

See also: GERMANY, RELATIONS WITH; SORGE, RICHARD;
WORLD WAR II

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OPRICHNINA

Tsar Ivan IV's personal domain between 1565 and 1572, and by extension the domestic policy of that period.

The term *oprichnina* (from *oprich*, "separate") denoted a part of something, usually specific landholdings of a prince or a prince's widow. Ivan IV (the Terrible, or Grozny) established his Oprichnina after he unexpectedly left Moscow in December 1564. He settled at Alexandrovskaya sloboda, a hunting lodge northeast of Moscow, which became the Oprichnina's capital. Ivan IV accused his old court of treason and demanded the right to punish his enemies. He divided the territory of his realm, his court, and the administration into two: the Oprichnina under the tsar's personal control; and the *Zemshchina* (from *zemlya*, "land"), officially under the rule of those boyars who stayed in Moscow.

The servitors were divided between the *Zemshchina* and the Oprichnina courts on the basis of personal loyalty to the tsar, but the courts were largely drawn from the same elite clans. The Oprichnina court was headed by Alexei and Fyodor Basmanov-Pleshcheev, Prince Afanasy Vyazemsky, and the Caucasian Prince Mikhail Cherkassky, brother-in-law of Ivan IV. They were succeeded in around 1570 by the high-ranking cavalymen Maljuta Skuratov-Belsky and Vasily Gryaznoy. The Oprichnina army initially consisted of one thousand men; later its numbers increased five- to sixfold. Most of them came from the central part of the country, although there were also many non-Muscovites (Western mercenaries, Tatar and Caucasian servitors) in the Oprichnina. Both the leading Muscovite merchants (the Stroganovs) and the English Muscovy Company also sought admission to the Oprichnina.

To maintain the Oprichnina army, the tsar included in his domain prosperous peasant and urban communities in the north, household lands in various parts of the country (mostly in its central districts), mid-sized and small districts with numerous conditional landholdings, and some quarters of Moscow. The northern lands produced revenues and marketable commodities (furs, salt), the household lands provided the Oprichnina with various supplies, and the regions with conditional landholdings supplied servitors for the Oprichnina army. The territory of the Oprichnina was never stable, and eventually included sections of Novgorod. The authorities deported non-Oprichnina servitors from the Oprichnina lands and granted their estates to the *oprichniki* (members of the Oprichnina), but the extent of these forced resettlements remains unclear.

The Oprichnina affected various local communities in different ways. The *Zemshchina* territories bore the heavy financial burden of funding the organization and actions of the Oprichnina; some *Zemshchina* communities were pillaged and devastated. In early 1570, the tsar and his oprichniki sacked Novgorod, where they slaughtered from three thousand to fifteen thousand people. At the same time, the lower-ranking inhabitants of Moscow escaped Ivan's disgrace and forced resettlements. For taxpayers in the remote north, the establishment of the Oprichnina mostly meant a change of payee.

The tsar sought to maintain a close relationship with the clergy by expanding the tax privileges of important dioceses and monasteries and including some of them in the Oprichnina. In exchange, he demanded that the metropolitan not intervene in the Oprichnina and abolished the metropolitan's traditional right to intercede on behalf of the disgraced. The Oprichnina's victims included Metropolitan Philip Kolychev, who openly criticized the Oprichnina (deposed 1568, killed 1569) and Archbishop Pimen of Novgorod, the tsar's former close ally (deposed and exiled 1570).

The Oprichnina policy was a peculiar combination of bloody terror and acts of public reconciliation. The social background of its victims ranged from members of the royal family and prominent courtiers, including some leaders of the Oprichnina court, to rank-and-file servitors, townsmen, and clergy. Indictments and repressions, however, were often followed by amnesties. The mass exile of around 180 princes and cavalymen to Kazan and the confiscation of their lands (1565) were counterbalanced when they were pardoned and their

property partially restored. As a gesture of spiritual reconciliation with the executed, the tsar ordered memorial services in monasteries for more than three thousand victims. The Oprichnina involved the ritualization of executions and peculiar symbolism that alluded to the tsar and his *oprichniki* as punitive instruments of divine wrath. The *oprichniki* dressed in black, acted like a pseudo-monastic order, and carried dog's heads and brooms to show they were the "dogs" of the tsar who would sweep treason from the land.

The tsar abolished the Oprichnina in 1572 after its troops proved ineffective during a raid of Tatars on Moscow. Together with the Livonian War, famines, and epidemics, the Oprichnina led to the country's economic decline. During the Oprichnina, Ivan IV thought to strengthen his personal security by taking to extremes such Muscovite political traditions as disgraces, persecution of suspects, and forced resettlements. The Oprichnina revealed the vulnerability of the social and legal mechanisms for personal protection when confronted by authorities exceeding the political system's normal level of violence. Transgressions and sudden changes in policy contributed to the image of the tsar as an autocratic ruler accountable only to God. The court system, however, survived the turmoil of the Oprichnina. Despite the division of the realm and purges, members of established clans maintained their positions in the court hierarchy and participated in running the polity throughout the period of the Oprichnina.

Some historians believe that the main force behind the Oprichnina was Ivan IV's personality, including a possible mental disorder. Such interpretations prevailed in the Romantic historical writings of Nikolai Karamzin (early nineteenth century) and in the works of Vasily Klyuchevsky, foremost Russian historian of the early twentieth century. The American historians Richard Hellie and Robert Crummey offered psychoanalytical explanations for the Oprichnina, surmising that Ivan IV suffered from paranoia. Priscilla Hunt and Andrei Yurganov saw the Oprichnina as an actualization of the cultural myth of the divine nature of the tsar's power and eschatological expectations in Muscovy. According to other historians, the Oprichnina was a conscious struggle among certain social groups. In his classic nineteenth-century Hegelian history of Russia, Sergei Solovyov interpreted the Oprichnina as a political conflict between the tsar acting in the name of the state and the boyars, who guarded their hereditary privileges. In

the late nineteenth century, Sergei Platonov took those views further by arguing that the Oprichnina promoted service people of lower origin and eliminated the hereditary landowning of the aristocracy. In the mid-twentieth century, Platonov's conception was questioned by Stepan Veselovsky and Vladimir Kobrin, who reexamined the genealogical background of the Oprichnina court and the redistribution of land during the Oprichnina. According to Alexander Zimin, the Oprichnina was aimed at the main separatist forces in Muscovy: the church, the appanage princes, and Novgorod. Ruslan Skrynnikov accepted a modified multi-phase version of Platonov's views.

See also: AUTOCRACY; IVAN IV

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SERGEI BOGATYREV

ORDIN-NASHCHOKIN, AFANASY LAVRENTIEVICH

(c. 1605–1680), military officer, governor, diplomat, boyar.

Afanasy Lavrentievich Ordin-Nashchokin was born to a gentry family near Pskov in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, probably around 1605. He received an unusually good education for a Russian of the time, learning mathematics and several languages, and entered military service at fifteen. Exposed at a young age to foreign customs, he put his insights and ideas to good use throughout his life. In 1642 he helped settle a border dispute with Sweden, honing his talents for careful