

Aim: Why was Russia backwards in the 17th and 18th centuries?

I Russia under Catherine the Great

- Peter dies in 1724
- Peter III rules until 1761- converts to Orthodox
- Wife is Catherine: German born
- Became empress in 1762
- Selective Westernizer
- Enlightened despot
- Increased power of landlords and nobility over serfs
- Expanded Russia into Siberia, Alaska and Poland

II Serfdom in Russia

- Not original status of Russian peasant
- Peasants were homeless and settled on the land of wealthy Russians
- Mid 17th century serfdom becomes hereditary
- Similar to slaves because they bought and sold, traded and gambled
- peasants were serfs
- Serfs were taxed and policed by landlords
- They were illiterate and punished harshly
- Gov't supported serfdom

III Social Unrest in Russia

- Russia lacks middle class
- Farming was traditional
- Russia lagged behind the West
- Peasants rebel and protest
- Radicals want to end serfdom
- 1770's Pugachev Rebellion called for an end to serfdom
- Pugachev was a Cossack
- Bloody rebellion
- He drawn and quartered in a public square