

# **From Ruthenia to Russia**

## **The History**

## **Publishing House ANTYK (1985-2018)**

The ANTYK publisher originated in 1985 as an underground printing house functioning first as section of the Independence Party printing unit and later independently as publisher and political group ANTYK. Among the anticommunist underground publishers we were the first publisher and group with a clearly conservative and independence oriented program. By our name we have deliberately tried to link mentally with the Action ANTYK operating during the II World War. The General Directorate of the Home Army and the Delegation for Poland of the Government in Exile wishing to oppose the activities of the communists have first organised special cells called 'K' that were collecting materials for a counter-propaganda and inspired actions of anticommunist political organisations.. Since this activity was not sufficient and effective enough a Social Anticommunist Committee was set up. It realized part of its activities through a subdivision called ANTYK within the information bureau of the Home Army and this was also called Action ANTYK. The main purpose of Action ANTYK was counter-propaganda, alerting the society to the fallacies of the communist propaganda and the true nature of the Soviet system and real intention of the USSR with respect to Poland – the intention to deprive us of independence.

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We propagate the works of Prof. Jacek Trznadel and of many others who did not submit to the new enslavement of minds.

In 2011 we started the promotion of the works of Feliks Koneczny in English by publishing his 'On the Plurality of Civilizations', 'The Jewish Civilization', 'On order in history', 'The laws of history', 'The Bizantine Civilization'.

**Feliks Koneczny**

**From Ruthenia to Russia  
The History**

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## Translator's Note

Feliks Koneczny's (1862-1949) book on Russian history was first published in 1921. The original title was *Dzieje Rosji od najdawniejszych do najnowszych czasów* [History of Russia from the Most Ancient to the Most Recent Times]. In view of the book being already almost a century old the title had to be changed.

Koneczny wrote for the Polish intelligentsia of his generation assuming a certain level of general knowledge of languages, culture, geography and history, both Polish and universal. While reading this book it may be helpful to occasionally glance at maps of Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States and European Russia, both historical and present day, so as to locate the rivers and towns mentioned in the work.

As in the previous translations of Koneczny's works, all additions that come from the translator are given in square brackets [ ]. Where the translator considered it necessary to add some explanation, either in the text or in the footnotes, this is in square brackets. Quotations in other languages are left intact in italics and are followed by an English translation in square brackets. Russian words were given by Koneczny in a Polish transliteration, which is usually understandable to Poles. These words are given in Russian followed by an English translation in square brackets.

Maciej Giertych  
(2018)



## Introduction

In the spring of 1917 the Warsaw Publishing Company published the first volume of my *History of Russia* which in 527 pages of the 8<sup>th</sup> print size covered the time period only up to the year 1449. Before I shall be able to complete this work in the same sort of detail, the need appeared, a very urgent one, to give to our general public a concise overview of the subject – and so this is the genesis of the present book.

From start to finish this book contains only the results of my own investigations and many years of studies which were conducted and interrupted due to various circumstances of life. This is an abridged version in respect to the former more extensive study, providing here only its backbone. It is an abbreviation of the first volume and a conspectus of further ones published in advance because of the practical needs of the public. For this reason in this volume I have kept to the rule that a presentation of the earlier times is given as briefly as possible and the work expands increasingly as more recent times are dealt with.

This shortened version is completely void of the so called scientific apparatus; this is left for the more detailed editions in which I shall try to maintain the same method as was used in vol. 1. Whoever is interested in details, deductions, proofs, who likes to ask the question: why? and requires justified answers for it will have to look into the main study and consider the present volume as an introductory reading.



## **Part I**

### **Up To the Mongolian Invasion**



## **I. Before the Varangian's Rule (till the year 862)**

The eastern Slav lands are for History – as the science about changes – a most plentiful theme, because probably no other part of the world has undergone so many changes and so radical ones. The history of the Polish lands seems to be unchangeably stable in comparison with the history of Russia! While in our country the forms constantly changed and continue to do so in service to a more or less constant content, the eastern Slav lands in contrast have seen the opposite: the content changed more frequently than the form. There even traditions were in flux, excluding one another.

The second major difference between the history of Poland and of Russia lies in the basic dissimilitude of the struggle for existence. The Russians even today have not started to work intensively. The perfection of a society necessarily requires a certain degree of tenacity in the struggle for existence, the intensity of which is inescapably tied with intellectual effort. However, the way as life functions in Russia, is such that people are never forced to exert themselves intellectually so as to assure prosperity. Even trade in the eastern Slav lands was not linked to any productivity, to any manufacturing or industry (as was the case in XIV-XVI century Poland). Until the most recent times, trade rather inhibited the development of society, disintegrating it. Life continued there extensively, particularly in the watershed of the Volga, without deepening anywhere.

Whether the whole eastern Slav lands are to be identified as Russian, that is whether Ruthenia and Russia are the same, or should we contrast these notions, this is a debate that has reached exhaustion and ... it has not led to any practical result. It is an old

privilege of life to bypass theories! The present book, deriving from a scientific current and not from any political party will describe the relationship between being Ruthenian and being Russian, in its historical development, i.e. in the manner it was considered by contemporaries in different periods of time. We shall begin our topic from Kiev because the colonists who created the new Ruthenia in the watershed of the Volga (which was later to become Russia) came from the Dnieper river. We therefore need to know what they brought into the northern Finnish-Turanian countries. The scope of the history of Russia in its initial period must therefore cover the whole of the eastern Slav lands.

The first stimuli for historical appearance in this part of the Slav lands came from the Armenians and Arabs engaged in international trade. They reached these parts of the world from the east moving westwards and finally the Slavs were brought into their sphere. This occurred through the mediation of the Khazars, a Finnish-Ural people who had a semi-settled type of life along the southern Oka, and also through the Bulgarians, a Turanian people who led a nomadic life beyond the middle and lower Volga.

The initial settlements of the eastern Slavs were within a triangle the base line of which runs more or less from the upper Bug river to Kiev, narrowing suddenly in the northerly direction towards its apex at lake Ilmen. This triangle entered as a wedge between the Finnish-Turanian branch of peoples in the east and the Baltic ones in the west. There in the east, there was a multi-tribe "Yugra", a swarm of peoples of a very low cultural level extending from the eastern slopes of the Valdai hills all the way to the Urals, from the Arctic ocean to rivers Volga and Kama. (The most primitive among them were the Magyars beyond the Kama). On the other hand the Finnish peoples who lived north of

the Valdai hills, east and west of lake Ilmen had a relatively higher level of culture. From the south-western side there were deserted areas which only from the X<sup>th</sup> c. onwards became inhabited. On the northwest there were the Baltic peoples (Latvians, Samogitians, Prussians, Lithuanians, Yotvingians.) They also persisted at a lower cultural level in comparison with the eastern Slavs<sup>1</sup>. Thus the eastern Slav people originally did not meet at any point directly with their western (Polish) cousins. Since the whole area of the lower Dnieper river was also sparsely inhabited, the eastern Slav peoples in the initial period of their history were completely isolated both from their western and southern sides.

Around the year 700 the Khazars discovered again the trade route northwards along the Dnieper river (that was known to the Greeks already in antiquity). They recreated the ancient trading post in a region which had been populated already since Palaeolithic times, as it was convenient for the transfer of goods over the Dnieper and it was a border point of settlement in the region. This place was Kiev. Below Kiev the banks of the Dnieper were empty almost to its delta.

Mosaic<sup>2</sup> influence coming from Asia Minor and Persia reached the Khazars through the trade routes and later (in mid IX<sup>th</sup> c.) Christianity also influenced them when trade contacts brought them closer to Byzantium. Byzantine builders erected for them a new capital on the river Don (Sarkel, next to what today is Bila

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<sup>1</sup> Until the Polish-Lithuanian Union [1385] there was also no cultural influence of Lithuania over Ruthenia, if anything the opposite was true.

<sup>2</sup> Jewish propaganda reached also the northern neighbourly Burtas people. Even in the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. there were still quite formal remnants of Mosaic worship there and some vestiges of it persist until today among the sects of the Tambov and Penza governorates.

Vežha). Together with the builders (in the years 857-858) came Constantine of Thessalonica, later known to the whole world under his monastic name of Cyril.

His missionary activity however did not expand from the Don to the Dnieper river and it is a fact that neither St. Cyril nor his brother St. Methodius – the later apostles of the southern and western Slavs – had in fact anything to do with eastern Slav lands.

In mid IX<sup>th</sup> c. a new and very dangerous competitor for trade along the Dnieper river arrived from the north: the Varangians of Scandinavia. Their superiority lay in the fact that they were a sailing people, knowing how to build boats, and thus they were capable of taking over the water routes of the Dnieper and Volga watersheds, while the Finns, the Yugra, the eastern Slavs, the Bulgarians and the Khazars knew only how to construct primitive boats (which were simply carved-out logs)<sup>3</sup> and thus they could not travel far. The expanse of land between the Baltic and Constantinople, for many centuries since the times of ancient Greece, was divided into several intermediate trading regions. It happened for the first time in 838 that someone traversed the entire route. These were messengers of the Scandinavian Swede people, from the tribe *Rus*.

Long distance sailing trips were for a long time a question of economic existence for southern Scandinavia. The whole of Western Europe knew the Norse builders of coastal states, called the “Vikings”. Their close relatives were referred to as the “Varangians” in the Dnieper watershed. They had been visiting the lands on the western Dvina and Neva for a long time, but only sporadically, because even having reached lake Ilmen, they did

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<sup>3</sup> Even today it is possible to see such uni-logs in the remote Pińsk regions [of pre-world war II Poland].

not find much benefit from these expeditions. Having learnt however that somewhere further to the south there are rich countries to which all these northern peoples are supplying furs, they did not rest until they investigated the matter closely, collecting information during several exploratory expeditions, undertaken so as to make geographic discoveries on the Dnieper, Don and Volga rivers and on the Black Sea. They established that lake Ilmen was a key to all the waterways of this part of the world being on the crossroads that link the Baltic Sea with the Black and Caspian Seas, thus Scandinavia with Constantinople and the caliphates of Islamic Asia. Around the year 850 systematic invasions of the Varangians began. They strove to occupy the upper courses of the Dnieper and Volga rivers.

The Rus people wanted to settle closer to the gold-yielding watercourses and the final destination of their planned expansion was the “golden city” itself: Constantinople. The *путь из варяг в греки* [journey of the Varangians to the Greeks] began, and it was to be the main theme of the next two centuries.

The Slav and Finnish peoples around Ilmen allied together against the Varangians, but this was unsuccessful. In the years 859-862 the confrontation was settled in favour of the Rus people and their sailing boats appeared for the first time on the Volga. This is how the history of these lands began, with trade wars. It is not the farmer but the trader who made his historical imprint here.

## **II. Ruthenia as the road to Greece (860-1043).**

The Varangians wanted to conquer the state that was by the Bosphorus, and the Dnieper region was of value for them only

as the road leading to Greece. They established only military and trade stations among the eastern Slavs and their entire activity was consciously temporary. They only formed units of warriors centred in forts, being in constant readiness for expeditions.

One of the Varangian troops travelled south along the Dnieper all the way to the limits of settlements, i.e. to Kiev and they tore away these lands from the Khazar supremacy. From there, the first Varangian expedition to Constantinople took place in the years 860 to 865. A different troop under the leadership of Rurik, a Rus, having occupied Novgorod on lake Ilmen in 862, also aimed for Kiev. But only 20 years later, in 882, all the Varangian stations around lake Ilmen and along the Dnieper were under one common leadership. This was done by the successor of Rurik, Oleg (879-912) who was a faithful guardian of Rurik's underage son Igor (912-945). Oleg made an expedition to Byzantium in 907. He extorted a heavy tribute and contracted a very favourable trade agreement. The greatest expedition was led by Igor in 941 when he came with 10 000 sailing boats [Byzantine estimate], but he was defeated by "Greek fire" and hardly managed to escape with only 10 boats. He returned to the waters of the Bosphorus three years later with another major army and obtained a tribute, but had to satisfy himself with a trade agreement that was less favourable than the previous one.

Twice in these times the "route to Greece" was closed, blocked by nomadic barbarians. This happened first in 884 when the steppes south of Kiev were occupied by the majority of the Magyars migrating from the Volga and Kama rivers. This however lasted for only six years, because the the Magyar nomads, invited by the German Emperor so as to operate against the Great

Moravian state moved on to the Hungarian lowlands. The southern steppes were taken over a second time in 915 by the Pechenegs, a Turanian people, who were pushed out of the Caspian Sea area by the Khazars. After a short time Igor allied with them against Byzantium.

Thus, thanks to the Rus, relationships were established between the Dnieper watershed and the Greek Empire. As a result, Christian influences began to operate and finally Olga (945-964), the widow of Igor came to Constantinople and was baptized there, in the Greek-Catholic rite (there was no schism as yet). Her son Sviatoslav (964-973) however persisted in paganism. He made expeditions to the Balkan peninsula twice (in 967 and 969), twice conquering and losing the Bulgarian state<sup>4</sup>. He was killed by the Pechenegs (who in the meantime allied with Byzantium) during preparations for a third expedition (in 973).

The expeditions of Sviatoslav were the first contact between the eastern and the southern Slavs; they foretold also the first contacts with the western Slavs. The Varangians learnt in Bulgaria from where “silver and horses” were brought to the Balkan peninsula, namely from the West. They became interested in the Danubian trade route linking Central Europe with the Balkans and so they started to investigate how they could have access to this route coming from Kiev. This route had several branches in the northerly direction. The most easterly branch led through the Dukla mountain pass in the Carpathians onto the lands of the Polish people known as the Lachs. Their settlements extended from the river San to Strypa and the upper Bug rivers being as it were a southern extension of Mazovia. Neither the Mazovians nor

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<sup>4</sup> A part of the Bulgarians migrated from the eastern watershed of the middle Volga onto the Balkans and there they mixed with the Slav element.

the Lachs belonged at the time to the Piast [first dynasty of Poland] state. They were locked in a primary tribal existence under local fort princes. From their eastern side, as yet there was no direct neighbourhood with the eastern Slav settlements because at the north-eastern end they were separated by the nomadic Yotvingians on the right banks of the Bug river and further on they were kept apart by the upper Prypeć and its most western tributaries, where [due to the marshes] there were hardly any human settlements.

Already eight years after the death of Sviatoslav efforts were made to occupy the newly discovered route. Over the corpses of his step brothers, Oleg (killed in 977) and Yaroslav (killed in 980), who had been favourable to Christianity, Vladimir (980-1015) came to power. He commanded the Rus troops and also the passive local Slavs. He was another son of Sviatoslav but “born of a slave”. He was a vehement defender of the heathen party. Immediately, in the second year of his rule *Иде Володимер к Ляхом и зая грады их, Перемышль, Червен и ины грады.* [Vladimir goes towards the Lachs and takes over their forts Przemysł, Czerwień and other forts]. This is the verbatim note found in the oldest Ruthenian chronicle (referred to as that of Nestor). These words are clear evidence that Vladimir took over Polish lands and that these regions did not belong to the settlements of eastern Slavs.

Thus in 981 the Rus had their first contact with the western Slavs.

The route leading the Rus through the lands of the Lachs to Hungary and further on to the lower Danube was placed under special care. Several military Varangian stations were set up in

the local forts, and so as to secure access to these stations from the east, a new fort was established in 988 named after the founder: Vladimir (of Volhynia). They suspected that this route would prove useful for military purposes, for expeditions to the Balkans.

Vladimir operated against Byzantium in a systematic way. The Bulgarian expeditions of 985 and 986 as well as the expedition in 988 to the Black Sea coast had this aim. They were undertaken even though the Greek Emperor sent a delegation to Kiev asking for peace and offering his daughter Anna to Vladimir as a wife. He would of course have to be baptized. Vladimir rejected this condition and sailed all the way down to the Black Sea city of Kherson. The expedition however proved catastrophic and so Vladimir found himself at the mercy of the Emperor. Having lost his army he was not to be released from Kherson until he would on the spot receive baptism. The conditions previously offered were accepted and the princess was given to him as wife.

Anna was the sister of the “Roman empress”, Theophania, the famous wife of Otto I. The Rurik dynasty was thus rapidly entering into relationships with the courts of the West and since they neighbored with the Lachs, after having taken over their lands, they also were in contact with the Polish Piasts and the Hungarian Arpads. Vladimir also maintained permanent contacts with Rome itself. He was baptized (similarly as Olga) in the Catholic Church, in the Greek-Catholic rite. (There was no schism at the time; in fact in Kherson itself Vladimir met with papal envoys). The relationships with the Latin world were to develop and increasingly tighten, particularly since the Varangian troops which continued to arrive from Scandinavia were of the Latin rite.

Among the Rus of the Dnieper watershed both rites would meet, the eastern and the western.

The missionary activity undertaken among the Slav population was in both rites. The famous St. Bruno of Querfurt reached even the Pechenegs. He was a missionary supported by Poland, an admirer of king Bolesław the Great. The Bishop of Kołobrzeg Reinbern worked in a major part of the watershed of Prypeć as well as in the Turów area. The variety of rites did not present a problem at the Kiev court.

These bishops had an ally for the Latin tradition, in the person of a Swedish princess, the wife of Yaroslav [the Wise], the son of Vladimir. But they found her to be an opponent – not for confessional but political reasons.

At issue was the question of the succession after Vladimir. The right of succession was with Vladimir's nephew Sviatopolk<sup>5</sup> who gained the support of the mighty ruler of the western Slav lands Bolesław the Great by becoming his son in law in 1012. Vladimir of course preferred to hand over Kiev to his son Yaroslav and not to his nephew and so Sviatopolk found himself in prison together with his wife. Bolesław intervened on behalf of his daughter, and his victorious expedition of 1013 had the result that when Vladimir died two years later, it was Sviatopolk who became ruler of Kiev. But Yaroslav did not give up his claim and he allied with Henry II of Germany, an opponent of the Polish ruler. He was summarily defeated. Bolesław conquered Kiev in 1018 standing at the peak of his power, but he abandoned the cause of his son in law and returned to Poland leaving Sviatopolk

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<sup>5</sup> The son of the killed Yaropolk, the rightful heir of Rurik and Sviatoslav.

to manage on his own. Sviatopolk was defeated by Yaroslav in 1019. He escaped and vanished from history.

Bolesław the Great abandoned the cause of his son in law in full consciousness and of his own will. Had he wanted to he could have kept him in Kiev. After all he ruled the fort and saw himself as its lord. He considered himself ruler from the Elbe to the Dnieper. From Kiev he sent two missions to both Emperors: to the “Roman” Emperor, Henry II of Germany and to Basil II of Constantinople, presenting himself as their neighbour, asking for friendly relations and warning that he would respond in the case of unfriendliness.

Bolesław the Great ruled from the Elbe to the Dnieper. He was all powerful over the Slav lands. This was not a simple conquest, but a type of state relationship which our modern terminology refers to as a federation. In this manner Bolesław was already ruler over Pomerania, Polabia, Moravia and in the same sense he understood himself to be ruler over Kiev. For this reason the actual person of the Kiev prince was immaterial.

These plans concerning the East turned out to be unattainable without a prior incorporation into the Polish state of the land of the Lachs and of Masovia. The expeditions of Bolesław the Great were also geographic discoveries and they showed what was one’s own territory, (Polish) and what was not one’s own, even though related. From then onwards the Piasts above all aimed at the unification of all the Polish lands. Thus in 1019 Bolesław removed the Varangian garrisons from the forts in the territory of the Lachs and attached them to the state of the Piasts. His son and successor, Mieszko II incorporated Masovia.

Exploiting the various difficulties that Mieszko II [successor of Bolesław the Great in Poland] was experiencing, Yaroslav once again occupied the territory of the Lachs which was then held by the Rurikids until 1070. It started to be referred to as the land of the Czerwień forts because from the east the route towards them led through the Czerwień fort. Casimir I the Restorer could not dream about regaining these territories because he was dependent on the friendship of Yaroslav. It was due to his support that he was victorious over Maslav of Masovia (1047).

The relationship of Yaroslav to the Piasts underwent peculiar developments! Initially he experienced the full force of the potency of the Polish dynasty. Later he was witness of its rapid decline to a very low level, and finally he contributed to the restoration of its strength...

In 1043 Yaroslav attempted an expedition to Constantinople, the last one. It consisted of only defeats. In the peace treaty negotiated in 1046 again a Byzantine princess was involved. Yaroslav asked for the hand of the daughter of Constantine Monomachos (again called Anna) for his son Vsevolod and he was given her. Vladimir Monomakh was born from this union. His name is a synonym of a different historical period.

In that year of the last expedition to Constantinople, in 1043, also the last troop of Varangians arrived from Scandinavia. From that time the immigration of the Rus ceased. The simultaneity of these facts is noteworthy. They came to the eastern Slav lands only because the Dnieper region was for them a “route to Greece”.

### **III. Divergence between society and the state (until 1054).**

The Varangian occupation in this period (even under Yaroslav) had no territorial boundaries that could be defined approximately. It was not a continuous compact territory, but it spread as it were in jumps, from one military-trade station to another by-passing large areas. There are serious doubts as to whether in the mid XI<sup>th</sup> c. it covered all the regions of the Dnieper watershed, especially those that were distant from the major water routes. In the South the rule of Vladimir and then Yaroslav extended all the way to the river Sula (beyond which roamed the Pechenegs and later the Cumans) and on the left bank of Dnieper only to the river Ros. Beyond the Dnieper river there was a Varangian station only in Rostov which dated from the days of Rurik. Vladimir set up a few of them on the conquered lands of the Lachs and Yaroslav added three more: a permanent station in Yuryev (Dorpat [Tartu]) on the western side of lake Chud [Peipus] and two temporary ones, originally maintained only during the summers, in two centres of the Finnish people, in Suzdal among the Mari and in Murom among the Mordvins. The regions between the Sula and Murom were not known to the Varangians even in the beginning of the XI<sup>th</sup> c.

The borders of their dominion were all the more doubtful because the wars conducted by the Rurikids did not aim at territorial acquisitions. Their intent was to enforce ever more favourable trade conditions, the termination of the monopolies of rivals, the bringing in of new branches of trade to the markets of Kiev and Novgorod and the opening of new trading routes that earlier had been held exclusively by the Khazars or Volga Bulgars. Thus, for example, Sviatoslav, on having beaten the entire Khazar state in 965 did not hold onto any strip of land and satisfied himself

only with the enforcement of trade transit over the Don river for his traders. The Khazar state continued to exist.

The notion of territorial occupation of the land was unknown in the eastern Slav lands of the times. The land was the property of whoever first settled it, defended it and began exploiting by hunting, fishing or forest bee-keeping. A prince had no higher rights in this sphere of life. Just as anybody else, he could have taken over empty land and by the very fact of holding it he became a landowner, as a private holder, and not from any authority derived from his position in the state.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the power of the Varangians over the Slavs had no notion of statehood. Their invasion was not the conquest of Slav lands but only the extortion of subsistence and tributes. The Varangians were not interested in land ownership. A soldier in the troop of the Varangian prince frequently became a trader, but never in this period of time, did he become a farmer! The soldiers were a mobile element serving in the forts and they were maintained by the prince.

The Varangians were not interested in establishing a state of their own. They only wanted to live at somebody else's expense and enrich themselves. Already in the days of Olga [regent 945-960] a special princely market place was set up near lake Ilmen. It was referred to as a "pogost", because guests came there,

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<sup>6</sup> In Poland all empty land, "no-man's land", was considered the property of the prince (or king) without any obligation to utilize it.

i.e. foreign traders. For many centuries trade in the eastern Slav lands was conducted by the princes.<sup>7</sup>

The power of the prince over the Slav population was restricted to military duty and the collection of tributes. A prisoner of war was a personal property of the prince. He could be employed in compulsory labour or sold to eastern traders.<sup>8</sup>

The Varangians did not engage in government or administration. The view that they introduced feudalism to the eastern Slav lands is completely erroneous. Rurikid governance was based upon a clan community that was unified, and divided only into allotments, none of which were to be hereditary, all within a branch of the clan. The clan elder held Kiev and the others received some other more and some less profitable forts, depending on their position in the clan hierarchy.<sup>9</sup>

Thus each Rurikid gradually progressed onto a higher position in the clan hierarchy, onto an ever more profitable principedom. Thus no prince was ever permanently associated with any one principedom, neither materially or morally. No province was a family nest for him to be inherited from a father and grandfather. There was only one exception. If somebody's father died before his grandfather, he became an "узгоу - izgoy", a derelict, losing the right to progress in the clan hierarchy of princes and forts and

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<sup>7</sup> In the South trade in oxen, and in the North trade in furs, conducted always under the authority of the Tsar continued till the XVIII<sup>th</sup> c. This trade had many privileges.

<sup>8</sup> In Poland a slave was only bought, and never sold.

<sup>9</sup> An uncle had priority over a nephew, an older brother over a younger one, a father-in-law over a son-in-law, a husband of an elder sister over her younger brothers and an older brother-in-law over the younger husbands of other sisters.

so he had to remain with all his further descendants at the location that was held by his father at the time of his death. Thus, only exceptionally (as was the case in Polotsk) a dynastic tradition could develop together with some kind of settled state-like relationships.

The clan elder, the prince of Kiev, in principle had a patriarchal authority over his relatives, but he was not their superior in the sense of a state leader. There was no “Grand Prince of Kiev” and even the title of Grand Prince was as yet unknown. None of the regional princes paid any duties to the prince of Kiev.

Thus there was a basic difference between the history of the Eastern Slav lands and Western and Central Europe. All the European nations began with a state organization, imposed by a winning dynasty. This was followed with a struggle of society wanting to influence the state until finally the state became based upon society. But the Varangians did not work towards the building of a state and so the Varangian period was not a case of a state being imposed upon the eastern Slav societies. Should one consider their rule as a state building moment in the historical life of the eastern Slav lands, then a scene unknown in the West would appear: as we shall see there was a bifurcation between society and the state.

Such a divergence was unavoidable, because the dream of the the ruling dynasty was the abandonment of the conquered land. The Rurikids wanted to leave the Dnieper region and establish a state for themselves in the Balkans. They wanted to exploit the subject Slavs in view of an end that had no relationship with the interests of the Slav people and was even in many respects completely alien to them.

One sign of this contradiction was the establishment of a capital in Kiev, a site that was unsuited for the purpose. The nearby regions were poor and the prosperity of Kiev lay not in its production but in its being a transit intermediary. It was located at the limits of human settlements and was endangered by attacks from the Pechenegs, thus the positioning was most troublesome. But the dynasty made its capital in Kiev, because it was their southern-most station on the “way to Greece”. The primacy of Kiev was based on their plan to conquer Constantinople. Later the Orthodox Church made of it the “mother of Ruthenian forts” because of the Pechersk Lavra.

This Kiev Lavra is the oldest monastery of the eastern Slavs, set up on the model of the Greek “holy mountain” of Athos. It is a faithful copy of its ecclesial anarchy hidden under the pretence of the strictest observance. Athos managed and still manages without any common rule, nor does the Kiev Pechersk Lavra have one till this day. The same is also true for the many Lavras that imitate it. The Kiev Lavra is the mother of all the monasteries of the eastern Slav lands and it is for this reason that Kiev was recognized, through the mediation of monastic writings, as the “mother of the Ruthenian forts”.

The Byzantine influences of the time were restricted only to this imitation of Athos and the bringing in of some craftsmen from Greece. These influences were minimal. The eastern Slav Church adopted not the Greek liturgy but the Bulgarian. Priests who knew any Greek were exceptional, and so the Church was not influenced by Byzantium, but only by Bulgaria. Byzantine scholarship never had an impact on the eastern Slav lands.

The Bulgarian Cyrillic<sup>10</sup> – considered to be a national alphabet due to a peculiar misunderstanding – did not fit the eastern Slavs and so it had a negative influence on the development of language and literature. It was a form into which their language was introduced by force. While in the West the Latin alphabet was adapted to various languages; in the eastern Slav lands the opposite process took place.

The beginnings of literacy forecasted well, but later it turned out that it never emerged beyond the initial stage. The oldest monuments of Church writings date from the beginnings of the XI<sup>th</sup> c. The famous *летописъы* [annals] begin with the year 1039, while the first book written by a Pole, and not in Polish but in Latin, appeared only around the year 1208 (the *Chronicle* of Kadłubek). Similarly, the Dnieper region advanced economically rapidly; trade developed and towns flourished, while in Poland only some “sub-forts” began to operate.

In a relatively short time this entire development was to be arrested, as if, paralysed. The mystery lies in the bifurcation of society and the state that led to paralysis of both.

At first the social organization was that of the clan system. Its original form persisted for a long time in the poorer South of the Dnieper region and there it was the lowest administrative unit, the *вервь* (community), that is, the clan and the territory of its property. In the wealthier North individual property appeared at an earlier stage and the clan structure soon dissolved before it

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<sup>10</sup> This is an alphabet named after its inventor, a monk by the name of Cyril from Preslav [Bulgaria] who lived in the days of Tsar Simeon (888-927). St. Cyril, the apostle of the Slav worked out the Glagolitic alphabet, which is still in use today in the Roman-Slav liturgy in Dalmatia.

managed to occupy the whole land in the region. These unclaimed lands (which were quite extensive) became the property of the *волость* (township), which was only a territorial unit, irrespective of family relationships. Both the *волость* and the *вервь* had self government under their clan elders and town elders who also had a judiciary power in civil issues. No one ever referred criminal cases to the courts because this would be self offending. Such issues were resolved by the blood vendetta, the right to take revenge oneself.

Due to the extensiveness of the area of the *волость* the calling of a general gathering of the entire population became impossible in the North, even though this had been the universal practice in all countries and all times, as the most primitive social institution. Thus, it was necessary to call gatherings of the *волость* elders only as well as the elders representing village settlements (*деревни*). The general gatherings (*веч*) persisted only in the towns. In the wealthier North these gradually developed into a legal institution, whereas in the South the term referred to any accidental gathering of people. In the richest town, in Novgorod the Great, these general gatherings developed into a regular legal institution that had legislative authority<sup>11</sup>.

It was also Novgorod the Great that first had a written civil law. The first edition of the so called “*Русская Правда*” [Russian Truth], the oldest legislative monument of the eastern Slav world, was framed during the days of Yaroslav [the Wise 1016-1054]. It was a manifestation not of the power of the ruling prince, but of the will of the Novgorod people. The term *Rus* (a descendant of

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<sup>11</sup> This Novgorod institution has been erroneously extended by historians to the whole of Ruthenia, calling even the entire period that of „regional rallies”.

the Scandinavian *Rus*) was used there in opposition to the indigenous population. It indicates not only that the Varangians have not yet melded with the Slavs, but also once again shows that there was a divergence between society and the state.

The Varangian period united the peoples of the eastern Slav lands through one dynasty. The clan community of the Rurikids, which had the *Rus* people as its military and superior class was given the general name of *Rus* or *Ruthenia*. But the local population living in these regions did not feel any common unity and this continued throughout this period.

#### **IV. The question of the transversal route across Ruthenia (1054-1174).**

The rule of the Rurikids could not form a state so long as Ruthenia was not a compact complex of continuous territories. Instead there was only external communication, along its circumference without any knowledge about what was in the centre.

The issue was complicated by the movements of nomads in the Southeast. Towards the end of the first half of XI<sup>th</sup> c. the Asiatic wandering of peoples began, that was to last for two centuries and its extensive ripples affected the eastern Slav lands. In 1055 the Mongolian Cumans appeared, more ferocious and better organized than the Pechenegs whom they pushed out (to the Dobruja on the Danube). The Cumans entered as a wedge between the Armenian and Bulgarian trading spheres and so Southern Ruthenia was threatened with ruin by this, had it not opened for itself a route from Kiev across the regions of Chernigov and Seversk, through the Desna and Seim rivers onto the upper Oka.

Serious common enterprises however were impossible due to the lack of unity within the dynasty. Even the clan law was being broken.

It happened that the son of Yaroslav, Vladimir, the prince of Novgorod died two years before his father (1052 and 1054), and as a result the grandson of Yaroslav, Rostislav Vladimirovich became an *izgoy*, a derelict. This meant that the Novgorod region, which was the richest, was to become the exclusive property of the Rostislav line. In consequence the clan community would suffer a serious impoverishment. To prevent this, the younger brothers of Vladimir chased Rostislav out of Novgorod, deprived him totally of any position and did not give him anything instead.

Izyaslav, the oldest son of Yaroslav had some monarchic sense and so he was inclined to initiate a form of statehood into the loose dominions of the Rurikids. On his initiative, in 1067, there was an attempt to introduce some princely legislation that would be binding for the whole of Ruthenia (the so called second edition of the *Russian Truth*). The idea was that the rank of the princes was to be strengthened in respect to society, imposing their supremacy over the subjects. By imposing double, treble and even four-fold penalties, there was an attempt to protect princely property and to elevate those people who were directly subject to the princes<sup>12</sup>.

Izyaslav was inclined towards Rome and for this reason the Pechersk Lavra was hostile towards him. The separation of

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<sup>12</sup> Simultaneously there was the extension of the application of the first edition which continued to be law in the Novgorod region. Work on this new edition was done during the last common presence of the sons of Yaroslav in Novgorod the Great.

the Churches took place in the year of Yaroslav's death (1054) and the Church in Ruthenia wavered between Constantinople and Rome until 1147, while the dynasty wavered even longer. Only the Lavra was decided from the very beginning. It organized rebellions against Izyaslav in Kiev, calling in his place his younger brothers, first Sviatoslav and after his death (1076) Vsevolod. This provoked dynastic struggles over Kiev, which passed on from generation to generation, and it also happened at times that the Cumans were called in to help out against one another.

Izyaslav returned to Kiev twice (1069, 1077) with the help of the Polish king Bolesław the Bold. The Polish intervention was not for nothing. In March 1070 Bolesław joined the Czerwień Forts back to Poland. This state of affairs lasted only for 13 years. After the next crisis of the Piast dynasty in Poland, the homeless sons of Rostislav gathered a military troop and occupied the Land of the Lachs in 1083.

Izyaslav called for help from even further afar. He travelled personally to the "Roman" Emperor Henry IV, and he sent his son Sviatopolk all the way to Rome where he received Ruthenia as a fiefdom from Pope Gregory VII, being given at the same time the title of king. Both son and father remained faithful to Rome. Sviatopolk II (1093-1113) was also a Uniate, recognizing the Papacy.

Also the Kiev Metropolitans were at time Uniates. This was so with Hilarion in the days of Izyaslav and Ephraim (1090-1096) under Sviatopolk II. An unshakeable proof of the unity with Rome at the end of the XI<sup>th</sup> c. and maintained later is manifested by the cult of St. Nicholas the Miracle-maker, which expanded immensely among the eastern Slav lands much more than the veneration of any other saint. His feast was instituted by Pope Urban

II in 1087, and it was not accepted or recognized by the schismatic Greek Church. Despite this, Ephraim introduced the feast in the metropolitan province of Kiev.

Amidst the chaos of struggles over Kiev and other regions a most important fact of the period happened in 1090 and it was hardly noticed, namely, the establishment of a Varagian station in Ryazan by prince Yaroslav Sviatoslavovich († 1129), the son of Sviatoslav Yaroslavovich. This was the discovery of the shortest route to the river Oka. It became the founding stone of the transverse route that was essential for the whole of Ruthenia. It was to determine the fate of Kiev, depending on whether the Ryazan principedom was favourable towards the “mother of Ruthenian forts” or unfavourable towards it.

Now the Kiev people were doubly interested in establishing closer links with the northern settlements of Slavs in the Finnish territory. Since these had passed onto the Pereyaslav line of the Vsevolodoviches, the Kiev people in 1113 called as their prince the head of that line, namely Vladimir Monomakh. This increased even more the dynastic conflicts among the Rurikids. The Izyaslaviches, deprived of Kiev allied with the Rostislaviches<sup>13</sup> against the Vsevolodoviches. This encouraged the Sviatoslavoviches to fight with Monomakh. When during these struggles the Murom region (on the lower Oka) passed under the supremacy of the Ryazan prince, Monomakh set up a new fort, Vladimir on Klyazma against the Muroms.

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<sup>13</sup> Bolesław Wrymouth [the Polish prince 1107-1138] joined this alliance, which was all the more important because so far the relationships between the Rostislaviches and the Piasts of Poland were hostile.

His son Yuri Dolgorukiy waged several wars against Ryazan, and he secured the route in the direction of Ryazan in such a way that he occupied the valley of the river Moskva in the land of the Muroms. In 1147 he set up a military station there (out of which later the city of Moscow developed), at a site where the river changes its course and comes closest to Klyazma; thus pointing an almost direct route to Ryazan. But it was only in 1155 that Dolgorukiy managed to take over Kiev. He ruled there for only three years and was unable to establish a link between Kiev and the northern settlements.

At that time the Kiev people surrendered to the Ryazan prince (Izyaslav III Davidovich) trying luck with the Sviatoslavoviches against the Monomakhoviches, also unsuccessfully. An even more bitter struggle over Kiev resulted. It involved an increasing number of princes, who constantly expelled one another and increasingly frequently called in the Cumans as arbiters.

Thus the Cuman barbarians became a part of the organism of Southern Ruthenia. Not being able to defend themselves against these Mongolian nomads (having received no help from Northern Ruthenia), the Southern princes made peace with them. Vladimir Monomakh even married his son Yuri Dolgorukiy with a Cuman princess and as a result he interfered in the internal quarrels of the Cuman princes. Through diplomacy, he was always in alliance with some horde against some other one<sup>14</sup>. In this way he weakened the force of their attack and this is to his merit. He was

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<sup>14</sup> Unjustly Monomakh is considered to be a vanquisher of the Cumans. He is praised for having battled against them 83 times. The very number of these confrontations however indicates that he did not truly confront them at any moment. He also negotiated a peace with them 19 times.

the only one who at least did not remain passive in the face of the the Cuman question.

Yuri Dolgorukiy followed the steps of his father in the Kiev-Cuman policy. His son by the Cuman princess, Andrei Bogolyubsky, however broke with the policy of his father and grandfather. This prince not only failed to take part in the universal quarrel over Kiev but in fact did not want to be the prince of Kiev. He moved completely to the “Zalesye” (as the North-eastern Slav settlements on Finnish territory began to be called – [literally the land beyond the forest]) and devoted his entire life to the organization of the New Ruthenia. Breaking completely with Kiev and the whole Rurikid clan he adopted the title of “Grand Prince of all the Rostov land”. (This was the first time that the title of “Grand Prince” was used among the Rurikids). He tried to distinguish his Rostov realm separating it from the rest of Ruthenia even up to the breaking of the Church union with it. Having appointed himself as Grand Prince he had no intention of transferring onto his line the obsolete rank of the clan elder. In fact he wanted to completely abolish this title. He set up in the Rostov area his own personal dominion, that was to be hereditary beyond the clan community (as if he were an *izgoy*) with the idea that his relatives would not be considered his “younger brothers” but subject executors of his power. In practice however this project proved to be a vane dream.

The number of princely districts was continually increasing (in 1170 there were 72 of them) and all were pleased with this arrangement. For the *Rus* the fragmentation of districts was a guarantee of the maintenance of their status as a military troop, and the war of all against all was their life-giving element. Every

town was happy to be the capital of some principedom. The Orthodox Church could have no impact because it had too little education to be able to dominate society<sup>15</sup>. The notion of single rule died out completely even within the Orthodox Church and this also indicates the complete absence of Byzantine notions.

The lack of theological training resulted in such a missionary activity of the Church among the converted northern Finnish peoples that it produced the so called *двоеверие* [dual faith] with a double religiosity in which paganism continued as the substance and Christianity supplied only external forms.

For the Rurikids confessional issues were completely irrelevant up to the times of the Monomakhoviches. They maintained family ties primarily with the Scandinavian-Norman clans, that is, with Roman Catholics. The closest family of Monomakh had plenty of Latin links (wife, daughter-in-law, grandchildren). The relationships with Rome were still quite lively, often friendly, both in Southern and Northern Ruthenia.

But the opposite trend finally proved victorious. This was because the hatred of Rome was cultivated in the Kiev Lavra and its daughter monasteries and they dominated all Church writings. The *Chronicle of Nestor* (which was ready in 1116) became the corner stone here. It is a work in which violent hostility towards anything Latin is coupled with extraordinary theological ignorance. Under the Monomakhoviches (Monomakh † 1125) allegiance to Greek “orthodoxy” was finally proclaimed and the ties with the West were severed. The beginning of a conscious awareness of “orthodoxy” among the Church hierarchy dates from

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<sup>15</sup> In Poland the Church stood at the head of a political movement aiming at single rule and thus it had the support of the aristocracy and gentry.

1147. At that time Izyaslav II of Kiev tried to appoint a Metropolitan Bishop against the Constantinople Patriarch, but some of the bishops protested decidedly against such a break with Byzantium and the Lavra then called in Yuri Dolgorukiy to Kiev who in this way became a champion of “orthodoxy”. His son Andrei Bogolyubsky followed his father in this matter in and maintained no contacts with the West. If he dreamt of severing links with the Kiev metropolis, he understood this only in the sense of establishing at home in Vladimir on Klyazma a second Metropolitan See, that would be equal, parallel and similarly “orthodox”.

These hopes for his own Metropolitan See ended fatally for the prince’s candidate, and for the prince himself. The candidate was killed amidst tortures<sup>16</sup> and plots against the prince began.

While the Kiev people expected to attain their political-trade interests by submitting to Ryazan, Andrei Bogolyubsky thought how to subdue Ryazan and destroy Kiev. Only then would “the entire Rostov land” be his, protected from anybody else’s hegemony, and also in the future. Bogolyubsky based the promotion of Zalesye on the ruin of Southern Ruthenia.

In the final confrontation that worked towards the occupation of the transversal route, Novgorod the Great could be a serious determining factor. This city stood up against Dolgorukiy and Bogolyubsky, particularly since 1164 when he expanded his influence downwards along the Volga at the expense of the Bulgars<sup>17</sup>. There was fear that the central market of the North would

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<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Church chronicles transmitted to posterity the memory of him as a *совершенный злодей* [perfect villain].

<sup>17</sup> For the first time then, the occupied regions were taken over for good.

be transferred somewhere to Zalesye and this would place Novgorod the Great in a subsidiary position. A struggle ensued in which both sides sought supporters throughout Ruthenia. Kiev stood on the side of Novgorod.

Andrei suffered a major defeat on February 25<sup>th</sup> 1169 near Novgorod, but he compensated it in the South and the victorious Novgorod did almost nothing to defend Kiev which had allied with it.

Andrei Bogolyubsky allied with the Cumans and 11 Rurikids desirous of spoils moved against Kiev. The “mother of Ruthenian forts” was sacked completely. In vain did Kiev try to liberate itself from the hegemony of “the Rostov land”, because when Bogolyubsky organized a second coalition against it, he was supported even by Ryazan and Novgorod the Great that feared the revenge of the “Grand Prince”. Thus the “mother” was plundered a second time in 1170. Since Novgorod had abandoned the cause of Kiev, in consequence it also had to accept a son of Bogolyubsky as its prince.

Belatedly the Novgorod people realized that Bogolyubsky took the mouth of the river Oka from the Bulgars and occupied it permanently. Trying to deprive Zalesye of trade on the further road northwards, they established a trade centre in the land of the Yugra Cheremises on the Vyatka naming it after the river. That very year Andrei Bogolyubsky fell victim of a plot and was murdered on March 29<sup>th</sup> 1174.

The occupation of the mouth of the Oka was the final touch in the establishment of the great transverse route across Ru-

thenia. Now, instead of political consolidation, a complete splintering of Ruthenia took place. This is explained by the increasing divergence between society and the state.

## **V. The preparation of the scission in the eastern Slav lands (1174-1224).**

Amidst the increasing fierce competition between the old and new trade centres, Novgorod the Great lost its maritime trade and the possibility of trade expansion towards the West, because it failed to occupy the Chude coast in Estonia. Here hegemony was held by the Varangians from the Goth coast, that is, the traders from the island of Gotland (the capital of which Visby, was considered to be the wealthiest Christian city after Constantinople). This was to change in 1159 when traders from Bremen discovered the mouth and the lower course of the western Dvina river and since then German trade entered into the competition.

Should at that time, towards the end of the XII<sup>th</sup> c., Novgorod proved able to break the supremacy of Gotland through an alliance with the German trading towns, then Northern Ruthenia would have opened itself to the influences of Western European civilization. This could have happened already at the end of the XII<sup>th</sup> c., because then there would be pressure towards the Estonian coast and as a result the whole of the Baltic sea would become a Ruthenian sea.

The “window towards Europe” was already broken through in the days of Andrei Bogolyubsky, but he closed it by weakening Novgorod in a war that in fact became permanent from

that time onwards and was suspended only occasionally for short periods of truce.

From that moment Novgorod was primarily concerned in ensuring that a greater state power would not be established in Zalesye. The city engaged in various alliances during a long lasting war of the cities engulfing ever wider circles including Smolensk, Vitebsk, Polotsk, Drutsk, Ryazan, Rostov and Vladimir on Klyazma. The role of princes in these burger trade wars was reduced to that of condottiere defence of local trading interests. It happened quite often that a prince after having changed his principedom fought then on the opposite side. Thus for example, when the Novgorod people needed an able warrior, they called Mstislav the Brave from Smolensk to be their prince, even though that city was at war with them.

With the military fortune constantly changing, Ryazan, initially allied with Novgorod the Great, became the dominating force in Zalesye while the brother of Bogolyubsky, Michael only managed to occupy Moscow. Soon the youngest brother of Bogolyubsky, Vsevolod, known as *Большое Гнездо* (the Big Nest) because of his large progeny conquered Ryazan and became the only ruler in Zalesye. This prince was neither resourceful nor had he any political sense, but strangely enough he had good luck. He harassed Novgorod by taking over one of its “sub-forts” Torzhok and he transferred the population to the Suzdal region. He thus began the artificial migration of peoples through forced transfers that was to become such a special feature of Russian history.

In the last years of the XII<sup>th</sup> c. Novgorod found itself surrounded by a compact ring of envious competitors who were exploiting its difficulties. Meanwhile a new German state on the

Baltic began to be established. In 1201 the city of Riga was erected and a year later a permanent regiment of the military Order of the Sword Brethren settled there. Novgorod, being unable to face them all at once, submitted to the “Goth coast” and receded completely from the sea (1201).

Novgorod had to retreat because by then it had to deal with Lithuania!

For a long time Lithuania was receding being attacked by the Rurikids. It was only in 1132 that the Lithuanians managed for the first time to defend themselves and in 1159 there was the first incidence of an alliance of a Rurikid with Lithuania against another Rurikid. Soon the principdom of Minsk, the first fragment and precursor of “Lithuanian Ruthenia” came under the rule of the Lithuanian dynasty. In 1185 Grodno was taken over by Lithuania and simultaneously Lithuanian expeditions proved to be victorious even as far away as in the vicinity of Pskov, the largest of the Novgorod “sub-forts”. Lithuanian conquests extended from Volhynia to the Chud lake! Thus in one generation the political situation in the North-East of Europe changed remarkably. This was particularly so since 1219 when the Lithuanian prince Mindaugas appeared on the scene. He strove for single rule over the whole of Lithuania. In a short time he managed to occupy all of Black Ruthenia.

Meanwhile the old lands of the Czerwień Forts as well as the lands closest to them from the east and north became fiefdoms of the Polish Piasts and partially also of the Hungarian Arpads.

The most possessive and ruthless of the princes, Vladimirko (1125-1153) gathered all the principdoms from the San river

to river Zbruch and around 1150 established a capital in Halych, because the greatest centre of his prosperity was there, deriving it from trade in salt. This “Halych Ruthenia” continued to maintain its Polish social structure. We do not hear anything about any influence of towns in public issues, while very early the “land *bo-yars*” had a major role and towards the end of the XII<sup>th</sup> c. they controlled the Halych principedom, which was Ruthenian only in the dynastic sense. There, land property, in stark contrast to Ruthenia, was considered to be a basic factor of the social system and political life. The Rurikids who had the opposite view were increasingly hated, while the Piasts were not considered foreign as they interfered in the continuous rebellions of the landowners in the Halych lands.

Casimir the Just [of Poland 1138-1194] helped his nephew Roman [the Great], prince of the Volhynian Vladimir to conquer all the regions from Brest and Drohiczyn, all the way south to the Carpathians, as a fiefdom of Poland. At this point began the historical antagonism between Poland and Hungary<sup>18</sup>. Were it not for the Magyars, the Ruthenian rule over the land of the Lachs would have been only an episode which would have ended towards the end of the XII<sup>th</sup> c. and there would be no such thing as “Red Ruthenia.” Bela II of Hungary had occupation plans and took the side of a supposedly expelled Halych prince. He repeatedly interfered until in 1188 he managed to place his son Andrew temporarily in charge of Halych. When the Roscislaviches died out in 1198 the citizens of the Halych principedom decided to join with the [Polish] Sandomierz principedom and this sparked a military Hungarian expedition. Leszek the White [of

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<sup>18</sup> The myth of the „traditional Polish-Hungarian friendship” is a major historical error. This „historical” view is of a very late date and is based on the unreciprocated assistance given by Polish generals to the Hungarians in 1848.

Poland] was unable to expel the Magyars with his own forces and so he allied with Roman and installed him back in Halych as a vassal of Poland.

When after the death of Roman<sup>19</sup> a 30-year struggle over the Halych principedom ensued, the Hungarian king Andrew II already at the beginning of the conflict adopted the occupation title of *Rex Galiciae et Lodomeriae* (king of Halych and Vladimir). When the Halych gentry named their leader Władysław as a prince (the very name indicates that he was a Pole and Catholic), Hungary again objected. Finally a solution was found that was common in mediaeval diplomacy, that is, the marriage of children. A three year old Polish princess, [Blessed] Salomea, the daughter of Leszek was married to the five year old Hungarian prince, Coloman. The child couple was crowned in 1214 and since then all the Kings of Hungary continued to call themselves “kings of Halych and Vladimir”<sup>20</sup>.

The Hungarian governance began with the persecution of the Eastern Church and this led the descendants of the former troopers to call in a Rus prince all the way from Novgorod the Great. Mstislav the Bold, the son of Mstislav the Brave had been called to Novgorod after his father had many achievements there

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<sup>19</sup> Roman with Polish protection turned out to be the most potent prince among the Rurikids. He even conquered Kiev (in 1202 and 1204). Later, he turned against Poland and lost his life in the famous battle near Zawichost in 1205. He left two underage sons, Daniel and Vasyli, and this led to the conflict over Halych. The princes changed there almost from year to year. Finally, the Piasts and Arpads agreed to a compromise and established Daniel in Halych, but the local population expelled him.

<sup>20</sup> The Latin names *Galicia et Lodomeria* were later applied [in the XIX c.] to the Austrian partition of Poland.

in 1210, with victories from the Baltic to the Volga river. He conquered many territories for Novgorod, but he himself had to satisfy himself only with the role of a hired condottiere.

In Novgorod even the former equal rights of the princes was abolished. Neither the prince nor his wife, relatives or troopers who came with him were allowed to own land in the Novgorod realm. Governance passed onto a *посадник* [mayor] who was elected by a general rally and since 1218 every prince had to promise under oath a Novgorod *habeas corpus*: *без вины мужа не лишити* [without guilt a man cannot be deprived of freedom]. The insignificance of the princely authority can be judged from the fact that after the departure of Mstislav the Bold Novgorod had a dozen princes in the years 1218-1230, on average, a new one every year. Thus when there were no prospects of obtaining some principedom in the Chud region or in Zalesye after Vsevolod, Mstislav the Bold started to look for something else and so he responded willingly to a call from Halych in 1218. Here he began by marrying the daughter of the main *Khan* of the Cumans, so as to have their assistance against the constantly rebelling “land *bo-yars*” (whose leader had a purely Polish name Żeliszław).

The Mongolian steppe nomads (Cumans, Torkil, Berendei, Black Klobuks) began receiving baptism. This meant that they attached to their former deities three new ones: Christ, the Mother of God and St. Nicholas. Thus in the South a new dual faith appeared and this was a great cultural calamity, the more so since the Cumans had factual political hegemony over a major part of Southern Ruthenia. Elements of some new Mongolian-Slav culture appeared in the eastern Slav lands: the cult of physical force that would degenerate into brutality, and the predilection for destruction as proof of physical supremacy. Towards the end

of the XII<sup>th</sup> c. Ruthenia became barbaric. Destructiveness attained monstrous dimensions, with the burning of conquered towns, the deportations of the population, the capturing of women and children that were then sold as slaves etc. etc. Unfortunately in this period there was absolutely no Byzantine influence (and the Byzantine culture at the time was by no means dead!).

With such a state of affairs the “entire Rostov land” disintegrated into separate districts held by the numerous progeny of the Big Nest of Vsevolod. The rulers in Rostov, Vladimir on Klyazma and Suzdal attentively continued to call themselves “Grand Princes”, but this was only an empty title. Also the princes of Kiev then called themselves “Grand Princes” even though their influence had fallen to the weakest level. The princes of Smolensk and Halych did not want to be any different. Novgorod the Great was the last to adopt the title of Grand Prince (in 1272). Thus Ruthenia had a swarm of “Grand Princes” precisely in a period when not one of them dreamt about political hegemony throughout the Ruthenia of the Rurikids.

After the not very long life of the oldest Vsevolodovich, Konstantin († 1219), his younger brother, George of Vladimir and Suzdal managed to gather the forces of almost the whole of the partitioned Zalesye for a new expedition against the Bulgars the consequence of which was the fortification of the mouth of the Oka and the establishment of Nizhny Novgorod (1221). Those who completed in this way the demarcation of the transverse route across Ruthenia did not do this so as to unite Southern and Northern Ruthenia, but in fact, they did this against Southern Ruthenia and against the Vyatka of Novgorod. Throughout Ruthenia there was no sign of any general political thought.

Thus the eastern Slav lands were in the process of splintering: the Western part gravitated to Poland; in the Middle part Lithuania was wedging in; the North, being divided by the antagonism between Novgorod and Zalesye lost all links with the South; and the South succumbed to the power of the Mongolian nomads.

## **VI. The Tartar invasion and division of the eastern Slav lands (1224-1263).**

Such was the state of the eastern Slav lands when in 1224 the Tatar onslaught coming from Asia fell upon them. This time, they were not attacked by savage hordes, as was previously the case with the coming Pechenegs, Magyars and Cumans. This was a fully regular army whose black and white banners were followed by a strictly organized bureaucracy.

In Asia in the past and even today there were never any nations that would be united together historically on the basis of affinity in language. Asia knows only political conglomerates that are ethnographically mixed and gathered together in the name of some religious or economic slogan.

In central Asia the primary mode of the struggle for existence was war with all the consequences that this entailed. The European condottiere practice was trivial in comparison with the Asiatic. One such military entrepreneur of the XII<sup>th</sup> c., Yesugei Baghatur, became a ruler, i.e. a *Khagan*, and his son Temujin since 1220 was a *Khagan* of all *Khagans*, or *Genghiskhagan* which was shortened to Genghis Khan. He ruled over 45 different peoples that were organized in military fashion. In 1215 he conquered Peking and around the year 1220 he dominated Asia all

the way from Korea to Turkestan. Whoever did not want to submit to the stern rule of his state administration, whoever preferred to remain a nomad as before, fled westwards onto the steppes extending from the lower Volga to the Don, onto the so called Kipchak. Such free-men were called by the Turkish term *Khazaks* [Cossacks].

These Kipchak Cossack freedom was about to be terminated. When the expedition onto the extensive, unmeasured “meadows” of the Kipchak was announced, there was much enthusiasm among the pastoral tribes leading a nomadic life there. Since they lived on the meadows and steppes they were referred to as the “steppe people” – *Tatir* or *Tatar*. The army of Genghis Khan was filled with so many tribes of the steppe Tatars that they marked the army with their stamp and gave it a name.

The program of uniting all the Mongolian-Turanian peoples was set. Ruthenia was not part of the plans of Temujin, but the Ruthenian princes provoked the Tartars. Mstislav the Bold organized help for his Cuman father-in-law. There had never been so much enthusiasm and bellicose spirit in Southern Ruthenia as this time in the defence of the Cumans. The princes of Kiev, Chernigov, Pinsk, and Volhynia united under the leadership of the Halych prince went out onto the steppes, but they suffered a terrible defeat on river Kalka on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1224. They were chased out only as far as the Dnieper river. The Mongolian commander Subutai had been instructed to conquer Kipchak and not Ruthenia. Thus he did not cross the Dnieper.

The Cumans in part surrendered and another part of them fled by the traditional steppe route to Hungary so as to join their kin, the Magyars and their close brothers, the savage Hungarian

Cumans. This flight served as a guide for the learned high chancellery of the Genghis Khan, indicating that in the far West there were kin peoples that also were worthy of being (and should be) included in the state of Genghis Khan. From that moment a Mongolian expedition to Hungary was only a question of time.

Meanwhile a new peril appeared endangering the eastern Slav lands from the North. Fearing the ever more successful attacks of Mindaugas [of Lithuania] they invited “The Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem” [Commonly known as the Teutonic Order] to Livonia. These were the same Teutonic Knights whom Konrad of Mazovia had brought onto the lower Vistula in 1226. The Livonian “Brothers of the Sword” being defeated by Mindaugas in 1236, dissolved their own Order and all joined the Teutonic Knights. This happened in 1237. From this moment the “Order” began the establishment of a German state along the Baltic coast, extending from the western limits of Polish Pomerania to the Neva river and lake Ilmen.

In the same year 1237, Batu, the ruler of Kipchak working on behalf of the Genghis Khan, continued his efforts to unite all the kin tribes. This time their expedition was directed onto the lands of the Bulgars (the eastern watershed of the Volga) and further on to Ugro-Finnish territory. Its western part had a Slav population, and so the Tartar expeditions again encountered the Rurikids. Zalesye was ruined completely. But the expedition of 1237 and 1238 did not touch in the least the native Slav lands in the north. The Tartars went as far as Torzhok to the very point of ethnographic border with the Ugro-Finns and from there they suddenly turned south (aiming for the Caspian Sea).

Revenge for the expedition of Mstislav the Bold was to come in 1241, when the plans for the occupation of Hungary were worked out. (This was tied with the need of subduing Poland.) [The Mongolians defeated the Poles at Legnica in 1241.]

Meanwhile Mstislav the Bold terminated his conflict with the Hungarians in the same way as Leszek the White did before him; he married his daughter to Coloman's brother Andrew and the new couple was given Halych in 1227. In the meantime, Daniel the son of Roman had come of age in his Volhynian Vladimir and struggled to obtain his father's domain. After being expelled from Halych twice, he finally occupied it for good in 1230. He also occupied Podolia, parts of the watershed of Pina, Drogobuzh and Luck, and in 1240 he became also the prince of Kiev. In this way for the first time the whole of Southern Ruthenia was united under one rule<sup>21</sup>.

This was of no significance in the face of Tartar superiority. In that very year 1240 they sacked Kiev burning it to the ground and in December 1240 only charred remains were left of Halych itself.

The Teutonic Knights had the obligation to defend Christendom against the heathen Tartars. Instead they plundered Catholic Poland and as regards the eastern "orthodoxy" they formulated and propagated in Europe the opinion that the schism was equivalent to paganism. Their "crusades" along the Baltic

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel is erroneously considered to be the founder of Chełm. Chełm was an old Polish settlement when Daniel took it over and fortified it in 1233. Chełm belongs to the same Polish line of settlements (on the empty lands between the Yotvingians and Ruthenia) as Krasnystaw (two miles away) and Łuków, to the north of which was the land of the Yotvingians.

were directed not only against the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians but even more so against the northern possessions of Novgorod. In the year of the Mongolian invasion, 1240, the Teutonic Knights began a number of incursions in the direction of Pskov and simultaneously they have encouraged the King of Sweden to participate in this “crusade”.

Alexander of Pereyaslav (from the line of the Big Nest) had at that time the office of the prince in Novgorod the Great. He did not wait for the enemies to unite. In July 15th 1240 he beat the Swedes on the Neva river, who were already moving onto the sub-fort Ladoga, thereby gaining the surname Nevsky. He followed up this victory with another one over the Teutonic Knights on the “icy battlefield”, on the frozen lake Chud on April 5th 1242.

This victorious prince never thought of sending assistance to his Rurikid relatives who were attacked by the Tartars. When shortly afterwards he encountered them he submitted excessively to the Khan administration. He became a ready tool in the hands of the Tartars to such an extent that he even wanted to hand over Novgorod the Great to them.

Thus Southern and Zalesye Ruthenia found themselves under Tartar rule. The whole country west of the Dnieper river as far as the upper Bug river was incorporated directly into Kipchak and there were no longer any Rurikids there. In other places they became governors ruling in the name of the Khan of Kipczak and being personally responsible for the collection of tributes from their principdoms. One of the princes of Zalesye and the trans-Dnieper regions was appointed above them all as their senior, the Grand Prince of the Khan, as the Khan’s general plenipotentiary

and tax collector. This position was quite remunerative. Thus the Rurikids were intriguing against one another at the Khan's court so as to obtain the “ярлык” [certificate] (that was an honorary robe in Chinese fashion).

The main concern of the Mongolian administration was the army and the treasury. The more a prince provided revenue for the Khan, the more he was an extortioner in his own principality and the more he was secure in his own rule, whereas the Grand Prince had to change into an oppressor of all the lower princes. During the time of the Tartar domination, the statehood was maintained through the oppression of society and for this reason the Tartar superiority over Ruthenia was a historical calamity. There is no doubt that it was only the Tartar system that introduced for the first time a state administration in Ruthenia. Thus the loose rule of the Rurikids was transformed into some kind of a state, but the divergence of society and state that had existed till then changed into an outright opposition.

As a result of the Tartar oppression the population on the right side of the Dnieper fled westwards, in the only possible direction, that is, to the Halych principality. It was only then that the so called eastern Galicia acquired a Ruthenian population, not only in the towns but also in the villages, as a rural population. The force of the emigration was so powerful that it went even further, to northern Hungary.

This was the genesis of “Red Ruthenia” and “Hungarian Ruthenia”<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> In Ruthenian sources there is nothing about their presence in Hungary. Hungarian sources mention them sporadically only since the XIII<sup>th</sup> c.

Daniel of Halych sought refuge from the Tartar invasion in Hungary and then in Mazovia. On his return he found himself in between the Tartar yoke and the expansiveness of Mindaugas who by now became his direct neighbour. He hoped for an alliance with Zalesye against Lithuania, but was soon disappointed. The Big Nest in the meantime disintegrated into seven prince-doms, all embroiled in mutual domestic warfare. These wars were initiated by the fourth son of Yaroslav Vsevoldovich, Michael the Brave, **the first prince of Moscow** (1248), the owner of the eighth ranking province of Zalesye<sup>23</sup>.

Meanwhile Daniel, having been expelled again by the *bo-yars* in 1250, went to [the Khan] Batu manifesting his servility, and then with his help returned to Halych. Having the support of the Khan he initiated a further war against Mindaugas. But suddenly in 1250 the baptism of Mindaugas changed the whole situation in Eastern Europe. The Catholic coronation of Mindaugas in 1253 generated a complete change of Daniel's policy. He also crowned himself in Drohiczyn as the King of Ruthenia. He received the crown **together with Church union** from the hands of a papal legate and announced a crusade against the Tartars.

The idea of trying luck against the Tartars came to Daniel as he saw the massive immigration from the east. He could expect that the population in the area between the Zbruch river and Kiev

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<sup>23</sup> Michael tried to subordinate Vladimir on Klyazma to Moscow. However, he was killed in that year 1248 when he was assisting Novgorod against the Lithuanians. This episode passed without an echo, and since there was no prince who would draw attention to Moscow by his own personal values, the chronicles did not even notice its existence. Thus for the next few decades we know nothing about Moscow. Probably the Moscow principdom passed onto Vasily of Kostroma, the younger brother of Michael.. It is possible that Vasily held both these principdoms (separated by the Suzdal one) until his death in 1276.

would rebel against the Tartar *baskaks* [Mongolian functionaries] and he would again unite the whole of Southern Ruthenia in his hands. That these were his plans is indicated by the fact that he transferred his capital to Chełm and fortified the trading centre on river Poltva against the Tartars. It was changed into a fort and given to Daniel's son, Leo, being at the same elevated to the rank of a principedom (Lviv). But the crusade promised by the Church failed, there was no uprising against the *baskaks* and when Daniel was dying in 1263, the *baskaks* were operating openly also in the Halych principedom.

At the same time Ruthenia was becoming more and more economically dependent on the Kipchak khanate. New outlets for trade had to be found in the westerly direction, but this became impossible due to the conflict between the two fractions of Northern Ruthenia. The question of Novgorod became the decisive issue. Unfortunately on the Baltic the supremacy of the Teutonic Knights became more forceful, and finally Ruthenia was cut off from the sea for many centuries. At the same time Lithuania was returning to paganism which was to last for a whole century. The continuing and deepening conflict between Novgorod the Great and Zalesye resulted in the growing influence and hegemony of the Lithuanian dynasty, which was becoming equal to the Tartar one.

This proved decisive for the definitive division of the eastern Slav lands.

Thus around the year 1260 Ruthenia splintered into six parts: Polish-Ruthenia, Lithuanian Ruthenia, Novgorod-Smolensk Ruthenia, Zalesye, directly Tartar Ruthenia, and that of Chernigov. Each of these parts had its own different prospects. **But the eastern Slav lands did not splinter into nations, because the very notion of a nation did not exist in the minds of**

**contemporaries**, nor had anything else happened that would settle the issue whether several nations would develop in the region or whether this whole great area would become a single nation.

For the West the eastern Slav lands were a geographic term, a plethora of countries whose rulers were *reges* [kings of] *Russiae* (*Rusciae*), but also *reges Ruthenorum*. **Both these terms *Russia* and *Rutheni* are known to sources prior to the Mongolian invasion and both were equally employed to cover all of Ruthenia, both South and North.**

The Slavs themselves did not initially consider the Zalesye as part of Ruthenia, but this did not last for long and finally the dynastic political meaning of the term prevailed and was maintained with strict consequence. Ruthenia was referred to wherever there were Rurikids.

## **Part II.**

### **The Grand Duchy of Moscow (1263-1449)**



## VII. Voluntary confirmation of bondage (1263-1319).

The Asiatic universal state began to fall apart from the year 1260 and this was so for religious reasons, when Buddhism, Islam and Christianity (various Nestorian sects) started to combat one another<sup>24</sup>. Some of the Genghis Khans were openly baptized (e.g. Nigudar, i.e. Nicholas and Uldzhait) before 1295 and so also were some of the Khans of Kipchak (e.g. Sartaq, son of Batu). In Kipchak Nestorianism was not differentiated from the Greek-Slav Orthodoxy. Oriental sources described Ruthenia as being plain and simply Nestorian. Generally speaking, in the East Buddhism won, and in the West Islam.

The Kipchak also split into the Muslim “Golden Horde” on the Volga, and the “Khanate of the Nogai”, the defenders of the *yasak*, that is, of the pure Mongolian tradition. The second group formed the Nogai Hordes between the Black and Caspian seas.

Around the year 1280 practically there was no longer any Genghis Khanate. In the smaller state organisms the earlier military prowess weakened and the learned Chinese administration disappeared. The *baskaks* become simple adventurers who were given some province by the Khan’s court as a spoil on which they were to enrich themselves. The administration of the Kipchak was based on all possible plagues of misgovernment. The Tartars were becoming savage. Also the whole of Ruthenia under their rule

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<sup>24</sup> Asian Christians favoured the conquests of the Genghis Khans seeing in their Empire protection against Muslim domination. In the army of Genghis Khan, Nestorians had separate „tumens” (divisions). They fought visibly at Legnica (1241), because the sources mention a banner with the diagonal cross of St. Andrew .

was becoming ever more ferocious, particularly since the Tartar blood was mixing with the Slav since the XIII<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>25</sup>

The multifarious decline of the Khanate provided opportunity for resistance against this power, which until recently was unconquerable. The Tartars failed to combat Lithuania both in 1274 and in 1277 (when they were supported by Leo of Halych). In 1282 both Hordes tried an expedition onto Hungary, but they were defeated decidedly in the Carpathian passes. The invasion of Poland in 1287/8 reached even Sieradz (the front guard of the army was composed of Leo and Mstislav, sons of Daniel), but this was only to gather captives and run off with them as quickly as possible. When for a fourth time they attacked Poland during the 1293/4 winter, they failed to reach beyond Sandomierz, and this was their last incursion. All these attacks were only expeditions for spoils. They lost the capacity to rule over occupied foreign lands. The Tartars restricted themselves to Ruthenia, because there they found no resistance and even more, they found allies inviting their assistance in conflicts against relatives and neighbours.

Thus Ruthenia was tightening the bonds of its captivity voluntarily. Whenever a Rurikid did not obtain a “ярлык” [yarlyk, a certificate] from one of the Hordes, he went to the other Horde. There was no hope of any solidarity among the princes against the Khan. The dynasty was composed of a loose gathering of personal enemies trying to obtain the certificate for themselves at the other’s expense. They abolished the principle of primogeniture and they themselves led the way to the rule that the position of the Grand Prince may be given to whomever according to the good pleasure of the Khan. This bad example began from Yaroslav Yaroslavich of Tver, the youngest

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<sup>25</sup> Tartar women at the time had complete liberty and were not restricted by any harem rules.

brother of Alexander Nevsky. Through intrigues he managed to obtain the certificate from the Horde for himself against his older brother Andrew, the head of the Big Nest. From such behaviour the principle had to develop that every prince must have a certificate for his own principedom. Thus the will of the Khan was to determine who was to fill the position of the prince of any province.

The certificate for the Grand Prince brought a premium in that he managed the Tartar tribute and besides, he had the proceeds from Vladimir on Klyazma. The Khan never nominated any prince of Vladimir and there was no such thing as a “Grand Duchy of Vladimir”. It was only the people of Vladimir who devised a simple way of maintaining the semblance of primacy through the simple method of handing over the fort to whoever obtained the grand “*ярлык*” [certificate]. Thus the burgers of Vladimir increased even more the captive relationship of their leaders towards the Horde. In practice Vladimir on Klyazma had no political influence and not a single of its grand princes in the years 1264-1327 ever resided in the town.

What Yaroslav Yaroslavich did to his elder brother, he experienced himself from his younger brother, Vasily of Kostroma.

In 1270 a rebellion against Yaroslav broke out. The prince waited for assistance promised from the Khan, but in the meantime the Khan changed his mind. The Novgorod people rich in gold managed to obtain the favour of the Khan and it was Vasily of Kostroma who led the the delegation to the court of the Khan in Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde. The Khan promised the Novgorod people unlimited freedom to conduct trade throughout that part of Ruthenia that was under Tartar domination, and so

also in the Tver principedom. Thus Yaroslav lost the right of restricting trade, but in the same process Novgorod the Great accepted Tartar supremacy. In the contract signed with Yaroslav in that year 1270, the Novgorodians spelled out clearly that freedom of trade would be allowed them *no цареѳе грамоте* [following the Tsar's charter]. **It was the Khan of Sarai who was the Tsar.**

The Orthodox Church itself was deepening the bonds of captivity. Metropolitan Cyril (1249-1281), the former chancellor of Daniel in Halych, based the progress of the Church on the Khan's favour. At the Khan's court a rivalry between the ecclesiastic and lay authority ensued. The Khan gave the Church full freedom from taxes and tributes as well as judiciary power over the entire population in matters concerning family and inheritance laws and also jurisdiction over all issues concerning the people of the Church, i.e. not only the clergy, but also the lay people living on Church property. Cyril himself tried to obtain a "*ярлык*" [certificate], and he received it and accepted it in 1279. Since then it was required of all metropolitans that they be accepted by the Khan and that they pay homage to him personally in exchange for a certificate. Later this was also required of bishops.

The destruction of Kiev, the Metropolitan See by the Tartars made Cyril snatch the vacant Bishopric in Vladimir on Klyazma and he transferred there in 1250. Around the year 1280 the Metropolitan returned to Kiev when the region had been rebuilt, but his excessively servile attitude towards the Horde did not protect against plunder and destruction. Kiev was sacked again in 1299, and then Cyril's successor, Maxim, the Greek decided to settle in Vladimir on Klyazma for good. This provided a justification for six southern eparchies to separate out in 1303 and

they established a distinct Metropolitan See in Halych. The breach between Southern and Northern Ruthenia was complete.

This was a time of complete decline of Southern Ruthenia, when the “Ruthenians” without the support of the princes lost the material basis of their existence. Since they did not possess any land property they preferred to emigrate. Thus they left *en masse*, as whole regiments (under the leadership of Nestorovich and Pleshcheev) and they moved northwards by a route that was well known since the days of Yuri Dolgorukiy. The emigration of the troops finally determined the decline of the towns in the South. Since then Southern Ruthenia became almost entirely a rural region, while the North continued to be a land of towns. The psychology of the region must have been affected negatively by the abandonment by the more resourceful elements, who had some tradition and ambition and furthermore had some proficiency in the military profession. Passivity, an apathetic existence, the lack of fortitude enabling a spirit of enterprise that would improve one’s lot, these for a long time were the sad characteristics of Kievan and Chernigov Ruthenia.

The emigrating military class primarily went towards the principedom of Moscow. Since Vasily of Kostroma was childless, Moscow passed onto Daniel, the youngest son of Alexander Nevsky. Daniel was supposed to expand his dominion thanks to a donation made by Ivan, the last prince of Pereyaslav, but the Khan annulled the prince’s testament. Yury, the son of Daniel recompensed this by the hundredfold. He placed the Moscow line at the head of Zalesye.

Yury Danilovich took over Mozhaisk from the Smolensk principedom in 1303 and he took Kolomna in 1308 from the Ryazan principedom. When he tried to obtain the certificate of the Grand

Prince from the Horde, he had to recede giving the place to Michael Yaroslavich of Tver. This sparked the Tver-Moscow war which was to last for 24 years. Twice Michael besieged Moscow, but with no success. Yury grew in strength because he invited the troops that were migrating from the South. He took onto his pay all the troops regardless of their number and the associated costs not missing any opportunity to increase his armed force.

Relationships in the New Ruthenia in which Moscow was coming to the fore were quite different from the proper Northern Ruthenia, not to mention the Southern one. In Zalesye, the troops were flourishing and the competences of the princes, which were on the verge of extinction in the regions of old Ruthenia, were on the increase. While in Novgorod the prince was forbidden to establish villages (so that he would not settle in too much), in Zalesye the princes were gradually becoming the main landowners. Thus in Zalesye gradually agriculture became the main occupation in rural husbandry, while in old Ruthenia it was still behind with bee keeping, fishing, hunting and the keeping of fowls.

What were the relationships in the Northern Ruthenia itself can be learnt from “the third edition” of the *Russian Truth*, which was from the second half of the XIII<sup>th</sup> c. (but not later than 1284). The disappearance of the clan community is indicated by the ruling requiring that the “court” (i.e. the living quarters with the surrounding area) be passed on unconditionally to the youngest<sup>26</sup> son. In Zalesye the rural settlements had individual features and there never had been any clan communes there<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> [This may be an error. Probably the eldest was meant.]

