

# **The Donald W. Treadgold Papers**

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## **Modernization through Resistance: War, Mir, Tsar, and Law in the World of the Pre-Reform Russian Peasantry**

**Hugh D. Hudson, Jr.**

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## About this series

*The Donald W. Treadgold Papers* publication series was created to honor a great teacher and great scholar. Donald W. Treadgold was professor of history and international studies at the University of Washington from 1949 to 1993. During that time, he wrote seven books, one of which — *Twentieth Century Russia* — went into eight editions. He was twice editor of *Slavic Review*, the organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, and received the AAASS Award for Distinguished Contributions to Slavic Studies, as well as the AAASS Award for Distinguished Service. Professor Treadgold molded several generations of Russian historians and contributed enormously to the field of Russian history. He was, in other ways as well, an inspiration to all who knew him.

The *Treadgold Papers* series was created in 1993 on the occasion of Professor Treadgold's retirement, on the initiative of Professor Daniel Waugh. Professor Treadgold passed away in December 1994. The series is dedicated to the memory of a great man, publishing papers in those areas which were close to his heart.

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## **About the author of this issue**

**Professor Hudson specializes in the history of Russia and the Soviet Union. His research spans both Imperial Russian history and that of the Soviet Union, with special attention to the role of marginal social groups in shaping the culture and economic structure of the country. Recent publications include work on Soviet architecture, the role of entrepreneurs in industrialization during the eighteenth century, the role of Old Believers and industrial development, and peasant newspapers during the NEP. Currently, he is working on peasant-state interaction during the 1920s, with special attention to the role of newspapers as a means of cross cultural communication. He is currently Professor of History and Chair, Department of History, Georgia State University.**

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Starting in earnest in the seventeenth century, the tsarist regime sought to break free of the restraints imposed on the mobilization of resources by the tribute collecting hierarchy, a form of state-societal interaction that reached back into Russia's history over some thousand years. This work is concerned with the efforts of the people of Russia to preserve that very social order. Unlike the peasants of northern and eastern Europe whose cultures had been successfully subverted by urban constructs of identity, the Russian peasants struggled to rebuff attempts by both tsarist state and radical intellectuals to subvert the myth of the peasant nation, with its icon of Moscow the Third Rome and the Returning Redeemer. This remained true despite the fact that from at least the time of Peter the Great, the Russian state had been involved in a protracted effort to transform the values and behaviors of its people in a struggle over the meaning of "Russia." This effort centered on the question of what Chinua Achebe has described as that which is "right and natural"<sup>1</sup> and to a great degree paralleled efforts by imperialist regimes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to "Europeanize" the intellectual systems of colonized peoples.<sup>2</sup> In Russia, this interaction between state and people took the form of the state establishing new institutions and the people reacting against these changes. Most analyses of this process have stressed the "conservative" nature of the people's response, especially when those responding were peasants. Paul Avrich, in a commonly cited investigation of the peasants' reaction to modernization, argued that the peasantry looked backwards for its answers and demonstrated an inability to conceptualize within the parameters of the new "modern" state emerging in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>3</sup> This work argues a different understanding; for the case studies presented here detailing peasant resistance suggest a new way of conceptualizing some Russian peasants' relationship to modernization.

What was the peasants' reaction to the state's efforts to harness them more effectively to the demands of the modernizing Russian state? What did they seek to preserve? Why were they so unwilling to join in what Peter the Great would label the "common good"? To address these questions, this study looks at a number of aspects of state-peasant interaction at the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century: the peasants' understanding of what was "right and natural" in their resistance to ascriptive labor in factories as the state attempted to

meet its goals of military/industrial modernization; the peasants' conception of the *mir* as the foundation of identity and as the source of their relationship to the true tsar in opposition to the "colonial" identity tendered by the Europeanized elite; the contested image of the tsar as revealed in the arson panic of the Middle Volga in 1839; and the peasants' understanding of law, and lawful tsar, as the basis for defending what was right and natural, including the peasants' identity as true Russians, as reflected in the peasants' utilization of codified law.

In investigating these case studies, I have employed the term modernization. As is generally understood, modernization theory, which developed within the social science community at the hands of, among others, Walt Rostow, Lucian Pye, Eugene Staley, and Lincoln Gordon as an ideological tool of the Cold War, posited a sharp distinction between traditional and modern societies.<sup>4</sup> The theory rested on the assumption that development from traditional to modern proceeded along a single straight line leading toward capitalism and bourgeois participatory government in an evolutionary, as opposed to revolutionary, process wherein economic, social, and political change were interdependent. Contact with modern societies served to accelerate progress in "stagnant" traditional societies. Traditional societies, according to this theory, are backward because they have yet to attain the path of capitalist modernization, not because they are forcefully articulated into a subordinate position within the world capitalist economy and locked into peripheral class structures, as argued by the dependency-world systems approach.<sup>5</sup>

This essay is not the place to settle this contest between these grand development theories, nor to question postmodernism with its focus on the relationship between actors and structures, free agency and systemic coercions. What is important to recognize is the historical setting in which the Russian elite perceived the necessity to "Europeanize" and modernize peasant society. The overt focus of this drive to modernize the peasantry came to be the agricultural methods employed, particularly strip farming. But the essence of the program was to force peasant society to surrender its values, its definitions of "right" and "natural", and to accept the semi-Europeanized *Weltanschauung* of the post-Petrine elite. The latent, structural goal of turning "Third Rome" subjects of the Muscovite Tsar into "Imperial" rural citizens of Russia was expressed in attacks on the peasants' understanding of labor

obligations, the centrality of the *mir* in all matters effecting the peasantry, the relationship of the tsar to tradition and to traditional obligations toward the peasantry, and the function of customary, as well as written law. Thus within the Russian historical context, modernization was the mobilization of the peasantry to meet the growing demands of the Imperial Russian state, a process interpreted by elites to require the undermining of traditional peasant life and the substitution within village society of a worldview that stressed what the elites defined as rationality and systematization.

## **Russia versus the Russians**

To analyze the reactions of the Russians to the efforts of the state to transform their culture, we must first review the problem of confusion between "Russia" and the Russians. For a long period of time "Russia" did not in fact exist. It had to be created. The Russian state was a myth, produced over centuries by different groups and individuals to meet certain necessities, absolutes that at crucial times radically changed, and produced in their turn fundamental alterations in what was Russia. The "Russians" on the other hand evolved according to another rhythm, one not divorced from the fevered pulse of the state, but which existed parallel to, and in interaction with, the demands of elite-perceived necessity. As the initial effort to construct Russia began in the last quarter of the first millennium, the Russians constituted merely groups of separate tribes and villages, representing numerous modes of existence scattered across an almost indefensible plain that joined Asia to Europe. This plain had always proved difficult to defend from attack from either the East or the West, but especially from simultaneous attacks in the East *and* the West. Subsequently, the peoples of the area spread East and West in waves of cyclical migrations that often corresponded to the cycles of invasions.

Civilization in the territory to become Russia developed within a geography dominated in the north by the tundra and taiga, frozen and semi frozen regions that have historically rebuffed the efforts of agriculturalists to bring more than a tiny fraction of the territory defined as Russia under the plow. Try as both might, neither prayer, nor military action has made the climate propitious for economic prosperity. But the geographic reality that has most shaped the necessities of Russia and the

cultures of the Russians has been the steppe. Before the emergence of the idea of Russia in anyone's mind, the steppe empires ruled: built upon war, plunder, destruction, and murder. In an astonishing simplification of the chariot technology of the great Mesopotamian and Egyptian armies, and following the example of the Assyrians in the last millennium B.C.E. in fighting directly on horseback, the first organized hordes appeared on the steppe around 500 B.C.E. With the advent of horse warfare, riding horseback became the basic fact of life on the steppe. From this point forward, the people of the horse confronted the people of the plow in a struggle to define the meaning of life in the territory that would become Russia. The men on horseback did not attempt to control and direct *only* those people found on the steppe. The rivers of the Russian territory flow north south, and in winter would descend the horsemen from the steppe, riding as far into the wooded areas as would allow them to safely escape before the spring thaw left them trapped in the forests. Among the steppe tribesmen, the necessity to hunt and the importation of new gods that united people beyond the claims of kin or charismatic leadership provided the war machinery, thus permitting the gestation of a state. But the cultures of the forest peoples and the steppe peoples, although bound together in the political structure of steppe empires, do not form a common culture, and do not produce a shared, unified understanding of what is Russia.

As a land highway linking Asia to Europe during the period of the domination of the eastern Mediterranean by Islam, the steppe offered the potential of riches for any group capable of organizing trade and tribute collection. First the Khazars along the Volga, and then the Kiev Rus along the Dnieper, accomplished this organization during the first millennium C.E. By the ninth century, a political structure existed with its center at Kiev that both controlled the trade route connecting the Varangians to the Greeks and that collected tribute from the agriculturalists and hunter gatherers of the forest lands.

But despite the existence of an organized tribute collecting hierarchy, there existed neither a concept of the "state" nor any other abstract construct among the so called princes of Kiev Rus. At most, the territory of Kiev Rus was conceived as the private property of the ruling, Riurik clan. The Kievan-Rus princes and their followers were mostly a military band that organized the raiding of villages for booty with which it could

trade with Byzantium in the south. There existed here no society or community and no common governmental interaction between the villages and the princes. During the winter, the Prince of Kiev and his brothers, cousins, uncles, and hired mercenaries headed north to collect tribute from the villages: usually in the form of slaves, furs, honey, and other forest products. Then in the spring, the group would make its annual trip to Byzantium, whereupon it would engage in trade and then return to pillaging activities. As noted above, aside from the collection of tribute, there was little connection between the towns of the princes and the villages of the people.

If we ask what Kiev Rus was, beyond being the disputed private property of the Riurik clan, then we would have to answer that it, in addition, was basically a myth in the minds of well organized churchmen from Byzantium. A *notion* like a state was in the minds of these churchmen, who intended to convert the region to Christianity and use it in defense of Byzantium. Although these Byzantine churchmen sought to bring a concept of law, organization, and political purpose to the steppe, this celibate, so called black clergy were dealing with the purely monarchical and urban milieu. The vast majority of the population, the peasantry, was outside the church leadership's vision: they were left to the mercies of the white, village clergy, who married into peasant society, and shared its social realities and myths. The leadership of the Orthodox church was far less concerned than the western church in converting the masses; the Orthodox church was engaged in creating and then supporting a political order. Only later would it become concerned with transforming village society to fit its notions of Christian order.

For the vast majority of people in the area that *would become* Russia, contact was not with the "state" but with the person of the tribute collector. The collector was forced to work within the existing social order of rural Russia. Faced with the ever present possibility of peasant flight to the semi nomadic borderlands in the south, the tribute collector was threatened by this form of traditional resistance. Thus the collector had to work through the village elders, the form of government that peasants perceived as *right* and *natural*. A built in conservatism characterized rural Russia, with the collector disinclined to attempt to alter the nature of society. As the collector sought to obtain the tribute, he had to work through the existing social structure and actively maintain the status quo. The collector

attempted to guarantee the tribute through awe; the peasants attempted to control the collector through bribery. Awe and bribery kept the social order in balance. But that order did not permit the easy mobilization of resources to meet what the developing state defined as its necessities. The state's efforts to compel acceptance of its claims on necessity generated conflict and ultimately undermined the authority of the tsar.

## **War, ascription, and resistance**

One of the prime areas of conflict between peasant society and the Imperial Russian state centered on the demands of war. By the eighteenth century, the state became aware that buried underneath Russia's Ural Mountains were huge deposits of the invaluable raw material iron, which, if exploited properly, would provide one of the chief ingredients of an early industrial economy. A prospering iron industry, in its turn, would expand immeasurably Russia's hitherto limited war making capacity. This was no small consideration in the early eighteenth century, an age in which war making was still deemed the major function of the ambitious ruler. Appropriately, no one was more alert to the potential of Ural iron than Peter I, whose reign of some thirty-five years (1689--1725) would be distinguished by only one year completely without war.

Much of what the region lacked in the way of industrial prerequisites, the state itself could supply. Whatever coercion might be required in the process could readily be provided by a Muscovite government that had never cringed from its application. Entrepreneurs, for example, could be created overnight by compelling experienced state servitors and successful merchants to relocate to the Urals to manage metallurgical enterprises. Nor did capital represent an insuperable problem: the long suffering Russian peasant, who had been squeezed in the past to endow the state with the resources it needed, could be squeezed again – and presumably still tighter. With the resulting capital, the state could establish its own iron works or else grant loans and subsidies to private entrepreneurs to do so. This same capital would permit the state and its surrogates to import advanced technology and its bearers from Central Europe. Finally, the state itself, and the army in particular, would provide the market for the finished product. Paucity of labor appeared to be the sole remaining obstacle

separating Peter I from a flourishing metallurgical industry.

