



# CATHERINE THE GREAT

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# PROFILE

- ❖ Name: **Yekaterina II** or **Catherine II**
- ❖ Reign: 9 July 1762 – 17 November 1796 -longest-ruling female leader of Russia & one of the country's most influential rulers. The *Catherine Era* was known as the **Golden Age of the Russian Empire**.
- ❖ She was born in Prussia & came to power following the abdication and assassination of her husband.
- ❖ Spouse: Peter III of Russia. BUT she had 3 illegitimate children, fathered by 2 different lovers:
  - Anna Petrovna- the **future King Stanislaus II of Poland**
  - Elizabeth Alexandrovna Grigory & Count Alexei Grigorievich Bobrinsky-  
**Orlov**



# POLITICAL/SOCIAL ISSUES

- ❖ Catherine **began as a political and social reformer** but gradually **grew more conservative** as she aged
- ❖ The **Pugachev Rebellion** of 1774-1775 gained huge support until it was extinguished by the Russian army, with Catherine giving nobility greater control over land and serfs
- ❖ She unintentionally gave the **serfs a legitimate bureaucratic status** that they had lacked before as they could now file complaints against landlords
- ❖ But nobles could send their serfs to be **punished in Siberia**
- ❖ She eliminated many ways of people becoming serfs and **established new schools** in which they could learn a trade or get an education
- ❖ A follower of the Enlightenment in 1767, she assembled a group of delegates in order to determine the people's wishes and **compose a constitution**. Unfortunately, it was considered too liberal and **came to nothing**





# FOREIGN POLICY

She governed at a time when the **Russian Empire** was expanding rapidly by conquest and diplomacy, adding 200,000 sq miles to **Russian territory**.

- ❑ In the south, the Crimean Khanate was crushed following victories over the Ottoman Empire in the **Russo-Turkish wars**, and Russia colonised the vast territories of Novorossiya along the coasts of the Black and Azov Seas.
- ❑ In the west, the **Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**, ruled by one of Catherine's former lovers was eventually **partitioned**-Russian Empire gaining the largest share.
- ❑ In the east, Russia started to **colonise Alaska**, establishing Russian America.
- ❑ In the Far East, Russians became active in fur trapping in Kamchatka and in the Kuril Islands. This spurred Russian interest in **opening trade with Japan** to the south for supplies and food.





# ECONOMIC POLICY

Catherine ruled through corruption, scandal, political reforms, and land expansion.'

- ❑ She created many **beneficial trading deals** with countries such as Japan and Britain.
- ❑ Issued the **first paper money** through the Assignment Bank
- ❑ Due to the large amount of Government spending, she created **Assignment rubles**. However, this subsequently lead to a silver shortage.
- ❑ Catherine followed the tendencies of her age in regard to her economic policy and adopted a **Laissez-faire** approach
- ❑ She was interested in the **development of industry and trade**, namely export trade.



# RUMOURS

- ❖ She had an erotic appetite for horses
- ❖ She died while trying to have sex with a stallion
- ❖ She got her friend to test her lovers for her
- ❖ She had MANY lovers
- ❖ She died when a toilet seat broke under her – she actually died of a stroke while on the toilet
- ❖ Potemkin built fake settlements with hollow facades to fool Empress Catherine II during her visit to Crimea and New Russia
- ❖ None of her children were fathered by her husband





Thank you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!