<sup>27</sup> There were however clan communes in “Red Ruthenia” also at a time when in Southern Ruthenia symptoms of them had been lost long ago. This is also an indication that these lands were Polish.

Northern Ruthenia always differed from the Southern by having *pogosts*. These [trade centres for foreign guests] developed into compact settlements being the main centres of the localities and the very word *pogost* began to mean just a given district.

Throughout the whole of Zalesye the valley of the river Moskva was becoming most Slav as a result of the immigration from the South (and only one of its districts maintained its Mordvin features). But it was this Moscow that became the main bulwark of Tartar supremacy.

No principedom in which the Rurikids were replaced by Lithuanian dynasts fell under Tartar domination. This fact must have given the Lithuanian princes in Ruthenia a sort of an aura that spread sympathy towards them. The idea of shedding the yoke of Tartar captivity appeared only in Polish-Ruthenian territory, during the rule of Andrew of Halych and Leo II of Volhynia (great-grandson of Daniel of Halych). They successfully opposed the Khan and refused to pay the Tartar tribute.

When in 1305 both Metropolitan Sees were simultaneously vacated, the Patriarchate joined them together in the person of a monk Peter who just as the Metropolitan Cyril came from the Halych principedom. The prince of Tver, who as the Khan's Grand Prince, held the residence of the Metropolitan in Vladimir on Klyazma was unfavourable towards Peter and proposed his own candidate for the Metropolitan See. This being so, Yury offered the Metropolitan a residence in Moscow. The change of the location of the Metropolitan residence was soon to have political significance. When Dmitry the Fearsome Eyes, the son of Michael

led at his father's request an army against Moscow, Peter imposed an anathema on him.

Thanks to the support of the Metropolitan, Yury was viewed more favourably by Uzbek, the new Khan of Kipchak (since 1313). He received the sister of the "Tsar"- Khan as his wife. During the next military event she was captured in Tver and died there while in captivity. Yury accused Michael of poisoning the Tartar princess and arranged things so that Michael had to appear personally in Sarai to explain himself. He was killed there in 1319 after barbaric tortures. In this way, Yury of Moscow, the ruler of a second rate principedom, became the Grand Prince with the Khan's certificate for this.

In these days the valley of the river Moskva was becoming an ever more used trade route; it shortened the distance to Ryazan, to Oka and the upper Don. Also it was closer from Moscow to Tver, the main centre for trade in grain than from other Zalesye towns.

Yaroslav of Tver began entrepreneurship and trade on a large scale. When he was appointed prince of Novgorod the Great, he started to conduct business on the extensive Novgorod territory bringing also a large number of *закупы* [*zakups*] to Tver. These were people working on the land or in trade for somebody else who were paid in advance, thus they were borrowers serving out their dues (they were also referred to as "hostages"). In this way a class of people was formed who were personally dependent on the prince and besides there was the danger that the secrets of the Novgorod trade might be disclosed to foreigners. Twice Yaroslav had to disown this economic activity (in 1265 and 1270) and he had to promise that he would disband his "hostages". When he failed to fulfil

his promises, the Novgorod people preferred to call in the Tartar authority to force their prince to comply.

### **VIII. The economic superiority of Moscow (1320-1359).**

Yury was recognised as a Grand Prince by the Khan for only one year, and then Uzbek transferred this dignity onto Dmitry the Fearsome Eyes of Tver. The extent of hatred between these princes was indicated by the fact that when the two of them met at the Khan's court in 1325 they attacked one another and Dmitry killed Yury by his own hand. The severe infringement of the court's etiquette resulted in Dmitry being also killed, but the certificate for Grand Prince remained with Tver. It was given to the brother of the executed, to Alexander Michailovich.

In August 1327 somebody spread a completely baseless rumour among the people of Tver that the Tartars were about to impose Islam by force. Thus the people of Tver were talked into the extermination of their local Tatars in defence of their Orthodoxy. It seems that the Moscow prince, Ivan from Pereyaslav, the last of the living Daniloviches who managed to gather the whole province in his hand, was just waiting for this moment. He immediately presented himself to the Horde and received the prestigious task of leading a punitive expedition against Tver. Also the certificate of the Grand Prince was transferred onto his head.

The chase after Alexander continued for many years. He hid himself from fort to fort, and Uzbek demanded that he be delivered alive. Finally fate caught up with the unhappy prince. He became the second prince of Tver and the eighth of Rurikids to be condemned to death by Uzbek. Such was the triumph of Moscow's Ivan.

He is known as Ivan Kalita (1325-1341). The surname was given to him by his contemporaries because he set up the Moscow dynastic treasury [*калита kalita* means a money purse]. His achievement was the attaining of economic superiority by Moscow without which later there would not have been its political hegemony. He did not think of any “autocratic rule” and had no political plans apart from remaining in the favour of the Khan, so he was ready to ruin any possible rival. Ivan worked towards the twofold increase of the tribute paid by Novgorod the Great to the Tartars. The result of this was that the great city placed itself under the protection of Lithuania in 1332.

This incident was the beginning of the antagonism between Lithuania and Muscovy.

The second historical leader of Lithuania after Mindaugas was Gediminas. He already held the whole of Black Ruthenia and since 1313 Lithuanian supremacy was recognized over the extensive “Grand Duchy” of Smolensk. Since 1321 also Kiev wavered between Gediminas and Uzbek. Also the Patriarchate in Constantinople recognized this state of affairs and from 1316 a separate Metropolitan was appointed for “Lithuanian Ruthenia”. Gediminas brought also into the network of his policies Wolhynia and the Halych principedom, this time through political marriages.

The Halych Rurikids died out in 1324 and their inheritance was taken over by Bolesław of the Mazovian Piast dynasty, the son of a sister of the last Halych prince. She was married to Trojden of Czersk and Sochaczew. In this way the old land of the Lachs returned to Piast rule. This fact was not even noticed by

any of the Ruthenian chronicles! The closest relative and presumed inheritor of Bolesław was the Polish prince Casimir (later the Polish king, Casimir the Great). Gediminas married his daughter Aldona to this Casimir in 1325 and six years later Bolesław himself married a second daughter of Gediminas, Eufemia, known as Ofka. In 1324 Gediminas had married his son Liubartas with Busha, the inheritor of Andrew, the last Rurikid who held Vladimir of Volhynia, Bełz and Chełm.

Thus Gediminas was gathering under his political influence an increasing part of Ruthenia. In the North he was becoming a dangerous rival to the Teutonic Knights claiming Pskov and Watland (a part of the Novgorod realm closest to Livonia). Having offered Novgorod his protection Gediminas was cutting across not only the plans of the Teutonic Knights but also those of Moscow. Ivan stood up against him in the name of the rights of the Khan-tsar of Ruthenia.

In 1339 Ivan Kalita made an expedition against Smolensk in which he was helped by five other Rurikids. This was so as to enforce the Tartar tribute there against Gediminas and in fact after the death of Gediminas Smolensk from 1340 had to pay the Tartar tribute.

Ivan Kalita was fervent in extending the dominion of the Tartars. He adopted the title of the “Grand Prince of the Whole of Ruthenia”. This “Whole Ruthenia” meant only Tartar Ruthenia as distinct from the Lithuanian one, and the title did not imply any native authority but only the authority of the Khan. It was the “Tsar”, the Khan who imposed upon his “whole Ruthenia” his main prince and tax collector. This was a title given as a favour

in Sarai and it was a sign of servitude. In time it was to mean supremacy, but in the days of Ivan Kalita no one dreamt of this.

The testaments of Kalita indicate that he had no intention of making the town of Moscow into the capital of some “autocrat”. He prescribed that the main town was to belong to all his inheritors jointly. (There was a similar joint rule in Tver and Rязan). He wanted to maintain equality amongst his inheritors so much that he carved out the districts in checkboard fashion to ensure equality of benefits, each inheritor receiving more or less an equal (21-26) number of forts and villages.

In the XIV<sup>th</sup> c. in Ruthenia there was no awareness or consciousness of any statehood at all. The forming of some state order was impeded by the notion of land ownership. Since a peasant or a prince had identical and equal rights to own land that had not yet been cultivated by anyone, **the Rurikids were only rivals who were reducing the area of private settlement, but without generating a notion of public property.** The principdoms were private enterprises of people of the princely caste. Within a XIV<sup>th</sup> c. principdom in Ruthenia some state law did not face a private law. It was only the case of the private rights of an individual of the princely caste which encountered identical private rights of other people. Thus in the XIV<sup>th</sup> c. there was no development of public legal relationships, and Ruthenia was receding back to the state of affairs described in the second edition of the *Russian Truth*.

In the neighbouring Lithuania, in the days of Gediminas, a full state law was already in place. It was based on the principle that from among all the dynasts, there was only one, who was the ruler, the monarch, and in the face of his authority no one had any

rights. All people were his slaves and the entire land was his property. Without his permission no one could grant authority to his son or marry a daughter, let alone dispose of the land. The Grand Prince could make use of his relatives, other princes, as his substitutes but there was no mention of hereditary rights in the provinces. The Grand Prince was an autocratic holder of all the provinces and the other princes had no rights in respect to him, but they had duties. For this reason, the Lithuanian state system cannot be compared with the feudal system.

The economic foundation of the Lithuanian dynasty was decidedly different from that of the Rurikids. Basically all the land was the property of the principal ruler of Lithuania, and precisely for this reason there were no private landed properties belonging to the prince. The prince did not have husbandry of his own and he did not need this, because at any time he could dispose freely of all the property of his subjects. As a result, the Lithuanian prince readily leased land and in practice this amounted to the fact that **the Ruthenian dynast took land and the Lithuanian one gave it.**

This was the second reason, apart from freedom from the Tartar yoke, why the Lithuanian dynasts were popular in Ruthenia.

**There was only one exception from this rule, and this was in the Moscow district.**

Among the ravaged principedoms of Zalesye war was offering less and less benefits in the form of spoils. Ever more frequently poverty had to be overcome by the establishment of villages. Social development inadvertently moved the military troops into becoming landowners, and this was against their will.

Initially this was a sort of mobile husbandry that was transferable, semi-nomadic, constantly on new and ever new land. It was only towards the end of the XV<sup>th</sup> c. that it was possible to speak of *boyar* farms in the strict sense of the word, but the beginning was made. This current was well exploited by Ivan Kalita. He was a prime farmer himself. He established more than a hundred villages of his own and he leased them willingly to his troopers, thereby attaching them to himself. According to the old law of Rurik they had the freedom to change their troop, transferring from one prince to another, and thus no one would give them land as property for good. But having a village that was already functioning was worth more than an empty land given by the Lithuanian dynast, and so thanks to this, “service” in Moscow could be more profitable than in Lithuania.

This was a much better way of subjecting people in a personal dependency that was more solid than the *закладничество* [loss of personal freedom but exemption from taxes to the state - hostages] practiced by the Tver princes. Even in this Ivan proved more efficient than what was done in Tver, because he introduced the *заклады* [hostage state, mortgage] on such a large scale that ultimately they became a source of princely supremacy over the smaller princes and this was done on the basis of the trade law.

Kalita, hardly anybody ever received a more appropriate surname, became the banker of smaller princes by giving them loans to be paid back by the *заклад* [mortgage] through princely service. In this way he was taking the neighbouring princely provinces partly in lease, and partly buying them out. If the *закладничество* always led to chaos, all the more so this was the case when it was applied among people of the princely caste and in reference to their princely rights! But this was an issue that had

just been settled and appropriately so. In 1327, in an agreement between Novgorod the Great and prince Alexander of Tver, it was finally decided that a distinction would be made between property rights and princely-state authority. Property over the *заклады* [mortgages] was recognized without the recognition of political dominion and thus all extraterritoriality (if I may use the modern term) was excluded<sup>28</sup>. But Kalita in the same period was complicating the issue once more by completely muddling the legal notions and as a result the whole public life of Northern Ruthenia. This was by his invention of the practice of trading in princely rights.

After the death of Ivan Kalita (1341), his eldest son Simeon (1340-1353) obtained the certificate of Grand Prince over the “whole Tartar Ruthenia”. He was given the name Proud by the monastic chronicle writers because of his predilection for costly buildings. The extent to which the dependence on the Horde was constantly increasing is indicated by the fact that Ivan Kalita during his 20 year rule was in Sarai only three times, whereas his son during 12 years was as many as five times there. No one thought of shedding the Tartar supremacy and instead Tartar assistance was sought against Lithuania.

The main concern of Simeon the Proud and the thought of his brother and successor Ivan Ivanovich (1353-1359) was how to halt the expansion of Lithuania.

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<sup>28</sup> The contract stipulated the following conditions: the prince would hold on to the villages that he bought in the Novgorod territory, but he was not to perform any judiciary role over them nor would he send any of his courtiers there to execute princely authority; furthermore, in the future he was not to take „either people or land in the Novgorod realm”.

In the meantime however Algirdas, the successor of Gediminas, not only brought the Smolensk land back under Lithuanian supremacy, but also extended it over the Seversk and Chernigov lands in 1356. He also ensured that there would be a distinct Lithuanian Metropolitan See besides the original one in Kiev. The Kievan see at the time was composed of Zalesye and only Kiev itself.

Meanwhile the Halych Metropolitan See had ceased to exist, but soon it was to be re-established. After the death of Bolesław Trojdenovich (1340) the Polish king Casimir the Great took over the ancient land of the Lachs because he was the closest relative and inheritor of the deceased. Bolesław had recognized the supremacy of Uzbeg, but Casimir brought full liberation from the Tartar yoke. Bolesław had conflicts with the Orthodox Church, while Casimir was the first monarch ever in Europe to proclaim religious tolerance and it was since his time that the final and complete organization of the Church hierarchy in the Halych province and Volhynia took place.

Casimir the Great had to deal with Hungarian and Lithuanian claims to these lands. Not being able to manage them both at once, he made a deal with Louis of Hungary against Lithuania. In this manner Lithuania, pressed increasingly by the Teutonic Knights in the North, found itself having a new rival in the South, namely Poland. Profiting from this Ivan Lvovich tried to confront Algirdas. The result however was negative and the victorious Algirdas came up with a program of occupying the whole of Ruthenia and the complete elimination of the Rurikids everywhere.

## **IX. The consolidation of Moscow in its distinctiveness (1360-1380).**

The program of Algirdas that the whole of Ruthenia was to be Lithuanian year by year was coming closer to execution. Already all his sons from his first marriage were baptized in Orthodoxy and given regional principedoms in Ruthenia. Beginning from 1362 the Kiev land and the whole of Podolia were under Lithuania. This expansion was not dangerous for the Ruthenian tongue; in fact it was thanks to the Lithuanian dynasts that the Ruthenian custom, together with the Ruthenian writings and Ruthenian notions as regards private law were being promoted in Lithuania. There was no Ruthenian public law and this was tied to the fact that there was no indigenous Ruthenian statehood. A society with a definitively higher culture, as was Ruthenia in respect to Lithuania, for over a hundred years was succumbing to the pressure of a statehood that had a lower culture and this was because as regards state organization it was at a lower level than Lithuania. Lithuania at least had a dynastic law which enabled the organization of a state. Only one of the Gediminas progeny was the monarch being entitled to conduct policies as the leading Grand Prince and all the other princes in slave-manner were dependent on his favour and disfavour.

Following the example of Lithuania, Metropolitan Alexius Pleshcheev (1354-1378) began formulating a public law in Moscow, the only one in Ruthenia. He was the son of one of the leaders of the troops that migrated from the Kiev land. He was chosen by Ivan Kalita to be the Metropolitan. He was his god-child, thus according to the customs of the time he was a member of the family, as if, a member of the dynasty. Ivan Ivanovich made him the guardian of his 9-years old son Dmitry (Donskoy) as well as of his 6-

year old nephew Vladimir of Serpukhov (born after the death of his father Andrei, the brother of Simeon the Proud). As a result, two Moscow lines developed and continued until the second half of the XV<sup>th</sup> c. But thanks to Alexius, externally the political unity of the whole area was maintained and thus the statehood of Muscovy was formed. Metropolitan Alexius worked out a legal statute, written in 1362 in the form an official *dogovor* (agreement), made between the 9-year old Vladimir and the 12-year old Dmitry. Dmitry as the Grand Prince of Moscow was given state jurisdiction over Vladimir of Serpukhov whose principedom was provincial and dependent upon Muscovy. Vladimir was deprived of the right to conduct wars independently and the obligation was imposed on him to supply assistance to every war expedition that Dmitry might make. Nine years later, in 1371, when the contracting sides were 18 and 21 years old, a second agreement was made. The rule of primogeniture was established. The Serpukhov prince accepted to be subservient not only to Dmitry (Donskoy) but also to his eventual eldest son, and he promised never to apply to the Khan for a Grand Prince's certificate against the sons of Dmitry.

Thus Metropolitan Alexius was setting the foundations of Muscovy statehood and this in most unfavourable conditions. During his time Moscow was deprived of the Khan's certificate for Grand Principedom twice. In 1359 the Khan transferred his favour to the Suzdal line, not without some inspiration from Algirdas. It was then that Vladimir on Klyazma was elevated against Moscow, making of it the residence of the Grand Prince of "the whole of Ruthenia"<sup>29</sup>, (Dmitry Konstantinovich of Suzdal), and

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<sup>29</sup> In this way, and only in this moment, the „Grand Principedom of Vladimir” was established. By now it was the sixth „Grand Principedom” in Zalesye. These were Rostov, Suzdal (Nizhny Novgorod), Tver, Ryazan, Moscow and now Vladimir on the Klyazma.

the Metropolitan was ordered to move there as to his proper canonical see. Alexius did not obey. In 1362 he brought into play the treasury left behind by Kalita and as a result "Moscow regained the privilege of being the Khan's tax collector". The Moscow *boyars* did not stint their monies for the cause. For the first time in Ruthenia there appeared a common interest of the dynasty and society. The *boyars* understood that the Grand Prince's certificate while enriching the prince also increased their possibility of benefiting from the Prince's favour.

In 1367 Algirdas turned against Moscow. In the following year he was victorious on the river Trosna and started to besiege Moscow. After only three days he stepped back, not being sure of the loyalty of his regiments from the "Lithuanian Ruthenia", because Alexius threw an anathema on the princes of Smolensk and Tver who helped Algirdas. Also in 1370 a second siege failed.

From this moment Algirdas all the more so tried to ensure that Lithuanian Ruthenia would not be dependent on the Church in Moscow, and so that it would have its own Metropolitan. Just as Alexius in Sarai, so Algirdas did not spare his funds in Constantinople. Cyprian, the legate sent by the Patriarchate, who was a Serb, not only recognized the need for a distinct Lithuanian Metropolitan See, but he even recommended the extension of its frontiers so that the see of Kiev (in fact the Moscow one) would be restricted only to Moscow, Ryazan and Suzdal, and this only for the lifetime of Alexius after whom there be no successor. And what would Moscow be without a Metropolitan?

The destructive sentence against Moscow was being written with ever greater harshness. In 1375 Moscow was again deprived of the certificate to have a Grand Prince, and the title this

time was transferred to Tver. But this was the breaking point. Michael Alexandrovich of Tver was soundly defeated and that same year, he had to establish a relationship with Moscow that was identical to what was given to Serpukhov in 1371. This peace accord is in fact the foundation stone of the hegemony of Moscow in Zalesye.

Moscow grew in strength under the regency of its Metropolitan. Thanks to the occupation of Starodub and Galich in 1363, it acquired control over the valley of the Klyazma. On the basis of its economic superiority and supported by the state law modelled on the Lithuanian, Muscovy of Metropolitan Alexius was able to resist the Lithuanian expansion.

Alexius was also the creator of the principle of Tartar legitimacy, which became the guideline for the policy of Muscovy.

The Tartars with the growth of their population were expanding their encampments. In the mid XIV<sup>th</sup> c. they had their nomadic settlements in all the regions from the river Oka to Crimea, from the river Don to the Aral sea. This was accompanied with political decentralization. Around 1360 there were already nine Hordes and nine Khans – “little tsars” as the Ruthenian chronicles referred to them. Alexius introduced the principle that only the Khan of Sarai was to be considered the legitimate Tsar. This legitimization meant that in the case of struggles with the other Hordes, they were considered as rebellious against Sarai. And these new Hordes were coming closer to Zalesye encroaching upon lands that decidedly were not the steppes. There was the danger that the agricultural population from among the Mordvins and Bulgars might in the future be enslaved, working for the Tartars, and in this way the Bulgarian trade would be completely lost.

The northern Hordes were already forbidding direct contacts between the traders in Ruthenia and the Volga Bulgars! A confrontation was inevitable because these Hordes were frequently suffering poverty, to which they reacted on a short term basis by invasions, plunder and the taking of captives.

Happily the princes of Ryazan made a good beginning in 1365 and they expelled the Horde that was ravaging their region. Those of Suzdal took their example in 1367 and in 1370 they bought in Sarai “an order” to intervene in the Bulgar-Tartar issues in the name of the Tsar-Khan. Sarai legitimacy helped in time the expansion of the trading sphere of Ruthenia. When in 1374 the Don [Golden] Horde imposed a tribute upon Nizhny Novgorod, the princes of Suzdal refused to pay it and they defended themselves successfully. In the winter of 1375/6 the sphere of Ruthenian trade reached for the first time as far as Kazan. The prince of Nizhny Novgorod (Dmitry Konstantinovich) introduced a customs duty in Kazan and located his customs officers there.

For a long time Moscow kept a distance from all of this. It was only in 1377 that Metropolitan Alexius decided to send also the troops of Moscow to actions against the Tartars. Moscow was not successful at the time, but in 1378 Dmitri of Moscow won a major victory over Mamai of the Don [Golden] Horde on the river Vozha, when the Tartars were returning after having burnt down completely Nizhny Novgorod.

This was shortly after the death of the Metropolitan who had steered the politics of Muscovy till the end of his days, alongside the prince who in 1378 was already 28 years old. Alexius died in February having survived Algirdas by less than a year.

These two exceptional statesmen were opponents worthy of one another. They ensured that Lithuania and Zalesye did not merge into one entity. Alexius dreamt of shedding the Tartar supremacy. The easiest way would have been to submit Zalesye to Algirdas, but Alexius preferred Tartar supremacy than Lithuanian. He treated the opposition against Lithuania as of more importance than the shedding of the Tartar yoke over Zalesye. Also Algirdas dreamt of ruling over the whole of Ruthenia and he had at hand a sure way of attaining this, through the adoption of Orthodoxy. This was after all the faith of all his sons from his first marriage. Had he become Orthodox, he would have been the prime lord in the Orthodox Church after the Byzantine Emperor and undoubtedly it would be he who would establish Metropolitan Sees. Algirdas however stopped short on this route and turned back. Not one son from his second marriage was baptized and Algirdas himself preferred to retreat from Moscow without benefits rather than adopt Christianity in the eastern rite.

Had Algirdas occupied Zalesye, what then would have become of Lithuania in respect to the magnitude of Ruthenia? And would Lithuania be ever able to become Roman-Catholic, as it did, shortly afterwards, in just nine years after his death?

The eldest son of Algirdas, Andrei of Polotsk, who was baptized in Orthodoxy, expected to become his successor as the Grand Prince. Algirdas however assigned Lithuania proper to his unbaptized sons from his second marriage passing on his monarchical authority to the oldest one of them, Jagiełło. Andrei tried to expel Jagiełło from Vilnius and in 1379 he allied with the Moscow Dmitri offering him for this Briansk in eastern Lithuanian Ruthenia. Jagiełło, searching for ways of defending himself from Moscow used for this purpose the hostility of Mamai who at that time declared himself to be the Khan of the Don [Golden] Horde.

Mamai offered Moscow a lowering of the tribute provided that his supremacy be accepted, but he met with a refusal, because Dmitri held onto the legitimism of Sarai. Then Jagiełło encouraged Mamai to make a second expedition against Moscow offering an alliance and assistance.

Dmitri went out to battle, but unexpectedly he started to negotiate and in a period of two weeks the size of the tribute was agreed to. Then suddenly Mamai stopped the negotiations, because 1<sup>st</sup> September came and this was the day when Jagiełło was to arrive with assistance. Jagiełło from the very beginning had no intention of fulfilling the agreement. Whoever wanted to rule over Ruthenian Metropolitan See could not fight on the side of the unfaithful against the Orthodox. Whoever planned to rule over the whole of Ruthenia could not allow himself to be considered a crook and risk the desertion of the troops of Lithuanian Ruthenia. In vain, Mamai waited for a whole week. On September 8<sup>th</sup> 1380 he had to accept battle on the Kulikovo Field on the Don and ... he was beaten. As a result of the victory Dmitri was named Donskoy.

Soon after the battle the Grand Prince of Ryazan, Oleg, who before the battle had been an ally of Jagiełło, declared himself a subject of Dmitri Donskoy on equal terms as the prince of Serpukhov (and this was clearly spelled out in the agreement). What is more important, Cyprian, who had been appointed by the Patriarchate [of Constantinople] as the successor of Alexius, changed to the side of the victor declaring himself the only Metropolitan of the whole of Ruthenia. Profiting from the decision of the patriarchate, that Kiev was no longer to be subject to the Metropolitans of “Small Ruthenia and Lithuania”, but only to the Metropolitan of “Kiev and Great Ruthenia”, Cyprian in this way

added to the military victory of Dmitri a more valuable ecclesiastical victory.

Thus the statehood of Muscovy was expanding, and even though two years later there was to be again an unfavourable turn of events and after a further four an even more severe catastrophe in which the edifice of Metropolitan Alexius was crashing, the foundations remained and survived everything. On them the edifice would be again rebuilt several times, always according to the old plans. That is why these years, 1360-1380, when the foundations of the distinctiveness of Muscovy and its later hegemony were laid, have to be individuated as a special historical period even though it lasted only 20 years.

## **X. The hoped-for Vilnius Tsardom (1380-1408).**

Several months after the Kulikovo Field victory, the whole of Kipchak was conquered by a new potentate in the long line of Asiatic universal monarchs. This was Timur-lang, referred to in Western sources as Tamerlane. His rule in contrast to the tolerant Temujin was based on the religious fanaticism of Shiite Islam. He organized an oriental despotism with a state religion and the obligation to exterminate all those who do not wish to follow it and with the principle that the personal will of the ruler was the only law. He also was the originator of the social system based on camp-court ranks, the 12 *чиньы* [ranks] into which the entire life, not only the public was forced. Who did not have a *чинь* [rank] was outside the society.

Tokhtamysh, the Khan of the whole of Kipchak in the name of the conqueror, completely forbade Ruthenia to have any trade dealings in the Volga Bulgaria and with the Bulgars. The

complications that this brought about led to an invasion of Zalesye in 1382. At one stroke all the foundations and beginnings of Muscovy statehood crashed and Moscow itself suffered massive slaughter. Oleg of Ryazan occupied Kolomna. The Metropolitan Cyril returned to Kiev and the certificate of Grand Prince was almost transferred to Tver.

The situation became all the more critical for Moscow because in this moment Jagiełło decided to receive baptism in the Eastern Church. Next to a schismatic Vilnius, Moscow would have been only a subsidiary principedom.

Suddenly however a radical change took place. Lithuania accepted baptism but in Catholicism, in the Western Church. The genesis of this great historical move lies in the issues of Halych Ruthenia, the old land of the Lachs [Poles].

Casimir the Great had made out of Halych Ruthenia an axis of Polish economic policies, as its link towards trade with the East. In order to maintain this trade route an agreement was made with Hungary against the incursions of Lithuania. It is only for this reason that Louis of Hungary this veritable “father-in-law” of the Polish Crown, obtained succession after Casimir the Great. In his name Poland was ruled for several years (1372-1378) by a Germanized Piast from Silesia, Vladislaus of Opole. He based the public life on feudal law, organized the Catholic hierarchy and abolished the Orthodox hierarchy. When in 1378 Louis appointed Hungarian *starosts* in the forts, an open rebellion erupted in Poland, and after the death of the “father-in law” six gatherings of Polish gentry declared themselves against the continued bond with Hungary. The Polish Crown was denied to the older princess Mary, because she had become the Queen of Hungary and so it

was agreed that the younger [St.] Hedwig would be accepted, because by her person she did not represent any legal-state link with Hungary and ... it was possible to decide about her hand.

When the alliance with Hungary against Lithuania fell, the orientation was changed for an alliance with Lithuania against Hungary. Here lies the genesis of calling Jagiełło to the Polish throne, his marriage with [St.] Hedwig (1386) and the Catholic baptism of Lithuania.

Catholicism and the alliance with Poland gave Lithuania protection against the rapacity of the Teutonic Knights and dissolution within the Ruthenian culture. It was the Poles who saved Lithuanian nationality. Lithuanian Ruthenia was not affected by the Polish-Lithuanian union neither in its religious confession nor in its customary laws. The only restriction on Orthodoxy was that Lithuanians were forbidden to espouse it. Civic rights following the Polish model were given only to Catholic Lithuanians, but Ruthenia itself did not experience any such restrictions and Polish law was not imposed upon it. It is noteworthy that the progeny of Gediminas, who were already baptized by the Eastern Church were allowed to remain faithful to their Orthodoxy. Thus all their lives, not only the step brothers of Jagiełło but also his two full-brothers, Lengvenis and Skirgiełło, remained Orthodox.

Thus it was not for confessional reasons that the eldest of Jagiełło's step-brothers, Andrew, initiated unsuccessfully the "Belarus war" with the help of the Teutonic Knights. He offered the Knights the Polotsk and Vitebsk regions as fiefdoms.

Władysław [his baptismal name] Jagiełło acquired as a result the most extensive domain in the whole of Europe and he did

not give up the program of Algirdas to gain the rest of Ruthenia. First, he tried to subject Novgorod the Great under Lithuanian authority. The project looked promising. Lengvenis was accepted in Novgorod and he commanded the entire military force there having considerable political influence. This was something exceptional, because by then a prince did not count for much in Novgorod the Great. He was not even the military leader. He was a simple resident accepted in the name of peace with the progenies of Gediminas and Rurik. The government in Novgorod the Great was oligarchic (with three to five *посадники* [governors, mayors]!). Lengvenis seemed to be reintroducing the rule of the prince, but profit could not be drawn from the occasion, because there was an internal split within the Lithuanian dynasty. A cousin of Jagiełło, Vytautas, son of Kęstutis, who was famous for having regained Halych Ruthenia from the Hungarians (in 1387), was in conflict with Jagiełło over his patrimony, and so he allied with Moscow and with the Teutonic Knights. **After 1386 Moscow was becoming the main centre of Orthodoxy in opposition to Vilnius**, but for the moment Dmitry Donskoy did not act against Jagiełło and so he did not make use of the readiness of Vytautas.

Dmitry Donskoy died in 1389 and his testament contained intentions that were totally in opposition to those of Ivan Kalita. Not only did he not want to ensure equality among his descendants, but he deliberately carved out the provinces in such a way that there would be a planned inequality with a privileged position for his eldest son Vasily.

Vasily Dmitriyevich (1389-1425) married Sophia, the daughter of Vytautas, while Vytautas being in open rebellion against Jagiełło fled to the Teutonic Knights (1389) and then led them against Lithuania. In 1392 however Vytautas made up with

Jagiełło on the basis of the decision that he became the Grand Duke of Lithuania for life, but under the supremacy of Jagiełło as the King of Poland. He began therefore his government by recalling Lengvenis from Novgorod.

The Teutonic Knights found themselves a new trouble maker in Lithuania in the place of Vytautas, who again was a Catholic, because such one was more valuable, namely, the youngest of Jagiełło's full brothers, Švitrigaila Boleslav. Six times he initiated rebellions. Furthermore, through the falsification of documents the Order tried to claim supreme authority over the whole of Lithuania as well as full ownership of Samogitia, the district of Pskov and the Watland of Novgorod.

Vytautas was inclined to make all concessions towards Moscow and the Teutonic Knights. He betrayed Novgorod in both directions and finally recognized the Knights' claim to Pskov and Watland. He accepted also the occupation of the Dvina land (the watershed of the northern Dvina river) by Vasily Dmitriyevich and almost supplied him with assistance against Novgorod. But his Moscow son-in-law did not reciprocate the relationship and when Vytautas occupied Smolensk in 1395, Vasily organized a coalition against him with Ryazan and Tver which had to be repealed through further concessions.

The submissiveness of Vytautas derived from the fact that he wanted to have free hands and use all his forces so as to attack the Tartars (profiting from the rebellion of Tokhtamysh against Tamerlane) and he hoped to become the Tsar himself in place of the Khan of Sarai. He reasoned that in this way he would become the master of Tatar Ruthenia and would have enough power to reclaim from the Teutonic Knights everything that they had taken and then he would

cease to be a vassal of the Polish Crown. The issue was of primary importance. Without the union with Poland Catholicism would not be maintained in Lithuania and in the Empire of the East that Vytautas hoped for, the Lithuanian element would be a so minor component that the Vilnius Tsar ruling over the Tartars would in fact be a Ruthenian Tsar and not a Lithuanian one.

In the meantime Vytautas suffered a major defeat in 1399 on river Vorskla being beaten by Tamerlane's commander Edigu. Thus Lithuanian nationality and Catholicism were saved, and Moscow retained its own direction of development. The spectre of tsardom did not yet disappear from the scene of history, but in fact the issue was already decided.

The defeated Vytautas was for a moment so weak that Smolensk shed his supremacy in 1401. In order to regain it, which happened in 1404, Vytautas had to buy the neutrality of the Teutonic Knights by helping them to occupy Pskov. The expedition in 1406 failed, and so it led to the establishment of a coalition against Vytautas led by Moscow. The actions of this coalition were terminated by an attack of Edigu on Zalesye in 1408. Vasily, being ruined, preferred to contract a permanent peace with his father-in-law and Vytautas did not want to test again his military fortune. In September 1408 the regiments of Vasily and Vytautas faced each other on the river Ugra, but without having drawn their swords they made peace which was to prove permanent. The river Ugra became the frontier between Lithuanian supremacy and Moscow's sphere of political influence.

In those years the name of Poland entered into the history of Zalesye Ruthenia that hitherto had been unknown to the Poles. This happened for the first time in 1396. In the treaty between Tver and Moscow it was spelled out that it was made against the

Tartars, Teutonic Knights, Lithuania and ... Poland. Poland was included here because the King of Poland was the superior of vassal Lithuania and was obliged to offer her help.

In 1408, for the first time the Poles had the opportunity to see that part of Ruthenia which they called "Muscovy" after the town Moscow. At Ugra among the Lithuanian forces there was also a Polish regiment led by Zbigniew of Brzezia. In this instance the Poles were soldiers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

## **XI. The question of the frontier between two cultures (1408-1449).**

The most important question for the East of Europe in the XV<sup>th</sup> c. was whether in Ruthenia, on both sides of the border between Lithuania and Muscovy, similar legal notions would be adopted, and so there would be similar social arrangements, or whether the frontier between the two states would set apart two distinct societies, having a different culture in spite of their unity within the Eastern Church?

The adoption of Lithuanian public law in Moscow ceased in 1386. Not only the changes that were taking place in Lithuania under the influence of Western Christianity were not being followed, but even more and all the more vehemently the previous political order was maintained, one that in Lithuania was already treated as outdated.

The direct influence of Polish law on the Lithuanian state lasted for only six years (1386-1392) because only in these years Lithuania was incorporated into the Polish Crown. From 1392

unto 1792 there were various changes in the relationship of Lithuania to Poland, but throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was a distinct state, not subject to any Polish laws or to any Polish administrative office. In 1392 the absolute power of the Grand Duke of Lithuania was restored and this lasted until 1569. But in 1387 hereditary rules about the princely regions were introduced and these were based on the feudal system. Thus in Lithuanian Ruthenia the system was adopted that had already been in place in Halych Ruthenia, brought in by Vladislaus of Opole, but there it was soon to be abolished because the land of the Lachs returned to the kingdom of Poland. (The Polish law had no practice of feudalism.) Thus in Lithuania proper and in Lithuanian Ruthenia gradually a feudal hierarchy developed, beginning with the princely regions, and then this descended to all land ownership. In this way a specific Lithuanian Ruthenia feudalism was established. It was known as the “service law” and it was extended ever more multilaterally until the mid XVIII<sup>th</sup> c. The unity or the cultural duality of the eastern Slav lands was to depend on whether this law would pass onto Zalesye or not.

The first stage of the diversification of legal notions was the paying of tributes in kind, that is, produce or labour to the state, meaning the fort or the prince. This primitive system continued in Ruthenia for an exceptionally long period of time, and this is all the more strange, because it concerned countries that were decidedly focused upon trade! Catholic Lithuania liberated itself from this antique system already in 1387 under the influence of Polish law. Lithuanian Ruthenia followed in 1432 as a result of the intervention of Polish lords. Halych Ruthenia did so in 1435, having achieved a complete return to the Polish law. Meanwhile in the Tartar Ruthenia everything remained as before.

The second factor that differentiated the cultures along the two sides of the eastern Lithuanian border was the different approach of the offices to the population. More and more in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania officials were remunerated by giving them the use of land, while in Zalesye, particularly in the Grand Duchy of Muscovy the Tartar-Turkish system was dominant and finally it became universal, , namely, the so called *кормлене* [feeding]. It consisted in the right of the officials to collect charges directly from those who had to deal with their offices. This, the most fatal plague of Tartar origin, in time was to expand, becoming the incurable cancer of oriental public life. The first cause of this evil lay in the Zalesye law that undiminished since the days of Rurik was still binding even though it was contrary to any notion of statehood, which gave a soldier of the prince's troop the right to freely transfer from one prince to another. Thus in order to keep the soldiers, the princes competed with one another offering them ever more remunerative "feeding."

The best solution, or rather the least negative one, was that of Muscovy, where following the example of the prince also the troop soldier started to set up villages. Thus the notion of a *boyar* was ever more linked with sizeable land ownership. The farms flourished, particularly since in the principdom there were no domestic wars for 130 years, from 1303 to 1432. In Muscovy the troop soldiers were the richest and it was not difficult to obtain the use of a village from the prince. This was so, because the property of the prince was based primarily on the villages. But there were not enough of them for everyone. Also not all wished to be farmers. Thus ever more frequently the soldier changed into a courtier, serving the prince also during peace time, and the administration of the country was linked ever more with service to

the prince. Thus already in the XV<sup>th</sup> c. the question had to be resolved, whether this administration would be managed more or less in a European way or in an Asiatic way? Was the purpose of the administration the eliciting of spiritual forces from society or only the sucking of material benefits from it so as to increase the riches and power of the throne and its offices?

It was not always the Catholic and Orthodox Churches that were decisive in the diversification of the two cultures that began to function in discord in the eastern Slav lands, but in the first half of the XV<sup>th</sup> c. this was the case.

Towards the end of the XIV<sup>th</sup> an idea appeared that had a semblance of a return to Catholicism. Since 1369 a Church union was propagated in the Byzantine Empire in the hope of obtaining help against the Turkish onslaught. Metropolitan Cyprian held to this idea with both hands and he managed to find the support of both Jagiełło and Vytautas for this. But Vasily Dmitriyevich absolutely rejected the idea of unification with the “Latin heresy.” The union seemed to be a way of eliminating contradictions that appeared in the appointing of separate Metropolitans for Halych and for Lithuania. Cyprian found a way for this. He did not leave Moscow and yet from 1401, he enjoyed official recognition by Poland and Lithuania. At the same time he managed, first in Muscovy, to obtain such privileges for the Orthodox Church that the position and influence of his Church in the state were incomparably higher than what the Catholic Church had at its disposal. Also the clergy of the eastern rite held more rights than the clergy in the Roman Church.

In the attempts to arrive at a union in Ruthenia there was a gross and fundamental error. So when finally a union was signed

at the Council of Florence in 1439<sup>30</sup> it proved to be extremely fragile.

A return to Catholicism in Ruthenia could not come about through a Church union. Ruthenia belonged to the Byzantine Church only in a formal and loose way. In fact what was practically confessed was a “dual faith” made up of a mechanical mixture of residues drawn from various faiths (Byzantinism, Nestorianism, local pagan cults, the Mongol state religion, Islam, Buddhism and finally the trends set by Tamerlane). The “dual faith” of Ruthenia, both South and North was full of internal contradictions that could be put together in some compromise only through the focusing on the form. It was only the form that guaranteed some measure of coherence to the structure of the Orthodox Church. As a result, in the Ruthenian Church there was an excessive attachment to the form with a simultaneous ignoring of the content. The form had to become everything, because it was the only thing that they all had in common. Religious life was deformed by formalism. The rituals began to be seen as having the significance of magical acts operating through formulas that were to be unailing due to the immutability of even the smallest detail. With such formalism it was impossible to implant a Catholic spirit that requires the superiority of the content over the form

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<sup>30</sup> Cyprian died in 1407 and so he did not live to see any official move towards a union. It was to be introduced at a universal Council but the Councils in Pisa (1409), Constance (1415-1418) and Basle (1418-1422) failed to deal with the issue. Vytautas wanted to have his nephew, Tsamblak (a Bulgar) as Cyprian’s successor, but the Patriarchate [of Constantinople] sent a Greek, Photius. Vytautas therefore reactivated the Lithuanian See in 1415 and appointed Tsamblak as its Metropolitan. Tsamblak travelled to Constance in 1418 but achieved nothing, and so next year he closed himself in a monastery. Photius made peace with Vytautas and became the only Metropolitan for the whole of Ruthenia. After him there came Isidore who signed the union of Florence in 1439.

and the tendency to reduce and simplify the forms. A Church union that did not require anything from the Uniates apart from the introduction of a *memento* for the Pope in the Mass would not be understood in the minds of the clergy and the faithful as a submission of the Eastern Church to Rome. Instead, it would rather be understood as the conversion of the Pope to the Orthodox faith.

Should a union be achieved, all propaganda of the Latin rite would cease in the Lithuanian state, with the Orthodox Church receiving a monopoly, whereas the Catholic Church would be neglected, weakened and impoverished materially and spiritually. Thus the point would be reached when the Orthodox Church having used well the time of the so called union would finally break with it returning with triumphant advantage back to Orthodoxy. The final result of such a union, should it prove possible to introduce it in the XV<sup>th</sup> c. would have been the abolition of the Catholic Church and of all West European currents in Lithuania and Ruthenia. In the circumstances and conditions of the XV<sup>th</sup> c., if for no other reason than simply the rather recent arrival of Catholicism there, a union would in fact imply a submission of the Catholic Church to the supremacy of the Orthodox Church. Where formalism distorted the minds as deeply as in Ruthenia, there could not come about any change of content, such as the return to Catholicism, without a change of the form, a change that would be visible and tangible.

By a strange coincidence the course of history linked the delineation of a frontier between two cultures in the East of Europe with the simultaneous drawing of a boundary between the German and Slav domination. It was such that growth in the power of the eastern culture was always favourable to the growth of German influence and *vice versa*. When Jagiełło was preparing

himself to adopt Orthodoxy (before 1386), the German Order of the Teutonic Knights was to occupy Samogitia and northern Lithuania. When Andrew was hoping to depose Jagiełło, he submitted Polotsk and Vitebsk to the Knights. The would-be project of the Vilnius tsardom of 1399 was to enrich the Knights with Pskov and Watland. In a strange way, the circumstances converged that the negotiations about a Church union that were dangerous for Catholicism occurred exactly at the moment when the Teutonic Knights were exerting all their forces to put in practice their claims over the territories of Pskov and Novgorod.

Since 1406 year after year the Teutonic Knights conducted successful raids into the land of Pskov. A major expedition was planned for the year 1410, which was to occupy the city itself. The landmeister of Livonia for a long time refused the Grand Master any assistance in the “Great War” that was being conducted in Prussia [against Poland], because first, he wished to deal with Pskov. But after the momentous victory of the Poles who defeated the Teutonic Knights at Grunwald on July 15th 1410, the Livonian landmeister speedily negotiated peace with Pskov. In the tradition of the Teutonic Order that lingered until the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. there was the sentiment that the “Great War” against Poland prevented the occupation of Pskov.

Meanwhile Vasily Dmitriyevich expanded the domain of Muscovy thanks to the permanent peace assured from the Lithuanian side. Ryazan and Nizhny Novgorod were subject to his state authority. Tver submitted even its internal matters to his judiciary. In external policy Vasily Dmitriyevich held on continuously to the Sarai legitimacy (even when after the death of Tamerlane, Kipchak fell apart again), while in internal policy he tried above

all to maintain the principle of primogeniture. This was questioned by his brother, Yuri Dmitriyevich who considered himself to be the successor on the Grand Princedom of Muscovy, but care for the education of the 10-years old son of Vasily, Vasily Vasiliyevich (1425-1462) was in the hands of his grandfather, Vytautas, the father of his mother Sophia. Thus Yuri had to keep quiet.

Vytautas viewed the guardianship over his Moscow grandson as a strike of luck, which was to enable him achieve through peaceful means the aims of Algirdas to which he returned with eagerness. The program of the last years of his life was to have Zalesye subjected to the hegemony of Muscovy and Muscovy subjected to the hegemony of Lithuania, which was to be liberated from the hegemony of Poland. Thus there was to be permanent peace over the entire territory from Vilnius to Kiev and Nizhny Novgorod. The records of his almost six year regency in Moscow (1425-1430) indicate that he wanted to introduce in Zalesye a system that would be akin to European feudalism. This was to be based on the mutuality of services between the vassal and his sovereign and also on imposed peace among the vassals of a common sovereign. Both these arrangements were completely foreign and contrary to the traditional agreements among the Rurikids. **This was the only case in these years where there was an imitation of the Christian social system of Lithuania.** But since this was imposed from without it did not keep.

The successor of Vytautas († 1430), Sigismund Kęstutaitis was against the Church union and he opposed further expansion eastwards. The notorious rebel Švitrigaila, the youngest brother of Jagiełło and brother in law of Yuri Dmitriyevich stood up against Sigismund and Jagiełło. Hoping for Švitrigaila's help, Yuri initiated a civil war in 1435, which was to last for 22 years.

This internal war in Muscovy in its major turns had some impact on decisive changes that were taking place in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Initially Yuri triumphed, because Švitrigaila had the support of the Teutonic Knights and the whole of Lithuanian Ruthenia which was ready to break with the Polish Latin influence. Švitrigaila personally was a Catholic and a supporter of union with the Orthodox Church, but he fell into an awkward position, in particular when the Polish politicians enacted two laws in 1432 that were contrary to all European notions of the time. One, in the name of the “Grand Duke of Lithuania”, proclaimed equal rights among the adherents of both Churches, and the other forbade the transformation of Orthodox churches into Catholic ones and the imposition of Catholicism by force. Thus Orthodoxy was directly protected against the project of Church union.

Ruthenia was therefore leaving Švitrigaila. In 1433 Sigismund Kęstutaitis was the winner and Yuri had to humbly recognise Vasily Vasiliyevich. The following year Yuri died and his sons started to war against one another so as to take over the small inheritance of their father.

The triumph of Vasily Vasiliyevich over Yuri’s sons became complete as from 1435 when the Poles and Lithuanians defeated the Teutonic Knights. The final confrontation with the Knights took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1435 during the great battle near Wilkomierz on the river Šventoji, the northern tributary of Neris. Contemporaries compared this Polish victory with that of Grunwald and some even considered it more important than Grunwald.

The success of the Polish-Lithuanian armies confirmed the position of Vasily the Blind (as he started to be called after

being blinded during the civil war), because also on the Church issue the thinking in Moscow and Vilnius was concordant.

The Church union was finally proclaimed at the Council of Florence 1439 in the presence of Metropolitan Isidore, but there was no official delegation from Poland or Lithuania there. When Isidore returned he was received very badly. The Bishop of Vilnius Mathias refused to recognize him and in Moscow he was imprisoned.

A year later Sigismund Kęstutaitis fell victim of a plot and the government of Lithuania landed practically in the hands of the aristocratic family of Goštautai. They also were opponents of union but ... in a different sense. They profusely supported the foundations of the Bernardines [Franciscans], who devoted themselves to the spreading of the Latin rite in Ruthenia. The Goštautai aimed at severing the legal-state relationship of Lithuania with Poland and thus they represent the last link in the chain of supporters of the program of Algirdas, hoping to submit the whole of Ruthenia to Lithuania.

The attitude towards Vasily the Blind changed because the Goštautai wanted to see Ivan Andreevich of Mozhaisk as the ruler in Moscow. He was the grandson of Dmitry Donskoy after his son Andrei, thus a cousin of Vasily the Blind.

Prince Casimir Jagiellon was to become the tool of the Goštautai. He was only 13-years old, but thanks to the influence of the Goštautai he was proclaimed the Grand Duke of Lithuania in 1440. After the battle of Varna [in Bulgaria] in 1444 [where the Polish king Władysław was killed] the Goštautai opposed Casimir's claim to the Polish throne after his dead brother and

they went so far as trying to breaking even the appearances of a union with Poland. According to them, Moscow was worth more to Lithuania than Kraków.

They attacked Moscow in 1446. The whole of Zalesye stood to fight, but divided into two camps. The princes allied and opposed one another intermittently and amidst a very variable military fortune the civil war of Muscovy continued right up to 1454. Lithuania however dropped out of the conflict already in 1447!

This was imposed by Casimir Jagiellon himself. He was already 20 at the time. He opposed the Goštautai and decided that he would accept the Polish Crown. Not being able to struggle simultaneously in two directions, far to the west and far to the east, he ordered the ending of the war against Moscow. In 1448 a diplomatic mission appeared in Moscow with a peace offer from Casimir Jagiellon and in the next year an “eternal peace, alliance and friendship” were signed with the following conditions:

Lithuania recognized the hegemony of Moscow over the whole of Zalesye, including Novgorod and Pskov, but these provinces were not to be incorporated directly into state of Muscovy nor were Muscovite garrisons to be held there. Thus Lithuania gave up the policy of further eastward expansion and in 1449 began an opposite policy. From this moment until the days of Bathory [king of Poland 1576-1586] Lithuania did not want to have any wars with Moscow and always remained in a defensive position.

At the same time the idea of a Church union was decidedly rejected. This step gave the Catholic Church the liberty to expand

eastwards and at the same time it deprived the Orthodox Church of an argument that could be used as a tool for the suppression of influences of Western European culture. The Orthodox Church was as it were neutralized in the cultural sense, because mutual confessional propagandas were relinquished and this state of affairs lasted until 1596, that is, to the Union of Brest.

The ending of the conflict by Casimir Jagiellon fixed the frontier between the two cultures. One of them, the Latin culture was West European, classical and Christian; the other in the mid XV<sup>th</sup> c. was still undefinable. Something was brewing and forming east of the Ugra river, but this culture as yet did not have a clear identity.

## **The intermediary period (1449-1505)**

### **XII. The taking over of the whole of Zalesye (1449-1489).**

It was only after 1449 that Vasily the Blind, being safe from the Lithuanian side, could work out further ends that went beyond the beating of his rivals in the civil war, namely, the taking over of all the states that neighboured with Zalesye: Tver, Ryazan and Novgorod the Great. To start with it was necessary to insist beyond any doubt on the principle of primogeniture. Thus in 1449 he appointed his eldest son Ivan as co-ruler.

Vasily the Blind went far in ensuring the support of the Orthodox Church for himself and his successors. Together with

Metropolitan Jonah to a large extent, he was the creator of Moscow caesaropapism. The opportunity was provided by the fall of Constantinople [1453].

Byzantine hatred of “Latinism” turned out to be stronger than fear of the Turkish onslaught. The reception of the Union of Florence was joined with the hope of obtaining military assistance from the West, but it was only at the last moment, in November 1452 that the Union was ratified in Constantinople. In spite of the delay there were riots in the city with the cry: “Better to have the turban than the tiara!” Shortly afterwards this choice came about. Since May 29<sup>th</sup> 1453 Constantinople ceased to be the capital of the “Orthodox Tsars” and it became the Istanbul of the Turkish sultans and the seat of the new Islamic caliphate. The holy Mt. Athos did not hesitate to show its gratitude to the caliphate for the conquest of Byzantium, which saved them from a Church union. The Patriarchate, now that it was freed from the danger of losing the “purity” of its faith, fared very well under the rule of the Sultan. Just as the Ruthenian Church profited from being under the Tartars, so did the Balkan Church profit from being under the Turks. For the Greeks, who were forbidden to convert to Islam, the Patriarch in many respects became as if the new Byzantine Emperor. A full concord was established between the Phanar (the house under a lantern, the palace of the Patriarch) and the caliphate. The accord was to deepen ever more as the Porte [the Ottoman government] began to set up ramparts against Catholicism and even to persecute it, while supporting Orthodoxy (because the Popes strived to form an “anti-Turkish leagues”). Soon all the Orthodox were considered to be “Greeks”, preventing the Orthodox from the loss of a single faithful transferring to Islam.

Vasily made use of the Uniate episode of 1452 so as to break definitively, even formally, with the Patriarchate that was “infected by the heresy” and when shortly afterwards it turned out that the Patriarchate in this sense was pure, it was declared that it cannot be recognized so long as it was in the captivity of the unfaithful. Tartar Ruthenia was secured by Metropolitan Jonah from the eventuality of the arrival of some Uniate Metropolitans from Lithuania. Jonah made the theological discovery that there could be no more Councils, beyond the seven, that is, the number that is recognized by the Orthodox Church. The calling of an eighth Council (... the Florentine!) was forbidden not only by the previous seven and by the canons, but also by the Apostles themselves and the Holy Scriptures! It went unnoticed that the split into the two Metropolitan Sees had to be perpetuated all the more, since there was to be no higher spiritual authority above Moscow and Vilnius, because no other supremacy, either of Constantinople or Rome was recognised. **Vasily broke with the Patriarchate of Constantinople so as to ensure that the Moscow Metropolitan See would depend exclusively upon the Grand Princes** who would designate their own candidates for this office imposing them on the episcopate. Moscow was thus working out its own canon law with the Grand Prince being the legislator. At the same time, there appeared priests... who were illiterate.

In respect towards the Horde, Vasily the Blind was meek, because he was conscious of the fact that the state of Muscovy would crash were it to liberate itself from Tartar yoke prematurely, that is, before the unification of the whole of Zalesye. Moscow hegemony was maintained best by the Khan himself. After all, Moscow attained its position by administering the Tartar tribute. He manoeuvred therefore between Tartars of various Hordes,

and he used the Tartars very well so as to ensure for himself military superiority in Zalesye. Sometimes he took the “Khanlets” [the relatives of the Khan] to his pay and he permanently employed the “Ryazan Cossacks” as his mercenaries. This was a community of Tartar refugees and their descendants who settled on the empty Ryazan territories in that central part of Ruthenia from where “raids” could be made in all directions. We hear about these Cossacks for the first time in 1444 and this is the oldest record of any Cossacks in Ruthenia.

Since Vasily had Tartar regiments at his disposal, no one dared to oppose him. Tver had balanced from 1375, but finally in 1454, it gave up having any foreign policy of its own. As from 1456 the nominees of Vasily were appointed to the Ryazan forts supposedly as protectors of their underage local princes. In that same year a very profitable agreement was made with Suzdal lowering the position of their princes to the rank of Moscow vassals. By direct force, Vasily the Blind destroyed the other Moscow line (that of Serpukhov) and to such an extent that only one small province, the Vereya remained.

From 1456 a series of expeditions against Novgorod began, aimed at the gradual subordination of the city in an ever greater dependence upon Moscow. Vasily the Blind began by being “elected” anew as the “Grand Prince of Novgorod the Great”. Soon it was “enacted” that the Novgorod “rally documents” were to have no validity before their certification with stamp of the Grand Prince (in theory the Novgorod one). Thus Novgorod was in a compulsory situation. Once Lithuania had retreated in 1449, the fate of the city was to be played out in the rivalry between the rapacity of the Teutonic Knights and that of Moscow. Having abandoned the maritime trade the city succumbed to an inevitable

dependence on Moscow and it was only with the help of Moscow that it could acquire access to the sea coast. Casimir Jagiellon had no plans to intervene because he was hoping to gain Moscow for his anti-Turkish projects, directing all his attention to the shores of the Black sea...

The inheritance of Vasily the Blind († 1462) covered already 1500 square miles. He divided it between his five sons in such a way that the eldest Ivan, his co-ruler, known as “the Stern” (he was given the name, as an honour, already during the life of his father) received 15 forts and the remaining four sons were given in total 11. Thus together with the small province of Vereya there were six provinces of Muscovy. Vasily the Blind spent all his life expelling the regional princes not out of some basic dislike of these provinces but only so as to have more to divide among his own children.

Ivan the Stern (1462-1505) differed from his father in that he strived for autocracy. He did not consider himself as being the first among the Rurikids, but as someone elevated above them and his reign was marked by the oppression of the princely caste. As a youngster he had been married by his father to Maria of Tver. When he became a widower in 1467, he did not want to enter into any new relationship with the Rurik family in Zalesye so as not to prolong the semblance of equality of rank. It was not easy to find a foreign princess because for confessional considerations beyond Ruthenia he could look for a wife only in Wallachia. Thus the choice was very limited. The Byzantine Empire had already ceased to exist in 1453 ... And yet a Byzantine princess was found.

Gian Battista della Volpe, a major Venetian trader and speculator coming from Vicenza who resided in Moscow pointed

out to Ivan the Stern that in Rome there was a niece of the last Byzantine Emperor, Zoe Palaiologina, who had received an education thanks to the financial support of the Pope. Venice had great trading interests in the East and it would be useful for it to have a princess in Moscow of its recommendation. Volpe vigorously acted in perverse fashion in both directions. In Moscow he asserted that the princess was eagerly awaiting some salvation from Latin oppression and in Rome he claimed that Ivan wanted to adopt the Florentine Church Union and was willing to join the crusade against Turkey planned by Pope Paul II. Ivan was happy that an imperial princess was found, who would not familiarize with the minor Rurikid princes, and besides she had a dowry of 60 000 ducats, payable from the papal treasury! Thus he finally empowered Volpe to marry this lady *per procuram* [through the agency of] in his name in Rome. This wedding took place on June 1st 1472. It was to be an epic date for the development of Catholicism in the East... But Uniate efforts always produced results that were contrary to the intentions. As soon as Zoe arrived in the land of the “pure faith”, she changed into Sophia and till the end of her life she was a vehement enemy of Catholicism.

A retinue of Greek and Italian courtiers accompanied Sophia. These were humanists who landed in the abyss of Moscow ignorance. The very same Byzantines, who lectured on Homer and Plato in Italy, failed to teach anybody even grammar in Ruthenia. But Sophia made Moscow into a “white stone city”. Her court architects built several churches and palaces in the Kremlin in Moscow that till this day are the greatest adornment of the old capital.

Sophia never had any political influence. It is a fabricated myth to claim that under her influence Ivan acted more courageously against the Horde. Tartar supremacy remained, and for Ivan it was something untouchable before the whole of Zalesye would not be taken over by him. In the years immediately after Sophia's arrival, ...the Tartars doubled the obligatory tribute. Sophia also did not introduce Byzantine ceremonials in Moscow. The complicated ceremonial that Ivan was gradually introducing in his court was a replica not of Byzantium but of Sarai. It was a Tartar ceremonial with all its barbaric oriental pomp, full of bizarre vanity. Sophia also did not bring with her any "Byzantine inheritance" to which there were six other male pretenders (her brothers, uncle and nephews). The dream of Ivan the Stern was to become the successor of the Tsar-Khan and not of the Emperor of Byzantium! He always tried to have the best possible relationships with the Turkish Sultan!

Thus there occurred a make-believe situation according to which Moscow was said to have a mission about which nobody ever dreamt there. The first inspiration came from Venice (to encourage Ivan to join the anti-Turkish league) and the phrase "Byzantine inheritance" was coined by the leaders of the Levantine trade. By another route it was to enter later into the mentality of the culture that was developing east of the Lithuanian border...

The historical dowry of Zoe-Sophia was something else. Her courtiers fortified Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod and other localities replacing the primitive wooden palisades with brick ramparts constructed according to Italian military art that set the highest standards for siege war in the world at the time. The practice of importing various types of "European craftsmen", engineers and cannon-founders began from Italy. The result was that

before the reign of Ivan was over Moscow had military superiority not only over the Tartars but also over Lithuania. Lithuania was to feel this. It allowed itself to be overtaken by Moscow in military technology, particularly in artillery. Having a too low level of its own intelligentsia Muscovy profited from Italian military expertise (and later that of the Germans) but only to a certain point and not for a long time, because the Muscovites were unable to learn these things themselves, but for a certain period of time, they became a military power with which its neighbours could not measure. Even the superficial adoption of Italian military art gave Moscow such a superiority that in the following years the armies of Novgorod the Great that were ten or twenty times more numerous were soundly defeated! The secret was very simple: Ivan the Stern not only introduced the use of gunpowder, but only he had cannons which made all the enemy regiments flee.

The following years were devoted to the suppression of Novgorod the Great. Muscovite supremacy was already accepted there, but Ivan wanted something more. **He wanted that the local government in Novgorod be identical as that in Moscow.** This was pure rapacity aiming not only at the unification of the two parts of Northern Ruthenia, but also at the destruction of Novgorod just as Bogolyubsky had destroyed Kiev earlier. Gradually the liberties of the “great city” were restricted. The city spontaneously defended itself in the years 1469, 1471, 1475 and 1477 but without any plan and order and without hope of success. In the final year Ivan started to impose an administration that was modelled upon Moscow. As a symbolic sign of the abolition of independence he took the main rally bell to Moscow. He also, angrily, refused to pledge any conditions, even if they were to be written up by himself. He imprisoned and deported citizens, resettling those who were contrary to the Muscovite governance; among

them was the famous Marfa Boretskaya, mother of a clan whose members were attached to civil liberties and for this reason they would have preferred to see Novgorod within the sphere of influence of Lithuania. A Lithuanian party was formed in Novgorod hoping that Casimir Jagiellon would break the treaty of 1449 and defend the city against Moscow. The King had no intention of doing this nor had he any excuse to do so, because Ivan was careful to maintain the formal letter of the 1449 treaty, and he never at any time had his garrison in Novgorod.

Casimir Jagiellon held so closely to the principle of maintaining peace with Moscow that he even did not want to profit from the opportunity when a new civil war was imminent in Muscovy. After the death of his brother Yuri, Ivan the Stern wanted to introduce the principle that the inheritance left by a childless prince would belong to the Grand Prince only. He also denied to his brothers the freedom of “departure from service” towards himself, thereby questioning the fullness of their princely rights. The brothers of Ivan, Andrew the Older of Uglich and Boris of Rzhev moved against him as soon as there was a chance of having the support of the Khan for this.

As the previous Muscovite civil war had its echoes in Lithuania where there was a major upheaval, this time something similar happened amongst the Hordes which were in conflict. The Crimean Khanate, referred to as the Perekop Khanate in Polish sources was initially formed under Lithuanian protection, but for the ambitious Mengli-Giray it became a basis for plans to re-establish a unified state of Kipchak. The first step was to be the subordination of the Golden Horde.

Because of delays in the payment of the tribute to Ahmed, the Khan of Sarai, Ivan the Stern was suddenly attacked in 1472. He then sent the tribute twice and thus ensured peace until 1480. In the conflict between the Hordes Ivan sided with Crimea. This was a false step. Ahmed called Ivan's brothers to act militarily and simultaneously prepared a new raid on Moscow. The result was that Ivan had to reconcile with his brothers by making concessions to them and from then on he had to pay a double Tartar tribute, both to Ahmed and to Megli-Giray. Ahmed fell in some battle between the Hordes in the eastern steppes in 1484, but the Golden Horde continued to exist for the next twenty years and so by no means was the subordination to it terminated.

By paying off the Tartars, Ivan was free to terrorize the Muscovy provinces with impunity. After the death of Andrew the Younger (1482) he reintroduced his principle excluding his brothers from any part in the inheritance. He also pressured the princes of Vereya so much that they fled to Lithuania leaving their province at the mercy of Ivan.

In Novgorod since 1478 Ivan was beheading his opponents and he deported the population by hundreds of families. In 1480 he even imprisoned the Archbishop and confiscated Church property belonging to the Novgorod See. He had practised the confiscation of private property from the very beginning. Muscovite administration in Novgorod became increasingly violent and soon another novelty appeared: there were complaints about the "racket bribes" enforced by the officials of the Grand Prince. Eight years later 8000 traders were deported from Novgorod and resettled in various towns of Zalesye.

At the same time Ivan was preparing to take over Pskov. Also there he was formally recognized as superior, but he left the city the appearances of self-rule up to the moment when he managed to deal with Novgorod. Meanwhile he surrounded Pskov with a network of intrigues, subterfuges and pit falls and he organized a pro-Moscow faction amongst the city populace both in Novgorod and in Pskov. He prepared himself in many ways for the final blow that he was about to make. Meanwhile he took care of all external affairs of both cities and this increased support for him not only among the municipal masses. At the same time he extended his external power and widened the scope of Moscow's political influence.

We have an interesting example of this in Pskov. In earlier times Pskov had a trading post in Dorpat (Yuryev) [present day Tartu in Estonia] from which some tax was due to the treasury of Pskov. From this trading post a whole Ruthenian suburb developed composed not only of Pskov citizens, but the tax was forgotten. Having heard about this, Ivan used it at the first occasion. When he made an agreement with the Bishop of Dorpat in 1463, he ordered that this Yuryev tax be mentioned. This was repeated in 1474. This is a detail, but after a century it was to acquire an unexpected significance.

Ivan the Stern was tightening his control over Zalesye thanks to the peace that he had from the Lithuanian side. Suddenly, in the winter of 1483/84 the neighbourly relations were disturbed and to such an extent that in Vilnius they were thinking of a coalition against Moscow. Tver was brought into this and contacts were established with Novgorod and Pskov. A silly political rumour was spread in the West that Ivan was trying to obtain a regal or perhaps even an imperial title from the Pope. This

was interpreted as a claim over the whole of Ruthenia ... including Lithuanian Ruthenia. Moscow culture had distanced itself already so much that in Vilnius it was incomprehensible and so the rumour about a royal title, sought nowhere else but ... in Rome was treated seriously!! But when Casimir Jagiellon was reassured by the Pope that this was not true, he immediately restored the best of relationships with Moscow. He needed them all the more because in that moment the Black sea ports of Kiliya and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy fell into Turkish hands. The utopian idea of finding support in Moscow against Turkey became a mythical *idée fixe* that was to continue in Polish politics ... all the way till the days of Sobieski [Polish king 1674-1696]...

Not having any difficulties from the side of Lithuania Ivan managed to expel Michael, the last prince of Tver and he forced his brothers to make agreements with him which in fact deprived them of any authority in their own provinces. This was followed by the final overpowering of Novgorod the Great.

Novgorod the Great was thus becoming a sort of sub-fort of Moscow and in fact an inferior one, living off the remnants of Moscow trade that as a monopoly was imposed on the whole of Zalesye. The inheritance of Novgorod trade was taken over by Moscow and should it be possible to take over also Kazan, the extent of Muscovy trade exploitation, free from any competition, would cover the whole of the multi-tribe Yugra and all the further Tartar steppes. These issues were cared for greatly.

Ivan the Stern wanted to utilize the continuing conflict between the two Hordes, the Golden and the Crimean, so as to deal with the third one, namely the "tsardom" of Kazan. Here however he was completely fooled, used and made fun of. He conquered

Kazan, but soon it turned out that he did this not for himself but for Mengli-Giray, his superior. The departure from Sarai legitimacy, recommended some time ago by Metropolitan Alexius, proved ever more to be the grave error of the reign of Ivan.

While Kazan was not occupied (this was postponed until 1552) long distance, often armed trade expeditions were made, the furthest of which went as far as the Siberian Tyumen and from there by the Irtysh river up to the river Ob. Thanks to the acquired sympathy of the Siberian Horde, the Yugra people, centred around Perm entered the Moscow sphere of influence and so Kazan was encircled. A decisive move was the occupation of Vyatka in 1489. This was the last fort in Zalesye that fell under Moscow domination. The autonomy of Ryazan and Pskov for a long time was only nominal, and so it can be said that since 1489 the whole of Zalesye was under the control of Moscow. It had the monopoly of trade in the East, and this was particularly so since by then Kazan was encircled both from the north and the east.

It was only then, after having taken over the whole of Zalesye that the time came to shed the Tartar supremacy.

### **XIII. Governor and Tsar of all Ruthenia (1480-1505).**

Following the example of his father, Ivan the Stern made his eldest son Ivan, referred to as the Younger, his co-ruler. He was born of Maria from Tver. Ivan did not want his successor to marry a Rurikid princess. For already known reasons he wanted a foreign princess as his daughter in law, and no relative of the Palaiologins was to be found at the time. Thus there was no choice and there was only one court available, where it was possible to look for a fiancée, namely in Wallachia. Thus an engagement was

arranged in 1480 and in 1482 Ivan the Younger married Helen, the daughter of Stephen the Great, the voivode of Moldavia<sup>31</sup> (1457-1482).

This was a very specific court. Wallachian relationships in many ways resembled those in the Muscovy Zalesye, particularly since there was no shortage of Tartar influences there, but these were weaker, while Byzantine influences were more significant. Wallachia of the time was like Byzantium in caricature. Pure and direct Byzantine influences were too exalted for Moscow, unattainable for them due to their ignorance and this was the reason why Sophia Palaiologina did not bring into Moscow any political dowry. Helen of Moldavia proved much more influential, because she brought a Byzantinism that was sufficiently barbarian. The rulers of Wallachia for a long time had been autocrats, with unlimited power. They even had time to degenerate in their despotism and throne madness was visible already among the predecessors of Stephen the Great. The titles of *самодержавной господин* [autocrat] and “divinely graced lord” were known in Moldavia even at the end of the XIV<sup>th</sup> c.

Wallachia had to deal constantly with the Hungarians and it was in the Moldavian court that Moscow and Hungary discovered one another, and then through Hungary the way to Germany was opened. A new and plentiful source was discovered for the

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<sup>31</sup> There is great confusion in the use of the terms Wallachia, Moldavia and Muntenia that continues since the days of Kromer all the way to the *Geographical Dictionary*. In fact the situation is simple: Moldavia is where the river Moldova is. This is a tributary to the right side of the Siret river (the mouth is near Roman). Therefore to the east of Transylvania there is Moldavia and it extends from Pokutia to the mouth of the Danube. Muntenia is to the south of Transylvania, while the land to the west, Oltenia is known as the Little Wallachia. The name Wallachia applies to all these lands.

import of “craftsmen” of all kinds (and the Germans specialized in metallurgy). As a result Ivan the Stern had a mythical view of Western monarchs, who offered him alliances against Poland and Lithuania. He reasoned correctly following his common sense, that since Casimir Jagiellon necessarily had to be his enemy, as the enemies of Poland the Emperor Frederic III and the even more fiercely so Matthias Corvinus of Hungary assured that for Moscow it was better that Casimir and his sons would have many more dealings with the West and so would spend their energies there as far away from Moscow as possible. Thus the Moscow interest was exactly opposite to that of the Habsburgs and Hungarians as regards the policy of the Jagiellons who hoped to expand their influence in Bohemia and Hungary. But Ivan pretended to be a candidate for an ally and in exchange for this he imported “craftsmen” who opened the first mines in his country and magnificently improved his artillery.

Thus the voivod’s daughter from Moldavia supplemented the dowry of the Emperor’s daughter adding to this a political touch of autocracy. That is not all. She brought in something more.

Wallachia was similar to Moscow in that a most primitive kind of *двоеверие* [dual faith] reigned there and the only criterion of orthodoxy was hatred of the “impure Latinism”. In the Moldavian dual faith there was an element that was known in Ruthenia only exceptionally by some rare individuals, namely, the so called Bogomilism. This sect, which had developed on a dualistic substratum the genesis of which dates back to ancient times, had corroded like rust the Balkan Orthodoxy of the Southern Slavs. The Bogomils rejected the Holy Mass and the sacraments. They did not venerate the saints and their prayers were restricted to the Our Father. Their ethics allowed them to participate actively in the life

and religious practices of the current ruler should this turn out to be convenient for the concealing of their affiliation to the sect. This sect therefore facilitated greatly the conquest of the Balkans by the Ottomans. The Bogomils accepted Islam with no resistance. The present day so called “Turks” of Bosnia and in others parts of the Balkans are descended from them. They do not know a word in Turkish because they are the most genuine Slavs!

Bogomilism had been influenced by Jewish scholarship centred in Thessaloniki, which dabbled in the Kabbalah and astrology. By a coincidence of circumstances some snippets of this scholarship reached Novgorod the Great due to the arrival of Scharia, a Jew from Southern Ruthenia. He had a group of followers some of whom were clergymen. Ivan who liked to have all kinds of scholarship at his court invited two such astrologer-priests to Moscow. Helen, imbued with Bogomilism at home, met these two who were favoured by Ivan and she herself supported them even more. In a short time the younger grand princess had around her a circle of astrological-theological scholarship that more and more resembled Bogomilism. This was as it were a species of oriental rationalism.

This group was discovered first in Novgorod. The local Archbishop in his ignorance thought that he had uncovered some Jewish proselytism amongst the Orthodox. Investigating the issue he found that the dignitaries of the court of both Ivans, father and son, belong to the *жидовинство* [Judaizers] and he concluded that Helen of Moldavia herself was Jewish. Obviously, he was terrified. Soon the sect proved to be so powerful that it imposed a Bogomil Metropolitan on the Orthodox Church, Zosimus (1490-1494). The Orthodoxy of Ivan the Stern was dubious not to mention that of the Younger Ivan, the husband of the “Jewess”.

Ivan the Younger died in 1490. Were the principle of primogeniture to be strictly followed, his son and the grandson of Ivan the Stern, Dmitri, should be the heir to the throne. But the view emerged that a ruler may appoint any of his sons as his successor. This was similar to the Tartar dynastic law according to which the successor was chosen by the Khan at will, because **the Khan's will was the unique source of all public law**. The Khans had the right to bypass their closest descendants and could transmit the succession to any member of the dynasty or their in-laws; the relatives of the Khan's wife were considered equal in dynastic rights. The relationships in Moscow were rapidly becoming similar to those among the Tartars and following the model of the Tsar-Khan's courts, the importance of women grew.

The two grand princesses competed over the inheritance of their sons. Helen of Moldavia, the "Jewess", supported by the Bogomil Metropolitan Zosimus guarded the rights of Dmitri, while Sophia, the "daughter of an Emperor" intrigued in favour of her son Vasily. Ivan the Stern, hesitating between his son and grandson, between his wife and daughter-in-law left the issue unsettled for eight years. Against this background there was a quiet conflict of the higher clergy with the new class of courtiers, the *dyaks* [deacons, clerks], who supported Sophia and Vasily. The *dyaks* had appeared already in the days of Vasily the Blind. These were literate laymen. . They were not rich, and they earned their living through writing, being the officials of the Grand Prince, without having aspirations for a higher social status. They were the beginnings of the Moscow bureaucracy which soon was to become a class of political importance.