The Urals were remote from the substantial population centers so essential to a labor intensive industry such as metallurgy. Granted, there were peoples indigenous to the Urals region: but the Bashkirs and Kalmyks were loath to abandon their nomadic lifestyle, much less adapt themselves to the extreme hardship of hot and dirty hearths. Predictably, all attempts to draw them through manufactory gates proved futile, whether by lure of wages or by fear of the lash. Since Russia was not undergoing an enclosure movement similar to England's, enticing potential workers from more distant population centers was an uncertain prospect at best. The prospect seemed all the more unlikely because the native Russian laboring classes, urban as well as rural, were bound to their places of residence by a combination of debt contracts and state decrees.<sup>6</sup> It was clear to Peter I that the bulk of the metallurgical work force, skilled as well as unskilled, would have to be dragooned to the Urals. The question that the government failed initially to ask, one that would fundamentally shape Russia's future, was how the peasants would respond to this attempt to remove them from their society and culture.

The problem of skilled labor initially proved a relatively straightforward one to tackle. Andries Winius and other foreign born entrepreneurs, such as Peter Marselis and Heinrich Butenant, who were contracted beginning in 1630 to transform Russia's primitive ironworks into a modern metallurgical industry, relied almost exclusively upon Europeans to serve as the core of their skilled labor force.<sup>7</sup> Whenever they requested permission to recruit additional foreign masters, the government almost invariably obliged, provided those masters agreed to instruct native Russians in the art of smelting and forging. By training a skilled native labor force, hired foreigners thus served both to satisfy immediate labor needs and to secure Russia's metallurgical future.

But skilled laborers comprised only one component, and certainly the smallest numerically, of the work force employed by the seventeenth and eighteenth-century iron industry. Water operated iron and copper works craved large numbers of unskilled laborers to perform such time consuming auxiliary tasks as felling trees, burning and breaking charcoal, mining ore, and transporting raw materials to the factory and finished products to market.<sup>8</sup> While the government aided the

manufacturers indirectly in their endeavors to acquire skilled workers abroad, it intervened directly to insure them an adequate supply of domestic unskilled labor. Specifically, the government assigned state peasants on a seasonal basis to new metallurgical works. These peasant workers were known in law as "ascribed peasants" [*pripisnye krest'iane*] and became an integral part of the enterprise, whether state or privately-owned. All adult males were obliged to work a certain number of days per year, theoretically from two to four weeks (although in practice usually much more), in return for which the manufactory owners paid their state obligations [*tiaglo*]; only for labor performed in excess of these obligations were they to receive direct compensation. Determined by the state, the level of compensation, officially termed *plakatnaia rabota*, remained well below what freely hired workers could command. There was no question of compensation for the tremendous distances over which they had to trek in order to reach the workplace. Finally, ascribed peasants had to provide for themselves, their families, and other workers by continuing their agricultural pursuits when not actually employed at the factory.

The policy of ascription was called upon in 1700 when Peter declared war on Sweden, a conflict that impelled the Tsar to transfer his metallurgical industry from the exposed northwest to a more secure base in the Ural mountains. In all of the twenty eight metallurgical works erected in the new base, ascription became the dominant mode of unskilled labor. Starting in December 1702 and January 1703, when the state peasant villages of Aitsk and Krasnopol'sk and the monastery village of Pokrovsk were consigned to the iron works at Neviansk, the pattern was set.<sup>9</sup> By 1719, according to the returns of the first census of tax liable males [*reviziia*], thirty one thousand male peasants had been ascribed to various metallurgical works, nearly thirty thousand of whom had been ascribed to those in the Urals.<sup>10</sup>

The Petrine recourse to ascription provided the Ural metallurgical enterprises with a steady source of unskilled labor; but like the military conscription it paralleled, it failed to ensnare sufficient numbers to satisfy an ever growing appetite. Other approaches were explored. For one, mendicants, street urchins, prostitutes, and other sorts deemed "unwholesome" were swept from the streets and dispatched to factories to spend much or the remainder of their lives in activity judged more useful by the

state.<sup>11</sup> Still, the numbers proved limited. Such was the importance the state attached to metallurgy that, in an effort to offset inadequate labor supplies, it proved willing to impinge on the nobility's traditional all but exclusive prerogative to acquire serfs. Earlier Peter I had permitted Nikita Demidov, as yet a commoner, to purchase peasants to work at his Neviansk ironworks.<sup>12</sup> By decree of 18 January 1721 the Emperor extended to non noble manufacturers in general the right to purchase entire villages for full time work at their enterprises, creating thereby a new category of "purchased peasants" [*kuplennye krest'iane*], to be known after 1797 as "possessional peasants" [*possessionnyye krest'iane*]. Permanently attached to the manufactories for which they were bought, these possessional peasants or, more accurately, "manufactory serfs," were not to be freed, sold separately from the enterprise, or transferred from one enterprise to another.<sup>13</sup> Nor, for that matter, were they to be subject to the recruitment levy: by working in enterprises that supplied the state with essential war material, they were in effect already serving, if not actually serving in, the military. The peasants thus affected supplied not only the supplementary unskilled labor craved by the owners, but with the passage of time semi skilled labor as well.

The ascribed peasants, however, had their own views on labor and necessity. As early as the 1720s, ascribed peasants were resisting compulsory labor and demanding that they be paid for their work the same as hired workers. The core of their resistance was their determination to remain agriculturalists. Rather than perform the tasks demanded of them, the peasants ascribed to the Bymovsk factory sought to hire other peasants so that they could continue to tend their fields. Given the rates set for ascribed labor, this was an impossibility. Ascribed peasants were paid 24 kopeks for felling a *sazhen* (seven cubic feet) of wood and had to pay substitutes 50 kopeks for the work. Similarly, for preparing charcoal they received only two-thirds the amount demanded by hired workers.<sup>14</sup> Only when the rates for ascribed labor increased to those set by the labor market could these ascribed peasants afford to utilize substitutes and thus remain in the fields.<sup>15</sup>

The state's response to the demands of ascribed peasants for wages on par with those received by free labor was to suppress the free-labor market, mandating that "freely hired labor be used only for specialized manufactory work, since the

basic work force is to be comprised of compulsory workers.”<sup>16</sup> To inhibit the hiring of fugitive peasants, the Imperial Cabinet of Empress Anna in 1734 further specified that only those peasants with landlord and government issued passports be employed and ordered runaways who had settled at or near the factories dislodged.<sup>17</sup> The Cabinet forbade the offering of higher wages to lure skilled laborers and decreed that no hired worker could be paid a wage greater than that set for an ascribed worker performing the same task.

That same year the state formulated the fundamental principles upon which all future ascription was to be based. It stipulated that all those who established ironworks would receive 100 to 150 state peasant households for each blast furnace, and 30 households for each forge; as for copper, 50 households, or 200 male souls, were to be provided for every 18 tons produced.<sup>18</sup> Less than two years later, on 7 January 1736, the government took another momentous step by decreeing that all skilled workmen, together with their families were to be permanently bound to their place of employment,<sup>19</sup> transforming most of what free hired labor could be found in the Urals into bonded labor “eternally bestowed” [*vechno otdannye*].<sup>20</sup> The tsarist administration believed that by eliminating the temptation of the higher wages received by free-hired labor, ascribed peasants would have no alternative but to adjust to their status as factory workers. In case that did not occur, henceforth unauthorized departure by such workers would be equated with the crime of flight from the manorial estate by serfs, a crime the state now vowed to prosecute more vigorously.<sup>21</sup>

As noted above, the attitude of the affected peasants was one factor that the government had chosen to disregard when formulating its labor policies. During the 1740s persistent petitions and sporadic strikes alerted both the manufacturers and the government to the fact that all was not well in the Urals.<sup>22</sup> While this initial outburst of unrest represented no mortal threat to either the metallurgical industry or the state, the situation changed drastically in the 1750s and early 1760s, when the strikes escalated into rebellion that engulfed much of the Urals.<sup>23</sup> The threat was all the more serious because once again Russia found itself at war, this time with a great power: Prussia. When the application of military force failed to pacify the region, Russian authorities found themselves compelled to reevaluate their traditional labor policies.

Because ascribed peasants constituted the driving force behind the uprisings at the manufactories, the government of Elizabeth I (1741--1762) concluded that any additional ascriptions would only exacerbate the situation, and accordingly assigned no more state peasants to iron and copper works after 1760. Peter III (1762) and Catherine II (1762--1796), Elizabeth's immediate successors, followed in her footsteps, although neither promulgated formal legislation prohibiting ascription.<sup>24</sup>

Catherine's determination to restrict a specified form of factory coercion had been preceded by Peter III's decision of 29 March 1762 to rescind the law of 18 January 1721 granting non nobles the right to purchase manufactory serfs [*kuplennye krest'iane*] for their works.<sup>25</sup> Henceforth, those of non noble origin who established new metallurgical works were to staff them with hired labor.<sup>26</sup> Manufactory owners of noble birth (but not those who had been ennobled thanks to their economic activity) would continue to be able to exercise their traditional seigniorial right to buy and sell enserfed peasants, be they destined for work on the manorial estate or in the manorial factory.

The government's re examination of two of the three pillars of its labor policy in the years between 1760 and 1763 did nothing to tranquilize the ascribed peasants, since neither the halt to ascription, nor the prohibition of the further purchase of manufactory serfs, altered in any way the status of those already bound to the Ural works. When Catherine II ascended the throne in June 1762, she found by her own account 49,000 ascribed peasants in the Urals (of a total of 142,517 in all of Russia) in open revolt.<sup>27</sup> Many worked at state owned enterprises that had been handed over or sold to high ranking dignitaries: to the Shuvalovs, Vorontsovs, Chernyshevs, Iaguzhinskiis, and others. Not to be satisfied with transfer of the enterprises back to the state, the workers demanded nothing less than emancipation from industrial labor. The organization of the labor force around the factory had provided the peasants with the tools they needed to threaten the government's security and place the metallurgical factories at risk: the very sinews of war. Yet fearing the assuagement of their demands would create an immediate labor shortage, and eventually a halt to essential production, Catherine refused to grant them. In response to this pressure from below, she did, however, dispatch Prince A. A. Viazemskii as personal envoy to the Urals with secret instructions to carry out a thorough investigation of the causes behind the rebellion.<sup>28</sup> The

Prince was to "collect information to determine whether it would be better to carry out mining and metallurgical work with freely paid hired labor, in order, if possible, to avert in the future the causes of such unrest, and to make work as stable and beneficial as possible."<sup>29</sup> Armed with his instructions as well as a manifesto enjoining the rebels in the name of the Empress to return to work, Viazemskii over the course of eleven months slowly succeeded with the aid of guns and even cannons where others had failed over the previous three years: in restoring a modicum of order at the Ural works.

The ascribed peasants took the opportunity of an Imperial inspection to make use of what they believed to be their right and thrust petitions into Viazemskii's hands. Their overriding demand remained the preservation of their agricultural way of life.<sup>30</sup> Appealing to reason, they attempted to explain that the seasonal nature of ascription removed able bodied males from their villages at critical times, leaving only women, children, the disabled, and the elderly to perform the field work upon which the village's subsistence depended. They also pointed to specific abuses by manufactory owners and administrators: low pay and excessive time spent at the works, the need to travel great distances without compensation, collective responsibility for assigned tasks, and even forced resettlement at the manufactory as permanent workers. In one way or another, they all lamented ascription's general threat to their traditional way of life.

Of the petitions considered by Viazemskii, those submitted by ascribed peasants of the Kamsk ironworks proved the most significant. It was on the basis of these complaints that the Prince prepared for the Empress a set of regulations concerning labor to be performed at the works (promulgated on 9 April 1763).<sup>31</sup> The Empress limited the utilization of peasant-workers, stipulating a three month maximum stay for any one ascribed worker at a factory. Factory owners and foremen were admonished not to demand work in excess of the established norms, and ordered to compensate ascribed peasants directly so that they in their turn would be enabled to pay their obligations. The workers were given the right to elect officials who would monitor work performed and wages received, and who had the authority to report abuses to local officials. But Catherine refused to countenance emancipation.

On 17 March 1764, less than a year after the promulgation

of Catherine's edict, Viazemskii submitted his final report to the Empress. Asserting that a combination of excessive work obligations at privately owned enterprises and a tax increase in 1761 had been responsible for the unrest, he proposed corrective measures.<sup>32</sup> Most dramatic was his call for the reassignment of peasant workers ascribed to private enterprises to state owned iron and copper works. Moreover, wages were to be raised to equal those received by hired workers, and travel money paid to all those who had to journey at least 200 kilometers to their worksites. Finally, he suggested measures to regulate the actual work and its organization outlined in Catherine's edict. Like his mistress, Viazemskii believed that improved conditions for the ascribed would aid them in their adjustment to a despised way of life.

Given the long-standing demand by the ascribed peasants that they be paid the same rates as free-hired laborers (so that they, in turn, could hire replacements and thus free themselves indirectly from factory work), the measures suggested, had they been implemented immediately and in good faith, might have calmed the situation in the Urals for some time to come. Be that as it may, Catherine failed to act quickly and decisively, neither making obligatory for the industry as a whole the edict of 9 April, nor following through completely on Viazemskii's recommendation.<sup>33</sup> Not surprisingly, the ascribed peasants remained discontented, and the possibility of even greater disturbances loomed large on the horizon. The stage was set for the advent of Pugachev, who led a revolt in September 1773.

