An attempt has been made in this thesis to analyse the political and economic relations between Japan and the USSR during the years 1945-63, particularly from the point of view of Japan.

Geographic closeness breeds special interests between nations. Hence, even before Japan opened her doors to the West, she had to reckon with the presence of Russia. After Japan ended her policy of seclusion, Russia was a factor which played an important role in Japan's foreign policy calculations. The absence of a strong unified China made Japan and the Soviet Union the two big Powers determining the balance of power in the Far East. Their mutual relations, therefore, were a matter of concern for other Powers, who wished to secure their commercial and trading interests in the Far East. A Russo-Japanese combination could have transformed the Far East into their exclusive domain. Hence, the Western Powers were determined to keep the two balanced in such a way that their own interests were preserved.

The crushing defeat of Japan during World War II in no way diminished her strategic importance in the Far East. The rise of a unified China, professing allegiance to the democratic world, might have relegated Japan to the background
but the establishment of a People's Republic in China once more increased the significance of Japan's role in Far Eastern affairs.

While an analysis of the changed significance of the role of Japan in the deepening Sino-Soviet conflict is beyond the scope of this study, a survey of Japanese-Soviet relations is important to get a correct perspective of the future power relationships in this region.

It is clear from the above, that a study of Far Eastern History would not be complete without an enquiry into the relations between Japan and the USSR. Notwithstanding this, the number of detailed published studies on this vital subject is indeed very limited; many of them are confined to the period before World War II. It was with the intention of filling up this gap, that the present study was undertaken.

The study begins with a brief survey of the pattern of relations between Japan and Russia from the time of their first contacts till the outbreak of World War II. Against this background, an attempt has been made to explain the Yalta Agreement as well as Japan's efforts to secure mediation in the Pacific War. Japan realised very early that rivalry among the Powers could be utilised to strengthen and promote her own position. The sense of competition between the USA and Russia over Japan, which was revealed even at the time of opening the country, came to the
foreground again at the end of World War II. Once again, Japan was given an opportunity to utilise the confrontation among the Powers to promote her own national interest. Therefore, even while examining Japan's relations with the USSR, attention would be focussed not on the bilateral relations alone; but they would be viewed in the wider context of international relations and particularly Japan as seen in the US-USSR conflict.

Was Japan a passive spectator to this contest between USA and USSR? Did she exercise her own judgement in formulating her alliance policy or was she coerced? How far were her past relations with the USSR and the contemporary Soviet policies and attitudes instrumental in determining Japan's policy? Did the Soviet Union make any attempts to draw Japan into her fold? What were the reactions of the Japanese people to these attempts? Since communist ideology would be a binding link with the Soviet Union, how does Japan respond to this ideology? What are the various other factors which could bring them closer? These are some of the questions, which have been examined in this study.

Scholars taking up the study of a contemporary period have the disadvantage of non-availability of all the primary source materials. This difficulty was faced at times in this study also, especially for the period after the San Francisco Conference. Therefore, for this period,
extensive use has been made of the Japanese language newspapers and Soviet Press reports. These were supplemented by memoirs of Statesmen and the publications of the Government of Japan on the various issues.

As regards the period from 1945 - 52, the war trials brought out into the open, many records which might not have been made available for a long time in the normal course of events. These records give a clear picture of the various developments determining the changes in Japan's policy towards the USSR, apart from Japan's decision for War, etc. The US State Department has published the various documents relating to the important wartime Conferences at Cairo, Teheran, Malta, Yalta and Potsdam. Many of the records relating to the occupation era are also published. A perusal of the verbatim record of the minutes of the Far Eastern Commission would have been helpful, but they have not yet been made available to all research scholars. However, the reports of the Secretary-General of the Far Eastern Commission have been published. The US State Department has also brought out publications based on the verbatim record. These publications have been referred to. The verbatim minutes of the Allied Council for Japan have been made available. These primary source materials helped in the reconstruction of the events up to the end of the occupation era.

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