As Rome enlarged its territory, its republican form of government grew increasingly unstable. Rome later formed a dictator-slaved empire. There was a growing discontent among the lower classes of society. The gap between rich and poor grew. Rome’s rich landowner’s lived on huge estates. Slaves worked these estates (By 100 B.C. enslaved made up around one-forth of Roman population). Two brothers, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, tried to help Rome’s poor. They proposed reforms like limiting the size of estates and giving land to the poor. Both met violent deaths.

In 60 B.C. Julius Caesar joined forces with Crassus (wealthy Roman) and Pompey (popular general married to Caesar’s daughter) and takes control. For ten years they dominated Rome as a triumvirate, a group of three rulers. Crassus dies in 53 B.C. During 58-50 B.C. Caesar led his legions in a campaign to conquer Gaul (modern day France). His successes made him very popular with the people of Rome.

Caesar defeated Pompey’s troops in Greece, Asia, Spain and Egypt. In 46 B.C. he returned to Rome. Pompey dies in Egypt. Power struggle in Egypt, Caesar sides with Cleopatra. They begin a relationship and she bears him a son, Caesarion. She returns back to Rome.

In 44 B.C. Caesar was named dictator for life. He granted citizenship to many people in the provinces. He helped the poor by creating jobs through the construction of new public buildings. He increased pay for soldiers and started colonies where people without land could own property. Worried about his growing power, and hoping to restore the constitutional government of the Republic, on March 15, 44 B.C., he was stabbed to death in the senate chamber.

Vicit war broke out after Caesar’s death. Caesar’s grandnephew, Octavian, joined Mark Antony and a powerful politician named Lepidus. In 43 B.C. they control of Rome and ruled for ten years. While leading troops against Rome’s enemies in Anatolia, Mark Antony met Queen Cleopatra of Egypt and fell in love with her and followed her to Egypt. Octavian defeated the combined forces of Antony and Cleopatra at the naval battle of Actium in 31 B.C. They killed themselves. Octavian accepted the title of Augustus or exalted one. “Roman was now an empire ruled by one man.” Rome