Pugachev found ready recruits among the ascribed peasants: His appeal to the ascribed peasants of the Avziano-Petrovsk ironworks reflects that he, far more than Catherine or Viazemskii, comprehended the peasants' world: specifically how they regarded themselves and "others" and the values according to which they modeled their behavior toward each other and toward the *other*.<sup>34</sup> His "Imperial manifesto" invited factory workers to join the true Emperor and provide him with bombs and mortars and in return promised them "the cross and beards, river and land, grasses and the sea, lead, powder, and every freedom."<sup>35</sup> To the targets of such manifestos, "every freedom" could only mean liberation, while the grant of "rivers and land" must have struck a responsive chord amongst those who yearned for a return to the village and the status of state peasantry. Throughout the southern Urals, ascribed peasants showed their

enthusiasm by either joining the ranks of the rebels or departing for their home villages. By the time the Pugachev Rebellion achieved its zenith in February 1774, 64 of the 129 Ural enterprises, well over 40,000 ascribed peasants, had gone over to the Pretender's camp.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately for Pugachev, the year 1774 also saw his rag tag army crumble when faced with seasoned soldiers fresh from the recently concluded Turkish war, but not before the rebellion had caused tremendous damage to the metallurgical industry of the Urals, estimated at 5,536,193 rubles.<sup>37</sup> But whereas the plants soon began to operate at full force once more, the revolt had a more lasting and significant impact upon the fate of the ascribed peasants.

Catherine II's chief investigator in the Urals, Captain S. I. Mavrin, reported that the ascribed peasants were a driving force behind the rebellion. To explain this, he pointed the accusing finger at those factory owners who oppressed their peasant workers, forcing them to travel long distances to the worksites, in neglect of their agricultural pursuits, and to purchase supplies from company stores at exorbitant prices. Decisive steps, he declared, had to be taken to forestall renewed trouble.<sup>38</sup> But his analyses followed the established line of flawed reasoning regarding the adaptability of the ascribed to the factory. In a letter to G. A. Potemkin, Catherine wrote: "What he says about the factory serfs is well founded, and I think there is nothing else to do but buy the factories; when they are state owned it will be easier for the *muzhiki*."<sup>39</sup> But she failed to go that far and instead, in an effort to remedy the worst aspects of ascription without resorting to emancipation, promulgated on 21 May 1779 a manifesto establishing general regulations for both state and private enterprises employing ascribed peasants.<sup>40</sup> The most significant act of amelioration yet issued by the Russian state, the document defined what exact tasks ascribed peasants could be compelled to perform: woodcutting, the preparation and hauling of charcoal, the transport of ore and sand, and the construction and repair of dams. The manifesto also increased wages substantially and moreover reaffirmed the peasants' right to pay in cash one ruble of their two ruble 70 kopek tax. Catherine could only hope that these regulations would soothe the discontent.

Insufficient though it may have been over the long run, the manifesto did indeed prove successful, temporarily any further major outbursts among the peasant workers.<sup>41</sup>

The manifesto's provisions helped reduce the time spent at the worksite, leaving more time for agriculture; nonetheless, ascribed peasant rebellion had not become a thing of the past, nor had the longing for freedom. By the turn of the century, unrest and renewed strikes by ascribed peasants eventually emerged again as the driving force behind reform. Some members of Tsar Paul I's administration, in particular Chief Director of the Mining Chancellery M. F. Soimonov, were convinced that ascription was creating material loss in the metallurgical industry. Against conservative opposition, Soimonov successfully argued for the gradual elimination of ascription as a labor system on the grounds that it would be more beneficial to free the majority of the bonded workers, who would then constitute a labor pool from which the factories could draw hired workers at nominal wages. Driven by economic compulsion rather than the knout, they would also perform more efficiently than ascribed peasants.

If on the one hand worker unrest was pushing the government slowly towards elimination of ascription, then on the other military necessity was working towards continued reliance on unfree labor. Confronted this time not by a Charles XII swooping in from the North, but rather by a Napoleon Bonaparte threatening an intrusion from the West, the government not surprisingly proved reluctant to abjure unfree labor entirely. In an uneasy compromise between the desire to eliminate the root cause of peasant worker unrest and the perceived need to assure the maintenance of military production, the government concluded that the continuous operation of the metallurgical works would have to be guaranteed in some form. The solution it eventually hit upon and attempted to implement was to retain a percentage of the former ascribed peasants, to be reclassified as "indispensable workers" [*nepremennye rabotniki*], who would now work full time in the factory. Soimonov calculated that the labor of 1000 ascribed peasants could be accomplished by 58 such workers.<sup>42</sup>

Although Paul I on 9 November 1800 issued an edict providing for the introduction of Soimonov's indispensable workers, resistance remained so strong at court that opponents managed to prevent implementation during the remaining months of his abbreviated reign. In tandem with the issue of peasant worker unrest, the question of peasant worker emancipation persisted, as the proposals put forth in Paul's reign were to form the core of Emperor Alexander I's reform efforts. An Imperial

commission headed by I. F. German and A. F. Deriabın, sent to the Urals in 1802 to elaborate a solution to labor unrest among ascribed workers, came out in support of the Pauline solution. In keeping with the commission's report, the Emperor, after instituting martial law at the Ural factories in 1806, finally issued the decree abolishing ascription on 15 March 1807.<sup>43</sup> All told, the decree of 1807 and its subsequent extension to private enterprises in 1813 freed some 217,115 peasants ascribed to works in the provinces of Perm, Tobol'sk, Viatka, Kazan, and Orenburg. Yet the legislation by the same token forced some 17,850 indispensable workers to remain bonded to the Ural metallurgical industry. These workers did not, however, become permanently attached to the enterprises; rather, they were obligated to serve thirty years and their children were obliged to serve for forty years. Once the members of this newly created category reached the age of infirmity, the factories were free of any obligation to them: they were left to fend for themselves.

Frequent uprisings by ascribed workers in those areas untouched by the legislation proved Alexander's emancipation a partial solution, at best, to the problem of labor unrest.

Especially unsettling disturbances devastated the Olonets and Altai regions during the first third of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup> Persuaded that total emancipation was not a proper solution to the labor problem, the state refused to extend the provisions of 1807 to either province. Deeming emancipation in those remote regions too risky – risky since it feared the free market could never guarantee an adequate supply of labor – the state forced the ascribed peasants of Olonets and Altai, along with all other remaining ascribed and possessional peasants, to await the general emancipation that was to come only in February 1861.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Mir* and imagined community**

This prolonged resistance of the ascribed peasants clearly demonstrates that at least some peasants were more than willing to fight to preserve their understanding of what was "right and natural," in their understanding of community. But what exactly was the peasant vision of the just world? That vision centered on the concept of "*mir*," not simply as the assembly of the village or its leaders, but more as the construct of community – a form of imagined community – a holy one of true tsar and people, standing in opposition to the "other" of the gentry.<sup>46</sup> This image

resonated among Slavic peasants throughout the empire and was not peculiar to the ascribed or to any particular geographic area. By the nineteenth century, if not earlier,<sup>47</sup> however, the inability of the tsar to exhibit the characteristics of the “true tsar” had begun to shatter that imagined community.

What, if anything, was to take its place? According to the radicals of mid-century, a community of enlightened revolutionaries and proto-socialists, i.e. peasants, would shortly take form. From an already well told saga, we know that this dream remained exactly that, transforming itself over the decades of the second half of the century into a nightmare of alienation and despair. The radicals’ view was challenged at the time by the Slavophiles who contended that until severed by the Westernizing ways of Peter I and his heirs, an ideology of unity and harmony under God and tsar had bound Muscovite Russia together and should be restored by a return to pre-Petrine truths. Although much has been written on the ideas of the Russian radicals and the Slavophiles,<sup>48</sup> we have yet to explore sufficiently why the Populists, Marxists, and tsarist officials failed to create a nationalizing myth that peasants could accept.

The peasants of European Russia have tended to be analyzed not as who they thought themselves to be, but as others have imagined them. To understand why peasants refused to be bound with the elite in the imagined community of “Russia”, we should recast the way we conceive of state-society relations, viewing in effect, the colonized and the gentry not as literate members of a gentry/peasant imagined Russia, but as part of a Europeanized colonial elite. If we are to view the peasants within their own constructed identities, we need also to understand how they perceived what was necessary to preserve that identity and defend their culture. As Anthony Smith has phrased it, we must investigate the cultural differences of their “vertical ethnies.”<sup>49</sup> We can approach the peasants through a number of sources, including the reports of government officials. As we have seen in the case of the ascribed, however, these were literate outsiders whose cultural prejudices clearly informed their analyses. But properly used, the petitions from the peasantry--and more significantly the folklore that they shared among themselves--together with the reports of investigating commissions and of government officials can give us the insight we seek into the peasants’ world.

Richard Stites has categorized the peasants’ defense as

one of “*volya*, untrammled freedom combined with village order or religious rule.”<sup>50</sup> But in what did “freedom” and “order” consist? What solidarities did they express? Stites states: “Male peasants perceived themselves as equals, calling each other ‘brother’ or ‘Orthodox one.’”<sup>51</sup> This common identity centered around a religious perception of self, wherein descent was perceived through the Muscovite myth of the “Third Rome.” Thus when ascribed peasants called for a return to the status of state peasants, more was involved in their vision of right and natural than simply the elimination of an overlord: Russian peasants envisioned themselves as the last remaining “true” Christians whose purpose it was to preserve the faith after it had fallen in the first two “Romes,” Rome and Byzantium.<sup>52</sup> But by the nineteenth century peasant identity incorporated more than religious myth: secular history too had entered into the process of identity formation.<sup>53</sup>

The general history that the nineteenth-century Russian peasantry shared embraced the founding of the Russian government in the ninth century, the Mongol yoke of the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, the Time of Troubles at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, as well as the reigns of the most powerful rulers. Peasant historical memories, however, focused especially on the defense of the country from foreign invaders. The peasants’ understanding of a common history thus centered on the lives of heroes who had defeated foreign foes.<sup>54</sup> Primary among these were Aleksandr Nevskii, Dmitri Donskoi, and especially the tsars “Terrible” and “Great,” Ivan IV and Peter I. What is significant in this history, of course, is the meaning ascribed to these events by the peasantry. A sense of Russianness was expressed through the designation of certain “others” as the enemy, especially the Tatars, the Lithuanians, and the Polish lords,<sup>55</sup> an identity that also produced a common historical territory defined by the lands surrounded by steppe nomads to the south and east and heretics (Catholics) to the west. A clear cultural geography also existed within “Russia,” with the Russian great lords (boyars) defined in peasant historical memory as the internal enemy at war with tsar and people.

The folklore surrounding Ivan the Terrible, consequently, stressed his struggle with the boyars. A particularly revealing song celebrates the victory over both the external and internal enemies:

The Terrible was a warrior, the tsar, our little father  
The first tsar Ivan Vasil'evich:  
Through the dense forest with his army-strong  
He marched to the Tatar land,  
Into his realm he took Kazan,  
Established his rule over Astrakhan;  
He expelled Perfil from Novgorod,  
But he had not driven treason from mighty Moscow . . .  
Here the Tsar's heart flared up  
Greater than a flame, greater than a raging fire.  
And he looked upon the boyars cold-heartedly  
And they felt it deeply young and old  
And the boyars hid themselves old and young.<sup>56</sup>

In song and story, whether fighting the Tatars or destroying treason amongst the boyars, Ivan always sides with the people, giving proof thereby to his just essence.<sup>57</sup>

With both Ivan and Peter, the image of the tsar underwent a degree of peasantization. This is particularly true for Peter the Great whose image in peasant lore focused on his skills, especially his ability to work with his hands. Peter evolved for the peasantry into the sacralization of "peasant master" (*khoziain*). A tale from Orël province, consequently, reveals not simply his knowledge but also his concern for the welfare of the peasantry. This story recounts that "He knew all handicrafts, and even learned how to plait birch bark sandals. But he cursed this work because the plaiting of sandals failed to provide the workers with enough food to survive on."<sup>58</sup>

Ivan and Peter, the most revered of Russian rulers, emerged thus in folklore as both guardians of the people against all forms of evil and symbols of Russian national strength. The resistance of the peasantry to the post-Petrine state can therefore be understood in part as the result of the failure of nineteenth-century rulers to live up to the mythical image of the "tsars of the glorious past" who were brave warriors, skilled craftsmen, and divinely ordained protective fathers of their people.<sup>59</sup>

The Russia that was to be defended by true tsar and chosen people was inextricably connected to the Orthodox faith. This conjoining of national, patriotic, and confessional sentiments was especially evident in the struggle against Napoleon and was reflected after the Great Patriotic War in peasant songs and tales.<sup>60</sup> It is significant that in the songs, Moscow emerged as the symbol of Russia, the old capital whose

identity is inseparable from Orthodoxy.