Ivan the Stern greatly increased the number of the *dyaks* and supported them so as to be as least as possible dependent on

the clergy. The spheres of state power had grown immensely and this required more officials. The annexations needed more armed forces and since Muscovite order was imposed everywhere by force this required a **permanent army**. This was the case in all the Asiatic despotisms, even in their miserable caricatures, such as the Volga Khanates which served as models for Moscow. Around the year 1490 Ivan conscripted in military service the “children of the *boyars*” throughout the country. Thus all the youth of the *boyars* had to be maintained at the expense of the state, not to mention the non-*boyar* army which was also on the increase. The introduction of firearms also entailed considerable expenses, and Ivan had no intention of saving on this because he knew that the cannons gave him superiority over Lithuania.

The taxes in Muscovy were always higher than anywhere else in Zalesye. Since the principle was held that **everywhere things should be “like in Moscow”**, the annexations always brought an increase in taxes. In order to facilitate military communication and the constant movement of officials a general postal tax was introduced which was a primitive form of road tax. The taxation system was based on land property and thus the land had to be measured. The measurements known to the previous authorities of the former princedoms of Zalesie were considered insufficient. The pinnacle of Moscow political statesmanship consisted in imposing uniformity everywhere, in great and small issues. This principle is inseparable from all bureaucracy. It was judged therefore that the local measurements are irrelevant and the requirement was made that everywhere the Moscow *sokha* [primitive plough] was to be used for taxation purposes [i. e., the land that could be ploughed one day with a *sokha* was considered a unit of the area]. This required whole regiments of Moscow officials.

Ivan the Stern needed higher taxes all the more so, because having resisted Sarai legitimism, since 1480, he had to pay the Tartar tribute in two directions, to Sarai and to Crimea. Evidence that he was subject to Mengli-Giray extends as far as 1491. On that occasion on direct orders he supplied military assistance for an expedition against Lithuania as well as against the eastern Hordes with which he had been allied earlier. When his brother Andrew did not prepare his regiment on time as was required by the Crimean Tsar, Ivan imprisoned him. But in the following year the subordination to the Tartars ended. The Crimean Khan wished to occupy Ukraine. Should he incorporate Ukraine to Crimea, the lower Volga region and Kazan, which were his, who would be able to oppose his might? Ivan however made an agreement with the Golden Horde, promising to abandon the cause of the Crimean Horde, provided that he be recognized as independent, making an alliance as an equal. He therefore did not appear with his regiments near Putyvl at the position required by Mengli-Giray and when the Golden Horde blocked the way of the Crimeans, they had to retreat with nothing. The circumstances worked out so well that the Crimean Khans left Moscow in peace until 1521.

Three years after the happy coincidence of 1492, that is, in 1495, Ivan the Stern managed to send the first delegation to the Sultan himself and negotiated a trade agreement. Also the Sultan did not want to see the dynasty of the Girays to grow too strong. Ivan relying, on the Sultan's favour entered into a relationship of equals with a subordinate of the Sultan, that is, the Khan of Crimea. Thus from the position of Mengli-Giray's subordinate he became his ally.

The shedding of the Tartar yoke was not connected with any military victory. There was no external sign of this fact nor was there any assurance that the operation was successful. Even in his testament, written somewhere around 1503, Ivan the Stern provided for the continued payment of the Tartar tribute. In fact however Moscow was independent of the Tartars as from 1492<sup>32</sup>.

The year 1492 was also the year of the death of Casimir Jagiellon. Ivan never made any agreement with him, maintaining the peace in accord with the concord made by his father back in 1449. Immediately, however, he attacked his successor on the Lithuanian throne Alexander. The reason for this was simple. The union between Poland and Lithuania was severed. Alexander was only the Grand Duke of Lithuania, while Poland had a separate King in the person of John Albert. Since then Moscow-Lithuanian wars were to become a permanent element in the history of Eastern Europe. In the first war Lithuania, inferior in military art proved much weaker, so that it had to pay for the peace of 1494 by ceding Vyazma.

In 1494 Ivan adopted the title of “*государь вся руси*” [Governor of All Ruthenia]. Beginning with the *Russian Truth* the title of *государь* [the governor] was associated with the notion of super authority over those who were in personal dependence. Thus the title was directed against Rurikid relatives, for whom the Moscow Prince was to be the unique superior and they all were to be “service princes” dependent upon him. Thus personal subservience became the essence of public authority. Such was the notion of sovereignty from where the example was taken, namely, from among the Khans. Up to now every ruling prince

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<sup>32</sup> The year 1480 is commonly given, but it is deduced *ex post* as referring to the last Tartar raid on Ruthenia.

had been a *государь* [governor]. From this moment onwards only the princes of Ryazan and the minor princes of the Seversk region were titular. They, on the basis of “the right of free departure” served alternatively either Lithuania or Moscow. Thus Ivan truly became the unique governor of the whole Tartar Ruthenia, i.e. the so called “All Ruthenia”. The adoption of this title was a simple confirmation of the existing state of affairs.

Just as earlier thanks to the security from the Lithuanian side Ivan gathered the Zalesye princedoms, now in similar fashion thanks to security from the Tartar side ... he wanted to make gains at the expense of Lithuanian Ruthenia. The easy acquisition of Vyazma and the easy collection of the princes of the Seversk region encouraged further acquisitions. Ivan the Stern thus began trying to see whether it would be possible to set up a pro-Moscow party in Lithuanian Ruthenia. This was possible only on a religious basis and so it greatly influenced the improvement of his attitude as the “governor” to the Orthodox Church.

Alexander thought that he could keep the Moscow danger at bay by marrying in 1495 Helen, the daughter of Ivan and Sophia Palaiologina. This marriage was invalid in the light of Catholic canon law because a papal dispensation had not been granted; the Pope required that either he leaves Helen or she converts to Catholicism. Again a Church union was to satisfy both sides, only to produce results that were contrary to the intended ones. The propaganda in favour of the union, in spite of having shown the conversion of the Kiev Metropolitan, turned out to be more beneficial to ... Ivan, because it brought him supporters in the name of hatred of the Catholic “heresy”. Attempts to gain the support of Helen for the union served Ivan as a *casus belli* [event provok-

ing war], as a breaking of the contract which guaranteed the religious liberty of the daughter of the Governor, as the persecution of Orthodoxy in her person. It was becoming increasingly evident that Ivan wanted a new war against Lithuania.

His unfriendly attitude spoiled the major plans of the Jagiellons. They were about to organize an anti-Turkish league. The oldest of the Jagiellons, Vladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary offered to mediate so as to maintain peace between Lithuania and Moscow. Ivan, who was so adept at utilizing offers of alliances coming to him from the West, pretended that he himself was ready to join the league and he even sent a delegation in April 1490 to Kraków so as to deal with this. In fact, he was only gaining time and hiding his true intentions.

The steady conquest of Lithuanian Ruthenia was already included in Ivan the Stern's political program. The title "Governor of **All** Ruthenia" was to attain a **literal** meaning. The title which so far was indifferent with respect to Lithuania appeared in a new light once Ivan began encroaching onto the provinces of the Lithuanian state!

Worse than these intrusions was the fact that Ivan was trying to impress Lithuanian Ruthenia. He operated as a defender against the Church union. For this reason he was exalted by the Pechersk Lavra of Kiev and its various filial monasteries, and at the same time he presented himself as the only Orthodox Tsar, the only person in the world who in the eyes of the Orthodox Ruthenians was to be considered as the true Emperor.

Six years had now passed from the moment when he refused to stand with the Tsar-Khan at Putyvl and he did not suffer

any difficulties because of this. Seeing therefore that he was independent, Ivan decided to call himself a Tsar. This was linked with the issue of succession to his throne. The court intrigues were turning into plots to such an extent that Ivan feared being poisoned ... by his own wife. When suspicion of this kind fell upon Sophia, Helen of Moldavia won the occasion and Ivan declared his grandson Dmitri to be his successor. This was done in a ceremonial way that was unknown till then. This was the first coronation in Moscow. He ordered the Metropolitan who officiated at the coronation to refer to him as the "Tsar". Ivan, however was careful in using this title and did so rarely. It was only during the next reign that the title was to become current. As compensation he gave his son Vasily the rank of Grand Prince of Novgorod the Great and Pskov. Thus he was establishing a new and large province contrary to all that he had done in his life. Should the province turn out to be hereditary there would appear a secundogeniture, a new state, large enough to stand up against the policies of Moscow. The quarrels and intrigues must have taken on a dangerous turn since he decided to stave them off through such sacrifices but this was only to maintain external unity and the capacity to undertake actions on the Lithuanian side.

Ivan refused to make a truce with Alexander [of Lithuania] despite the mediation of Stephen of Moldavia who joined the anti-Turkish league and despite the arrival of a delegation from Vladislaus of Hungary. Ivan lingered thinking up various formalities until May 1501, when it became obvious what were his true intentions. Alexander then hastily allied with the Khan of the Golden Horde, Shah-Ahmad as well as with the Teutonic Knights from Livonia. Just as they were discussing a common expedition against Moscow, John Albert [king of Poland] died and Alexan-

der occupied by the new election [of the King] would have preferred to settle for any kind of peace should Ivan be ready to make it. Alexander neglected completely his duties in respect to his allies as a result of which the Muscovite army entered Livonia in October 1501. Plettenberg the landmeister with his own army managed to force the intruders out, gaining a major victory near Ruthenian Narva, i.e. by Ivangorod in early March 1502. Shah-Ahmad left to himself was defeated by Mengli-Giray in May 1502 who profited from the occasion to administer the final blow to the Golden Horde. Ahmad with the remnant of his army hid amongst the Nogais at the mouth of the Volga.

Alexander returned from Kraków as the Polish King, but without a Polish army. Poland had not yet begun to treat Lithuanian problems as its own. Meanwhile Ivan sent his grandson Dmitri to Smolensk. A regular siege started. In September 1502 the last expedition of the Teutonic Knights against Pskov turned out to be fruitless. (The first one had been in 1222). Lithuania was saved by some little understood dynastic complications of the new Tsar. Suddenly, Dmitri was told to return from Smolensk and he was imprisoned together with his mother. In April 1502 Ivan declared that his successor would be not Dmitri but Vasily. He ordered his four other sons to sign an agreement according to which they recognize the right of their father to designate a successor regardless of the seniority of the line. At least the danger of the secundogeniture was abolished.

The war was continued in a sluggish manner until towards the end of 1502 a legate of Pope Alexander VI came to Moscow worried about the anti-Turkish league. He did what he could to free Alexander from his war with Moscow, but unwittingly he made a certain indiscretion. Wishing, as he imagined to press Ivan

to the wall the papal legate declared that the part of Lithuania that Ivan was currently conquering was the heritage of Vladislaus Jagiellon with whom Moscow was not at war, thus the conquest should be terminated. Ivan, as if provoked by this, answered that only Poland and Lithuania could be considered as the heritage of the Jagiellons, but not Ruthenia.

In March 1503 Ivan informed [King and Grand Duke] Alexander that if he wants peace *он бы государю нашему отчины, Русские земли, вся поступилъ* [he must restore all the Ruthenian land, our fatherland, to our state] because: *вся Русская земля божиею волею из старины от наших прародителей наша отчина* [by the will of God the whole Ruthenian land from antiquity since our ancestors is our fatherland ]. In consequence, with difficulty only a six year armistice was negotiated, and with very severe conditions. Lithuania gave to Moscow the whole watershed of the Desna. During the armistice further negotiations about peace were to be conducted, but everything fell when during an audience on 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1504 Ivan informed the Lithuanian delegation that all the lands of Ruthenia are his patrimony, and so he should also receive “Smolensk, Kiev and other forts”. In fact he was calling on Alexander to cede to him the whole of Lithuanian Ruthenia.

Thus it was utopia to think of a permanent peace. The armistice was valid until 1509 but according to the Moscow understanding of international law it ended immediately in the case of death of any of the rulers who made the agreement. Ivan the Stern died in November 1505 and Alexander wanted to try his luck. Before however he managed to prepare anything and prevent the

danger to Lithuania coming from the sons of Mengli-Giray (Glin-ski beat the Tartars at Kletsk in August 1506), Alexander himself died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1506.

He left to his successors a ferocious war with Moscow, one that would not allow any compromises so long as the tsardom of Muscovy continued to claim Lithuanian Ruthenia.

It was true that Ruthenia was the patrimony of the Rurikids, but also for a long time it was the undoubted patrimony of the progeny of Gediminas! Ivan held the position that **the rights of the original owners cannot expire, so long as there are some inheritors**, even of the furthest possible degree of relationship. It may be worth mentioning here that such notions about property rights continue till this day in Moldavia. The law of repurchase and pre-emption known everywhere at some stage of social development occur there in the most primitive form, and Ivan applied this in respect to Lithuania. The repurchase of course was to be made by armed force. It has also to be noted that Ruthenian law had no such pre-emption law.

At issue was a private-legal notion, the right of ownership. The notion of Ruthenia on the Moscow side was the same as in the XIII<sup>th</sup> c. Ruthenia was where there are Rurikids or where they have been. It would be vain to seek any national substratum to this, even an elementary one. In the beginning of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. throughout Ruthenia, both that belonging to Moscow and that belonging to Lithuania, no one ever thought of ... nationality. This is not an oriental concept and the territories of the Moscow state, directly after the times of Zoe-Sophia!, were rapidly adopting Asiatic features.

## **Part III**

### **Moscow Tsardom (1505-1725)**



#### **XIV. The birth of a specific culture (1505-1554)**

Ivan the Stern assigned only loose forts to his younger sons, without any neighbouring regions, and these were scattered throughout the entire state. Thus they had revenue only from some forts, as it were a salary, and they were not holding any provinces. The oldest son and successor of Ivan, Vasily Ivanovich (1505-1533), from the very beginning had an advantage over his brothers and a much greater one than any of his predecessors had.

Alexander's plan of trying luck in confrontation with Moscow after the death of Ivan was taken up by his brother and successor Sigismund the Old (1506-1548), who just as Alexander did not wait for the finalization of the election [as King] in Poland. During the election, being only the Grand Duke of Lithuania, he sent a delegation to Moscow in late autumn of 1506 demanding the return of the conquered territories. Vasily in response said that he did not own any foreign lands, *a u ot прародителей наших и вся Русская земля наша отчина*, [whereas the entire land of Ruthenia since our forefathers is our fatherland].

Moscow moved first, whereas Sigismund managed to gather an army only in June 1507 and he started to push out Moscow from Belarus. Plettenberg, the Livonian landmeister, an ally of Alexander, this time turned away from Lithuania. But in July 1508 the Lithuanian hetman, the orthodox prince Konstantyn Ostrogski, won a major victory near Orsha and this inclined Moscow to seek peace. Sigismund also preferred to discontinue the war, abandoning even the aim for which the war was started: the regaining of conquered properties, because he managed to incline Vasily towards something that was worth much more, namely, an

alliance against the Tartars. This was considered a happy introduction to a common future war against Turkey. Thus a permanent peace and not an armistice was signed, on conditions that were basically unfavourable to Lithuania: *uti possidetis* [as you possess].

It turned out that Vasily double crossed Lithuania because he wanted to execute the final incorporation of Pskov during the peace. This happened in 1510, and so already next year it was known in Livonia that a discontinuation of the peace with Lithuania was decided.

The third war with Moscow dragged on for ten years (1512-1522) having a pan-European diplomatic context. Sigismund the Old tried to finalize the age long issue with the Teutonic Knights. He threatened that he would transfer them to Podolia, where they would have multiple occasions to fight the heathens, namely the Tartars. In the meantime the Grand Master conspired with Vasily and pointed out to Emperor Maximilian the possibility of profiting from the eastern context. Already in 1513 Vasily obtained help from the Teutonic Knights of Prussia, mercenaries armed in European fashion. Soon the Emperor gave his support to the idea of reclaiming from Poland the so called Regal Prussia, which the Knights lost in 1465. (Plettenberg bought into this idea in the interest of the entire Order). The Emperor promised significant assistance. He was planning a great league against the Jagiellons that was to include the dynasts of Brandenburg and Saxony, all the provinces of the Teutonic Knights, Wallachia, Denmark, Moscow and the Habsburgs. They were to take away from the Jagiellons the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary.

Vasily had no luck. In vain his armies sieged several forts of northern Lithuanian Ruthenia, and twice attempted to take Smolensk, this “key to the lands of the North”. Peace seemed imminent when Maximilian offered Moscow his plans of a league. In August 1514 the Emperor made “a permanent alliance” with Moscow and convinced Vasily to move against Smolensk a third time. Also this time he failed to capture it, but he did take it. This was so because the Lithuanian aristocratic Glinski family betrayed and urged the garrison to submit to Vasily.

Besides the tie with the German Order and with Moscow the imperial league never came about, but already in November 1514 we find the first official information about plans to have a meeting of the Habsburgs with the Jagiellons in Vienna. A dynastic compromise was made at the first “Congress of Vienna” in May 1515. Mutual marriages were decided and as a result Bohemia and Hungary eleven years later passed into the hands of the Habsburgs.

But the alliance of Moscow with the Teutonic Knights held. In 1516 the Grand Master Albrecht [Hochenzollern] of Brandenburg waited with a first class regiment on the Samogitian border to see how the struggle of the Moscow forces at Vitebsk would ensue. Moscow had to retreat and so the next year it remained quiet. But Vasily did not contract a peace treaty when Sigismund demanded the return of Smolensk, because he expected the outbreak of war between Poland and the Teutonic Knights in which Lithuania would have to participate being endangered from the Livonian side. The King indeed did declare war and the Grand Master received financial support from Moscow. Mutual diplomatic missions and conspiracies against Sigismund persisted

throughout 1521 and 1522. These were sad times for Polish politics. Poland did settle an armistice with Albrecht allowing him to turn into a temporal prince (1521, 1525) [and secularize the Order through the embracing of Lutheranism]. The confrontation with Moscow was terminated, leaving Smolensk in Moscow's hands. The hope of regaining it "in more happy" times was not abandoned and for this reason there was no peace but only an armistice, negotiated for five years in 1522, and then extended in 1527 for a further six years.

Moscow triumphed having encroached into Lithuanian Ruthenia. The old program of Algirdas was being put in place, but in reverse.

Because of all this Vasily felt stronger on the internal front. He ended the nominal freedom of the Ryazan principedom in 1521. What was of historical importance here was not the fact itself, after all, the principedom was in Moscow's hands for quite some time, but the method that Vasily used to achieve this. He imprisoned the last prince of Ryazan. This method was to become systematic in Vasily's governance. The former successor to the throne, his nephew Dmitri lingered in prison and died there. The same happened to Vasily's youngest brother Simon, who tried to escape from his brother's violence to Lithuania.

In Moscow the time of Tsarist terror began. The Tsar could do whatever he wanted because the state religion would bless anything that he demanded. Vasily beheaded the *boyars*, treated them as his slaves and referred to them as his *смерды* [peasants]. Even his brother-princes had to call themselves his *холопы* [slaves, servants] ... This was the beginning of an oriental

despotism that copied the Tartar tsardom. It could spread so profusely, because the Orthodox Church helped it along.

Vasily returned to strict religious fidelity. Under his rule the Josiphlanes (Josephites) gave direction to the Church. They were called so after *igumen* [head of a monastery] Joseph, i.e. Joseph Sanin. They insisted upon a fierce persecution of Bogomilism and so they supported autocracy. They finally determined the strict bond between the Church and the state so that they would support one another. Thus they approved the extensive right of the state to intervene in matters of the Church. The struggle with the Judaizers was not easy, because the Jews, who practiced astrology and were involved in the Bogomil groups, were ... the only scholars present in Moscow Ruthenia. Due to their intellectual superiority they had an influence also in spheres that were unquestionably orthodox.

The Jews and converted Jews played an eminent role in the writings of the Orthodox Church, and since they came from Lithuania the Belarus language appeared in the translations of the Bible and commentaries to it. This did not however reach Zalesye and the Belarus language never passed beyond the border of Lithuania. The victory of Josiphlanism and the suppression of both Bogomilism and the Judaizers were linked through a complicated set of historical circumstances with the separation of Moscow from the cultural developments of other parts of Ruthenia. Thus a cultural distinctiveness of Zalesye resulted.

The Orthodox Church wanted to have correct theological teaching, correct translations of texts and correct commentaries to the texts. It was urgent that the true Bible be distinguished from the Apocrypha that were very numerous and hardly anyone was

able to differentiate between them and the true Holy Scriptures. Thus a scholar from Athos was brought in, Maxim the Greek, who had spent much time in Italy and interacted with many eminent humanists of his generation. He arrived. He translated the *Psalter*, and ... was persecuted by envious ignoramuses and money-makers of the Orthodox Church. Finally he was convicted for heresy and for an improper translation of the Bible. He was equalled with the princes and he too died in prison. From that time onwards and for many years Moscow Church scholarship, limited to only a few luminaries, consisted in the memorization of some texts, which naively were always to be taken literally and all commentaries were suspect. The basic principle of Josiphlanism was victorious for several generations insisting that “thinking is the source of evil; thinking is the second fall of humanity”.

On the basis of Josiphlanism social and state consequences were derived. At first this was only in a loose and practical sense, as if accidentally, but soon a theory was articulated.

The creator of the Moscow state and culture theory was the monk Philotheus. In his letters to Vasily he reflected upon the history of the Church and of the Christian world in general. The true faith that for centuries was held by Constantinople did not crash together with the fall of the city. “Holy Byzantium did not vanish but was transferred to Moscow” as to “the third Rome, and there will be no fourth”. On this basis Philotheus welcomed Vasily as the new “head of all Christendom and the lord of the future of the world”.

For a long time there were signs that the religious slogans of Zalesye would be more exclusive than anywhere else and that

these peoples would be able to define their identity only on a confessional basis. With this foundation a strict exclusiveness was worked out, with an ever more outspoken and clear notion of their own religion and the consideration of themselves as being a chosen people in contrast to the neighbouring peoples and the heathens. Philotheus finally defined **the basic canon of Moscow culture: the conviction about their own superiority over the rest of the world, founded on a state religion and temporal despotism controlling the Orthodox Church.** The canon of Philotheus became the leaven of a new culture.

The Seversk region hesitated between the two centres of culture, Vilnius and Moscow. It was a conglomerate of small princedoms transferring all the time from the Jagiellons to the Rurikids and back again. The predominance of Moscow over Lithuania at that time terminated these transfers and in 1523 Vasily took over Novgorod of Seversk locking the local prince, according to his unchangeable system, in prison for life. The Seversk region which at the time was culturally deficient submitted passively to the state of affairs in which cultural issues were determined by terror. Without difficulty it adapted to the Moscow system so that in fact an expansion of Zalesye took place. The occupation turned into an assimilation, just as in Novgorod the Great and Pskov not to mention Ryazan or Tver. This same process of cultural assimilation began in the Smolensk region. The state border in Ruthenia had the magic power of determining culture.

The occupation of provincial princedoms ended with the incorporation of the Seversk region. This was the last land of Ruthenia that still had its own princes, the last line of the “subjected” Rurikids. From the time of Ivan Kalita their number continued to increase, with more and more princes “in service”. Their total

number was considerable. After all, six “grand principedoms” were subjected, each of which had several minor provinces. Thus in the days of Vasily Ivanovich their class must have numbered something of the order of several hundred persons. This was the oldest Russian nobility, of truly dynastic origin.

As the occupation of provinces progressed, thousands of families of the military troops, courtiers and *boyars* of all the former principedoms transferred themselves “in service” of the one *зосударь* [Governor, Tsar]. Whoever failed to report to this service would be suspected of being malcontent and would lose not only his position but could also expect as a certainty a confiscation of his property. Without any precept being decreed, in fact the obligation of “service” was introduced. Since then each son of the *boyars* had to go through military service. Who had not performed his military duty when young could not claim to belong to the *boyar* class. The result was that it was impossible to hold any public office or have any larger land property without being “in service” to the Tsar. Who did not “serve” belonged to the plebs, even if he was very rich; but after some time he would lose the right to own land property.

Thus there were three classes of those who were “in service”: the princes, the *boyars* and the *dyaks*. Anyone could become a *dyak*; this was a democracy of the alphabet [only literates could be *dyaks*]. The princes were the aristocracy by birth. In the middle there was the *boyar* class, which was indeterminate. The Tsar’s favour could make a *dyak* or practically anyone into a *boyar*, just by giving him use of the prince’s villages. These were the so called *помещики* [landowners in service]. At the same time disfavour with the Tsar could result in expulsion from this indeterminate class necessarily connected with affluence. But the Tsar

could not deprive the princes of their title, even should fate reduce the progeny of some provincial prince to a very lowly condition. Thus there were many truly impoverished princes who by their lifestyle and social influence stood much below the *boyars*. It has to be noted that numerous princely families resisted the subjection as long as it was possible and they were penalized by the Tsar's disfavour.

In this manner a new social system was developing, which in the next generation was to adopt Tartar elements directly and ... to petrify. At the beginning Tartar influences were only in the state notions and court custom. Vasily liked the Tartar fashion and arranged his court completely in a Tartar mode, embellishing it with shining oriental luxuries. He introduced a fully slavish Tartar etiquette and Tartar attire.

The Tartars were rebuilding their position under the Girays and Tartar culture was on the increase. The fall of the Golden Horde was only an internal inter-Tartar crisis which resulted in the centre of gravity moving to Crimea. Since the end of the XV<sup>th</sup> c. the Tartars could no longer be called "barbarians". The strength of the Girays became considerable even more so when the Astrakhan Khanate was added to the Crimean; the Kazan Khanate was subordinate to it.

Vasily tried to impose upon Kazan a Khan of his choice, but by doing this he only invited a terrible invasion of the successors of Mengli-Giray that almost reached Moscow in 1521. There survived a tradition, a very probable one, that Vasily had no other choice but to recognize himself again as obliged to pay the tribute to the Girays and that only a new way of conducting war unknown to the Tartars saved the "Tsar of all Ruthenia" from becoming

again a Grand Prince requiring a Tartar *ярлык* [certificate]. The retreating Tartars encountered artillery transported from Ryazan and this freed Moscow from the Giray supremacy.

Further expeditions against Kazan in 1523 and 1524 brought no results. Therefore something like a blockade of this trade centre was imposed. This began with the setting up of a competing trade market in Makarevo on the opposite side of the river Volga, and this was to be followed by the establishment of several such encircling stations.

Being busy with the Tartar plans Vasily did not attempt further acquisitions in Lithuanian Ruthenia, thereby fulfilling the six year armistice of 1527. In 1533 the days of Vasily ended, and again the next reign was to start with a war with Lithuania.

Since Vasily the Blind the rulers of Moscow held onto the principle of personal rule. Vasil Ivanovich was a despot, who accepted no restrictions to his will. Personal rule over an extensive area is utopia, even when the monarch is very hard working. After Vasily Ivanovich the state of Muscovy covered an area of 40 000 sq. miles! With such a territory personal rule had to change into chaos or the rule of the *dyaks*, the bureaucracy. In the case of the abolition of the principle of personal rule an oligarchy could form and there were groups inclined to it in the retinue of the Tsar.

Personal rule could not last any longer also because very rapidly a degeneration of the Muscovy line of the Rurikids occurred. Both sons of Vasily Ivanovich were deranged. The younger Yuri, as soon as he grew up, turned out to be suffering from complete madness. The elder, Ivan the Terrible (1533-1584) was affected by throne madness, persecution complex, religious mania,

and also with a derangement common in the East, which in Europe, only in the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> c. was defined as sadism. At the time of the death of the father none of this could be predicted because Yuri was an infant and Ivan was only three years old. The field opened for a long regency, which even formally could not last less than nine years. Eastern princes were considered war-worthy at the age of twelve, but even this was far away.

The rules of dynastic order were adopted from the Tartar East. From there came the conviction about the purely personal character of supreme authority. It was personal to such an extent that it passed onto the widow of the deceased ruler when the new one was underage, she being a representative of the personality of her deceased husband. The widow was also entitled to strictly personal rule. Thus she had to right to pass on the governance to whomever she chose, not being in any way limited in the choice of her ... favourite.

The first ruling widow, the first “Tsarina”, was a Lithuanian, the second wife of Vasily, Elena Vasilyevna Glinskaya. She came to Moscow with the whole Glinski clan after they handed over Smolensk to Moscow. Since for known reasons the Tsar did not want to have Rurikid in-laws and no Wallachian princess was available, he was glad to find a spouse worthy of himself among the Glinski family. It needs to be recalled that the Lithuanian-Ruthenian aristocracy surpassed that of Muscovy in education and also in routine pertaining to affairs of state. Behind Elena’s back there was her uncle, Michael Glinski, but he was not approved by ... Elena’s favourite, prince Obolensky. And so Michael went to jail. Obolensky ruled, but Elena cared for the interests of her son. Being aware that one of her husband’s brothers may try to seize power, she preferred to make this impossible before any of them

tried to take Ivan's place. Scarcely four years passed and both her brothers-in-law, Yury and Andrey died in prison.

It was up to Michael Glinski and then Obolensky to conduct the fourth war against Lithuania. This war (1534-1537) did not lead to any results, even though Lithuania had assistance from Poland. The Polish hetman Jan Tarnowski conquered Starodub in 1535, but after the Poles receded, in the third year of the war Moscow reached as far as Velizh. Then in 1537 an armistice was negotiated again for only seven years.

Prince Obolensky was then replaced by Telepnev, who was no prince. This was seen as being an offence and sign of contempt of the princes of Rurikid blood such as the Obolenskys, Byelskys, Shuyskys, Kurbskys and many others. Thus when Elena died in 1538, these families took the care over Ivan in their hands.

Among these princely families no doubt there was material for oligarchs. But aristocrats who want to set up a political class of their own have to be disciplined and loyal towards one another. The Muscovite elite was too primitive to understand this. They failed to generate some class consciousness. They were a crowd of loose individuals capable of joint action against an intruder such as Telepnev, but once they got rid of him, they started to intrigue against one another. Not having any clear end or clan ambition they only hindered one another. None of them represented anything. They had no concern for the state. Each one only wanted to gain personally from the governance. Initially the Shuyskys won the "care" over Ivan against the Byelskys, but then there was rivalry within the Shuysky family itself. Vasily Vasilievich Shuysky began the series of regents, but he soon died and

was followed by his brother Ivan, who was soon replaced by Andrei Michailovich Shuysky. With every change of the “guardian” there was a change of favourites, courtiers and parasites as well as ... metropolitans, because each one had his own candidate for this office.

The mindlessness of those who rule is not the monopoly of any culture or any part of the world. But here something else was noticeable. None of these regents ever thought of occupying the throne himself in spite of the fact that the characteristics of Ivan were simply calling for his dethronement. His bad instincts were very clearly differentiated from the noble “sternness” of his grandfather and so he was given the ignoble name of “Terrible”, i.e. somebody who was cruel, and yet nobody ever thought of the possibility of depriving him of the throne.

At the age of thirteen Ivan was already “war-worthy” and so fictitiously it was said that he held the reigns of government. In 1543 he had a fit of madness during a court banquet and he ordered that the regent, Andrei Shuysky be thrown out into the courtyard among wild dogs. The order was obeyed and the dogs devoured the regent, while the guests continued with the meal. It is clear that mid-XVI<sup>th</sup> c. Moscow was already totally a part of Asia. It was to go down on this road long and far.

Ivan the Terrible allowed himself to be tamed by the Glin-ski clan, the relatives of his mother, while he completely ignored his father’s relatives. Such a tendency for scheming on the mother’s side was a constant feature of the Orient. Thus a second period of the influence of the Glinskis ensued, but also not for long. Their only political act was the further extension of the armistice with Lithuania in 1544 for a period of ten years.

In January 1547 Ivan was crowned and married, because he was already ... 17 years old. He chose a spouse according to the method practiced by the Khans when they wanted to complete a bevy of concubines. Throughout the country the prettiest girls were found and sent to Moscow for the Tsar to choose among them. This Christian Tsar however was not selecting a concubine but a righteous spouse that would be a monarch for the state. Ivan was to repeat this procedure six times because in all he had seven wives. This became the dynastic custom in Moscow.

The relatives of the first wife, the Romanovs removed the Glinskis from the Tsar's favour and government already in the same year 1547. It is difficult to tell in whose hand the Romanovs were to function as tools, but once they realised that they could live and operate on their own account they did not refrain from doing so. When in that year a fire devoured Moscow, which until the mid-XIX<sup>th</sup> c. was wooden, the rumour was spread that the Glinskis had set fire to the city. A mob destroyed their home and the head of the family, Yuri Glinsky was strangled to death. Since then for a long time there were no aristocratic clans in the Tsar's court.

The customs and behaviour of Ivan did not encourage people to commune with him, especially those who could manage without this. The positions in the court were filled by such individuals for whom proximity with the Tsar was such a step in their career that it was worth the experience. People hardened in this "courtship". There were for example those who would not even sigh when the Tsar played in his favourite manner piercing their foot to the ground with the point of his famous walking cane. This was one of his more innocent entertainments! With time he reached such ease in the Asiatic games of a despotic degenerate

that for him it was a trifle to murder people by the dozens, even from his close retinue. He always found the greatest pleasure in the immediate torturing of anyone who happened to draw his attention because he enjoyed seeing the pain of his victim, even it was his wife.

No matter whom the Tsar was, his person was an object of religious veneration. After all Philothus had declared that the Tsar was the representative of the “third Rome” and not the Metropolitan! Thus in the name of the supernatural order, in the name of God’s peace on earth, God’s kingdom on earth, one should consider oneself an unquestioned slave of the Tsar. This slavery supposedly did not debase, in fact it elevated, ennobled, because it gave man a higher religious sanction. The kingdom of God consisted in the fact that there was a Tsar. Thus a righteous Muscovite could not have any doubts about the form of governance and how could one want to limit the power of God’s chosen one? **Whether the Tsar was good or evil, this was something between him and God, and the people had nothing to say about this.**

This is why no one ever thought of dethroning Ivan the Terrible. As long as the state religion was not affected, belief in the mystic world mission of the Tsar protected Muscovite despotism from any danger. It seems that Ivan himself fervently believed in this aspect of his imperial dignity and considered himself to be a religious figure.

The religious substratum of monarchism became the primary feature of Moscow culture and thus a chasm developed between it and the Lithuanian-Ruthenian culture which was moving towards the adoption of liberal Polish notions about his Majesty the King as the first citizen in the state. In fact **the very notion of**

**citizenship was and continues to be alien in Moscow**, because it is impossible to fit into its canon of principles and views notions about rights and human dignity based on personal values that would be parallel to duties. This is the reason why feudalism in any form could not develop in the Muscovite humus . There were many who were “in service” in Moscow, but the “service law” of Lithuanian Ruthenia failed to cross the borders of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The social structures of Lithuanian and Muscovy Ruthenia were very different.

Under Ivan the Terrible there developed a social structure that was perfected to the smallest details having a decisive bureaucratic component. The hierarchical position of each clan was defined with precision following the principle that there are no equals and that everybody was either above or below somebody else. The *Родословные книги* [genealogical books] were written up containing a list of families of princes and more important *boyars*, who held positions in Moscow even before the whole Zalesye was forcibly united. These families would be harmed should they be located below some prince of ancient pedigree whose ancestors were maybe enemies of the fortunate line that delivered tsardom. Thus these loyal *boyar* families were treated on an equal par with the princes and placed alongside them in the genealogical book.

The starting point for the hierarchical position of a given family was their place within the court ceremonial: where should they sit when invited to the Tsar’s table. This had consequences for all realms of life. This is the origin of the so called *местничество* [placing] i.e. the determination of the place at table. A true placement mathematics was worked out, by no means easy, following complicated rules that contemporary European

minds would find incomprehensible. Ivan the Terrible delighted in these calculations and he gave a legal status to these genealogical books, attributing to himself the right to interpret them. He became a master in this field. Appeals against a too low location were sent to him and he personally resolved these complaints. Finally, being obviously exhausted by these issues, he ordered that only the head of a clan had the right to appeal its location in the genealogical book.

Hierarchical justice meted out so accurately only to “the best” met with approval and was desired by all “the good”. Thus the *родословы* [genealogies] were extended so as to cover all the families that Ivan the Terrible considered to be the *boyars*. It was only then, when they were written into the genealogies that the *boyars* became a specific social class, a caste to which one belonged simply on the basis of birth, when this was officially certified. Thus from this moment, one could be very rich, even influential, but if one’s father was not written into the genealogical books, one was not a *boyar*. And from this moment onwards **the ruler could nominate somebody as a *boyar***, whereas before, the notion was unclear and had no legal meaning. Thus the *boyars* became a closed caste the access to which was possible uniquely through the Tsar’s nomination. This was so because only a Tsar’s decree would allow for new entries in the genealogical books.

In this way a second formation of Muscovy gentry appeared: the “written in” *boyars*. This was a gentry that had no crests, symbols or clan calls, and was only conditional, because each generation had to be renewed in nobility by being “in service”. Thus the class did not have any dignity of its own; in respect to the throne they were all slaves dependent on the Tsar’s

whim. The *boyars* therefore lacked the basic elements of European gentry. In the eyes of the gentry of Lithuanian Ruthenia the Moscow *boyars* were not true noblemen. The greater the importance of the Polish gentry, transferred then to Lithuania and Lithuanian Ruthenia, the greater was the cultural chasm between the two Ruthenias. All the privileges of the Moscow *boyars* were based on ... the forced duty to be “in service”. Thus the social placing soon became a service hierarchy, a kind of bureaucracy by birth, because the service position was determined by the placing in the genealogical books. It became therefore a principle that being a *boyar* depended on service, and the position in service depended on birth.

The will of the Tsar’s could of course make all sorts of alterations, but this was the only sphere of life in which the Tsars, even Ivan the Terrible, considered their power to be limited. Only later did they attempt to free themselves from these restrictions of placing, because the situation was reached that even military rank during war depended upon it. The decision about who was to lead an army was determined by the position in the genealogical books.

A certain kind of correction was supplied by the *dyaks*, who increased in number. They were not listed anywhere and did not hold any superior official positions, but they could be and often were very influential. The Tsar determined the extent of the *dyak*’s responsibility according to his whim. These were extraordinary officials who could have any position. And the Tsars preferred people of low social standing because they enjoyed the exercise of their power through the humiliation of the higher and the elevation of the lower.

During the time of Ivan the Terrible a major conflict erupted between the *dyaks* and those of “higher birth”. There was a time when the *dyaks* were winning. The smart managed to reach high even under Ivan the Terrible; but no one ever knew for how long. *Dyak* Alexey Adashev advanced so high that he became as if the premier of the state, something like the viziers of the Khans or the high vizier of the Sultan. He was given as an assistant a clerical companion, no bishop or learned monk but a simple priest, a *dyak* in clerical garb by the name of Sylvester. So as to forestall any opposition from the *boyars* Adashev ordered his subordinate bureaucracy to select people he could rely on in the forts and settlements and to tell them to come to Moscow on a fixed date in 1550. A comedy was organized pretending that they were representatives of the entire country. Their gathering, which took place in the open air in Moscow, was simply an ostentatious installation of Adashev. The *dyaks* showed their power. Village and town people were organized against any possible opposition of those of “higher birth”.

The *non-boyar* classes fared well under the rule of Adashev. Local administration was established allowing for some self-government with elected *starosts* and with an autonomous judiciary. This improved life and property security. After all this is the foundation of all communal life. The government of Adashev was beneficial in many ways because he introduced order in the administration. The negative side was the introduction of the chancellery spirit even in the local governments.

On the external side Adashev worked towards the further encirclement of Kazan. In 1551 he even set up a military post in its vicinity, in Sviashsk on the Sviaga. The sending of a plenipo-

tentiary to Kazan, soon after appointing a candidate for the tsardom of Kazan, during struggles connected with the succession after the death of the Khan there in 1552, was viewed as a provocation. It moved all the parties in Kazan and sparked a decisive reaction. It was known in Moscow that the Crimeans would defend the Khanate that was subordinate to them. It was also known that a Tartar attack on of Moscow territory was likely, and so fire arms and artillery were prepared well. Even though the Kazan Tartars united with the Nogai Horde and the Crimean Tartars were heading for Moscow, Moscow this time felt sure of itself. The Crimeans had to recede from Tula and reached no further. Near Kazan 30 000 defenders were gathered, but this was nothing in the face of the 150 Moscow cannons led by a German ballistic expert who knew how to set up mines using gun powder. In the summer of 1552 Kazan fell beaten by this higher military expertise.

This event, awaited for over several generations had monumental consequences.

Immediately thousands of traders from Zalesye were settled in Kazan expelling the Bulgar and Tatar trading families that held this position for ages. Most extensive trading possibilities opened up before the state of Muscovy. Through Vyatka there was free access to the shores of the White Sea while on the other side the whole of eastern Yugra fell in the hands of the new masters of Kazan. Two years later, in 1554, there was an adventurous expedition against Astrakhan and this Khanate was torn away from the Girays. **The whole Volga was now within the borders of the tsardom of Muscovy**, reaching already the Caspian Sea. This had even further consequences. In the years 1552-1557 the lands of the Cheremises fell to Moscow as well as the remainder

of the Mordvins, Chuvash (a mixture of Bulgars and Tartars), Votyaks and Bashkirs peoples. Further to the south the Nogais and the Kalmyks entered the sphere of Moscow influence. The roads were opened to the Caucasus and Siberia. Tsarist Ruthenian trade was entering Asia from two directions.

The importance of these trade routes was understood in Europe, much better than in Moscow itself. England, rivalling Spain and Portugal in universal trade tried various ways. One of them was the attempt to reach India by land across the territories of Muscovy. The English calculated well that between England and the Volga region there had to be a free sea passage to the north of Scandinavia and through the White Sea. Thus in 1553, Adashev in the name of the Tsar received the captain of an English ship that arrived with a letter from Mary Tudor. For climatic reasons this newly discovered route proved to be only of scientific interest.

It was closer and easier for the Swedes to reach “India” across Muscovy. In 1554 a mutual trade agreement was made with very generous conditions. The Swedish King allowed traders from the territories of the Tsar to travel through his lands to Flanders, France and England and in reciprocity the Swedes obtained permission to travel across the lands of Muscovy all the way to India and China. This treaty of course demonstrated not Muscovite but Swedish geographical knowledge! Soon the development of life in Scandinavia took a different turn, which made the search for prosperity through trade with the East redundant, and so both the Swedish and English plans were not put into practice. But Moscow was taught the value and further direction of its trade routes, and it did not fail to make use of this. Until then the geographical horizons of Moscow ended at Tyumen. Soon they

were to move much further eastwards, but for themselves, and not for the Swedes or English.

Trade entrepreneurship directed towards the exploitation of foreign lands was in the blood of the descendants of the Varangians. There was no shortage of traders driving in the direction of China until finally they reached there. One of the most outstanding of such entrepreneurs of the first generation after the conquest of Kazan was Gregory Strogonov, the progenitor of one of the richest Russian families. In 1558 he managed to acquire a concession over desert territory along the Kama river for a stretch of more than twenty miles, so as to set up salt works and mines there having a monopoly all the way up to the Urals. Soon the Urals were crossed finding rich ores of iron and lead. The company expanded on foreign territory, amongst nomads with whom relationships were varied. The normal development of mines supplying ores that were much in demand by the government for the needs of the army required some military protection. The Strogonovs received permission to have their own regiment. A famous Cossack, Yermak was chosen to lead it. He moved deeply eastwards reaching the Irtysh and Ob rivers. He beat the local Tartars and began the conquest of the whole of Siberia. Almost within one generation (1558-1583) Western Siberia was counted amongst the possessions of Moscow.

The holding of Kazan led towards Asia. Year by year the state was having more and more Asiatic interests, and also a population that could not be called European. Once the two Tartar Khanates, of Kazan and Astrakhan were conquered by Moscow, the Slav element in that triple tsardom decidedly became a minority. The percentage of Slavs had also declined earlier as a result of the occupation of further principedoms of Zalesye, in which, as

for example in the Ryazan princedoms, the Finish peoples were dominant. All the more so, this happened when the state extended well beyond the settlement areas of the Slavs! The more the power of Muscovy extended, the less it became a Slav state even though the valley of the river Moskva itself always remained an almost entirely Slav region.

The changing of the new territories into Slav lands progressed slowly but in a steady and unrestrained manner. This was not because the Slavs were the politically dominating element. There was no national consciousness in the XVI<sup>th</sup> c.! The growth of Slav and later Russian influence was the consequence of the expansion of Christianity. It followed the Church language. The adherents of Mahomet, except for a several dozen clans that were immediately written into the genealogical books, did not convert to Christianity. When later baptism was imposed by force, the descendants of the Bulgars who had been subject to the Tartars complied, as also the Ural-Finnish peoples of the Volga, but we know nothing about any Orthodox Tartars. Nowhere was it possible to convert them *en masse* and till this day there is no Christian-Tartar region anywhere. It is interesting that there were group conversions where the Tartars held the governance, but this ended once the Orthodox took over control. This has to be attributed to the cultural decline of Zalesye Ruthenia. The relationships turned around in this respect. Earlier, Ruthenia dominated culturally above Kipchak, but later the Kazan Tartars turned out to have a higher level in respect to the declining Muscovy culture.

We know that court habits and fashions were taken over from the Tartars. After the conquest of Kazan Tartar fashion became dominant amongst the *boyars*. Now the locking away of the women, something that had been done only sporadically among

the highest aristocracy, became the rule in every house that wished to be fashionable. This began at the court of the Tsar. By no means was this an indigenous custom, and so it was unknown among the common people. The example came from above because many Tartar clans entered the aristocratic classes. Whoever could demonstrate that among his ancestors there was a *mirza* became a prince, placed on an equal footing with the Rurikids who were “in service”. Every Tartar who had land property became a *boyar* if he only wished. In the higher classes of society a mixing of Tartar blood with the Finish and Slav occurred frequently. Now, in the second half of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. the Tatarization of Muscovy took place on a grand scale.

Strong Tartar social influences contributed greatly to the rapid mechanization of society according to hierarchical ranks. In Kazan there was a strict social hierarchy with three kinds of gentry but access to public life and importance derived only from service in the Khan’s offices. What so far had only an indirect influence on Moscow arrangements through the imitation of the Khans, now was directly introduced in the state and social organism with full force, because what was from Kazan was considered fashionable. The higher Tartar classes differentiated automatically into bureaucratic-hierarchical ranks, according to the *чины* [Chinese ranks] which had persisted among the Tartars dating back to the old tradition of Tamerlane. Muscovite ranks continued to follow the genealogical books, respecting the nobleness of birth. Thus two hierarchical systems faced one another in rivalry until the Tartar proved victorious. Just as earlier conquered Greece imposed its culture on ancient Rome, so Moscow was drawing from the conquered Tartars by the handful. At rapid pace not only the state but also society were becoming Asiatic.

The mixing of the Slav element with the eastern Yugra and the Tartars was not restricted to the *boyar* class. Much of the Slav population moved into the spacious conquered Volga regions. A renewed dispersion of the people began. The extensive character of the Russian form of life began with a very easy struggle for existence. Riches were ready to take, once the people traded along the newly conquered routes in three directions: to Siberia, the Caucasus and the White Sea. Many generations had waited for the occasion to boycott and push out the Bulgar and Tartar trade and to take their place. Once the possibility opened no encouragement was needed. The Slav people began to trade in the Volga region and beyond to such an extent that soon there was a shortage of hands for agriculture. Even the Finns, who had always been farmers, started abandoning agriculture and entered the wide horizons that lay open. As Christian subjects of the Tsar they profited from privileged conditions enriching themselves quickly through trade. Enormous fortunes were made while wider areas of cultivated land turned fallow because there was nobody to work on it. Trade enticed not only those who had some capital at their disposal, but also quite poor people, who acted as second class intermediaries. These agents, engaged in minor trading tasks as *закупы* [purchasers], took high advance payments and then tried to do something on their own. Quickly some capital was gathered as well as useful information and so they could continue on their own accord, finding others to do the subservient works. These were brought in from Zalesye and offered remunerative positions. Thus they abandoned the *boyar* villages without much thinking and willingly. Even land that was owned was abandoned in search for the Golden Fleece. Trade in the Volga region was exceptionally remunerative and it did not require much intelligence and input. It was so profitable that it was difficult to resist the temptation to abandon everything and take part in it. Kazan

Tartars knew these temptations well, and so among them the agricultural population had always been ascribed to the soil because otherwise there would have been ... no agriculture.

Thus shortly in the newly occupied territories there were many Slavs, primarily townspeople engaged in trade. Usually individuals would go alone into the wide world marrying some locally encountered woman, most readily a Tartar, because a Tartar of even the lowest rank was considered to be of aristocratic species. It was not surprising that in the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. there was the saying that each Tartar was a prince!

Initially the difference in religion was of no concern, and when the Orthodox Church structures were brought into the new territories once again there was... the dual faith! Thanks to this particular facility the Church maintained its “purity”, in the sense that there were no changes in the liturgy. That was sufficient and since the oriental religious systems were of a lower kind, the Church did not absorb anything of their essence from them. It stood among the population, irrelevant to it, but not deteriorated by it. It stood above the population engulfed in the dual faith, but it did not adapt to this population. Throughout the Muscovy state the Orthodox Church was uniform and everywhere the same.

The maintenance of Church purity in that period was all the more important because this was what differentiated Muscovy culture from that of Lithuanian Ruthenia. During the Reformation the Grand Duchy of Lithuania became very Calvinist and Protestant pastors influenced the Lithuanian Kiev Metropolitan see. The Orthodox Church readily assimilated the novelties. The *boyar* class of Lithuanian Ruthenia, particularly in Belarus, in its vast majority adopted Calvinism. Also other sects were successful

but Calvinism was dominant. There was resistance against a Church union, but there was great readiness to accept Protestantism. These influences stopped however at the Lithuanian-Muscovy border. In the realm of the Tsar there are no signs of Calvinism. The purity of the Orthodox Church was maintained. Soon there was a return wave towards Catholicism in Poland and in Lithuania [the Counterreformation]. In their struggle against Calvinism fervent and fortunate Catholic missionaries converted also the Ruthenian Protestants. In this way, and only in this way!, Catholicism of the Roman rite reached the Ruthenian *boyars*, who thus became completely equal with the Polish gentry. The adoption of “Latinism” facilitated further the adoption of Polish culture. Thus the *boyars* of the two Ruthenias simultaneously went in different and opposing cultural directions. The Muscovites hastened in the Asiatic direction and the Lithuanians were becoming European.

Kazan was the first fort that was taken by Moscow by storm. (Smolensk had been taken by treachery.) This was the first great triumph of their siege army. The success was achieved thanks to foreign “craftsmen”, particularly experts in ballistics who for two generations had been brought in from Italy and Germany. This new military technology however, which allowed for victories over Lithuania and the Tartars could not be assimilated locally. At that time, the foreign engineers and experts in ballistics could not find sufficiently able local pupils in the tsardom of Muscovy. So it was necessary continuously to bring in expert craftsmen from abroad. This was not without difficulty. Life in Muscovy was so difficult and unpleasant for a European that in spite of very high salaries, after some time they did not want to work in Moscow and the supply of fresh forces withered. Finally

craftsmen from southern Germany had to be found, because Italians did not want to go to Moscow, and under Ivan the Terrible also the southern Germans, with whom contacts were made through Hungary, stepped back. The hope of obtaining craftsmen from England also failed and so there was an attempt to find them in northern Germany. In 1547 Ivan the Terrible sent an agent, Hans Schlitten, who contracted almost a hundred expert technical craftsmen of various kinds.

Unexpectedly, the Emperor Charles V imposed sanctions on this “export” and an already prepared consignment was stopped and forcefully disbanded. This was done at the request of Livonia and with the support of the governments of Lithuania and Poland. As a result the transport routes were closed and the hope that a supply of expert craftsmen would come from northern Germany ended, whereas others did not want to come. Moscow militarism was endangered with stagnation and should this last for long there would be an inevitable decline of military capacity, because it proved impossible to educate local craftsmen.

Relationships with Livonia as well as with Lithuania consisted in a constant prolongation of armistices. Here and there local misunderstandings about border issues broke out and they were immediately resolved, but mutual dislike was growing. The Tsars were watching Livonia with attention. Thus for example Vasily Ivanovich sent missions with very insinuating questions asking why the Archbishop of Riga was building a new fortified castle on the border, in Villack, and it was only Albrecht of Brandenburg, who wanted peace between Moscow and Livonia, who managed to pacify the issue. During the time of Ivan the Terrible relationships did not improve. It was the general opinion that the growing power of Muscovy sooner or later would move against

Livonia. It was for this reason that the Schlitten transport was sanctioned. In the meantime the animosity with Lithuania prevented Moscow from having access to the West. On its part Moscow tried to frighten Livonia with mutual repressions. In 1554 the armistices were due to end. It was a bad sign that the armistice with Lithuania was extended only for two years. When the delegates from Livonia came to deal with Ivan the Terrible, he demanded ... the Yuryev tribute.

This was the beginning of the wars over supremacy in the Baltic.

## **XV. The struggle over the Baltic (1554-1595).**

Over 80 years had passed since the *dyaks* of Ivan the Stern wrote the “Yuryev tribute” into an agreement with the Bishop of Dorpat. In Livonia this was forgotten and Moscow did not remind about this, because it would be pointless – until under Ivan the Terrible a way was searched for exerting pressure on Livonia. Thus the *dyaks* of Adashev unearthed this tribute. The archives of Dorpat were in a worse state than those of Moscow. In Livonia the document of the agreement could not be found and so they did not know what it was all about, whereas the *dyaks* of Adashev had a free hand in attributing to the issue an exaggerated importance. In Livonia there was panic and fear that the Tsar was demanding a tribute, i.e. the recognition of his supremacy over all the states of Livonia!

Moscow was interested in Livonia for two reasons. It wanted to use the routes leading from there to the West, the closing of which could be a severe blow as was demonstrated by the incident with Schlitten. Furthermore Moscow wanted to ensure

political influence there so that Livonia would not side with Lithuania and become a field for war that would encircle Moscow and force war on two fronts.

By this same argument Livonia could be an ally for Moscow against Lithuania! This country therefore had significant importance being a point of balance in the constant struggle between the powers of Eastern Europe that was interrupted only by armistices. Both Lithuania and Moscow had to aim for influences in Livonia and should they prove insufficiently constant and permanent they had to conquer the country. Ivan the Terrible was in a hurry since as of 1547 the import of craftsmen was blocked. Soon the Moscow army would lose its superiority.

These circumstances link directly the eastward expansion of Moscow and the conquest of the Baltic coast. Should Livonia whatever way pass into the Lithuanian political camp, immediately Lithuania would have superiority over Moscow and would endeavour to regain its own territories and perhaps even resuscitate the question of Novgorod the Great. By weakening Moscow from the West, Lithuania would paralyse Moscow's expansion in other directions. In the case of an alliance with Crimea all the fresh acquisitions of Moscow could be questioned. Furthermore, the lack of "craftsmen" would also deprive Moscow of its superiority over the Tartars. All these issues were tied meaning that the political interests of Moscow were bound with the question of Livonia to such an extent that it was an urgent matter of primary importance.

In Vilnius the situation was understood very well. The genial mind of Sigismund August capable of catching the most complicated issues, this King [of Poland] who had an exceptional

political sense saw that “Yuryev tribute” issue was not to be dismissed and so he decided to forestall Moscow. He offered Livonia an alliance in case of any need. Then in Cesis, Adashev proposed that the Tsar would renounce the tribute and offer the best of friendship, on the condition that Livonia would ally with him against Lithuania. Thus Livonia had two mutually excluding proposals, each offering friendship but each in fact proposing the recognition of the partner’s political superiority together with the conversion of its own army into a subsidiary force of either one or the other side. Livonia had to factually submit either to Moscow or to Lithuania even though formally it would retain its independence. Being stuck between Lithuania and Moscow, Livonia was too weak.

The landmeister Fürstenberg’s advisors preferred Moscow and so the Livonian Order chose the direction: with Moscow against Lithuania. The emotions ran so high and became so bold, that the Polish emissary in Livonia, Łacki was killed. Sigismund August responded with full energy. When Livonia did not want to amend, the King ordered general conscription throughout Lithuania and with the regular army of Poland and Lithuania, in all 100 000 armed men, he reached the frontier at Pozvol in 1557. (Hence, the name of the Pozvol war.)The size of the army indicated that the King was ready to challenge Moscow should it come to the defence of Fürstenberg. These preparations for war resulted in Moscow deciding to stay put and the landmeister had to accept the Polish conditions. The pro-Moscow party lost its ground and those who were prepared to ally with Poland and Lithuania against Moscow took over.

The Polish-Lithuanian army receded, and it was not easy to gather such a grand force again. Here an aspect of the military

advantage of Moscow appeared, in that it always had a sufficiently large permanent army, composed of “*boyar* children” and garrisons of forts, the so called *осады* [sieges], so it could take up military initiative at a convenient moment that was dangerous for the opponent. Unexpectedly, Ivan the Terrible attacked Livonia in 1558 and when neither the Order nor the states could even plan a successful defence in a short time he occupied twenty towns engulfing the entire country with his armies. The new landmeister Kettler then negotiated a defensive treaty with Lithuania and Poland and the following year confrontation with Moscow began in Livonia, in which soon the Scandinavian countries were also involved. Again a conflict over the Baltic erupted, something that was known already in the Middle Ages and it was to repeat itself over several generations.

In 1559 Mikołaj Radziwiłł [of Lithuania] occupied Southern Livonia, but further to the North Muscovite supremacy seemed to consolidate, particularly since it reached Fellin (Livonian *Wielun*) [Viljandi] in 1561. Sigismund August did not want to press further before he was sure of his rear. The Livonian Republic composed of several states, shaken by Protestantism, hesitating between Moscow and Lithuania and searching its own constitutional order could not be a reliable support before all these issues were settled. In 1561 the Teutonic Order was abolished (as had happened in Prussia in 1525) and the secularized principality of Courland was given to Kettler as a vassal state subject to Sigismund August. The rest of Livonia was to be handed over to Poland and Lithuania with the assurance of religious liberty for the Protestants as well as administrative and judicial self-government.

The decisions of the Livonians and Poland were forestalled by King Eric XIV of Sweden, who in 1561 occupied the

northern part of the country, namely Estonia. Since all were trying to secure their interests, Denmark did not wish to remain empty handed and so the Danish prince Magnus, the brother of the King, occupied the Ösel-Wiek Bishopric and the very rich Piltene region, secularizing it and confiscating it at the same time.

Livonia was thus a playground and a measuring stick of the power of all the states of Northern and Eastern Europe. Above all these complicated interests, there was one issue that was most important on which everything else was to depend, namely how the Polish-Swedish relationships would work out? Should the Polish-Lithuanian state come to an agreement with Sweden against Moscow the tsardom of “all Ruthenia” would be soon pressed back to the region of Zalesye proper, having only the possibility of further expansion in the direction of the Urals. Never would have Moscow been able to cross the wall of a Polish-Lithuanian-Swedish alliance. Initially there was only mutual observation. The part of the country that was occupied by Moscow separated the Swedes from the Poles and Lithuania.

In these years Ivan attempted to govern really personally. Adashev and Sylvester fell into disfavour in 1560 and from that moment onwards for a long time there was no general governor in the tsardom. The Tsar himself, being very impulsive sent army after army, year after year to Livonia and in 1562 he began war against Lithuania which had the full solidarity of Poland. Ivan was victorious; his generals occupied Polotsk in 1563, but next year the fortune changed. Prince Kurbsky was soundly defeated on the Ula by Mikołaj, “the Red” Radziwiłł. Kurbsky therefore did not want to show himself to the Tsar and he fled to Lithuania, from where he later wrote his famous letters to Ivan, culturally a

very interesting correspondence. The whole army was totally destroyed.

There were complaints against the personal rule of the Tsar, which reached his ears generating a noted response. The Tsar, who was deadly suspicious, knowing that there was an opposition, started to mistakenly suspect that somebody wanted to dethrone him, hand him over to the Crimean Tartars, or do something similar. Thus in December 1564 he organized the comedy of an abdication. At the same time he made sure that the people of the city of Moscow, moving in a procession towards a monastery in which the Tsar was supposedly to “offer himself to God”, would plead him to remain the Tsar. He always looked for the support of the common people against the classes that were capable of ruling the country. He followed the same policy against the princes and *boyars* as his predecessors had done against Novgorod and Pskov. Externally he appeared as a friend of the common people wanting to protect them against the richer classes, even though the common people were not oppressed. He exploited the lower envious instincts of the illiterate masses in order to be able to rely upon them in the case of some presumed dangers that his persecution complex suggested.

The net result of this comedy was his renewed taking over power under the conditions that the “people of Moscow” provided him. This meant that the Tsar could confiscate the property of his subjects, even punish them by death without trial and that the clergy and the Metropolitan himself had no right to plead for the condemned. For the protection of his own person Ivan organized a special regiment of the so called *опричники* [guardsmen], something as if a barbarian praetorian guard. These men swore that they would not know father or mother but only the will of the Tsar

meaning that on his order they would murder even their own parents. As a reward they were allowed to perform any kind of excess on the population and they lived in plenty having whatever “joys of life” that their barbarian style required. Their upkeep was expensive and so the proceeds from twenty forts in the vicinity were scheduled for this. These regions were separated out from the general state dominion, which anyway was also fully dependent on every will of the Tsar, and a distinct administration was set up for them so that the *опричнина* [police rule] was an autonomous sphere belonging to the *опричники* [terror guardsmen]. The idea itself could be useful because it entailed the distinction of state property (known as “Crown property” in Poland) from the property of the court (in Poland, the “table property”). But in Moscow this aspect of the issue was not noted. As a result a band of rogues 6000 strong was established serving the insane butcher on the throne.

Ivan’s persecution complex had defensive and offensive periods in respect to his imagined enemies. In one year, he ordered that a monastery near Moscow, the Alexandrova Sloboda be fortified, where he hid. To reach this retreat it was necessary to pass through the camp of 6000 guardsmen who led a riotous, idle life. In another year, the raging Tsar moved on the offensive and organized expeditions at the head of the guardsmen against various towns, which were said to be the seats of some plots. Usually the towns nearest at hand suffered most, thus most frequently Moscow itself.

For eight years (1565-1572) the leaders of the guardsmen were in fact the rulers of the country and ... of the Tsar. This was a time when organized criminal bands governed.

While the court terror policy flourished, the army was in decline. Then suddenly Ivan wanted to have some fame as a military leader. The campaign in Livonia was not very successful and calls for peace were voiced. Then in 1566 the Tsar organized in Moscow a gathering of *boyars*, clerics, traders and local *starosts* from the border areas and from the Smolensk region, that is, from regions most concerned about the war, and he asked them whether the war should be continued. As expected, they all unanimously supported the whim of the Tsar who had the habit of confiscating property and beheading ... without trial. Thus the war was continued. The Lithuanian field-hetman, Roman Sanguszko won a major victory in 1567 near Chashniki and the next year he conquered Vula. In vain, Ivan negotiated with the Danish prince Magnus. The unpredictability of the Tsar who wanted to rule personally soon resulted in Magnus turning against Moscow.

Meanwhile Sigismund August unexpectedly found a new ally. Sultan Selim II declared war so as to regain Kazan and Astrakhan. He acted as the caliph whose duty it was to liberate the Muslims from the rule of the infidels. The expedition of 1569 was a failure and the siege of Astrakhan in the 1569/70 winter also came to nothing, but the forces of Ivan were divided. In 1571 Moscow was greatly weakened by an invasion of Devlet-Giray from Crimea, who crossed the Oka river 100 000 strong, burnt Moscow and ravaged the entire country through plunder and the taking of people in captivity. The result was that even the common people had enough of these wars and were calling more clearly for peace.

Ivan raged the more, the less he had military success. Not counting the dozens of murders he committed on less significant subjects, in 1569 he ordered the killing of his cousin Vladimir

Andrieevich and also ... the Metropolitan Philip who dared to criticize him for the bestialities of the guardsmen. It needs to be emphasized with utmost stress that even the murder of the Metropolitan did not spark any rebellion against Ivan. This is the best proof that his constant suspicion of plots against him was a figment of his deranged imagination. In 1570 with his guardsmen he organized a robbing expedition against Novgorod the Great and Pskov. For five weeks he was beheading people by the thousands. Finally came the crown of his executioner's rage: in 1572 by his own hand, he killed with a stick his own eldest son and successor to the throne, Ivan the Younger... His persecution complex finally turned against the guardsmen. Not feeling safe with anyone, not trusting anyone, he was afraid of the grumbles of the impoverished people. He agreed therefore in 1571 to an armistice with Lithuania for at least three years. Thanks to this respite it was possible next year to repulse a new attack by Devlet-Giray.

The armistice came towards the end of the distinguished reign of Sigismund August [king of Poland 1530-1572]. Could History ever locate next to each other two contemporary and neighbouring monarchs who were so very different from one another? On the one hand the organizer of the terror police and on the other the negotiator of the ... Union of Lublin! [In 1569, the Union established the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.] **This King introduced Polish public law in Lithuania** and therefore also in Lithuanian Ruthenia. He gave the gentry and the Ruthenian *boyars* of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania the Polish class arrangements and land rights. He abolished the vassalage of the *boyars* (although this did not work out in practice, and the vassalage returned later). He established the local diets [elected local self-governing entities] and a Lithuanian parliament. On this strictly Polish model a set of constitutional laws was prepared for

Lithuania in the field of administration and the state system, **whereas private laws and rights were not affected** in anything. The Lithuanian statute of 1566 had this dual character. It respected the Lithuanian-Ruthenian law, and **introduced Polish law only to the extent that this was required for the introduction of civil liberties**, a notion that was unknown east of the Lithuanian border.

In Lithuania the throne was hereditary. This could become dangerous, because the King had no son, but he had sisters, married to the King of Sweden and the Elector of Brandenburg. The King's nephews, who were foreigners, could come up with a claim to inherit Lithuania. This provided possibilities for diplomatic trading and could cause political complications. Thus Sigismund August declared that he rescinds his inheritance rights in Lithuania and from that moment he made Lithuania into an electoral monarchy just like Poland. Many of the reforms of Sigismund August met with opposition from the Lithuanian aristocrats, who criticised them as being democratic innovations. While the Lithuanian-Ruthenian gentry was calling upon the Crown in 1562 to have a closer union with Poland, the magnates, unhappy with the Polish influences did not want this deeper integration and so at the parliamentary session in Lublin in 1569 they broke off the negotiations. This was a turning point in the history of relationships among the states of Eastern Europe.

The Lithuanian aristocrats broke off the negotiations, but the representatives of Podolia, Volhynia, Podlasie and the Kiev region, that is, the whole of Southern Lithuanian Ruthenia remained in Lublin at the parliamentary session. Since they wanted to benefit from the democratic Polish public law, they seceded

from the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and standing by the King demanded that they would be incorporated into the kingdom of Poland. As a result, also the Lithuanian gentry decided to follow this example and they were ready to abandon their aristocrats and the state distinctiveness of Lithuania being thereby directly incorporated into the Polish kingdom. The terrified aristocrats therefore returned to Lublin, and this is how the famous Union of Lublin of 1569 was sealed. Lithuania retained its separate government, its separate army and a separate treasury, but it lost the whole of Southern Ruthenia.

From this moment, that is, from 1569, the kingdom of Poland bordered on the tsardom of Muscovy. Now Poland was not only a state assisting Lithuania in its wars against Moscow, being able, as sometimes happened, not to offer assistance. Now direct Polish-Muscovite relationships had to be maintained. The Poles and the Muscovites became state neighbours.

The neighbourhood began with efforts on the part of Poland to end the wars and establish friendly relationships with the tsardom of Muscovy. The armistice of 1571 left each side with what it had in 1562. Thus Livonia continued to have four masters: the Swedes, the Danes, Moscow and the Lithuanians with the Poles. Amongst these four all sorts of alliances and compromises were possible. For Lithuania a new trade route opened up along the Western Dvina [Daugava] to the Baltic, but Moscow had Narva there...

In Poland the idea cropped up that maybe a union with the Muscovites could be negotiated just like the Union with Lithuania, with which Poland had fierce wars before Vladislas Jagiełło...

There was no fear of the schism or of the cruelties of Ivan. The cotemporaries had no idea about the Tsar's state of mind. It was thought that he only had a cruel disposition which in contact with Polish laws and customs would have no field for itself. Concerns of great magnitude were at stake: the wars with Moscow would change into a trade and political alliance with the tsardom. By granting Moscow access to the sea, Polish trade and industry would have access to the extensive routes towards the Far East. Should the military potential of Poland, Lithuania and Moscow combine, it would be possible to expel the Turks from Europe and free the Balkan Slavs. Thus a political entity, one of the most magnificent known to history would come about. This project, however, would be the most ... phantasmagorical. The Tsar himself was soon to teach the Poles about this.

**No one in Moscow had a clue what a voluntary union of nations in a common political organism was,** for the simple reason that the notion of a nation was completely unknown there. There they only had the notion of occupation and the force of violence. Ivan the Terrible did not object to the idea of becoming the King of Poland and even more so the Grand Duke of Lithuania. But he did not understand what was proposed and no one in his whole tsardom understood this. The Tsar understood that Poland calling him to the throne would submit itself to Moscow and so as a condition for election he required the ceding of some Lithuanian provinces to Moscow.

The misunderstanding was at least as great as the magnitude of the dreams, and yet the idea of union with Moscow continued to bud and it was to reappear for a long time to come. After the second interregnum when Henry fled [Henry Valois, from France had been elected King of Poland], the candidacy of Ivan

or that of his son Feodor came up again, and even though the candidacy was considered seriously on the electoral field, there was no real political backing. In Moscow the proposal of electing him as King of Poland was taken as proof of weakness, as submission in the fear of war. Thus when the election failed, Ivan moved onto the Polish part of Livonia.

The new Polish king, Stephen Bathory (1576-1586), together with his renowned advisor, chancellor and hetman Jan Zamoyski, not only picked up the challenge, but this struggle over the Baltic was for them only an episode in their greater plans. The further aim of the war was to incline or force Moscow into rendering its numerous armed forces under the command of the Polish King for an expedition against the Turks, thus what was aimed at was a military anti-Turkish convention. Besides, Bathory wanted to take back from the Habsburgs the Hungarian Crown so as to prevent a possible new coalition of this dynasty with Moscow. Otherwise the anti-Turkish league would be endangered from two sides. Bathory himself was to suffice for the league and he counted on his own force planning to simultaneously organize a number of expeditions into the Balkans from Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and from the Moscow side.

Lithuania in the meantime managed to soundly correct what it had neglected earlier in its military strength whereas the development of the Muscovite army was curtailed by the sanctions which blocked the arrival of foreign “craftsmen.” Moscow had a larger army than the united forces of Poland and Lithuania, and also a larger one than any other European country. But having weakened its direct contact with European military technology, and being unable to copy it due to the intellectual limitations of its military leaders, Moscow lagged behind. It could not win by

sheer force of numbers even more so because the Polish army was reaching the height of its success. Not only did it equal any army in Europe, but it was also marked by the creativity of its ideas and accuracy in execution. It reached such perfection that it could beat much larger armies and so the numerical superiority of Moscow was immaterial. Under Ivan the Terrible Muscovy strategy and tactics were again becoming obsolete and they could endanger only those coming from the East.

Ivan expected a war in Livonia, but the Polish-Lithuanian forces moved directly onto Muscovite lands hitting at the rear of the enemy forces. In 1579 Polotsk was regained as well as several minor forts. Immediately Ivan sent envoys offering peace, but they were refused. King Stephen crossed the Dvina and conquered Usviata in 1580 whereas Zamoyski took Velizh and Velikiye Luki. Then several minor forts surrendered on their own account. Not agreeing to any peace King Stephen pressed on in 1581 towards Pskov. Here Ivan Petrovich Shuysky stood ground and tired the Polish-Lithuanian army to the limits of their resistance. Bathory and Zamoyski surprised the whole world because they did not end the siege for the winter (the first such case in the history of modern warfare!), but the extremely severe winter was more favourable to the defenders than to the attackers. Descriptions of this campaign marvelled the whole of Europe because contemporaries found it strange. Pskov was far from surrendering but Poland decided to make new efforts, both military and financial, preparing for the spring of 1582. Both sides were near exhaustion at Pskov but Poland still had greater reserves. This was what Bathory was counting on and what Ivan feared. Towards the end of 1581 the situation reached such a point that even should the Poles depart from Pskov, if they would not settle

for peace, they would undoubtedly return to fight under conditions that would be fatal for Moscow.

In these dire circumstances Moscow found a solution. Ivan the Terrible sent news to Rome declaring that together with his “all Ruthenia” he was willing to accept the Florentine Union on the condition that he could convert in peace. Hastily an envoy from the Vatican was sent to the besieged Pskov, the Italian Jesuit Possevino, who was very naive and vehement, who notified that the war had to be ended in the interest of the Church. It was difficult not to be obedient to the Pope if one hoped for an anti-Turkish league... Ivan renounced his claim to all possessions in Livonia and receded from the coast near Narva, whereby Moscow lost its port on the Baltic and he also returned Polotsk and Velizh to Lithuania. Bathory on his side relinquished some forts and even Smolensk remained in the hands of Moscow. But it was not a peace that was negotiated. It was only an armistice for ten years. This was signed at Jam Zapolski in January 1582.

It was already 25 years since Moscow entered Livonia in 1558. The effort of a whole generation was lost in the unpredictable and unsteady hand of Ivan the Terrible and this inevitably led to the weakening of Moscow also in its relationships with the East, but signs of this were to come about later.

During the armistice King Stephen hoped to settle the Hungarian question and to advance his great plans in that direction so as to exert the pressure on Moscow with greater force. Also Sweden entered into this game of several countries because of Livonia. Since the days of Sigismund August there were Swedish garrisons in the North, in Estonia, which was ceded to Poland and Lithuania by the Teutonic Knights and by Moscow. This was

a difficult problem for the future and so it was better to come to terms with Sweden beforehand, because otherwise all the plans concerning Moscow, Hungary and Turkey could fail should Sweden unnecessarily engage the Polish-Lithuanian forces...

No one in Poland or Lithuania wanted a war with Sweden, least of all the King himself who at the time was preparing himself a party in Hungary. Wanting to settle the issue peacefully it was decided that the succession to the Polish throne after the childless Bathory would be promised to a Swedish prince. The youthful Sigismund Vasa as son of John III Vasa and Catherine Jagiellon was a nephew of Sigismund August, and he was brought up by his mother in the Catholic faith against the will of the father. (Possevino was in charge of the mission in Sweden). The project had full support of King Stephan.

In 1584 during the Polish negotiations about receiving the Swedish prince and the agreement with Sweden regarding Livonia Tsar Ivan the Terrible died. According to the notions of international law in respect to Moscow the treaty of Jam Zapolski ceased to hold.

Also the Swedish-Moscow agreement was no longer binding. In his last years Ivan the Terrible was occupied with the war against Sweden. The Swedes occupied Karelia in 1580 and in 1582 they captured Narva. The following year Ivan had to negotiate an armistice seeing himself defeated also by Poland. The acquisitions of John III Vasa [of Sweden] were kept by him.

The degenerate Ivan the Terrible had two living sons, both of whom were imbeciles. The older Feodor succeeded on the Tsar's throne (1584-1598), while the younger Dmitry, affected by

epilepsy was given by his father Uglich as his maintenance. Even now, not a single prince thought about the possibility of dethroning Feodor even though he was only a figure head. He spent most of his time engaged in religious devotion with no mental order and sense. The religious mania, that appeared in his father sporadically, took over Feodor completely.

