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TOPIC: SOCIAL ORDER IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup>  
CENTURY

GROUP: 20LL5A

# PROJECT PLAN

- TOWNSPEOPLE AND MERCHANT
- STATE PEASANTS AND INTERSTITIAL CATEGORIES
- SERFS
- NOBILITY
- CONCLUSION

# INTRODUCTION

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE EXPERIENCED ENORMOUS GROWTH NOT ONLY IN TERRITORY, BUT ALSO IN POPULATION DURING 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.

NATURAL GROWTH ALONE ACCOUNTED FOR MUCH OF THIS GROWTH-FROM ABOUT TEN OR ELEVEN MILLION INHABITANTS IN 1700 TO ABOUT 28 MILLION BY THE END OF CENTURY.

THE ANNEXATION OF THE NEW TERRITORIES ADDED GREATLY TO THIS AMOUNT, INCREASING THE TOTAL POPULATION TO OVER 40 MILLION IN THE 1790s.

90 PERCENT OF POPULATION BELONG TO THE PEASANTRY AND STILL MORE LIVED IN THE RURAL AREAS.

MUCH MORE WAS AT STAKE THAN THE POLL TAX; REGISTRATION IN THE POLL TAX POPULATION CARRIED ONEROUS OBLIGATIONS LIKE CONSCRIPTION AND CORPORAL PUNISHMENT FORMED THE GREAT DIVIDE IN SOCIAL ORDER.

# TOWNSPEOPLE AND MERCHANTS

- RUSSIA'S URBAN POPULATION WAS, AS ALREADY SUGGESTED, EXCEEDINGLY SMALL —SOME 3 PERCENT ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL CENSUS OF THE 1760s, SLIGHTLY MORE THAN END OF CENTURY.
- THE ELITE IN URBAN SOCIETY HELD THE RANK OF MERCHANTS, THE SUBJECT OF MUCH LEGISLATION IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.
- ACCORDING TO THE SYSTEM IN PLACE BEFORE 1775, MERCHANTS HAD TO HAVE DISPOSABLE CAPITAL OVER 100 ROUBLES TO REGISTER IN THE FIRST GUILD, 50 ROUBLES FOR THE SECOND, AND 10 ROUBLES FOR THE 3<sup>RD</sup>.
- 80 PERCENT OF MOSCOW MERCHANTS REGISTERED IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> GUILD IN 1766 DID NOT ENGAGE IN TRADE.
- EACH GUILD BORE SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND HAD TO BEAR A TAX BASED ON THEIR DECLARED CAPITAL.
- THE MEGISTRATES ALSO HAD TO DEAL WITH MAJOR CRISES LIKE FOOD SHORTAGES AND EPIDEMICS, AS IN MOSCOW PLAGUE RIOTS OF 1771.



# STATE PEASANTS AND INTERNATIONAL CATEGORIES

- THE CATEGORY OF STATE PEASANTS WAS A CATCHALL TERM TO IDENTIFY THOSE LIVING ON STATE LAND AND OWING DUES TO THE STATE RATHER THAN TO PRIVATE LANDLORDS.
- AS FOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITY ,MOST WERE PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE IN THE NORTH .
- SEA WORKED MAINLY AS COMMERCIAL FISHERMANS AND WHALERS.
- ONE IMPORTANT SUBGROUP OF STATE PEASANTS HAD FORMERLY BELONGED TO THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH —PRIMARILY MONASTERIES ,OCCASIONALLY TO PARISH CHURCHES.
- IN 1762 ,HOWEVER PETER 3 SECULARIZED THE CHURCHS LANDED ESTATES AND TRANSFERRED ITS PEASANTS TO STATE JURISDICTION .
- IN 1764 ,SHE CONFISCATED THESE LANDS AND PEASANTS ONCE AGAIN.
- THE PEASANTS POPULATION ALSO INCLUDED A CATEGORIES OF OTHER SMALLER SOCIAL UNITS.\
- A SUBSTANTIAL POPULATION ,THESE PEASANTS WERE ADMINISTERED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCY AND HENCE WERE MORE APPROX. TO STATE THAN SEIGNEURIAL PEASANTS.