It was the combination of a particular type of tsar (the “people’s tsar”), a particular people (one that excluded the landed elite and whose identity was further rooted in the institution of the village commune), and the true Orthodox religion that provided the full definition of Russianness for the peasantry. True Orthodoxy, however, remained a disputed issue even as late as the nineteenth century. The schism within the Russian church of the seventeenth century, which was provoked by changes in church ritual ordered by Patriarch Nikon in order to “return” the Russian church to proper, Byzantine liturgical practice, in many ways was the consequence of a struggle over the meaning of “Russia.” For those who broke away from the reformed church, known as the Old Believers, the essence of Russia was contained in the myth of the Third Rome, whereby both Rome and Byzantium (the “second Rome”) had fallen because of sin. The Byzantine transgression was its willingness at the Council of Florence in 1439 to reunite with Catholicism, thereby forsaking true Orthodoxy. Russia thus had become the last bastion of genuine Christianity whose duty it was to defend truth against the false doctrines of the West. Since the Russian state supported the Nikonian reforms, and thereby denied the heritage of old Muscovy, “once opposition to the liturgical reform and all its implications carried the Old Believers into opposition to the Russian state, their movement became a rallying point for the discontented and dispossessed of Muscovite society.”<sup>61</sup> As Geoffrey Hosking has asserted, the issue is not the actual number of peasants who openly (or even secretly) professed the Old Belief; rather, what was significant was the old “national” ideal of Russia that was expressed through the Old Belief. And that ideal was central to the peasant definition of Russianness – a Russia without landlords, serfdom, taxes, or recruitment, a Russia of self-governing communes whose cultivators owned their land, and were ruled by “a benevolent, patriarchal monarch professing the ancient Russian faith.”<sup>62</sup>

The historian G. A. Kavtaradze goes so far as to argue that by the middle of the nineteenth century “the law of the tsar and the law of the [peasant] commune had assumed a mutual identity [. . .] In the tsar they saw the *source* of the law, which they put into practice themselves in the commune.”<sup>63</sup> Beginning at least by the late eighteenth century, peasants were more and more incorporating into their self-identification not only secular

history, but they were also assimilating codified law into the defense of their community.<sup>64</sup> In his investigation of the use of written law among peasants in the north during the period 1750 to 1796, A. V. Kamkin noted 966 citations from 65 legal acts in effect during the second half of the eighteenth century. Among state peasants, the most frequent citations dealt with rights to land allotments and other issues of land utilization, especially efforts by non-peasants, including landlords, to obtain lands held by state peasants. Other matters concerned the rights of the *mir* to regulate tax collection and require labor services as well as recruitment obligations. Individual legal rights were also addressed, as in the case of the retired soldier Ivan Mingalev, who upon his return to his village, successfully appealed to the lower land court—with a direct citation of the law—to protect his and his children's right to a land allotment.<sup>65</sup> The peasants were not simply using law as a cover for their struggle for freedom from the other (the landlords); rather, they believed that their positions were legal (and just) and that the law (*pravo*, etymologically and conceptually closely related to *pravda*, truth) objectively applied, would support their cause.<sup>66</sup>

Although peasant society often continued to function outside the currents of legal consciousness that were gradually establishing the supremacy over the claims of customary law within elite society,<sup>67</sup> the interaction between custom and law was far more influential toward peasant defense of identity. Already by the late eighteenth century, peasants were willing to turn to formal written law when custom failed to protect their economic viability, especially as concerned land rights.<sup>68</sup> They also resorted to codified law to protest increases in obligations, revealing in the process considerable knowledge of laws regulating such matters as trade, handicrafts, passport restrictions, the right to hire oneself out for labor, and procedural regulations.<sup>69</sup> Rather than being separated from the emerging legal consciousness of urban society, and rather than simply being ignorant of the law, the peasants interpreted the law through their own “filters” of justice to defend their understanding of what was right and natural, what was “Russian.”<sup>70</sup> In examining peasant petitions prior to emancipation, Vsevolod Kruitkov has found that peasants utilized 22 laws contained in the Code of Laws of the Russian Empire of 1842.<sup>71</sup> This ability to incorporate codified law into the defense of their interests was based in part on a greater degree of

literacy among the peasantry of the first half of the nineteenth century than formerly assumed, a literacy that was especially developed within the schismatic Old-Believer culture.<sup>72</sup>

By the late eighteenth century, tsar and law were to defend especially the rights of the commune [*mir*], an institution central to the creation and preservation of peasant identity in European Russia. In fact, despite the stresses on the commune as a consequence of emancipation and movement toward a more commercial agriculture, the *mir* continued to provide solidarity throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, as witnessed by its role in peasant strikes during the revolutionary years 1905-07. According to Teodor Shanin, “[rural strikes] were mostly led by their communal assembly [*mir*], which decided on the strike, established its aims, supervised its execution, and manned its pickets.”<sup>73</sup> The centrality of *mir* for identity was also evidenced by the fact that in 1905-07 “rich peasant landowners and/or employers were seldom harmed.” In the upheavals of 1905-07, 75.5% of the attacks were aimed at nobles; 14.5 % at police or army; 1.4 % at rich peasants; and 8.7 % at all others, including clergy.<sup>74</sup> Communal solidarity was expressed most clearly in the aims set forth for the peasants’ new Russia of 1905. Shanin concludes that despite differences of geography (non-Black Soil vs. Black Soil) and the existence of social stratification among villages, a common set of demands emerged for a repartition of the land, for a land utilization “labor principle”, and for more local control – an ending of *proizvol*, that is, of arbitrary interference in life by the state.<sup>75</sup> There emerged then in this period of great stress and strife a clear sense of peasant identity.

This peasant solidarity transcended divisions that were supposed to emerge as class stratification developed within the peasantry; but as Paul Gilroy has argued, radical traditions among groups “whose enduring jeopardy dictates that the premises of their social existence are threatened” can be the most radical.<sup>76</sup> The Russian peasants’ awareness of their “peasantness” (their “Russianness”) in the face of constant pressure to provide the surplus demanded by elite society (within a cultural construct not of their own making), ensured that almost all efforts to entice them into the revolutionary politics of urban based revolutionary nationalism would be perceived by the peasantry within the paradigm of mortal struggle for cultural preservation. Such populist nationalism was merely the Imperial Russian form of

east European national awakening and intellectual longing for the creation of a nation, yet could not create with the peasantry a new concept of "Russia" because there already existed one within peasant society, one that would be defended against elite imagining.

This is not to romanticize the nature of the *mir*, as was done by Alexander Herzen and others who claimed that embryonic socialism was located within the village commune.<sup>77</sup> While it functioned as the intermediary with all outside forces, it also served to maintain patriarchal authority. As the institutionalization of the patriarchy, it allowed the *bol'shak* (household head) to exploit more effectively the members of his own household. Nonetheless, Steven Hoch concludes: "While these elders did support individual heads of households in dealing with recalcitrant family members, the patriarchs, who embodied communal wisdom, experience, interests, and action, did much to bind the peasants together."<sup>78</sup>

It is perhaps in the area of political culture that the failure of elite society to replace this exclusionist peasant community with a more inclusionist national one is most apparent. James Scott has argued that:

The closeness of an elite's culture to that of its peasantry depends, in large part, upon how its great tradition developed. Broadly, we may distinguish between what [McKim] Marriott calls an "indigenous" civilization that largely represents an elaboration or "dignification" of elements already present within its little tradition (e.g. India and China) and a "borrowing" civilization in which much of the elite culture is based on outside models (e.g., much of Southeast Asia).<sup>79</sup>

Russian elite society of the Imperial era represents the archetype of a borrowing civilization, if not a "borrowed" one. While the elites were being compelled by the Petrine-Catherinean state to change not merely their clothes but also their mentalités, abandoning received ways of regarding the cosmos, themselves, one another, and others, and adopting new values according to which they would model their behavior toward each other and toward the other, the Russian peasantry was engaged in a struggle to emulate the Great Muscovite orthodoxies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>80</sup> Only the most committed were willing to defend the old culture, expressed in religious terms as the Old Belief, if it meant confronting government troops (whose

penchant for flogging, branding, tongue extracting, and burning alive was “ameliorated” to merely a double taxation under Catherine the Great). It has thus been estimated that some ten out of the total fifty-one million Orthodox believers in the mid-nineteenth century accepted the Old Belief with its conviction that the Petrine state was the manifestation of the Antichrist.<sup>81</sup> The numbers who sympathized with the Old Belief, but were reluctant to commit to it, became far more numerous after Nicholas I began to persecute them more vigorously during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup>

The chasm that now separated the two cultures was perhaps most strikingly manifested in the efforts by members of the elite to replace God with the tsar as the true source of all power. As Stephen Baehr has expressed it:

[B]eginning in late seventeenth century and gradually increasing throughout the eighteenth century, Russian panegyric culture portrayed the tsar as an icon of God and his Russia as an icon of the heavenly world. In the process, the ruler cult from which the icon had in part originated and the medieval lore of divine kingship were [at least rhetorically] restored in Russia.<sup>83</sup>

Restored, however, for whom? What Baehr fails to appreciate in this analysis is that the very act of attempting to turn the tsar into a Messiah (Greek: *khristos*) who no longer revered the culture of the Russian peasantry (the Muscovite vision of *Rus'*), but rather *replaced* tradition with borrowings from the infidel West, deprived all tsars from Peter the Great onward of the right to lay claim to such medieval lore, as peasants saw it.

Peasants often crafted songs and tales to resist the claims of the elite, such as those inspired by the uprisings of Razin and Pugachev, stressing the wickedness of the nobles and the almost saint like characteristics of the rebel leaders. Both Razin and Pugachev were treated as mystical forces who continued to live on and whose opposition to the elite was an all but religious act.<sup>84</sup> It is also worthy of note that Pugachev in song and story was often referred to as “Peter III,” his claim as pretender.<sup>85</sup> The most powerful of these myths concerned the return of the true tsar, the “Returning Redeemer” [*vozvrashchaiushchii izbavitel'*], who appeared beginning in the seventeenth century in the form of the pretender.<sup>86</sup> The legends associated with these pretenders contained an expression of the peasants’ desires, hopes, and ideals. The peasants, however, needed a “tsar” to grant them their desires; without his approbation, rebellious peasants were

but brigands. The image of the "true tsar" thus was not a product of church-hierarchy culture successfully transmitted to a gullible peasantry in order to establish firmer control over the people, an effort that would have been made even more difficult by virtue of the existence of a married clergy in the village, but little removed from the rest of the peasantry. On the contrary, it derived from the bottom up and reflected the peasant concept of the nation, a unity of the common people and the father-protector. A true tsar thus firstly had to be a "natural born" tsar who desired the best for his people, but was prevented from doing what was best by the machinations of the evil aristocracy (*boyars*).<sup>87</sup> What is essential to understand, however, is that any tsar who ruled for any length of time lost his (and in the eighteenth century most often *her*) right to be considered a "redeemer"; the connection of the ruler to the Russian state destroyed any bond with the people.<sup>88</sup> Thus the idea prevalent in studies of the Russian peasantry of a class laboring under the delusion of naive monarchism misses the crucial point that the ruling tsar is never the "true" tsar. By the eighteenth century, the peasantry in those areas where Pugachev either received peasant support or where he was later glorified in song (significant expanses of the Russian south and east and extending into the Muscovite heartland) give evidence of their discarding of earlier anti-boyar legends, substituting for them anti-tsarist ones that were expressed in the form of the struggle to replace a "tsar-oppressor" with a "people's" tsar.<sup>89</sup> While such a reaction may indeed have been strongest in the Volga and Urals regions, it should nonetheless give pause to any contrary assumptions about peasants in other areas of the empire.

But as Scott has noted for Southeast Asia, such fragmented expressions of opposition, especially when joined with religion, can transform themselves into revolutionary movements whose demiurge is a utopian vision, which "entertain[s] quite worldly ambitions for salvation on this earth."<sup>90</sup> This was most clearly expressed in Pugachev's manifesto of 31 July 1774:

We, by the grace of God, Peter Fedorovich, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias . . . grant by this our personal *ukaz* with royal and fatherly charity to all who were previously peasants and subjects of the landlords to be true and loyal servants of our own throne and *we reward them with the ancient cross and prayer, with bearded heads, with liberty and freedom to be forever Cossacks, demanding neither*

recruitment levy, poll tax or other monetary taxes, and we grant them the ownership of the lands, forests, hay meadows and fishing grounds, and salt lakes, without purchase and without quitrent, and we free the peasants and all the people from the taxes and burdens previously imposed on them by the villainous nobles and mercenary town judges.<sup>91</sup>

As evidenced by the reception Pugachev received, these were powerful words that rang true to the ascribed and other peasants' vision of a just world.