Five aristocrats competed for the role of Feodor's substitutes. The first was Nikita Romanov who controlled the state and the Tsar. He was the new Tsar's uncle, his mother's brother. Soon after the coronation of Feodor, which was solemnly celebrated on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1584, the uncle fell ill and died after two years. Thus he made room for another clan of "married in" aristocrats, namely, for Boris Fyodorovich Godunov. He was of Tartar princely origin and his sister was the wife of the Tsar. The Tartar prince knew how to deal with opponents. He ordered that Ivan Fyodorovich Mstislavski be shaven and sent to a monastery. He exiled many sending them to distant towns. He forced Bohdan Bielski to emigrate and in 1587 did away with Ivan Shuysky, the famous defender of Pskov, depriving at the same time the Metropolitan of his office because he supported Shuysky. The aristocrats were intriguing against one another and so again no ruling oligarchy could be formed. The candidates for regents excluded one another. The heads of all regions, plenipotentiaries and higher clerical posts were filled by confidants of the Godunov family.

King Stephen wanted to interfere in the quarrels of the Moscow elites. In Poland there was so much enthusiasm for the King's plans that the parliament readily passed every motion that the King wanted for this great expedition that was to lead through Moscow to Constantinople. Then suddenly the news arrived about the King's death in Grodno on December 12<sup>th</sup> 1586.

Never in its history was Moscow in such a grave situation as after the election of Sigismund III Vasa to the Polish throne. It seemed that Moscow would find itself gripped by the Lithuanian-Polish-Swedish thongs.

Godunov, who had to watch for his own life, had no external authority. The situation however was soon to change. He strengthened his power through a very fortunate idea: **the elevation of his Metropolitan to the rank of a Patriarch**. From that moment no other candidate for the office of the Metropolitan and a supporter of some other aristocratic clan could compete with Job, the candidate of Godunov, who was ordained a Patriarch in 1589.

At issue was not the question of independence from the Patriarch of Constantinople, because we know that the Metropolitan sees of Moscow and Lithuania were already independent and for a long time. In fact, the establishment of the Patriarchate entailed the renewed entering into closer relationships with Constantinople! For the Patriarchs of Constantinople, the Moscow Tsars after all were the Tsars of Orthodoxy. Since they were the richest amongst the Orthodox and it was possible to benefit from their treasury, thus it was not the Tsar who was searching for contacts with the Patriarch, but on the contrary, it was the Patriarchate of Constantinople, who forgetting the offensive conflict of the past pressed for the reestablishment of relationships with Moscow.

Increasingly frequently representatives from Constantinople arrived in Moscow. They were welcome and generously financed, more for political than for religious reasons. Moscow wanted to have the best of relations with the Sultan and the Phanar

was increasingly becoming a Turkish diplomatic agency for Orthodox territories. For many generations the Muslim Caliph managed his policies towards Orthodox Moscow through the mediation of the Phanar, which eagerly fulfilled all the political missions required of it by the Sultans.

Patriarch Jeremias, who modestly weighed his own dignity, went in 1588 to Moscow so as to visit the rebellious Metropolitan, even though he was not recognized by him, of course fulfilling the mission committed to him by the caliph. As an agent of the Sultan he was to find out whether Moscow would ally militarily with Poland, and if so, he was to counteract this in time. Godunov profited from this visit and paid Jeremias for the ordaining of his Metropolitan Job as a Patriarch. This raised Godunov greatly in the eyes of all the subjects of Tsar Feodor, and particularly so in the eyes of the Tsar himself who was given to thoughtless religious devotion. Now Godunov was sure that no one would remove him from power.

In the following year 1590, the Moscow-Swedish war erupted again, and it turned out to have a positive consequence for Moscow. Sweden lost all the territories that it had taken from Moscow earlier. There was no alliance between Poland and Sweden. In 1592 Sigismund III Vasa became the King of Sweden, thus there was the personal union of the crowns of Lithuania, Poland and Sweden. It seemed that the fatal hour for the expansion of Moscow towards Europe had arrived and that from that time onwards Moscow could only decline. And yet it turned out that the election of Sigismund as the King of Poland and particularly his taking the throne of Sweden was in its consequences a most fortunate incident for Moscow! In that year 1592, came the inquisition parliament in Poland, the taking over of Sweden by Charles

Suderman, the rebellion of Lubomirski and later the most terrible wars between Poland and Sweden! Moscow was protected and its Orthodoxy assured inviolability due to the exclusivism of two other denominations: the Catholicism of Sigismund III and the Lutheranism of Charles Suderman... Everything else was set aside in the face of the major question. In Sweden was a Catholic to oppress Protestants or a Protestant Catholic? Thanks to the religious wars in central Europe Muscovy expanded into Russia.

While preparing externally to move against Poland Sweden made peace with Moscow in 1596 giving up forever Karelia, Koporia, Yam and Narva (Ivangorod) so as to all the more effectively use Estonia as war bastion against Sigismund III and in further consequences against Poland.

Moscow, defeated in its struggle for access to the Baltic, was saved here from a crash by something completely unexpected, the antagonism between Poland and Sweden.

There was no political significance in a fact that chronologically belonged to these years, namely the death of Dmitry, the son of Ivan the Terrible, even though in the future this was to serve as an excuse for important events. Dmitry died in 1591 during an attack of epilepsy. Godunov was later accused of having murdered Dmitry. For what purpose? Had he planned to take over the throne he would have preferred to see Feodor murdered! To murder Dmitry in 1591 in expectation of the death of Feodor would be too early! It is difficult to imagine that Godunov would not be eventually happy to function also under Dmitry as the “great *boyar*” (grand vizier!), as he did under Feodor. Mentally Dmitry was just as deranged as Feodor! There is not the slightest

trace anywhere in Moscow of that period of attempts to dethrone the Tsars and still less to murder them.

## **XVI. The working towards a union of Poland, Lithuania and-Muscovy (1595-1634)**

The negative consequences of abandoning agriculture for trade were soon to manifest themselves, even before the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. Periods of unrest came which spelled instability for the state and famine for society. Political influences follow wealth. Since the core of national wealth started to pass from immovable property to movables, the landowning classes felt endangered: the aristocracy, *boyars* and monasteries as well as the class of people endowed by the ruler with the right to use the Tsar's villages, the so called *номлещики* [lesser landowners] who were increasing in number and obliged to do military service. The fleeing from agricultural work endangered the availability of soldiers, undermining the existence of the *номлещики* thus questioning the tradition of the “*boyar* children”. At the same time this disturbed the social and state structure depriving the princes and *boyars* of affluence. Should the role of the trading *boyars* increase everything would have to have a different shape, because in trade it was impossible to form a social hierarchy that would be “in service” for the government, because a trader had no time for this.

There was only one class that had access to public life and was not against the spreading of the population well beyond the centre. These were the *dyaks*. They increased in number as a caste of scribes who occupied the administrative machine. They were supported by the Tsars, who imagined that by freeing themselves from the decisive influence of the clergy and the *boyars* they could rule independently according to their own will through

those who only had an executive function. This illusion pleased the Tsars in their governance. Thus in time their main occupation was the organizing of the *dyaks* in chancellery sections, the so called *розряды* [sets], designated for various special purposes. Towards the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. there were as many as 30 of them and in the mid XVII<sup>th</sup> c. there were 50. The larger the size of the country, or the more dispersed was the population the more field there was for these administrative sections. The greater the need for new ones the more there was the need for *кормлене* [feeding]. It is easier to make money taxing a trader than a farmer.

The mutual dislike between the clergy and *dyaks* grew as a result of different positions on this issue. The Orthodox Church was the owner of half of all the arable land and the escape from the land could ruin it. Thus the clergy was in solidarity with the *boyars*.

Thus all those who had official importance moved against the sudden growth of the trading class. The Tsar himself had to oppose the changes that were undermining militarism and the personal dependence on him of those who were “in service.” The problem was further increased by the disintegration of all rural economy, not only the agricultural one throughout the country. People were fleeing the land, ignoring their agricultural duties, not waiting for the time of harvest, not fulfilling any agreed times. The number of prosecutions of those guilty of fleeing the land grew at a terrifying rate. First, there were attempts to prevent the evil by prolonging the time lapse for prescription in such cases, from two to three and later five years. This began in 1590. When this failed, Godunov began limiting the right of termination of contracts in agricultural relationships, thereby tying people to the soil by force.

The terrible three year famine (1601-1607) sanctioned this practice. In the times of unrest that were about to come, whoever held state power reduced the freedom of the rural population to move until in 1607 this liberty was completely abolished.

As a result, only the trading occupation of the Tartars survived, but they were almost totally excluded from it. The social system of Muscovy followed the Kazan Tartar model with compulsory tilling of the land. This began with the farm hands, with the *закун* [purchaser] and *смерд* [peasant], but soon this forced employment passed also onto the small landholders and the population of the *деревни* [hamlets].

The *boyar* or *помещик*, the landowner or leaseholder, first of all had to be “in service”. Thus he did not live in the village, and did not manage the farm. He was responsible towards the government for the village that he rarely saw, and which he did not farm personally. His responsibility consisted primarily in the paying of taxes. The destruction of village social relationships did not come about suddenly, but it moved in this direction almost from the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c. extending more and more during the century. It was impossible to deal with every peasant individually being in fact absent all the time and not knowing him. Thus a joint taxation responsibility of the entire settlement in respect to the owner and the government was introduced and the distribution of the taxes from individual families and heads was left to the peasants themselves.

In this way the Russian *мир* [peasant commune] was formed. It was a forced association of the entire population of a district with collective communal land ownership and periodic

distributions of the land for use by individual families. Justice required the division of the land according to the size of the family, because the taxation system was based on the number of heads.

It has to be noted that collectivisation was the only method of bypassing the prohibition of leaving the soil. As long as the lord, the local governor and the treasury of the state, *казна* [treasury], suffered no loss, what interest was there in having this or that person in some given place? Since the remaining paid for all, it was immaterial how they collected the money. Thus permissions were granted for seeking fortune in the world, in urban or itinerant jobs, provided the appropriate sum was sent on time. For those that remained the duty was easier, and finally the situation was reached when at least half of the population of a village that was ascribed to the soil in fact lived elsewhere.

This social arrangement led in time to two consequences. Whoever belonged to a given village on a clan basis was always a co-owner of its lands and he had to remain such an owner. This was not only his right but also his burden, which he could not shed, even if he wanted to, because he was not allowed to do so. In class sense he had to remain a peasant, once he was born as such. Even when with the knowledge and permission of his lord and having paid well, he lived in town, being in fact a craftsman or trader, often quite affluent, he could never cease to belong by law to his village commune, where he had to pay his taxes as a collective co-owner. As a result he could never cease to be a *холоп* [slave], neither he nor his descendants.

Thus migration from the land was later taking place quite openly and legally so long as the principle of the peasant commune was not affected. Initially, there was no other exit for the

dissatisfied and opponents but to become ... Cossacks. One Tartar social system brought in another. The Ryazan Cossacks continued to be in the pay of the rulers of Moscow and they grew in number supplementing their ranks not only with Tartars but also by the multitude of ethnic groups of the watersheds of Oka and Don. There was never a shortage of individuals who delighted in irregular warring. Their settlements extended along the river Don. Trade and brigandage was their income and the Tsar provided grain. Under Ivan the Terrible these Cossacks were reorganized. They were to be the border force on the Don against the Tartars, whose plundering raids were to continue for several generations. The Orthodox Church imposed unity upon these Cossacks of various origins and turned them all into Slavs.

The Cossacks spread from the Don far westwards, because the steppes were enticing and they offered the possibility of enrichment through the robbing of the Crimean Tartars. Along the river Dnieper a second centre of fugitives from neighbouring countries, Wallachians, Hungarians, Ruthenians and Poles developed. As a rule, amongst this mixture, fugitive Polish noblemen took over command. Already in the beginning of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. these Dnieper Cossacks organized themselves in military fashion. Following the example of Moscow also the Polish Kings took them on in their pay. First in 1531, under Sigismund the Old 2000 Cossacks were registered and later Stephen Bathory gradually accepted them all under his pay, making out of them a permanent armed force on these marginal (Ukrainian<sup>33</sup>) lands. Earning a living through military activity was always attractive for people of the East. The number of Cossacks increased at such a rate that the royal registry could not handle this being limited by the royal

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<sup>33</sup> [The original meaning of the word Ukraine is “land on the margin”.]

treasury and the need of having agriculture in the neighbouring lands. Just as in Zalesye there was flight to trade, so in Lithuanian Ruthenia there were fugitives joining the Dnieper Cossacks. Soon Ruthenia was dominant among the Cossacks, in fact attaining a decisive majority, while others [Tartars, Poles etc.] became Ruthenian through the influence of the Orthodox Church. Also here Orthodoxy tied all the Cossacks together.

The main difference between the Don Cossacks and those from Zaporozhye on the river Dnieper was of economic nature. The Moscow Cossacks avoided agriculture while the “Polish” ones divided life between tilling the land and a war camp known as the “Sich”.

Ukraine, the former Kiev land, from the end of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. began again to be economically functional. The Kings made great donations of open spaces, sometimes of several or even a dozen or so square miles, and as a result the Ruthenian magnates became the greatest entrepreneurs of settlements known to European history. They brought in settlers by the thousands and they needed tens of thousands. Thus they were not happy with the Cossacks who were depriving them of hands for the plough. The Cossacks did not bring women into the Sich. A married Cossack picked up any patch of still no one’s land in the steppes, wherever he wanted and established there a settlement, a small farm. They would change places. Some of them were with the Sich, in military readiness, and others were with their families on their small farms.

In these extensive steppes of uncultivated and uninhabited land, the dozen or so thousands of small farms were lost as if nothing. It was a common situation that a farm laid within the territory of somebody’s estate. As a rule, the owner of the small

farm had no way of knowing that his land had already been donated to somebody, because no magnate used the whole of his land immediately. He would establish settlements and larger farms gradually as conditions allowed for this. After a number of years it turned out that a Cossack had settled on the land of an aristocrat! The Ruthenian magnate was not interested in the piece of land but in the few pairs of hands from the small farms. The private law there followed the Lithuanian statute to which an extra ruling was added in 1588, providing that whoever had settled on land that was not his for a period of ten years, he became a subject of the owner. Many therefore would abandon their small farms in the tenth year and then move on searching fortune elsewhere. But there were many others who were affected by this ruling, when they had held a farm for more than ten years, which turned out later to be within somebody else's estate. This ruling was often painful to the Cossacks and it was the first reason why the Southern Ruthenian lords and the Cossacks were at odds with one another, even though they were of the same origin and faith. Today we would say that they were of the same Ruthenian nationality.

At the turn of the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> c. there was a moment when in the South of the former Lithuanian Ruthenia, in the provinces that had passed under Poland following the Union of Lublin, a Ruthenian nationality would be formed. The peasant element was a sufficient substratum in every respect so that a nationality could be based upon it. It was numerous and had distinctive features. Finally, a national consciousness started to appear in these Ukrainian regions, for the first time among the eastern Slavs, and this was so because an intellectual class developed and it was influenced by the example of Polish culture.

In Muscovite Ruthenia it was impossible to stop the ordination of illiterates to the clergy. Otherwise, as the synod of 1551 declared, there would be an insufficient number of priests. Meanwhile in the part of Ruthenia that until recently had been Lithuanian and now belonged to the Polish Crown, the educational level was rising high, not only among the clergy. Ecclesiastic literature was produced, and there were works that could readily be compared with the average theological-polemic treatises of the West. The Orthodox Church on this side of the river Dnieper boldly encountered the ideas of the Reformation, copying the Poles and the Lithuanians in this respect. There were many influences of Calvinism and Arianism among the Ukrainian Orthodox clergy. Just as Radziwiłł in Lithuania, so Prince Konstanty Ostrogski in Southern Ruthenia stood at the head of the “novelties”. He was the lord of over 35 towns and a thousand villages. In his native Ostróg, he established a printing house and a higher school of education that aspired, not without justification, to the rank of an Academy. He gathered professors for it from all over the world, profiting also from the mediation of Possevino. This was the first such example in the eastern Slav lands. Meanwhile in Muscovy only “craftsmen” were imported for military purposes. Some faint echoes of this activity did reach Moscow, but they were as if crumbs falling from the Ostróg table. In Ostróg there was the first printing house which published liturgical books for the Orthodox Church. There in 1581 the first complete Bible in the Old Church Slavonic language, the famous “Ostróg Bible” was published. There were attempts to set up a printing house in Moscow, but, fearing that compulsory literacy would be imposed upon them, the lower clergy organized “popular” rebellions, and the printing house was branded as “the work of Satan” and destroyed. The Ostróg Academy however was far from being truly Orthodox. On the contrary, it seeped the Protestant trend into the Orthodox

Church. Prince Ostrogski himself was deeply influenced by Arrianism.

This Prince Ostrogski, who drew others by his example, was symbolic of the budding national life. Based on the Polish citizen's culture, he considered himself to belong to Western Europe and it was only with this Europe that he sought spiritual and cultural links. At the same time he was an Orthodox, and he favoured the "novelties", because he sought ways for the rebirth of his Orthodox Church. He never thought of abandoning it and was fanatically attached to it. But this had nothing to do with his political views. He hated Moscow that imposed itself as the defender of Orthodox Christianity. He despised the Muscovite ways and held nothing in common with Moscow. On the contrary he saw himself to be completely different and opposed. He saw the two totally different cultures, one of which he wanted to combat. He readily stood at the head of Lithuanian armies so as to fight against Moscow. His whole life was devoted to this combat. At the same time he did not become a Pole and nobody among the Poles considered him to be Polish. He was something different. He considered himself as belonging to Ruthenia, and so we also have to treat him as such. The inevitable conclusion of this is that **Ukrainian Ruthenia (from the Podolie, Bratslav and Kiev regions) began to distinguish itself from Muscovy by way of nationality**. The entire Ruthenian intelligentsia of Ukraine, both lay and clerical supported Ostrogski. From this Ruthenian language the specific [derogatory] term "Muscovite" passed onto the Polish language.

All of this did not last long and the genesis of a Ruthenian nationality was soon to be violently interrupted having scarcely reached the mid XVII<sup>th</sup> c.

At that time religious issues were inevitably tied with the political. Protestantism was in opposition against Sigismund III Vasa, and so Protestant influences drew Southern Ruthenia also into opposition together with this newly arising Ruthenian nationality that held onto the Orthodox Church. Completely contrary dogmatic reasoning was besides the point here. The vast majority of the intelligentsia in the whole of Europe was equally mistaken.

The Protestants, who were disappointed with the King, came to an agreement with the Orthodox and they were ready to dethrone Sigismund. Then the King came up with the idea of putting a wedge into this alliance. He proposed to revive the Union of Florence. The issue was in the air in the sense that the highly expansive missionary activity of the Latin Catholic Church sought a harvest for itself among all types of Protestants, including those in Ruthenia. In this way, through the mediation of Protestantism, the Latin spirit spread among the leading classes of Ruthenia.

Dogmatically, Orthodoxy is closer to Catholicism than even the mildest form of Protestantism. In fact in the eyes of Catholicism it is not a heresy. This circumstance must have become increasingly obvious to those who participated in the religious debates of the time. It would have been strange that in the period of reconversion of the former Orthodox from Protestantism to Catholicism, the idea would not come up that since it is possible to convert successfully from Calvinism or even Arianism to Catholicism, it should be even easier to convert from the schism... This was the logical conclusion. Thus there were attempts to achieve unity of the “Church of God” in Ruthenia, supported by distin-

guished members of the Orthodox Church. The King did not invent the Uniate movement, but he grabbed it with an awkward hand, namely a political one. He held onto it wholeheartedly, supported it, hastened it and directed it in his own way. **The Union of Brest of 1596 was half a religious and half a lay achievement, announced too hastily.** Only White Ruthenia [Belarus] and Podlasie wanted it and were prepared for it, but Sigismund ordered that the Union be proclaimed for the whole of Ruthenia thinking that he could eliminate the schism from his country by ... political means.

The whole of Southern Ruthenia sharply opposed the Union at an Orthodox synod called in that same year also in Brest. From that moment the King had fierce enemies in Southern Ruthenia. Konstanty Ostrogski stood at the head of this opposition. In Ostróg violent pamphlets were printed inciting the population against Poland accused of organizing the so-called Union. The Union was understood as being a direct persecution of the Orthodox faith.

The reactivation of the Union moved both Moscow and Constantinople. From Constantinople agitators were sent whose task was making the Union impossible. Cyril Lucaris, the former rector of the Ostróg Academy was the principal agent and his mission consisted in the spreading of hatred against Poland. He had his main headquarters in Ostróg where he was protected by Konstanty Ostrogski who had previously beaten Moscow. But Lucaris and those like him were not enemies of Moscow. In fact, they saw the development of the power of Moscow as being in the prime interest of Orthodoxy. Every agent sent by the Patriarch was at the same time an agent of Moscow. Thus the Union of Brest unfortunately forced into one political camp both the devotees and

the opponents of Moscow, who were unified in their opposition against the Polish King, and as a consequence also against Poland.

Thus gradually circumstances were accumulating which were to allow Moscow to interfere deeply into Polish issues and Poland's history. Initially this seemed to be an impossibility, because events went in exactly the opposite direction: with the intervention of Poland and Lithuania in the history of Moscow! Contemporaries often find it difficult to differentiate between what was an episode and what had a historically permanent consequence.

After the childless death of Tsar Feodor in January 1598 it was Jan Zamoyski who advised Sigismund III to try to take the Tsar's throne, but this project was not even considered closely! Meanwhile in Moscow, following the Tartar mode the office passed to the Tsar's widow, Irene, the sister of Godunov. It was in this moment, when the throne was inviting itself, as it were, to be taken Godunov actually thought about adding the monarchical dignity to the power that he already had. It was obvious that Irene could only be an intermediary for the transfer of the throne to a new dynasty. Why should the Godunov family not aspire to this? Without difficulty he inclined his sister to renounce the throne in his favour, but he then had to deal with the opposition of so many Rurikids, and all those aristocrats who could dream about the throne on equal terms with Godunov.

Godunov hesitated and decided to restrict himself to the role of a "great *boyar*" and then create a Tsar of his own making. He spread the rumour that Dmitry did not die in 1591 but was alive and safe under the protection of the Godunov family and that now he wanted to take the throne that belongs to him after his

brother. Godunov even issued a proclamation supposedly coming from the said Dmitry, but the deceit was discovered. Then Boris Godunov organized a gathering of *boyars* and clergy and ordered them to proclaim him Tsar. He had the Patriarch Job on his side and the landowning class sympathized with him in gratitude for his tying of the peasants to the soil. Thus a descendant of the Tatars crowned himself Tsar on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1598. He then immediately started to combat the clans whose opposition could be dangerous. The state was subjected to terror and spying. But it proved impossible to murder and eliminate all and those of the Mstislavskis, Shuyskys, Golycins, Byelskys and Romanovs who survived used the same stratagem against Boris Godunov that he had conceived first. They started to look for some pretender to the throne.

Being unable to find an appropriate candidate for this role among themselves, they turned to the Lithuanian and Ruthenian lords for help. There was some kind of agreement between the Byelskys, Shuyskys and Romanovs and the aristocratic families of Lithuania and Ruthenia. In particular it seems that this was between the Byelskys and the Sapiehas. The projects of having a closer legal and state union between the states of Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy, had first appeared with the idea of calling Ivan the Terrible and later Feodor to the Polish throne. The more recent proposal of Jan Zamoyski to place the Polish King on the throne in Moscow was similar. These projects had an increasing number of supporters, although for diverse reasons that were not always selfless, and were imagined in various ways. In Lithuania and Ukraine it was primarily the Wiśniowiecki, Wojna, Sapieha, Mniszech and Stadnicki families that were interested in this. This group therefore engaged in the search for a candidate who could be the self-proclaimed false Dmitry.

In 1600 Lew Sapieha travelled to Moscow proposing a close legal-state union that would prepare the unification of the tsardom with Poland in the future. Godunov rejected the proposal and then Sapieha ... left the false Dmitry with the Byelskys family.

Who was the pretender? This is not sure. Russian sources claim that he was Yuri Bogdanovich Otrepev, a monk with the monastic name Gregory or Grisha. In Lithuania he was considered to be an illegitimate son of King Stephen Bathory. It is a fact that the false Dmitry had several European features, and this was the cause of his ruin.

The pretender continued his education in various monasteries in preparation for his role and he even became a *dyak* of the Patriarch. Mysterious news about his origin and destiny were being spread and so finally Patriarch Job had him closed in a distant monastery on Lake Belye. He fled from there to reside in Halych, Murom, Moscow and Novgorod of Seversk, from where finally he moved into Lithuanian Ruthenia. For some time, he was a member of the Pechersk Lavra in Kiev, and later he visited a number of Ruthenian lords. From the end of 1602 he spent nearly a year at Adam Wiśniowieci's Brahin and towards the end of 1603 the rumour finally declared that he was Dmitry, the son of Ivan the Terrible.

In the years 1601-1604 there was a plague and famine in the tsardom of Muscovy and it was so severe that there were cases of cannibalism among the common people. Both Boris Godunov and the aristocracy offered numerous alms but as is the case with all charities, be they the most generous, during public calamities their input was only symbolic. Crowds of hungry people moved from region to region trying to find a place where the famine was

less severe. But besides the hungry and under the pretence of the famine the wandering crowds were armed so as to initiate unrest against Godunov. When Godunov sent army regiments against such groups it was said that he sent the army ... against the hungry! The Tsar took revenge on the princely families and in the meantime the rumours about Dmitry were becoming more intense. Dmitry moved to Michael Wiśniowiecki in Lubnie, organized a court for himself there, and received delegations from the provinces of Muscovy.

The toleration of a pretender on Polish territory could lead to war with Moscow. After all an armistice had been agreed upon with Godunov! Zamoyski, Żółkiewski and Chodkiewicz pointed this out to King Sigismund III. Zamoyski and the Ostrogskis did not want to allow the passage of the regiment of the false Dmitry onto the other side of the Dnieper. But public opinion there was already on his side. Thousands of people believed in him and were convinced that they have to acknowledge the true Tsar Dmitry and offer fidelity to him and not “the usurper” Godunov. The Ruthenian voivod Jerzy Mniszech was the public patron of the false Dmitry. He made millions on the enterprise and placed his daughter on the Tsar’s throne. The Polish King also believed in the authenticity of Dmitry and was talked into supporting him by a promise of Church union. He therefore agreed to the cession of the Seversk region and of half of the Smolensk region, (which ultimately did not take place) and he counted on support in the regaining of the Swedish crown. The false Dmitry came to Kraków, where he was received into the Catholic Church on April 16<sup>th</sup> 1604 by a Kraków Jesuit, Fr. Sawicki. The following day, he sent a letter of submission to the Pope. Thus he had the King completely on his side.

The King could not officially support Dmitry because without the accord of the parliament he could not declare war against the Moscow of Godunov. The King however encouraged the recruitment of volunteers, although not many of them, scarcely 2500 were found.

With such a small force the false Dmitry set out to conquer a colossal, militarily organized state! He must have had the ground well prepared. Already at the border, he was met by a delegation of Don Cossacks who submitted to him as to “their hereditary lord”. When he entered Kiev, he already had 20 000 men and further on the way the commanders of the forts were brought to him in chains, because the garrisons were rebelling and moving to his side. It was only at the Seversk Novgorod that Mniszech had to pave the way militarily, but he beat the best general of Muscovy, Basmanov. At the further stage a battle was lost near Dobrynice. Vasily Shuysky was still defending the cause of Boris Godunov remembering how others had been subjected to tortures! The smaller commanders made deliberate errors in favour of the false Dmitry and there were many deserters joining him. In spite of all this his military position was not ideal. He had to stop at Putyvl sending requests for help to Kraków and he despatched assassins to Moscow, who were to kill Godunov.

The conduct of the King was severely criticised during the parliamentary session in Warsaw. Jan Zamoyski, who directly after the death of Feodor had advised an open and formal move for the Tsar’s throne, now gave a long speech against the King in which he famously said: “In God’s name! Is this a comedy of Plautus or Terence? ... Is it possible to murder anyone, particularly in that country, and then not to bother whether this man or another is likewise murdered?” But the King held to his position.

Then all of a sudden, on April 14<sup>th</sup> 1605, Boris Godunov died, probably poisoned. He had a ten year old son Feodor, whom he left under the care of Patriarch Job and the military leader Basmanov. But the army soon forced Basmanov in his own camp to declare the false Dmitry Tsar, after which also Shuysky recognized him. Shortly afterwards Feodor Borisovich [the son Godunov] was strangled to death together with his mother. Thus all obstacles were removed from the way and the false Dmitry entered Moscow triumphantly on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1605. He had only a unit of 2000 soldiers with him, the most important part of which was a 600 strong regiment of Polish cavalry.

Already at the beginning of August riots against the Poles began. Vasily Shuysky was spreading rumours that the Poles were planning to kill Dmitry and they came here so as to change the Orthodox churches into Latin ones. Shuysky was condemned to death for this, but then he was pardoned. The people however continued to rebel on their own accord when they saw the strange habits of the Poles and of the Tsar who dealt with them in a way that was so different from what was required by the Moscow ceremonial. The Western custom that was not so servile seemed to the people as being a depreciation of the majesty of the Tsar. The false Dmitry several times made the same mistake of trying to “reform” the custom of the Moscow court and when later he saw that these Western experiments could become very dangerous to him, he tried to put the “blame” for this on the Poles. It is obvious also that the behaviour of the Polish crowd by no means was praiseworthy. In the regiment of Polish voluntary soldiers, who hoped to conquer a foreign country and impose a doubtful candidate on the throne, there were more adventurers and people of doubtful manners than serious heads.

Of all the promises that the false Dmitry had made, he fulfilled only one. He married Maryna Mniszech. The envoy of Sigismund III who above all asked for help against the Swedes was sent away with nothing. Dmitry did not want to meet the Jesuits at all. Instead, he initiated policies aimed against his benefactor, King Sigismund III.

Meanwhile in Poland the danger of a rebellion hovered over the head of the King. The outburst was hardly contained by the authority of Zamoyski. When this great statesman passed away in the second half of 1605, a severe danger fell upon the King. The opposition candidate for the Polish throne was none other but the false Dmitry of Moscow. He had been in contact with the Stadnicki family and with Nicholas Zebrzydowski.

A second false game was now running in the opposite direction. Shuysky surrounded the false Dmitry with his own people. A personal messenger of the new Tsar, Bezobrazov was sent to Sigismund in December 1605 and operating in Kraków in the name of Shuysky, he tried to engage the King against the false Dmitry proposing that the King's son Władysław be made Tsar. Sigismund gave an unclear reply, and sent a new messenger to Moscow, who reminded Dmitry about his unfulfilled promises and proposed a precise project of state union.

This was to be: a permanent alliance, a common foreign policy with an anti-Turkish league; mutual freedom of resettling, purchase of property and even holding of public offices; freedom of trade from Germany on one side to Persia on the other; freedom to establish Catholic churches, schools and Jesuit colleges in the main cities of the tsardom; a common currency and the intent to

have a common fleet on the Baltic and the Black Sea. In the case of the death of Dmitry having no son, Sigismund would be his successor and if the Polish King, who had sons, would die earlier, the new election of the Polish King would take place only after consultation with the Tsar.

Indeed these were projects for a very close union! A wonderful horizon had captured the imagination! And yet at the same time both monarchs were uncertain of their own position in their own countries...

This same false Dmitry who was negotiating with Sigismund the conditions for a “permanent alliance” at the same time was in contact with Studnicki who was present in Moscow and they were planning action against Sigismund having at their disposal an army of 100 000 ready to move against Lithuania under the command of Shuysky. The choice of the commander for the army indicates again that the false Dmitry was not sure of his own entourage in this comedy of permanent intriguing of all against all.

There were constant secret meetings at Vasily Shuysky’s. The opposition was growing and the authenticity of the Tsar became increasingly suspect to the wider masses, because he ate at one table with foreign envoys etc. He had no respect for his own Tsarist majesty! In Moscow it was normal to kneel before the Tsar. One had to then fall to the ground and hit the dirt with the forehead, crawling on all four towards the throne. But at the coronation banquet all the guests would eat with their fingers throwing the bones under the table. The European manners of the false Dmitry were constantly becoming apparent and this was seen as a sort of heresy.

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1606 riots against the Poles began and on the night 26/27 of May there was butchery during which the false Dmitry was murdered. Two days later, Vasily Shuysky was “elected” by the Moscow traders, clergy and *dyaks* as the new Tsar. Two month later a new false Dmitry [II] moved against Moscow and Maryna Mniszech claimed that he was her husband, but this repeated comedy did not last long and was only an internal Moscow affair.

Vasily Shuysky fearing Sigismund, who managed successfully to quell the rebellion of Zebrzydowski, allied with Sweden against the Polish King. He hit the weak spot of Sigismund. Then in 1609 the King declared war against Moscow not caring about anything else.

The war was a triumphant victory for Poland and Lithuania. Towards the end of September 1609 King Sigismund III arrived personally near Smolensk and began a regular siege. In the following year hetman Żółkiewski having only 3000 cavalry and 1000 infantry beat 40 000 Muscovites and Swedes at Klushino. In a victorious march he reached Moscow on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1610. He did not organize a siege, nor did he try to enter the city. He did not want to be a victorious aggressor and so he immediately called on the Moscow magnates to come to terms with him and negotiate some form of a “permanent alliance”. After three weeks an agreement was reached. The Muscovites themselves brought both Shuyskys, Vasily the Tsar and his brother Dmitry, the commander of the army to the camp of Żółkiewski as prisoners. They invited the Polish and Lithuanian prince Władysław [the son of Sigismund], who was 15 years old to be the Tsar. It was

only then that Żółkiewski entered the city as the representative of the new Tsar and of a friendly state.

It seemed that the program of forming a single power composed of Poland, Lithuania and Moscow with a common foreign policy, thus the project of the extension of the political union to include also Moscow, had reached a happy fulfilment.

Żółkiewski however was countered by Sigismund III who insisted upon a personal union, wanting the Muscovites to recognize him as the Tsar. But since he had been behind the Union of Brest, he was personally hated by the Muscovites. The negotiations therefore dragged on strenuously and with no sincerity. The King remained near Smolensk until the fort was taken on June 11<sup>th</sup> 1611. This was the high point of his reign. But a bad policy can waste even the best of victories. On returning from Smolensk, the King ordered the hetman to return also from Moscow, leaving only a small garrison on the Kremlin.

The Muscovites abandoned the Shuyskys but they never received Władysław. They remained without a Tsar, that is, without a government, amidst the chaos of general ignorance. The Muscovy oligarchs were deprived of their most outstanding individuals who had been murdered in the recent years, and yet a new Tsar had to be chosen from among this group. There had to be a Tsar because otherwise the tsardom would crash in confusion! Poland could have an interregnum but “Tsarlessness” was an absurdity. Had the hated Sigismund taken the throne of Moscow by force, provided that he left Orthodoxy in peace, it would have been easier to accept his even most severe rule than the absence of a Tsar. With Asiatic and Tartar notions about state authority a republic was unthinkable! It is inexplicable how Sigismund could

leave Moscow in such a state for the duration of whole three years, leaving at the same time in the Kremlin a miniscule garrison representing no one knew whom or what. Since Władysław was not arriving, some native Tsar had to be called to the throne, the first duty of whom would be the expulsion from Moscow of the garrison imposed by some foreign ruler. It is strange that the Tsarless period lasted full three years. This can be only explained by the fact that the magnates could not come to terms, all being envious of any possible candidate to the throne.

Finally the common people started to demand a Tsar. There were more and more riots. One of these, organized by a butcher called Minin in Nizhny Novgorod was joined by Prince Pozharsky, a second rank prince who could have easily advanced on the popular sentiment so as to be not only of first order importance but as someone who would be well above all other heads. There were no problems with the small Polish garrison. It had to capitulate negotiating for itself honourable conditions. They left Moscow arms in hand. Now was the time for Pozharsky to be proclaimed Tsar by the people.

In the last moment the leaders of the families that until this time were close to the helm of state affairs came to an agreement among themselves so as to prevent the promotion of this new man. They chose the weakest among them, the poorest, to be the Tsar, a person from a marginal family, namely a Romanov. Filaret, the head of the family was shaven to be a monk and his son Michael had no influence in the country. Thus this **Michael Romanov (1613-1645) was chosen among them to be the Tsar because he was considered to be the least dangerous.** In this way a new dynasty was set up, the Romanovs, even though there were plenty of Rurikids descending from side lines.

The new Tsar tried to reoccupy Smolensk, but his army was repelled by Jan Karol Chodkiewicz, one of a whole bevy of excellent Polish strategists who knew how to beat an enemy army that was several times more numerous. The question of the “permanent alliance”, this time an imposed one, was entering a new phase.

In February 1616 the Polish parliament approved finances for Prince Władysław so that now, **only now**, his selection as Tsar six years earlier could be executed! Sigismund III was slow in determining his thoughts ... not only in this matter. When finally at the beginning of April 1617 Władysław moved towards Moscow he had to redo the historical events that took place seven years earlier!

Relationships between Poland and Muscovy were strangely interlocked with those between Sweden and Moscow. This time both countries were at war with Moscow but without mutual agreement. Dynastic hatred passed on from Charles of Suderman to Gustav Adolf. He also was a counter-King with respect to Sigismund, wanting to destroy his rival. When Sigismund sent his son against Moscow, Gustav Adolf quickly settled for peace. The Swedish army was making great gains against Moscow. Novgorod the Great was already taken and Pskov was besieged by the Swedes ... Had the Swedes continued to battle the simultaneity of the expeditions even without any agreement with Poland would put Moscow in thongs from which it would hardly be able to extricate itself. But just before the departure of Władysław in January 1617, Gustav Adolf settled for peace with Tsar Michael in the treaty of Stolbovo, returning to Moscow all that he had won, keeping only the mouth of the river Neva.

Władysław was successful. He conquered Dorogobuzh and Vyazma in a speedy march, and supported by 20 000 Cossacks led by Konashevych he headed directly for the capital of the Tsars. Outside the gates of Moscow he negotiated for peace, but only a 16-year armistice was agreed upon and signed on December 11<sup>th</sup> 1618 in Deulino. Władysław renounced his claim to the throne of the Tsar but three major lands were incorporated, the Smolensk land to Lithuania and the Seversk and Chernigov lands to Poland. The defeat of Moscow was decisive. What would have happened should Sweden also continue to battle against Moscow? And what would the political configuration be, were it not for the quarrel between the Vasas deriving from their mutual religious exclusiveness?

It was mentioned above, that the Polish Prince Władysław had the support of 20 000 Cossacks. Earlier the Cossacks went against Moscow together with the false Dmitry and it was they who maintained the cause of Maryna Mniszech till the very end. It is clear that the Zaporozhye Cossacks were not supporters of Moscow. In this they were like the leading magnate of Ruthenia, Prince Ostrogski (†1608) who put a stamp on the budding Ruthenian national consciousness. The Cossacks held also to his tradition in that they hated the Union of Brest. Konashevych was called for war against the Turks in 1621, which brought the Khotyn victory, but he led his Cossacks, many thousands of armed though not registered men, on the explicit condition that Sigismund would recognize the anti-Uniate hierarchy of Southern Ruthenia that had been secretly established a year earlier by the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophanes<sup>34</sup>. He had been sent to Ruthenia with that purpose by the Patriarch of Constantinople, who at

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<sup>34</sup> The Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch were permanent guests of the only factual Patriarch of Constantinople.

that time was ... Cyril Lucaris, the former rector of the Ostróg Academy.

At the battle of Khotyn, besides Konashevych also another admirer of Poland and a great opponent of any Church Union took part, namely Peter Mogila, the son of the Wallachian Hospodar. This exceptional man, educated in Paris was truly a son of the Western civilization. He had Polish notions of citizenship. Later he joined the Basilian monks and became the Orthodox Metropolitan of Kiev, recognized in this position by Władysław IV in 1635. Through his comprehensive activity Mogila highly raised the standards of the Orthodox Church. When the Ostróg Academy declined, the primacy of Orthodox Church learning moved to the Academy that Mogila established in Kiev in 1631. Soon it was to acquire fame not only in the theological sciences.

The Union of Brest resulted in the pastoral concern of the Orthodox hierarchy for the people of Southern Ruthenia, and in particular for the Cossacks of the Dnieper region, the Zaporozhye Cossacks. Even Phanar noted them. The Zaporozhye Cossacks were a permanent army on the steppes between Poland, the Crimean Tartars and the Black Sea. Thus they were of political and military significance for the Porte. Poland could make out of them an important borderland military force, because their numbers could increase indefinitely. They were sufficiently numerous and through their small farms the steppes could be colonized. Thus an excellent vanguard that was always ready could be made out of them.

They were excellent soldiers and this was known in Istanbul because the Cossacks often made freelance expeditions

against the Tartars and the Turks without asking the King or voivode for permission.

The Don Cossacks did the same because the spoils from such daring and unexpected expeditions against some region gave them prosperity for many years. Both the Moscow and Polish governments had to punish severely these acts of brigandage, because they could provoke a war with Turkey at a least favourable time. The average Cossack did not understand this; he had too little education and in any case what did he care? He earned his living by wars. If the King or Tsar did not want them to organize plundering expeditions on their own, then they should ensure for them a comfortable existence! As a result Moscow which was militarily organized found it easier to deal with its Cossacks and tolerate them than Poland which avoided militarism.

For a time it seemed that Poland would maintain a very large Cossack registry bringing them thereby under control because it looked that great wars against the Turks were approaching. The spirit of King Stephan was being revived in Prince Władysław and already during the reign of King Sigismund III the Turkish wars began. For this reason the Porte was interested in generating discord between the Cossacks and Poland. The religious question turned out to be useful for this. Thus the interests of the caliph coincided with those of the schismatic Patriarch. It was not for the first time that the Patriarchs of Constantinople acted as agents of the Sultan, and the Sultan was the protector of Orthodoxy not only in the Balkans.

Within such circumstances Władysław IV succeeded his father on the Polish and Lithuanian throne in 1632. He was a king who was acceptable to the Cossacks, because he devoted his

whole reign to the Turkish issue and had plans for immense wars in which he greatly counted on the Zaporozhye Cossacks.

With the change on the Polish throne the armistice of Deulino ceased to be binding even though it still had two years to expire. Moscow, evaluating the change on the throne according to eastern notions treated it as a period of internal turmoil and thus of inevitable unrest and weakening. Therefore, immediately after the death of Sigismund III a great expedition was sent against Lithuania. It occupied Seversk Novgorod and began the siege of Smolensk. The new king could react only in the following year, but in 1634 he forced the whole army of Muscovy to capitulate and then in a peace treaty negotiated at Polyanovka, Tsar Michael Romanov had to permanently renounce all his claims to the lands that Moscow had lost in the Deulino armistice. At the same time Władysław renounced his claim to the throne of the Tsar, a title which until then he had used.

From then onwards the King devoted himself completely to the Turkish question. The episode of trying to arrive at closer legal-political relationships between Poland, Lithuania and Moscow ended. Also attempts at Polish and Lithuanian intervention in the history of the tsardom of Muscovy ended. Instead, intervention in the opposite direction began.

**Thus ended the first attempt in Polish history at a synthesis of two cultures<sup>35</sup>**; what fruits did this yield, we shall see in the following chapter.

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<sup>35</sup> [In his later writings Koneczny would use the word „civilizations” here, defining cultures as subdivisions of civilizations.]

## **XVII. The Cossack wars (1634-1682).**

The Turkish wars began during the war of Poland against Moscow in 1633. The Sultan having information that a major action against Turkey was being prepared preferred to initiate aggressive action himself. Due however to the lack of earlier preparation this failed and so in 1634 Sultan Amurat IV ordered a retreat. When a peace was negotiated, both sides understood it to be a truce for a few years so as to prepare better. Both sides genuinely wanted peace during these years and thus they agreed that their vanguards, the Tatars and the Cossacks would not make any attacks.

The registered Cossacks, the King's soldiers were obedient to the King's prohibition and in order to keep in check the unruly non-registered Cossacks a fortress was built on the Dnieper river, the Kudak [today's Dnipro]. There were two rebellions against this, but they were suppressed by the iron fist of Prince Jaremi Wiśniowiecki. Two Cossack leaders were beheaded, Sulima and Pavlyuk. It was not possible to permit the existence of a permanent army within the state that would not be subject to the government, and so the Polish parliament decided that the non-registered Sich be forcibly disbanded. There was a good way of dealing with this in Polish law, namely the settling of the Cossacks on the King's land under "military law", but the Ruthenian magnates opted for another solution that favoured their settlement interests. In 1638 it was decided to change the non-registered Cossacks into simple peasants, i.e. to locate them as serfs on the farms. From that day there was no end to daily conflicts and mutual violence in Ukraine.

Then King Władysław, having in secret prepared a number of details for his Turkish plans, suddenly declared that he would increase the registry of the Cossacks from 6000 to 12 000. This meant that the King needed 6000 new volunteers for the registry, who would receive pay from the state treasury. Immediately four times that number volunteered, namely 24 000! Thus the king had a 30 000 strong Cossack army and it was clear that if he wanted he could have had 60 000 of them. In the case of a longer war these Cossacks would be remunerated by the donation of land by the King, and in time they would form a new class of soldier-gentry.

The Ruthenian magnates were terrified. In order to prevent the increase of the Cossacks, they spread the rumour that the King was not planning a Turkish war, but that he wanted a permanent army, not a citizens' army, but one that was only at the King's disposal, because he wanted to introduce absolute rule. The parliament of 1647 therefore ordered the reduction of the Cossack registry to 6000 as was the case before. This meant that 24 000 Cossacks would have to be demobilized. The King had no intention of doing this. This could be done only if a regular army would be sent against them, and King Władysław was decidedly opposed to this. In fact he did not order them to disband because he was awaiting the appropriate moment to issue a completely different order, namely, that they would move and occupy Crimea. Everything was ready. All that was needed was the last word of command.

In order to issue this command the **King brought the more trusted Cossack leaders to Warsaw. Bohdan Khmelnytsky was among them.**

He was a member of the Polish gentry, having the Habdank. His father had moved from Mazovia to Ukraine looking for bread and became a “deputy-*starost*” that is the administrator of a farm in Chyhyryn, belonging to Koniecpolski. He later joined the Cossack registry and became a centurion. Finally he was given a farm, Subotiv for use by Koniecpolski. His son Bohdan was educated as a Pole and a Catholic by the Jesuits in Jarosław and he also joined the registry. In 1620, during the unfortunate battle against the Turks at Cecora, the father was killed and Bohdan the son was imprisoned. Having returned after a few years he became a Cossack camp scribe and managed the Subotiv farm leased to him by Koniecpolski. In matters of religion he was indifferent, in contrast to his father. He married an Orthodox woman and allowed her to bring up their children in the Orthodox faith, but he himself never formally joined the Orthodox Church.

When his wife died he wanted to marry again, but a rival the current deputy-*starost* of Chyhyryn Czaplínski was quicker. There were conflicts because of this and they resulted in Subotiv being taken away from him. In vengeance Khmelnytsky decided to bring a plundering group of Tartars against Chyhyryn so as to ruin the Czaplínskis. He moved therefore to Crimea.

The Turks and the Tatars had their spies, and so it was known to them that Khmelnytsky travelled to the King to Warsaw. Also the Khan himself became interested in the Cossack scribe, and he hosted him in Bakhchysarai. Having learnt from him what he needed, he passed the information onto Istanbul.

In order to prevent the action of the King, the Phanar and the Porte united in their desire to ruin Catholic Poland, as already Hungary was ruined. They decided to incite a religious war of the

Orthodox against the Catholics in Southern Ruthenia planning to use the Cossacks as their tool. Khmelnytsky travelled in the search for several dozen plundering Tatars who would burn down Chyhyryn and then return to wherever they came from, and he did not think of any other consequences nor did he have any other plans. He returned from Bakhchysarai with a promise that he would become the ruling prince of Ukraine under Turkish supremacy provided that he incited a Cossack rebellion. In this way the very same Cossacks who were to move against Crimea and later battle against Turkey changed into a Turkish shield defending against any anti-Turkish action from the Polish side as they paralysed Poland inciting an internal civil war.

Suddenly hundreds of travelling priests, agents of the Turks appeared in Ukraine. They were on order from the Phanar. Their warmongering was helped by an error made by hetman Mikołaj Potocki who started demobilizing the Cossacks on his own initiative without a King's order. He belonged to the group of eastern magnates who did not want any Turkish wars, who were not interested in the shores of the Black Sea and who wanted no increase in the number of registered Cossacks so that the number of farmhands on their estates would not decrease. The Cossacks, when accosted, opposed the King's army and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1648 defeated it in a battle on the Wild Fields by a river called Zhovti Vody. In a second battle several thousand Tatars fought alongside the Cossacks. The great hetman and the field hetman were taken prisoner. In the third battle the entire army of the King dispersed.

The Tartars announced that every Orthodox who would not join the army of Khmelnytsky would find himself in Tartar captivity. Under this threat the army of Khmelnytsky quickly

grew to 100 000 men. In order to feed these crowds he had to move further into territories that were farmed better. He reached as far as Lviv, where he extorted 200 000 thalers threatening plunder. Moving further on, he reached Zamość. At this point the Tartars left, without worrying about Crimea any more.

The entire expedition of Khmelnytsky took place during an interregnum because King Władysław IV died on the fifth day after the battle on the Zhovti Vody. The Primate of Poland [who in the Polish system functioned as the *interrex* during an interregnum] sent a messenger to Khmelnytsky who was in Zamość, inquiring what was it that he wanted? He replied according to the program worked out in Bakhchysarai, declaring that he demands that the parliament abolish the Union of Brest, as if the parliament had anything to say in matters of religion.

When John II Casimir was elected King, he ordered the Cossacks to return to Ukraine and Khmelnytsky obliged. There however, a Turkish emissary was waiting for him, Theophanes, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. As Khmelnytsky was entering Kiev Theophanes welcomed him as the “Prince of Ruthenia”.

Since Khmelnytsky did not renounce this title the King had to go after him. This time the Cossacks suffered one defeat after another until again the Tartars came to their rescue. With a renewed threat of Tartar captivity the army of Khmelnytsky grew to 260 000 heads. Only one fifth of them were Cossacks and the 4/5 were a rabble whose behaviour in the camp and in the battlefield consisted in a series of atrocities. The wild mob due to its number hindered the military movements. Having only 15 000 soldiers John Casimir withstood as many as twenty Cossack attacks at a camp near Zbarazh and the conflict would have ended

with the defeat of the so called Cossacks were it not for the Turkish help that they received. The Porte sent 100 000 Tartars to support the Cossacks and thus the fortune of the war was wavering. An agreement was negotiated near Zboriv on conditions that would have prevented all future possibility of conflict, were it only a question of the Cossacks and their Orthodox faith, but Turkish interests were at stake.

The Zboriv treaty increased the Cossack registry to 40 000 heads and Khmelnytsky was nominated the hetman of this army. All the registered Cossacks received the status of Polish gentry and royal lands from the three voivodeships of Bratslav, Kiev and Chernigov were scheduled to be distributed among them. In these three voivodeships only the Orthodox would be able to hold offices and the Jesuits and Jews would be forbidden to live there.

Why is it so that in the face of such conditions the Cossack wars erupted with a doubled ferocity and this happened immediately after the agreement, before any side could be blamed for anything? In that very year 1649, **Khmelnytsky sent letters to the Khan, to the Sultan, to the Swedish King and to the Tsar calling for an invasion of Poland.** This can be explained by the fact that given the extreme numerical superiority of the mob over the true Cossacks in the army of Khmelnytsky, he in fact acquired despotic power. He did not want to restrict himself to the rank of a hetman. He expected to become a reigning prince. In fact the Sultan sent him a nomination as the Prince of Ruthenia under his own suzerainty, and the Sultan ordered the Tartars to be always available on orders from the new ruler. The mob was urging for war, pretending to be true Cossacks, because how were they to be supported, if only 40 000 were to be included in the King's army? For this mob, war against Poland meant a paradise of plunder and

abundance of vodka which was always available in the camp for immediate consumption. Peace meant work on the soil in the Cossack farms of the three voivodeships or the role of peasants in the estates of the Ruthenian magnates. Khmelnytsky as he chose further war, stood on the side of the mob. In fact the level of his Cossack-dom was lowering constantly with influence and power passing on to the hands of the illiterate rubble. The immediate entourage of the “Prince of Ruthenia” was characterized by illiteracy coupled with constant drunkenness. The staff of the Zaporozhye Cossacks was composed of drunkards and bandits. It took time before some opposition was organized against such an understanding of the Cossack cause.

As was mentioned above Khmelnytsky also called upon the Moscow Tsar to attack Poland. Matters reached a new phase. So far, it was only the Islamic caliph who was defending “the purity of the Orthodox faith” in Ukraine and the Cossack wars were needed so as to divert the danger for Turkey ... of being expelled from Europe. From that moment a new end appeared, namely, that Moscow would be recognized as the superior authority over all the Orthodox. In its final consequence, this eventually was to turn against Turkey, but for the moment it concerned only the Polish-Lithuanian provinces. It was in the interest of Turkey that Poland be weakened, the state that was constantly scheming a league against the Crescent. From that moment for a long period of time the interests of Moscow and Turkey combined, in opposition against Poland and Lithuania.

Since 1645, Alexei Mikhailovich (1645-1676), the son of Michael Romanov was the Tsar. His government was noted for the continuity of purposeful action. This was so, because his “great *boyar*” managed to be in charge for 30 years! This was

Morozov, who favoured education and for this he deserves credit. He was the guardian and tutor of Alexei and then he in fact wielded power in Alexei's name. He owed the permanence of his position to the circumstance that he was a widower when his pupil became Tsar and married. Thus, he was not replaced by a new wave of "people of the time" (the new in-laws of a Tsar were referred to as "people of the time" – *временники*), the Miloslavskys, because he sailed with them by marrying the sister of the new Tsarina.

Again the prime principle of policies was that everywhere everything had to be as in Moscow, but for the first time this was introduced through legislation. The differences of local laws and the traditions of customary law were abolished imposing uniformity in all the provinces. For this purpose a codification commission was set up composed of three princes and two *dyaks*. In this way and for this purpose the *уложение царя Алексея* [*The Code of Tsar Alexei*] was decreed. It was a code of laws that were binding everywhere to the limits of the Tsar's rule, with all things being forcibly set according to the Moscow straightjacket.

Khmelnysky called upon Tsar Alexei in 1649 to undertake a joint operation against Lithuania and Poland. In response the Tsar demanded from Warsaw that the Smolensk voivodship be returned to Moscow. This was a declaration of war, but disturbances in his own country prevented the Tsar from attacking Lithuania, so he delayed the expedition to some more favourable time.

The tsardom of Muscovy was going through a crisis that basically was more serious than what was happening in Poland, because it derived not from external entanglements but had its or-

igins in the very essence of Muscovy. After the agricultural over-  
turns which by no means were over, urban unrest exploded which  
had an economic and a religious source. This generated a deep  
split within society with a religious war, and besides Moscow also  
had a problem with its Cossacks just as Poland did and of no  
lesser magnitude. Thankfully for the tsardom each of these oppo-  
sition groups operated independently and their actions were never  
simultaneous. There was never any agreement among them and  
the riots were spontaneous, vehement, with no calculation or plan,  
and void of any order.

The military organization of the state was such that inevi-  
tably the taxes had to increase at a faster rate than the economic  
possibility of the people. Morozov therefore opted for Asiatic fis-  
calism, a method that was well known to oriental despots, namely  
to ... the fiscal control of trade. Whole branches of trade were de-  
clared to be the Tsar's monopoly. This provoked enormous con-  
fusion in the economic relationships of the towns, particularly  
those of the northern provinces and led to a civil war with the  
towns rebelling against the state. Even the capital rebelled and  
Novgorod the Great and Pskov had to be conquered anew.

The third Cossack war took place without the interference  
of Moscow. A 100 000 strong Tartar horde moved into Ukraine  
and Khmelnytsky mobilized about 200 000 of Ukrainian people  
who were afraid of Tartar captivity and were agitated by Ortho-  
dox priests who in a systematic way were spreading the rumour  
that the Polish lords were about to forcefully impose the Union of  
Brest in Ukraine. (In fact they were the least concerned about  
this!) Soon a three day battle took place on June 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> 1651  
near Berestechko. This was the greatest battle of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c.  
Theophanes was in the camp of Khmelnytsky. He was sure of

victory because there were three times as many Tartars and Cossacks than the army of Poland and Lithuania. King John Casimir would often stand ground personally and he proved successful here. It was a major victory under his banner. The triumph was commemorated solemnly in Rome, Vienna and Paris because it was rightly understood that the vanguard of the Islamic onslaught was beaten, held back by the *antemurale Christianitas* [bulwark of Christendom – a term often applied to Poland].

Considering the fact that they were defeated the Cossacks were given very good conditions: the Crown land from the Kiev voivodship would be distributed among them and there would be 20 000 registered Cossacks under hetman Khmelnytsky. But he wanted to be the reigning prince! With this in mind he tried to occupy Moldavia for himself in 1652, but since the Hospodar there was at the time on friendly terms with Poland, he could not be abandoned. Thus, the fourth Cossack war broke out. This time the Tartars did not support Khmelnytsky and as a result there was no fear of Tartar captivity, so he could mobilize no more than 50 000 armed men. This was a very noticeable fact! With such reduced forces Khmelnytsky feared to give battle alone and he had to search for help elsewhere, wherever it was possible. He applied again to Moscow and it was in this war that the Tsar entered the arena.

In Moscow from the very beginning the matter was understood in no other way than as a simple submission to the ruler of Moscow, in such a way “as things are in Moscow”, that is, as an unlimited subordination to the Tsar’s autocratic will with unconditional acceptance of his despotic power. Moscow demanded that the entire Cossack army swear allegiance of fidelity to the Tsar before he would enter the war. This oath had to be sworn,

because without it Khmelnytsky would be doomed. The Cossack elders, who received the rights of noblemen from Poland, were told that the same would be given them by the government of Muscovy. They understood that Ukraine would have self-rule, that no taxes would be imposed upon them without their accord, that there would be no officials of the Tsar in the towns but only local autonomous officials dependent on the hetman, the direct ruler of the country, who would obtain his office by election. In other words, everything would be as under the King but better, because the Tsar's registry would be higher, raised up to 60 000 and the Orthodox faith would not be endangered.

In February 1654 the entire Cossack camp moved, as ordered, to Pereyaslav where they pledged their fidelity to the Tsar in front of representatives of Moscow. Then they asked the Tsar's delegates to reciprocate and pledge the conditions of the agreement in the name of the Tsar. Here the Cossacks met with the same reaction as years back the inhabitants of Novgorod the Great had heard from Ivan the Terrible. They were scorned and sternly reprimanded. How dare they demand an oath from the Tsar! Thus, the very beginning of the matter proved that the Tsar was totally different from the Polish King!

Khmelnytsky's army did not return to Ukraine from Pereyaslav. It was sent immediately against Lithuania where aside the Moscow army it besieged Smolensk, Vilnius and Polotsk. In the southward direction, against Chernigov and Kiev, the Tsar at first sent only his Muscovite army, because he did not trust the Cossacks.

Meanwhile Poland was experiencing a "deluge": a Swedish invasion, an extremely violent invasion of the Hungarian

Rákóczi, a betrayal of the Prussian prince and an agreement about the partitioning of Poland and Lithuania. In the autumn of 1655 the whole of Poland was in the hands of Charles Gustav of Sweden. Seemingly Moscow was gaining allies but there are many exceptions in history from the saying that common enemies make friendships! The Muscovites and Swedes were waging war against Poland at the same time, but there was no political friendship among them. On the contrary, Moscow was again endangered by joint Polish-Lithuanian and Swedish forces that could crush the tsardom. This linking of the forces had already taken place because the majority in Poland and Lithuania accepted Charles Gustav as their King. The whole hope of Moscow lay in the return of John Casimir and the reinstatement of the two separate lines of the Vasas. What resulted was a most interesting fusing of interests in political history.

At a consultation in Opole, in Silesia, the place where John Casimir found refuge, the few remaining senators that stood with the King considered how to obtain assistance in the war against Sweden. The Poznań voivode, Jan Leszczyński came up with the proposal to offer the succession to the throne to whoever would come and help the King regain his country. The proposal was accepted and offers were sent among others to Moscow. Tsar Alexi Mikhailovich took the proposal under serious consideration. After all the Radziwiłłs had already signed a union of Lithuania with Sweden on the condition that the Swedes would help expel the Muscovites! In early spring 1656 an envoy of the Tsar appeared in Lviv offering that in case the Tsar or his son Feodor would be elected King, he would return to Poland and Lithuania all the territories that he had occupied and would help expel the Swedes. To start with a two year armistice was signed, beginning

on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1656. The armistice however was full of lingering consultations which yielded no positive results, because the project ceased to be pertinent once John Casimir managed to return to the throne and expel the Swedes using only his own Polish forces. The Polish nation noticed that Charles Gustav had no intention of being an electoral king (i.e. a constitutional monarch according to our present day parlance) and so the nation considered him an invader and quickly got rid of him. Once Charles Gustav no longer held Poland, Alexei Mikhailovich ceased to be its friend. Thus in 1658 a new war with Moscow broke out. But with Sweden peace was made. In that year Alexei returned to Sweden all the acquisitions that he had made in Livonia.

Meanwhile Ukraine was returning to Poland. Khmelnytsky died in 1657 and his successor Ivan Wyhovsky reconciled with Poland negotiating on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 1658 an agreement in Hadiach on the following conditions.

**A distinct Ruthenian state was established from the voivodeships of Kiev, Bratslav and Chernigov, having its own army, treasury, ministers and offices under the leadership of an elected hetman.** This state was to be in union with Poland and Lithuania. The gentry of all the three states would jointly elect their common King and would send delegates to a common grand parliament. The Cossacks were to be the gentry of the new state.

For a second time during the Cossack wars the emerging Ruthenian nationality was given complete self-government, this time in the form of their own state. Orthodoxy was to be the basic feature of this nationality. The Ruthenian banner was raised high, as was indicated by the explicit specification that only an Orthodox could hold any public office there. The Ruthenian state had

all the means necessary for governance, an army, a treasury and offices. Ruthenian society of the time had all the classes that were needed for the genesis of full nationality: great magnates, the owners of the most extensive estates in Europe, small owners of farms and very numerous folk people tilling the soil. They had more soldiers than any other nation because even the masses learned some military organization during these wars. There was no shortage of traders because everyone there had many possibilities to trade; every Cossack traded. Finally, a class of gentry was to be formed out of the Cossacks, the middle class of the Ruthenian nation.

But this new gentry was illiterate and by “Cossack freedoms” they understood ... the unlimited right to brew vodka. Individuals endowed with some cultural formation were exceptions. The majority was a dark mass and this terrible ignorance meant that all the structures worked out for them by the Poles in the name of peace proved in vain. Left to themselves, moved by their ignorance, they attacked one another.

Now civil wars among the Cossacks broke out over the issue who was to be their hetman. These wars lasted 22 years until 1680. Throughout this time one hetman submitted to Poland another to Moscow and the third to Turkey. At times there were simultaneously two or more hetmans. The Cossacks ceased to be the decisive factor in the budding Ruthenian nationality, and never afterwards did they attain such national consciousness. Amidst the universal anarchy only the mob felt well and whoever had some personal cultural consciousness turned away with disgust from the dominant state of affairs.

The short era of Ruthenian nationality was ending and the episode of the Ruthenian state terminated with the result that whoever did not have to be a Cossack, whoever could manage without this way of earning a living left the Cossack ranks and being ashamed of the atrocities committed during the Cossack wars dominated by the most appalling mob tried to conceal any trace of participation in this. Those who were to form the Ruthenian gentry were abandoning Orthodoxy *en masse* and converting not to the Uniate Church but directly to the Roman Catholic faith of the Latin rite. Towards the end of the Cossack wars and as a consequence of them the entire Ruthenian intelligentsia and the whole gentry class of Podolia, Volhynia and Ukraine became Polish. They did not want to have anything in common with the heinous murders, brigandage and licentiousness and so they defended their moral sense under the wings of Polish culture. From then onwards and as a consequence of the war Orthodoxy remained the faith of the peasants of Ukraine. Only those who could not abandon the Ruthenian identity, namely the simple people remained with it.

Such was the end of the first national consciousness in the eastern Slav lands. Ruthenian nationality evaporated in the horrors of the Cossack wars and ultimately these wars strengthened Polish nationality in Southern Ruthenia.

In response to the Hadiach accord Moscow again declared war against Poland and Lithuania. For two years new calamities fell upon Poland until in 1660 Czarniecki gained a major victory near Lachowicze and shortly afterwards a second Muscovite army capitulated before Jerzy Lubomirski. Having pushed out of Poland the atrocious wild mobs of Rákóczi, who were no better than the Cossacks, and having settled for peace with Sweden all

the forces were turned against Moscow. The war was conducted aggressively and so happily that at the 1661 session of the parliament 103 standards won on the Muscovites were laid before the King. Lithuania was regained. But no peace was negotiated.

Wyhovsky then stood up to the Muscovite army of Prince Trubetskoy (1659), but Yurii Khmelnytsky, the son of Bohdan, moving against Wyhovsky pulled his followers onto the side of Moscow. He also did not maintain his position for long and for personal security he had to allow himself to be shaven so as to become a monk. The next Cossack hetman Tetera constantly hesitated between Poland and Moscow.

In the further course of the war against Moscow the King himself set out in the summer of 1663 into Ukraine. He victoriously crossed the river Dnieper and in February 1664 won a major victory near Briansk. The Crown standard-bearer, Jan Sobieski even reached as far as the river Vorskla. This expedition, organized on a grand scale with prospects of reaching peace with Moscow on conditions dictated by the victorious Poland suddenly failed, because the unexpected warming of the weather caused the early melting of the ice. Not wanting to be grounded with the army in mud and melting snow the expedition had to be discontinued mid-way with only partial success.

From then on the war with Moscow dragged on lazily, while another war broke out against Turkey. The one who had started the Cossack issue, namely the Sultan interfered again. Doroshenko, the new Zaporozhye hetman after Tetera submitted to Turkey and started immediately to fight against the Crown army having obtained 40 000 Tartars as assistance. The plunder-

ing expedition, which was to be the introduction to a Turkish invasion, entered deeply into Red Ruthenia. Jan Sobieski, at that time already the [Polish] hetman, having only 8000 men repulsed an army of 100 000 Tartars and Cossacks near Podhajce in 1667. When he forced a peace treaty on the Tartars, also the Cossack hetman had to think about this. Doroshenko therefore broke off with Turkey and submitted to Poland.

In 1667 a compromise was agreed upon with Moscow, which divided Ukraine. The armistice signed for 13 years in Andrusovo gave Smolensk to Moscow, while in exchange Polotsk and Vitebsk as well as all the acquisitions Moscow made on Polish Livonia were returned to Lithuania. Ukraine was divided along the river Dnieper. The eastern side was to belong to the Tsar and the western to the King. Since the Tsar was unable to deal with his Cossacks, he asked that he be permitted to introduce his garrison into Kiev for a period of two years. This was accepted, but once the “Muscovite” entered Kiev, he never left it.

Kiev, “the mother of Ruthenian forts” after whole centuries of varied circumstances found itself in the hands of the disdained “Suzdal region” from where “the tsardom of the whole of Ruthenia” emerged.

The Cossack wars have a significant place in the history of culture and this was also so because they tightened the bond between Kiev and Moscow. The former “whole Rostov land” to a large extent had been a settlement region of Southern Ruthenia and the Kiev Pechersk Lavra was the mother house for all monasteries in the eastern Slav lands. The Orthodox Church had always revived and improved its standards when it had Metropolitans from Southern Ruthenia. It was always the case

that revival came from the South. Even the Muscovite state initially [before the domination of Tartar influence] had been organized by men from the South. Later the relationships weakened only to be revived again at the turn of the XVI<sup>th</sup> and XVII<sup>th</sup> c., when the Ostróg Academy was flourishing. The subsequent Academy established in Kiev by Mogila had a direct impact on Moscow. This derived from Church studies of the Biblical texts.

Once the books used by the Church were printed, the settling of the textual version became an issue. The books that were used in Ruthenia had many errors made by copyists and resulting from an inadequate knowledge of languages among the translators. These errors were being discovered as the liturgical books were prepared for printing. Already in the days of Tsar Nicholas [Romanov] there was hesitation as to whether the errors should be maintained uncorrected because they have already been ... confirmed by tradition. An interesting and remarkable conflict broke out, with the question being raised where the faith had “greater purity”, in Greece or in Ruthenia, that is, where the manuscripts of the Scriptures are better?

Patriarch Nikon was in favour of Greek theology. He cared much for the raising of the standards of theological studies. In this matter it was possible to refer to what had been worked out in Ostróg and Kiev in the field of exegesis and this should have been done. The Kiev school of theology was exerting an increasing influence but at the same time it provoked suspicion and resistance because the Kievans ... knew Latin and in general they relied on Polish culture. When a learned brotherhood, led by the Greek Arsenius and the Ruthenian Jepifanij Slavynckij (†1676) moved from Kiev to Moscow, Nikon entrusted them the work of

editing a correct version of the Church books. During the “Council” of 1654 the Patriarch had a resolution passed requiring a scientific revision of the texts. This resulted in great opposition extending well beyond the Council.

There were two sources of the opposition. The introduction of corrected texts was to take place through the imposition of the printed versions. This implied the obligation of learning how to read and write. This was tedious, whereas it was simpler for the priests to remain illiterate! Furthermore, the court preacher, Symeon of Polotsk (†1680), who was also educated in Kiev and was the author of theatrical mysteries based on the Bible modelled on similar Polish versions, called for the establishment of schools for candidates to the priesthood! There were also deeper reasons for the reaction. Entire generations had become accustomed to certain forms and expressions which for the followers of the *двоеверие* [dual faith] functioned like incantations. A minute change in them was interpreted as a deprivation of these formulas of their magical power. And why should they be changed when they proved good and effective for so many generations?! With horror it was discovered that novelties were to be introduced, that the innovators write the name of the Saviour *Isus* rather than *Jesus* and that they make the sign of the cross with three fingers instead of with two etc. Gradually Patriarch Nikon was acquiring the opinion of being the Anti-Christ...

Again a violent conflict broke out as to the superiority of “Greek theology over the Ruthenian” and it affected the court of the Tsar. In 1658 the Patriarch left Moscow settling in a neighbouring monastery which he had established. He lived there for eight years, and then in 1666 he was exiled to the White Sea. Through a strange type of compromise his person was sacrificed,

whereas the crux of the issue was preserved. In that year the Tsar ordered that copies of the corrected books be sent to the eparchies and major monasteries. The result was that simultaneously in various parts of the country an open and violent opposition broke out protesting against the “corruption of the Orthodox faith”. Fanatical priests and many people touched by religious frenzy wandered from fort to fort encouraging a direct active opposition.

The revision of the texts proved to be the drop that caused the container to overflow. Terrible post-war poverty, famine and pestilence prepared the ground for revolution. The inflation was such that bronze coins were introduced having a nominal value in place of the silver currency. This fact alone gives an idea about the depth of the economic crisis and the increase of the costs of living! Under such conditions the taxes were raised and various restrictions to trade were made through the introduction of state monopolies! And yet the people would have accepted all of this in silence as coming from the holy person of the Tsar, but the problem was that the Tsar had perverted the religion ... Thus there occurred the one and only case when an upright Muscovite could stand up against the Tsar. He had corrupted the faith and so just as Nikon he was becoming the Anti-Christ. The fact that he had exiled the Patriarch and deprived him of his Patriarchal office was irrelevant, since he ordered that prayers were to be celebrated according to his heretical books.

The social and state formulas of Moscow had to be rooted in religious humus; only then did they have value, power and life. Both the state organization and revolution had to have this basis, because without them they would be meaningless. Opposition over such issues as famine, exploitation, ruin, the tying of peasants to the soil and the blocking of the earnings of traders would

organize and change into a revolution only when a religious movement was attached to it.

Since 1668 the opposition had its main headquarters in the famous pilgrimage shrine, the Solovetsky monastery in the far north. From there slogans about the defence of the endangered purity of faith came and there the *раскол* [split, schism of the Old Believers], the religious civil war began. The entire society, all the people divided into two camps because the quandary of consciences affected all the classes.

It can be said that the *раскол* (split) was a gift of Ukraine to Moscow as a consequence of the introduction of the printing press... Since the schism was based on clear errors in the religious texts, it could not have survived had there been a systematic furthering of education. Those who unawares were the cause of the conflict, the Kievans, the graduates of Mogila's Academy, had every right on their side. Had the social reasons for rebellion subsided and were ignorance to be replaced by education, the problem limited to a purely theological matter with no social colouring would not have persisted. The Kievan influences would then have been the foundation stone of what is often referred to as the "Europeanization of Russia".

The cultural revival of Muscovy could effectively come from the same source from which it sprung in the past, namely from Southern Ruthenia. This Ruthenia was subject to Polish influences and was already exercised in "Latin scholarship", adopting even though slowly some elements of Western culture. Through the mediation of this Southern Ruthenia some kinds of secular writings adapted from the Polish language were reaching Moscow.

A similar phenomenon occurred here as was the case with Byzantine influences. Just as Byzantinism came to be known after it was subjected to transformation in Wallachia, so Europeanism could be grafted onto the Moscow soil only after an appropriate Orthodox transformation and this could be supplied only by the Kiev Academy and by Southern Ruthenia in general. Direct Polish influences were excluded for religious reasons and in any case the cultural rift was too great.

Unfortunately for Muscovite Ruthenia, the Kievan culture did not survive. Kiev lost a great deal by being transferred to the Tsar.. Cut off from Polish culture meant that very soon Kiev had nothing to offer Moscow, and so it fell to the level of ... Muscovite ignorance. But also in Ukraine on the right bank of the Dnieper the Ruthenian nationality broke away from the new offshoot of European erudition which seemed to bud in Southern Ruthenia and was sending runners northwards. All of this declined, stamped out by the Cossack "rebellions." Thus Cossack-dom became not the foundation of Ruthenia but its grave. What sort of backward influence this lack of a proper source of European culture was to have on the history of Russia, became soon manifest, when Muscovy was transforming into Russia and seeking cultural support beyond its natural cradle.

This region was already in decline when the Andrusovo armistice was signed in 1667. The diplomatic negotiations were conducted from the side of Moscow by Nashchokin, the famous Pskov *boyar* who merits to be called the first European in Moscow, a man of genuine righteousness, a great organizer of the eastern trade and a builder of the first ships on the Volga and the

Caspian Sea. By a coincidence, perhaps not accidental, these ships were to be destroyed ... by the Cossacks.