# SERFS

- IF ANY POPULATION DID ROUGHLY CORRESPOND TO OUR CONCEPTION OF THE PRIMORDIAL PEASANT WEDDED TO THE LAND ,IT WAS THE SERFS .
- ACCORDING TO POLLTAX CENSUS OF THE 1760s,RUSSIA HAD 5.6 MILLION MALE SERFS .
- BY THE LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY RUSSIAN 'SERFDOM ' BORE LESS IN COMMON WITH OLD WORLD SERFDOM THAN WITH NEW WORLD SLAVERY.
- IF THE RECENT HISTORIANS FINDINGS FOR THE VILLAGE OF PETROVSKOE IN TAMBOV PROVINCE ARE TYPICAL ,OR EVEN WIDESPREAD .
- STILL,THE 2<sup>ND</sup> HALF OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MARKED A MAJOR DETERIORATION IN SERFS LEGAL STATUS.
- PEASANT COMMUNITIES ,MOREOVER ,HAD FEW LEGAL MECHANISMS OF RESISTANCE ;NO LONGER FULL FLEDGED SUBJECTS .
- A HIGHER AWARENESS OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD WAS PARTICULARLY LIKELY GIVEN THE PEASANTS' NON AGRARIAN ACTIVITIES AND THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISPERSION AND INTERMIXTURE OF SOCIAL CATEGORIES ,WHEREBY THE MOST DIVERSE STATUS GROUPS-FROM SERF TO STATE PEASANT —LIVED IN CLOSE PROXIMITY.
- IN SHORT ,NO ACCIDENT THAT IN THE 1770s AND SUBSEQUENT DECDES ,SERFS BECAME INCREASINGLY RESTIVE AND EXHIBITED THEIR OWN JUDGEMENT ON THIS CONSUMMATELY 'IMMORAL ECONOMY' .

# NOBILITY

- THE PETRINE TABLE OF RANKS OF 1722 COMPOUNDED THIS CONFUSION BY CREATING A MECHANISM TO ELEVATE THE MERITORIOUS TO PERSONAL NOBILITY AND, IF THEY ROSE HIGH ENOUGH, TO HEREDITARY NOBILITY.
- NEVERTHELESS, UNTIL 1762 THE NOBILITY STILL OWED SERVICE TO THE STATE, ORDINARILY IN THE MILITARY.
- MOREOVER, LIFETIME SERVICE TOOK NOBLES AWAY FROM THEIR ESTATES, TRANSFORMING THEM INTO ABSENTEE LANDLORDS WHO WERE OBLIGED TO DEPEND UPON STEWARDS TO OVERSEE DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS AND TO MEDIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE PEASANTS.
- SUCH MANagements WAS NOT ONLY EXPENSIVE BUT EXTREMELY INEFFICIENT AND UNRELIABLE, RIDDLED WITH GRAFT AND DECEPTION.
- STILL THE AMBITIONS AND WELL CONNECTED, COSMOPOLITAN SERVICE WAS AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY, BRINGING NOT ONLY STATUS POWER, BUT WEALTH AS WELL.

# CONCLUSION

- ALL OF THESE MATERIAL ADVANTAGES COEXISTED UNEASILY WITH A DEEPENING MORAL DISCOMFORT AMONG THE SERVICE NOBILITY OVER THE LEGITIMACY OF THEIR SPECIAL PRIVILEGE .
- ALTHOUGH MOST STILL SERVED ,THEY WERE NO LONGER BOUND TO DO SO.
- EDUCATED AND LITERARY NOBLES FREELY INVOKED THE LANGUAGE OF FREEDOM ,RIGHTS ,AND VIRTUE AT THE VERY . MOMENT WHEN THEY LEGALLY BECAME THE SOLE GROUP IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY WITH THE RIGHT TO HOLD FELLOW SUBJECTS IN VIRTUAL SLAVERY.
- BUT THE DISCOMFORT WAS REAL AND UNRESOLVED ,EVOKING A RARE BUT IMPORTANT CRIDE COEUR IN THE FINAL DECADES OF THE CENTURY



THANK YOU