Having rejected the reformed religion of the Nikonian church and the Petrine state that supported it, what did the peasants seek in government? Expressed within the terms of the dominant ideology as a "true tsar," the peasants were seeking local control and the absolute authority of the father. However the tsar was "true" [*istinnyi*] only when he was a magnified reflection of the peasant master, the *khoziain*. Discussing peasant revolts, David Goldfrank expressed the political myth thus:

The standard programs for the actual revolts included an abolition of serfdom and other forms of bondage and the establishment/reestablishment of a cossack-type democracy resting on patriarchal families for all plebeians. Popular ideals of *pravda* [truth] and vengeance, naive monarchism reflecting the patriarchal structure of peasant families, and cossack, villager, and *odnodvoretz* [homesteader] memories or fear of lost liberties combined with such utopian myths as that of "Nikita's estate," an alleged grant in a *bylyna* [folk epic] of a cossack territory removed from state control and free from seigneurialism.<sup>92</sup>

The name of the tsar was in fact often used in defense of peasant protests against the tsarist system. But the image of the tsar, and the union of the people with the tsar based upon this imagining, was already suffering tremendous stress in the pre-reform era. As discussed above, this was clearly revealed in the violent peasant resistance to increased demands of the tsarist state, reaching extraordinary peaks during the Pugachev rebellion of the late eighteenth century and again with the 1905 Revolution. In between these apexes, peasants usually utilized complex, but far less tumultuous, methods of resisting the authority and often the legitimacy of their overlords, while at the same time asserting that they had the right to live their lives within their own framework of meaning.<sup>93</sup> These supposed

weapons of the weak represented a fundamental struggle between peasant and elite society over that which was considered "right and natural," as noted above. However, periodically during the nineteenth century peasants substituted more lethal weapons for passive ones. In examining cases of peasant violence, recent scholarship has postulated that peasant belief in the Old Regime's weakness was a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century and primarily one associated with a perceived breakdown of the state's coercive power.<sup>94</sup> While that may well be true, other forms of delegitimization of tsarist power were at work earlier in the century, processes that significantly undermined state authority well before 1905.

### **Redeemer tsar and true people**

Of the forces undermining state authority, one of the most powerful was the desanctification of the image of the tsar. This process revealed itself forcefully in 1839 during the height of an arson panic and chiliastic movement that swept the Middle Volga region.<sup>95</sup> Arson, to be sure, has a long history in Russia. Examining its function, V. I. Semevskii, the foremost nineteenth-century Russian historian of the peasantry, noted that peasant petitions seldom led to any amelioration of conditions, and thus peasants were forced to resort to other forms of protest against oppression. Chief among these, he argued, was arson.<sup>96</sup> But Semevskii also contended that the peasants used arson as a means to ruin their lords in hopes of thereby achieving a means to purchase their freedom. Therefore, he reasoned, arson should be viewed as either an explosion of peasant irrational frustration or evidence of their proverbial extraordinary craftiness [*khitrost'*]. But there is significantly more at work here than simply "prerational," primitive behavior.

As is known, the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century was a period of contested definitional space, providing a focus for a violent struggle to determine what view of the world *as it should be* would prevail. Elite society sought to justify the world as it presently existed, whereas the peasantry called into question not merely the right of the gentry and the state to exploit its labor, whether as ascribed peasants or serfs, but also the image of the tsar. In the process, the arson panic of 1839 occasioned conflict over the meaning of the fires, with all who were caught up in the events submerging the fires

into preexisting frameworks of thought and meaning.<sup>97</sup> Through petitions and reports, a rhetorical struggle unfolded with gentry and officialdom attempting to preserve their hegemony during a moment of crisis, and the peasantry invoking alternative images as a mechanism to challenge authority. The gentry particularly desired to delegitimize peasant disturbances by refusing to see them as forms of rebellion and instead conflating them with crime.<sup>98</sup> The peasants took the occasion of the fires as an opportunity for transference, generalizing from an attack on a specific agent of evil—an arsonist—to an attack on all who were defined as being enemies of the peasantry, a process of analogy and transference analyzed by Ranajit Guha with respect to aggression by Indians against all Europeans and the principal native collaborators of the Raj.<sup>99</sup>

But more was disputed than simply gentry-dominance or even membership in the “community”; for in 1839 it was the very definition of “tsar” that was ultimately contested. Rather than being a question of whether the peasants were “for or against” the tsar, at this point in Russia’s history several competing images of the tsar were available to the peasantry in pursuit of their interests. The image of the tsar thus became a peasant rhetorical weapon, not merely a hegemonic weapon of the strong. This rhetorical struggle parallels the fight over the meaning and use of law within peasant society, where peasants *would use* those laws that provided them with protection against over exploitation, but *deny* the legitimacy of law when they saw it as disadvantageous to their interests.<sup>100</sup>

As in any peasant society where the landlords have access to almost all the levers of formal power, only the most determined of peasants are likely to attack that power frontally. What is far more common is a small scale war of propaganda denigrating the opposing side – “lazy, crafty peasants” versus “evil, rapacious landlords” – which has been described as “a critique of things as they are as well as a vision of things as they should be.”<sup>101</sup> An analysis of the charges leveled by the peasants against the lords in 1839 provides some understanding of how far the peasants believed the lords had deviated from acceptable norms of behavior, how far the lords had traversed in removing themselves completely from the peasants’ *mir* – that is, their world, their community, the place where their God, and His justice, resided. Similarly, the elites’ efforts to construct peasant resistance as “crime”, provide insight into how the gentry and

officialdom hoped to prevent peasants from imagining a different moral universe. But most importantly such an analysis permits a better appreciation of the contested image of the tsar in the peasant struggle to reestablish justice, what the peasants referred to as *pravda* [truth] as opposed to *krivda* [crookedness].

The scene of this particular struggle was the Middle Volga, one of the Great Russian regions of the Empire, but a territory with significant numbers of Ukrainians as well as non-Slavic peoples. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Middle Volga had been essentially a frontier region with open lands and forests that had beckoned runaway serfs, deserters, Old Believers, and other religious schismatics and sectarians. Not surprisingly, it had been a major center of support for Cossack-led revolts, including the great Pugachev rebellion. Serfdom had come late to the area: the first land grants had been made to nobles in the 1690s, but the most significant grants came, in fact, only after the Pugachev rebellion. Thus, as two specialists on the region have argued, "the peasantry's collective memory incorporated the pre-serfdom past, which contributed to the oft-noted rebellious nature of the local population and sharpened agrarian relations."<sup>102</sup> Given the newness of serfdom to the Middle Volga and the memories of peasant rebellion from the eighteenth century, as well as the mix throughout the region of more recently arrived serfs with state and appanage peasants who remained largely free of noble interference, the region was in danger of exploding.<sup>103</sup> In 1839 the region did indeed explode.

A few years earlier, in 1833 and 1834, the Middle Volga had suffered from serious harvest failures that came on the heels of the cholera epidemics of 1831 and 1832.<sup>104</sup> As a result, peasants from the area had played a significant role in the illegal flights to the North Caucasus that marked the years 1832--1837.<sup>105</sup> Both state peasants and serfs had also been caught up in the chiliastic movement that swept through the region in the 1820s and 1830s, a phenomenon that was destined to influence significantly the rhetorical battle.<sup>106</sup> In 1839 the crops again failed. According to a report by the tsarist secret police, the Third Section, although generalized famine was not to be expected, hunger had already struck.<sup>107</sup>

As the summer moved into July and the drought continued, fires became ubiquitous. They eventually spread from Simbirsk into 13 other provinces in central Russia, western Ukraine, and the Urals.<sup>108</sup> In Penza province alone, seven towns

and numerous villages burned in August.<sup>109</sup> In the region of greatest concentration, an area approximately 130 miles in diameter centered in the Sengilev and Szyran districts of Simbirsk province, some 34 major fires broke out in the period between 8 May and 6 July 1839.<sup>110</sup> Everywhere the fires led to various forms of peasant disturbances, from refusals to work to attacks on strangers, local officials, landlords, and especially Jews, as well as to the spread of rumors, the peasants' dominant rhetorical weapon. The most prevalent of the latter attributed the fires to arson conducted by the landlords in an effort to ruin their peasantry, who, the rumors proclaimed, had been designated to be freed or given in dowry to Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna on the occasion of her marriage. Other rumors spoke of the miraculous appearance of the late Grand Duke Konstantin who was to rescue the peasantry from the lords, of government calls to execute the landlords, and, finally, of the government's own campaign of arson in connection with a new plan for resettling the peasantry.<sup>111</sup>

Major General of the Corps of Gendarmes Perfil'ev headed an investigation into the fires that concluded they were the result of carelessness by the local population during a heat wave and prolonged drought. Some cases of arson were indeed discovered, which the general dismissed as the work of people "of a vicious character" seeking an opportunity to steal during fires and of local people carrying out vengeance against their neighbors and hoping to pass blame on to the Jews.<sup>112</sup> But Perfil'ev found neither proof of conspiracy, nor any political content whatsoever in the arson. All of the rumors, he concluded, were simply the result of panic. Given, however, the central role of arson in peasant assaults against enemies worldwide and throughout time, as well as the tendency of officials such as Perfil'ev to conflate peasant forms of rebellion with "crime," a closer analysis of the fires and their meaning is necessary.<sup>113</sup> Regardless of the existence of arsonists, the behaviors based on belief in the above-mentioned rumors are far more important than the results of the official investigation for an understanding of the images held by peasant and gentry society of one another and of the peasant *mentalité*, especially their understanding of legitimacy.<sup>114</sup>

The fires produced extraordinary violence.<sup>115</sup> In the state peasant village of Volynshchina the peasants first refused to heed the orders of the local police and then proceeded to threaten

the district marshal of the nobility, whom they suspected of arson. At the estate of Count Levashev one of the village officials incited the peasants of Gorbunovka village to take up their axes and cut down all the officials at the first sign of fires. This transference should have been the most troubling to the authorities. It indicated not simply a desire to seek revenge on those guilty of a particular grievance, but an attack on all who were defined as hostile to the peasantry, irrespective of the initial impulse.

We see in the violence of this period a mix of both retributive killing – in which there was no reference to “turning the world upside down” but rather “murder . . . charged with the memory of wrongs suffered”<sup>116</sup> – and a generalized desire to destroy all adversaries. This latter transference can be seen in an attack on two village clerks in the Tatar village of Timoshkina. In yet another example, the serfs of Rep’evka village, believing that their lord had ordered the village burned, tied the steward behind a horse, dragged him to death, and then proceeded to torture his son.<sup>117</sup> The village priest, attempting to defend the steward, was set upon by the crowd and just barely obtained sanctuary in the church. Similarly, the peasants of Topornina accused their lord of arson and then severely beat him. In the state village of Baltai in Saratov province the peasants burned to death two of their own whom they suspected of setting fires. The Tatar appanage villagers of Staro-Timoshkino seized the head of the Ankudinovsk chancery who had come to fight the fires, severely beat him as well as two village scribes, and then hogtied the three before turning them over to the district police officer. In another case of transference, these villagers threatened to murder any appanage administrator who attempted to enter the village. The head of the Bol’shesaimansk chancery was somewhat more fortunate; he and two scribes were suspected of arson, taken prisoner, then held for two days under guard by the Tatar appanage villagers of Akhmetlee before being turned over to the district police. The Penza provincial surveyor Larianov was not so lucky. Seized by the peasants of the state village Domoserdkova together with his valet and an accompanying soldier, all suspected of arson, he was first interrogated, then beaten, bound hand and foot, and tethered to a post, where he was left for more than a day. In the town of Kuznets, vigilantes roamed the streets seizing, beating, and incarcerating anyone whom they imagined an arsonist; three suspected people were

thrown into fires. In two of the last manifestations of the panic, in late August, the villagers of Tartarskaia Laka beat to death the nobleman Ivan Duralov whom they suspected of setting fire to his own home, while in Mordovskaia Muromka, the peasants assaulted, and then burned alive, the merchant Pavel Kanakeev following a fire in the village.<sup>118</sup>

Whereas the peasantry utilized a rhetoric of retribution against arsonists, intermixed often with transference of guilt to any perceived threats, the officials attempted to explain events utilizing a language of criminality, conspiracy, and coercion. But just as the rhetoric of the peasantry often made it difficult to distinguish between immediate perpetrator and larger enemies, so the official discourse on the fires, in which the latter were cast as "crimes", made it all but impossible to comprehend the actions of the peasantry. Governor N. I. Komarov of Simbirsk province was particularly troubled by three of the murders that were committed during the course of the panic. In the village of Iurlovka, the district police chief was killed by the peasants in response to the outbreak of fires, just as were the landlord and his valet in the village of Shigona. Komarov saw evidence here of a well-orchestrated conspiracy.

Karsunsk district, in which Iurlovka was situated, was a center of great peasant disturbance during the summer of 1839. The district was composed of a number of petty landlords as well as a preponderance of *odnodvortsy*, descendants of military servitors who were settled on the southern border of Muscovy to provide the first line of defense against invading tribesmen from the steppe, and who, by the nineteenth century, had been reduced, despite much protest and occasional violence, to the status of state peasants. Numerous peasant villages were located in the wooded areas surrounding the lords' domains and the holdings of the *odnodvortsy*. Fires broke out in those villages, including Iurlovka, in late May. In response to a circular letter from Governor Komarov, the Karsunsk District Police Chief, Koliupanov, ordered the chief and the local police to gather troops from the reserve battalions and investigate any suspicious fires. The chief arrived in Iurlovka shortly after the first fire. As he prepared to leave, a second fire erupted, arousing suspicion that the local police chief was an arsonist. Hardly had the second fire begun to burn when he was set upon by the villagers who proceeded to beat him along with the estate clerk. When flint for lighting a pipe was discovered in his carriage, his fate was sealed.