The Cossack wars took place not only within the Polish state. They also touched upon Muscovy even though there was no menace of the ... Union of Brest there! The Don Cossacks organized rebellions no less frequently than the ones from Zaporozhye until in 1670 there was a general conflagration in the Moscow state led by the Cossack Stepan Razin, who organized a military society comparable to that of Khmelnytsky. The reality was the same, but only the circumstances were different. Razin was not exploited by the neighbours of the country for their own political aims and so everything happened as an internal affair of Muscovy. In the eastern arena of Cossack activity there was no national feeling, no sense of distinctiveness or national unity and there was no religious agitation. The “rebellions” of the Don Cossacks manifest the symptoms of oriental communal life, untarnished by any side influences, namely, the genesis of a political society on the basis of a military organization that simultaneously served as its economic substratum.

Stepan Razin presented himself as a liberator from the famine that attacked the Don watershed. Having gathered a large company of Cossacks and non-Cossacks he showed them a way of life leading them in the conquest of Azov and then in plundering expeditions along the lower Volga, and finally in the Yaik regions near the Urals. He ordered the peoples in the region from Persia to the middle Volga to pay him a tribute. He gathered Slav, Tartar and Yugra volunteers. After a few years he had a major army at his disposal and daringly started to move more and more in the westerly direction. He moved across the boundaries of direct Tsarist rule, and the Tsar’s armies proved helpless against him, because

the people would arrest the Tsar's "generals" and emissaries and send them in chains to Razin's camp, while the soldiers simply passed onto his side. Wherever the Cossack forces met the *раскол* (Old Believers) they immediately gained fervent followers willingly shedding the yoke of the Anti-Christ. Famine was an even better agent. Thus a new state was forming against Moscow. Stepan Razin ruled in Tsaritsyn [Volgograd], Astrakhan, Saratov, Samara, Tambov, Penza and was near to Nizhny Novgorod. The closer he was to Moscow the more revolutionary his movement became, incorporating an increasing number of oppositionist elements which were interested not only in a more pleasant form of life, according to their notions, but also in ensuring that in their regions things would not have to be "as in Moscow."

As from 1668 the Old Believer *раскол* rebelled openly and also penetrated the army. The Solovetsky monastery had its own garrison composed of soldiers who had been sent there to suppress the monks. It changed into a fortress that resisted sieges for eight years. Every defeat of the Tsar's forces sparked new resistance in other parts of the tsardom. The city of Moscow itself became the scene of riots in which the Miloslavskys fell. The "re-introduction of peace" cost 7000 heads, either imprisoned or hanged. In such circumstances the rebellion of Razin was moving towards the northwest, aiming at Moscow from where they would help those besieged in Solovetsk. Had this happened the entire tsardom would have changed into one revolutionary camp.

The *раскол* of the Old Believers started to link up with the rebellion of Razin and the village people, ascribed to the soil, who fled to join him. Also in the tsardom "Cossack wars" were imminent, with an agricultural and religious background. All the *bo-yars*, all landowners in general, not only the great landlords were

endangered, and this would inevitably lead to a total ruin of the whole state and of the social system as it existed so far. So the state and the society of the *boyars* made an effort to defend their existence. Finally in 1671 a strong enough army was raised, which under the command of Yury Baryatinsky defeated Razin near Simbirsk. The fleeing Razin was caught up in the steppes. He ended very differently than Khmelnytsky, on the gallows in Moscow. The revolution lingered on for a few more years but as the years went on it was dying down and finally it was suppressed with the utmost severity.

In that same year 1671, in Poland, the further course of the Cossack issue turned into a Polish-Turkish war, because Doroshenko submitted to Turkey. Despite the famous expedition of Sobieski against the Tartar units the war ended with the ignoble Buchach peace treaty of 1672 in which Podolie was ceded directly to the Turkish state, while Ukraine was left with Doroshenko under the supremacy of the Sultan. Thus the original dream of Khmelnytsky was achieved: a separate state of Ukraine existing thanks to the Sultan's grace. The Ukrainian religious war finally fulfilled its mission... in respect to the caliphate.

The further military action of Sobieski, who from 1674 was King, led to the regaining two thirds of Ukraine under the 1676 Żurawno treaty. The rest together with Podolie was returned to Poland as late as 1699 under the treaty of Karlowitz. On the one third of Ukraine left to him, Doroshenko continued to serve Turkey.

By now Morozov ceased to be at the helm of Moscow and Nashchokin removed himself to a monastery for devotional purposes so as to avoid a worse fate. The widowed Tsar remarried

and this inevitably implied a change in the people of the time". Together with the new Tsarina, Natalia Naryshkina, her uncle Matveyev took over control. The change was strictly personal and nothing changed in the direction of affairs. Matveyev was an earnest supporter of education, just as Nashchokin had been and he leaned towards European culture just as his predecessor. The Tsarina broke with the Tartar harem system and the courtiers started to shave their beards. Theatrical performances were organized.

All three governors under Alexei imported foreigners as many as they could obtain for state service. But since a long time there were no Italians and the Poles were never accepted. Catholic foreigners disappeared completely. Only the enemies of "papism" were received into the Tsar's service, i.e. Protestants. Relationships were therefore restricted to Northern Europe. Craftsmen, engineers and officers were recruited from Sweden, Northern Germany, Holland and Scotland. There were many of them. Near Moscow a special settlement was organized for them, the so called "German *Слобода* [Quarter]." Due to the dislike of Catholics Moscow did not profit from the main centres of progressive military technology, Spain, France and neighbouring Poland. As a result the Muscovite army again became backward. Sweden could be an excellent school, but military instructors were not imported from there because that would amount to treason against their own country. Similarly there were never any Polish officers in "Moscow service" in spite of the fact that in Poland there were Orthodox officers.

In the last year of the life of Tsar Alexei the Solovetsky monastery was finally conquered and it submitted. An even more severe persecution of the Old Believers followed, which intensified during the reign of his son Feodor Alexeyevich (1676-1682)

who became Tsar as a 14-year old youth and died when he was only 20. Matveyev was banished and the Miloslavskys again became “the people of the time.”

The Andrusovo armistice with Poland was prolonged for a further 13 years as a consequence of which the Seversk land was to be returned to Sobieski. Only a few counties however were returned, while the remainder was left suspended in the promise. Relationships with Doroshenko involved also Moscow in a war against Turkey, which was waged successfully. An armistice agreed upon in Bakhchysarai in 1681 left the eastern bank of the river Dnieper entirely in the hands of Moscow. The Turks were leaving these regions and Doroshenko had to resign his hetmanate. The Cossack wars ended.

### **XVIII. The second struggle over the Baltic and the bureaucratic reform (1682-1725).**

The Cossack wars were a turning point in the history of Eastern Europe as regards the course of cultural influences. During the first half of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c. Western influences, through Poland and Lithuania continued to impact Lithuanian and Ukrainian Ruthenia, and this influenced Muscovy. In the second part of the century a radical change took place, which was complete around 1700. Kiev found itself within Moscow's sphere of influence and Poland was following completely Lithuanian and Ruthenian standards. This turn of direction was greatly supported by the economic relationships. This was a time when the towns were in decline, a sign of the undoubtable economic ruin of the Polish state. With the background of this universal poverty democratic Poland

became aristocratic, and this happened without any new legislation but only as a consequence of changed social conditions. Political clout normally follows affluence and the poorer were the masses, the lower the average level of prosperity, the greater was the power of the rich. The middle class gentry that had led Poland since the times of Casimir Jagiellon were now reduced to “holding onto the rich”. The richest magnates soon acquired such political predomination that in fact they were the exclusive owners of the governments. These richest magnates were not from ethnographic Poland; their origins were in Lithuania and Ruthenia! Gradually the political and social influences of Poland on Lithuania and Ruthenia declined and the opposite trend took over. Poland was to become oriental in many respects, an external expression of which was the adoption of eastern attire. At the same time Poland succumbed into ignorance falling lower and lower until the middle of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> c.

The Kiev Academy, the most easterly located centre of at least indirect European culture was gradually phasing out and dying. In the meantime in Moscow, under Feodor Alexeyevich a Slav-Greek-Latin Academy was set up. It was a school in which not only Orthodox Church writings were studied but also the Greek language, essential for theological investigations within Orthodoxy. Also Latin was taught there. Previously Moscow students went to Kiev to learn Latin. With Latin being now a part of the curriculum the Moscow Academy emancipated itself completely from Kiev. Soon students from Kiev were travelling to Moscow and later to St. Petersburg so as to obtain a higher education.

From its very beginning the Moscow school was open also for those who had no intention of entering the clerical state. Lay students were soon entering it in numbers as a result of the reform

of the bureaucracy undertaken in Moscow. Only the graduates, as a rule, could count on receiving higher positions.

The bureaucracy was expanding and became more powerful at a truly terrible rate, the example for which would have to be searched in the original source of this surrogate of a culture, namely in Mongolia! The families that were ruling the country “at the time”, about which it could be said that they had “married” into the *самодержавие* [autocracy], were never sure of their own future. Thus they were interested in pushing the princely families as low as possible and in elevating the bureaucracy. Towards the end of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c. the bureaucracy already encroached on all fields of life constantly inventing for itself new issues and responsibilities that were said to be essential for the state. There were already as many as fifty *приказы* [orders] i.e. governmental departments dealing with various matters and each one of them was densely populated with serving *boyars* and *dyaks* and had many subordinate regional offices in the provinces. The *dyaks* were the intelligentsia of these departments, but they were not in charge nor did they even run the regional offices in the numerous towns of the wide provinces of the tsardom. The *boyars* were in charge even though as a rule they were illiterate. The *boyar* officers of the bureaucracy derived from the obligatory “service” of the distinguished families and the distribution of positions was determined basically by the *местничество* [placing, meaning the proximity with the most influential people in the state]. This principle was held onto so strictly that soon it brought the administration into an absurd condition, and there was no way how this principle could be bypassed. Increasingly frequently it was announced that in some branch of the service, a position would be assigned “without the placing”, i.e. to a *dyak* or *boyar* that was competent for a given job regardless of birth. Such exceptions,

through sheer necessity, happened increasingly frequently, and this enhanced the importance and fame of the *dyaks* and not the *boyars*.

The bloated bureaucracy was a force with which every “autocrat” had to deal. At times of crisis the Tsar would call a sort of parliament of his bureaucracy. These were the so called “land diets” in which the higher bureaucracy, both the *boyars*, only those who were “in service” and the *dyaks*, as well as the higher clergy took part *ex officio*. Elected members representing the lower clergy and the lower bureaucracy took part only when it was considered necessary to invite them, which was not always the case. Since the middle of the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. until the middle of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c. there were 17 such “land diets”. They flourished under Tsar Michael, and then slowly they declined as an institution of public life. They were never a representative organ of the population. Delegates of the people were allowed to take part only once, in 1613. In their genesis and their development and structure, the “land diets” had nothing in common with West-European institutions such as the Estates General, class parliaments etc. They ceased to be called because they were too inconvenient for the people “of the time”, who did not like to recall the memory of Adashev.

In order to have a free hand with respect to the bureaucracy, in 1682 a decisive step was taken. The “placing” was totally abolished. This basically was a positive step. It was announced then that priority in leadership positions would be given to the graduates of the Slav-Greek-Latin Academy.

The introduction of Latin as a compulsory subject for study for candidates to higher positions, both clerical and lay, was a true “window opening to Europe”!

The fashion deriving from the Tsar’s court was causing increasing objections amongst the wider masses who regarded the shaving of beards as a sin and the teaching of Latin as heresy. *Раскол*, the schism of the Old Believers increasingly was becoming an opposition against all innovations, a cultural, political, economic and moral opposition. It was a comprehensive, basic and total opposition, impervious to all arguments, all actions and to any logic of facts. This was so, because it was based on an erroneous understanding of the religious foundation.

The government did not hesitate in the employment of a radical solution against the schismatic *расколники*. They had to be exterminated. The measures turned out to be a failure even though in 1681 the burning at the stake was tried. Martyrdom added lustre to the cause inviting ever new followers, generating fanaticism finally reaching such a stage that some groups committed joint suicide burning to death. The persecution strengthened the foundations of the “Church of the Old Rite”, which in time was to have its own hierarchy, both clerical and lay, set apart from the entire state system. The ranks of the schismatics grew in proportional reaction to the government’s following of the course that later was referred to as the “Europeanisation of Russia”. Various opposition groups joined together, even though they had little in common, with the net result being that modern Russian sectarianism was born. The initial “schism” was centred on the *Старообрядчество* [Old Rite]. After the death of Feodor Alexeyevich even more severe persecution followed, during which several new sects were discovered.

Tsar Feodor died childless on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1682. The month after his death was full of events.

The younger brother of Feodor, Ivan, the second son of Maria Miloslavskaya, was physically disabled and mentally handicapped. Their step brother, however, Peter, the son of Natalia Naryshkina, aged ten, was in full health. Patriarch Joachim supported the Naryshkins but the party of the Miloslavskys first came up with a means that later was always practiced: they assured themselves the support of ... the palace guard, a regiment of rifles. The Moscow praetorians cleared the way by removing the head of the Naryshkin family, the brother of Tsarina Natalia, as well as a number of other distinguished individuals including the old Matveyev, who had been recalled from exile by Natalia. They all were killed. The Miloslavskys brought forward the 25 year old Sophia, the sister of Feodor and Ivan so that she would rule as the guardian of the two sons of the previous Tsar, Ivan and Peter. Sophia Alexeyevna (1682-1689) handed over the government to her favourite Prince Golitsyn. All these changes took place within one month, between April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 30<sup>th</sup> 1682. Natalia with Peter had to leave the capital, but since it was intended to have them under control, they had to live close to Moscow in the village Preobrazhenskoye, near the German Quarter.

It was there that the young Peter came to know foreign officers and engineers who were brought in increasing number, because Golitsyn cared for the development of the army. In this way Peter acquired some technical education, which he continued to develop all his life, even though he was never interested in science proper, and never had the notion of striving for scientific truth. In this he was similar to Ivan III the Stern, who had a respect

for “craftsmen” and had a collection of such “learned” men at his court. The similarity was even deeper. Since the times of Ivan III, Peter was the first Moscow dynast, who had real talent.

The primary issue of Moscow politics again was the question of access to the sea coast. Since Nashchokin this matter increasingly came up to the fore as being most important, because the prosperity of the state depended on a positive solution of this question and the expenses for the military were enormous. No one was interested in “coming closer to Europe” for cultural reasons. What was important was the lucrative trade with Europe, which could be handled directly from one’s own port. It seemed immaterial whether the port would be on the Baltic or on the Black Sea; it would be best to have one both here and there! Whoever had to deal with the constantly faltering finances of the state had to see that these would not be settled without having the control of some sea coast. Golitsyn thought the same and it was not without cause that he imported engineers and navy officers from Scotland and the Netherlands. The young Peter encountered many of them in the German Quarter and Preobrazhenskoye and he acquired a personal fondness for the navy that stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Golitsyn decided to turn towards the shores of the Black Sea. This was the cause of his decision that was contrary to the whole tradition of Muscovy until this time. He agreed to cooperate with Poland against Turkey, a policy that all the Tsars since the XV<sup>th</sup> c. had opposed. The circumstances were rather favourable because Poland at the time after the rescue of Vienna in 1683 remained in the anti-Turkish league together with the Habsburgs. Thus the Turks could be pressured from three sides simultaneously. Golitsyn therefore negotiated a permanent peace with Poland in 1686 on the conditions of the Andrusovo armistice, with

Kiev being handed over to Moscow forever, promising to pay 1½ million thalers to Poland and to declare war against the Sultan. The peace treaty was signed on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1686 and in August Sobieski moved against Moldavia while Golitsyn attacked in the direction of Crimea. The Polish king reached the Danube, but had to retreat. Also Moscow's expedition against Crimea came to nothing, even though great forces were engaged, 100 000 of regular army and 50 000 of Cossacks from the eastern Ukraine under Ataman Mazepa. A second expedition in 1689 also failed.

That was the end of Golitsyn's government. Peter, already 17 years old, was healthy, active and ambitious. He was eager to rule and so there was fear that he may be dangerous towards his official guardian since she had no intention of giving up the guardianship. Thus Peter was quickly married off so that he would think less about Moscow in Preobrazhenskoye. As a wife he was given a rich woman, Lopukhina, but their mutual relationship proved to be disastrous. The Naryshkins however came to terms with the Lopukhins. The former were much experienced in the principle of families "of the time" and Sophia realised that her position deteriorated even more. She did not think twice and prepared an assassination plot against Peter gaining the support of the rifle guards. It seems however that her agents were followed by richer and more generous agents of the Lopukhins and the guards turned sides in favour of Peter. As a result Sophia retired to a convent. This happened in 1689.

Formally there were two Tsars, Ivan V and Peter, because Ivan lived until 1696 and he was meticulously mentioned in all the official state documents. In fact he played no role at all and showed no interest in the affairs of the state. Only Peter Alexeyevich, Peter the Great (1689-1725) was the real Tsar.

The new ruler continued to be devoted to his technical exercises and so for a long time the matters of state were left to the Lopukhins and Naryshkins. The Tsar's court continued to wage war against Turkey, but lazily. For six years nothing was done. Sobieski was not supported even when he conquered Moldavia again in 1691. Only in 1695 did Moscow move, because Peter himself took to the field taking over personally the helm of the state.

Two armies advanced in 1695, one led by Sheremetev went along the Dnieper towards Crimea and the other led by the 25-year old Peter went to Azov. The siege failed because not having a fleet it was impossible to attack the city also from the sea. The Tsar came across his ambition and vocation. He called all his Dutchmen and Scotsmen to Voronezh, supervising the work himself and during the winter 30 ships were built. With them he embarked again against Azov in April 1696 and took it in July.

At the same time 80 000 Tartars tied the Polish forces and in 1695 they reached as far as Lviv. They were repelled but further military action proved impossible. The life of the great fighter against the Turks, the great statesman, who never drew his sword for an ignoble cause, King John III Sobieski was ending. He died on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1699, a month before Azov submitted to Peter.

Peter prepared for his famous trip around Europe. In March 1697 a grand embassy left Moscow, sent to a number of European monarchs. It was a large team composed of 160 people led by two foreigners in the service of Moscow, a Scotsman named Gordon and a Genevan Lefort. The team included the incognito, Peter Mikhailov as the Tsar wanted to be called during

the trip. The incognito was necessary for reasons of etiquette. The Tsar was an oriental despot, following a boor ceremonial, unchanged for centuries, based on the assumption that basically no one is a human in comparison with the Tsar and all the monarchs of the entire world at best could be considered his subordinates. This ceremonial was well known in Europe due to various delegations visiting Moscow since the XVI<sup>th</sup> c. It was generally ridiculed and Moscow deputations were treated as comedy shows. Peter had no intention of abandoning this ceremonial, but he managed it in this way that he travelled with no ceremony, incognito. It was also an oriental symptom that he wanted to touch with his own hand the workshops of Netherlands, England and Venice, as he had planned. This derived from the oriental conviction about the miraculous value of the monarchic hand. Peter was an “European” only in the field of ... technology. He was never so in his interior nor ever did he intend to be. In this he was like Ivan III the Stern with a similar seeing of his relationship towards Europe.

On the way they visited Livonia, where they were not very hospitably received, the courts of Brandenburg and Hannover, and then the Netherlands, from where in January 1698 they travelled to England. In April the return journey began, again through the Netherlands, then central Germany, Prague and Vienna, from where they planned to go to Venice so as to return through Hungary and Poland. In Vienna, Peter was informed that Sophia profiting from his absence had planned a plot. Assuring herself of the support of the rifles, she intended to dethrone the travelling Tsar and take over herself the helm of the state. Thus from Vienna Peter went straight to Moscow, through Southern Poland having informed the Polish King Augustus II the Strong about the changed plans. He met with the Polish King in Rawa Ruska, north of Lviv on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1698. This meeting was not for reasons of

etiquette. It had been prearranged for quite some time and represented the last element in a carefully set up diplomatic network.

Peter undertook the journey which in his days was tedious not only so as to learn the carpentry of ship building. He wanted to check out personally whether Moscow could use European contacts for its own internal and external needs.

The Tsars have always regarded Europe with contempt as a collection of countries that did not have any real monarchy, because even in the most absolute monarchies, the subjects had some rights. Thus the Tsars considered themselves to be much above all the kings of the West. They despised Europe also because it was deprived of the true faith. Peter Alexeyevich was not a pious devotee of Orthodoxy, but he valued it for its being identified with the tsardom. He had contempt for Catholic kings whose power was so limited that they had to share it with the Pope, they themselves being only sheep in the Church and not the pastors. In his eyes these were symptoms of profound inferiority. Thus he had respect only for Protestant rulers, because they were enemies of the greatest, as he understood, enemy of monarchism, namely, the Pope, who so impudently restrained the power of kings in a field the importance of which he understood so well. For Moscow the Papacy implied setting limits on despotism, therefore it was a revolutionary and anti-social institution! Peter was well informed about Protestantism since his early years by the officers of the German Quarter. For this reason his whole journey was primarily focused on Protestant countries. It was there that Peter had political issues to settle, both internal and external, whereas Vienna, Venice and Warsaw were needed only for external purposes, but were unsuited to offer him any advice concerning internal policies due to their Catholicism.

Moscow was enchanted by the whole of Europe, both Protestant and Catholic in the field that always impresses the Orient, namely, in the technical side of their arrangements, particularly the military ones. Basing on his own fresh experience from Azov, Peter recognized the value of technology. He conquered the port city only thanks to the employment of a Western technique, as was earlier the case with Ivan III when he took Kazan. Peter was aware that Moscow would not supersede its European neighbours, Poland and Sweden, whom it would like to confront over Livonia, White Ruthenia [Belarus] and Ukraine west of the river Dnieper, so long as it was unable to produce its own craftsmen, officers and engineers in appropriate numbers. Peter understood that the secret why the European states could easily have a sufficient number of people in these professions lay somewhere beyond the army, in the some factors of the civil life. He wanted to resolve this mystery and wrench it away from Europe and that is why he personally set out on the journey.

The Tsar urgently needed an army of a high European technological standard during his own reign so as to secure and expand the coastal conquests, on both seas, the Black and the Baltic. He could not stop at Azov. He had to aim for the conquest of Crimea and for this he needed the continued agreements with the Habsburgs and Poland. During his trip he learnt that he could also aim at the conquest of Livonia. The expansion of his projects covering both seas was the major profit that he gained from his trip to Europe.

The access of Northern Germany to the sea was closed by Sweden, which since the peace treaty of Westphalia in 1648, after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) controlled the mouths of the

Weser, Elbe and Oder rivers. This presented a major difficulty to the two main states of Northern Germany that Peter visited, Brandenburg (Prussia) and Hannover. For both of them Russia could become a valuable ally, should she recognize that she had common interests against Sweden from which she could take Livonia. The Elector of Saxony, the ruler of the central German state could also be a partner because he was King of Poland since 1697. Poland and Moscow could divide Swedish Livonia among themselves. Also Denmark could be considered a reliable ally because it had territorial disputes with Sweden. In each one of these countries there was pondering how to deprive Sweden of her conquests. Peter's voyage, the personal encounter of one of the interested parties with almost the entire region of the possible alliance, greatly contributed to the awareness of common interests and helped in the forming of the necessary contacts for international politics. Thus political know-how was acquired.

Initially Peter was engaged in matters of the Black Sea. He wanted to ensure that his recent conquest of Azov be confirmed as belonging to Moscow by his allies in the anti-Turkish league, the Emperor Leopold I and the new Polish King Augustus II the Strong. Thus Peter planned to visit them both. In Vienna he achieved what he wanted, i.e. the promise that the issue of Azov would be brought into the conditions for peace with Turkey. From Vienna, as was mentioned above, he returned directly home and as a consequence the meeting with Augustus II was accelerated.

At this point the famous Johann Patkul enters the historical scene. He was one of those condottiere politicians who offered their talents to whichever monarch was available and willing. Patkul was the most noble among such men because all his life he

served only one cause, although at various courts. The main concern of his life was the weakening of Sweden and in particular freeing Livonia from Swedish rule. He was a Livonian nobleman, a German, the head of the opposition against Swedish rule. In Stockholm he had been sentenced to death. He switched to the service of King Augustus II just at the time when Peter was organizing his meeting in Rawa Ruska. He gained the complete favour of the Saxon King of Poland and as regards Peter his own person served as a new argument. Livonia could serve the Tsar for entire generations offering an unlimited number of all kinds of craftsmen, from a simple gunman to commanders of whole armies. Gaining even half of Livonia, Moscow would acquire a rich and industrious nest of European technicians on whose expertise the future of the army would depend, which was the only force of this state against neighbours. In every Livonian there was something of a Patkul!

Basically the agreement was negotiated and settled in Rawa Ruska. Patkul would manage the enterprise to its fruition. In the meantime Peter returned to Moscow. He dealt with Sophia locking her in a convent. He disbanded the regiment of the court rifles having first decimated them. Furthermore, after several investigations he ordered that about a thousand people be hanged or beheaded and large groups were exiled to Siberia. The year 1699 was a year of executions and it ended with a radical overturn in the court because Peter banished his wife Eudoxia Lopukhina. From that moment the court became libertine in its mores and frequently this was excessively open, as if it were intended to be demonstrably visible.

Peter started to show contempt for the traditional customs, because he returned from his voyage with the will to introduce

the European fashion by force. We are accustomed to smile hearing about the *указы* [decrees] pertaining to attire, the shaving of beards etc., about the evening “assemblies” to which women were forcibly brought on the Tsar’s order and required to dance, something which no respectable Muscovite woman had ever done, and of numerous similar obligatory “reforms”. This for us is a vast source of historical anecdotes! But Peter knew what he was doing. He knew that in Muscovite society nothing could be done in the content without changing the form, and this had to be done in a way that would be obvious even to the least competent and truly ignorant observer. Where for centuries the entire content had to be subordinated to a given form, beginning with the written language, there the type of forms would decide about everything.

The reforms of Peter have to be criticized for another reason. The reformer did not look into the issue in depth nor did he intend to do so. He was only interested in the technology of European culture, and in external manners. Nothing else mattered because he did not perceive it nor did he have a feel for it. Peter’s mind after all was very superficial. For him the society and the state consisted uniquely in the army and the offices. He was concerned about the rest only in so far as they were a mass of people who had to pay taxes and provide recruits.

Peter drew the models of his reforms from Protestant Germany. As from 1698 the Germanization of official Russia begins. Whenever there was a need to introduce some new administrative ordering, Peter profited from the opportunity to impose something German. This began with the copying of the German *Landeskirchen* [regional Churches] in which the monarch was at the same time the Head of the Church, not only factually but also in the legal sense. When in 1700 the Moscow Patriarch died, Peter

forbade the filling of this post and so the Church remained without a leader until twenty years later, Peter declared himself to be the Head of the Church. Since in this time he had to deal with four Metropolitans all of whom were equal in rank (of Moscow, Novgorod, Rostov and Kiev) he managed the Church as if it was divided and he even used one Metropolitan against another. Thanks to this he succeeded in taking over Church property,, in fact increasingly so. At the same time he imposed obligatory literacy on the clergy and required that bishops would run schools for the sons of priests. Whoever failed to attend a school was recruited to the army for twenty years. He ensured that the Church, from now on the prime institution in the state, would have state protection. Thus the state had to guarantee the orthodoxy of the citizens. As in German states, which jealously followed the principle *cuius regio, illius religio* [whose rule, his religion], it was the state authority which had to ascertain whether the citizens fulfil their religious obligations. Thus Peter required that the state would control church attendance and the reception of the sacraments. The Old Believers”, who did not recognize the Church and the clergy using new liturgical books, were oppressed even more. The officials liked to exaggerate when dealing with the *расколники* [schismatics], because then they could extort bribes from them. As a result Peter was becoming the heir of Patriarch Nikon as the “Anti-Christ.”

In the meantime the negotiations for peace with Turkey were drawing to a positive end. Three years after the death of Sobieski the fruits of the Polish hero’s life’s efforts were finally collected. The Karlowitz peace of 1699 left Hungary free of Turkey, the power of the Habsburgs was restored, and the rest of Ukraine and the whole of Podolia were regained by Poland. The

Moscow tsardom gained access to the sea because the acquisition of Azov was covered also by the terms of the peace treaty.

The signing of the peace treaty did not allow any further moves in the direction of the Black Sea at least for some time, but the time was not wasted. Peter turned towards the Baltic.

Patkul succeeded in negotiating a secret deal between Denmark, Moscow and Saxony, but Prussia and Hannover disappointingly did not take part because of their involvement in the war over the Spanish succession that engaged northern Germany. The alliance of the three seemed to be sufficient, or perhaps even it was four, because while Poland did not declare war on Sweden, Augustus [of Saxony] was also the King of Poland and the Saxon army moved freely over Polish territory, thus it was easy to get Poland involved in the war! Patkul counted on the youth and lack of experience of the new Swedish King, Charles XII (1697-1718) who in 1700 was only 18 years old. He had been considered of age by the Swedish diet already three years earlier and indeed he was running the country personally making many mistakes.

The army of Saxony, gathered beforehand on the Livonian border began military action exactly at the time when the Danes entered Schleswig. Unexpectedly however Charles found himself close to Copenhagen having no help from anywhere. He immediately forced Denmark to declare neutrality in the separate peace treaty of Travendal. He chose this tactic so as to beat each opponent individually throwing all his forces at one opponent at a time. On November 30<sup>th</sup> 1700 Peter was soundly defeated outside Narva and next year Charles beat the Saxons near Riga and then entered Lithuania. The absurdity of neutrality was unmasked to the full because Poland had no army to defend it. While Charles

XII warred with Augustus II, the Elector of Saxony, Saxon and Swedish armies were pillaging the land wherever their armies met, namely in Lithuania and Poland. Furthermore Charles XII wanted to dethrone Augustus II in Poland and Lithuania and so he had to conquer these countries himself! Augustus was defeated at Kliszowo in 1702 and again near Pułtusk the following year. Finally in 1704 he was dethroned and soon he had a Swedish army occupying his native Saxony.

Patkul already in 1701 switched from serving Saxony and Poland to being in the service of Muscovy. He confirmed the alliance of Augustus with Peter (1703) and accompanied the Moscow expeditionary corps that was sent to help Saxony. (This was the first appearance of a Muscovite army in the West, not a particularly successful one.) Patkul saw the change on the Polish throne, with the first election of Stanisław Leszczyński in 1704, but he was encouraged by the conquest of Narva by Peter. Next year however, he observed with horror that Augustus following the example of Denmark was striving to negotiate separate peace treaty. He informed the Tsar about this advising him to agree hastily to a peace treaty himself. His correspondence with Peter was discovered and so the Saxony authorities imprisoned him in December 1705. Meanwhile Peter, having to deal with only insignificant Swedish garrisons in the north occupied major parts of Swedish Livonia. He moved even further to the north and occupied the mouth of river Neva, a territory of prime trade and strategic importance. In May 1703 he started to fortify the region establishing, among others a fort on the island of Lust-Eiland, which was to become the original settlement of the city of St. Petersburg, the Amsterdam of the North.

In 1705 Peter moved across Lithuania and Poland to help Augustus. An army of 35 000 took Courland, Vilnius and Grodno from Sweden. But Charles XII stupefied the world with his lightning speed military operations. He suddenly abandoned Saxony and very soon he was again in Lithuania forcing Peter to retreat rapidly. While the Tsar receded in the direction of Kiev, Charles returned to Saxony in an even more rapid operation and forced Augustus to sign a separate peace in Altranstädt in 1706, under the terms of which he renounced the Polish-Lithuanian throne. Among the terms of the treaty there was also ... the handing over of Patkul. Charles XII ordered that he be killed after such tortures that they seemed mild in comparison with the tortures and deaths frequently imposed on the ancient princes of Zalesye by the Horde in Sarai.

Now Charles moved to beat the third and last opponent that was left to rely on his own forces alone, namely Tsar Peter.

The situation was very serious, the more so because the state of Muscovy was disturbed by internal conflicts. Rumours about the Anti-Christ were beginning to have significant importance and these were dangerous for Peter. Here and there there was a riot, occasionally even amongst the military. In Astrakhan the local garrisons started to organize themselves into some kind of military republic, a new sort of Cossackdom and they stood up against the Tsar for a full year until they were defeated by Shere-metev at the turn of 1705 and 1706. It was significant that such an outstanding military commander had to be sent against them, one who would have been of use elsewhere. The new Cossack insurgency in Astrakhan inspired the Don Cossacks of the old formation. A serious revolt broke out which also lasted for more than

a year in 1707/8, before Peter managed to suppress it brutally hanging the leaders and every tenth Cossack. This terror turned out to be reciprocal when at the time of these executions Charles XII appeared on the road between Vilnius and Moscow.

Having an army of 43 000 men the Swedish King set out from Saxony towards the end of 1707. He crossed the Vistula in January 1708, regained Grodno and started to occupy Lithuania chasing away the retreating armies of Moscow. Peter pleaded for peace agreeing to return all his conquests on the condition that one access to the Baltic would be left to him. Luckily for Moscow, which by now was becoming Russia, Charles refused the peace...

The Swedish King moved against Moscow victoriously crossing the Dnieper. The Muscovite generals as they gradually retreated changed the abandoned lands into a desert. As a result the Swedish army was in danger of famine. An early and severe winter came up and the victorious Swedes found themselves in an impossible situation dependent on the unfavourable elements. There was no hope that they would succeed in reaching Moscow. Everything seemed to indicate that the army would disintegrate with its major part perishing due to the cold and famine and the remainder, incapable of fighting would change into a crowd of surviving stragglers. Wanting to avoid, this the Swedish King had to change the direction of his march to a southerly route, where at least grain would be available and it would be possible to arrange winter quarters.

Sweden had an ally in the South in Mazepa, the hetman of the Cossacks who like Khmelnytsky dreamed about a principedom for himself. Also he was of Polish gentry, deriving from the Kołodyński family of Volhynia, and he too was educated in Jesuit

schools. He was in contact with Charles XII and with King Stanisław Leszczyński since 1705, having agreed with them to carve out of Ukraine east of the river Dnieper a principedom under Polish protection. He also made a separate treaty with Sweden for the Swedish expedition of 1708, offering to submit all the forts in the Seversk region and bring in regiments not only from the Dnieper Cossacks but also from the Don. The political plans were changed. He was to obtain a principedom for himself not in Ukraine but in the North, namely in the Vitebsk and Polotsk regions while all possible acquisitions in the Ukraine were to be incorporated into Lithuania and Poland. This agreement is ample proof that the action of Mazepa had no national foundation, such as the differentiating of Southern Ruthenia from the Muscovites and that Mazepa did not represent any other interests apart from his own.

Charles XII moved South because of his alliance with Mazepa. This, however, was a great disappointment. In September 1708 on the river Sozh he lost his second army that came with assistance, and having survived the severe winter he began a new campaign in the spring of 1709 with the siege of Poltava. But Mazepa brought him only 4500 Cossacks. The majority of the Cossacks stood by the Tsar and they had no intention of changing sides. From among the Cossack elders, personally unhappy because the conditions of the 1654 Pereyaslav agreement were not followed by Moscow, only a miniscule group joined Mazepa. Charles had believed in a major revolt of Ukraine against Moscow and so he found himself as if in a trap. In June Tsar Peter arrived with a fresh army numbering 60 000 men and on July 8<sup>th</sup> 1709 a major battle took place near Poltava in which the Swedish army was shattered. Charles fled further south seeking shelter in Turkey, but he did not have even a battalion of soldiers with him! Mazepa was with him, but he was to die within a few weeks in

exile in Galați, while the Swedish King returned home after five years of exile.

During these five years the relationships changed completely. Peter was taking over Livonia. In vain did Charles manage to encourage Turkey to declare war on Moscow. In vain did he rejoice seeing the Turkish success, when the whole Moscow army was encircled by the Turks on the river Pruth. It seemed that the Tsar had no other possibility, either he would submit together with his entire army to Turkish captivity or he would perish in a hopeless battle. All of this was in vain! Peter managed to extricate himself from encirclement without any losses by buying his freedom through the cession of Azov. The whole world was surprised that the Porte engaged in negotiations when it could take Tsar Peter and his whole army as prisoners of war!

Two individuals participated in this masterpiece of secret diplomacy. They were Heinrich Osterman and Marta Skavronska, both of whom accompanied the Tsar on this expedition and were closed off with him in the camp at Pruth.

After Patkul a second German attained the dignity of becoming the right hand man of the Tsar. Heinrich Osterman was from Westphalia. He was the first of a series of Germans who wholeheartedly served the interests of the tsardom so much so that he converted to Orthodoxy becoming Andrey Ivanovich Osterman. By profession he was a sailor, an admiral, then an eminent statesman and diplomat. He was very intelligent, full of initiative and honest. He was selfless and incorruptible, but he knew how to corrupt others. On the Pruth he proved his talents and value to the person of the Tsar. As a helper he had the vixen Marta Skov-

ronska, not much different than the mistresses of Versailles, although she was more uncouth. She was of peasant origin and she had served as a maid for a pastor in Malborg of Livonia. She married a Swedish dragoon. In 1702 she was captured by the Muscovites and assigned to Menshikov, a former childhood colleague of Peter in Preobrazhenskoye, who accompanied him on his European voyage. He was already a distinguished military leader and from that year also a count of the Holy Roman Empire by the grace of Emperor Leopold I (1658-1705). She was handed over “as a present” by Menshikov to Tsar Peter, who was keeping his wife Eudoxia locked in a convent for four years. The Tsar cared much for external forms, and so, as was the case with Osterman, he ordered his concubine to convert to Orthodoxy. Thus she was given a new name, Catherine Alexyeyevna. She was “Alexeyevna”, because the Tsar thought it appropriate that the godfather of his concubine [at the Orthodox rebaptism] be his heir Alexei, the son of the abandoned Eudoxia!

Marta-Catherine mediated in the bribing of the Grand Vizier and when this was successful, Osterman’s task was easier. The treaty was negotiated quickly. Peter ceded Azov and received free exit for his army undamaged. From that moment he held Catherine close to him and in the following year, 1712, he did not shy from marrying her. Catherine remembered to whom she owed her career and she always remained grateful to Menshikov, even more grateful than the Tsar was to her.

For Alexei, the Tsar’s son, this marriage was a severe blow. Brought up amidst experiences that could only affect him negatively, he succumbed to the influences of the opposition. The changes introduced by Peter caused the “schism” to grow. A specific mysticism developed, involving belief in the approaching

end of the world in which an Anti-Christ, Peter himself, was generating turmoil! Opposition based on religious grounds was permissible for the consciences of even the most Orthodox, thus the matter could become dangerous. It is quite normal that the opposition places its hopes in the heir to the throne. Many dynasties have survived thanks to this and kings often inspired such oppositional credence in their own son! Here however, there was the unusual circumstance that the Tsar's son himself believed in his mission to correct some evil for which father was culpable. He was not particularly intelligent, being degenerated both physically and mentally by debauchery but he had some vague dreams about the future in which only one thing was clear. He was ready to ruin everything that would be shown to him as being the achievement of his father! This of course disturbed family relationships in the Tsar's court.

Peter had several children with Catherine (two boys died early) and due to her decisive temperament she managed to intrigue and generate quarrels between father and son. Peter often harmed his son, who in time arrived at the conclusion that since his father always sides with Catherine, only the misfortunes of his father and step mother could bring him profit. He did not endanger their life but he stood firmly with the opposition.

Soon after the peace treaty on Pruth the Tsar arranged the marriage of his son. In the history of Russia Alexei Petrovich has a place as the first dynast who married a German princess. Peter's foreign tour resolved also the difficult problem that the Tsars had in finding appropriate Orthodox wives, and if the Tsar's court was to be considered as equal to the European ones, then the Tartar custom of selecting wives in a compulsory beauty contest had to

be abandoned. Protestant theologians judged that for their princesses and their *Landeskirchen* [country Church] a conversion to Orthodoxy was something quite proper. From this moment the Russian dynasty had an abundance of Orthodox princesses to choose from. Leading the arch-long line of “converted” princesses was Caroline Christine Sophia, a Braunschweig princess from the Wolfenbuettel line. She was very unhappy in her life with Alexei, which lasted only a few years.

A few months after the wedding of the son, the father married again and this was a harbinger that Alexei would never sit on the throne and that Catherine would try to get rid of him. The only hope of the Tsar’s son was that the opposition would bring him to the throne. This meant that the son would have to destroy what his father had built. Peter was aware of this, but he had to continue his policies the threads of which were still in the presumed hands of Menshikov but in fact in the hands of Osterman. Copying the German Emperor Peter started to distribute aristocratic titles. He must have come to the idea that he also was an “Emperor” just as Joseph I (1705-1711) or Charles VI (1711-1740). Menshikov, who was always protected by Catherine, became not only a count but also a prince at the same time.

Having lost access to the Black Sea Peter cared all the more diligently for the Baltic coast in Livonia. Soon after the peace treaty on the Pruth Peter managed to approach Courland, a fiefdom of Poland and Lithuania since 1561. In 1711 Peter arranged the marriage of his niece Anna Ivanovna (the daughter of his step brother and titular co-ruler Ivan V) to the Prince of Courland, Frederick Wilhelm Kettler. For a short moment Peter moved even further Westward in 1712 and 1713 taking over parts of the

Swedish possessions in Pomerania. This second sally of Muscovite army in the West thanks to Menshikov was exemplary. Western monarchs envied the Tsar seeing his exceptional military gains. In 1712 the Muscovite army had 80 regiments of infantry, 33 regiments of cavalry, more than 300 guns, a fleet of 48 warships and about 800 lesser vessels with 28 000 sailors. Approaching by sea Peter conquered Finland and the islands in the Gulf of Bothnia in 1714 and the Muscovite fleet was coming close to Stockholm.

Precisely in this moment Charles XII returned to Sweden having done something stupendous. At top speed, on horseback he managed to break his way from one end of Europe to another, from Bender in Turkey to Stralsund, which was being besieged in November 1714. Everywhere he found that the conditions had changed enormously. Spanish supremacy in Southern Europe and Swedish in Northern Europe had ended. The war of Spanish succession terminated with the peace treaty of Utrecht in 1713, thus there was no difficulty for the northern German countries to move against Sweden, particularly since the Saxon Augustus II the Strong returned to the Polish throne. From Weser to the Volga there was an uninterrupted wall blocking any possibility of movement for Charles XII. This was because there was an alliance between Hannover (linked at the time dynastically with England), Prussia, Denmark, Saxony (linked dynastically with Poland and Lithuania) and Moscow. In 1716 Sweden lost the remnants of its coastal possessions in Germany. The dreams of Patkul and the youthful aims of Peter were fulfilled.

Peter was too lucky in respect to Europe. He proved to be so powerful that he generated more fears than hopes of gain. When Moscow was not counterbalanced by Sweden, it was too

heavy an ally, more like a future hegemon in the political arrangement. Also Peter had doubts as to his further focus on the European fields. He had no intention of gaining anything more from Sweden, but he remembered that the tsardom had claims to the Lithuanian-Ruthenian and Polish-Ruthenian provinces. The time had come for expansion in this direction, but he would have to abandon it, were he to remain in a permanent alliance with the Polish-Saxons and as a consequence also with the Prussian and English-Hannover alliance. The situation was becoming insincere for both sides. Should Sweden abandon plans to regain Livonia and agree with Moscow, which was transforming into Russia, Peter would prefer to reactivate the former state of affairs in Europe, namely an alliance of France and Sweden, which he would be happy to join as a third component. As earlier Patkul had led the Tsar's policy against Sweden, now Osterman led it in the exactly opposite direction, **towards reconciliation with Sweden and an alliance with France, so as to have a free hand against Poland.**

Russia was becoming a European power, having decisive influence in the East. This was because together with Sweden Poland was losing in political importance and so Moscow had no rival.

King Augustus II the Strong, a Saxon treated the Polish crown as some merchandise for the settling of his dynastic interests. He was ready to sell, and at any moment, the nation over which he ruled. Poland did not gain absolutely anything in the northern war. This war only served the King to subdue the nation even more with the help of his Saxon army brought into the country illegally. These foreign armies became a plague for Poland and Lithuania and so the Tarnogród Confederacy was called in 1715 against them. The Saxon King asked Peter for help. For the

Tsar this was very welcome, because it allowed him to interfere as he planned with action against Poland!

A Muscovite army of 10 000 entered Volhynia. Negotiations ensued in which Peter offered to act as a mediator between ... Poland and the Polish King. Such unnatural situations resulted from the fact that Poland did not have a permanent standing army! The Saxons agreed to recede but on the condition that Poland and Lithuania together would not have more than 24 000 soldiers in the future. This was a moment when there were plans to increase the size of the army. The number was miserably small considering the relationships in Europe at the time. Were the Sejm (Parliament) not to accept this condition, not only the Saxon but also the Muscovite forces would remain in the country. The Sejm was called for January 30<sup>th</sup> 1717. Next day there was the one and only sitting of this Sejm. No one was allowed to speak “against” the restriction because the Sejm premises were encircled by foreign soldiers, but there was no traitor who would be ready to speak against the interests of his own state. Thus all the deputies sat in silence for 6 hours. This session is remembered in history as the “silent Sejm”...

Poland was powerless having only a miniature army and so it was an easy prey for such a military power as Peter’s Russia. Wanting to exploit Poland further it was necessary to secure safety from the side of Sweden, or at least to have its neutrality in case of conflict with Poland. This was what the Tsar expected from the alliance between France and Sweden with an association with Moscow added. The French-Swedish-Moscow alliance could keep the whole of Europe in check for numerous generations and it would amount to a verdict on the very existence of the

Polish-Lithuanian state subjected to Moscow in the coming years...

Peter was so concerned about this that he went personally to Paris in 1717. The French Regent, Philip of Orleans, ruling in the name of the underage Louis XV 1715-1723 was indifferent towards the Tsar's proposal, finding the Russian's negotiating capabilities undiplomatic. Thanks to this, Poland had some peace from the side of Peter.

It was the fate of Peter that his foreign travels always brought him internal problems.

No less than dealing with foreign policy Peter was constantly engaged in introducing various reforms. He was systematic, full of energy and devoted to the task, but he was not always successful. He was impressed by the bureaucratic apparatus that he saw in Germany, which was so centralized that it facilitated the personal rule of the monarch. The King of Prussia could receive in audience just a few men and he was informed about every aspect of communal life in the state. This was so because the heads of administrative departments had wide competences. The Prussian King could confer daily with his handful of ministers, but how could the Tsar converse frequently with the 50 *boyars* or princes that were in charge of the 50 *приказы* [authorities] i.e. the governmental departments for various issues? Peter therefore started to combine a few or a dozen of his departments into a single dicastery until he ended up with only ten "governmental colleges" dependent upon a "governing senate". He divided his entire bureaucracy into eleven *чины* [tchini - ranks]. (The word came to Ruthenia from the bureaucracy of Tamerlane through the mediation of the Tartars.) Again following the German custom, he gave them special titles. From this moment the original terms

such as the “serving *boyars*” or “*dyaks*” disappeared. The whole country was divided into twelve provinces each now referred to as a *губерния* [governance] according to the German terminology taken from the French (as almost the whole official German nomenclature). Peter made these reforms in the years 1711-1717, and just before his trip to France he introduced the “governmental colleges”.

This whole reform was a major blunder and it could not serve its purpose. The tsardom was too extensive to be governed in a way that was appropriate for relatively small states that were densely populated and had an educated and wealthy citizenry. In the extensive and unpopulated areas of the tsardom personal rule could be maintained only through the system that had already been tested in the Orient, namely, through satraps, i.e. superiors over everything in a given region. This could not be done through ministries each having a strictly defined competence in the state. The grafting of a German bureaucracy onto the Russian soil so as to strengthen personal rule was only an illusion. Only forms were applied but without the content. On humus that derived from Chinese, Mongolian and Tartar traditions it was impossible to successfully graft what had developed from legalism, from a reception of the Roman law. Peter ignored all those aspects of Muscovite administration with which the reforms could be tied, if it is at all possible to reform a bureaucracy. Thus in fact he did not reform anything in the field of public administration. He only imposed a revolution in a field that was least suitable for revolutionary experimentation. As a result Peter’s “reforms” led to chaos and administrative anarchy with the German system of administration distancing the Tsar from personal governance that soon was to be entirely in the hands of the bureaucracy.

But not in everything did Peter copy the Germans. He introduced the scheme of “three classes” in a different manner than was practiced in feudal Europe. The Orthodox clergy were not considered a “class”. The “third” class according to Peter were the peasants, but the rural population became even more backward in comparison with the European agrarian system. Not only did he forbid the private property of the peasants, but it was he who made the organisation of the *мир*, the peasant commune compulsory. He imposed throughout the entire country in all its settlements the joint responsibility of the local commune for the collection of taxes. The commune system was then extended beyond the Zalesye, in particular in the former Tartar territories in the North and among the new Cossack settlements near the Ural Mountains. The municipal population was divided by Peter into three “guilds” according to the Livonian model. He required that the *boyars* be considered as the *дворянство* [nobility] and he nominated profusely many counts and princes.

All these changes were very superficial and it was precisely for this reason that to Peter’s citizens they appeared as something very radical because at each step they affected the external forms. The *раскол* [schism] of Old Believers was spreading ever more addressing complaints to ... the successor to the throne. It seemed beyond doubt that Alexei elevated to the throne would cancel all the decisions of his father, becoming a direct instrument of the Old Believers. He would repeal even the sensible reforms and thus bring the state back in everything to the times of Alexander Michailovich and Patriarch Nikon when the prime issue was the question which theology was superior, the Greek or the Ruthenian.

If Peter wanted to assure permanence to his efforts, he had to eliminate his son. Thus the Tsar's son was already almost a prisoner, constantly spied upon and persecuted. Suddenly, when Peter was abroad, he learnt that his son also left Russia. Alexei did not feel sure of his life and so he fled. Profiting from his father's absence, he escaped and very far: by way of Vienna he reached Naples. The escape amounted to a renunciation of his right to the throne. It would seem therefore obvious that Peter would offer him a generous subsistence and encourage him to stay abroad. But Russian logic was different. It had always been the dogma of oriental despots that an escape abroad without a special permission, the arbitrary removal of oneself from the power of the despot was a major crime, equal to high treason and an insult of His Majesty, the greatest possible offence against a monarch. This was how Peter viewed the disappearance of his son and so he used all possible means, influences, interventions, threats and promises to bring him back for the sole purpose to kill him. But he did not intend to act as Ivan the Terrible had done earlier when he killed his son with his own hand. When Peter returned from Paris he organised a formal trial of his son following all procedural formalities. The largest court ever known to history, composed of 127 judges, representatives of the bureaucracy of all provinces with some admixture of those "in service" – so something akin to the earlier "land diets" unanimously sentenced the Tsar's son as a rebel condemning him to death. History knows that unanimity can be arrived at most easily where there is a despot, particularly when it is in tune with the wishes of the despot. This time, however, the court did not admit to the fact that the sentence had been passed. Instead it was announced that the Tsar's son Alexei "died" in prison on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1718. On the body of the victim there were marks of 40 lashes of a ... whip. Thus the son of Alexei and the Braunschweig princess, also named Peter

became the successor to the throne, should the father not offer precedence to some descendant of Martha-Catherine. The situation became similar to that towards the end of the reign of Ivan III. Peter never gave a clear indication as to the succession. He only issued a general statement that the throne would pass onto the person whom the Tsar would indicate not being in any way restricted in this by primogeniture. This was the same as what happened under Ivan III, the Stern!

Meanwhile, the war with Sweden dragged lazily on, because Charles XII did not negotiate a peace treaty and was not prepared to renounce Livonia. His new minister, baron Görtz, however supported Peter's projects hoping to have Russian assistance in efforts to regain the Pomeranian regions in Germany and to conquer Norway. Unexpectedly Charles XII fell victim to an assassination plot while he was besieging the Norwegian fort Friedrichshall in December 1718. It was an even greater surprise that the sister of Charles who succeeded him, Ulrike Eleonore, as well as her husband Friedrich of Hessen-Kassel (1719-1751), also did not want to have peace and Görtz was executed. But after two Russian expeditions against Southern Sweden the views changed and in 1721 Osterman finally managed to negotiate a peace treaty in Nystadt. Peter returned Finland but held onto the Swedish Livonia. In this way the war over Livonia finally ended.

Being secure on the outside and internally Peter finally moved to an open placing of the Tsar at the head of the Church. Imitating closely the German *Landeskirchen* (country Churches) **he assigned the central administration of the Church to a body called a "Synod", just as in Germany but with the added adjective "Holy". It was to be a body that was completely de-**

**pendent on the monarch, composed of clerics and laymen, under the direct supervision of an *ober-procurator*, a lay person representing the Tsar** and dealing directly with the Tsar. The typically Muscovite mentality of Peter was evident here, in that he always attached excessive importance to the form. Also before, the grand princes of Muscovy were in fact the governors of the Orthodox Church which was always meekly subservient to the Tsar! Formally the head of the Church could only be somebody, who had the title to interpret the faith, thus a clergyman. Peter abolished this state of affairs and entered into the field of consciences so as to be a head of the Church even in the formal sense only out of the love for the formula.

From this moment there was an incurable disorder in the Church due to the divergence between its principles and governing order. Theologically Orthodoxy has nothing in common with Protestantism which allows for a free interpretation of the Bible. Just as Catholicism, it is based on the principle of authority. If Orthodoxy was not to be left dangling in the air and reduced to absurdity, it must have at its spiritual head a person of theological authority, residing in Constantinople or in Moscow, a Metropolitan or a Patriarch. No layman, not even the Tsar, could be such an authority. With this change in 1721 some of the most faithful Orthodox started to have doubts as to whether there was any visible structure of the true Church, or maybe it should be sought in the *раскол* [schism]. As a result sectarianism was on the increase to such an extent that soon only the dignitaries of the state officialdom could be counted as the flock of the “Holy Synod”. **Since Peter’s time religious indifference crept into the ranks of the bureaucracy and even among the clergy, tied with the hypocritical participation in the liturgy.** The “reform” of 1721 deprived the Church of its social value and in state life it was pushed

aside from a leading and often creative position to a purely executive and passive function.

When in this way the power of the Tsar was adorned with the attributes of a German Protestant prince, in that very year 1721 Peter adopted the title of an Emperor so as to stress that he was not only ahead of all the princes but in fact he was equal to their titular Lord, the “Roman” Emperor. In the Russian language the new title was *императоръ* [Imperator] and it was used alongside the old title of the *Tsar* which was maintained. Thus Peter had in mind a title that was to be higher than that of a Tsar. This was to be a decoration, an ennobling of the title of the Tsar. Not every Tsar was an *Imperator*, but he reached this altitude. In this there is some copying of antiquity, where the Caesars were given the title of Emperor by the Senate; in principle it was a personal title. This was how Peter understood it. In his mind each one of his successors had to personally prove his merit before adopting the title.

That was not the end of the titles. Both supreme authorities, the Senate and the Synod proclaimed Peter to be “Peter the Great, the Father of the Fatherland”. It is obvious that the Slav-Greek-Latin Academy did not teach about the classical world in vain and that everything could be of use for “state” needs! This was the only monarch who was referred to as *Great* in his lifetime, because ... he himself gave himself the title.

Death surprised him two and a half years later, on January 28<sup>th</sup> 1725. The final years of the constantly active Emperor were devoted to an expansion of his realm over Caspian countries at the expense of Persia. In 1722 Derbent was conquered for the tsardom and in 1723 Baku.

## **Part IV**

### **The Russian Empire**

**(from 1725)**



## **XIX. The state beyond society (1725-1762).**

No *раскольник* (sectarian) was as happy as Alexander Danilovich Menshikov at the occasion of the death of Peter the Great. He was constantly being tried since 1714, accused of bribes, robberies and various malpractices, but he managed somehow thanks to the protection of Catherine. Finally, he was not only sentenced to death but the execution was already set, when suddenly the death of the Tsar turned the condemned convict into – a state administrator. Menshikov always had his “party” i.e. a team for conducting business in the affairs of the state. His accomplices acted quickly and energetically. They were extremely versatile and managed to get the guards onto their side.

The throne was due to Peter Alexeyevich, the son of Peter’s eldest son, the unhappy Alexei Petrovich. He was 10-years old at the time and so the throne was grabbed by the illiterate Martha Catherine, initially as the supposed guardian of the underage Peter, but in fact the true power was in the hands of Menshikov, now officially known as the favourite of the Tsarina. He was a good soldier but he too was hardly able to write his signature. Catherine I stupefied the world with her career for two years (1725-1727). After her death, Menshikov handed the throne to the 12-year old Peter II (1727-1730) hoping that he would continue to rule in place of the underage Tsar.

Also Osterman remained in power, now as vice-Chancellor and tutor of Peter II nominated by Catherine. Thanks to him the Academy of Sciences which Peter the Great had planned came into being. Russia of the time found a simple way of establishing it: Germans were appointed as its members. Just as industry may

come into existence through the import of foreign capital and foreign engineers, so in Russia science could be introduced. In all of this the principle of the material world, namely technology was decisive. The whole world is a mechanism that can be “made” once one observes how it is done in other countries.

Suddenly Menshikov lost out in spite of the fact that he engaged his daughter with Peter II. Before details of the plot devised by Osterman came into the open Menshikov was imprisoned and deported and power fell into the hands of the Dolgorukiy family (and Peter II’s fiancée was replaced by a Dolgorukiy girl). In order to do away with previous influences and to have Peter exclusively in the milieu of the Dolgorukiy family the Tsar’s court was brought back to Moscow. There were personal reasons for this, the greed for power, but by the nature of things this was connected with the issue whether the state was to continue to be governed in the way of Peter the Great, i.e. the German mode, or whether the state was to return to its old Muscovite traditions. In the city of Moscow as yet nothing had been reformed. On the contrary, the old capital disliking St. Petersburg was demonstrably, on purpose, old fashioned. There beards, according to the old “*boyar style*” were still the norm.

These efforts however crashed due to the shortness of time given by fate to Peter II, who died in 1730 at the age of 16. The Romanov dynasty in its male line ended. There were two daughters of Peter the Great and his niece, a princess in Courland. The Moscow party succeeded in placing of the latter on the throne calculating that Tsarina Anna would not follow the St. Petersburg line. Well, they met with disappointment.

Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740) had been a widow for 19 years. Her husband, Frederick Wilhelm of Courland died shortly after the wedding, but his wife remained in the country, settling in Mitau, while Ferdinand, the last of the Kettlers, the uncle and successor of her husband was constantly abroad. At the court in Mitau, Ernest John Buehren, a nobleman owning some property in Courland, found favour with the princess. The new Tsarina brought him over to Moscow and made him a count. On this occasion Buehren acquired French origin, claiming to descend from the dukes of Biron, whose crest and surname he started to constantly use! This German favourite led Anna towards St. Petersburg and advised her already in 1732 to transfer the capital again onto the Neva. There he enforced convictions by the thousand for the very suspicion of any dislike towards himself. The reign of Anna can be truly named as times of court terror. Since the days of Ivan the Terrible there were no such pogroms of the *boyars* and Biron vehemently and specifically persecuted the old historical families.

Under the supervision of Biron, Osterman continued to govern assisted by Burkhard Christoph von Münnich, an old general of Peter the Great, who in the days of Anna was the head of the “war college”. These three Germans were responsible for foreign policy and they had to deal primarily with Polish-Russian issues.

The question as to who was to occupy the Polish throne after the death of Augustus II in 1733 became a European problem of universal magnitude. Particularly two factions were involved, the French and the Habsburg. Emperor Charles VI wanted to transfer the complex of Habsburg heritage onto his daughter Maria Teresa through his “pragmatic sanction” and in this way he wanted to maintain an extensive “Austria”, while Louis XV wanted to profit from the extinction of the male line of the dynasty

so as to splinter the former Habsburg monarchy. At the Polish election Leszczyński was unanimously chosen, for a second time. He was the father in law of Louis XV. The French party won. Poland could turn the scale against Austria.

Not a single vote was given in favour of the Saxon dynasty. The new elector, Augustus III, the son of Augustus II decided however to take the Polish throne by force and he easily obtained assistance from Austria and Russia for this. His wife was a niece of Charles VI and on this account he could claim at least a part of the Habsburg heritage against Maria Teresa to whom Charles VI wanted to transfer the undivided realm. The elector promised to recognize the “pragmatic sanction” and he received for that an army of 12 000 for the expedition to Poland. Even at a cheaper price, he obtained help from Russia. He promised Biron that when he would become King of Poland, after the long reign of Ferdinand, he would give him the principedom of Courland, which was a vassal of the Polish crown. The result was miraculous. Ten days after Leszczyński took control of Poland the first regiments of a 40 000 man Russian army appeared near Warsaw. In this manner Russia took part in the “war of the Polish succession”.

On the one side there was France, Spain and Sardinia and on the other Russia and Austria. They countered one another on battlefields in Italy and the upper Rhine. In 1734 von Münnich captured Gdańsk, from where Leszczyński scarcely managed to escape with his life, and then he took over Poland. He was recalled to fight Turkey with whom suddenly a war broke out (1736-1739) that had not been provoked in any way by Russia at the time, but was incited by France which encouraged the Sultan to attack so as to have the Russian army removed from the battlefields of central Europe. Von Münnich conquered Crimea in

1736, next year Ochakov and in 1739 Moldavia. These victories did not provide much benefit because Sweden began preparing for war so as to regain Livonia and seeing this Osterman pressured for peace with Turkey and managed even to get the support of Biron for this. A peace treaty was agreed to in Belgrade in 1739 under the terms of which Russia had to restrict itself to regions between the Bug and Dnieper rivers. A year earlier the war of the “Polish succession” ended with a confirmation of Augustus III Saxon on the throne of Poland and the general recognition of the Austrian “pragmatic sanction” on the condition that the Habsburgs renounced almost all their territories in Italy.

The purpose of the Russian participation in all these wars was attained already in 1737. After the childless death of the last of the Kettlers, Courland, in accord with the vassal law, should be incorporated into the crown of Poland. Biron, however, obtained it for the help that he offered in the acquisition of the Polish throne. Biron did not settle in his new principedom and instead he remained close to Anna and continued to govern the Russian state.

The basis of this governance is worthy of note. Biron was typical. Neither he nor any other individual holding the Russian throne at the time had any party supporting him within the country, or even any group having some political aims. What’s more, there was no opposition group. This was a time of complete apathy of the society, which did not take part in the matters of the state even in the negative sense. Russian policy at the time was very active and interventions in European issues were on the increase. Half of Europe was sprinkled with the blood of Russian soldiers, but all this was conducted by the court, and only by the court. And the court of these make-believe Tsars and Tsarinas also had no inherent connection with public affairs, because there,

there were no convictions and no movements. There were only the private interests of some individuals, who exploited the state for their own ends. In these years, Russian policies were entirely dependent on the accidental whims and fancies of individuals, without any defined purpose. Frivolous games were being played using for this the powers of Russia.

The relationship between the state and society that resulted was of a worse and lower type than the former discrepancy between society and state. **The state became something that was beyond society.** Never in the history of Europe did something similar come about. No European state would manage to persist in such a condition, but the Russian state emerged from this ... strengthened. The conclusion is that **for the existence and development of this state, its relationship with society was indifferent.** The state machine could function well beyond society, even in the period after 1725. The state consisted of two spheres: the court, and the triple bureaucracy, ecclesial, civil and military. Whenever these three factors would stick together and be at the disposal of the court, the state remaining outside of society could develop and flourish, follow an active foreign policy, make encroachments on neighbours and grow into an ever stronger power. But there was only one condition, but an essential one: this triple bureaucracy had to be affluent. This is the secret of the state system of Russia. The difference between Russian and European bureaucracy is manifest in this: in Russia, the military penetrates ever more the higher administration, whereas in Europe increasingly the soldiers were excluded from the governance of the state and from politics. The symbol of this state being beyond society was the armed bureaucrat, the general-cum-tax-collector. Having a monopoly in administrative routine and in power, the armed bureaucracy knew how to impose its will both down and up, upon

the population and finally upon the court. Frequently, the court would submit, because it was unsure of its future, constantly in fear whether some new plot would bring in changes among the people at the top. It was only a question of who would wield power and not a question of policies.

With such a specific way of functioning of the state beyond society the reign of Anna Ivanovna was not too bad. She died a year after the Belgrade peace treaty. She spent the final stage of her life in devising ways to secure the continuation of power for Biron. She would have placed him on the throne, handing the state over to him, would this in any way be possible. A happy coincidence for her dreams allowed her to work out an intrigue that ensured the Courland prince supremacy over Russia for many years. He could profit from it should conditions prove favourable to move higher, from a prince to a Tsar, to an Emperor, in fact to an Imperator...

Anna had a sister, Catherine Ivanovna, whom Peter the Great wedded to Leopold of Mecklenburg. A daughter from this marriage, Anna, was married to a Braunschweig prince, Anthony Ulrich of the Braunschweig-Bevern line and just at the time when Tsarina Anna was preparing for death, the other Anna gave birth to a son, John (24<sup>th</sup> August 1740). Anna Ivanovna nominated this newborn child her successor, expressing also in her will that Biron was to be the Regent – and this was the real purpose of her move.

The plan failed. The little Johnny of Braunschweig figures in the list of Tsars as Ivan VI (1740-1741) because he was most formally shown homage when he was scarcely two months old, but a few days later, Münnich who had the guards at his disposal imprisoned Biron and deported him to Siberia, following Menshikov.

Johnny's mother, Anna Leopoldina became the Regent and her husband Anthony Ulrich was modestly declared commander in chief of the army. Münnich assured for himself the role of prime minister leaving foreign affairs in the hands of Osterman. Soon there was another change. Anthony Ulrich and Osterman joined forces against Münnich ... An interesting episode in the history of Tsardom ensued, which could be referred to as **the times of Braunschweig economy**, because it was impossible to speak at the time of any governance in the proper sense of the word.

Münnich resigned in May 1741, because he did not agree with the Regent as regards foreign policy. After the death of Charles VI (1740) the "war of the Austrian succession" broke out, a second war over the "pragmatic sanction". The Russian Regent supported Maria Theresa, while Münnich supported the Prussians who began the so called first Silesian war. Soon, Saxony, Bavaria, France, Spain and Sweden supported Frederic the Great against Maria Teresa. The French and Swedish embassies in St. Petersburg found a way against Anna Leopoldina. A candidate for the throne was proposed in the person of Elisabeth, daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine (born before marriage in 1709). The guards were engaged in her favour and a coup d'état was organised on the night of 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 1741. Münnich and Osterman were deported to Siberia and the Braunschweig couple were in prisoned together with the infant Tsar.

Osterman died in Siberia after six years, Münnich returned after twenty years and "Ivan VI" never regained freedom. In this way, through the intrigues and bribery of foreign embassies, Russia entered the whirl of a war for the reign of Maria Teresa, an issue that was totally indifferent to the Russian state. Political changes took place not as a consequence of a struggle

between political courses (there were none), but as a result of clashes arising within the narrow outlook of family envies and hatreds. Each of the competing parties had at hand some candidate for the throne or ... for the function of the throne's favourite who would serve as a blind tool.

Sweden indirectly joined the coalition against Maria Teresa only because in agreement with France there was the occasion to provoke court anarchy in St. Petersburg. It is for this reason that Sweden protested against the disregarding of Elisabeth's rights to the throne and staged the coup d'état, hoping naively that the signs of state anarchy indicated a weakening of the Russian state, which could be used to undo the peace treaty of Nystadt. Unexpectedly the intrigue proved successful. It was even unnecessary to attack St. Petersburg for Elisabeth something that Frederic of Sweden (1720-1751) was ready to do. All this is a classical example of how in St. Petersburg of the time no one had any political program. The Swedish king had to continue the war, which had begun in the last days of Osterman, against his own candidate for the Russian throne, namely against Elisabeth, because her court was unable to transform into any political party. And strangely the war turned out to be very favourable for Russia, even though so much was hoped for from its anarchy. This Russia, deep in anarchy, dictated the conditions for the treaty of Åbo of 1745, taking over southern Finland up to the river Kymi.

Absolutely all the expectations of foreigners with respect to the policies of Russia in the mid XVIII<sup>th</sup> c. failed, just as was the case during the reign of Ivan III. France and Sweden later had no benefit from the fact that they closed the path of return to the throne for the house of Braunschweig. Elisabeth Petrovna (1741-1762) immediately, at the very beginning of her reign appointed

a successor to the throne, while she was still under the influence of the French and Swedish ambassadors. This was to be her nephew, the son of a younger sister Anna Petrovna married to the prince of Holstein-Gottorp. The 14-years old prince Charles was immediately brought to St. Petersburg and on converting to Orthodoxy he was given the name Peter. That was in 1742. Two years he was married to the daughter of a low ranking prince, Christian August of Anhalt-Zerbst who was a Prussian general and governor of Szczecin. The wedding of the 17-year old Charles-Peter with the 16-year old Sophia Augusta, renamed Catherine after converting to Orthodoxy, took place in 1745. The young wife of the crown prince was taught sensual pleasures reaching the level of debauchery by the Tsarina. Both of them Elisabeth and Catherine were famous for it. The pupil surpassed her tutor, but history does not judge her on this basis, because she was to introduce again purpose into governance and concern for the interest of the state. She had talent and having come close to the throne at an early age, she had much time for political education, which she was to prove later abundantly.

In the war over the Habsburg succession the caprices of Elisabeth changed. She was neutral in 1746, but having experienced a personal insult from Frederic the Great she hastily allied with Maria Teresa and then quickly sent an army as far as the Rhine. Europe was becoming accustomed to the criss-crossing of Russian armies, whose generals even did not know what they were fighting for... This time the participation of Russia hastened the settling for a peace treaty in Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748.

In a secret article of the treaty Elisabeth opened for Maria Theresa the prospect of regaining Silesia and thus she initiated the third war over Silesia, known as the Seven Years War (1756-

1763). For a number of years alliances were being formed and changed in Europe. The Austro-Russian alliance was joined by Augustus III the Saxon, who had earlier been beaten by the Prussians and wanted revenge. The Prussian king got wind of these alliances, pre-empted Augustus and entered Saxony in 1756 occupying Dresden. Then Augustus III searched for help from his Poland, which was officially neutral and in this circumstance there lied the knot that tied the whole of eastern Europe in one political issue.

For a long time there were attempts to introduce internal reforms in Poland and to re-establish the power of the state through external action. At the start there was the double election of Leszczyński, then the programs of the Czartoryskis and the Potockis. The Czartoryskis were strong supporters of Leszczyński. They arrived at the conclusion that they would not expel Russian influences from Poland and so they decided to act just like the others. They tried to profit from the conditions in St. Petersburg for their own ends. The Czartoryskis were striving for the Polish throne, but in this they expressed a given public program that concerned both the state and society, and so they acted not as mere aristocrats desirous of the crown. They wanted the throne so as to introduce reforms, to serve the Polish ideal. During the Russian-Turkish war (1736-1739) the Czartoryskis called for an alliance with Russia, while the Potockis wanted an alliance with France, Sweden and Turkey. The Czartoryskis acted so decisively that they even organised a suspension of the Sejm (Polish parliament), something that was against their own principles, so as to ensure that there would be no alliance with Turkey. As a consequence no alliance with anybody was made at the time.

When in 1756 the Saxon king of Poland sought Polish help against Prussia having already the assurance of Russian help, the Czartoryskis decided to profit from the circumstance in which, they thought, Russia should be interested in a Poland having greater military power if it was to be allied with Moscow. But the majority of the gentry stood firmly on a neutral position not understanding that an army is needed ... to defend neutrality. It was then that Poland became, as it was accurately said, a “roadside inn” that was visited by any passing Russian or Prussian army.

The Czartoryskis had also further plans. Seeing the “Braunschweig economy” and knowing the dislike of German things that was prevalent in all classes of Russian society they presumed that Russia must be dreaming of some national dynasty just as Poland, being unhappy with the Saxons was always ready to find itself somebody who would be a new Leszczyński, provided there would be no obstacles coming from the interventions of foreign forces. They committed this great error (but a common one!) of measuring Russian minds by their own European way of thinking, and so they assumed that it would be possible to base some plans in Russia on a desire for a national dynasty, just as in Poland. And since simultaneously both Russia and Poland were suffering under German dynasties, then, they figured out that the common identity of the problem, that is, German influences, must lead to a communality of interests. The expulsion of the Germans, being in the mutual interest would generate friendship. Thus the Czartoryskis came up with an ideology of a common Russian and Polish interest directed against the Germans bent on the establishment of national dynasties. They believed that Russia and Poland with Lithuania would be in the best of relationships were it not for the German influences in St. Petersburg. Both countries at the time did not have a national dynasty. Should it prove possible for

the Czartoryskis to attain the Polish crown, something similar in the course of events could happen in Russia. If a Braunschweig or an Anhalt prince may be a Tsar, why would it be impossible for a Polish King to become the Tsar? Thus at the time of the gravest political decline of Poland the old political ideal of expanding the union of Poland with Lithuania onto Russia was reborn. The Czartoryskis were convinced that once state order and a strong government would be introduced in Poland, demonstrating that it is possible to combine strong rule with civil liberties, then the “Muscovite nation” would desire... a constitutional monarchy and would friendly join with the Polish nation in the aspiration for freedom. Thus the carrying out of reforms in Poland was to augur also a new historical period for Russia which in consequence was to lead to markedly improved relationships with the former “Muscovites”. For this reason the Czartoryskis were not afraid of basing the primary phase of their plans on a Russian intervention in Poland. They did not fear Russia, being locked in their dreams, which had a basis in real facts but did not take into account the spiritual dimension. The materialism of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> c. was the foundation of their ideology.

Meanwhile Russian armies were helping some Germans (the Saxons and Austrians) against others (the Prussians). The Russians were winning, first in 1757 at Groß Jägerndorf, then in 1758 they crossed the Oder and finally in 1759 they won at Kunersdorf, but they did not know how to profit from these victories, and so sometimes unexpectedly they met with a defeat, as for example in 1758 at Zorndorf. Elisabeth changed the commanding general three times and it was only in 1761 that Buturlin conquered substantial territories and led to the situation near Bunzelwitz, where the army of Frederick the Great found itself completely besieged, also by Austrian forces. But then Buturlin

... took his time, prevented under various excuses a general attack and in this way he saved the Prussian king. He had received instructions from the heir to the throne to save the Prussians and news reached him that the days of the Tsarina were ending. It was generally known that the crown prince Peter was a great fan of Frederick the Great.

As soon as Elisabeth closed her eyes on January 5<sup>th</sup> 1762 Peter III sent a courier ordering that the war against Frederick was to be discontinued. Immediately he returned him all the conquered territories and even offered that his own army may be used against Maria Theresa. A few months after taking the throne he had a written and approved formal offensive-defensive alliance with his Prussian idol. This was how the rule of the Holstein-Gottorp dynasty began.

Just as Elisabeth had warred against the Prussians with no state interest and without any political purpose, so it pleased Peter III to change this into a war against Austria. Both wars were the pure caprices of despots having at their service a state that was beyond the society. The Russian state could easily have changed into some kind of branch of Prussia under a Tsar who immediately gave his personal guards Prussian uniforms and ordered that as soon as possible there was to be as many as 18 000 such soldiers, were it not for the fact the he also failed to consider ... the spiritual dynamics. He allowed himself to show publicly his disregard for Orthodoxy. Thus, after a few months not only was he no longer on the throne but also in this world.

