• Lenin feared the ‘Great Russian chauvinism’, he believed that socialism could only be guaranteed if Russian nationalism was suppressed but the fear of Russian nationalism still ran at risk for Lenin

• Stalin, on the other hand, saw everything differently and he was concerned with the growing indigenisation and saw minority nationalism as posing a greater threat (as opposed to Lenin who saw Russian nationalism as the real threat to the establishment of socialism).

• Russification of non-Russian republics began under Stalin. In the late 1930s the Russian language was promoted in schools and even the number of Russian schools was increased. Russian patriotic symbolism was used excessively in propaganda and ideological statements. Stalin concluded that the slogan of Marxism-Leninism had very little appeal and thus, decided to exploit selected aspects of Russian nationalism and patriotism. Terms like ‘rodina’ (motherland) and ‘otechestvo’ (fatherland) were promoted and became commonplace in literature (such words were out of fashion since the Revolution), and WW2 was known as the Great Patriotic War just like how the Napoleonic War was called the Patriotic War, during WW2 the Soviet state called for its citizens to defend the ‘motherland’ and the Soviets adopted a new national anthem, abandoning the socialist Internationale

• Stalin, instead of granting minorities the right to secede and form nations as Lenin had intended, initiated mass deportations and resettlements of minority groups. At least 9 different nationalities were deported between 1935 and 1938 alone. Poles, Romanians, Baltic peoples, Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars and Chechens were resettled or deported between 1939 and 1953

• So, while Lenin sought to give the minority groups in Russia the right to secede and form their own nations, Stalin clearly had no intention of keeping to this. Lenin also sought to suppress Russian nationalism and feared it was a threat. At to the establishment of socialism, Stalin viewed minority nationalism as the bigger threat and endorsed and promoted Russian nationalism instead

Social Policy

• Lenin’s primary social policies dealt with the church and religious affairs. Lenin viewed the Russian Orthodox Church as being a reactionary institution who would react very quickly and given their massive influence, affect the populous if they did not agree with the present Bolshevik government, and thus, the Church posed a major threat to Lenin. The Bolsheviks could not battle the Church on any grounds and survive and this made the Church a proactive force against the Bolsheviks, therefore Lenin sought to completely destroy the Church

• Under Lenin: Church and state were separated, church property was seized and many churches, monasteries, were closed. Religious instruction (like ceremonies) were prohibited and only civil marriage was allowed.

• The Julian calendar was replaced with the Gregorian calendar and titles of nobility were all abolished.

• Lenin recognised the need for change and introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which temporarily restored some capitalist elements back into the economy, Lenin referred to it as “state capitalism”. Although in direct conflict with socialism, a more capitalism-oriented economic policy in the immediate aftermath of the civil war to kick-start the economy (which had been ruined). The complete nationalisation of industry that had been put in place during War Communism was abolished, small and medium-scale manufacture, retail trade and service nationalisation was abolished while heavy industry, banking and foreign trade remained in state control. Some individuals were also granted to set up and run their own small enterprises.

• Stalin’s social policies oriented towards religion were similar to that of Lenin’s; he sought to completely eliminate religion. Many churches, synagogues, and mosques were either closed or put to other uses. Schools, which initially had been told to