The peasants proceeded to beat him by turns and then, over his pleas for mercy, tossed him repeatedly into the fire. Stripped naked and barely conscious, he was piled in a cart by a village official and taken for assistance to the home of a neighboring lord, Nemchinov. But his wounds were mortal; he died a few hours later.<sup>119</sup>

A second murder took place in the village of Shigona, which included both agricultural serfs and peasants assigned to factory work. According to Governor Komarov, this was a particularly disobedient village, as witnessed by the peasants' refusal to lower their caps upon his arrival. Here the outbreak of fires had produced rumors that the lord, Krotkov, had ordered his estate burned in order to prevent it from being seized for indebtedness and transferred to the heir to the throne as his personal estate. The peasants, already angered by Krotkov's harshness and his excessive demands for labor, seized their lord when the fires broke out, beat him, threw him into the fire, and then murdered his valet.

The fact that these murders had taken similar forms, occurring at opposite ends of the province some 140 miles apart, proved to the governor that a well-organized conspiracy existed throughout the province. Particularly alarming to the governor was the fact that the victims had not been killed by a single individual but had been collectively beaten and then thrown into the fire, and further that large numbers of villagers were "forced" by the ringleaders into participating in the acts. He was certain that the ringleaders had spread rumors through the markets and taverns regarding the lords' responsibility for the fires, but the goals, and also the speed, of the uprising were "incomprehensible." He also confessed that he was at a loss as to how to subdue the rebellion completely, as "I did not see in the people either a belief that they had acted unjustly or illegally or true repentance."<sup>120</sup> Consequently, he argued, he was forced to rely on fear and "inspiration through punishment . . . to bring the peasants quickly to their senses." There followed over a week of interrogations, public floggings, head shavings, exilings, imprisonments, and forced oaths of loyalty to the lords as the governor rode through the province under the protection of cavalry and infantry. Given the rhetoric used to conceptualize and explain the violence, it was impossible for the governor to comprehend what was taking place, even if he had not been engaged in a clash of opposed interests. The fires had provided

the peasants with justification to move from everyday forms of subservience to extraordinary forms of resistance, but to Komarov the peasants were simply engaged in crime.

To explain the peasants' behavior, Governor Komarov also had to resort to rumor and myth. The governor reported to the Minister of Internal Affairs, A. G. Stroganov, that exiled Poles had managed to bribe the peasants into setting fires.<sup>121</sup> The local officials were convinced that only some alien force, some social group divorced from "the people," could be responsible for the disasters of that summer. Much as misfortune in the seventeenth century was explained by witches who were seeking to destroy the established order,<sup>122</sup> local officials sought out socially marginal people to blame for the fires. Along with the Polish exiles, vagrants, Old Believers, and Jews were readily made into scapegoats.<sup>123</sup> Significantly, the local peasants shared this world view with the officials: both viewed those outside the community as the true source of evil and reinforced one another's rumors.<sup>124</sup> But what the local officials simply could not comprehend was that for the peasantry the lords themselves now belonged to this "foreign," evil group who were capable of destroying the world through fire, despite the fact that the Third Section had reported that the very first response of the peasantry in Simbirsk province was to lose faith in the landlords and local officials. But as evidenced by whom the peasants attacked, suspicion fell initially on almost everyone who had some connection to the world beyond the village limits. Thus village scribes, state peasant stewards, and local police constables—in short, all who could be associated with the structures of oppression—were beaten and arrested, if not tortured and killed.

But in order for the gentry and officialdom to hold sway over the peasantry, it was essential to recast the arson debate into a different discourse on "peasants" and "aliens," and here Jews emerged as the preferred definition of the outsider. The initial attack on Jews occurred in the town of Kuznetsk, which had been especially hard hit by fires on 29 May and 1 June.<sup>125</sup> In the midst of the disturbances, local officials formed a vigilante group. Calling themselves the Kuznetsk District Committee, these state servitors – themselves the objects of suspicion – established an extraordinary police force and special investigative commission to interrogate Jews and others who had been seized in connection with the outbreak of fires. All Jewish males living within the confines of Kuznetsk district were arrested and together with

their families incarcerated in the Kuznetsk jail. In the town of Vol'sk, the governor ordered all Jewish military cantonists seized and confined to a special barracks.<sup>126</sup> Unable to obtain any proof against the arrested Jews, the extraordinary police resorted to beating confessions out of them. Not to be outdone in this show of zeal, upon his arrival in Kuznetsk, the Saratov Governor, Major General Bibikov, approved these vigilante measures and even took credit for them.

Despite the peasants' suspicion of all officials, the confirmation of the Jews' guilt by the Kuznetsk District Committee and Governor Bibikov seems to have partially served the purposes of the elite. Rumors spread among the peasantry throughout the region that the Jews were the real arsonists. In what could only have been the result of "information" disseminated from the cities to the villages, the rumors described a complex web of intrigue whereby Polish deportées had bribed the Jews into setting the fires and the Jews had obliged in retaliation for the establishment of recruitment obligations on Jews by edict of 26 August 1827.<sup>127</sup> The Third Section reported that rumors of a Jewish conspiracy had gained acceptance throughout the summer and not simply in Saratov, but across the adjoining provinces. As the rumors took hold, a new twist was added: the Jews planned first to burn all homes throughout Russia, destroy all the standing crops, and then exterminate all Russians with poison.

The acceptance by the peasantry of a Jewish conspiracy was aided when Bibikov officially informed Governor Panchulidzev of Penza Province that he had secret letters proving that the Jews were the arsonists and that they were working for the Poles to undermine Russia. This should have served the government well, for if it came to dominate the discourse it would shift the peasants' focus away from both the local officials and the landlords.<sup>128</sup> That the rumors were being promulgated in written form also should have made them even more powerful as the peasants tended to regard anything in writing as more credible.<sup>129</sup> The elites, however, were not able totally to control the content of the rumors, even when in Simbirsk and Tambov provinces efforts were made to prove that the Old Believers were also involved in the arson conspiracy. The peasants continued to spread their rumor that officials and landlords were the actual arsonists. But the most disturbing rumor was the one that demonstrated that even the tsar himself was considered by some

of the peasantry to be outside the fold: the heir apparent, so the rumor went, had married the daughter of the Turkish Sultan, and the tsar, in order to celebrate the union, had burned three provinces! According to the secret police, the peasants readily believed the story.<sup>130</sup>

As the fires and rumors of arson spread, peasants began to abandon work, gather their goods together, and sit in their fields waiting for the fires to strike, leading Count A. Kh. Benkendorf, chief of the Third Section, to lament that “everyone despairs.”<sup>131</sup> Other peasants began to disassemble their cabins, apparently in the hope that this would prevent their being torched. Yet another response was to flee to a local garrison in search of protection. Despite the governors’ attempts to persuade the peasants that the source of the fires had been found (Poles and Jews), and efforts to suppress peasant disturbances through beatings, deportations, and quartering of troops, the most prevalent reaction by July was to attack the landlords, the most logical candidates for arson in the mind of the peasantry. Throughout the middle and lower Volga, lords were being fettered in irons, driven from their estates, and on occasion murdered. After having condemned two lords to death, beaten another with sticks and staves, and hanging two house serfs, the elders of a village in Kirsanov district in Tambov province called for condemning all landlords to the gallows. They proceeded to lead their village in an oath with the peasants of Rasskazov village to throw all landlords and local officials into the fires.<sup>132</sup>

To explain the lords’ alleged behaviors, the peasants added the rumor that the lords feared the peasants’ emancipation in honor of the grand princess’ wedding. Now rumors flew declaring that the lords had ordered forests burned to end long forbidden illegal felling of timber; others maintained that villages were being burned by lords who had no legal rights to their estates.

What does the fact that peasants believed the lords had started the fires tell us about peasant desires, of their understanding of “right and natural”? Earlier arguments asserting limits to peasant conceptualizations of freedom and proclaiming the peasants’ inability to act in concert appear seriously flawed.<sup>133</sup> B. G. Litvak, to cite a famous example, argued that as the peasants were not able to conceptualize their true class interests (both by virtue of the fact that they had not yet “gelled” into a self-conscious class and as a consequence of

successful inculcation by the tsarist regime<sup>134</sup>), they were in fact quite willing to live with the gentry in the countryside. At most they sought some amelioration of their conditions within the system of feudalism, in essence legal equality with the state peasants, a watchword that “dominated the ideological impulses of the peasant movement right up to the end of serfdom”. This was a conclusion shared by some Western as well as Russian historians.<sup>135</sup> He further contended that “only at the very end of the 1850s did there appear the first signs of ‘all-round’ imitation, that is actions in support of or following the example of neighboring but not common landlord villages.”<sup>136</sup> In fact, in 1839, peasants in several provinces often acted in direct response to disturbances in neighboring villages. This concerted action occurred regardless of whether the villages were composed of state peasants or serfs or whether there was a common lord, this some twenty years before the Temperance Movement of 1859, often seen as the first major unified Russian peasant action across social estate and owner divisions during the century. The coordination was so great that Aleksandr Herzen, writing some 14 years later, would recall it as the main counterexample to the usual failure of peasants to act in harmony.<sup>137</sup> Having divided the world into an all-estate peasant “we” and gentry “they,” the peasants then proceeded to take direct action against those defined as outside the community in the drastic form of murder.<sup>138</sup> This was highly unusual; in most cases of Russian peasant disturbances in the first half of the nineteenth century a type of ritual drama was played out in which the peasants would challenge (usually landlord) authority, oftentimes based upon their “understanding” of an imperial edict, in hopes of obtaining some redress of grievance. They accepted the fact that punishment would be meted out prior to any investigation of the cause of the disturbance.<sup>139</sup> Openly declared defiance of the law and the use of violence was not the norm. The degree of violence seen in the Middle Volga in 1839 was especially rare.<sup>140</sup>

Part of the explanation for these events can be found in the conjuncture between the fires and the chiliastic atmosphere that had developed in the region.<sup>141</sup> A number of prophets of the end of the world had been active in the Volga region, chief among these Vasilii Moskvina, Sidor Andreev, Luk'ian Sokolov, and Fedor Bulgakov.<sup>142</sup> Although the response to their apocalyptic message was particularly strong amongst the sectarian *Molokany*,<sup>143</sup> the movement spread quickly among the Orthodox.

With passions in the region inflamed, German colonists contributed to the instability. Some years earlier, in 1821, the German colony “New World” had been established in Bessarabia by the followers of the German pietist and mystic Johann Heinrich Jung Stilling. German separatists now set off from Bessarabia to Georgia in search of the New Jerusalem, passing en route through the middle and lower Volga, an area of German colonization from the previous century. The teachings of the German pietists on the imminent Second Coming appear to have reinforced similar beliefs among the Russian sectarians living along the route to the Caucasus.<sup>144</sup> A group of over 800 *Molokany*, traveling to the “New Jerusalem” to meet Christ, waited out the winter of 1834 in Saratov *guberniia* where they preached the Apocalypse to the peasantry. After the *Molokany* left the region, the movement continued among the local peasantry, leading the government to exile two of the local prophets of doom to the Caucasus in 1838, the year before the arson panic.<sup>145</sup> In examining the preaching of the Russian eschatologists, one Russian scholar, basing his argument on comparative textual analysis, has determined that the schismatic leader Fedor Bulgakov made use of Jung-Stilling’s writings in the composition of his eschatological treatise “The Book of Zion.”<sup>146</sup> More than anything the Russian peasants, and particularly their chiliastic preachers, were drawn to the idea that the end of time was at hand, Christ was returning in the near future, and a reign of God – *free of landlords* – was shortly to begin.

The spread of fires a few years after the height of this movement formed “the backdrop against which millennial expectations [became] mobilizing myths”<sup>147</sup>: the end was near and the rule of the Antichrist, and his servitors, was finally coming to a close. But it is something of a leap from belief in the Second Coming to tossing a lord into a fire, however traditional it might have been to treat suspected arsonists in such manner. To more fully understand what the peasants were attempting to achieve in 1839, their rumors—and the ideological and rhetorical struggle they express— require analysis.

In a study of peasant folklore, Maureen Perrie argued that the evidence of peasant tales suggests that the peasants saw the lords as members of the same community. Although lords most often were viewed as antagonists, “social justice in the tales does not involve the abolition of overlordship as such, but simply the punishment of the unjust individual and, in some instances, his

demotion and replacement by his antagonist.”<sup>148</sup> But what is missing in that assessment is an appreciation that claiming the right to replace a lord is part of an ideological struggle over the rights to authority, a rejection of the justification, rationale, and values that buttress the lord’s claims to overlordship.<sup>149</sup>

During the 1839 crisis, Middle and Lower Volga peasants rejected their lords as an acceptable part of their universe, defined them as belonging to a world of outsiders, and denied them, ideologically, the right to claim overlordship. What moved the peasants from everyday nonviolent forms of resistance to attacks on the lords was in part the material deprivation that had characterized the region over the decade of the 1830s, the breakdown in authority that accompanied the arson panic, and finally the rumors of the Second Coming that provided them with a window of opportunity to express their opposition more openly. Given these circumstances, they were ready not merely to abolish *overlordship* but the *overlords* as well. The rumors of the lords’ responsibilities for the fires spread “spontaneously, without deliberation, that is, by the force of ideology alone”<sup>150</sup> so rapidly and so far because the peasants were already well prepared to believe that the lords were an alien force. In the rhetorical struggle, the gentry and tsar had attempted to preserve their hegemony over the peasantry through the use of the concepts “peasant” and “alien.” However, the peasantry had refused to accept these elite conceptions and instead had invoked images that they themselves created, specifically of predatory gentry and officials, as a mechanism to challenge authority.