He was deposed by his own wife. The Gottorp-Anhal marriage was singularly ill chosen. Since 1753 there were two positions of "favourites". At the older court there was Shuvalov and

at the younger Saltykov. The birth of Pavel Petrovich in 1754 made such an impression that Saltykov was appointed ambassador far away in Madrid. He was succeeded as the favourite by the Polish ambassador Stanisław Poniąkowski [future King of Poland], and then the time came for Orlov. He managed to maintain the status of the favourite for 13 years and supposedly he truly loved Catherine. It is a fact that the Orlov family was active in the elevation of Catherine. They made a deal with the guards. They ran the whole affair, first by declaring Peter insane and Catherine his Regent, then by forcing his abdication and finally having the Tsar murdered and the throne offered to the widow. In this way Catherine II (1762-1796) reached the throne. She was a German, full of contempt for everything that was Russian and yet she was to be recognized in Russian historiography as an incarnation of Russianness, and frequently referred to as “the Great”.

Orlov and Catherine are to be credited for putting an end to personal whims in foreign policy and the working out of directives that derived from reflection about the interests of the state. From this moment it was possible to question some erroneous understanding of issues, inappropriate judgment of problems and circumstances, but it could not be said that the management of the state was haphazard.

Catherine recalled the army from Germany and maintained neutrality in the Seven Years War, which anyway was coming to an end. Russia did not take part in the peace treaty negotiated in February 1763 in Hubertusburg.

A great deal has been written about the supposed opposition of German and French cultural influences in Russia and conclusions were drawn from this so as to construct an image of the

political history of Russia at the time. But the undeniable fact has to be noticed that the closest source of French influences was the court of Frederic the Great himself of Prussia, who despised even publicly everything that was German. The difference in the attitude of Peter III and Catherine II to Frederic the Great was such that Peter was a clumsy, inept, thoughtless pupil of the Berlin master, copying him in a caricature manner, whereas Catherine was his best student, full of subtle understanding for his methods which she knew how to apply in a way that was suitable for the given time, place and circumstance. Nobody ever removed the Germans and the French custom was furthered by the Germans themselves! The literary-advertising relationships with French writers were first established by Elisabeth, and then they were continued by Catherine. The Germans that were brought back, after having been expelled by Peter III and the new Tsarina willingly employed then in state service. Münnich became responsible for the Baltic ports and dozens of new Germans were hired.

In the period of the state being beyond society the whole superficiality of the “reforms” of Peter the Great came to the open. These were only bureaucratic reforms which did not lead the Moscow world towards Europe, because in the entire next generation a truly Asiatic relationship of the state to society was possible. A typical example for this period was the “humanitarian” decree of 1754 that abolished the death penalty, but with exception for political crimes! If the mark of “Europeanization” were the bureaucratic forms, then Peter III, the most ardent admirer of European uniforms, was perhaps an even greater reformer than Peter the Great!

European influences were coming in, but not from the offices but from books. Peter the Great had a certain role here, even

though it was similarly superficial. The heretical Latin brought deeper changes than all the official “reforms”! And Latin had been introduced or rather permitted to be used by Feodor Alexeyevich. In the days of Peter the Great it continued to exert its influence. It had such a potency that once the embryonic leaves were allowed to bud their development was not retarded even in the disgraceful times of most horrid orientalism, the years 1725-1762.

In this period society manifested its existence in three fields of life:

a) Sectarianism proliferated enormously. This had nothing to do with “religious creativity” frequently attributed to Russia. It would be a strange “creativity” the main condition for which was ignorance. Not a single sect appeared that could be appropriate for intelligent people. The main cause for the appearance of numerous sects was the fact that no one in Russia knew the catechism, not even the parish clergy. As the Bible in Germany so in Russia the dogmas were left to the good will of society that was ignorant.

b) The second field of life that was flourishing at the time was trade. Internal custom duties were abolished and thanks to the Asiatic acquisitions and the access to the sea there was a fantastic increase of prosperity. The struggle for material existence became easy not requiring any exertion of mind, will or nerves. Even the lazy were not endangered by poverty in Russia – and this always is the greatest calamity of society. (Famines appeared later for other reasons. They will be discussed in time.)

c) The intellectual life was slowly flowing, although following a narrow rivulet, but it had a constant influence, even beyond the awareness of society. Latin was playing its role. In 1755 Shuvalov set the foundations for the Moscow University. This was true “Europeanization”! What results it provided we shall soon see. We must remember that the essence of universities is criticism, thus also scepticism...

To begin with one consequence became apparent that seemingly was casual and yet it was fundamental and important. The study of Latin grammar for two generations greatly developed the native language and did more for literacy than several previous centuries. In the third generation writing was on the increase, and thus literature was born. Lomonosov (1711-1765) is a representative of the second generation. He was an encyclopaedist dealing with mathematics, history and novel writing. He was a legislator for the written language and the creator of artistic verse. In this period several private theatres were set up and in 1756 a court theatre was established in St. Petersburg. There the first follower of Moliere, Sumarokov worked. Tsarina Catherine II wrote comedies and demonstrated literary ambitions even in her letters which were deliberately written ... to be printed. With her person was associated the entire biography of a representative of the third generation of Latin in Russia. Derzhavin (1743-1816) was the man, the first inspired Russian poet, who started to publish in 1779.

In this way the Russian literary language appeared, thanks to the school of Latin and without any genetic connection with anything that had been written in the eastern Slav lands since the days of Nestor. Thus a second national consciousness appeared in the eastern Slav lands, which was soon to become manifest to the

full in the person of Karamzin (1765-1826). It is to his credit that literacy was soundly and finally based upon the folk language of the people of the former Zalesye.

The nationality of Lomonosov, Derzhavin and Karamzin was not in any contrast with the former nationality of prince Ostrogski or the Academies of Ostróg or Kiev in the days of Mogila. There could not be any opposition to them for the simple reason that the initiators of the new formation knew nothing about the former. There was no memory of the former centres or even the slightest continued tradition. Both these movements formed spontaneously, independently, with absolutely no connection, to such an extent that there was no occasion for any antagonism. The earlier achievements died out and so the initiators of the new Russian literary language had no knowledge of them.

From the days of Catherine II, the term “Russia”, a noun without an adjective became common in the Russian language. In the Polish language we immediately differentiated between the adjectives “Russian” and “Ruthenian”, while throughout Ruthenia, for the whole of the eastern Slav lands, both notions have the same adjective *Русские* [Russian, Ruthenian]. According to the Polish understanding of national issues these were two nations, but since the national consciousness of the Ruthenians did not develop, having disappeared after a short episode, thus besides the Russian nation there were the Ruthenian people, the nationality of which was to be settled only in the distant future.<sup>36</sup>

Latin, the mother of nations in the West raised a national consciousness even there in the East, in spite of the fact that the

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<sup>36</sup> [The Ruthenian people have now developed into the Belarus and Ukrainian nations].

notion of nationality absolutely does not belong to the attributes of oriental culture. Thus in Russia the perplexity of two cultures began, leading to a crisis that so far has not been resolved.

## **XX. The partitions of Poland (1762-1796)**

The state functioning beyond society that Catherine II had inherited viewed society only in one case: when there was a rebellion. Thus the Cossacks were most commonly remembered. Their revolts against Russia were not any less common or less violent or in any way different from their rebellions against Poland. After the revolt of Mazepa, his “Sich” was transferred deeper into the steppes onto a Tartar region. In the days of Anna Ivanovna they were allowed to return to their original sites, but at the same time their “Cossack rights”, that is their camp-social arrangements were restricted even more. But the prospect of autonomy moved the Cossack masses less and less. In the days of Elisabeth the revolts were caused only by issues tied with the forms of their struggle for existence which the Cossack liked to be easy. The main reason for their dissatisfaction was the unavoidable historical process of colonising the steppes which the Cossacks considered as their property as a whole and in every respect. All restrictions pertaining to their presence on the steppes were considered by them government abuse. On the extensive steppes on both sides of the Urals the Cossacks claimed that they had not only freedom of trade with the whole of Yugra and with wandering tradesmen of various ethnic groups, but also they had a monopoly so long as the trader and his wares were on the steppe. A Cossack considered himself to be free to raid and rob on the steppe and the state had no right to intervene. Whoever settled on

the steppe should pay the Cossacks for the privilege and not impose any restrictions of movement on them without paying anything in exchange! The regular systematic colonisation of the steppes began during the days of Peter the Great and continued under Elisabeth and even more energetically so under Catherine II seemed to the Cossacks to be an attack on their wellbeing, on their “Cossack freedom”. Should the whole steppe be gradually colonised, where then could he be a Cossack? Thus this was a constant struggle of a semi-settled and semi-nomadic element with modern arrangements that were eliminating their customary laws, their method in the struggle for existence. A Cossack liked to see travellers across the steppes but hated to see settlers who were not members of his Cossack fellowship.

In 1771 as many as 170 000 wanderers set out to cross the steppes. What a harvest for the Cossacks! When the Tsar’s government forbade the robbing of travellers across the steppe a rebellion erupted, which due to its ties with a number of other circumstances became an important historical event, while several dozen earlier revolts had only a local significance.

The western Mongols, known as the Kalmyk people moved from Dzungaria onto the Volga having conducted this migration in a most regular march over a 12 year period in the years 1618-1630. When permanent colonisation and the regular authority of the Tsar came too closely to their settlements they decided to return to Asia. In 1771 the return migration numbering 170 000 heads began. A small portion of them remained on the left bank of the Volga, because they were prevented by an unexpected flood. The Cossacks were ordered to withhold the Kalmyk emigration, but they were forbidden to rob them. The government wanted to force the Kalmyks to return with their whole property,

and it was precisely in this point that the interest of the Cossacks directly clashed with the projects of the St. Petersburg ministries.

Since Cossacks refused obedience, a regular army regiment was sent to chase the Kalmyks. The Cossacks did not want to renounce their “rights” and from misunderstandings there came clashes that ultimately resulted in a universal Cossack rebellion. The entire “Cossack army” moved against the Kalmyks so as to plunder the wandering people or force them to pay a ransom. The issue concerned the whole Cossack community. They killed one German general and submitted to another. It seemed that the revolt was quashed but it continued to simmer. In 1773 it erupted again with dual force.

The dissatisfaction of the Cossacks was used against Catherine. For a long time her throne was uncertain. There were many of those who wanted to continue the dynastic kaleidoscope of the past 30 years and to gain on the change on the throne. In 1764 a certain group (the details are unknown) wanted to place against her Ivan VI, who in the meantime grew up in prison and he had spent the last years in the worst prison of Russia in Shlisselburg. The guards noted that there was an attempt to steal out the prisoner and so they acted on standing orders that were given long ago. The 24 year old Ivan VI, who had been a prisoner from infancy, was stabbed to death.

A few years later a method was used against Catherine that had been used once by the Shuyskys against Godunov. They trained an impostor who spent several years preparing himself for the position. This was a Cossack from the river Don by the name of Pugachev and he pretended to be Peter III. He moved the *раскол* [sectarians], the peasant people and the Cossacks and he

played a role that was no lesser than that of Khmelnytsky with whom he had much in common, while he had no common features with Mazepa or the False Dmitry. In September 1773 he appeared on the Ural steppe with hardly 300 armed men, but a month later he already had 3000 Cossacks under him and at the beginning of the next year he had as many as 30 000 armed men. By the spring of 1774 he had several hundred thousands! He claimed that the steppes and forests in the North are the exclusive property of the Cossacks and no one had a right to decide anything there without their permission. In this way, he was establishing a separate Cossack state. All the nomad and semi-nomad peoples of the Volga region joined him: the remnants of the Kalmyk people, the Bashkirs, Chuvashes, Cheremises, all those for whom the Russian bureaucratic rules and in particular their abuses made life difficult. Also the agricultural population of Russia supported Pugachev because being tied to the soil meant that they could not earn a living in trade which was then facilitated enormously. Pugachev found a simple way of gaining the support of all agricultural settlers on the more distant Volga regions declaring that under his rule the fields and lands would become the property of the peasants who would not have to share their harvests with anyone. Thus they followed him. But what they liked even more than the land property was the free steppe life, and they had no intention of returning to their agricultural work.

The armies sent against Pugachev returned with nothing. Frequently they even feared accosting the “black multitudes”. The rebellion was approaching Moscow itself! Whoever did not want to submit to the Pugachev formation, fled. Pugachev conquered Samara, Orenburg, Kazan, Saransk, Penza, Saratov and only the storming of Tsaritsyn [Volgograd, Stalingrad] failed. This lasted till 1775. The whole of the Volga region was covered

with gallows on which hung the corpses of land owners and the *чиновники* [state officials holding some rank]. It was only general Suvorov who managed to suppress the rebellion and Pugachev was executed in Moscow. As usual, later impostors of the impostor appeared, but the rebellion phased out.

The substratum of the Pugachev rebellion was not political or ethnographic but exclusively economical. The peasant people supported him because just a few years earlier, in 1767 they were handed over as plunder to the arbitrary will of the landowners and forbidden to place complaints against them. The “schism” supported any action against the government which relied upon the “untrue faith”, because they were persecuted. Catherine II herself was completely indifferent in religious matters. Externally she manifested her Orthodoxy but she understood that the state had no interest in generating an opposition on an ecclesial basis and so she refused to continue the persecution of the schismatic Old Believers. During the Pugachev rebellion, she proclaimed an edict of tolerance (1773) freeing the sectarians from all bureaucratic exploitation. **She allowed for all religious organisations except the Catholic.** But a reservation was made that the clergy of any tolerated denomination cannot be subordinate to some superior authority that would be abroad. Thus Catherine introduced the German-Protestant principle of a *Landeskirche* [country Church], and she held on to this rule all the more willingly because it placed all ecclesiastical property at the disposal of the monarch. Most Tsars eyed the enormous properties of the monasteries with envy, but it was finally Catherine who devised a harmless way of secularising them without raising the suspicion of being unorthodox. She changed the subjects of the monasteries into subjects of the state by imposing upon them a head tax of one and a half rouble annually, and this was to serve the maintenance

of the monasteries. Thus the management of monastic estates and agrarian issues in them were now handled by the state drawing benefits from this.

There was no need of the Pugachev rebellion to perceive that the administration did not enjoy the confidence and attachment of the populace. Catherine had serious intentions to reform the bureaucracy of the administrative system of Peter the Great. That bureaucracy led to the horror of a state that was beyond society. It has to be admitted that the Orlovs and Catherine tried to establish some bond between the state and society, but they failed to do so. One of these efforts was the oldest Russian law against bribe taking officials (1763) and the new organisation of the Senate that truly wanted to prevent abuses, even though this was completely unsuccessful (1763).

The beginning of the rule of Catherine had also a beautiful face. This German princess was Europeanising Russia, because she opened many schools, with all her authority she supported the Academy of Sciences and the Moscow University and made preparations for the establishment of three further universities in St. Petersburg, Kazan and Kharkov. She organized a Cadet College (1762) and what is most characteristic she was interested in the establishment of schools for girls (1764-1765), hoping to have the title of the "Semiramis of the North". She was very attentive that progress in the state would be treated as her personal achievement and that Russia would not be considered to be a part of Asia. More and more diverse cultural elements were being intermingled mechanically. How could universities for whom criticism is fundamental be reconciled with a despotic form of government? A compromise between critique and blind obedience was an absurdity. Thus the next generations were to gather the bitter fruits of

these compromises. In the meantime Catherine was happy to hear compliments from the luminaries of French literature in which she delighted as much as she cherished those of the most “enlightened” princes of the German Reich. In the literary market, she was ranked higher than those who were abroad, because... she was richer. She also supported the sciences, and gave impulses for historical research (Schlözer, Miller, Shcherbatov), but woe to anybody who would write something about the not completely European origin of the Russian nation, particularly of its gentry. The order came that Russia from its very beginning was to be viewed as ethnographically and culturally European and if any academic found something else, he immediately fell into disfavour. This was an indication what the future Russian universities would be like...

If the “Semiramis of the North” was to be worthy of the title she had to be a great legislator. Some “book of laws” should remain after her. The Empress caring for her fame set up a commission in 1766, which was to edit a code of laws and she herself took an active part in its works. In this way, unintentionally she interfered in the work of the appropriate experts who were inconvenienced by her intrusions and in every issue waited for the decision of the “great monarch”. This was the main reason why this code never came to be, even though introductory studies were made over a period of three years. The commission, trying to flee the burden of responsibility that was so dangerous because of the cooperation of the Empress proposed the calling of a “land council”. Catherine in this respect was full of good will and she approved the project. In 1767, 652 representatives of the country came to St. Petersburg. The vast majority of them were representatives of the bureaucracy from all possible offices and from every county and there were also representatives of the gentry, thus

coming from the same class. The former came from the ranks in service, while the latter also came from the ranks but they were retired from service and preferred to live on the land. Besides them there were representatives of the towns, but they were insignificant since they had been selected as indicated to the town people by the local bureaucrats. The independence of their views was no better than that of the “delegates” of the Cossack army delegated by the elders. Furthermore each province was ordered to send one representative of those who were obliged to do military service from among the crown peasants and small land owners, that is, the so called *однодворцы* [freeholders]. Also the *инородцы* [foreigners], the non-Orthodox were not forgotten. One representative of every foreign ethnic group that was settled, i.e. excluding the nomads was invited from each province. This great crowd had 200 sittings, which of course proved useless for the work on the code, because the majority did not want to have any codification and the minority did not understand what was going on. The whole issue came to nothing, because it was organised inappropriately. The only result was aversion against having the people participating in matters of governance in any way, and this was to continue throughout the whole of reign of Catherine. As a result the power of the bureaucracy was strengthened. This is how all bureaucratic reforms end (always and everywhere), irrespective of whether they concern the bureaucracy itself or any other issue that it tries to reform.

A “reform” was introduced a few years later in 1775 and this was entirely in the bureaucratic spirit. Not taking into account the historical specifics of the provinces, the entire state was divided into 50 *губернии* [governorates, provinces], with several of them tied into general-governorates. The military element was in-

creasingly entering the administration, and a major part of the judiciary was separated from the administration. The centralisation, ever more systematic, was constantly putting into practice with greater precision the old motto that “everything has to be as in Moscow”. This greatly facilitated things for the rank officials. The entire country stood open to them and when they were transferred to a different governorate they did not have to learn anything new. Also they did not even have to show any interest in knowing the governorate to which they were sent. It was the responsibility of the region to adapt itself in some fortunate way to the official.

In the provinces those who had the right and duty to serve the state and who since Peter the Great were called the *дворянство* [gentry] were organized. It was again the same class of ranking officials, but in a different form. The obligation of “service” was supposedly abolished but electoral rights in gatherings of the nobility were given only to those who at least reached the rank of sub-lieutenant in the state or military service. Thus full nobility was continuously dependent on “service” and at the bottom of everything there were the official ranks evermore comfortably and widely taking over everything.

The bureaucracy willingly evened everything out, whatever it could, failing to comprehend unity without uniformity. When in 1775, Potemkin abolished the Cossack *Sich* this did not have to be considered a consequence of the Pugachev rebellion. Even without the rebellion this would have happened, because everywhere the mode of action was to be the same following the old motto that “everywhere things should be as in Moscow”. But the abolition of Cossack licence was a genuine necessity for the

state and a sign of progress of public law and order... The steppes had to be colonised!

Having such a background of the internal situation Catherine II waged her foreign policy, the aim of which was imperialism with a truly expansive swing, because she decided on the conquest of Poland and Turkey. Whether these acquisitions were necessary for Russian society, for its development in any field, is another question. Was the Russian nation ultimately to benefit from these aggressive conquests or not, no one at the time could predict. For historical studies the fact that Catherine II had no intention of easing her despotic power and no one in the whole country ever thought of this is of decisive importance. With all these “European” reforms the system of the “Russian Empire” was to remain the same as it was in the earlier Muscovy times: it was to be a military oriental despotism. **Such a state can exist only if it is engaged in conquests, and once it ceases to do so, it has to crash.**

The rebellion of Pugachev provided ample proof that the internal structure of the Russian state was not strong. Basic reforms turned out to be unfeasible. The state should have crashed, because after all it had already entered the poisonous atmosphere of a state being beyond the society. It would have fallen had it not received support and new steam in the new conquests. The imperialistic plans of Catherine II saved the Russian state. Turkey survived, but Poland became the fuel of Tsardom in the coming century. The Russia of Peter the Great would have fallen to pieces had it not been consolidated by the acquisitions of Catherine, the partitions of Poland.

The Czartoryskis [in Poland] decided to dethrone August III the Saxon with Russian help, so as to make one of their own King (Michael was considered in the first place) and so as to hasten reforms. These were to consist in the introduction of a hereditary throne, the cancellation of the *liberum veto* [free veto] and the introduction of majority vote<sup>37</sup>. They approached Elisabeth for help, a few weeks before her death, but the Tsarina did not agree to the dethronement. They counted then on Catherine in view of her earlier relationship with a member of their family, a nephew of the Czartoryskis, Stanisław Poniatowski. But Catherine also rejected the dethronement project and ordered that the death of August III had to be waited for. The Czartoryskis were expecting a Tsarina like Anna, Elisabeth and Catherine I. They were to be disappointed severely. Catherine II did not bring in her lovers into politics. It is true that she was a lascivious harlot, but it is also true that she distinguished her private life from public issues and kept them strictly apart.

On the very day when the peace treaty in Hubertusburg was signed ending the Seven Years War (15<sup>th</sup> of February 1763) the Prussian Frederick II wrote to Catherine II proposing joint action on the occasion of an interregnum in Poland. In fact after the death of the Saxon King they agreed to prevent the reforms that were planned by the Czartoryskis. Thus, working behind their backs but against them, she pointed to Poniatowski as a candidate for the throne. She knew that he had a feature that was of value for her, namely, the lack of character. The Czartoryskis imagined that the Empress was doing this in view of her personal memories

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<sup>37</sup> [In Poland at the time each deputy had the right to oppose a decision of the Sejm by his single vote – unanimity was required for all issues. The result was that frequently some delegate, bribed by a foreign country would block an issue that was important for Poland.]

and since the elect was also in favour of reforms, and since they were men of higher quality, who were truly concerned about important things rather than their private interests, they readily accepted the one chosen by Catherine, judging that now Russia was beginning to serve the interests of Poland...

They were not discouraged by the position of the Empress on the issue of Courland. Peter III recalled Biron from exile and Catherine introduced him back onto the Courland principedom, against the protests of August III, who had his own candidate for the position. Courland was a vassal state of Poland but the Tsarina controlled it and the country was roamed by Russian soldiers. The Czartoryskis were not discouraged by this and they found an explanation in the personal relationships and ways of the St. Petersburg court.

The surprise came during the convocation Sejm when the Russian and Prussian ambassadors objected to the abolition of the *liberum veto*. The Russian army was already in Poland and the election of Poniatowski as King was conducted through their help. At the October 1766 Sejm the ambassadors of both these countries presented notifications opposing the new attempt to abolish the *liberum veto*.

So as to have an excuse for the continued presence of the Russian army in Poland a religious war was instigated. The idea was to prevent the passing of a law that already had been deposed with the Speaker of the Sejm on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1766, granting complete religious freedom to all dissidents in Poland. Russian colonels Karr and Igelström began organising a confederation of Catholic opponents, the Radom confederacy, while simultaneously the Russian generals Soltykov and Nummers organised a

confederation of dissidents in Toruń and another one for Lithuania in Słuck. At the same time lower level campaigners agitated the Orthodox population of the south-eastern voivodeships. Hatred against the Church Union was incited again. The two contrary confederations clashed at the Sejm of 1767. When a group of the Radom confederacy discovered the double-faced attitude of the Russian ambassador Repnin, they proposed that no changes would be introduced in the Polish state if they were sponsored by the Russians. As a result, Repnin ordered the arrest of four leaders of the anti-Russian opposition, Bishop Sołtyk, Bishop Józef Załuski, Hetman Waclaw Rzewuski and his son Seweryn and their deportation to distant Russia.

The Sejm was forced by the violent pressure of Repnin to elect the so called parliamentary delegation which was to prepare proposals leading to the suppression of the reform movement. Only the dissident issue was to remain, which could be used for trouble making. Russia was imposing “guarantees” for the maintenance of the obsolete state system and the indolent King accepted this in March 1768. The Sejm of 1768 allowed the Uniates to have only those churches that were theirs before 1717 and all others had to be handed over to the Dis-Uniates [Orthodox], so as to prevent Russia from exploiting the religious issue again.

A confederacy was formed in Bar, in Ukraine, so as to expel the Russian garrisons, but the King ordered the Polish army to join with the Russians and combat the confederates. The agitation conducted in the last four years among the Orthodox population was now turned against the Bar confederacy. A great rebellion of the so called Haydamacks (or Kolishchizna) [Ukrainians] ensued. Knives were blessed in the Orthodox churches for the slaughter of the Poles who supposedly were aiming for the

abolition of Orthodoxy! It was the Uniates who suffered most, because more than 200 000 of them were murdered at the time. The illiterate masses agitated by the Russian agents behaved in a way that even Russia considered as excessive. Even the worst of governments must finally have some peace and order in the neighbourhood. Thus stern orders came from St. Petersburg and so general Krechetnikov quelled the revolt of the Haydamacks quickly and with severity.

In spite of the Haydamacks the Bar confederacy continued for four years, and finally the partisan warfare simmered out after many courageous deeds which were not tied with any planned military activity.

For some time people in Poland counted upon the war that had been declared unexpectedly by the Sultan against Russia in the autumn of 1768. After variable fortune in the 1769 campaign, in early June 1770 prince Rumyantsev pushed the Turks away from the Pruth and on July 21<sup>st</sup> he captured the Great Vizier together with his entire army and occupied Wallachia. The Russian fleet having circumnavigated from its Baltic ports around the whole of Europe (This was its first more distant expedition.) instigated a Greek uprising in Morea. Then led by Alexei Orlov it beat the Turkish fleet near Chios Island on July 24<sup>th</sup> 1770. In the following year Rumyantsev crossed the Danube and prince Dolgorukiy entered Crimea. These triumphant victories signalled the failure of the Bar confederacy because Russia was able to send more forces into Poland.

The taking over of Lithuania and Poland became only a matter of time, and very short time indeed. Had Russia obtained

such a supremacy over Turkey as it had over Poland, then immediately it would have become the most dangerous power in Europe.

Suddenly, in 1770, without any warning, without even looking for an excuse, amidst regular peace the government of Maria Theresa captured Spisz and the region of Nowy Targ. This was outright plunder, as if an attempt to see what was possible in action against Poland. For Austria the attempt turned out to be positive, and so following her example Frederic II captured Gdańsk Pomerania and Warmia, also without any declaration of war.

Catherine wanted to occupy the whole of Poland. She was outpaced, forced to share the spoils and threatened with a coalition against her. Austria preferred to have as a neighbour on the Transylvanian border a declining Turkey rather than an ever more potent Russia. Thus Austria made an offensive-defensive alliance with Turkey in 1771 guaranteeing all its borders. Then the Prussian Frederic came up with a project that was to satisfy all. For returning Turkey its new acquisitions, Russia was to receive compensation on Lithuanian territory and to “maintain the equilibrium” also Austria and Prussia were to bite a part of Poland. Catherine had no intention of sharing Poland with anyone, so at first she gave a negative response, but after a short time, fearing a coalition against her, she agreed.

In February 1772 an agreement was signed partitioning Poland and in September the armies of the three neighbours entered the country taking their shares. The Bar confederates trying to salvage at least the honour of the nation and so they defended Częstochowa to the last and also Lanckorona and Tyniec near Kraków. In the following year the partitioning powers repeated the order that Poland would not introduce any reforms of the state

system. A speciality of Catherine's rule in Belarus was the immediate persecution of the Uniates. Orthodox missions were organized supported by military force. Soon 800 parishes were "transcribed" as Orthodox.

Throughout all this negotiations about peace continued with Turkey, which were deliberately prolonged, until finally an agreement was reached in 1774 in Küçük Kaynarca. Russia was gaining a great deal and had the way open for further progress on the Balkans. It took Moldavia and Muntenia under its protectorate, which were to be represented at the Sultan's court by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople. It regained Azov and also obtained Kerch and Enikale and the Crimean Tartars were considered independent of the Sultan. This could only be a transitory stage leading to their subjection by Russia. Thus the taking over of Belarus in the first partition of Poland did not stop Catherine from making acquisitions at the expense of Turkey even though she did not rule anywhere in the Balkans directly.

Above all, attention was directed at Crimea. Efforts were made to ensure that the Khan would always be a supporter of Russia. Money and military force was used until finally Russian garrisons remained in the peninsula. In Poland care was taken to stop any reforms. Roubles were sent and Russian soldiers attended election diets so as to prevent the introduction of Zamoyski's new code of law. The permanent activity of Russian policy both here and there worried Prussia and Austria fearing that Russia would be too powerful. Finally Catherine so as not to have to deal with two neighbours at the same time, decided to ally with Austria. During the war of the Bavarian succession (1778-1779), Joseph II, the son and co-ruler with Maria Theresa wanted to round off the possessions of his House and so he decided to occupy Lower

Bavaria. Over this issue a war with Prussia almost broke out with the Prussians entering Bohemia. On that occasion, Potemkin, the successor of Orlov made valuable diplomatic favours to Vienna. Next year, Joseph II went personally to Russia. He met Catherine in Mogilev and then in 1781, after the death of Maria Theresa, an alliance was made and in the following year an agreement pertaining to Turkey. The north-western part of the Balkan peninsula was to be under the house of Habsburg-Lorraine. Crimea was to be Russian, and the remainder of the Sultan's domains in Europe were to form a new "Greek Empire" ruled by a grandson of Catherine II, Konstantin Pavlovich. Several years passed before the Empress could try her military prowess in the Balkans again, but Crimea and the Crimean steppes of eastern Bessarabia were conquered already in 1783. Potemkin was made the first administrator of Crimea receiving for his achievements in this field the title of the "Tauridian"<sup>38</sup>.

Again, it seemed that a coalition against Russia was imminent in 1786, after the death of Frederic the Great. Hertzberg, a minister of Frederic Wilhelm II managed to come to an agreement with England, Sweden and Turkey and started to canvass Poland. But Stanisław August Poniatowski preferred an alliance with Russia and against Prussia. He went to Kaniów to meet Catherine who was visiting the Crimea, offering her Polish assistance hoping that in this way he would get permission to increase the army, but he was disappointed in this. Not only he, the weakling King of weak Poland followed the Empress presenting a humble request. In Kherson Joseph II was waiting for her and the Habsburg demonstratively took part in her triumphant tour of Crimea and accompanied her later all the way to Poltava.

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<sup>38</sup>[Taurida was the historic name for Crimea. Together with the mainland north of it, it formed one of the governorates.]

Sweden and Turkey simultaneously attacked Russia from two sides, while Prussia and England were getting ready to support them. Meanwhile Joseph II, surprised by an uprising in Brabant could help Russia against the Sultan only as late as February 1788. Initially Russia had no luck. Its fleet was sunk following a sea storm and the Austrian forces aligned along the “military boundary” were in disarray. Neither the victories of Suvorov in the next year nor the capture of Ochakov by Potemkin managed to weaken Turkish superiority in the field. But the expedition of Gustav III of Sweden against St. Petersburg failed and the naval battle near Helgoland was undecided. He spent too much time in Finland besieging fortresses while in the meantime a plot of the gentry forced him to return to Sweden. But he was not defeated and could still prove dangerous.

Waging two simultaneous wars and additionally since June 1788 having an offensive-defensive alliance of Prussia, England and Holland directed against her, Catherine did not want to risk a war with Poland which would have mobilized all the allies of the said coalition. Both camps started to canvass for Polish support. Stanislaw August Poniatowski continued to be in favour of an alliance with Russia, but Catherine was afraid to negotiate it, so as not to come afoul of Prussia. Under such circumstances the Great Sejm gathered. The Prussian ambassador Buchholz called for the shedding of Russian guarantees and encouraged the introduction of all the needed reforms, assuring in the name of his King that in the case of a war with Russia, Prussia would offer an army of 30 000 men to defend Poland. The Russian guarantees were refused and in November 1788 a notification was sent demanding that the Russian forces leave Poland. Even Stanisław August joined the anti-Russian camp. The stance of Poland was

not indifferent the more so since in the spring of 1789 funds were already collected for an army of 65 000. Thus Catherine's army retreated from Poland and Lithuania so as not to spark a military conflict in particular since it was not only the Prussian but also the English ambassador in Warsaw who worked towards the drawing of Poland into an active anti-Russian coalition.

The Russian armies were managing increasingly well. The Swedish forces failed to land on Russian shores. Thus Gustav III agreed to a peace treaty in August 1790 on the conditions of the *status quo ante* [positions as before the conflict]. In Turkey, after Potemkin conquered Bender and Suvorov took Izmail (the last fortress on the northern bank of the Danube), in 1789 there were even further victories of Suvorov near Fokşani and on the Rymnik as a result of which he took almost the whole of Wallachia. But Catherine suffered a diplomatic defeat, being outmanoeuvred in a truly masterly manner by Prussia.

The bidding for an alliance with Poland continued. In the first half of 1790, Frederic Wilhelm called Poland to go to war against Austria so as to regain Galicia and he achieved his aim. Suddenly Joseph II came to terms with Prussia promising to break with Russia. His successor, Leopold II, was not interested in continuing the war against Turkey and in the same 1790 he made peace in Sistova. Everything aimed at the isolation of Russia so as to make her pliant to the will of Berlin. The Prussian king gave solemn assurances that he would help Poland should it find itself at war with Russia as a result of its shedding the Russian guarantees and the introduction of reforms. With the background of such circumstances the magnificent Constitution of the Third of May [1791] was enacted in Poland, but from the very beginning it was destined to be quashed by an ally. Two days after having signed

the alliance with Poland, the Prussian ambassador in Warsaw, Lucchesini boasted in a letter to his monarch that he caught the Poles in a trap! Poland was scheduled to be the subject of a trading deal between Berlin and St. Petersburg.

On March 31<sup>st</sup> 1790, Lucchesini wrote: “Now that we have these people in our hands and when the future of Poland depends entirely on our combinations, the country could serve Your Royal Majesty as theatre of war... or perhaps it will become the subject of trade in peace negotiations. The whole art lies in ensuring that these people do not suspect anything and will not be able to foresee what kind of concessions they will be forced to make.” Thus the alliance had only to facilitate further acquisition of Polish territories by Prussia, if not to something even more extensive. Already in April 1790 Catherine received a proposal from Berlin that she would ally with Prussia and England against Austria and Prussia would then allow for expansion into the Balkans and for the return of Russian supremacy over Poland provided that Prussia be allowed to take Wielkopolska [the Poznań region]. In exchange, Poland would be allowed to regain Galicia at the expense of Austria. St. Petersburg replied with a simplified project, suggesting that Austria be also included in the move against Poland.

So as to secure the Polish issue Catherine made peace with Turkey. In the peace treaty agreed to in Jassy on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1792, Russia satisfied itself with Ochakov and the country on lower Dnieper, Boh and Dniester rivers. Thus further Russian expansion into the Balkans was prevented. Now a Russian invasion of Poland could be expected. Turkish presence in Europe was preserved at the expense of Poland.

Very soon Poland was to bodily defend also France.

Since 1789 the “Great Revolution” raged in France. The successor of Leopold, Emperor Francis, took upon himself as his lifetime duty to combat it. Gathering a coalition against revolutionary France he came to an agreement with Prussia drawing it into the war against France and he also tried to involve St. Petersburg.

Catherine, who up to now often served as a tool for Prussia began to emancipate. She expressed this in a confidential letter where she wrote: “There are reasons about which one does not speak openly. I want to involve them in French issues so as to have a free hand. I have many enterprises to complete, and therefore they have to be busy elsewhere and not to hinder me.” Thanks to the French Revolution, Catherine till the end of her days had complete freedom in the East.

One of the “enterprises that she had to complete” in the first place was the Polish issue. In April 1792 she organised the Targowica confederacy, which invited the Russian armies against the new Third of May Constitution. Very quickly, because already on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May the corps of Kakhovsky 64 000 strong attacked Poland from the side of Ukraine, while the corps of Krechetnikov counting 32 000 men attacked from Lithuania. The Polish commander in chief, the 29-years old nephew of the King, prince Joseph Poniatowski, expected in vain the help of the promised 30 000 Prussians who were due on the basis of the current alliance. Berlin announced cynically that “the circumstances have changed”. Austria forbade the supply of arms for the Polish army across Galicia and Ettinghausen, an Austrian officer from Lviv was attached to Kakhovsky in the role of a commissar. He was instructed to show favour to the Russians, because the war was to

be conducted also along the Austrian border, following the first partition of Poland.

The war was was waged honourably. A subordinate of prince Poniatowski, his senior by 17 years, general Tadeusz Kościuszko, already famous for his role in the war of independence of the United States of North America salvaged the situation near Zieleniec on June 15<sup>th</sup> 1792. He pushed the Muscovites out near Włodzimierz on July 7<sup>th</sup> and on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1792 he victoriously battled at Dubienka until Ettinghausen showed Kakhovsky how to encircle Kościuszko by crossing the Austrian border. The matter was finished off with the King joining the Targowica confederation.

The Prussian ambassador Schulenburg, who had been showered with many roubles, urged the Vienna government to enter Poland together with the Russians so as to arrange the second partitioning of the country. Emperor Francis preferred to be given a part of Bavaria and having conducted negotiations on the subject too long, he was late in coming up with a declaration from his side. Since January 13<sup>th</sup> 1793 the Prussian-Russian convention was in force. At the end of January Prussian forces took Toruń, Poznań and Wschowa. The terrified Targowica confederates begged Catherine for help and declared a general mobilisation, but when they wanted to dispatch the Warsaw regiment to the Prussian border, they met with a painful surprise. Even though they were operating under Russian protection they discovered that the Russian ambassador Igelström forbade them to act against the Prussians and he manned the local arsenal with his Cossacks.

Russia took over the eastern territories of Poland as far as the river Zbruch and in the north everything east of the line drawn

from Dźwinsk of Livonia, down to Pińsk and the course of Zbruch. The partitioning powers also insisted that the army of Poland and Lithuania was not be larger than 15 000 men.

Under arms there were still 45 000 soldiers called by the Great Sejm. Ways were being sought to prevent the disbanding of this army and to take up military action anew. This was the genesis of the Kościuszko insurrection. Vienna knew about these plans. For a while, there was even “confidence” with the governor of Galicia, count Brigido. Maximilian Ossoliński, the plenipotentiary of the Emperor’s minister Thun stayed at Bosutowo near Kraków in Kościuszko’s camp for five days (19<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> April 1794). The vice-president of Galicia, count Gallenberg met secretly with Ignacy Potocki, the foreign minister of Kościuszko in Podgórze near Kraków on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1794. There were also attempts to come to terms with Berlin. It is a fact that Kościuszko had with him in his camp a Prussian advisor by the name of Glave. Kościuszko was convinced that he would have to deal with Russia only.

Every Pole knows the importance of the words: Raclawice, Połaniec Manifesto<sup>39</sup> etc. When Kosciuszko was repelling two Russian attacks near Połaniec (12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May 1794) the Russian general Tormancov was crossing through Galicia to the Prussian side with the knowledge and accord of the Austrian government. The aim was to direct the Prussians against Kraków. By the end of May the agreement of the three partitioning states against Poland was ready.

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<sup>39</sup> [Kościuszko beat the Russians in Raclawice. This greatly increased the morale of the Polish insurgents. Kościuszko’s Połaniec Manifesto was a decree that favoured the peasants and small land owners, giving them full citizens’ rights.]

Officially Prussia was still allied with Poland. When Kościuszko reached Szczekociny on June 6<sup>th</sup> he had guarantees from the Prussian side that even though the Prussian forces were only two miles away, in Żarnowiec, they would not come to aid the Russians and that only for opportunistic political reasons one Prussian battalion would join the battle on the Russian side. The battle took on such a turn that it seemed that a Polish victory was inevitable. When general Wodzicki suddenly saw Prussian uniforms, terrified, he went to inform Kościuszko who assured him this was only a single battalion... In fact 18 000 Prussians moved from Żarnowiec! They were led by King Frederic Wilhelm himself. Not only was the battle lost, but the whole insurrection suddenly found itself in a completely different situation for which no one was prepared.

At that moment the 140 000 soldiers of the coalition marching towards Belgium were turned around and directed to the Vistula. France was liberated from the spectre of an invasion that turned eastwards. On July 1<sup>st</sup> imperial forces entered the Sandomierz region, while on July 7<sup>th</sup> the Prussian front guard reached Warsaw. Soon also the forces of Fersen, the Russian commander arrived. The Prussian King personally directed the siege which lasted till September 6<sup>th</sup> and was unsuccessful, and this was the personal merit of Kościuszko. After the liberation of Warsaw the Prussians failed to link up with the main forces of Fersen due to an uprising in the Wielkopolska region led excellently by general Dąbrowski. Also Fersen proved helpless.

A second army was sent from Russia headed by Suvorov. Fersen had to be engaged before Suvorov could join him and so the battle of Maciejowice broke out on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1794. General Poniński did not come with reserves on time and Kościuszko

lost the battle. What was decisive was the fact that Kościuszko was taken prisoner and together with him the insurrection fell, because there was no one who could replace his organisational talent. On October 24<sup>th</sup> a preliminary agreement of the three powers was made as to the final partition of Poland. On November 4<sup>th</sup> Suvorov staged a violent slaughter of Praga, [the eastern suburb of Warsaw]. On November 25<sup>th</sup> [1795] King Stanisław August Poniatowski abdicated.

The first act of the Russian governance in the new territories it obtained was the persecution of the Uniates. All Uniate bishoprics were abolished except one in Polotsk. Basilian religious houses were closed and the number of Uniate parishes was reduced in one year from 5000 to 200! In the years 1772-1796 the Uniates lost in all 9316 parishes and 145 monasteries.

History does not know times with less stable international relationships than that during the great French Revolution. The political kaleidoscope left Austria this time at war with France, while Prussia made a separate peace with it in Basel in April 1795. Prussian-French relationships improved so much that there was even a project of joint action against Austria. The Polish issue remained on the same line with the French-republican in that mutual interests required the breaking of the alliance of the countries that had partitioned Poland. France declared that it would pick up the cause of Poland if at least one of the partitioning powers would do so against the other two. In 1795 it was only possible to think of Prussia since it was on good terms with France. Even though Catherine had no intention of meddling in the affairs of France she behaved in a hostile way towards the idea of a republic and even banished from her country all Frenchmen who were not royalists. She wanted again to involve Prussia and Austria in

French issues and for this reason she wanted to be considered by her neighbours as ready for an anti-French operation.

Thus only Prussia could be considered at the time to be an ally of France and the Polish issue. It was even considered whether it would be possible to organise a secudogeniture for the Hohenzollerns from a part of Poland. In the spring of 1796 general Dąbrowski went to Berlin, while at the same time Polish émigrés in Paris projected a Polish legion operating aside the French army, thus against Austria. The working out of the deal about the borders of the partition zones was not yet over and it seemed that a conflict among the partitioning powers may break out. Catherine intended therefore to play the game also pondering about the “reestablishment of Poland” with the variant that this should be at the expense of Prussia.

Both Prussia and Russia were counting equally on the Poles, promising to liberate the zone partitioned by the opponent. Both in Berlin and in St. Petersburg there were plans to liberate a general imprisoned in the 1794 insurrection so as to place him at the head of a new supported uprising in the province of the neighbour. It was said at the St. Petersburg court that Frederick Wilhelm planned to “let loose against Russia” general Madaliński, who knew nothing about this! Then Catherine imagined that she could use Kościuszko for her calculations and so she decided to release him from prison, which was not necessarily equivalent to granting him freedom. When this was being prepared, Catherine II died on November 17<sup>th</sup> 1796. By a happy turn of events her death not only did not delay the liberation of Kościuszko, but Pavel I, the son of Catherine, liberated at once all the Polish prisoners and gave Kościuszko total freedom, allowing him also to

travel abroad. On December 19<sup>th</sup> 1796 Kościuszko left St. Petersburg and again went to America.

Catherine II through the grand expansion of her country enlivened again the Russian statehood. The expansion also went across the Caucasus to Asia. In the last years of her rule Catherine II had also some “unfinished enterprises” among the Imeretines and Georgians. For many years with intrigues, plots and military actions she fought Turkey and Persia so as to take the lands on both sides of the Caucasus. In her eyes however these conquests were of secondary importance. The “achievement” of her life was the partitioning of Poland.

The greatest crime ever committed in the history of the world was the glory of the reign of Catherine II and for this she obtained the title “Great”. This “moral misunderstanding” entered deeply Russian mentality and it revenged itself by the fact that in a slavish way the greatness of Russia became dependent on the ruling over Poland and from this time onwards the entire Russian politics had to deal uniquely with this issue. And this uniqueness drew with it increasingly worse consequences for the society and finally it undermined the entire state. From this moment not a single issue that was important for the state could be taken care of properly because everything was always devoted to only one question, subordinated to only one concern: how could the domination over Polish territories be maintained? Ever since, the history of the Russian state is a history of political neglect. The only vitality of the state was its expansionism. In consequence the state developed in such a way that it did not serve its own nation in anything. Thus the development of society took place beyond the state and again there was a discrepancy between society and the state.

Through the partitions of Poland, Russia geographically entered Europe. From this moment onwards Russia had to succumb to European influences; this would have happened even without the reforms of Peter the Great.

In the partitions of Poland Russia did not obtain any region that was ethnographically Polish. It only had Lithuania and the old Lithuanian Ruthenia, but the culture of these regions was decidedly Polish with a fair percentage of ethnically Polish population, in some regions coming up to 50%. There was no Ruthenian culture or any Ruthenian national consciousness in these lands. What had previously developed in this direction in the meantime had vanished. The Russian state could not acquire anything of this at all. This was a great loss for the Russian nation and state, because its significant Europeanization could have taken place only through appropriate influences coming from the Orthodox Ruthenian people. The direct contact with Polish culture only generated a centrifugal scepticism. It sparked envy and hatred, deprived of any positive action which on principle was excluded. **As a result of the partitions of Poland Russia came too much into contact with the culture of the West.** The lack of some intermediary element, of some bridge brought in consequence a terrible disorientation.

In the Russian zone of partitioned Poland only the peasants were Ruthenian and yet at every step there was a cultural difference, even though an unconscious, passive one. In the Ruthenian lands of Poland the peasants were subjected to the lords but there was never any *mup* (the Russian peasant commune). The land was assigned to each peasant personally, individually. There were different notions about land ownership and the attitude of

the people to the state was different. Above the peasants there was a class of people who for the first time appeared in the Muscovite-Russian state, namely, a real gentry. The notion of citizenship clashed with the notion of state subordination, and no compromise between these notions was possible. Polish culture was more distant from the Russian in this respect than the notions of societies living further in the West, who having passed through the reception of Roman law, the fall of feudalism and enlightened absolutism may have seemed to Russia at least initially to be closer. But there were mutual illusions on this issue with the belief that western absolutism was identical with eastern despotism.

## **XXI. The Napoleonic wars (1796-1815).**

Catherine II had demonstrated against the French Revolution, but she did not offer the West a single Russian soldier, glad that Austria and Prussia were busy with France. When General Bonaparte was expelling Austrian garrisons from Italy and Emperor Francis asked Catherine for help, she demanded that first Prussia would join the coalition again. Thus both neighbours would be busy and Catherine would have ... time to think.

These issues however were becoming more and more complex and they led to a situation that was independent of the will of even the greatest potentates. The partitioning of Poland was beginning to produce its effects, forming a mutual interdependence of the partitioning powers and thus Russia was drawn into the wars of the coalition.

From the very beginning the great French Revolution was marked by universality. Even if it were not attacked by its neighbours, it would have turned against them. Tremors in the absolutist neighbourhood were inevitable, in Spain, in Italy, in Germany, all the way to the western frontiers of Poland. Prussia and Austria, even though they were fortified by the partitions of Poland did not have the capacity to beat France. They would have managed even less had Poland not ceased to exist. At the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> c. a constitutional form of government would have become the norm throughout Europe, except for Russia and Turkey and the reaction would have been unnecessary. Military upheavals would have been restricted to only half of Europe, and so they would have been quicker, less complicated and more effective. But as a result of the partitions of Poland absolutism settled in on a much wider basis forming an enormous compact region united with Russian despotism. Russian political combinations were drawing into the coalitional game also the Scandinavian and Balkan countries and thus France was set against the whole of Europe.

A factor that could have given equilibrium to Europe was missing, and that was Poland. This was the genesis of the universal European Napoleonic wars and of the “holy” alliance and all the consequent struggles and repeated tremors. The foundations of Europe were trembling because it was deprived of the single state which could boast of having a constitution without a revolution. Also in the international economic field there were upheavals caused by the partitions of Poland, having deeper and unnatural, yet inevitable consequences, which entailed the necessity of further political revolutions. In absolutely every respect a deep crater was dug in Europe above which the historical currents formed a profound whirl sucking into its depths not only all the states countries but also the entire European culture.

In its struggle against the revolution Russia attained hegemony over the European continent. She entered the coalition system initially due to the personal fancy of the son and successor of Catherine, Pavel I (1796-1801). His mind was deranged so much so that his mother wanted to deprive him of the throne assigning the succession to the eldest of her grandsons, Alexander. But she failed to prepare the situation in time. Instead, one of the first decrees of Pavel was the imposition of strict primogeniture in the future.

The political balance of Pavel was weighted heavily by the circumstance that this Orthodox Tsar, who was married twice and had fathered ten children, became the Grand Master of the Catholic Order of the Knights of St. John, otherwise known as the Knights of Malta. Fulfilling an old obligation, dating from the beginning of the XVII<sup>th</sup> c. and pertaining to the Polish Zasław-Ostróg estate, the Sejm of 1775 established a “Grand Priory” in a part of that estate. As a consequence of the partitions supervision over this Priory passed onto the Russian Tsars. The Order was fortunate. For a long time it had nothing religious or knightly about it, but Pavel took the responsibility seriously and imagined that it would be a useful tool in the struggle against the “godless revolution”. Pavel was a megalomaniac. He considered himself a monarch above all other monarchs and fancied that he had the task of protecting European monarchism. He saw himself as the elect of Providence, called to maintain “the divine order”, i.e. absolutism.

The Knights of Malta were to be his helpers as guardians of the divine order. While in France and Italy the properties of the Knights were being confiscated, Pavel established a new “Priory”

for them, one that was Orthodox, which he united in 1798 with the Catholic, Polish Priory, forming a single “congregation” composed of 98 commanderships. So as to encourage the Tsar to be even more generous, in December 1798 he was elected to be the Grand Master, an office that he accepted with great delight. From this moment his fancies went even further. He wanted to become ... the Roman Pope, and then not abandoning Orthodoxy or the Russian throne, having in his hands the temporal and the spiritual helm of Europe, both Catholic and Orthodox, he would introduce “divine order” in the world.

The point of attachment was provided by the partitions of Poland without which the Tsar would have nothing to do with the Knights of Malta. When Bonaparte on his way to Egypt took Malta, Pavel protested. Emperor Francis immediately made use of the Tsar’s disposition and soon two potent Russian armies moved westwards to help the coalition to which besides Austria and Russia belonged also England, Portugal, Naples and Turkey. Suvorov had grand victories in northern Italy and Russian soldiers moved as far as Holland, all in the defence of the “divine order”. But Pavel met with unpleasant disappointments. There were misunderstandings between Suvorov and the Imperial War Council of Vienna as a result of which Suvorov was ordered to go to Switzerland, across the famous Grand Bernard Pass, so as to help out the army of Korsakov, which had less success. At the same time the Russian fleet, combined with the Turkish helped the Sultan regain the Ionian Islands conquered by France. There were also more serious disagreements among the monarchs concerning the organisation of the Italian conquests. Furthermore, the English took Malta from the French and had no intention of giving it to the Order. Pavel was outraged.

In Paris there were doubts whether France would manage against the whole coalition and so there were attempts to disrupt it. The Polish issue was to serve in this. Already there were Polish legions besides the French army and this encouraged Kościuszko to return to Europe. There were projects to move against Austria with the Polish issue and under the leadership of some Russian grand prince, but without touching the Prussian zone of Poland. Soon everything changed, when Bonaparte returned from Egypt. Not only did he immediately retrieve the lost territories in Italy, but he also cunningly managed a separate peace with Russia without touching the Polish question. He assigned Malta to the Order of the Knights. By this one move the coalition was undermined. Suvorov was recalled and the Tsar made alliances on all sides but against England so as to pull out Malta from the English hands with French help. He even planned a major expedition to India together with Bonaparte, while the Polish Legion was quickly sent to Santo Domingo<sup>40</sup>.

Since a French expedition to India was not coming, the Tsar prepared to send his army there. This was the background of the conquest of Georgia. Not seeing any enthusiasm for this among his two eldest sons the Tsar thought of depriving both of them of the right to succession; and this was the Tsar who began his reign with a decree demanding respect for the principle of primogeniture! The Tsar wanted to pass the throne to his nephew, a minor German prince from the house of Württemberg, but just as his mother failed to deprive him of the throne, so also he failed to

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<sup>40</sup>[The Polish Legion was formed to fight for the re-conquest and liberty of Poland, but Napoleon used it for a French colonial war in the Caribbean. In Haiti, the Polish legionaries rebelled and joined the local population, ultimately settling there.]

deprive his sons before being killed in a plot that took place on the night between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1801.

This was the end of the Tsar who ordered pedestrians to kneel when his carriage was passing and who declared that in Russia apart from the Tsar only those are humans with whom the Tsar speaks and only for the duration of the conversation. His rule confirmed the system of the state being beyond the society.

The new Tsar, Alexander I (1801-1825), the oldest of Pavel's three sons manifested no pathological aberrations in common daily life, but he suffered from a tendency towards religious mania and a vehement abhorrence of truth. He was timorous, constantly afraid of some frequently imagined dangers, the result being that he often provoked what he wanted to prevent. His policy was based on two dogmas that he never abandoned: combat any tendency towards citizens' freedoms and prevent the reestablishment of Poland. Never, not even for a moment did he deny these two dogmas and yet for many years he was considered to be a liberal and an enthusiastic friend of Poland! His method consisted in pretending to join causes that he intended to combat.

The rule of the irresponsible Pavel under whom the highest ranking nobleman was never sure of his future inclined many magnates to think about restricting the arbitrary will of the Tsar. The first groups of malcontents emerged from court spheres and not from the working class. By no means did they want a constitution in the Western sense. Nor did they want the abolition of the unrestricted power of the Tsar, but they wanted to introduce righteousness within absolutism, so that there would be at least some unchangeable laws, some constant order of things that would be independent of the caprices of the monarch.

Alexander was as if ahead of his environment and he wanted to be seen as a liberal and he made sure that this opinion reached the West. Immediately after he sat on the throne he set up a “Committee for Public Benefit”, which was inexistence until 1807. He made the impression that he wanted to draw from the French example, avoiding however the French errors and unnecessary bloodshed. In 1808 he even ordered that a proposal of a constitution be prepared, but the choice of the person responsible for this indicates that he did not treat the matter seriously. He appointed baron Rosenkampf from Livonia to be the legislator for Russia, a man who did not even speak Russian!

Alexander I found a task for the malcontents doing what every generation in bureaucratic countries does. He gave them the futile assignment of dealing with an impossible problem, namely, reforming the bureaucracy itself. Alexander started with this already in 1802. There was some progress in that a part of the judiciary was separated from the administration. It was immaterial that in 1802 in place of the “colleges” of Peter the Great he introduced eight head offices which he called ministries. He muddled however the public life by setting up a new kind of bureaucracy, which had the task of initiating legislation. This was the so called Council of State. There was a certain turn away from oriental despotism towards European absolutism in that every decree had to be discussed first in the Council of State, but the administration was not corrected. New directives against the abuses of the governors continued to be enacted, and as always with no results.

Alexander was most inclined to make deeper reforms in the administration in the years 1806-1811, when in his court an im-

portant position was held by the famous M. Speransky, a righteous citizen and not a courtier. His proposals that a legislative college be established, being in part elected, and that the executive power be responsible to the legislative, were never ever considered. He was however ordered to prepare projects for the judiciary and the administration. Speransky's general plan of reforms *The Introduction to a Codification of State Laws* of 1809 did not meet with the Tsar's approbation. It contained the proposal of establishing four diets "*Doumas*" on a county, regional, governorate and state level, having however a very limited field of responsibility with the main point of gravity being in the Council of State. It was only this final point that was accepted by Alexander.

The entire activity of Alexander ended only with the "preliminary stage" and the result of it all was that during the reign of the "liberal" Alexander, Russia was given the very forms of bureaucratic-centralist government that survived with minor changes till our days [1914].

The ineffectiveness of reforms was all the more evident in that the Tsar tried to raise the intellectual standards of his bureaucracy. Four Orthodox ecclesiastical academies, in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan and Kiev were established as well as 58 seminaries. Three new universities in St. Petersburg, Kazan, and Khar'kov and a whole number of higher professional schools, military engineering academies and many others were set up. The governing spheres had no understanding for pure scientific endeavours. All these schools beginning with the universities were to be only advanced factories producing ranking officials of various kinds. At stake was not a reform of education, but only a reform of the bureaucracy.

Externally this was to have the appearance of liberalism in view of the progress of the French Revolution which meanwhile had transformed into the Napoleonic wars. By no means were they a blunt advance of militarism at the service of the egoism of one individual or his family. Napoleon, who from 1804 was an Emperor, was personally selfish, but behind his banners there was something more than just his personal governance. There came the equal levelling of the classes, equality with respect to the law, the emancipation of the country folk and constitutionalism. The Napoleonic wars brought an expansion of the positive elements of the French Revolution.

The Polish issue drew Alexander into the European wars against his own will. In contrast to his father he had no intention of meddling in the conflicts of Western Europe and at the very beginning of his reign he withdrew from everything negotiating a peace with England and a treaty with France, remaining friendly, that is neutral, with both European camps. But the Hohenzollerns thought it necessary to have at hand a prince who in a “bad turn of events” could be a candidate for the Polish throne and so they prepared Prince Louis Ferdinand. As a counterbalance, in 1804 Alexander appointed Adam Czartoryski as his minister of foreign affairs and for many years spread the illusion that he intended to unite the whole of Poland under his sceptre and declare himself the King of Poland. In the midst of a general war, hoping that he may paralyse the Prussian efforts around a Polish secundo-geniture, in 1805 the Tsar joined the “third” coalition against France. Prussia wanting to remain neutral refused the right of transit to the Russian forces. Czartoryski waited for this moment hoping for a conflict between Prussia and Russia that could serve as an excuse for a war between the two.

Alexander stopped in Puławy [the Czartoryski residence in Poland] on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1805 and for two weeks he loudly proclaimed his “Polish intentions”, until finally Frederic Wilhelm III (1797-1840) invited him to Berlin so as to reach an agreement. On that occasion they both decided to renounce their “Polish plans” and signed a “permanent friendship”. This was done theatrically on the gravestone of Frederic the Great. Alexander liked theatrical poses and in Berlin he showed off his art of pretending.

Vienna was already conquered before Alexander moved to help the coalition. He took part however in “the battle of the three Emperors” near Slavkov [Austerlitz] on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1805 after which the Russian forces retreated. The coalition was shattered. Next year, Prussia was defeated in the battle of Jena (14<sup>th</sup> October 1806) without receiving the slightest help from the “permanent friend”. Two weeks later Napoleon appeared in Berlin and the rest of the campaign was to take place on Polish territory, so all the belligerents started to work on the Polish question.

Suddenly Poland was being resuscitated from three sides at once. Frederick Wilhelm III together with Anthony Radziwiłł thought about a Polish-Prussian legion. Alexander considered again the proposal of Czartoryski, even though since July 1806 the latter ceased to be his minister and he counted on the help of general Kniaziewicz. Napoleon invited Dąbrowski to Berlin. Kosciuszko refused twice because Napoleon gave no guarantee that the Polish state would be re-established.

Napoleon was only interested in the breakup of the coalition. Alexander, on his part was willing to come to terms with Napoleon on the condition that the French Emperor would not

resuscitate Poland. Military honour obliged Napoleon to do something for the Polish issue, but he settled for a minimum thereby obtaining the favour of the Tsar. The war did not reach the Russian part of partitioned Poland at all, because Russia acceded to the peace treaty of Tilsit in July 9<sup>th</sup> 1807. With joy the Russian Tsar declared that he managed to prevent “the rebuilding of Poland, at least in its first stage”, and that “there would be no Poland, but only the strange entity called the Duchy of Warsaw” set up at the expense of Prussia. In order to gain the support of Alexander, Napoleon warned the Poles in December 1807 that they were not to imagine that “the autonomy given” to the Duchy of Warsaw as a fragment of the Napoleonic “system” was to be some kind of “an introduction to the rebuilding of Poland”. Russia even expanded as a result of the peace in Tilsit, because Napoleon gave the Białystok region that had been a part of the Prussian zone of partitioned Poland to Russia.

Having broken the friendship of Russia with Prussia, Napoleon worked towards the breaking of the Austrian-Russian alliance. He tried to gain the support of Alexander, and thought this would be forever, at the price of “dividing the domination of the world” between them, that is, through the division of Europe into two spheres of influence, the French and the Russian. This was agreed in Erfurt in October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1808. Scandinavia and the Balkans were handed over as fields of Russian rapacity, so long as Russia would not impede Napoleon in central Europe. In due course, Alexander was changing into an ally of the French Emperor, negotiating an alliance against Austria and joining the “continental system”. This meant that Russia had to repeal all its trade relationships with England, something that Napoleon required of all his allies already since 1806. Nobody from among

the associates of Alexander understood how far the continental system was counter to the interests of Russia.

On the basis of his friendship with Napoleon Alexander now energetically waged war against Sweden and he renewed the war against Turkey. In 1809 the Russians occupied all the fortresses on the Danube estuary but they stuck in their further march through Bulgaria. Russia was simultaneously waging a war against Persia so as to gain the Caucasus, but this war that had begun in 1805 was extended and lazy. To these campaigns were added two new wars, declared in 1809 on the basis of the alliance with Napoleon, namely against England and Austria. The Russian fleet was soon to be beaten by English admirals on the Mediterranean, and this war rapidly ended. But the Austrian-Russian campaign proved to be complicated.

The Duchy of Warsaw was a natural ally of France against Austria, and the Polish leader, Prince Joseph Poniatowski hoped for an expedition into Galicia. Alexander had been obliged to provide him with assistance. Thus the Tsar prepared an army 30 000 strong, but the behaviour of this force was such that Poniatowski considered them not as allies but as hidden enemies. The Prince was right. Alexander seeing that this war may lead to the extension of the Duchy of Warsaw betrayed Napoleon. His sympathies were on the side of Austria and the Russian army served the purpose of obstructing, hindering and preventing the conquest of Galicia. He would have preferred to take over the Duchy of Warsaw together with Austria so that it would no longer exist!

Again the Polish question occupied the full attention of Alexander, who because of it wanted to be ready for action on both sides depending on whether Napoleon would win or lose. He

made peace with Sweden on September 17<sup>th</sup> 1809 in Fredrikshamn gaining the Aland Islands and Finland up to river Tornio. He neglected the furthering of the war against Turkey concentrating just in case on possible action in the Polish issue. Dmitry Golitsyn advised that the “Galicians” favour be attracted by Russia through the suggestion of uniting the Polish territories so as to re-establish the Polish state. Alexander did not want to make any official step counting that he would come to terms with Napoleon again, but just in case he ordered that the Poles be “calmed with the hope of the resuscitation of their fatherland”.

Also Napoleon did not want to strengthen the Duchy of Warsaw, but again he had to do something for the Poles in the name of military honour, his only dogma. He did not plan to attach the whole of Galicia to the Duchy even though it was conquered uniquely by Polish soldiers and the military initiative of the Poles alone. At first, he thought of setting up a Habsburg secundo-geniture out of Galicia, assigning 4/5 of the country to Archduke Ferdinand, the recently defeated commander and brother of Emperor Francis, handing over the remaining 1/5 of the territory with Lviv to Russia just as he had done earlier with the region of Białystok. This combination did not come about and finally at the peace treaty of Vienna 14<sup>th</sup> October 1809, Napoleon divided the Galicia that had been reconquered by the Poles into three parts: the majority, because 3/5 of the territory was returned to Austria, the two counties of Tarnopol and Czortków were handed over to Russia and only western Galicia was allowed to be joined to the Duchy of Warsaw. In spite of this Alexander was very unhappy with the enlargement of the Duchy of Warsaw and he considered this “a grave insult”.

From this moment the relationships between Alexander and Napoleon became strained. What was the value of the “division of the world” since the Duchy of Warsaw could be enlarged? Who could guarantee where this enlargement would end in the future? Alexander therefore demanded from Napoleon a special commitment, a deliberately anti-Polish “article of guarantee”.

In vain Napoleon faithfully held onto the alliance that guaranteed Russia the right to take over the Scandinavian and Balkan peninsulas. Talleyrand, the most adroit diplomat of the time, advised his Emperor that he should rather support Austria in the Balkans against Russia, because a Russia cut off from the Balkans would have to focus uniquely on conquests in Asia and in this way Russia would be in permanent conflict with Austria as well as with England, and thus there would be peace from her side. In vain. This memorandum of Talleyrand came to the knowledge of the Tsar, and so Alexander had proof that Napoleon genuinely intended to maintain the alliance with Russia, because he did not follow the suggestions of the memorandum. But Alexander lost his head, enraged by the fear of the hated Duchy of Warsaw. He therefore placed everything on one card only to ensure that the mirage of an independent Poland would be dispelled.

Negotiations about the “article of guarantee” began. Napoleon had no intention of resuscitating Poland, thus the issue was not problematic, and was only a question of form. Alexander became increasingly insistent, finally demanding that Napoleon would officially publish the text of the agreement with Russia in which there was to be the clause that “the Kingdom of Poland will never be rebuilt”. Napoleon could not agree to this, because that would amount to the expulsion of the Poles to the opposite Russian camp and a loss of such an important strategic position that

was the Duchy of Warsaw. If the Poles, seeing that they were abandoned by France would agree to the unification of all their lands under the sceptre of the Tsar, then France would again find itself having the whole of Europe united against it. If such a situation could be avoided, it would be better to stand up and fight, before Alexander would be ready to put his plans into practice.

The “division of the world” proved futile. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 1810 Napoleon saw himself forced to declare, after year long negotiations, that while he did not plan on his own initiative to rebuild Poland “he would probably do so, if strategic necessity would require it”, meaning if the hostile attitude of Russia would compel him.

It is known for sure that Alexander was the first to decide on war. Russia had one real reason to break with Napoleon: the “continental system” led to the ruin in Russia, with the value of the rouble falling by three quarters! To counteract this, the external customs duties had to be maximally increased and this harmed French trade. For economic reasons war against Napoleon was becoming a very popular program in Russia.

Preparing for the confrontation Alexander called again Czartoryski in March 1810 even though he was still secretly negotiating with Napoleon the “article of guarantee”. Planning to gather as much as possible of Polish lands he proposed to Vienna the exchange of Galicia for a part of Wallachia won on the Turks at the time. The proposal was rejected, but it did not turn out to be detrimental for Russia because in the further course of the war against Turkey Bulgaria was occupied again in this very year 1810.

In the spring of 1811 the Tsar intended to start a war against Napoleon, but he had to postpone it because he failed to win over

Prince Joseph Poniatowski for the idea and even Czartoryski became suspicious and demanded guarantees about the Tsar's intentions regarding Poland. Seeing that he could not count on the Poles, being full of new ideas, he wondered whether it would perhaps be possible to abolish the hated Duchy even without a war. He proposed to Napoleon that a part of the Duchy be given to his relative, the prince of Oldenburg, who had lost his native principality in Germany during the Napoleonic wars. A division of the Duchy of Warsaw would be the beginning of its end. Napoleon by now was careful and declared that it would be irrational to decrease a French bastion in the east at a time when Russia was threatening him with war.

All the more energetically did the Tsar try to obtain the support of the nation against which he waged wars and planned the doom! From February 1811 Alexander promised Czartoryski everything that he wanted. There was talk about the reestablishment of Poland with frontiers along the Dvina, Berezina and Dnieper rivers. The other side also did not forget the Polish question. In May 1811 Napoleon appointed Fr. Pradt, as his political spokesman in Warsaw. In the instruction he received "was predicted everything that actually happened in the memorable, full of hope, spring of 1812: the calling of the Sejm, the establishment of a general confederation composed of representatives of all Polish lands, a debate in the Sejm on the declaration of independence, the establishment of voivodship committees, a grand deputation of the Sejm sent to the Emperor, and even the reply of the Emperor!"

By now Napoleon was already aware that the policy of "division of the world" was pure fiction and that he would have to defend the Duchy of Warsaw without which he would be at the mercy of a coalition of the three states that had partitioned Poland.

He could not avoid a war with Russia because the existence of the Duchy made Russia an uncompromising enemy if not always an open one. Thus he decided for war. At a public audience on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1811 he spoke to the Russian ambassador in stern words throwing the responsibility for the upcoming war on Russia. He added: "I am not thinking of the resuscitation of Poland because the interests of my nation do not require this, but should you force me into war, I shall use the Polish question as a means against you".

The sterner was the language of the Emperor the more the Russian Tsar pretended to be in favour of liberalism and a friend of Poland. Only one ruling was significant, obtained on the Tsar by Speransky in 1809, which gave priority in rank career to those who had a university degree ahead of those who were of noble birth. Since then Speransky had no more friends among the Tsar's courtiers. The liberal trend was greatly enhanced by the occupation of Finland. Now, a country was linked with the "Empire" which had a constitution giving equality to the classes and freedom for the parliamentary system. And the Tsar guaranteed and swore this constitution to be untouchable twice, on March 25<sup>th</sup> 1809 and in 1810. The Tsar was becoming a constitutional monarch. For this reason not all saw the acquisition of Finland to be beneficial. Alexander hood-winked everybody to such an extent that serious men, conservatives, feared that the Tsar's liberalism would extend to the whole of Russia with constitutionalism akin to the Finnish and possibly according to the French model! This was even more feared because Alexander's sympathy for Poland was treated seriously! Thus group of Russian state officials formed fearing that the Tsar was "subjecting Russian interests to the Polish". In 1811 a memorial was presented to Alexander, which was penned by Karamzin. This historian (1765-1826) became the personification of modern Russia. He gave his nation a

historical drive for entire generations, being the initiator of modern Russian nationalism. He declared himself strongly against any form of constitutionalism, although he wanted “the monarch to decree some unchangeable laws” and he was against the resuscitation of Poland perceiving in it the greatest sin against Russia.

Under such circumstances nine serious months passed dating from the warning given by Napoleon to the Russian ambassador at a public audience. In Paris military plans were being made and when France started to rearm Russia had to interrupt its Turkish campaign. Unexpectedly in 1812 Alexander returned the “Danube princedoms” to the Porte and settled for peace in Bucharest agreeing to consider the river Pruth as the border. The victories of Kutuzov were wasted. In the previous year he had taken prisoner the entire Turkish army near Rushchuk. It was impossible to wage a war against the Sultan and simultaneously against Napoleon who had half of Europe in his “great army.” During these nine months Napoleon forced alliances on Prussia and Austria, and since he had at his disposal the “Rhine Union” of the German princedoms, in June 1812 the whole of Germany under French leadership moved along with the Dutch, Italians and Poles for the conquest of Russia.

Between June and August 1812 everything went according to the plan worked out in Paris and presented in last year’s instruction given to Fr. Pradt. No advice was accepted coming from the Poles. The Polish generals suggested that winter should be spent in Lithuania and Belarus from where strategic reserves would be provided for the Napoleonic forces, but this advice was rejected. Instead Napoleon planned a political reserve. In his mind the purpose of the war was to force the Tsar to return to the Erfurt program.

Thus he acted in such a way so as to reserve for himself the possibility of a return to a new agreement with Russia. That is why he did not join occupied Lithuania with the Duchy of Warsaw.

Had Napoleon re-established the Polish state, he would have no need to move further east. The very resuscitation of Poland would have been a definitive result of the war and the security of the frontiers in the east would have been defended by Poland. But Napoleon wanted to escape the Polish question and avoiding it he entered the lands of Moscow...

The Russians began their famous retreat tactic. Their first commander in chief, Barclay de Tolly, retreated immediately as far as Smolensk, and when he was caught up, he yielded the fortress for conquest and destruction in mid August. The Tsar changed the commander in chief appointing Kutuzov, but he was defeated at Borodino on September 7<sup>th</sup> and returned to the tactic of his predecessor. An early winter came on and the Napoleonic forces suffered from cold and hunger on their way. They entered Moscow on September 14<sup>th</sup> 1812 but hardly triumphantly. The scorched earth policy deliberately ruined the countryside. There was less fighting with the enemy and more and more with the elements, suffering colossal defeats from the latter. Frost, famine, the lack of fodder and on top of this the fire of Moscow in September 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> made the situation dramatic. Kutuzov retreated as far as Ryazan and from there he surrounded the French army from three sides in a wide arch, leaving only the westwards route open. It was only during the retreat that the French army had to offer battle. Now Kutuzov was not retreating but attacking the enemy who was decimated each day by the elements. The confrontations at Maloyaroslavets on October 24<sup>th</sup> and on the Vyazma on November 3<sup>rd</sup> were catastrophic for the French and then finally there was the crossing of the river Berezina from November

24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 1812 which marked with terror contemporaries and posterity. Hardly 8000 men remained in the French lines and this remainder soon turned into separate units and loose groups of surviving stragglers. It was impossible to stop in Lithuania, because Napoleon, against the advice of the Polish generals did not prepare any support there, and so there were no winter quarters ready. Napoleon himself rushed on sledges directly to Paris.

Everything now took on a different turn. The Prussian Frederic Wilhelm already on December 30<sup>th</sup> 1812 promised neutrality and on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1813 he made an offensive-defensive alliance with Alexander. Without any difficulty the Tsar occupied Lithuania and the Duchy of Warsaw and together with Prussia he moved further on to the kin state of the Duchy of Warsaw, that is, to Saxony which was destined as a spoil for his ally so that even what was only in a loose and indirect bond with the Duchy would be erased and the Saxon dynasty would be punished for its reign in the Duchy that Alexander viewed as a sick nightmare. Thus the Russians and Prussians occupied Dresden on March 27<sup>th</sup> 1813.

