

How come Russia thought Great Britain and other European nations would support them in the Crimean War 1853-1856?

- During the Egypt-Turkey conflict 1839 Russia joined Great Britain, Austria and Prussia in a Quadruple Alliance. They sent an allied fleet to Eastern Mediterranean against Turkey. *This cooperation convinced Tsar Nicholas I that Britain would be supportive about the idea of dividing the Turkish Empire peacefully.*
- Then the *"Convention of the Straits"* took place. *This agreement convinced the Tsar that Great Britain would co-operate about dividing the Turkish Empire*
- During 1842 the Tsar visited England. People's open and positive attitude convinced the Tsar that he had Great Britain's support.
- *In 1844 Britain's Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen had a "conversation" with Nicholas I.* Tsar Nicholas thought it was so important that he made a **MEMORANDUM** of this meeting. He asked Lord Aberdeen to sign the notes. The British Foreign Secretary thought he just signed an account of the meeting while *the Tsar thought it was a policy of the future division of Turkey which now Britain was prepared to share in a friendly peaceful way.*
- 1848 – revolutionary year in Europe. In Austria the conservative minister Metternich was forced to retire. Although he had not been very popular in Great Britain he had preserved Central Europe from both French and Russian domination. *When Metternich fell it weakened the balance of Europe and opened for Russian expansion.*
- In France Louis Philippe had been replaced by Louis Napoleon. *To England this seemed to make France stronger and potentially more aggressive.* Due to this *Nicholas I thought that British-French cooperation was "out of the question"* (and he wanted to keep it that way).
- Both *Prussia and Austria received Russian help during the revolutions of 1848.* In Austria the Hungarian revolt was crushed with Russian military aid. By 1850 therefore Austria and Prussia were less negative of former Russian involvement in the European affairs...
- *The Russian involvement in the revolutions of 1848 affected the British public opinion.* Britain had suspected Russian designs on the straits, Constantinople and the route to India. This **RUSSOPHOBIA** grew after 1848-49. This Tsar Nicholas I did not realize.
- *Circumstances in the political life of Britain added problems.* Lord Palmerston - an experienced and well-educated minister was excluded from the foreign office at the beginning of 1850. In 1852 Lord John Russell became Foreign Secretary under Lord Aberdeen. *Lord Russell hated Russian imperialism as much as he hated Papal supremacy.* He thought that Tsar Nicholas only could be checked firmness! Lord Aberdeen thought France was the greatest threat towards Britain. He did not think Russia's foreign policy in Europe was dangerous. Unfortunately, Lord Aberdeen's government was a coalition of politicians with varying ideas. A J P Taylor wrote that *"they brought about war by failing to shout anything"*. Conciliation might have averted war and so might firmness - but the government failed to persist one or the other. Tsar Nicholas I didn't expect Britain to oppose any actions he took...