This in itself is worthy of note, but these peasants had redrawn the image of the world *even more* significantly. Returning to the question of “naïve monarchism,” P. G. Ryndziunskii warns that the construct “naïve monarchism” has tended to be used too indiscriminately by historians. According to him, “tsarist illusions” were weakening among the peasantry from the Pugachev rebellion onward, particularly among certain groups of religious schismatics.<sup>151</sup> But he also argues that in general during the first half of the nineteenth century, the peasants had not desired the annihilation of tsarism: “They separated the tsar off from the landlord and capitalists, even setting him up in contrast to them, and considered the tsar their potential ally and protector.”<sup>152</sup> In the arson panic of 1839, however, a more complex process is revealed: the coming together of religious mysticism and anti-tsarism. Religion, rather

than simply being "an ancient, patriarchal-feudal tradition that preserved the darkness and ignorance of the peasantry,"<sup>153</sup> provided legitimacy for rebellion; for some of the peasants believed both that the tsar was at fault in the fires and that the world indeed was coming to an end in the final days of judgment.

But there was more to do than simply wait. Much as the peasants demonstrated at the time of the Emancipation that they believed they had to *act* in such manner as to *be* the free people the tsar desired, and thus, for example, refuse the "false" charters that would deny them all of the land and await the "true" charter that would give them the entire lands and forests and free them forever from the landlords,<sup>154</sup> so too the peasants believed that they had to do something to prove their worthiness to God in order to enter into the thousand year kingdom. Helping God rid the world of evil, in the form of the landlords and government servitors, was their contribution in 1839. It was not simply that the state was seen at that point as weak, and thus an opportunity existed to turn everyday forms of resistance into acts of violence; it was that the state was coming to an end in a final judgment where the lords would be found among the goats. This was a classic example of what James Scott has called "a revolutionary appropriation of religious symbolism in the service of class interests."<sup>155</sup>

For the peasants of the Middle Volga additional social forces were at work in shaping their behavior. In analyzing Samara province, Allan Wildman argues that

it was not just the oppressive system of serfdom that gave rise to rebelliousness and transformationist instincts . . . but Saratov's contiguity with the fortified border zone between the Russian state and the *dikoe pole* ("wild steppe"), the world of fugitives, cossack freebooters, Tatar raiders, river pirates, and with the commercial networks that extended far into the latter zone. . . . Here the cossack freebooter and river pirate Razin and the Russian state vied for the soul of the much-oppressed serf-peasant.<sup>156</sup>

Added to this spirit of rebellion was the increased exploitation that accompanied the development of commercial agriculture in the region. According to Governor Komarov, forced labor on gentry land had increased from an average of three days per week in 1795 to five days.<sup>157</sup> Changes in the taxation system for appanage peasants from a *per capita* tax to one based on land holdings, designed to increase government income, led to both a

tax increase from 50 to 140 percent and a loss of landholding from six to 28 percent. In an effort to increase grain production for state use, the government also forced communal cultivation of lands instead of the traditional individual family strip cultivation. Summing up the situation, one elderly peasant explained shortly after the panic, "The lords were to blame. They had lots of land and the grain grew well. They forced the peasants to work at times beyond endurance. The *muzhiki* [peasants] thus rebelled."<sup>158</sup> The peasants thus were responding within what James Scott has defined as the "subsistence ethic." Within the subsistence economy of the Middle Volga peasants the most compelling fact of life was the need to subsist. That reality produced an intimate sense of the moral imperative of a right to survive; a threat to that right justified even violent rebellion as the elites had failed in their responsibility to help the peasants assure their continued existence.<sup>159</sup>

In the battle for ideological hegemony, the state thus was not winning. It was not simply that prior to the Emancipation of 1861 the institution of serfdom shielded the tsar and the Imperial government from the wrath of the peasantry, which was thus directed only at the landlords. Nor is it clear that tsarism was as successful inculcating into the peasantry the "false consciousness" of faith in the tsar, as some followers of Gramsci's logic on the power of cultural hegemony would have us believe, especially as the reality of a new market-oriented economy increased exploitation.<sup>160</sup> But neither was it simply that the peasants were cynically manipulating the tsar myth, claiming to be rebelling *for* him rather than *against* him, in an attempt to avoid punishment after their rebellions were suppressed, as suggested by Daniel Field.<sup>161</sup>

The myth of the tsar at this crucial point in Russian history is more complex; for in the imaginings of "us" and "them" occurring among the peasants of the middle and lower Volga, the image of the tsar was being contested. At times the imagining called forth a picture of a Peter the Great, a false tsar – the antipode of the just tsar who would fight against the wicked gentry on the people's behalf. In this image the tsar had ordered the fires set to please the infidel Sultan or had done so to force a new resettlement. But simultaneously there moved through the people an image of the reigning emancipator tsar who had ordered the peasants freed in honor of Grand Duchess Mariia Nikolaevna's marriage and who sanctioned the slaughter of the

evil nobles. It is within this image of the reigning emancipator tsar that Grand Duke Konstantin was portrayed as a friend of the emancipator tsar who had arrived in the region to bring forth freedom against the opposition of the lords, whom the peasants declared “are one and all guilty.”<sup>162</sup> The image of the tsar was thus in flux; there were several that could be drawn upon and used as rhetorical weapons— the tsar-father, the tsar-alien, the tsar-landowner—and the choice made would not be restricted to the paradigms of thought offered up by the elites.

The analysis of the Middle Volga peasants’ understanding of the cause of the fires of 1839 reveals an already well-developed rejection of the state’s legitimacy by some peasants, a rejection deeply rooted in the region’s history and political culture. Such an active rejection of the image of the tsar as “our Little Father” (*batushka nash*) constituted a fundamental act of revolution, an act based upon a coherent understanding of community and freedom, a vision of justice that informed the violence of 1839. Whereas elite culture may have seen the post-Petrine tsar as a god, or at least as a *khristos*, the only true tsar for the peasants was one who gave expression to the ideal of the peasant *khoziain*. Pugachev voiced his understanding of this ideal, entitling himself in one of his manifestoes the “pardoner of the sins of the people and the animals, benefactor, sweet-tongued, gracious, soft-hearted, Russian tsar.”<sup>163</sup>

What then characterized the good “people’s tsar”? We have already noted the Pugachev version, which, as Kirill Chistov makes clear, is not simply a written version of the peasant oral tradition.<sup>164</sup> Nonetheless the manifesto reveals the influence of peasant legends and desires. Chief among these is the image of the “doer of all possible good deeds” [*delatel’ vsevozmozhnykh blagodeianii*], which roughly translates as a defender against the wicked boyars and lords. We gain a somewhat better understanding of the characteristics of a true tsar from examining the desired characteristics associated with a respected peasant leader, information provided by correspondents from nineteenth-century villages<sup>165</sup> and by peasant petitions to remove impeached peasant officials.<sup>166</sup> The first requisite characteristic was “reliability” or “incorruptible honor,” virtues closely associated with the willingness of the person to sacrifice for the community. The “formula of confidence” for an elected peasant official ran as follows: “of good behavior, zealous in guarding his household economy, skillful in grain-growing, never fined or

punished, and able without doubt to fulfill the duty entrusted to him."<sup>167</sup> A more formal religious element was also attached; for a peasant leader of good reputation should also attend at least the especially important church services. Translated into the requirements for a true tsar, the "Little Father" was obligated to protect the people from the depredations of the landlords, make certain of the economic well-being of his "children," and safeguard their souls. Although the tsars were conspicuously failing by the eighteenth century in the first two areas, it was perhaps in the last area where the failure was complete and where the legitimacy of the ruling tsar was most seriously brought into question.

The Middle Volga peasants were able to maintain their own definition of community in the face of elite efforts to transform their perception of identity from an estate exclusive to peasants to an elite inclusive "all-estate" vision. In particular, these peasants were successful in withstanding the elites' efforts in particular to institute a new construction of the iconography of the tsar. They were able to do this—despite any economic disruptions that might have been affecting the village—because the commune offered successful resistance to elite cultural penetration, in part, because of the preservation of a literate counter-culture among the Old Believers that strongly influenced the Orthodox, as well as the schismatics.<sup>168</sup> There was nothing peculiar to the peasants in these areas that would make their behavior atypical for peasants in other areas of the empire. The preservation of the Muscovite ideal of the community of true tsar and holy people was thus possible because of the continued existence throughout most of Russia and cultural attraction of the Old Belief, whose adherents, both avowed and hidden, offered an alternative image of the nation. Among the peasantry, the image of tsar and people remained fixed on the icon of the *true* tsar. Nineteenth-century ideas of government and society could not be overlaid onto that holy effigy. The peasantry perceived the government as a foreign power and responded not much differently to the Populists, whom the peasants correctly saw as outside the Orthodox community.<sup>169</sup> While it was true that, like any colonized people, they could be made to obey, they could not so easily be coerced into believing.<sup>170</sup>

For far too long we have concentrated on the weaknesses of late Imperial peasant society, following particularly the lead of Anton Chekhov in his portrait of the dying village.<sup>171</sup> But while

economically the peasants were indeed suffering, they were not losing their sense of nation. The failure of the development of an urban-defined nationalism in Russia during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrates in fact the incredible resilience of peasant society. Unlike the peasants of northern and eastern Europe whose cultures had been successfully subverted by urban constructs of identity, the Russian peasants proved capable of rebuffing efforts by both the tsarist state and radical intellectuals to destroy the myth of the peasant nation, with its icon of Moscow the Third Rome and the Returning Redeemer.

Of course, it is true that in the years following the emancipation the peasant household ceased, on the whole, to be self-sufficient. Wage labor became for most peasant households a necessity, leading to the expansion of the system of out-migration [*otkhodnichestvo*], especially but not exclusively by males, to work in factories. Expanded contact with urban life clearly influenced the world of the village, as evidenced in particular by the growing demand by married sons for the division of the multifamily household. However, what is important to remember is that sons did not desire the destruction of the power of the family head; on the contrary, they wanted to *become* heads of families, even if out-migration left much of the traditional "male" labor in the village in the hands of women. Recent investigations of peasant culture and society in post-emancipation Russia have stressed not the destruction of peasant tradition as the result of *otkhodnichestvo* but rather its pliancy in the face of the urban challenge. As one historian aptly put the matter: "traditional attitudes and relationships are fiercely tenacious and capable of withstanding serious alterations in the material and economic bases from which they derive."<sup>172</sup> That Russian peasants indeed were economically weak did not prevent them from deploying their own cultural weapons against the heretical city in either its tsarist or radical cultural manifestation. Their strongest weapon was their own national myth of tsar and people which shielded them from modern nationalistic myths.

## Law and modernization

The myth of the people's tsar had by the nineteenth century reached into the peasants' understanding of law, a component of modernization that the state hoped to use to mold

peasant society into a desired image. It is in the peasants' utilization of law that we most clearly can see modernization through resistance; the peasants demonstrated an ability to restructure this abstraction, and to utilize this essential aspect of modernity as a vehicle for resistance, and in the process to further their own modernization, their ability to interact with and manipulate the edifices of urbanized culture utilizing one of its primary structures. As the following cases demonstrate, the peasants continued to utilize traditional forms of everyday resistance such as refusing to pay dues [*obrok*] or at least to pay on time, attempting thereby to protect their economy with minimum risk. But resistance could take the form of open rebellion, as the following case study indicates. However, a growing form of resistance, one that demonstrated the peasants' ability to transform traditional everyday resistance into a modernized form of resistance, was to go beyond evasion while avoiding the costs of rebellion through attempting to manipulate codified law to their advantage.

This peasant adeptness is exemplified by what a visitor to Varnavinsk district in Kostroma province on 11 September 1815 would have witnessed: several hundred enraged peasants, armed with muskets and iron bars, chasing a bloodied company of Russian soldiers for over a kilometer down the main road, hurling insults at the troops as the latter suffered ignoble rout. What the astonished visitor unknowingly would behold was one manifestation of peasant resistance through law during the first half of the nineteenth century.

These events began some three years earlier when the Court Counselor Mark Demidovich Meshchaninov purchased 365 male souls with the intent of resettling 110 of them in Moscow to work at his paper factory. The peasants refused, instead offering to purchase their freedom. They further refused to return the people whom Meshchaninov ordered surrendered for recruitment. But due to the Manifesto of 30 August 1814 which amnestied all criminals (excluding murderers and bandits), the peasants were spared punishment. Meshchaninov then attempted to compromise with the peasants, who, refusing to resettle at the factory, had sent two representatives off to St. Petersburg in August 1815 with a petition to "free them from slavery." Meshchaninov proposed not to send the peasants to Moscow, but rather to construct a glassworks and a cloth factory on their village site. This effort was unsuccessful: the peasants still

refused to pay their dues [*obrok*], or to recognize Meshchaninov's authority and blocked construction of the proposed factories. Convinced of the legality of their position, the peasants would countenance no attempt at compromise.