Alexander was however wrong, believing that the war was successfully ended. In April, Napoleon encountered the Russians and Prussians again with a new army of 120 000 soldiers and he quickly occupied the north German theatre of war. The Russian-Prussian alliance turned out to be insufficient, so Austria had to be included. Emperor Francis waited to see what kind of offer would be made. Thus he wavered for a long time, first engaging himself as an intermediary in peace negotiations, and then in organising a congress in Prague from 5<sup>th</sup> July to 11<sup>th</sup> August 1813. Finally the Tsar guaranteed him a return to the 1805 frontiers. This meant that Russia would not hold the whole of Poland and

Austria would occupy western Galicia again. What is more Francis did not agree that Prussia would be compensated with Saxony and he demanded a return to the 1805 frontiers also for Prussia. Thus he insisted on returning to the situation as after the partition of Poland into three parts. This was a blow against Alexander who wanted to have the whole of Poland, or at least the whole of the Duchy of Warsaw. But the time was not due for negotiations because of the growing strength of Napoleon and so the Tsar agreed to the conditions of the alliance even though unwillingly and ... insincerely. But thanks to the bringing in of Austria into the game the grand "battle of nations" took place near Leipzig from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1813 and it ended with the defeat of Napoleon.

Taught by experience the allies did not consider the war to be ended and they decided to follow the enemy all the way to his nest. On March 31<sup>st</sup> 1814 the allies were entering Paris and by mid-April Napoleon reigned only on the island of Elba.

At this stage Alexander judged that the conditions concerning the borders which were to be as in 1805 did not necessarily have to be followed. He tried to see whether the Poles themselves (and there still was a Polish army) would not demand that the Duchy be "joined" with Russia. So already there in Paris Alexander tried to gain Polish sympathies promising golden mountains. He knew no limits of politeness towards Kościuszko. He tried to endear Kościuszko so much that at balls and festivities Alexander and his brother the Grand Duke Konstantin would both take Kosciuszko by their arms from the very entrance and lead him through the crowds calling the way with the exclamation: "Make room, room for a great man!" Alexander promised him in writing that "your most cherished wishes will be fulfilled". We know what was the content of these conversations from Kościuszko

himself, who would later quote the “promises of the Tsar, known to me and many others, that our country will be re-established extending as far as the Dvina and Dnieper rivers, the former borders of the Kingdom of Poland”.

At the Vienna Congress called from September 1814 to settle European issues Alexander came up with his original plan, namely, to cede the entire Duchy of Warsaw to Russia give Saxony to Prussia in compensation. He continued to “entice the Poles with hope” and in mid December 1814 he called the whole of Poland to arms through a proclamation “in defence of your fatherland and the maintenance of your political existence”. The plans of Alexander did not meet with the support of the Congress and a war almost broke out over the issue of Poland among the participants of the peace-building gathering. But finally an agreement was reached on January 13<sup>th</sup> 1815 to the effect that Saxony would remain untouched as it was and the Duchy of Warsaw was partitioned between the three partitioning powers [Russia, Prussia and Austria]. Alexander was to receive more or less a third of the Duchy, but he was not allowed to incorporate it directly into Russia. This fragment was pretentiously named the Kingdom of Poland, with a provision that it would be constitutional, but the Russian Tsars were to be its Kings. This new state entity was referred to by public opinion with disdain as the “Congress Kingdom”.

The “hundred days” episode of Napoleon between Elba and St. Helen’s did not affect the Polish issue in the least. Alexander began to organise his new kingdom, happy that at least he received Warsaw which was extremely desired because from there he “drove a military wedge into Europe”. Alexander failed to involve Kościuszko. According to the latter such a kingdom was a “farce” and when Alexander started introducing Russians

(Lanskoy, Novosilcov) into the government of the Congress Kingdom, Kosciuszko predicted that “the Russians will treat us as subdued”. Soon he also wrote: “There is a great fear that our kingdom will become something like the Astrakhan kingdom which was dissolved into the Russian provinces, even though its crown is visible in Russian ceremonies!” Suddenly the Russian court dramatically changed its opinion about Kościuszko. Grand Duke Konstantin was appointed the commander in chief of the Polish forces. This “horror man” of history about whom it was said that he was half ape and half tiger now said about Kościuszko that he was an “infantile old man” who was babbling “some incongruities about a united independent Poland.”

The most outstanding Prussian and Russian politicians Nesselrode, Pozzo di Borgo, Stein and Hardenberg agreed with Kościuszko that this “clay pot tied to an iron pitcher would not survive”.

These were the consequences of the “Napoleonic venture” in Poland. There was not much more benefit in the whole of Europe because a period of reaction ensued. France was given back to the Bourbons beginning a period of constant turmoil provoked by increasing centralisation. The general result which after all was negative is explained by the erroneous position taken by Napoleon himself and his entire generation. Napoleon was wrong in thinking that the resuscitation of Poland was not in the interest of the French nation. On the contrary, this was in the interest of every nation that did not want its own interests to be smashed by brutal forces and made dependent on external violence. France gave a bad example by removing itself from the Polish side and ever since then there was no other way for European states but the basing of their own existence on the primacy of physical force.

Each country had to constantly strive to have greater military power than the others. Thus universal militarism with all its effects, also cultural ones was the further consequence of the partitions of Poland.

The eye of Napoleon or that of anyone else in the Napoleonic team did not see so far. In their politics they restricted themselves to the so called direct ends. Following France soon the whole of Europe treated as political dogma the method which in fact was nothing else but a direct denial of issues that are primary for the whole of humanity. The long-term future of even one's own state and nation were sacrificed in the name of temporary second- or even third-order benefits. This was the "political wisdom" for the more recent times ... strangely opposed to common sense!

## **XXII. Russian hegemony (1815-1855).**

Russia decidedly had a greater influence on Europe due to the Napoleonic wars than Europe had on Russia. Hardly any Russian officer during the Napoleonic advances had sufficient intelligence to observe, compare, draw conclusions and perceive where exactly lies the difference between the European way of life and that of the Russians. Dissatisfaction was only among the most intelligent, as a rule among the aristocrats. Freemasonry moved from the West to Russia and other secret societies developed from it, but fruitlessly. The Napoleonic wars brought some Western "revolutionary" elements into Russia just enough to organise conspiracies ... that proved useless. A plot against the life of somebody, be he even the monarch, does not need many participants, but it cannot bring about a change in public life, if the

necessary background in society is lacking. The Russian majority was in full solidarity with the *самодержавие* [autocracy].

Once Napoleon, the promoter of revolution in Europe was defeated, Alexander was relieved. Now and then he still pretended to be a liberal, but he persecuted liberalism systematically. In conquered Paris he established the “Holy Alliance” – a united policy of Russia, Prussia, Austria and the Bourbons, which declared absolute rule and political oppression to be a ... religious duty. This was a continuation of the ideology of Philotheus of Pskov articulated in his letters to Vasily Ivanovich, based on the same religious motives.

After the Napoleonic wars the most authentic tradition of Muscovy revived, capable of new life, because it was modernized. Thus Russian hegemony in Europe ensued, the adapting of Europe to Russia.

The monarchs frequently came together so as to discuss the suppression of “revolution”. Under the leadership and protectorate of the Tsar there were congresses on this issue, in 1818 in Aachen, in 1819 in Carlsbad and Opava, and in 1820 in Ljubljana. In 1822 in Verona the subject matter of the deliberations was the maintenance of the “divine order” not only for the good of one’s own subjects, since the care was extended over all nations staving off “godlessness” here or there, as for example in Naples in 1820 or in Spain 1822 wherever emerged the spectre of constitutionalism. Everywhere “legitimism” was claimed, a term invented by Talleyrand, previously Napoleon’s minister, who later served under the Bourbon Louis XVIII. This slogan was taken very seriously by Alexander. He advanced the principle of non-contestation of “legitimate” rule (i.e. the one existing at time

when the “Holy Alliance” was established) to such an extent that he even condemned the Greek uprising against the Turks in 1821.

The whole of Europe became covered with a network of conspiracies against the “Holy Alliance”. Congresses and conspiracies were typical of the times. The three dynasties of the partitioning powers [Prussia, Russia and Austria] were the backbone of the “Holy Alliance”. For them the holding of partitioned Poland had to be the primary end. This was understood very well in all countries and so by contrast, if for no other reason, the Polish issue up to somewhere around 1850 was linked with the “question of the peoples”.

Alexander gave the Congress Kingdom a constitution, but he was not in a hurry to swear on it or even to be crowned King of Poland. The constitutions of Finland and Poland became a problem for the Russian state. Necessarily they had to be tolerated and sometimes even some word had to be said for the benefit of the Russian malcontents. It is true that Speransky went into exile in 1812 when war against Napoleon was approaching, but now he returned to offices although he had no political influence. In 1818 when the country was already covered by a network of secret organizations, Alexander finally decided for a coronation in Warsaw. In his throne speech he included a fragment about the extension of the constitution, but this was done in such a way that for a long time there were polemics in Poland and in Russia whether he had in mind only the occupied territories (Lithuania and Ruthenia) or whether he thought about the whole Russian Empire. So as to dispel the doubts, whether a constitution could be tied with autocracy, the Tsar ordered that a project of a Russian constitution be prepared. The task was given not to Speransky but to a subservient courtier, Novosilcov, who was a small but exact

copy of the Tsar himself. The latter did not treat the task committed to him seriously and he leaned upon his secretary, a Frenchman Deschamps. (The draft prepared by him was “discovered” later, that is, in 1830.)

The major part of Russian public opinion followed Karamzin claiming and believing that autocracy ensures the safety of Russia, that its unquestioned continuation was essential for the country’s happiness and that “salutary fear” was a beneficial factor of public life. The vast majority of Russian liberals started to hesitate. They were outraged by the fact that the Poles were to have “privileges”, namely constitutional arrangements, which the Russians did not have. Their envy was turning into hatred. The hatred of the West that had been cultivated for long centuries now had the object of this hatred at hand! Not only the “Emperor” but also the entire nation wanted to abolish the state distinctiveness of the Congress Kingdom and change it into a province dependent uniquely on Russian arrangements. The old Russian principle that everything everywhere “has to be as in Moscow” again became actual and with vehement force. The majority of Russians interpreted the distinctiveness of the Kingdom as a personal offence. The hatred of Poland generated the unity of the state and society. Something hitherto unknown in Russian history emerged, a state based on society.

It is a feature of every constitution that it has to develop, otherwise it will perish. The citizens of the Congress Kingdom took the first of these routes and the “King” the second. Decrees started to be enacted which were to interpret the constitution narrowing its scope. A secret police was introduced with the vilest system of investigation, an increasingly stupid censorship, secretive sittings of the Sejm [Parliament], etc. and just in case Russian armed forces

were constantly stationed in Poland. The gradual elimination of the constitution of course inspired opposition, but Alexander was again gaining sympathy with promises that he would attach Lithuania to the Congress Kingdom and re-establish the historical Polish state. He ensured that these promises be widely circulated. He did not limit the presence of Poles in the field of education within the Russian zone of Poland. The Vilnius University flourished and also the Lyceum in Krzemieniec founded by Czacki. Until 1823 Adam Czartoryski was the curator of the Vilnius educational province and these factors seemed to support the suggestions that the joining of Lithuania with the Congress Kingdom was planned. For a while all this assured safety for Alexander and his true plans, which as always aimed for absolutism and the destruction of even a hint of Poland's independence.

The factual ruler in the Congress Kingdom was the “wild” Konstantin [Pavlovich, the Tsar's brother], while the “King” required that the High Council obey his “orders” even in civil cases that could be given orally. Even for Russian norms Konstantin was too “wild” and precisely for this reason, since Alexander had no son, twice, in 1820 and 1822 he was forced to renounce his claim to the throne in favour of a younger brother, Nicholas. But the Tsar considered him suitable for Poland as a ... provocateur.

Thus there was a semblance of some kind of union of a part of Poland with Russia, whereas in fact there was a gradual, slow, but unrestrained incorporation of the Kingdom into Russia. This violence, conducted systematically, with planned calculation held a great danger for Russia. One state cannot contain two civilizations. The state apparatus cannot be steered simultaneously in two directions, because eventually it will be derailed. Already the holding of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and southern Ruthenia as

provinces incorporated into the Empire generated a mood from which ever more clearly oppression and persecution emerged. This began already in 1823 with the prosecution of the Filarets [a student organization], and would have been even more so had the Congress Kingdom been incorporated! In this relationship of the moral forces, the oppression could only harden the oppressed side and demoralise the oppressors depriving them of their vital strength. A higher culture can be permanently overcome by a lower element only when the dominating lower power will adopt the higher culture of the oppressed; if this does not happen, then the state is smitten by the contradiction of cultures, it disintegrates and falls into the vicious circle of senseless and destructive motions.

In these years following the Congress of Vienna there was a “constant Polish-Russian bonding” undertaken by freemasonry, but soon the clash became more violent. Some Russian secret organisations adopted an unfavourable attitude towards Poland from the very beginning. This was the case, for example with the “Order of Russian Knights” of Orlov in 1818 and the *Союз Спасения* [Salvation Union] around the year 1820. In these secret societies the first issue that was discussed was that of the occupied lands. In these debates and through them the common view was such that these lands were “genuinely Russian, from time immemorial” and that they have unduly been “made Polish and Catholic”. It was among these secret societies that Russian nationalism developed and it gave the impetus for the forced imposition of the Russian identity.

This historically was the essential issue and the political programs of these conspiracies, frequently contradictory were of secondary importance. Thus for example the *Северный Союз* [Northern Union] of Nikita Muraviev called for a federation

within a constitutional monarchy, while the *Южный Союз* [Southern Union] of Pestel aimed at a centralistic republic. Polish secret societies that were tied with the Russian basically were in favour of the maintenance of the political union with Russia and they negotiated various “agreements” with the Russian societies. A series of illusions continued ...

Meanwhile the Tsar maintained his subjects in the expectation of some great reform. He did this by introducing numerous minor changes. After all the administration may be perpetually reformed! Alexander had some healthy inclinations for decentralisation in administrative bureaucracy, as a result of which he gave the impression of being liberal! He cared for the development of trade and industry counting on income from this for the treasury. Thus the port in Odessa became a free port and there was the development of roads, canals, state banks etc. A fair degree of tolerance towards the sects also weighed on the positive side of Alexander’s reign.

Alexander’s attitude towards the “reforms” was typified by his clear position on rural issues. He extended the rights of the peasants allowing them to engage in free crafts and “manufactures”, but he did not want to even hear about the prospect of granting them property rights. When in 1817 the Lithuanian gentry presented a petition to the throne on this issue, there was no answer for two years and finally when it came it was short and succinct: Whoever will dare to speak about property rights will be deported to Siberia!

Alexander never had any intent to compromise with the Russian constitutional trend. The famous Arakcheyev was a true expression of the Tsar’s thought. He was justly called a “sort of

Sejanus”, because he could say: “I am the Council of Ministers”. Arakcheyev could not just make do with the increasingly aggressive censorship, police, home searches and even the restrictions of sciences and the subjection of universities to the control of the police and the administrative ranks. The crown of his system were the “military colonies”. Soldiers were settled in the villages, on farms, obtained for use from the state, but they were tied with a military duty at every call. Thus an army of supervisors and administrative-political spies was settled among the rural population along a long belt extending from the Baltic to Crimea. Arakcheyev was the director of these “colonies” until 1832. It was only a shortage of monetary resources that prevented full completion of this “system”.

The increasingly obvious reactionary position of the Tsar urged the conspiracies to become more energetic. Theoretical reflections were abandoned and it was agreed that action was necessary. In 1824 both “Unions” the northern and the southern joined together, so as to execute an assassination planned for New Year’s day in 1826. Alexander got wind of this in the autumn of 1825 and was well prepared to combat the attack. By a coincidence however the “Unions” were not to move against him. Alexander suddenly became ill and died a natural death in Taganrog during his return voyage from Crimea on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1825.

In spite of the fact that Konstantin had renounced his claim to the throne there were misunderstandings and complications for two weeks and this state of affairs facilitated the activities of the conspirators. It was only on December 24<sup>th</sup> 1825 that Nicholas I (1825-1855) decided to declare himself Tsar. The coronation took place the following day on December 25<sup>th</sup> and the next day, on December 26<sup>th</sup> there was an assassination attempt, known hence

as the plot of the Dekabrists [Decembrists]. They were exclusively aristocrats of the younger generation and officers of the guards “who knew more about French literature than about the realities of Russia”. It has been correctly said that the plot of the Decembrists was more like a palace coup. The Tsar almost lost his life. Two people who stood just next to him outside the Winter Palace were killed by bullets. Had the coup proved successful the only change would have been that the “wild” Konstantin would have become Tsar. The only consequence of the coup was that in his personal chancellery Nicholas organised a new section, namely the infamous *третье отделение* [third division] having a regiment of special gendarmes, **the so called *охрана* [security police], the purpose of which was to prevent political crimes.**

As every Tsar also Nicholas I was engaged in the reform of the bureaucracy. He understood the administration of the state in his own way. “During his long reign he was convinced that the country and nation are governed just like a military unit”. Nicholas has been described as the “first disciple of Karamzin”. Among the despotic Tsars he was the most despotic and so he understood governance in a military fashion. “He considered the nation as a gathering of common soldiers and the bureaucracy as an obedient, hierarchically organised detachment of commanders of various ranks”. The ranking officers not only had no right to object in any issue, but they were also not to have their own mind, because it is the task of the command to think for the subordinates. Thus under Nicholas I “the police and censorship followed carefully every sign of independent thought, every more noble beating of the heart”. The censorship consisted of ever more obvious servility coupled with stupidity. This was a period when “literature in Russia was burdened by this strange, obnoxious for human dignity condition which the fable writer Shchedrin, described as being

obliged to use the language of Aesop, and being forced to tangle thought to such an extent that ultimately it became incomprehensible". Gogol only once managed to speak out openly and clearly in his *The Government Inspector*. This comedy characterises well the oppression of the administrative ranks in the days of Nicholas I. All outstanding Russian writers came to know prisons from their own experience and furthermore, all their lives they were tortured by the censorship. The greatest Russian poet, Pushkin (1790-1837) after suffering various kinds of persecutions experienced the dangerous honour of having as his censor... the Tsar himself.

Having confidence only in the military, Nicholas greatly increased the role of the soldiers in the administration. The result was that bureaucratic habits were moved to the management of the army. The disastrous effects of this were to become clear already during the reign of this Tsar. He set up a committee under the leadership of Kochubey for the reform of the administration and started work on a general codification that had been abandoned already during the reign of the previous Tsar. These works lasted 14 years. They were begun in 1827 and the first volume of the *Свод законов* [Code of laws] was ready in 1832 with the following ones appearing up to 1840. Speransky as an expert advisor was allowed to take part in this project but no liberal notions were permitted. Finally, in spite of the great apparatus working on them the reforms of Nicholas I were limited to only a few details, the most important of which was the further separation of the judiciary from the administration and a reform of gubernatorial offices, introduced in 1830.

The “most famous” part of “the reforms of Nicholas” concerned the field of education. He simply decided to restrict scientific activity and reduce school attendance to the minimum that was required for the appointment of administrative positions. The Tsar never understood the value of science as such, beyond the sphere of governmental exams, and he always considered it as politically suspicious. In 1835 a special law was passed for universities reducing them to an absurdity and in 1850 lectures in philosophy were directly forbidden, because it was deemed that this field unnecessarily disturbs the minds. Books from abroad were forbidden and the Tsar’s subjects were not allowed to travel abroad so that they would not bring back any depravity from there. In 1851 a passport law full of restrictions was introduced.

Holding on to the tradition of his father Nicholas staunchly rejected the idea of giving property rights to the peasants, even though he was not against improving their situation through some partial decrees. The condition of crown peasants improved greatly during his reign, but it deteriorated in private properties because of the increasing arbitrariness of the owners of estates and the provincial ranking administrators. There were even some local peasant revolts.

A novelty of the reign of Nicholas was the government’s adoption of the program of furthering the Russian identity. Forcing people to be Russian primarily meant the obligatory imposition of Orthodoxy. Thus all the sects were persecuted, the Protestants were “converted” and the Uniates who did not want to convert were oppressed. In 1827 came the idea of the complete abolition of the Church Union. The Union had always been sustained artificially, in that Poles were becoming Uniates so as to assure that there would be no shortage of clergy in the eastern rite

attached to the universal Church. Thus the government cut down the Union in its root, when in 1827 it forbade Latin rite vocations to the Basilians. But the consequences of this decree were not awaited because already the next year the abolition of religious houses and parishes began, and in 1832 the Uniate Basilians were completely abolished. The ignoble treachery of the apostate Siemashko who had been appointed bishop through government support ultimately attributed the semblance of a *воссоединение* [reunion] with Orthodoxy to the violence which Siemashko officially imposed in 1839 in the incorporated territories. As a result, the Union remained only within the Congress Kingdom. The reign of Nicholas differed from that of the tolerant Alexander I primarily in this religious persecution.

Nicholas was also different from his brother in that he was not concerned about “legitimism”. He firmly held onto the Holy Alliance because he considered it beneficial for himself. Also he saw himself as a protector of all monarchs against all constitutional parties and all secret organisations, but he treated all this as a form of Russian hegemony over Europe and as a strengthening of his own autocracy. He articulated these issues with extraordinary clarity and honestly without inventing personally any theories. Alexander, exhausted by the Napoleonic wars could have or even had to retreat from imperial expansionism and so he saw it proper to define this or rather conceal it under the theory of legitimism. Alexander had expanded the borders of his state earlier by taking Białystok, Bessarabia and the Grand Duchy of Finland, even though it remained autonomous. He declared a termination of acquisitions when he received the Polish Kingdom! Russia at this moment was satiated with Europe and it needed peace to digest the acquisitions. Legitimism anyway was held to be binding only in respect to Europe, and not in respect to Asia! Nicholas

could not proclaim this formula because every Tsar had to extend the boundaries of the state. Conquests could not stop, because that would be the end of Tsardom. It would then crash.

The exception of legitimism as not pertaining to Asia was extended by Nicholas onto European Turkey. He renewed the wars against Turkey which had been necessarily interrupted by his predecessor because of the great war of 1812. Alexander distanced himself from the Greek uprising whereas Western countries supported it and so for several years, since the uprising was dragging on Balkan issues were being resolved without the participation of Russia. Nicholas negotiated an agreement with England and France in London in 1827 and he declared war against the “legitimate” Sultan. The campaign conducted in two parts of the world proved triumphant for Russia. In that very year the combined fleets of three allied countries destroyed the Turkish fleet in the battle of Navarino after which the Turks left Morea (the Peloponnese peninsula). In 1828 Dybich, a German by the name of Diebitsch, later referred to as “Zabalkansky” conquered half of the Balkan peninsula as far as and including Adrianople, while Paskevich conquered the inaccessible Kars and Erzurum in Asia. These victories were deemed by Austria and England to be excessive and dangerous for the interests of the former on the Balkans and for the latter in Asia. Thus an alliance of these two with Turkey against Russia was in the making so as to expel her from the Balkans. Such pressure was exerted on Russia that in the peace treaty of Adrianople in 1829 she was hardly allowed the right of passage for her trade ships through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles and the maintenance of a few harbours on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, while she was forced to return all other conquests. The war however changed the state of affairs in the Balkans because the Porte was forced to recognise the independence

of Greece and also of the “Danube princedoms” (Serbia, Muntania, Moldavia) which were only to pay a tribute to the Sultan.

Nicholas waged a war against Persia at the same time, which he had inherited from his predecessors. In the peace of 1813 Alexander I had taken Dagestan, Shirvan and the remainder of Georgia from Persia and of the Caucasus countries he took Mingrelia and Imeretia. Reactivating the Persian war Nicholas gained the Nakhichevan and Yerevan regions conquered by the same Paskevich, who for this received the title of count of Erivan. This was at the peace treaty in Turkmenchay in 1828. The conquest of Armenia had begun.

The position of Russia in Asia changed dramatically. So far Russia only had the undeveloped, unpopulated expanses of Siberia. Russia started to occupy regions that were densely populated, developed and had an indigenous culture. It was necessary to take this population into account. From that time Russia had to have a policy in respect to the Asiatic peoples. The possession of Siberia had no political consequences. It was only in the times of Alexander I that Russia initiated a certain political order in Asia. In the days of Nicholas the awareness of the possibility of confrontation with another political order that had its origin and direction in England appeared. The perception of this confrontation was noticed first in England and only then in Russia. Having acquired hegemony in Europe under Alexander I, Russia under Nicholas was entering the realm of world politics. From this moment Russia's Asiatic interests intertwined with the European having a growing influence on Russian policy in Europe.

Beginning with the peace treaty in Adrianople Russian policy began to fluctuate between Europe and Asia. In view of Asiatic issues under Nicholas the antagonism of interests between Russia and England became axiomatic. The more Asiatic interests were attended to, the more confrontation with English interests became a concern and Russia became aware of the possibility of being pressed from two sides, the European and Asiatic. As a result Russia could not remain isolated in Europe and so for this reason Nicholas moved to revive the “Holy Alliance”, the importance of which was declining.

Poland was to be the victim of this revival.

The most despotic of the despotic Tsars could not be favourable to the constitutional Congress Kingdom or to the Polish nation in general which was so conscious of its citizens' rights. The antagonism of the two cultures was becoming ever more evident and even extreme Russian liberalism was prepared to accommodate autocracy if this led against the Polish spirit. For this reason the abolition of the Church Union was very popular even among those who were most indifferent to religious issues, the *вольнодумцы* “free-thinkers”, who being opposed to the Polish identity became fervent, though unbelieving, supporters of Orthodoxy. The Tsar by being against his Polish Kingdom was truly standing at the head of the Russian nation.

Nicholas had no intention of recognising the state distinctiveness of the Congress Kingdom through a formal act of coronation, but pressured on this point he did not hesitate to propose that his coronation as King of Poland take place ... in Moscow. Only in 1829 he decided for this coronation and he called the first

Sejm [Parliament] of his reign for 1830. He exerted violent pressure on the deputies and only scraps of the constitution survived. It seemed that Nicholas, who knew perfectly well about the secret societies, wanted to provoke a rebellion, so as to suppress it and then have an excuse for the elimination of even the remnants of independence. Thus he would rule directly over “subdued” Poland.

He made use of the first possibility to disband the Polish army.

In July 1830 Charles X was expelled from France because he had tried a too absolute form of governance and Louis Philippe, a member of a different branch of the French dynasty was called to the throne. He was “a King of the bourgeoisie” and recognised constitutional liberties. Almost simultaneously Belgium rebelled against the Dutch King setting up a distinct, constitutional state. The “Holy Alliance” was alerted. Russia was to move against Belgium together with Prussian support, while the Austrian army was to attack France from the other side.

The Tsar wanted to wage this war using not the Russian army but the Polish. Marching orders were set for February 1<sup>st</sup> 1831. The Poles were to cross the Prussian frontier while in the Congress Kingdom only Russian regiments which always stationed there would remain. Furthermore, in place of the expedited Polish regiments “replacement” forces, meaning extra Russian regiments would enter the Kingdom. Thus the Congress Kingdom was to be completely deprived of its own army and occupied entirely and exclusively by Russian forces. In the war in the West, even if it were victorious, the Polish army would be depleted and would return weakened. In the case of defeat the Polish army

would be destroyed and the Russian untouched having the Congress Kingdom in its hands. Thus it would not have to retreat, because who could enforce it?. The purpose of the “Holy Alliance” was closely linked with the inevitable weakening of Poland and the introduction of direct Russian military rule there.

These plans were leaked and they reached the leaders of the secret societies. Since these had mutual international contacts, it was decided that the use of the Polish army against Belgium and France had to be prevented and instead a revolution had to break out in Poland. Discussions within the Polish secret societies as to whether the uprising would serve the interests of Poland ended in a vicious circle, because even without an uprising the Russian forces would occupy the Congress Kingdom and the Polish army would perish in far away lands. There was plenty of revolutionary material in the country, after all efforts in this sense were being provoked by St. Petersburg for a number of years, and so the uprising broke out easily and prematurely, already on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1830.

There was a party in the Congress Kingdom hoping naively that the war could be reduced to a “war of the constitutional Polish King with the absolutist Russian Emperor”, that is to a constitutional confrontation. The Poles, enticed by the prospect of negotiations that could perhaps manage without a military confrontation, allowed Konstantin to freely leave together with the entire Russian garrison, while the Polish army stood inactive from November 30<sup>th</sup> 1830 till February 14<sup>th</sup> 1831.

An alliance with Austria was sought In January 1831, the chairman of the government Adam Czartoryski appealed to Emperor Francis asking whether some archduke would not accept the

Polish crown. The reply in principle was positive, but it was almost immediately revoked upon the insistence of Metternich, who was omnipotent in Vienna. He claimed that Russia may represent a danger to Austria, but this would concern their grandsons. Currently it would be better to have Russia as an ally against all sorts of revolutions.

Meanwhile a strong Russian army had time to arrive. In February 1831 it entered under Dybich 114 000 strong against the 63 000 of Polish soldiers. The [Polish] victory near Stoczek on February 14<sup>th</sup> and the following confrontations from the 19<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of March near Grochowo and its vicinity, which led to the disfavour of Dybich, as well as the triumphs of Polish forces near Wawer and Wielkie Dębno, resulted in Metternich himself initiating new negotiations. There was an exchange of memoranda with plans for mutual operations and archduke Charles became a candidate for the Polish crown.

These plans fell because military success turned to the other side. The decision to engage in confrontation throughout the entire historical region of former Poland came too late. In April this offensive war began. The expedition to Volhynia proved futile and it had to cross the Austrian border and render arms there. The same happened in May with an expedition into Podolia and in June the expedition to Lithuania also came to nothing. As a result Austria agreed to stand on Poland's side, only if it were to obtain the approval of the western powers. France agreed, but England refused vehemently, taking up a hostile attitude even against France. It was said there that Russia may represent a danger to England in Asia, but this also would be a problem ... for the grandchildren, while at the present it would be better to experience

peace and ensure that the direct neighbour, France, would not become too powerful...

Polish hopes placed in Austria fell, while in the meantime Prussia was helping the Russians fruitfully along the border of its portion of partitioned Poland, allowing the Russian generals to cross the border, building bridges for them and supplying them with food. The encircled Polish forces fought over a decreasing area and finally only at the outskirts of Warsaw, until Paskevich entered the capital on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1831. Within a month Modlin capitulated and towards the end of October also Zamość.

Belgium gained independence and Poland lost the remnants of it. The *Organic Statute* of February 1832 abolished the constitution but maintained a distinct government in the Congress Kingdom. Again no promises were fulfilled. Almost half of the appointed officials were Russians. Scientific institutions and schools were closed. All Polish schools in the Russian zone of partitioned Poland apart from the Congress Kingdom were closed. The censorship that was introduced was such that academics and men of letters had to migrate to France if they intended to remain active.

Throughout Europe reaction was on the increase. The monarchs of the three partitioning powers met in 1833 in Münchengrätz where they agreed to mutually help one another with intervention in the case of political upheavals. In Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1840-1861) and in Austria Emperor Ferdinand (1835-1848) took careful steps to protect their countries against the “plague” of constitutionalism. This was not very effective as the near future was to show. For the moment Metternich controlled both home and foreign affairs. He was the “wise man of

reaction”, who did not care about fate of the “grandchildren” so long as the protective spirit of Tsardom prevailed over the whole of Europe. Tsar Nicholas indeed was the monarch of monarchs. Nothing was happening not only against him but even without him. It seemed that finally Europe was “organised as it should be” and that the order of the world was established for good. The years 1832-1848 were the zenith of absolute rule. The system of Nicholas was extended over the whole of the European continent. That was the summit of Europe’s adapting to Russia.

Suddenly amidst the supreme level of “divine order” a new revolution broke out in Paris in 1848. France again declared itself a republic! A coalition would have inevitably formed and the “Holy Alliance” would have intervened, were it not for the fact that the Paris example proved contagious. In the space of one year revolutions were breaking out in all the capitals of Europe not excepting Berlin and Vienna. Metternich was overthrown! Only Tsar Nicholas could boast that he and his subjects were “peaceful”. Had the revolution succeeded among his neighbours he would have been isolated in Europe.

Not only in the name of the agreement of 1833 but directly to maintain Russian hegemony over Europe, the dynasties of the other two countries that partitioned Poland had to be helped against the surge of constitutionalism. A special Russian interest was soon attached to the issue and the Polish question again became a bridge for mutual agreement. When the Hungarian uprising against the Habsburgs broke out, two former Polish generals of 1831 (Demiński and Bem) were active there. They did not hide their plans that in the case of victory, they would attack Russia with a well trained force. Thus Nicholas sent help to Transylvania against Bem, but he managed to drive out the Muscovites

completely. Immediately after that the dethronement of the Habsburgs was declared removing them from the Hungarian crown. In Vienna the revolution won and Emperor Francis abdicated in favour of his 17-years old nephew Franz Joseph (1848-1916). The juvenile monarch immediately placed himself under the protection of the leading monarch in Europe and began his reign by meeting with Nicholas in Warsaw. Soon a new Russian army entered Hungary from the side of Galicia. Bem was defeated by a Russian force thrice the size of his own near Nagyszeben and shortly after that in August also Dembiński was defeated near Timișoara. This was followed by the surrender of the Hungarian commander in chief Görgey to the Russian general Rüdiger near Világos. Russia was no longer threatened by a military incursion from Hungary, coming through Galicia to the Congress Kingdom or coming from Transylvania into Ukraine. The constitutional movement in Austria and Hungary was defeated, and this had an impact also on Germany.

The protective help of Nicholas given to the youngest of European monarchs did not end with the suppression of the Hungarian revolt. An uprising against Habsburg rule broke out also in northern Italy. The Tsar lent the Vienna treasury 6 million roubles and promised to send his army also to Italy should that prove necessary. This turned out to be unnecessary. The Italian uprising fell and Austria occupied Venice and Milan again.

Nicholas also had a decisive impact on the future of Germany and for the third time he came to aid the Habsburg dynasty. On the basis of the constitutional current, the movement for the political unification of Germany emerged. Since Vienna rejected the idea, German organisations looked towards Prussia. The Hohenzollerns understood that the trend may elevate them high, and

so they backed it. The supporters of Prussia decided in the early spring (March 20<sup>th</sup> to April 27<sup>th</sup>) of 1850 to establish the so called German [Erfurt] “Union”. Austria responded to this on September 2<sup>nd</sup> with the opening of the “Federal Assembly” of Frankfurt. A major confrontation between the two main German dynasties was in the wind and then suddenly Tsar Nicholas intervened, standing firmly on the side of the Habsburgs. Prussia, not wanting to be at war simultaneously with Austria and Russia in the Treaty of Olmütz gave up its plan for hegemony in Germany through the unification of the German states. This was the famous “Punctation of Olmütz” - *der Gang nach Olmütz*.

Thus, the “Holy Alliance” was buried, because there were differences between the states that formed the main body of the “system”. It can be readily said that this alliance had burnt out being impotent in the face of “revolutions”, since one of the main participants, Prussia found it appropriate to enter into agreements and compromises with the “plague” even though this was done in a selfish way, conditionally and with all sorts of reservations. It remained a fact that war between the members of the “Holy Alliance” was imminent. Thus the year 1850 has to be considered as the end of this project of Alexander I.

That was also the end of Russian hegemony in Europe. Only by inertia it was still in operation, but for a short time, hardly four years. The humiliation of Nicholas was to come about amidst an external war that was not successful due to internal relationships within the Russian state. The constant reforming of the bureaucracy manifested the total impotence of the bureaucratic state.

Nicholas bragged that under his rule there was no revolution. There were revolutionaries, but they were officers without

an army. Petrashevsky, who promoted extreme views taken from French literature, led closed discussion circles in which strictly theoretical propaganda was studied. Even for this the participants had to suffer. The acts of the trial of Petrashevsky's group in 1849 show that since the days of the Decembrists "the privilege of political thought has moved one social circle further and wider". This was because in the indictment there were now students, artists, officials, and even intelligent young traders. Oppositionist theories started to be democratic. Literature helped in this, even though it was terribly restricted by fables and the criticism of the most neutral books into which interpolations were being added etc. The art of "writing between the lines" flourished. Belinsky (1811-1848) was the first who showed this way. He would have suffered severely for his journalism published under the pretence of literary-critical articles, were it not for the fact that natural death freed him from the rogues.

The most representative figure of this generation was Petr Chaadayev (1794-1856). He "did not write anything in his native language, and what he did write, he never destined for printing", and yet he became famous and "left an indelible mark in the life of his nation". He summarised his thoughts and ideas in private letters which he sent to friends, and these were circulated in numerous copies. In 1836 one of these letters was published without his knowledge in the Moscow monthly *Telescope* as a "philosophical letter". It contained a devastating critique of the entire history of Russia and ended with the cruel conclusion: "We live insensitive to everything, in some narrow worldview, without a past and without a future, in some deadly stagnation". According to him Russia had no firm basis for itself. "In spite of all our qualities we do not know with what to fill not only our whole life but even a single day of it". Chaadayev accused Russia of having no

moral climate, no directives and ideals, no leading creative thought. He held the lifeless Orthodox Church to be primarily responsible for this. This letter made a “stunning impression, in particular on the person of Tsar Nicholas”. The result was that Nicholas ordered Chaadayev to be declared insane and treated as such. The Tsar was most offended by the fact that **Chaadayev pointed out the complete demoralisation of the civil and military authorities**, who in the eyes of Nicholas were considered to be superior and beyond all critique.

Not all people reached the foundations of the critique. There were many more who settled with the reality without thinking about changes. But since human nature cannot manage without the formulation of something that would be worthy of acceptance, something that even if it is not ideal is at least praiseworthy (because otherwise the spiritual life dies out and the inability for intellectual development ensues), many started to come up with theories about Russian issues claiming that the features of Russian life seem to be wrong and negative only to the pathological pessimists, simply because they do not understand them. It is impossible to measure the Russian way according to notions taken from the West, because Russian culture is distinct and its pillars are those things that are criticised in the West, namely Orthodoxy, Tsardom, autocracy and the uniqueness of relationships among the rural population. The Russian features were thus justified and even praised by the Aksakov brothers (Ivan and Konstantin), Khomyakov and the Kireyevsky brothers, who gathered a circle of writers and journalists. They perceived in the defects and insufficiencies of Russian life, its originality, as if, some specific Slav element of culture and hence they were known as the *славянофилы* [Slavophiles]. Even joint land ownership with its periodic partitioning in the Russian peasant *мир* [commune] was

considered by them to be something specifically “Slav”! They convinced themselves that Russia having such a rich basis for its own culture did not need to learn anything from the West. On the contrary, standing higher it could liberate the West from its inevitable doom that would come as a result of its revolutionary inclinations. This new trend tried to reconcile Tsardom with society. Soon the Slavophiles came to terms with the most modest reaction considering it a flourishing of the specific Slav culture, while the *западники* [Westernizers] (Byelinsky, the historian Granovsky, and the philosopher Herzen) tried to assimilate the achievements of Western science.

Since the expression of political views was forbidden this was maybe precisely the reason why nowhere else as in Russia the thoughts of the general public were tied vehemently and in a lively manner with every move of the government in foreign policy, hoping that the success or failure of the government may support the followers of one viewpoint and hinder those who held the opposite view. Since the days of Nicholas the Russian intelligentsia was interested in foreign policy almost exclusively from this point of view.

Around the year 1850 for the first time on the Russian horizon, hesitatingly at first, there appeared the question whether the mission of Russia was to civilise Asia? If that was the case should not everything that distinguishes Russia from the West-European culture be cultivated? This line of thought was on the increase because Nicholas I was decidedly proceeding towards the conquest of Central Asia. In 1839 the Kyrgyz steppes were incorporated into the “Empire of the white Tsar” and the action against Khiva began. Soon the famous advance of general Perovsky along Syr Darya took place. Throughout the reign of Nicholas I further

battles over the Caucasian countries continued. Around 1850 major advances were made in the easterly direction seeking an extension and an addendum of Siberia as far as the left bank of river Amur. Russia pressed onto Asia in two directions so as to become an Asiatic power.

Soon the tendency to separate from Europe found a political basis in European politics, when the Tsar resumed his advances into the Balkans. Those who tried to formulate a Slav culture for Russia could not fail to notice that in the Balkans there were Slav peoples and Orthodox at that, thus they were suitable for the “Slav” culture in particular because since under the rule of the Sultans they had no opportunity to be infected by the Western revolutionary spirit. Thanks to the Balkan wars the Slavophile current became also a political doctrine.

The expansion into the Balkans was hindered primarily by Austrian rivalry. Thinking that after the events of 1848-1850 this concern was no longer pertinent, Nicholas prepared himself for a major expedition against Turkey the purpose of which was to be the taking of Constantinople and the establishment of three states under the protection of Russia: Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria. An excuse for the war was found. Nicholas demanded the right of protection over all the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan. This of course was refused and so the Russian forces entered into Wallachia. This was not a war, yet, because that country had an independent status, but such an advance of the Russian army could only be directed against Turkey. The Sultan forestalled the Tsar in the formal declaration of war in October 1853. Nicholas approached Prussia and Austria for help and an alliance and he was very surprised when in September 1853 from Vienna, whose support he was sure of, he received only a conditional assurance of

neutrality. But the matter did not end with these countries. England and France allied with Turkey and in March 1854 they declared war on Russia and it became apparent that Italy was also readying itself to join the alliance. Austria was in favour of it.

In vain Paskevich besieged Sylistria in June 1854, because already in July Nicholas had to remove his forces from the Danube princedoms as this was demanded by Austria and Prussia and he did not want to find himself against a coalition composed of almost the whole of Europe. The humiliation was all the greater, because the countries from which Russia retreated were occupied by Austrian forces and this with the agreement of the Porte. Soon the French-English fleet conquered Bomarsund on the Baltic (Mickiewicz recalled this in his Latin poem) and a second fleet entered the Black Sea. In the middle of September 1854 the Turks, French and English landed in Crimea and the Italians were soon to join them. The offensive war turned into a defensive one for Russia.

From the very beginning of the war the Polish issue came to the fore. A new agreement was almost reached about the re-establishment of an independent Polish state composed of the Russian partition, and the Western countries including Austria and Prussia approved this, when suddenly there was a change. One of the Prussian ministers, Otto von Bismarck (38-years old at the time) managed to convince his King that Prussian policy should be completely reversed and directed against France and Austria on the basis of an alliance with Russia. The Prussian King broke the negotiations concerning Poland and was ready to stand on the side of Nicholas against Austria. Soon also Vienna sent a statement to London and Paris declaring that Austria cannot agree to the re-establishment of Poland.

Meanwhile the Crimean campaign turned out to be fatal for Russia. The military defeat on the Alma on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1854 and then another one near Inkerman on November 5<sup>th</sup> 1854 were not the worst news. During these military struggles it became obviously apparent that there were corrupt abuses and also incompetence in the Russian administration, no less so among the military than in the civil. It turned out that Chaadayev was right. The internal relationships in Russia were such that the state could do nothing in external policy without previous internal reforms. This became clear to all in a most vivid manner.

In October 1854 the famous historical siege of Sevastopol began, which was to last for eleven months. On the Polish side there were still illusions that after the conquest of Crimea, the French and Turks would move northwards and when they would enter Ukraine a Polish uprising would break out. Michał Czajkowski prepared a Polish division in Constantinople. Also Mickiewicz went to Constantinople in connection with this, only to find death there on November 28<sup>th</sup> 1855.

During the siege of Sevastopol Tsar Nicholas died on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1855. He was forced to admit that “the command required improvement”. The Tsar’s headquarters were already hearing opinions coming from Europe that Russia was “a colossus on clay feet” and that Russian hegemony over Europe had ended with the Crimean war.

Finally the allies took Sevastopol on September 11<sup>th</sup> 1855. By this fact the whole Crimean peninsula was won. The Polish division prepared itself for action. But then the successor of Nicholas, his son Alexander II (1855-1881) declared that he was ready

to ender peace negotiations, so long as Crimea would be returned to him. Consultations began that were continued in Paris and finally a peace treaty was signed on March 30<sup>th</sup> 1856 on conditions that were very severe for Russia. Russia was to return to Turkey the Kars fortress in Asia Minor and on the European side the delta of the Danube and a part of Bessarabia. Furthermore Russia accepted the imposed condition that it would not have a military naval force on the Black Sea and would not fortify its ports on the Black Sea coast.

The indignation against the government was enormous and opposition became both popular and, as if, a patriotic obligation. Alexander II again was faced with the same issue that bothered his predecessors, the immortal question of the reform of the administration.

### **XXIII. Nihilism and Russification (1855-1897)**

After the fall of Sevastopol, in a certain Moscow gathering, one of the main proponents of the Slavophile movement, Khomyakov appeared cheerful. When asked for the reason he said: “Over 30 years I wept in silence, now I can rejoice seeing salvific tears”. There was general rejoicing over the lost war because only this could force the government to introduce state and social reforms if the state was not to be completely deprived of military strength in the future. All were calling for two reforms: the granting of property rights to the peasants and the introduction of self-ruling local governments. Even the opponents of constitutionalism demanded this being convinced that such arrangements would satisfy the society and thereby curtail “revolutionary” movements. Even at the court of the Tsar the opinion prevailed

that “the revolutionists should be given something” for the sake of peace and so as to render them harmless.

Thus in 1858 the peasants were given personal freedom at first in government owned estates and they were granted the right to buy land. Three years later a decree of March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1861 announced that all peasant holdings were to be given property rights of their house and farmyard within two years and they may purchase land from the nobility within twelve years profiting from financial assistance offered by the state.

This agricultural reform got stuck, because it was half-measured. What it was supposed to be was expressed in 1858 in an address of the Tver governorate committee to the government. With the abolition of the governing power of the gentry over the peasants, which “restricted the arbitrary self-will of the officials” local self-government would have to be introduced and the division of the population into legally sanctioned classes would have to be abolished. In the court nobody wanted to hear about such things. **The peasant class in respect to the law was maintained, and so also the entire legally sanctioned class system.** The privileges of the nobility and the townspeople and the hereditary belonging to a class remained. Thus neither property nor education could liberate a peasant’s son from the fact that in the face of law he remained a peasant and so corporal punishment was the norm for him, while members of other classes were not punished in this way. Many other such restrictions of rights were maintained. Also the peasant *mup* [commune] in land ownership was maintained, confirming thereby the doctrine of the Slavophiles, who claimed that the peasant *mup* [commune] was the kernel of social strength, the foundation of Slav culture and a safeguard of the Russian identity.

In practice what happened was that the peasant property rights were changed into a right of usage under the supervision of the bureaucracy which from now on controlled the peasant *муp* [commune] at whim. This produced a “petrified in its distinctiveness class of peasants” that was illiterate and passive. “The peasantry was separated from the rest of the world by a wall of special laws, locked in unbreakable shackles. They were given some glimmer of class self-government but to which no non-official, slightly educated person had access. They were bound by extraordinary passports [identity documents]. There was a special civil law and to some extent also a criminal law for them as well as special class courts”.

The reform of the judiciary under Alexander II was advanced to some extent (openness of court proceedings, juries), but the introduction of special courts for the peasants was no progress.

Meanwhile in spite of all police efforts, during the reign of Nicholas I Western influences were affecting Russia and the more, normal contacts between Europe and Russia were prevented, the more abnormal cultural misunderstandings were facilitated. Criticism of things Western degenerated in Russia into a hatred of all authorities and Russian thinkers competed in their aggressive critical fervour, which led to the denial of everything. Western European notions adopted without the mediation of Southern Ruthenia or even Poland generated dizzy confusion in the minds and caused disorganisation.

Towards the end of the reign of Nicholas, the journalist Dobrolubov claimed that “apart from government autocracy there is also a whole legion of family, class and society despotisms”.

Why should the struggle be only against the autocracy of the Tsar, why not against all of them? Thus a current was born that was not interested in a constitution, because that was ... a trivial, marginal issue. What they wanted was the destruction of absolutely all existing institutions of communal life, so that on the ruins of the old world a completely new one would be built. What sort of order? This would be the problem of the next generations; for the moment what was clear was that now destruction had to prevail so that those who would follow would not be bound by anything.

Thus nihilism, a typically Russian speciality appeared. Pisarev, a successor of Dobrolubov whose doctrine had a universal impact on vast sectors of the Russian intelligentsia in the years 1860-1877 overturned the “authorities of tradition” in the name “of liberating the human personality from all shackles”. He desired “an individuality unrepressed by service to some ideals”. He negated everything and decisively opposed the “striving for common ideals”. In his *Scholastics of the XIX century* of 1861, he even declared himself against the furthering of literacy among the peasants. He rejected all European science and art, all philosophy. He only tolerated the natural sciences according to the naive view that the “natural sciences had not built anything and destroyed so much!”

Such followers and further disciples of Pisarev were not interested in a constitution! As a result the constitutionalist current declined in Russia. For a long time the last project that was proposed was that of Valuyev in 1863, which had a modest request of a parliament having only an advisory role. From then on no one spoke of a constitution until 1880. The “liberals” of this generation such as Suvorin or Katkov restricted themselves to the call for

granting property rights and local governments. They asked for reforms but did not touch the autocracy. In this they were similar to the Slavophiles, who included despotic Tsardom among the basic conditions of the culture which they liked to call “Slav.”

Soon after the decree on property rights, barely three years later (1861, 1864), the self-governing *земства* [local assemblies] were introduced. In these years however events took place that in their consequences were to deeply influence the Russian psyche binding in many respects the home and foreign policy of Russia into a single whole.

Initially Alexander II waged only an Asiatic foreign policy. There Russia felt strong even after the weakening caused by the Crimean war. Shamil, the leader of a revolt in the Caucasus deluded himself that now was the time to beat the Russian invaders. At the beginning Shamil had some success but finally prince [Alexandr] Baryatinsky forced him to surrender in 1859. From this moment Russian expansion was moving ever more deeply into Western Asia. Persia tried to rely on the support of England and France and even though these countries strongly wanted to expel Russia from Central Asia, Russian diplomacy proved to be much more efficient and Teheran was becoming ever more dependent on St. Petersburg. In those years the resistance of the Cherkess was also suppressed. The extraordinary capacity of Russian diplomacy was manifested in the issue of China. Without Russian participation and not caring about it England and France were waging a trade war against China in the years 1857-1860. After this war Russia gained privileged trade conditions and also a major part of Manchuria.

In Europe the situation changed completely. The power of the Habsburgs was declining. In 1861 they held only one province on the Apennine peninsula, namely Venice. The Italians with French protection were moving rapidly towards unification. France again since 1852 was imperialistic. It abandoned the republican form of government and was again an Empire under Napoleon III picking up the hegemony over Europe that Russia had lost. The French Emperor had ambitious plans of taking again the Rhineland provinces that were allotted to Prussia in 1815. For this reason he searched for Russian favour. But Alexander II sought sympathy elsewhere, because due to his dislike of the “ungrateful” Austria, he was coming closer to Prussia supporting this country directly very much so like his father had supported Austria.

Prussia however had its own policy with respect to Russia and it was ready to repay Russia by provoking a Polish uprising. Bismarck carefully executed his plans, which he had worked out before the onset of the Crimean war, when he managed to pull out Frederic Wilhelm IV from the anti-Russian coalition and from all plans leading to the restoration of the Polish state so as to turn Prussia against Austria and France. Now following the same plans he aimed for an as close as possible tie between Wilhelm I (1861-1888) and Russia. He thus made every effort to bury the Polish issue and in particular to obtain a guarantee that Russia would not come to terms with Poland. As a further historical consequence of the partition of Poland there were to follow a decline of Austria and France.

Alexander II was brutally sincere in respect to Poland. Two months after the Paris peace treaty of 1856 had been negotiated, he came to Warsaw, where he spoke harshly and decidedly, in fact provocatively, to the delegation that welcomed him. He

said: "Forget any dreams, gentlemen! What my father had done, he did well!" He therefore declared publicly that he had no intent of returning in Polish-Russian relationships to the forms that had existed before 1832 and that he approved the entire "Nicholas system" with respect to the Poles, that of oppression of the Polish identity and Catholicism, and that under his rule the Poles were not to expect any improvement of their situation.

Thus the personal disposition of the Tsar was in full agreement with the calculations of Bismarck, but the Prussian was aware that several important Russian interests required peace with the Poles and this may turn out to be a stronger factor than the arbitrary will of the most powerful individual. He decided therefore to dig an abysmal chasm between Poland and Russia. On his initiative in 1860 Polish proclamations calling for an uprising against Russia were produced. They were printed in Prussian government printing houses and were distributed by the Poznań police director Bärensprung. This plot was found out and publicised by Władysław Niegolewski, a Polish deputy to the Prussian parliament, but much to the surprise of Poles in the Poznań region a few months later there were demonstrations in Warsaw as well as ... the influence of secret societies was decisive. As it later turned out the beginning of the insurrectional movement and the origin of the secret government was all the work of youths who simply because of their age were incapable of seeing the consequences of their deeds. Soon a formal government was established by Wielopolski, which in spite of the personal dislike of the Tsar for the Poles, managed to attain an almost total autonomy for the Congress Kingdom. This was in vain, because a secret government won and in January 1863 a Polish uprising [against Russia] broke out which "was to unite Russia with Prussia with a strong chain".

The Russian chancellor Gorchakov was unknowingly led by Bismarck doing what was in the interest of the Prussians. In Berlin it was understood that perhaps “it would be impossible to prevent the re-establishment of Poland for ever” but for the moment it was seen that “suppression of the uprising was a question of life or death” for Prussia, as in fact Bismarck declared in a conversation with the English ambassador. The Prussian historian Bernhardi, who was an expert advisor dealing with eastern issues stated that “if the liberation of Poland from Russian rule is not to present a danger for Prussia” it cannot come about before Germany was united under Prussian hegemony and before the Wielkopolska region was made completely German. Promptly therefore captain Alvensleben was sent to St. Petersburg with a “convention” for which no one had asked in St. Petersburg and Gorchakov signed it on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1863. Prussia offered to help Russia with all its military might should other countries want to help the Polish uprising. **In this way Prussia was sure of Russian neutrality in the case of any war that the Prussian king may need to wage in the future.**

Prussia drew immediate profits from the convention. Having a serious conflict with Denmark over the principedom of Schleswig-Holstein, Prussia was endangered, because the St. Petersburg court supported Denmark. Suddenly Alexander II changed sides as a result of which Prussia and Austria occupied the contested territories. Then came the elimination of Austria from the deal, also with the help of Russian diplomacy.

The uprising in Poland was very much to the dislike of Napoleon III because the Alvensleben convention cancelled any hope of obtaining Russian support against Prussia in the planned

invasion of the Rhineland provinces. This plan had to be abandoned, but Napoleon did not give up at once. Taking into account what had happened he organised a diplomatic campaign against Prussia striving to stir differences between it and Austria and England. At the same time he tried to disable Russia for as long a time as possible precisely through the Polish uprising. With this purpose in mind, he promised an “intervention”, calling on the Poles to continue the struggle as long as possible until his plans would mature. He would have preferred to turn the Polish struggle against Prussia rather than against Russia. He encouraged the Habsburgs to move and regain Silesia and also their position within the Reich that they had lost, for which he would have asked for a return of Galicia to the Poles. Napoleon III would have undertaken the Polish issue should he have succeeded in an intrigue that would weaken Prussia in the process and sever its bond with Russia. England was basically opposed to the re-building of Poland fearing that the Polish state would contribute to the strengthening of French hegemony in Europe. England influenced the hesitating Austria in the anti-Polish direction.

England however did not move openly against Napoleon considering this to be dangerous. Instead diplomatic steps were chosen. When Napoleon III was preparing a diplomatic note on the Polish issue to be sent to St. Petersburg, England supported it. The note was declared jointly by France, England and Austria in April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1863. The Tsar, who was well informed by lord Napier, the English ambassador in St. Petersburg about the relationships between the three countries, replied sternly. **He said that he would not allow anyone to meddle in internal Russian affairs.**

Napoleon had no intention of placing the issue on a military level. In vain Charles XV (1859-1872), the King of Sweden,

who justly saw the re-building of Poland as being in the interest of his country and even an essential condition for its free development among European nations, offered to expedite 100 000 prime soldiers, regardless of the position taken by Austria and England, if only France would provide ships for the transportation of the army. Napoleon did not even take this option into consideration. Nevertheless he encouraged the Polish insurgents to continue fighting, and they managed to do so until June 1864. The result was such that the whole of Poland and Lithuania turned into ruin in absolutely every respect. Russification was imposed upon the whole country. All culture was truly bottled. Furthermore Muravyov “the Hangman” governed in Lithuania and a special “contribution” tax was imposed on the Poles that amounted to 10% of all proceeds from land. This tax remained in force until 1905.

The passionate enmity of the Russians towards Poland, since it was a representative of the “Latin world”, took on after 1863 such a dynamic and such vehemence, that it became as if a basic dogma of Russian patriotism and this has never since subsided. There were some more reasonable and more ethically educated individuals such as Alexander Pypin, who wrote *Польский вопрос в русской литературе* [The Polish Issue in Russian Literature] or Boris Chicherin, the famous professor of law at Moscow University, but these were exceptions and voices calling out in the wilderness. The liberals who previously had called for autonomy for Poland, such as Suvorin (*Новое Время* [The New Times]) and Katkov (*Московские Вестники* [Moscow News]) became vehement supporters of the most violent oppression of the Poles and if this contradicted the principles that they had held earlier they renounced them and promptly joined the camp of the reactionaries. It was dangerous to risk being accused of supporting the Poles, and so steps were taken so as to avoid

such an accusation. Only the revolutionary *Колокол* [Bell] of Herzen, who resided in London, supported the Poles, but this circumstance only added fire to the general hatred. Fidelity towards the Tsar was measured by the degree of virulence against the Poles.

The earlier “Slavophile movement”, that initially was a mere theory glorifying the peasant *мир* [commune], gradually changed into the political doctrine of Pan-Slavism. The essence of the Russian identity was defined in three terms: autocracy, Orthodoxy and *народность* [populism]. Aksakov saw the expansion of the Russian state as a religious mission. Translated into the language of the administrative ranks this meant that Orthodoxy had to be furthered by force eradicating in particular any remnants of the Church Union. In 1864 the Basilian Order was abolished in the Chełm region and forced “conversions” were imposed. In this there was also some voluntary participation of Orthodox clergy from neighbouring Galicia. There since 1848 sympathy for Moscow was being spread against the wishes of the Austrian government which tried to strengthen a national consciousness of Ruthenians as distinct from that of the Russians. Hatred of Catholicism was articulated in the form of a doctrine of the “true” Slav lands and the “dissenters”. Only the Orthodox could be true Slavs and those who were not Orthodox were “traitors of the Slav cause.” From there there was an easy step towards the conclusion that Russia, the defender of Orthodoxy was at the same time the protector of all the Slavs, having the right, or rather the duty, to punish the traitors among whom of course in the first place there were the Poles. Other Catholic Slav nations had still such a low level of self-consciousness that in every one of them it was possible to easily find a fair number of “representatives” who would be willing to convert to Orthodoxy and even adopt the

Russian language as the common language of all the Slavs, the only permitted literary language in all the Slav lands with all other languages being only “local dialects” not excluding the “dialect” of the Poles, the “rebels and traitors”.

On the basis of such shallow, child-like doctrines the famous “pilgrimage to Moscow” and the “Slav assembly” were organised in 1867, the focus of which was directed against Poland and indirectly also against Austria, while Prussia was increasingly viewed favourably by the government spheres. Scarcely two years after the fall of the Polish uprising, Austria was defeated totally by Prussia in the war of 1866. Bismarck could undertake this campaign only because he was sure of Russian support<sup>41</sup>.

Amidst such foreign affairs there were the beginnings of local government in Russia. Land assemblies were organised at county and gubernatorial level composed of representatives of all three Russian legally sanctioned classes: the land owners, the peasants and the town people. The assemblies were introduced by a decree dated January 1<sup>st</sup> 1864, but only for the 33 gubernyas [governorates] east of the river Dnieper. The former Polish territories were excluded as a punishment. The decree was published because the matter had been prepared earlier and postponed much too long and for this reason there were fears of the “liberals.” But when after the Polish uprising the liberals inclined to come to terms with the government on their own, searching for points of accord, the court of Alexander II started to regret the publishing of the decree. Thus the authorities undertook steps to repress the activity of the land assemblies that had just been established.

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<sup>41</sup> [At that time Russia was withdrawing from its easterly expansions. It sold in 1867 Alaska to the USA.]

At the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the land assemblies somebody referred to them as a Cape of Good Hope, but ... the Cape was “ever more frozen”. Already in 1866 the St. Petersburg assemblies were disbanded due to a conflict with the administrative ranks. Around 1870 the satirist Shchedrin said that showing disgust towards the land assemblies was “something like a letter of recommendation” among the official spheres. The struggle of the bureaucracy against the self-governing bodies increasingly manifested the inequality of power to the detriment of the land assemblies. In particular their activity in the field of education was curtailed.

Meanwhile Bismarck moved further. In 1870 he provoked a war against France. In vain Thiers travelled to St. Petersburg in September 1870. Russia remained in a friendly alliance with Prussia and profiting from the turmoil in the West it renounced the Paris treaty of 1856 that forbade it to maintain a fleet on the Black Sea. The position of Russia with respect to the French-Prussian war was such that it forced Austria, Italy and Denmark to remain neutral, even though initially they had planned to intervene in favour of France. Thanks to Russian support Prussian hegemony became dominant in Europe. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1870 Napoleon III became a Prussian prisoner and in France the “third” republic was declared. In May 1871 after Alsace and Lorraine were occupied, the German Empire was announced which was only a background for Prussian hegemony.

In 1872 Bismarck reinstated the former “holy alliance”, that is, the accord of the three countries that had partitioned Poland, now as the “union of three Emperors”. For Poland this initiated the darkest times, but these were the best times for Russian

reactionaries. Bismarck now worked to prevent a revival of Russia and so Prussian influences started to play a great role in internal Russian affairs supporting always the administrative ranks.

There were hopes that the entire opposition would be drawn into the government bandwagon. Amongst the “Slavophiles” there was no longer any opposition. In 1871 Nikolay Danilevsky published *Россия и Европа* [Russia and Europe], a book which entered the bloodstream of the Russian society. He claimed that Russia was not Europe and did not need to be a part of it, because it was superior and better than the “rotten West”. Danilevsky formulated the political aim of Russia that was to be the conquest of Constantinople and the establishment of a “Pan-Slavic union” under Russian leadership, whereas the Poles were destined to be annihilated. Even Konstantin Leontyev who ridiculed the Slavophiles and in many ways was closer to nihilism smoothly came to an agreement with the government becoming truly the philosopher of political reaction. He made the discovery that “the search for a universal equality of rights and an all-human truth ... is a terrible poison that is decomposing European societies through its gradual philosophical influence”. In his book *Восток, Россия и Славянство* [The East, Russia and the Slav Lands] Leontyev competed with Pisarev in proposing the theory that denies the value of all work in favour of individual interests. He dreamt about ways of “desecrating the obnoxious ideal of universal equality and idiotic universal progress”. He directly expressed his hatred for the “ideals of universal prosperity and happiness”. He predicted that Western Europe would soon be destroyed by anarchism and socialism and for this reason Russia must seek salvation in ... Byzantinism against the “wild encroachment of international Europe”. According to him “true Christianity teaches that all earthly hierarchies are a reflection of the

celestial one” and “the building of strong characters requires grave social injustices, i.e. despotism, danger, strong passions, superstitions, fanaticism etc., namely everything against which the XIX<sup>th</sup> c. was struggling. According to him “the state must permanently be severe, sometimes cruel and pitiless, because society always and everywhere is too fidgety, poor in thought and too passionate”. Thus Leontyev began with nihilism and arrived at the mysticism of despotism. Even Katkov thought that he was too extreme, but only because he expressed himself in such a wild way. The very gist of his reasoning was fully espoused by a substantial sector of society. Many nihilists approved of autocracy praising it as liberation from “rotten constitutionalism”.

The opposition expressed itself increasingly clearly with the help of ... sectarianism. Sectarian movements were always present and the attitude of the government to them varied: sometimes it provoked persecutions and in other moments it was indifferently tolerant. The main issue was the *раскол* [schism] that was in constant expansion. Finally they were given the right to hold “Old Style” religious services privately, in private homes. Other sects were not of major importance. But in this period this changed. Sectarianism was increasingly engulfing the minds of the entire Russian nation, being the only direction which in the absence of education could alleviate the spirit and lead it to ideals. Since illiteracy was universal strange sects, often vile ones appeared that in fact were anti-social, a true second arm of nihilism possessed by the denial of everything and intertwined with religious frenzy. This began around 1866 and expanded till our days [early XX<sup>th</sup> c.]. Apart from the revolutionary sects the *Штунда* [Shtundists, Evangelicals, Baptists] appeared in Ukraine in 1868. They were a rationalist sect formed under the influence of Protestant German colonists. Their name derives from a prayer

book written by Zschokke *Stunden der Andacht* [Hours of Worship]. This interesting peasant rationalism spread with great vehemence from the western side of the river Dnieper.

The official Orthodox Church was completely incapable of combating the sects. “The religious mission of Tsardom” restricted itself to persecutions and “missionary activity” among the Uniates of Podlasie promoted with the assistance of police structures functioning since 1875 and again with the help of Orthodox priests from Galicia. These Uniates were the final remnants of the Church Union under Russian rule. The Union remained only in eastern Galicia [under Austria] heartily supported by the Poles. Having obtained autonomy in Galicia the Poles started to share the national rights with the Ruthenians, wanting to make an ally out of them so as to combat Moscow. This was the genesis of the “camp of friends of Ukraine” and as a consequence of the “Ukrainian nation” which in its struggle against the Poles competed in ferocity with Russian “nationalism”. In Russia however, Ruthenian publications were made illegal in 1876.

For a long time Alexander considered “the union of the three Emperors” to be a universal balm for all needs of Russia. It provided secure support for absolute rule and helped engage the opposition in favour of government projects. Thus it permitted popular initiatives in foreign policy, namely on the Balkans. This was to be a secure “outlet” for all agitation of the opposition. Pan-Slavism was in fashion because the government encouraged it and on its wings it carried above all a zeal for Russification as a foretaste of the major historical mission that was to be fulfilled by Russia. Since all the Slav lands were to be united under Russian leadership into a single political entity, with one written language

and only the Orthodox Church (unless they were destined for annihilation for their “betrayal”), Russia had to prepare itself for this by engineering this Slav unification within its own state that was composed of so many different ethnic groups! Russification provided an ideological task for thousands of oppositionists, liberals and even nihilists who all had a dislike of the “rotten West”. Besides that, the move against the Balkans was considered to be the first stage of putting Pan-Slavism into practice. There even Russian constitutionalists would find a job for themselves ceasing thereby to pester Russia. In this way the energy of the whole opposition would be focused on the outside, it would be exported as it were, and at the same time the state would be enlarged bringing glory and prestige to the throne of the Tsar. Thus popularity among the wide masses of the society would be assured and it would be possible to continue to rule as before, even retreating through the abolition of the land assemblies. All this was to be achieved thanks to “the union of the three Emperors”. Having brought Russia into an alliance with Austria would permit free expansion into the Balkans. This is how the matter was presented in Berlin and St. Petersburg bought this. The doubts as to England, worried by the advances made by Russia into Khiva in 1873 were removed in a way going beyond expectations: the only daughter of Alexander II soon married the young English prince, the Duke of Edinburgh. In May 1874 the Tsar personally travelled to England with a political visit. Everything was developing smoothly, and all of this was possible thanks to the “honest intermediary”, Bismarck. This idyll was to last for the next two years.

There were no doubts about the move into the Balkans. The Russian ambassador in Constantinople, Nikolay Ignatyev dominated the Porte for twelve years (1864-1876). Thus all the more the Pan-Slavic camp was encouraged with the help of the

entire structure of the bureaucracy helping to organize demonstrations that theoretically had to force the government to take action so as “to liberate the Slavs”. Ignatyev was adroitly preparing an uprising in Herzegovina and Bosnia which broke out however somewhat prematurely in 1875. Vienna did not like this, and so in 1876 Serbia was offered two thirds of Bosnia and Herzegovina provided it declared neutrality in the case of a war between Austria and Russia. Serbia refused and the “union of the three Emperors” continued to demonstrably show its unity to the outside world. The three of them demanded an armistice with the insurgents so that the Porte would have to recognize them as a side in the confrontation, but the Sultan refused this. He promised only “reforms” but no one believed this. Thus Serbia and Montenegro declared war against the Sultan on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1876.

The Montenegrans beat the Turks but Serbia itself was beaten and suffered a Turkish invasion. Negotiations began in which Russia intervened, but they went through various phases, until finally the Tsar having made a military convention with Romania also declared war on Turkey on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1877.

The Porte hoped to undercut the strength of Russia by instigating an uprising on the Caucasus. But it was already too late to hem in Russia in Asia, because by then Alexander II had managed to strengthen his control over Central Asia. He conquered smaller states that blocked the way to Khiva, captured Tashkent in 1865, Khodzent in 1866, the ancient city of Samarkand in 1868 and also around 1865 he had the western part of the Caucasus. Then he defeated the Cherkess and in 1873 forced Khiva to renounce the lands on the right bank of the Amu-Darya and to recognise Russian supremacy. Thus the Turks failed to pressure the Russians from the Asian side and the Caucasian uprising was brutally suppressed after

a few months. At the same time Turkish domination itself was endangered when on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1877 the Russians forcibly took the famous fortress Kars in Asia Minor.

On the Balkan battleground the Russians conquered the Shipka Pass and readily crossed the Balkan mountains [in Bulgaria]. Soon it became obvious that the technical preparation of the military was insufficient and again all the deficiencies seen in the Crimean war reappeared as well as the inability of the high command to profit from victories or to coordinate the movements of several armies. Several critical months for Russia came about, but when fresh reinforcements arrived from Russia a triumphant move into the Balkans ensued. After four months of strenuous fighting, Osman Pasha capitulated in Plevna on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1877 in the face of joint Russian and Romanian forces. Already on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 1878 general Gurko took Philippopolis and on January 20<sup>th</sup> the Russian armies met in Adrianople. Serbia again entered the territory of the Sultan. Greece took Thessaly in Macedonia and in Crete an uprising broke out. Finally, towards the end of 1878 the Russians were just four miles away from Constantinople. With the peace treaty of San Stefano of March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1878 Russia did not annex directly anything, but the dreamed "Pan-Slavic Union" became a reality. The borders of Serbia, Montenegro and Romania were expanded and the Bulgarian principedom was established with such borders that the Porte was left having in Europe only a small belt of land between the Rhodope Mountains and the Aegean Sea. None of the Balkan states were strong enough on their own. They could survive only under Russian protection. It was obvious that not independent states were established, but only satrapies dependent on Russia. The Russian Tsar replaced the Sultan on the Balkans.

But at this stage the “union of the three Emperors” spoke up together with friendly England! Even before the end of 1876 English diplomacy took an unfavourable position to what was happening, as a result of which Russia responded even more energetically with its military action. Silently Austria was preparing diplomatic ground for the acquisition of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Germans seemed totally neutral. But a general protest broke out against the peace treaty of San Stefano. A European congress gathered in Berlin and imposed somewhat different conditions on Russia. The frontiers of the Balkan countries were reduced and Herzegovina and Bosnia were given to Austria to “occupy”. Not Russia but Austria was becoming the main power in the Balkans. Russia hardly managed to retain Bessarabia and northern Armenia for itself.

Alexander II had to accept the decisions of the Berlin congress, because after the Balkan wars he could not allow for the formation of European coalition against Russia. The extraordinary humiliation of Russia, which was victorious!, ever more incited the entire Russian nation. The whole of Russia shook in its foundations and an opposition emerged even among the bureaucracy. Suddenly the harmony with the government vanished, and secret societies began to operate again and so widely having the most radical slogans that they gained popular support, so much so that the government even started to leak suggestions of a constitution, so as to gain support among the more “moderate” elements, at least those that were not nihilistic. In vain the government strove to impose radical Russification experimenting with violence not only in Poland and Lithuania but also in Livonia and Finland, thereby setting up new grounds for the administrative ranks and new fields in which the official patriotism could be manifested. This however did not work now! And when new administrative-police rulings were decreed, when the liberty of the

universities was even more restricted, nihilism transformed into a party of terror to which not only nihilists joined. A specific Russian brand of socialism developed that sought its basis in the peasant communes and considered itself superior to western socialism being ready to force social changes immediately by the means of terror. The whole of Russia became covered with terrorist groups. Beginning with 1878 there were attacks on offices, on higher officials and from April 1879 a number of assassination attempts against the life of the Tsar.

After six assassination attempts at his life the Tsar finally decided to introduce a constitution. He agreed to the project of count Loris-Melikov's "Supreme Administrative Commission" and was about to print a manifesto calling representatives from the 33 governorates which had local assemblies, when suddenly the Tsar was hit by a bomb while travelling on a street in St. Petersburg on March 13<sup>th</sup> 1881. Bismarck's *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* published an article blaming the Poles for the murder of the Tsar...

Nicholas, the elder son of Alexander II, died in 1865 and so a younger son Alexander III (1881-1894) succeeded to the throne. He had the opinion of being a Pan-Slavist. By inclination and preference he was a despot, but at first he hesitated as to what sort of position should be taken with respect to Loris-Melikov, very soon however, he moved in the exactly opposite direction. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1881 he issued a manifesto announcing the maintenance of absolute rule [Manifesto on Unshakeable Autocracy]. It was prepared by his former tutor Konstantin Pobedonostsev. Katkov described him as salvation for Russia and "manna coming down from heaven". Ignatyev, the minister of the interior still tried to gain the support of the Tsar for the idea of calling a

“Council of local assemblies”, having of course only an advisory role, but this project, worked out by the historian Pavel Golokhvastov was never even a subject for consideration. Pobedonostsev continued as an advisor to Alexander III throughout the Tsar’s reign. Russia had never had a more vehement enemy of the freedom of thought, a more virulent persecutor of everything that was not Orthodox or Russian and was yet under Russian rule. In particular he was against everything that was Polish! . Pobedonostsev was appointed the Ober-Procurator of the Most Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church. Having a wide discretionary authority, permanent access to the Tsar at any moment and a decisive influence on his mind, he combined, as if, in his person Karamzin, Arakcheyev and Leontyev.

A true orgy of administrative rank power began in the name of reaction and Russification. A decree of 1883 placed the universities under police control and since then “the door was wide open for administrative intervention in all fields of university life”. The land assemblies were paralysed in a similar way. A new decree of 1890 established “gubernatorial offices for issues concerned with the land assemblies”, rank bureaucratic bodies that stood above the autonomous assemblies having power of control. Thus the officials of the assemblies were incorporated into the state administrative hierarchy. All individuals “who did not have the right to be in state service” were dismissed from the executive departments of the assemblies. As a result of the tragic way in which the agricultural issues were dealt with there were severe famines which were more painful than ever before. The most severe famine was in 1891. When the land assemblies initiated energetic help action the question of feeding the starving population was removed from their competence. Thus the role of autonomous local governments in every field was reduced to

nothing with increasing restrictions on their responsibility disrupting thereby the tie between the assemblies and the population. Nevertheless these assemblies became the main seat of non-nihilistic opposition and thus the constitutional current was reborn anew. When in 1894 they were asked to express an opinion about the reform of legislation pertaining to rural life, they knew that the state needed a general reform and not partial modifications of an outdated system.

