

Current History

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RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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world by Russia." It was a fatal step for Turkey, whose forces were annihilated. The Black Sea ceased to be a Turkish lake and the Straits became a European problem. The Russian navy for the first time appeared in the Mediterranean. Catherine initiated her Mediterranean policy and established relations with the Egyptian Ali Bey. The famous Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardji (1774) gave Russia an additional stretch of the Black Sea coast, limited the authority of the Sultan over the Tartars, granted concessions to Russian pilgrims and subjects of the Armenian empire, and gave the Russians fresh consular and economic rights.

The Sultan undertook to protect Christian churches and religion.

These and other provisions regarding religion gave Russia the status of a "protector of Christians" in Turkey.

In 1792 Catherine ordered the Crimean Khanate, a move which was very much resented by the Sultan, who in 1798 declared war on Russia. But the Russian reply was victorious and by the Treaty of Jassy (1792) expanded their possessions along the Black Sea.

FRENCH AMBIGUITY

During the Napoleonic wars Russia shifted her position according to her needs and circumstances. When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798 Russia and England hastened to the defense of the Ottoman Sultan, and by a special convention the Turks permitted the Russians to use the Straits at will. The Russian navy again operated in the Mediterranean and the Russians drove the French from the Ionian Islands and from Italy into Switzerland.

After Napoleon's return from Egypt to become First Consul of France, Tsar Paul abandoned his anti-French policy. But when Alexander I succeeded the throne in 1801 the new distribution of European forces found Russia and England again cooperating against Napoleon, who was at this time allied with the Ottoman Empire.

From 1804 to 1812 the Russians and

Turks fought independently. The Russians helped the Serb insurgents against the Turks and stirred other Balkan peoples against them. The English fleet, which turned its way through the Dardanelles in an unsuccessful attempt to aid the Russians, was compelled to withdraw and the Treaty of Constantinople (1812) was signed. This was an important document which established the "sacred rule of the Ottoman Empire," prohibiting warships of every nation from entering the Straits. Attempts at that in the same year to reach an agreement between Napoleon and Alexander on the Near East failed.

In the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century, Russia fought two wars with Persia and two with Turkey. The wars with Persia, terminated by the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchak (1828), gave Russia all territory west of the Aras River — including Georgia, Daghestan and Armenia, including the city of Erivan. Russia won for her nationals extraterritorial privileges and trade concessions. The wars with Turkey, terminated by the treaties of Bucharest (1812) and Adrianople (1829), brought Russia fresh Turkish territories, established her as a protector of the Serbs and the Romanians, and gave Russia additional benefits for her merchant shipping through the Straits — complete freedom "in all the seas and waters of the Ottoman Empire" without visit or search of Russian vessels passing through the Straits.

ENGLAND AND THE 'EASTERN QUESTION'

After the Napoleonic wars it was the English line which assumed the principal role of limiting the Russian force in the Near and Middle East. The Russian threat to Persia was interpreted by the English as a threat to India; the English threat to Persia was interpreted by the Russians as a threat to Russian Central Asia. In an effort to establish predominance over Iran the two great powers enacted a variety of economic concessions from the Persian