



# The reign of Ivan IV the Terrible

After the death of Vasily III in 1533, his three-year-old son Ivan IV came to the throne. Because of his early childhood, Elena Glinskaya, his mother, was declared the ruler. This is how the period of the notorious "boyar rule" begins - the time of boyar conspiracies, noble unrest, and urban uprisings. Ivan IV's participation in government activities begins with the creation of the Chosen Rada - a special council under the young tsar, which included the leaders of the nobility, representatives of the largest nobility. The composition of the Chosen Rada, as it were, reflected a compromise between various strata of the ruling class. Despite this, the aggravation of relations between Ivan IV and certain circles of the boyars began to mature in the mid-50s of the 16th century. Especially sharp protest was caused by the course of Ivan IV "to open a big war" for Livonia. Some members of the government considered the war for the Baltics premature and demanded that all forces be directed to the development of the southern and eastern borders of Russia. The split between Ivan IV and most of the members of the Chosen Rada pushed the boyars to oppose the new political course. This prompted the tsar to move to more decisive measures - the complete elimination of the boyar opposition and the creation of special punitive authorities.

The new order of government, introduced by Ivan IV at the end of 1564, was called oprichnina. The country was divided into two parts: oprichnina and zemstvo. In the oprichnina, the king included the most important lands - the economically developed regions of the country, strategically important points. On these lands settled the nobles who were part of the oprichnina army. It was the responsibility of the Zemshchina to keep it. Boyars were evicted from the oprichnina territories. In the oprichnina, a parallel system of state administration was created. Ivan IV himself became its head. The oprichnina was created to eliminate those who expressed dissatisfaction with the autocracy. This was not only an administrative and land reform. In an effort to destroy the remnants of feudal fragmentation in Russia, Ivan the Terrible did not stop at any atrocities. The oprichnina terror, executions and exile began. The center and north-west of the Russian land, where the boyars were especially strong, were subjected to a particularly severe defeat. In 1570 Ivan IV undertook a campaign against Novgorod. On the way, the oprichnina army defeated Klin, Torzhok and Tver. The oprichnina did not destroy the princely-boyar land tenure. However, she greatly weakened his power. The political role of the boyar aristocracy, which opposed the policy of centralization, was undermined. At the same time, the oprichnina worsened the situation of the peasants and contributed to their massive enslavement.



In 1572, shortly after the campaign against Novgorod, the oprichnina was canceled. The reason for this was not only the fact that the main forces of the opposition boyars were broken by this time and that they were physically exterminated almost completely. The main reason for the abolition of the oprichnina lies in the clearly overdue discontent with this policy of the most diverse segments of the population. But, canceling the oprichnina and even returning some of the boyars to their old estates, Ivan the Terrible did not change the general direction of his policy. Many oprichnina institutions continued to exist after 1572 under the name of the Tsar's court. The oprichnina could give only temporary success, since it represented an attempt by brute force to break what was generated by the economic laws of the country's development. The need to combat specific antiquity, the strengthening of centralization and the power of the tsar were objectively necessary at that time for Russia. The reign of Ivan IV the Terrible predetermined further events - the establishment of serfdom on a national scale and the so-called "Time of Troubles" at the turn of the XVI-XVII centuries.