The rule of Alexander III was rightly characterised as being “absolute in all spheres of life, mitigated only by the freedom for official patriotism, that is, the freedom to praise the government and assist it by word and writing in combating liberalism within the country and foreign elements on the peripheries of the state”. Against such a background, nihilism spread. Even though in these years it was disorganized and less capable of “action”, it gained an increasing number of followers also among the officers’ ranks. There were two types of terror that overpowered the “Empire”, the red, and the white. The latter, namely government terror was directed against some Russians and against absolutely all who were not ethnic Russians. The official patriotism which consisted in the oppression of other nationalities has been described as “cannibalism” and rightly so, because it was “a cannibalism that intended to consume within the borders of Russia the multimillion communities of cultural nations”. There was the bullying of everything Polish and vexations against the Germans of Livonia. The constitution of Finland with increasingly calculated consistency was gradually abolished. The oppression of the Poles was explained abroad and to the Poles as well ... as a penalty for the uprising. But was there ever any slightest preparation for an uprising in Livonia or Finland? The “cannibalistic ferocity of zoological patriotism” went so far as to discourage against Russia

even the so far inexhaustible resource of the best bureaucratic aristocracy and the most faithful tools of Tsardom, namely, that deriving from Livonia.

The only “benefit” of this truly thoughtless reign was the granting of greater tolerance for the “Old Faith” community, allowing them to hold public religious services. This was expected to offer support for the government coming from “the most conservative elements in the state”. The future however was to show that the state failed to distinguish among the various kinds of conservatism.

As a consequence of the reaction there was a return in foreign policy to the disrupted “alliance of the three Emperors” which was reinstated on Russian initiative bringing back the tradition of the “holy alliance” that was viewed with so much sympathy by the police state. Giers, the successor of Gorchakov organised a meeting of the Russian, Austrian and German Emperors on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1882 in Skierniewice. In St. Petersburg it was hoped that as a result of this meeting there would be certainty that no one would raise the Polish issue against Russia and that Russia would also gain a free hand for the “peaceful” conquest of the Balkans, thereby bypassing the decisions of the Berlin congress.

The topic was approached with excessive, clumsy eagerness. Bulgaria was ordered to accept Russian officers to its army so that they would constitute a third of the officers’ corps and at times the principedom was to have a Russian minister of war. In the meantime however an anti-Russian political party appeared in Bulgaria, which was very active and had much influence on the public opinion in the country citing directly the example of Poland under Russian rule. The Russian embassy intrigued ever

more forcefully against the person of the prince of Bulgaria, Alexander of Battenberg. Difficulties were made for him as he tried to extend the borders of the new principality [onto Rumelia]. Under Russian influence a restriction of the “Rumelian investiture” was placed in 1885 for a period of five years. Finally general Kaulbars, who played in Sofia the role of the earlier Igelströms and Repnins<sup>42</sup> in Warsaw, managed to successfully organize a plot that removed Battenberg from the throne. His successor was to be some Russian prince, not necessarily related to the reigning dynasty, but these plans were prevented by an intervention of the other Empires. Ferdinand Coburg became the new ruler of Bulgaria and Russia continued to intrigue against him for over ten years. It was only in 1896 that he was recognised, because he decided to convert his son to Orthodoxy, having performed this conversion with much pomp. The prince considered this as only a necessary temporary gesture towards Moscow.

Russia was intriguing similarly in Serbia against King Milan who was associated with the court of Vienna. The matter became acute, because the Pan-Slavists under the leadership of the semi-official St. Petersburg “Slavonic Charity Society” made much noise about everything not hiding the fact that they would like to involve the government in such a situation where there would be no other solution but to declare war against Austria and if necessary also against the German Empire.

In 1887 a decree was issued against German land owners in the Polish, that is, border provinces. In retaliation, Germany introduced regulations that paralysed Russian trade. Furthermore Bismarck published officially the text of a defensive alliance with

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<sup>42</sup> [Russian representatives in pre-partition XVIII c. Poland, who had great influence on Polish affairs.]

Austria that had been made in case of difficulties coming from the side of Russia. Thus the last reactivation of the alliance of the three Emperors ended. Europe was entering a new political era in its history.

French diplomacy hoped to profit from the diplomatic disagreements sparking a war in the East, so that France would join it and regain Alsace and Lorraine. Russia was offered an alliance against Germany. In the beginning of 1888 there were armaments on both sides and soon a war was being prepared in minor details. A declaration of war by St. Petersburg was awaited daily. This undoubtedly would have been a universal European war in which in the very beginning Russia, France, Austria and Germany would be involved as also the Balkans. In the last moment however, the Tsar pulled back not wishing to fight alongside republican France.

The initiatives of the Pan-Slavists did not cease. In March 1889 King Milan was forced to abdicate and from 1894 Bulgaria had a pro-Russian government. The situation was becoming again serious, because in the meantime the personal dislike of the Tsar towards France due to its revolutionary spirit was overcome. In 1891 the French fleet made a demonstrative visit to Kronstadt, and Europe was surprised to learn that welcoming the fleet the Tsar stood on his feet listening to the Marseillaise. That was one of the strangest scenes in history!

Europe was entering a new phase of its political history all the more rapidly when the new German Emperor since 1888, Wilhelm II deposed Bismarck. He had allied with Austria against Russia but just in case he also had a German-Russian counter-alliance, the *Rückversicherungsvertrag*! This second alliance was secret and it was in force in 1887-1890 ensuring mutual neutrality

in case either side would be attacked “without its own fault”. Thus it prevented Austria from declaring war on Russia. This counter-alliance was not renewed by Bismarck’s successor Caprivi and so from 1890 Austria had the freedom of initiative in matters of war and peace.

Bulgarian changes however were the culminating point of the crisis. In 1894 the customs war was ended and a new German-Russian trade agreement was signed. In the mutual rivalry a somewhat more peaceful period ensued in the Balkans until 1905.

Meanwhile in Asia the advances continued uninterrupted as if by force of inertia. In 1881 the Turkmen were beaten and Merv was incorporated. In 1886, after long negotiations with England the Afghan Punjab was occupied and in the next year the Kerki region on the Amu-Darya river. In the summer of 1891 a Russian exploratory expeditionary appeared on the Pamir plateau. Through various means there were attempts to gradually weaken the position of the Afghan emir and a diplomatic invasion of Persia began countering the initiatives of English diplomacy at each step. This series of successes was crowned by two triumphs, favourable trade agreements with Korea and Japan. Central Asia was now undoubtedly in Russian hands and there were no more territories for further Russian expansionism!

Russia was becoming an Asiatic power to such an extent that in St. Petersburg itself there were doubts as to whether with such a great expansion in Asia the interests of the state, that is, its expansion in Europe could be taken care of. Russian journalism started to debate which expansion should be given priority and whether Russia was to be considered more a European or an Asiatic country? Pan-Asiatism was appearing as a rival to Pan-Slavism.

Amidst such a turnover Alexander III died in 1894. His son, Nicholas II after the death of Giers in 1895 entrusted foreign policy to the hands of prince Labanov-Rostovsky. He did not want to have any complications in the Balkans so as to be able to take care of issues in the Far East. The centre of gravity of the ministry of foreign affairs transferred from the Black sea to the Pacific Ocean. In 1895 a war broke out between China and Japan, which the Chinese lost and the peace treaty in Shimonoseki imposed severe conditions on China. Both camps in Europe joined hands so as to prevent the growth of a new “power” at the other end of the political horizon, one that would have some mysterious ends that would be of doubtful value for European supremacy. Russia, France and Germany moved jointly in defence of China and forced Japan to rescind its hard peace conditions. In this way Japanese hegemony over the Pacific Ocean was effectively curtailed and as a result Russia obtained from grateful China the right to extend its Siberian railroad across Chinese Manchuria (1896). This railroad was to confirm Russian dominance over Northern and Central Asia before the time would come for Southern Asia. Russian political supremacy over China was already considered to be a settled issue.

German attention accompanied the Russian advances all the way into the Far East. Suddenly Germany occupied the Chinese port in Kiaochan. Hastily Muravyov, the successor of Labanov reached an agreement about the loan of non-freezing ports in Talienvan and Port Arthur for a period of 25 years, turning promptly the latter facility into a major stronghold. Soon an agreement was reached with Japan on the understanding that neither side would interfere in the internal affairs of ... Korea.

Efforts were therefore made to avoid any misunderstandings concerning Balkan issues. When Greece occupied Crete and a Greek-Turkish war broke out the Tsar made every effort to keep the conflict local. In order to maintain peace in Europe Nicholas II did not hesitate to send a memorandum to the European governments about universal disarmament and he called a peace conference on this to The Hague in 1898. Just in case, a year earlier the fact that Russia was truly in alliance with France was made public knowledge and the visit of the republican President of France Faure was ceremonially celebrated in St. Petersburg. It was promptly however stressed that Russia was not planning to use this alliance against anybody and that rather, it was withdrawing from European conflicts.

Pan-Slavism seemed to have been suppressed by Pan-Asiatism, but nihilism remained. It finally transformed into a specific brand of Russian socialism wanting to base itself on the rural *mup* [commune]. The seeds of Russian revolution remained and they prevented a “retreat from Europe”.

#### **XXIV. Intermittent blows from Asia and Europe (1898-1914).**

When he ascended the throne, Nicholas II said that he wants to be “not only Nicholas II but also a *second* Nicholas”. Pobedonostsev remained in charge and the petition that land assemblies would be given administrative competences was ignored “as pointless dreams”. The new Tsar, as if drawn from Leontyev’s book, became a mystic of despotism on the throne. “He treated his position and attributes from a mystic altitude” and believed that “he had no right” to limit his power. He believed that his son

was born thanks to the intercession of a new Orthodox saint whom he had canonized with an exceptional ceremonial, St. Seraphim of Sarov... He searched for ties with the supernatural world also beyond the Orthodox Church. He kept an occultist, Encausse-Papus in his court, who in 1906 recalled for him the ghost of his father. Later the famous Rasputin had enormous influence on the court. He was a *смапух* [*starets*, holy elder] by profession, even though by no means was he old. He was a simple peasant from Siberia, having the fame of being a miracle-maker. He was killed by prince Yusupov in January 1916.

“Education was being furthered against the will of the government, and so the intellectual intelligentsia grew in number and strength”. Thus criticism and the willingness to oppose were growing. Also, independently of the opinion and will of those who held power, and also of Pan-Slavism and Pan-Asiatism, **European economic relationships were influencing Russia, and they had a negative effect.** It was impossible to prevent the building of a railway system in Russia, and while there was never much enthusiasm for the project in the court of St. Petersburg and in the administrative ranks, Nicholas I had to submit to this necessity and Nicholas II even more. Also various other steam engines crossed the borders of Russia that were seemingly quite innocent from the social and political perspective, but in fact they were more revolutionary than uncensored books. They brought a delight for foreign goods that were popular because industrial production made them cheap and when a customs war was launched against them the only result was that foreign capital started to set up factories in Russia itself. Under Nicholas II industry began to be an organised force in the state of the Tsars, both from above and from below, in a capitalist and ... in a socialist way.

Amidst the passionate debate whether Russia was to go with Europe (meaning also against Europe) or with Asia, common life was becoming increasingly more European drawing with it the strongest need deriving from habituation and concerning many minor details that only European technology could supply. Thus there were ties with the great European capitalism and also an increasing dependence on it. The Russian statehood could not provide any protection to its society against this, because Russian state finances were also becoming dependent on Western capital. Militarism was draining Russia, ever since it entered into grand European politics. Already under Nicholas I the state budget began to outgrow the possibilities of society and so the state deficit grew at a terrible rate. The state budget lived almost exclusively on loans, none of which could be located within the country.

Towards the end of the reign of Alexander III it was noticed where all of this was leading and so countermeasures were sought for. Wyschnegradsky, the finance minister proved to have practical sense and he engaged in finance operations and dealt with companies that were building railways. He managed to accumulate a gold reserve through conversion operations and thus he maintained a balance of payments. This could not work for a longer period of time because no efforts were made to increase the productivity of society at a sufficiently high rate that would generate sources of wealth for the state. Witte, the successor of Wyschnegradsky, a favourite of Alexander III and Nicholas II followed the example of his predecessor and for a long time had good results. Soon however he introduced a fiscal system which was named draconian because it was amenable towards the rich classes of society and oppressed the poor. Witte started also to liberally spend the modest resources that Wyschnegradsky had

gathered, hoping that everything would return to the treasury with usurious percentage on the condition that the government itself would take the lead with heavy industry. He supported it with full force and as a result the vast majority of new companies were based exclusively on government loans, subsidies and orders.

The financial policy of Witte can be defined as economic centralism, as a tendency to locate the entire economic life in the hands of the government thereby increasing ever more the central authority giving state power even greater supremacy over society. In other words experiments were made to see whether the Europeanization of economic life could serve Russia as a further step in the strengthening of absolutism. The experiment failed, and it resulted only in the strengthening of the opposition and of revolutionary tendencies.

It is impossible to persist economically in one environment and culturally or politically in another. Since Russia was adopting European forms of economic life it also had to be imbued with the European spirit, or else take the risk of an inevitable decomposition resulting from the discrepancies of the forces of communal life, that were operating in contrary directions. To the cultural incongruity that had been introduced at the greatest risk for the state with the partitions of Poland and greatly intensified by the incorporation of the Congress Kingdom, now there were added divergences present within Russian society itself. There was a deliberate distancing from European culture in the name of Pan-Slavism or Pan-Asiatism and at the same time there was a desire to join the European economic life.

Those who wanted to follow the Western European state and social system in every respect, the so called *западники*

[Westeners] were becoming a decreasing minority. Only extreme currents were flourishing, both within the ruling circles and amongst the opposition. On the one hand, Bogolepov (1898-1901), the minister of education complained that university professors were removing themselves into fields of pure science: "It is the duty of professors to follow in their activities the views of the government and not to stay at the side. After all, a professor is not only a scientist, but also an element of the bureaucratic system". On the other hand, the consequences of this were such that Bogolepov himself was the victim of an assassination and the following five year period (1901-1906) habituated Russian public opinion with political murder that was viewed as something common, almost ordinary. The government however did not want to allow society to have any influence on state issues and Witte himself until the end of 1904 was opposed to any expansion of even the local government.

There were attempts to "drown" the general dissatisfaction and readiness for revolution in some external enterprise. In 1903, Lambsdorf, the minister of foreign affairs again after a ten year interval turned towards the Balkans, demanding from the Porte that it would introduce the so many times promised reforms. These were to serve as a most convenient excuse for the meddling of the "powers" in the Balkans for their own purposes. The Balkan initiative was proof that no one expected the eruption of a major war in Asia and this only in a matter of a few months!

Almost simultaneously on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 1903 a manifesto of the Tsar was issued because of demonstrations that broke out in several places. "Reforms" as in Turkey were pledged, but, as if in derision, it was promised that they would be submitted first to "ministers and higher officials" for consultation.. The

main opponents of all reforms were to work on their content... This again shows that no one expected the revolution to be so close.

In August 1903 Witte became prime minister. The Tsar placed in his hands the helm of the state hoping that the Balkan initiative would calm the opposition. The Pan-Slavic camp triumphed believing that this time there would be no surprises such as some congresses after a victorious war and even more there would be no reins for Russia in Asia. With true megalomania for state expansion the Pan-Slavic camp joined hands with the Pan-Asiatic. Vladimir Soloviev, maliciously but correctly said about this: “Destroy Turkey, destroy Austria, beat Germany, occupy Constantinople and if possible take also India”. Reality showed that Soloviev did not exaggerate because voices were raised saying that India was not enough. There was talk of China and finally about the domination over the whole of Asia. But first the aim was Constantinople! The Pan-Slavic current negotiated a compromise with the Pan-Asiatic or rather the two were to complement one another.

The English-Boer war was carefully exploited by Nicholas II so as to strengthen Russian positions in Asia, particularly in the region of the Persian Gulf and generally everywhere where it was expected that there would be conflict with England. But England had no intention to fight using British soldiers and in one day it proved to be stronger than all the Russian endeavours, when it entered an offensive-defensive alliance with Japan.

Profiting from the Boxer rebellion in China, a movement against foreigners, Russia occupied the whole of Manchuria and started to establish its own “sphere of interests” extending all the

way to Korea ignoring completely some “demands” of Japan. And then suddenly, before the Balkan enterprise was initiated, a little too early for England, Japan declared war on Russia on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1904. In a surprise attack admiral Tōgō destroyed the Russian fleet in Port Arthur and placed his army on land. Soon, after initial victorious battles general Nogi encircled Port Arthur and the whole world waited in suspense for the result of the siege, one of the longest and the most precise known to history, because all nations and states of the world had their interests associated with the siege. These issues concerned the Poles directly. The Polish issue had to re-emerge as a first plan regulator of Russian affairs.

The Japanese war was to expose the omnipotence and the incompetence of the Russian administration in a way that was even worse than at the time of the Crimean war. To begin with the autocracy showed its hatred towards autonomous local governing institutions and to all social action. There was even such dreadfulness as the action of state authorities against hospital ambulances that were equipped and dispatched by local assemblies. Plehve, the minister of the interior, an eager bureaucrat moved to eradicate the emerging progressive movement. Soon he was assassinated, but he left behind him more than 60 thousand “political criminals” locked in prisons and Siberian exile.

The military setbacks became a serious weapon in the hands of the opposition. After the defeat at Liaoyang on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1904 it was realized in St. Petersburg that it was impossible to risk further loss of popularity and so the successor of Plehve, prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky came up with the slogan that the government must regain the confidence of the nation. Permission was given for a conference of the chairmen of branches of the local assemblies, but in the last moment, when the participants were

already travelling to St. Petersburg the permission was rescinded. In spite of the prohibition the meeting took place in a private apartment and resolutions were made demanding a number of clearly specified civil liberties together with a representative form of government. A movement began which embraced the entire society. Gatherings after gatherings of various categories took place under various names and pretexts. Ever bolder demands were being made at these gatherings going beyond the constitutional issue.

The news from the battlefields were increasingly fatal for Russia. They deprived the government of reliability, unmasking the incompetence and frequently corruption of the administration. They supported the circulating “criminal” view that for Russia to win the war, power would have to be transferred to society. Witte himself hesitated and by the end of 1904 he saw that it was necessary to negotiate with the local governments. A turn-about was noticeable on the rural issue. In his *Memorandum on the Rural Issue* Witte agreed to submit the lowest organs of government to the control of autonomous local bodies.

This change however came too late. On January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1905 Port Arthur fell. There was general outrage, craftily utilized by the extreme elements, and it was turning into revolutionary unrest. A coincidence helped the tragedy. In his bureaucratic naïveté and wanting to have the workers on his side so as to counter socialism, Plehve tried to organize the workers himself through his agents. One such group in St. Petersburg, led by the Orthodox priest Gapon proved impossible to contain. So as not to lose influence Gapon had to agree to a strike in the Putilov munitions factory. That was not the end of this. The project was formed that the workers of St. Petersburg would march to the Tsar’s palace

asking for an audience for their representatives. This idea already smelt of revolution and for this reason it had great support of the majority of workers. It also appealed to Gapon, who imagined that a march of armless and peacefully behaving workers asking to be received by the Tsar, thus a sign of subservience, cannot be received badly, and should the response be positive, he being included among the representatives would certainly be noticed by the Tsar. Thus the government would take notice and he would make a career in the process. With full knowledge of the authorities, who were informed in detail about everything the march took place on “bloody Sunday” January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1905. The march was more like a procession, ostensibly religious and monarchic, and yet this peaceful and legal demonstration met with gun fire and a true massacre of the crowd resulted. The stupidity of the bureaucracy was really bottomless.

The blood that was shed became the most effective propaganda for revolution. Soon student demonstrations began. Various groups and classes organized themselves. There were many meetings and petitions and in the spring the first strikes broke out. The government no longer felt its strength in particular when the ten day long battle at Mukden (1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> March 1905) ended with a complete defeat of Russia. Hopes were still tied with the maritime expedition of admiral Rozhestvensky, but after the terrible total defeat at Tsushima (May 27<sup>th</sup> 1905) the decision came to come to terms with public opinion and so the calling of a legislative assembly was announced.

The first limelight of a constitutional system appeared already during the peace negotiations initiated at the proposal of President Roosevelt of the United States made on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The negotiations took place in America, in Portsmouth and they

moved slowly until the beginning of September. Meanwhile a manifesto was issued proclaiming the calling of a *государственная дума* [the state assembly] in January 1906, which however was to have only an advisory role. This project was called a “fig leaf for absolutism”. At the same time the autonomy of universities was restored so as to pacify ... those who were most vociferous. What happened was totally unexpected. The university lecture rooms served as the place for meetings of various corporations (railwaymen, factory workers, physicians, as well as cab-drivers etc.). There in the evenings various petitions were drafted and specific programs of ... strikes were prepared. The more moderate parties were gradually pushed out of the propaganda, while revolutionaries were ever more visibly in charge of the situation. The general public was increasingly engrossed in fanatical utopias of the specifically Russian socialism, which considered Western socialism as being too timorous and backward. Not only social ownership of factories and land was the subject of discussion, but also the abolition of all private property. The agitation was moving ever more visibly towards the outbreak of a revolution that would be not political but social, a proletarian revolution that was being prepared with “extremism at the verge of licentiousness”.

While the revolution was preparing itself for “action”, the agreement at Portsmouth was maturing. On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1905 a peace agreement was reached. The conditions were relatively good for Russia. It lost only Port Arthur, the southern part of Sakhalin Island and the southern part of the railway in eastern China, recognising also Japanese hegemony over Korea. At the same time Russia lost all respect in East Asia. The Asians noted that Russia could be beaten.

Pan-Asiatism which had dreamt of a universal state, of taking over India and China had to retreat to Pan-Slavism. If the state was not to give up its expansion, the Balkan issue waited again for its turn. Under the influence of liberalism aiming for a constitutional system, thus basing itself on models drawn from the West, the *западничество* [Westernist movement] was revived. For a time it had associated in the opposition camp with the epigones of the Slavophile movement. This resulted in the temporary change of Pan-Slavism into Neo-Slavism. The difference consisted in the fact that the movement did not restrict itself to the Slavs of the Balkans and in the construction of the doctrine also western Slavs were included. This had to bring back the Polish issue. In contrast to Pan-Slavism, Neo-Slavism did not condemn the Poles to oblivion. It allowed them to maintain their language and cultural distinctiveness and even considered a national autonomy but under two conditions: that the Polish question be an internal Russian issue and that Catholic "fanaticism" be abandoned.

The deliberations concerning the Polish-Russian relationships entered the primary plan of Russian public life for other reasons too. Since word about a constitution had already been mentioned from the height of the throne, even if it only was to be in an advisory capacity, it became obvious that the course of events could not be stopped and that Russia was entering a new phase of its history. The outcome of the Japanese war was also a decisive point of time in foreign affairs. All, also foreigners, felt that monumental things were happening, that their course would determine the future of Russia and so also of parties associated with Russia in the next historical period. It was also generally understood that the development of internal affairs would be of decisive importance. At issue was the question whether Russia

would manage to change into a law-abiding country and in this sense become European. So much was seen and observed by all. There were also some minds that probed deeper, reflecting on the social development of Russia and wondering **whether Russian society would be reborn?**

At issue was not the question as to which current society would eventually adhere to, but whether at all it would attain some cultural value, whether it would be saved from the decomposition with which it was affected. This question of the rebirth of Russia was of primary importance for Poland and many views concerning other important issues were dependent on this.

Eastern societies are renewed only through religion. Never ever has any nation there arisen from its moral demise in some other way than by first reforming its religious structures. Assuming that Orthodoxy was capable of renewal and that the rebirth of the Orthodox Church would proceed without hindrance, one could make the following calculation.

The reform of the seminaries would have to be the corner stone of everything, as they were were the nests of depravity, something which the Russians themselves recognised. From the decision and preparation of a reform to its introduction at least ten years were needed. The first graduates would be available five years later and adding another fifteen years for their activity in the parishes, the first fruits of the reform could be noticeable some thirty years later. Thus a whole generation of 30 years would have to pass before here and there infrequent clergymen of the new school would show in practice how a social reform could be understood and what could be expected of it. Such clergymen, the pioneers of reform, would be exceptional specimens, *rare nantes*

*in gurgite vasto* [rare creatures in a vast whirlpool]. Their number would grow increasingly annually so that the reform would embrace a growing number of seminaries. Considering the vastness of the territory and population belonging to the Orthodox Church one would have to optimistically add at least another twenty years for the spreading of the reformed clergy throughout the entire country, and then a further thirty years for a new generation of society to be brought up by them. This totals to 80 years and in this calculation no difficulties, no impediments were considered. In a purely theoretical academic calculation, 80 years would be needed from the decision to reform the seminaries to the appearance of its fruits. As yet there are no indications that such reforms are imminent. When the time for such a reform would come, then the renaissance of Russia would be an issue ... for our descendants in the third generation, on the condition that the initiated reforms would be allowed to run to a happy end.

The Russians themselves were generally full of hope. The revolutionists were expecting that within a few months Russia would stand at the head of a new civilizational period, giving an example of a new system to the nations of the world. The moderates were happy that the mustard seed of constitutionalism was sown, from which by the very force of the determinism of “progress”, everything that was needed would grow. The reactionaries earnestly believed that the “fever” would subside and society all the more willingly would return into the arms of Tsardom, having now a reformed ... bureaucracy. The Neo-Slavists saw Russia at the head of all the Slavs and reconciled with Poland, which would be cured of its “Latin fanaticism”. And since it would be so powerful, why would it not undo the Japanese defeat and then begin happily a period of some “Neo-Asiatism”? None of the Neo-Slav-

ists rejected the further conquests in Asia. None of the Neo-Asiatists abandoned thoughts about the Balkans, because it was from there that they hoped to gather new strength for further enterprises. The more near-East was to become chronologically a closer ... stage for the gathering of strength in a historical progress ... everywhere and anywhere, so as to take “Constantinople and India or whatever else comes to hand.”

The dreams of the Russian nation in principle did not change one bit. The psyche was the same, because a psyche may change only on the basis of a moral reform, and this is impossible without a religious reform. Without a moral advance everything was an illusion. But people would earnestly succumb to this illusion; even the strongest allowed themselves to be carried away by it.

For the optimistically inclined general public of Russia the matter was divided into two parts: **the rebirth of the political-military strength of Russia and internal renewal, that is, the termination of absolutism. Both were connected with the Polish question.**

The political force of Russia, strained by the defeats was becoming dependent on the Polish question, because beaten in the “Far” East it wanted to get even in the “Near” East. A great deal depended on the attitude towards the partitioning powers, to Austria and Prussia, and these combinations had to bring back the question of Poland. “Neo-Slavism” was gaining practical significance.

If turning towards the Balkans Russia wanted to regain the political prestige lost in its war with Japan it had to contend with its earlier competitor in the Balkans, namely Austria. Everything

would depend on the position of the German Reich, thus in practice of Prussia, that would be taken towards the Russian and Austrian rivalry. In the case that the German Empire would support Austria and stand against Russia, the only hope of Russia would be in the raising of the Polish issue. St. Petersburg had to prepare for this beforehand, the more so because both Austria and Germany could use the same means against Russia. Thus the Polish question became the focus of Russian foreign policy. Without settling the Polish-Russian issue the external rebirth of Russia, the regaining by it of a power status was impossible.

The Polish question was becoming also the focus of the internal rebirth of Russia, at least in the matter of the introduction of a constitutional order. The sincerity of the government in this respect or its insincerity could, at least for the moment, be measured by the basic criterion that was the attitude of the government towards the Poles. Not without justification the Congress Kingdom was considered to be the hub of abuses committed by the administrative ranks of the controlling bureaucracy. The oppression that was typical in the country was the fortress of Russian reaction. Thus the attitude of St. Petersburg towards the Polish issue was eyed by all as a kind of political barometer. Many Russians considered the resolution of the “Polish-Russian conflict” as a sure way towards Russian rebirth, both external and internal and as a necessary cornerstone of a new magnificent period in the history of Russia.

The “settling” of the issue was imagined in numerous ways, from political autonomy for the Congress Kingdom, to total national equal rights in the conquered territories of eastern Poland, and through various intermediary stages of this, including ideas of how to ... deceive the Poles after gaining their sympathy

through temporary concessions. One thing was certain. The Polish question truly became a gauge of Russian state culture.

A suggestion of how “the conflict may be dealt with” came from the general public. Towards the end of April 1905 a “friendly Polish-Russian gathering” took place in Moscow called through the initiative of a Russian prince, Shakhovskoy and a Pole, Alexander Lednicki. The meeting came up with the project of recognizing the principle of autonomy for the Congress Kingdom having its own Sejm [parliament] and with civil and national equality for the Poles in the Ruthenian and Lithuanian provinces. The meeting was very enthusiastic with expressions of faith proclaiming that: “New great ideas of universal freedom will be initiated by Russia. They will change the policies of oppression through the rule of fist that had once been revealed to the world by Metternich and Bismarck. Now a great new era of novel ideas is advancing! Free Russia is marching with them!”

Meanwhile information about the dissatisfaction that the program of accord between Poland and Russia was generating in Vienna and even more so in Berlin was coming to the fore. It is a fact that in January 1905 a serious representative of Polish society coming from the occupied territories had a conversation with Witte concerning the Polish issue. Amongst other things Witte on the occasion said that he personally had no objections, but “among us”, meaning, the Committee of Ministers, a serious argument against any concessions in favour of the Poles was raised. This was due to the fact that the German government considered it essential to restrict the rights of the Polish population. Thus two visits of Hohenzollern princes to St. Petersburg were linked with the Polish question. It is known that after the visit of the Prussian Prince Leopold, as well as after the following visit in March 1905

to Tsarskoe Selo of the Emperor's brother, Prince Henry, voices unfriendly towards the Poles were heard in St. Petersburg. The highest quarters of both Prussia and Russia exchanged views about the Polish issue. In the summer of 1905 Tsar Nicholas II and Emperor Wilhelm II met in Swinemünde on the German sea. Wilhelm II announced that should the Congress Kingdom be given autonomy, he would immediately send 200 000 men across the Prussian border and occupy the Congress Kingdom. Rumours about an Austrian and Prussian intervention in St. Petersburg against Polish interests appeared in the European press two years later, in the spring of 1907. Already in the second half of 1905 something else came up. High Russian officials did not hesitate to declare that they would prefer to hand over the Congress Kingdom to Prussia rather than to grant it autonomy. Simultaneously the general governor of Warsaw, Scallon, a careerist of ignoble memory warned the Poles publicly not to place any demands, because Prussian regiments are not far away and he could call them in at moment's notice. Polish "separatist tendencies" with respect to Russia were, if necessary, to be contained by a Prussian intervention, and there was no shame in making this known publicly. There is no doubt that amongst the highest ranks of the Russian bureaucracy there were those who were ready to cede the Congress Kingdom to Prussia. They had a very close relationship with Berlin and this was manifested by the fact that the Berlin press often published government texts of St. Petersburg a day ahead!

Such was the scene in the summer of 1905. In September there was a meeting in Moscow of representatives of the local and municipal assemblies demanding universal suffrage in the elections to the planned Duma, some autonomy for regions composing the Russian Empire and furthermore special protection for the working class and the peasants including the right to call for a ...

compulsory sale of private land in favour of the landless and small-holding peasants. A resolution was also passed conceding the Polish Kingdom autonomy as an entity tied with the Russian state.

Information arrived about the peace agreement reached in Portsmouth on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1905. Russia could devote some time exclusively to internal reforms and to the settling of the “Polish-Russian conflict”. The number of those who shared without reservation the views of Sergei Trubetskoy that “a free Poland was essential for Russia” dwindled, while the number of Russians who were able and willing to “dodge every idea according to the usage of the administrative ranks” was on the increase. Unexpectedly the conservative camp issued a warning and a very menacing voice. Konstantin Apollonovich Skal’kovsky, a collaborator of the *Новое Время* [New Times], having learnt about the Portsmouth agreement, predicted that a revolution would break out and the Duma would be dominated by revolutionary elements. Thus the state would be brought to a condition of complete decomposition “reducing Russia to only what it had at the beginning under Ivan Kalita”. “This is very likely, he said, in view of the total incapacity of the government, its unpredictability, lack of any system and of any stable policy that would see at least a little beyond its own nose”.

Having made peace, Russia was to demonstrate its capability to reform. Progressive elements picked up the wind and they were definitely on top at the time. But among them extreme elements were dominant as was already signalled during the September gathering in Moscow. The Constitutional Democratic” party (K-D, hence the shortened name *kadets*), which until then had led the land assemblies, since it started to fall in popularity

tried to gain influence among the wider populace. Having approved the “postulate” of the compulsory purchase of the land estates and then their selling under very easy terms to the peasants, the party decreed its own dissolution by gradually accepting the leadership of the most radical wings.

In October 1905 the revolution broke out, which was to be a “specifically Russian one”, not copying the great French Revolution, but greater, more bloody and severe. The prophecy was fulfilled. The formula of the revolution was new, though not of an original idea. This was a rebellion in the form of a general strike in which all the classes participated, all kinds of professions, even physicians and pharmacists! In villages the revolutionary licentiousness reached the stage of an “agricultural delirium”, while the strike on the railways, executed with great precision undercut all the arteries of modern life in the entire country. Also the students went on strike and when a professor of the Moscow university, prince S. Trubetskoy expressed doubts whether it was progressive and helpful when the young bring partisan infighting within the university walls through various meetings, he was told by the students that “social interests are above the scientific”.

The strike spreading gradually led to a culminating point in the days from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 1905. Not only factories and workshops were closed, but also shops, pharmacies, and even the waterworks were not functioning. Then a counter-organisation led by the police appeared in Moscow, supposedly only against the revolution but in fact against everything that was unsympathetic towards the police. This organisation called the *Черносотенцы* [“Black Hundreds”] organised a true storm of the University in Moscow on October 14<sup>th</sup>. There was much barbarity in the strike which literally deprived people of heat and water. It

needs to be pointed out as a fact of first order historical importance that the movement did not cross the Dvina and Dnieper rivers. This line continued to be the border between two civilisations.

That very month on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1905 the Tsar issued at last a manifesto, one that was very different from the previous. Finally the inviolability of persons, the freedom to associate and gather in meetings, as well as complete religious liberty were decreed. The promised Duma was to have legislative power, and it was precisely specified that no law would be binding in the country unless it was voted in by the Duma. The Duma was also given power of control over the administration. The electoral rights were extended widely in comparison with the previous manifesto and it was promised that there would be general suffrage in the future.

“Only a small sector of the public welcomed the manifesto genuinely. The socialists only pretended to be satisfied. They felt that Witte was their enemy, a dangerous and a cunning one. Should the proclaimed reforms be introduced quickly, they would have lost ground from under their feet.” They therefore chose the tactic of “claiming that the nation has attained its first victory over the government, but it was not appropriate to lay down arms”, the more so because there was the danger that the “liberal party” of the “bourgeois” would use “the victory of the people” for its own purposes.

It has been rightly said that “the timing of the manifesto was to determine whether the Russian revolution led by the liberals would take the form of a rational struggle for political rights or whether drawn by radical elements it would lead to anarchy. It

was the latter that happened”. After the strikes, after the revolutionary manifestations and parades, the “pogroms” followed. In the capital cities there were pogroms of the intelligentsia and the students, and in the provinces of the Jews, all with an active participation of the police. The Black Hundreds were murdering the trouble raisers in defence of Tsardom. The Russian peasant, the basic supporter of the Black Hundreds “once he felt that all bonds restricting his will have fallen, once he was free in respect to his own ignorance, he became a destructive force that could be directed in one way or another”.

In the face of the anarchy the government asked the liberal party for help, but it turned out that the “liberal intelligentsia was not numerous, it was unimportant and having no sway, lacking the capacity and the means to influence the people”. It was therefore branded as a bourgeois party that cares only for its own interests. The true gravity of the situation lay in the ignorance of the masses. “The peasant unrest represented the gravest danger for the state. The way in which it unfolded was most terrifying. Country houses were devastated, cattle were slaughtered, horses were wounded with their tails and tongues amputated, wild orgies amid bloodshed and arson were taking place. These were scenes worthy of the days of Tartar invasions”.

And yet the apex of the revolution was to come during the “December days” in Moscow and in the Caucasus. On December 7<sup>th</sup> a manifesto was proclaimed by “the united revolutionary organisations” calling again for a general “political” strike. “They were counting that the army would join their side, that the railway strike would prevent the sending military relief on time and that Moscow would rise together with St. Petersburg. All of this failed

and the result was defeat". These several days, 20<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of December were real hell in Moscow, with the debauchery of the two conflicting terrors, the revolutionary and the governmental. Finally the revolution was defeated, but the government itself changed into a "brutal party". It turned out that both the government and the revolution had no creative strength, having only the potential for destruction and devastation". All the government could do was to introduce a long series of bloody "war trials" and "penal expeditions" against the rebellious regions, as for example against the Latvians of Livonia, where the Russian army was handed over to the German barons. These actions did not differ in the degree of their bestiality from the wildest revolutionary orgies of the mobs. Ethically and politically both sides proved ... *ambo meliores* [worthy of one another].

The year 1906 began with elections to the first "State Duma." Not many voters participated because the elections were in two stages, indirect (i.e. the citizen was only a "pre-electors", electing the "electors", who then elected the deputies), and only reactionary organisations and the "Alliance of the 30<sup>th</sup> October" were allowed to canvass their candidates. This Alliance was something intermediate between the constitutional-democratic alliance the *kadets* and the organisation of the *истинно русских* [True Russians] referred to also simply as the "Black Hundreds". These were organisations formed under the patronage of the police, composed to a large extent of social rabble willing to commit any atrocity, which they knew would be unpunished. The authorities supported the parties of the "right" in various ways, also through the mass arrests of the progressive elements. In spite of this the elections were a great triumph for "the left", so much so that the *kadets* formed the centre in the first Duma and the left

began from them, being full of men who were revolutionaries on principle, for whom the revolution was not a means but an end.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> 1906 the Duma met for the first time and on July 22<sup>nd</sup> it was dissolved by the government. Already in June the relationships were strained until a breach was caused by a proclamation on agricultural issues, when the majority called for a compulsory expropriation of larger estates. Soon elections to the second Duma were announced. The court imagined that a more pliant parliament would be elected. The election slogan was that “the second Duma will confirm and continue the illegally disrupted activities of the first Duma”.

The court and the higher administration completely lost their head. During twenty months Russia had five cabinets with Sviatopolk-Mirsky, Bulygin, Witte, Goremykin and Stolypin as prime ministers. Even the meek “*Octobrists*” started to rebel and the most intelligent among them with Shipov, Stakhovich and Guchkov in the lead moved towards the opposition. Universally a catastrophe was expected for Russia. Konstantin Skal’kovsky, a conservative journalist! was most extreme in his pessimism predicting that “only so much will remain of Russia as was held in the days of Ivan Kalita”.

The second Duma functioned until June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1907, when it was disbanded due to the position of 55 *Kadets* regarding the arrest of socialist deputies who were accused of conspiracy. The government then introduced many changes in the electoral law so as to ensure that the parliament would be submissive towards the bureaucracy. Initially the court had no intention of calling new elections, but foreign financiers decided the issue by threatening that they would not give any loans to Russia should it cease to

have a representative system. Stolypin then invented the formula of “representative autocracy”. The Duma was to serve as a representative basis for “absolutism”, as a screen that would conceal the administrative rank system.

“Binding decisions” were decreed, imposing severe fines and prison penalties for criticising the government. Furthermore a solution that was very typical of Russian notions was found. The establishment of parties without the permission of the government was forbidden. The ministry announced that all parties are associations and thus they require permission of the authorities, i.e. a legalisation. Without this they were treated as secret organisations and fell under the criminal code. The *Kadets* were refused legalisation and even more so all the parties of the true left. As a result in November 1907 there was a Duma, which had only 33 *Kadets*, 113 Octobrists and 189 right-wingers, that is, deputies who were opposed to the parliamentary system and by and large were friends of the Black Hundreds.

The government took steps to make even such a Duma unpopular. The government charged the Duma with some chancellery details so as to ridicule it and prove that in spite of being hard working in fact it was useless. Issues that should have been dependent on the parliament were settled in the ministry offices without it. Thus the bureaucracy continued to have legislative power, while the Duma was given only bureaucratic details to settle. The cabinet prepared as many as 375 “proposals for bills” for the Duma. Examples of these were: “On the prolongation of authorisation for the minister of finance in the determination of tithes from fallow and uncultivated land in the Turkestan country”; “On the transformation of the military offices of governors of Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk into civil governors’ offices”;

“On the regulation of the governance of the church of the Resurrection in St. Petersburg” and the like.

The authorities became so reactionary that even the former minister of internal affairs, prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky, who was chosen as the justice of peace in the Kharkov county, was not approved for the office, because he was deemed too liberal for the position. The universities lost the remnants of their autonomy. Ten policemen were assigned to the Kiev University to maintain law and order. The Tsar received in private audiences delegations of various *истинных* [true parties], thereby honouring them demonstrably. Kokovtsov, the minister of finance said in the Duma in April 1908: “Thank God, we still do not have a parliament!” The expenses of the ministry of education at the time were lower than at any previous period in Russia, being hardly 2.3% of the whole budget. At the same time, because at the end of 1907, 74 622 prisoners were deported to Siberia and 88% of them were political prisoners.

The government was in the hands of people who did not know how to deal with common criminals. This became clear on the example of the Congress Kingdom. There were very few Post Offices there, only 600 of them in the entire country. Since the authorities were unable to deal with bandits attacking the Post Offices, a simple method was devised to make sure that money was not stolen. The Post Offices were systematically closed! By January 1908 about 200 of them were closed!

The approach towards the Poles was decidedly hostile, while ostensibly the relationships with the Prussians were friendly. Scallon, the governor general was quickly termed the “margrave of Warsaw”; it was generally held that he was financed

from Berlin together with a whole series of higher government officials of the Congress Kingdom. When the Prussian law of expropriations caused a boycott of Prussian goods in Warsaw Scal-lon forbade manifestos to this effect and the censorship blocked articles in the press on the subject. When on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1907 a project of autonomy for the Congress Kingdom was introduced in the Duma the semi-official paper *Rossiya* called this the “shredding of Russia into pieces” and even the *Kadets* refrained to have anything to do with the project as something that could cause “very serious international complications”, having of course Prussia in mind. In Vilnius a requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Mickiewicz was forbidden. In Warsaw the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Słowacki was forbidden! All private schools run by the Polish Educational Society were closed and the making of the public schools Polish was unthinkable. The “true parties” even had a project to forbid again all purchase of land by “people of Polish origin” in Lithuania and Ruthenia, as was the case between 1864 and 1905. On top of all this was the project introduced in the third Duma of tearing away the Chełm province from the Congress Kingdom. The government was provoking the Poles, believing that in this way it would wade through the revolutionary waves undamaged, by focusing the attention of the general public in another direction. It kept on inventing the Polish “danger” for the state so as to drown all calls for constitutional rule by the fear of Poland.

Means on an even greater scale were thought out so as to give the public opinion something to chew upon beyond issues of internal reform. The Duma majority agreed to a return to an active policy in the Far East, voting in early Spring 1908 for an immediate construction of the Amur railway line. That same year events required that a position be taken concerning Balkan issues,

when in October 1908, without prior knowledge and consent of the St. Petersburg ministry of foreign affairs, Bulgaria announced itself to be a Kingdom, and Austria proceeded to annex the occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hoping that internal turmoil would subside in the face of external responsibilities and that a victorious war would raise again the image of the Tsarist government in the eyes of the public, preparations were made for a war against Austria. It was imminent. Germany prevented it announcing that it would support Austria. In such a case Russia would need the help of France, but the French were not prepared for war and Russia alone did not dare to proclaim war. Again, after 1888 the European war was postponed...

Towards the end of 1908 and at the beginning of 1909 two currents concerning foreign policy competed in Russia. The most serious press in Russia not only called for a retreat from actions against Austria, but also new ideas of an alliance of “the two largest Slav states” against Prussia were formulated. General Kuropatkin stood at the head of this idea declaring that the only significant enemy of Russia was Prussia. At the same time a truly original idea was forwarded calling upon the Duma to issue a manifesto addressed to all peoples and parliaments against Austria under the pretence of wanting to maintain peace. The idea was almost implemented and this clearly indicates that the Russians had no notion of what parliamentarism is and what international relations are. The text of the manifesto was already at the stage of being signed and published.

In April 1909 the danger of war passed. It turned out that Russia was unable to wage a war and Austria became even more dependent on Berlin. In Russian journalism the anti-Prussian propaganda died out completely, and there was much talk about

the sale (yes: the sale!) of the Congress Kingdom to Prussia. Also the number of Polish mandates in the Duma was reduced! The extreme right even made the proposal that it would be forbidden to elect more than three Poles from Lithuania and Ruthenia. Stolypin declared that basically he approved the project but he judged that the matter should be postponed until the next year when a completely new anti-Polish electoral system would be introduced. Nevertheless this was done in the same year. The number of mandates in the Duma for the Poles was legally reduced so that even with the best of electoral results, there would never be more than twenty Poles in the Duma.

The attitude of the government towards the Polish question was always a precise and infallible criterion of its approach towards the constitutional issue. This was because the Poles were in the first line of constitutionalism and would offer the best basis for such a form of government. The more the government wanted to maintain the administrative rank system of government the more it persecuted the Poles. Thus the national oppression increased ever more and police rule became more and more obnoxious for Russia itself. The reaction went so far that the generally compliant and not demanding much "Octobrists" were moving towards the opposition.

The fourth Duma had more opposition forces in it than the third one, in spite of the barbaric pressures during the election. The years 1910 and 1911 saw many trials and assassinations which became a common phenomenon in every Russian town. Human rights were ever more restricted with the clear return to gubernatorial omnipotence, and in the Duma there was the killing of time with humorous trivialities. The reactionary parties had a

free hand and having become a tool of the police, they only incited the general popular discontent. It was clear to all that the country was heading towards a new revolution. The government tried to prevent this with terror, and the more radical parties made preparations for some new move on a larger scale, engaging themselves in terrorist actions in the process. Conflict was everywhere, in the corporations, the press, and on the streets.

The court often found itself in a situation without exit and even those extreme reactionaries who were better acquainted with the conditions for public life were aware of the fact that the revolutionary trend could not be contained permanently. But since on principle there was no intent to introduce a serious and genuine constitutional system, again there was longing for a war as a means for the alleviation of the internal tensions in the state. The more some group was reactionary, the more it was bellicose. The government was changing the “true Russians” into provocateurs, who openly called for a war against Austria, in spite of the experiences of 1908.

The chronic Austrian-Balkan complications of the last few years on which St. Petersburg counted, hoping that they would finally provide an opportunity for a successful enterprise in Russian foreign policy, were resolved in the Autumn of 1912 in such a way that the Balkan countries allied together not against Austria but against Turkey. In the Balkan war Austria willingly gave Russia a “good example” of neutral behaviour, because in this case every delay strengthened the position of Austria and weakened that of Russia. A Balkan war waged without Russian intervention had to isolate it politically. France, the ally of Russia wanted the same, namely that Russia would maintain neutrality, and even more so this was what England wanted. These countries

having Islamic subjects reached the position that they did not want to support anything that would be at the expense of Turkey. Thus Russia this time could not stand against Turkey, because it would have the whole of Europe against it and could lose the French ally.

The Balkan war unexpectedly caused a rift among the Slav allies. Turkey was defeated, but quarrels broke out over the spoils. In mid November 1912 the Serbs took Novy-Bazar and from that time onwards military success was permanently with the Balkan Slavs. After all the Serbs and the Bulgarians controlled not only Macedonia but were also beyond Adrianople. At that point a war between them broke out. The Serbs, together with Romania and Greece attacked the Bulgarians. By September 1913 Bulgaria was defeated and its borders were cut dramatically.

All of this happened without Russian intervention. The mere fact that Russia was no longer a decisive factor in solving the Balkan situation was a defeat. Russia, aiming for Constantinople, found itself outside the historic evolution of the Balkan peninsula!

The opposition was quick to make use of this. The equal incompetence of the government in both home and foreign affairs was so glaring, so obvious to everybody that a new session of the Duma from November 1913 moved decisively leftwards. The government did not draw any conclusion from this other than the decision that the persecution of the whole opposition and ... of the Poles had to be more severe. In the spring of 1914 a part of the press pointed out the danger coming to Russia from the side of Germany, urging that the pointless anti-Polish policy be abandoned, but these voices only encouraged the government to even

greater ferocity. In March 1914 there was the famous trial against Prof. Baudouin de Courtenay [a Pole], who was convicted to a prison term of two years for having written a brochure about autonomy, in which he argued that Russia would suffer paralysis as a consequence of its centralism.

The paralysis was already ongoing, while the court and all the rank officials were impatiently waiting for a war, hoping that in its turmoil the whole revolution would be drowned and that once the throne would be blessed with the splendour of victories “autocracy” would be secured for further ages. The tension between Germany and Britain spelled war for the whole of Europe. Already in March 1914 the whole European press was studying the alignment of forces in the expected Great War.

The court in St. Petersburg considered it necessary to hasten the outbreak of the war, provoking for this purpose Austria in the Belgrade region and the Russian ambassador in Belgrade started to organize plots in Bosnia.

A general war was inevitable for a long time. It was expected ever since Germany introduced universal military service. The weight of militarism brought to an extreme position was no longer sustainable and the multitude of political, economic and cultural complications indicated that the whole European system was outdated and required a renewal, a reform. The reform was not coming for too long a time and Prussian hegemony was suggesting that it would never come. Thus a general move against this hegemony was inevitable. A universal war was in the air for a whole generation and it hung on the political horizon as a final consequence of the partitioning of Poland.

The outbreak of the war was withheld, delayed for a long time, fearing its terrible consequences. The assassination in Sarajevo on June 26<sup>th</sup>, 1914 was only the spark that ignited the dynamite ... For Russia new blows coming from the side of Europe were approaching.

## **Names and place names**

Aachen

Åbo

Adashev Alexey

Adrianople

Aegean sea

Aesop

Afghanistan

Ahmed

Aix-la-Chapelle

Akmolinsk

Aksakov Ivan

Aksakov Konstantin

Aland Islands

Albrecht of Brandenburg

Aldona

Alexander II tsar

Alexander III tsar

Alexander VI, pope

Alexander Jagiellon

Alexander Michailovich

Alexander Nevsky

Alexander I Pavlovich

Alexander of Battenberg

Alexander of Tver

Alexandrova Sloboda

Alexei Mikhailovich

Alexei Petrovich

Alexius Pleshcheev

Algirdas

Alma

Alsace  
Altranstädt  
Alvensleben  
Amsterdam  
Amu-Darya river  
Amur river  
Amurat IV  
Andrei  
Andrei Bogolyubsky  
Andrei Dimirievich  
Andrei of Polotsk  
Andrey Ivanovich  
Andrew II  
Andrew, brother of Jagiełło  
Andrew of Halych  
Andrew of Uglich  
Andrew St.  
Andrusovo  
Anhalt-Zerbst  
Anna  
Anna Ivanovna  
Anna Leopoldina  
Anna Petrovna  
Antioch  
Anthony Ulrich  
Apennine peninsula  
Arabs  
Aral sea  
Arakcheyev  
Arctic ocean  
Arianism  
Armenia

Armenians  
Arpad dynasty  
Arsenius  
Asia  
Asia Minor  
Astrakhan  
Athos Mt.  
Augustus II the Strong  
Augustus III the Saxon  
Austerlitz  
Azov  
Bakhchysarai  
Baku  
Balkan Mts.  
Balkans  
Baltic Sea  
Baptists  
Bar  
Barclay de Tolly  
Bärensprung  
Baryatinsky Alexandr  
Baryatinsky Yury  
Basel  
Bashkirs  
Basil II  
Basilians  
Basmanov  
Bathory Stephen  
Battenberg Alexander of  
Batu  
Baudouin de Courtenay  
Bavaria

Bela II  
Belarus  
Belgium  
Belgrade  
Belinsky  
Beloje Lake  
Betz  
Bem  
Bender  
Berezina river  
Bernard  
Berendei  
Berestechko  
Berlin  
Bernardines  
Bernhardi  
Bessarabia  
Bezobrazov  
Białystok  
Bielski Bohdan  
Bila Vezha  
Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi  
Biron (Buehren Ernest John)  
Bismarck Otto von  
Black Klobuks  
Black Ruthenia  
Black Sea  
Boers  
Bogolepov  
Bogolyubsky Andrei  
Bogomilism  
Bogomils

Boh river  
Bohemia  
Bolesław the Bold  
Bolesław the Great  
Bolesław Trojdenovich  
Bolesław Wrymouth  
Bomarsund  
Bonaparte Napoleon  
Boretskaya Marfa  
Boris of Rzhev  
Borodino  
Bosnia  
Bosphorus  
Bosutowo  
Bothnia Gulf of  
Bourbons  
Boxers  
Brabant  
Brahin  
Brandenburg  
Bratslav  
Braunschweig  
Bremen  
Brest  
Briansk  
Brigido  
Britain  
British  
Brothers of the Sword  
Bruno of Querfurt  
Buchach  
Bucharest

Buddhism  
Buehren Ernest John (Biron)  
Bug river  
Bulgaria  
Bulgarians  
Bulgars (Volga)  
Bulygin  
Bunzelwitz  
Burtas  
Busha  
Buturlin Alexander  
Byelskys  
Byelinsky  
Byzantines  
Byzantium  
Calvinism  
Caprivi  
Caribbean  
Carlsbad  
Caroline, Christine Sophia  
Carpathian Mts.  
Casimir Jagiellon  
Casimir the Great  
Casimir the Just  
Casimir I the Restorer  
Caspian Sea  
Catherine I (see Marta Skavronska)  
Catherine II the Great  
Catherine Ivanovna  
Catherine Jagiellon  
Catholic  
Caucasus

Cecora  
Central Asia  
Cesis  
Chaadayev Petr  
Charles VI  
Charles X  
Charles X Gustav  
Charles XII  
Charles XV  
Charles of Suderman  
Chashniki  
Chełm  
Cheremises  
Cherkess  
Chernigov  
Chicherin Boris  
China  
Chinese  
Chios Is.  
Chodkiewicz Jan Karol  
Christ  
Christian August of Anhalt-Zerbst  
Christianity  
Chud lake (Peipus)  
Chude  
Chuvash  
Chyhyryn  
Cistercians  
Coloman  
Constance  
Constantine Monomachos  
Constantine of Thessalonica (St. Cyril)

Constantine Pavlovich  
Constantinople  
Copenhagen  
Cossacks  
Courland  
Crete  
Crimea  
Cumans  
Cyprian  
Cyril metropolitan  
Cyril of Preslav  
Cyril St.  
Czacki  
Czjkowski Michał  
Czapliński  
Czarniecki Stefan  
Czartoryski Adam  
Czartoryski Michael  
Czartoryskis  
Czersk  
Czerwień  
Częstochowa  
Czortków  
Dąbrowski Henryk  
Dagestan  
Dalmatia  
Danes  
Daniel  
Danilevsky Nikolay  
Danube river  
Dardanelles  
Daugava

Dembiński  
Denmark  
Derbent  
Derzhavin Gavrila  
Deschamps  
Desna river  
Deulino  
Devlet-Giray  
Diebitsch  
Disuniates  
Dmitry Donskoy  
Dmitry False  
Dmitry False II  
Dmitry Ivanovich  
Dmitry Konstantinovich  
Dmitry the Fearsome Eyes  
Dnieper river  
Dniester river  
Dobrolubov  
Dobruja  
Dobrynicze  
Dolgorukiy family  
Dolgorukiy Yuri  
Don river  
Dorogobuzh  
Doroshenko  
Dorpat (Yuryev, Tartu)  
Dresden  
Drogobuzh  
Drohiczyn  
Drutsk  
Dubienka

Duke of Edinburgh  
Dukla  
Dutchmen  
Dvina river  
Dybich  
Dzungaria  
Dźwińsk  
Edigu  
Edinburgh  
Elba Is.  
Elbe river  
Elena Vasilyevna Glinskaya  
Elisabeth Petrovna  
Encausse-Papus  
England  
English  
Enikale  
Ephraim  
Erfurt  
Eric XIV  
Erivan  
Erzurum  
Estonia  
Estonians  
Ettinghausen  
Eufemia (Ofka)  
Evangelicals  
False Dmitri  
Far East  
Faure  
Felin  
Feodor Borisovich Godunov

Feodor I Ivanovich  
Feodor III Alexeyevich  
Ferdinand archduke  
Ferdinand Coburg of Bulgaria  
Ferdinand emperor  
Ferdinand Ketler  
Fersen  
Finland  
Finnish  
Finns  
Flanders  
Florence  
Fokşani  
France  
Francis I  
Frankfurt  
Franz Joseph  
Frederic II  
Frederic of Sweden  
Frederic the Great  
Frederic Wilhelm II  
Frederic Wilhelm III  
Frederic Wilhelm IV  
Frederick Wilhelm Ketler of Kurland  
Fredrikshamn  
Friedrich of Hessen-Kassel  
Friedrichshall  
Friedrich Wilhelm IV  
Frenchmen  
Fürstenberg  
Galați  
Galich

Galicia  
Gallenberg  
Gapon  
Gediminas  
Geneva  
Genghis Khan  
Georgia  
Georgians  
German Quarter  
Germany  
Gdańsk  
Girays  
Giers  
Glave  
Glinskaya Elena Vasilyevna  
Glinski Michael  
Glinsky Yuri  
Glinski  
Glinskis  
Godunov Boris Fyodorovich  
Görgey  
Goertz  
Gogol  
Golden Horde  
Golitsyn Dmitry  
Golitsyn Vasily  
Golokhvastov Pavel  
Golycins  
Gorchakov  
Gordon  
Goremykin  
Goštautai

Gotland  
Goths  
Grand Bernard  
Granovsky  
Greece  
Greeks  
Gregory VII  
Grodno  
Groß Jägerndorf  
Grunwald  
Guchkov  
Gurko  
Gustav III  
Gustav Adolf  
Habsburgs  
Hadiach  
Hague  
Halych  
Hannover  
Hardenberg  
Haydamacks  
Hedwig  
Helen Ivanovna  
Helen of Moldavia  
Helgoland  
Henry II  
Henry IV  
Henry prince  
Hertzberg  
Herzegovina  
Herzen  
Hilarion

Hohenzollern Louis Ferdinand  
Hohenzollerns  
Holland  
Holstein-Gottorp  
Homer  
Hubertusburg  
Hungary  
Igelström  
Ignatyev Nikolay  
Igor  
Ilmen lake  
Imeretia  
Imeretines  
India  
Inkerman  
Ionian Islands  
Irene, tsarina  
Irtysh river  
Isidore metropolitan  
Islam  
Istanbul  
Italy  
Ivan III the Stern  
Ivan Andreevich of Mozhaisk  
Ivan Ivanovich  
Ivan Kalita  
Ivan V, son of Maria Miloslavskaya  
Ivan VI  
Ivan the Terrible  
Ivan the Younger  
Ivangorod  
Izmail

Izyaslav  
Izyaslav II  
Izyaslav III Davidovich  
Izyaslaviches  
Jagiełło  
Jam Zapolski  
Japan  
Jarosław  
Jassy  
Jena  
Jeremias, patriarch  
Jerusalem  
Jesuit  
Jewish  
Jews  
Joachim, patriarch  
Joannites  
Job, patriarch  
John Albert Jagiellon  
John II Casimir  
John III Vasa  
Jonah metropolitan  
Joseph I  
Joseph II  
Joseph Sanin  
Josephites  
Josiphlanes  
Kabbalah  
Kadłubek  
Kakhovsky  
Kalita Ivan  
Kalka river

Kalmyks  
Kama river  
Kaniów  
Karamzin Nikolay  
Karelia  
Karlowitz  
Karr  
Kars  
Katkov  
Kaulbars  
Kazan  
Kerch  
Kerki  
Kęstutis  
Ketler Frederick Wilhelm  
Ketter  
Kharkov  
Khazars  
Kherson  
Khiva  
Khmelnysky Bohdan  
Khmelnysky Yurii  
Khodzent  
Khomyakov  
Khotyn  
Kiaochan  
Kiev  
Kiliya  
Kipchak  
Kireyevsky  
Kletsk  
Klobuks

Klushino  
Klyazma river  
Kniaziewicz  
Kochubey  
Kodak  
Kokovtsov  
Kolishchizna  
Kołobrzeg  
Kołodzyński  
Kolomna  
Konashevych Petro  
Konięcpolski  
Konrad of Mazovia  
Konstantin Pavlovich, grand duke  
Konstantin Vsevolodovich  
Koporia  
Korea  
Korsakov  
Kościuszko Tadeusz  
Konstantin Grand Duke  
Kostroma  
Krasnystaw  
Kraków  
Krechetnikov  
Kremlin  
Kromer  
Kronstadt  
Krzemieniec  
Küçük Kaynarca  
Kulikovo Field  
Kunersdorf  
Kurbsky

Kurbskys  
Kuropatkin  
Kymi river  
Kyrgyz  
Labanov-Rostovsky  
Lachowicze  
Lachs  
Łącki  
Ladoga  
Lambsdorf Vladimir  
Lanckorona  
Lanskoy  
Latin  
Latvians  
Lavra Pechersk  
Lednicki Alexander  
Lefort Franz  
Legnica  
Leipzig  
Lengvenis  
Leo  
Leo II of Volhynia  
Leontyev Konstantin  
Leopold I  
Leopold II  
Leopold of Mecklenburg  
Leopold prince  
Leszczyński Jan  
Leszczyński Stanisław  
Leszek the White  
Liaoyang  
Lithuania

Lithuanians  
Little Wallachia  
Liubartas  
Livonia  
Ljubljana  
Lodomeria  
Lomonosov Mikhail  
Lopukhina Eudoxia  
Lopukhins  
Loris-Melikov  
Lorraine  
Louis XV  
Louis XVIII  
Louis of Hungary  
Louis Philippe  
Lublin  
Lubomirski Jerzy  
Lucaris Cyril  
Lucchesini  
Luck  
Łuków  
Lust-Eiland  
Lutheranism  
Lviv  
Macedonia  
Maciejowice  
Madaliński  
Madrid  
Magnus  
Magyars  
Makarevo  
Malborg of Livonia

Maloyaroslavets  
Malta  
Mamai  
Manchuria  
Marfa Boretskaya  
Mari  
Maria Miloslavskaya  
Maria of Tver  
Maria Teresa  
Mary of Hungary  
Mary Tudor  
Maslav  
Mathias bp.  
Matthias Corvinus  
Matveyev  
Maxim metropolitan  
Maxim the Greek  
Maximilian emperor  
Mazepa  
Mazovia  
Mazovians  
Mecklenburg  
Mediterranean  
Mengli-Giray  
Menshikov  
Merv  
Methodius St.  
Metternich  
Michael  
Michael Alexandrovich  
Michael of Tver  
Michael the Brave

Michael Romanov  
Michael Yaroslavich  
Mieszko II  
Milan of Serbia  
Milano  
Miller  
Miloslavskaya Maria  
Miloslavskys  
Mindaugas  
Mingrelia  
Minin  
Minsk  
Mitau  
Mniszech Jerzy  
Mniszech Maryna  
Modlin  
Mogila Peter  
Mogilev  
Moldavia  
Moldova river  
Moliere  
Mongol  
Mongols  
Monomakh Vladimir  
Monomakhoviches  
Montenegro  
Moravia  
Mordvins  
Morea  
Morozov  
Moskva river  
Moscow

Mother of God  
Mozhaisk  
Mstislav Danielovich  
Mstislav the Brave  
Mstislavski Ivan Fyodorovich  
Mstislavskis  
Mukden  
Münchengrätz  
Münnich Burkhard Christoph von  
Muntenia  
Muraviev Nikita  
Muravyov  
Murom  
Muscovy  
Nagyszeben  
Nakhichevan  
Naples  
Napoleon III  
Napoleon Bonaparte  
Narva  
Naryshkina Natalia  
Naryshkins  
Nashchokin  
Natalia Naryshkina  
Navarino  
Neris river  
Nesselrode  
Nestor  
Nestorianism  
Nestorovich  
Netherlands  
Neva river

Nicholas I  
Nicholas II  
Nicholas Alexandrovich  
Nicholas the Miracle-maker, St.  
Niegolewski Władysław  
Nigudar  
Nikon patriarch  
Nizhny Novgorod  
Nogai  
Nogai Horde  
Nogi  
Norsemen  
Norway  
Novgorod  
Novgorod of Seversk  
Novgorod the Great  
Novosilcov  
Novy-Bazar  
Nowy Targ  
Nummers  
Nystadt  
Ob river  
Obolensky  
Ochakov  
Oder river  
Ofka (Eufemia)  
Oka river  
Oldenburg  
Oleg duke  
Oleg of Ryazan  
Oleg Sviatoslavich  
Olmütz

Oluta  
Opava  
Opole  
Orenburg  
Orlov Alexei  
Orlovs  
Orsha  
Ösel-Wiek  
Osman  
Ossoliński Maximilian  
Osterman Heinrich (Andrey Ivanovich)  
Ostróg  
Ostrogski Konstanty  
Otrepev Yuri Bogdanovich  
Ottomans  
Pacific  
Pamir  
Pan-Asiatism  
Pan-Slavism  
Papus Encausse  
Paris  
Paskevich  
Patkul Johann  
Paul II pope  
Pavel I Petrovich  
Pavlyuk  
Pechenegs  
Pechersk Lavra  
Peipus (lake Czud)  
Peking  
Peloponnese  
Penza

Perekop  
Pereyaslav  
Perm  
Perovsky  
Persia  
Persian Gulf  
Pestel  
Peter metropolitan  
Peter I the Great  
Peter II Alexeyevich  
Peter III  
Petersburg  
Petrashevsky  
Petrashevtsy  
Phanar  
Philip, metropolitan  
Philip of Orleans  
[Philippopolis](#)  
Philotheus  
Photius metropolitan  
Piaſt dynasty  
Piltene  
Pina river  
Pińsk  
Pisa  
Pisarev  
Plato  
Plautus  
Plehve  
Pleshcheev  
Plettenberg  
Plevna

Pobedonostsev Konstantin  
Podgórze  
Podhajce  
Podlasie  
Podolia  
Pokutia  
Polabia  
Poland  
Poles  
Polish  
Polotsk  
Poltava  
Poltva river  
Pomerania  
Poniatowski Joseph  
Poniatowski Stanisław August  
Poniński  
Port Arthur  
Porte  
Portsmouth  
Portugal  
Possevino  
Potemkin  
Potocki Ignacy  
Potocki Mikołaj  
Potockis  
Pozharsky  
Poznań  
Pozvol  
Pozzo di Borgo  
Pradt Fr.  
Praga

Prague  
Preobrazhenskoye  
Preslav  
Protestantism  
Prussia  
Prussians (Balts)  
Prussians (Germans)  
Pruth river  
Prypeć river  
Przemyśl  
Pskov  
Pugachev  
Puławy  
Punjab  
Pushkin  
Putilov  
Putyvl  
Pypin Alexander  
Querfurt  
Radom  
Radziwiłł  
Radziwiłł Anthony  
Radziwiłł Mikołaj  
Radziwiłł Mikołaj “the Red”  
Radziwiłłs  
Rákóczi  
Rasputin  
Rawa Ruska  
Razin Stepan  
Red Ruthenia  
Reformation  
Reich

Reinbern, bishop  
Repnin  
Rhine river  
Rhineland  
Rhodope Mts.  
Riga  
Roman, town Moldavia  
Roman the Great, prince of Halych  
Romania  
Romanov Filaret  
Romanov Nikita  
Romanovs  
Rome  
Roosevelt  
Ros river  
Rosenkampf  
Rostislav Vladimirovich  
Rostislaviches  
Rostov  
Rozhestvensky  
Rüdiger  
Rumelia  
Rumyantsev  
Rurik  
Rurikids  
Rus  
Rushchuk  
Russia  
Russians  
Ruthenia  
Ruthenians  
Ryazan

Rymnik river  
Rzewuski Seweryn  
Rzewuski Wacław  
Rzhev  
Sakhalin Is.  
Salomea  
Saltykov  
Samara  
Samarkand  
Samogitia  
Samogitians  
San river  
Sandomierz  
Sanguszko Roman  
Sanin Joseph  
San Stefano  
Santo Domingo  
Sapieha Lew  
Sapiehas  
Sarai  
Sarajevo  
Saransk  
Saratov  
Sardinia  
Sarkel  
Sartaq  
Sawicki Fr.  
Saxony  
Scallon  
Scandinavia  
Scharia  
Schitten Hans

Schleswig  
Schleswig-Holstein  
Schlözer  
Schulenburg  
Scotland  
Scots  
Seim river  
Sejanus  
Selim II  
Semipalatinsk  
Semiramis  
Seraphim of Sarov  
Serb  
Serbia  
Serpukhov  
Sevastopol  
Seversk  
Shah-Ahmad  
Shakhovskoy  
Shamil  
Shchedrin  
Shcherbatov  
Sheremetev Boris  
Shlisselburg  
Shiite Islam  
Shimonoseki  
Shipka pass  
Shipov  
Shirvan  
Shtundists  
Shuvalov  
Shuysky Andrei Michailovich

Shuysky Ivan Petrovich  
Shuysky Ivan Vasilievich  
Shuysky Vasily Vasilievich  
Shuyskys  
Siberia  
Sich  
Siemashko bp  
Sieradz  
Sigismund August  
Sigismund Kęstutaitis  
Sigismund the Old  
Sigismund III Vasa  
Silesia  
Simbirsk  
Simeon, Bulgarian tsar  
Simeon the Proud  
Simon Ivanovich  
Siret river  
Sistova  
Skal'kovsky Konstantin Apollonovich  
Skalon  
Skavronska Marta (see Catherin I)  
Skierniewice  
Skirgiełło  
Slav lands  
Slavkov  
Slavophiles  
Slavs  
Slavyneckij Jepifanij  
Słuck  
Smolensk  
Sobieski Jan III

Sochaczew  
Sofia Alexeyevna  
Solovetsky monastery  
Soloviev Vladimir  
Sołtyk bp.  
Solytkov  
Sophia, daughter of Vytautas  
Sophia (Zoe) Palaiologina  
Sozh river  
Spain  
Spanish  
Speransky Mikhail  
Spisz  
Stadnicki  
Stakhovich  
Starodub  
Stein  
St. Helen's island  
Stockholm  
Stoczek  
Stolbovo  
Stolypin  
Stralsund  
Strogonov Gregory  
Strypa river  
Subotiv  
Subutai  
Sula river  
Sulima  
Sumarokov Alexander  
Suvorin  
Suvorov

Suzdal  
Šventoji river  
Sviatopolk  
Sviatopolk II  
Sviatopolk-Mirsky  
Sviatoslav  
Sviatoslav Yaroslavovich  
Sviatoslavoviches  
Sviaga river  
Sviazhsk  
Švitrigaila Boleslav  
Sweden  
Swedes  
Swinemünde  
Switzerland  
Sylistria  
Sylvester  
Symeon of Polotsk  
Syr Darya river  
Szczecin  
Szczekociny  
Taganrog  
Talienvan  
Talleyrand  
Tambov  
Tamerlane  
Targowica  
Tarnogród  
Tarnopol  
Tarnowski Jan  
Tartars  
Tartu (Yuryev, Dorpat)

Tashkent  
Taurida  
Teheran  
Telepnev  
Temujin  
Terence  
Tetera  
Teutonic Knights  
Theophanes patriarch  
Thessaloniki  
Thessaly  
Thiers  
Thun  
Tilsit  
Timișoara  
Timur-lang (Tamerlane)  
Tōgō  
Tokhtamysh  
Torkil  
Tornio river  
Toruń  
Torzhok  
Transylvania  
Travendal  
Trojden of Czersk  
Trosna river  
Trubetskoy  
Trubetskoy Sergei  
Tsamblak metropolitan  
Tsaritsyn [Volgograd]  
Tsarskoe Selo  
Tsushima

Tula  
Turów  
Turanians  
Turkestan  
Turkey  
Turkish  
Turkmenchay  
Turkmenia  
Turks  
Tver  
Tyniec  
Tyumen  
Uglich  
Ugra river  
Ugro-Finns  
Ukraine  
Ukrainians  
Ula river  
Uldzhait  
Ulrike Eleonore  
Uniates  
United States of North America  
Ural river (Yaik)  
Urals  
Urban II  
Usviata  
Utrecht  
Uzbek  
Valuyev  
Varangians  
Varna  
Vasa

Vasily Dmitriyevich  
Vasily Ivanovich  
Vasily of Kostroma  
Vasily Vasiliyevich The Blind  
Velikiye Luki  
Velizh  
Venice  
Venetian  
Vereya  
Verona  
Versailles  
Vicenza  
Vienna  
Világos  
Villack  
Vilnius  
Visby  
Vistula river  
Vikings  
Vistula river  
Vitebsk  
Vladimir  
Vladimir Andrieevich  
Vladimir of Serpukhov  
Vladimir (of Volhynia - town)  
Vladimir on Klyazma  
Vladimir Monomakh  
Vladimirko  
Vladislaus of Bohemia and Hungary  
Vladislaus of Opole  
Volga river  
Volgograd (Tsaritsyn)

Volhynia  
Volpe Gian Battista della  
Voronezh  
Vorskla river  
Votyaks  
Vozha river  
Vsevolod  
Vsevolod the Big Nest  
Vsevolodoviches  
Vuła  
Vyatka  
Vyatka river  
Vyazma  
Vytautas  
Wallachia  
Warmia  
Warsaw  
Watland  
Wawer  
Weser river  
Westphalia  
West the  
White Sea  
Wielkie Dębno  
Wielkopolska  
Wielopolski  
Wilhelm I  
Wilkomierz  
Wiśniowiecki Adam  
Wiśniowiecki Jaremi  
Witte  
Władysław

Władysław IV  
Władysław Jagiełło (see Jagiełło)  
Władysław of Varna  
Włodzimierz  
Wodzicki  
Wojna  
Wolfenbuettel  
Wschowa  
Württemberg  
Wyhovsky Ivan  
Wyschnegradsky  
Yaik (Ural river)  
Yam  
Yaropolk  
Yaroslav Sviatoslavovich  
Yaroslav the Wise  
Yaroslav Vsevolodovich  
Yaroslav Yaroslavich  
Yerevan  
Yermak  
Yesugei Baghatur  
Yotvingians  
Yugra  
Yuri Dmitriyevich  
Yuri Dolgorukiy  
Yuri Vasilyevich  
Yury Danilovich  
Yury Ivanovich  
Yuryev (Dorpat [Tartu])  
Yusupov  
Zabalkansky  
Zalesye

Zaluski Józef  
Zamość  
Zamoyski Andrzej  
Zamoyski Jan  
Zaporozhye  
Żarnowiec  
Zasław  
Zawichost  
Zbarazh  
Zbigniew of Brzezia  
Zboriv  
Zbruch river  
Zebrzydowski Nicholas  
Zhovti Vody river  
Zieleniec  
Zoe (Sophia) Palaiologina  
Żółkiewski  
Zorndorf  
Zosimus metropolitan  
Zschokke Heinrich  
Żurawno