On 10 September 1815, 107 soldiers and officers under the command of Captain Elizarov and 103 peasant "witnesses" gathered from neighboring villages were dispatched to force obedience. They were met by the peasants *en masse* who ordered the troops to leave the village. Confronted with such massive resistance, the soldiers withdrew, only to return the following fateful day in hopes that the peasants, having had time to reconsider, would yield. When the troops attempted to enter the village in a flanking maneuver, they were attacked by peasants, who armed with muskets, had hidden in ravines! At that point the peasants, rather than the soldiers, charged, and in hand-to-hand combat beat the soldiers with metal bludgeons. Captain Elizarov ordered retreat. Now thoroughly enraged, the peasants proceeded to carry out their ultimate insult and pursued the running soldiers with taunts of "we dare you to come back."<sup>173</sup> The peasants further threatened to beat the local police captain to death should they capture him.

A reinforced command attacked the village on 19 October, and although the peasants suffered military defeat, they still refused to accept Meshchaninov as their legal lord. The criminal chamber ordered 10 peasants exemplarily beaten in front of the entire village, but as the blows fell the peasants shouted "As the village community (*mir*) [goes], so go I. Against the mir I will never stand."<sup>174</sup>

Around the first of November the village appealed to Empress Mariia Fedorovna. The petition did not simply make the claim that the peasants were being ruined by being forced off their lands and transferred to Moscow. Rather, the petitioners offered a legal defense for their conduct: Meshchaninov's efforts to resettle the families contradicted "The Code, chapter XI, articles 30 and 31, and the decree of 31 July 1802 on resettlement without land."<sup>175</sup> The peasants correctly cited these laws: Articles 30 and 31 prohibited landlords from transferring their peasants from state-service [*pomestie*] lands to privately held ones [*votchina*]. The 1802 decree prohibited factory owners from purchasing peasants except from lands adjacent to the factories.<sup>176</sup>

But the state's pressure eventually proved effective. In

December 1815 the peasants gave up their resistance and paid Meshchaninov 15,000 rubles *obrok*. However, in January they again sent petitioners to Alexander I alleging that, having collected the 15,000 rubles owed, the troops proceeded to beat all the peasants over 16 years of age and ordered the village to hand over an additional 15,000 rubles. If they did not comply within two weeks, the troops had threatened, the young men would be sent into the army and the old would be beaten with the knout. On 24 March 1816 the Committee of Ministers finally ordered an investigation that led to a condemnation of Meshchaninov for ruining his peasants and ordered that the peasants be taken under guardianship. The Committee further commanded that the factories not be constructed until the peasants were in better condition.

However, the matter was far from settled. In July 1818 the peasants petitioned against their guardian Fedor Kondrat'ev Levashev for having forced them to pay him an 800 ruble bribe, above the 3000 rubles paid for his maintenance, in order not to be forced to pay their yearly *obrok* of 12,000 rubles. Levashev, they alleged, had also sent two peasant leaders into Siberian exile. By 1820, the peasants had not paid their *obrok* and were refusing the instructions of their guardian. When a disturbance broke out in a neighboring estate, troops were quartered on the village until the disturbance was suppressed. On 27 April 1820 the peasants petitioned against the ruin being caused by the quartering and the requirement that they pay 18,000 rubles *obrok*. An investigation by the new guardian and the military commander confirmed the ruin and on 2 July 1820 the troops were finally withdrawn.<sup>177</sup> What permitted such a protracted resistance was the peasants' continued belief that the law, when finally applied "legally," would save them.

The understanding of law among Russian peasants of the pre-reform era, however, has been a disputed topic.<sup>178</sup> As noted above, Vsevolod Krutikov has argued that during the first half of the nineteenth century, peasants increasingly perceived of their opposition to serfdom within a legal context and, furthermore, utilized codified law more and more frequently in their efforts to achieve emancipation.<sup>179</sup> In petitions to the tsar and to governmental officials, he contended, the peasants sought to prove the illegality of their lords' behaviors while arguing the legality of their own actions and demands. Along similar lines, Lazar' Genkin cited 122 petitions by Iaroslavl peasants in 1827

alone, making use of Alexander I's decrees of 1815 and 1816 on "Persons Seeking Freedom from Landlord Authority."<sup>180</sup>

Countering this interpretation, A. Pushkarenko warns against assuming too specific a knowledge of the laws' details. Peasants would make use of those laws that provided them with protection against over exploitation. But if they perceived a law as disadvantageous to them, they often simply denied its legitimacy. The approach to law, thus, was pragmatic, or self-serving.<sup>181</sup> M. Rakhmatullin argued similarly when analyzing peasant use of the 1847 law on purchase of freedom when estates were sold at auction. According to Rakhmatullin, the peasants were aware of the law and attempted to make use of it, but they ignored the fine print and appealed to the tsar for intervention when they did not meet the conditions set forth for purchasing their freedom.<sup>182</sup> Rakhmatullin maintained that faith in law tended to be strongest among the petitioners sent to present the peasants' grievances to the government; these peasants believed that their demands could be satisfied legally through the will of the tsar.<sup>183</sup> E. Dement'ev added a spatial consideration, noting that appeals for freedom based on law were strongest amongst those peasants who had lived under Polish legal codes prior to the partition of Poland.<sup>184</sup>

Western historians have not been so ready to accept the idea of peasant legal consciousness in the nineteenth century. As noted above, in his study of the Chigrin affair in Ukraine in 1877, Daniel Field concluded that the peasants were actually cynically manipulating the tsar myth when citing charters and the law, claiming to be rebelling *for* him rather than *against* him in an attempt to avoid punishment after their rebellions were suppressed.<sup>185</sup> David Moon follows essentially the same line of reasoning, arguing that:

The peasant migrants to the North Caucasus in the 1830s and 1840s did not feel a psychological need for legislation, or their "misunderstanding" of it, in order to feel that their actions were "legitimate." Rather they saw the legislation [on state peasant migration to the North Caucasus] and, crucially, in the way it was being implemented in the North Caucasus, as a possible way to achieve their aims. They hoped to take advantage of the apparent disagreements between the local authorities and landowners in the areas where they lived and the authorities and populations in the North Caucasus, and of the conflicting priorities between settlement and support for serfdom in St. Petersburg.<sup>186</sup>

At most, Moon argues, the peasants sought to give their cases “an appearance of legality.”

But how does peasant understanding of law fit within the prior analysis of resistance to ascription and the contested image of the tsar? An examination of three interrelated problems revealed in peasant petitions from the first half of the nineteenth century demonstrates a remarkable consistency across the Russian regions: peasant knowledge of the law, peasant belief in the efficacy of law, and peasant perception of the relationship between law and the power of the tsar. Peasants from the western provinces responded similarly to those from the central agrarian region and the lower Volga. Secondly, serfs and state peasants also demonstrated strong affinities. But before discussing the significance of these shared cultural attributes, let us begin by determining those issues most frequently treated as “legal” ones.

Questions of the nature of obligations under serfdom were often seen by the peasants during this period as matters of formal rather than customary law. On 10 January 1816, the peasants of the village of Kutka petitioned the Minister of Justice, challenging the efforts of their guardian to raise dues. They based their appeal on a detailed analysis of the Provincial Statute, which limited the guardian to collecting only the former *obrok* and forbade the guardian from charging more than 5 percent of the normal *obrok* to pay for his work of guardianship.<sup>187</sup> In an effort to bolster their case, they itemized his illegal exactions: he had collected already 15,000 rubles, and then demanded an additional 10,000, all above the “legal” 8,000 rubles per year. Moreover, he had misappropriated for himself 400 rubles from the legal 8,000; 750 out of the “illegal” 15,000; and was now extorting 1250 rubles from the newly demanded 10,000 rubles.

The peasants’ intricate knowledge of the law was revealed in the report of 29 June 1834 by the Bessarabian provincial procurator to the Ministry of Justice.<sup>188</sup> According to Procurator Gladkii, upon learning of the content of the new Statute on the Bessarabian Tsarany,<sup>189</sup> the peasants refused to continue to perform traditional duties, such as provisioning their lords, and agreed only to provide the specific labor duties detailed in paragraph 13 of the Statute, specifically twelve days’ labor in the lord’s fields per year, and service protecting the lord’s forests. Despite the Governor-General’s ruling that the new statute left in force earlier customary duties, the peasants continued to cite the new law and to refuse to perform any additional work. Only the

introduction of two companies of soldiers succeeded in forcing the peasants to end their resistance.

But it was not only in struggle against “outsiders” where law was seen as potent. In May 1825 the peasants of Bogoiavlensk district complained that their peasant head had been cheating them by over collecting *obrok*. They demanded that he be replaced by a person of their own choosing. Having authority over these peasants, the treasury argued that it had to set limits on the “willfulness of this unrestrained people” and sought a compromise. The government would agree to remove Arsakov, the *volost* head, but then rejected the elected head and clerk, the peasants Kuchin and Suloev, alleging that they had repeatedly been brought to trial.<sup>190</sup> The peasants, however, refused to choose anyone else and answered “The *mir* is above any power.”

This last response goes to the heart of the peasants’ legal consciousness. The peasants were not incapable of comprehending the abstraction of law, nor did they find it difficult to recognize the usefulness of law in their efforts to obtain justice. But “law” [*pravo*] could not be superior to “truth” [*pravda*], and the greatest truth of all within the pre-reform village was the absolute authority of the *mir*, which, as we have argued above, in the minds of the peasantry represented the collective wisdom and ancient traditions of village society.<sup>191</sup> Any attempt to deny the absolute moral and ethical authority of the *mir* was doomed to failure. Authority [*vlast*] might well be able to force *pravo* on to the village, but it could not undermine that which was right and natural [*pravda*].

The peasants were adaptable, however. Having failed in their argument that the *mir* had the right, from God, to replace the *volost* head with someone of their own choosing, the peasants turned to another approach, the use of the state’s own law. Arguing that Arsakov had misappropriated for himself money collected to buy food at a time of crop failure and to rebuild the church after it had burned, as well as the regular *obrok*—all told some 5,700 rubles—they petitioned directly to tsar Nicholas I:

And seeing we, the undersigned, that he [Arsakov] was receiving such encouragement [from the district police officer and the district attorney], we sent two petitions to the Nizhegorodsk civil governor, Kriukov, and the same petitions to the vice-governor Count Tolstoi asking that Arsakov be removed from office under the authority of the statute of 7 August 1797, paragraph 7, which subordinates him [the

*volost* head] to the village community. But we cannot receive any satisfaction from these petitions.<sup>192</sup>

According to the law in question,<sup>193</sup> the collection of dues by the head was under the "control" of the entire population of the *volost*, which was empowered once a year to verify accounts and in situations of insufficient funds to compel the head to make up the deficit.

The manifestation of faith in law did not occur only in struggles to limit the demands of lords and government officials. Defense of land rights also figured prominently in peasant recourse to statutory law. In June 1817 the economic peasants<sup>194</sup> of Dem'iansk district in Pskov province petitioned the Minister of Finance, D. A. Gur'ev, to defend them against the efforts of the Okunev brothers, recent inheritors of their father's estate, to seize peasant lands.<sup>195</sup> The brothers claimed that the disputed land was in fact within their serf villages, having been given to their father from state lands by decree of the Senate. But the peasants were ready to fight, using the law. They cited edicts of 19 September 1765 and 28 June 1787 and the Survey Instruction of 1766 (chapter 30, point 3) as bases for getting "their" land back. The 1765 *ukaz* stated that boundaries at the time of the general survey would be those that existed on the day of publication of the manifesto. The Manifesto of 28 June 1787 declared that all cases, both civil and criminal, that had been ongoing for ten years or longer, were obsolete. Point three of chapter thirty of the Survey Instruction decreed that all disputes regarding the survey had to be appealed within one year.

Placing more faith in the law, and revealing a detailed knowledge of the relevant legislation, the peasants declared that were this land not to be given back to them, then according to the decree of 22 September 1802, which set an allotment norm for state peasants in Simbirsk, Saratov, and Orenburg provinces of 15 *desiatins*,<sup>196</sup> they should be provided substitute lands.

Faith in law, nonetheless, did not signify a renunciation of the right to resort to violence when legal rulings were deemed "illegal." In January 1813, for example, the peasants of Kozhla settlement and Zagriazhsk village in Kursk province brought a case before the land court against their mistress' selling of serfs without land, requesting an investigation into this illegal act. A total of 112 male peasants and their families in 60 households were involved. When the court ruled against them, they then went into rebellion.<sup>197</sup>

In addition to protecting their lands, the peasants sought the protection of law from "illegal" forms of labor, as witnessed by the ascribed peasants, as well as the Varnavinsk peasants. The peasants of the village of Beretinka in Vladimir province argued that they should not be required to work in the textile factory of their owner, N. V. Sol'ianikov, because he previously had been a merchant. They reasoned that although he now claimed noble rank, "where he received this is unknown, and the factory was established as a state mill, belonging to the state, and is not his own property."<sup>198</sup> They concluded that the "merchant" Sol'ianikov had no legal right to own factory workers.

The struggle against factory work was one of the most significant "legal" campaigns of the peasantry. As the case of the ascribed workers demonstrates, resisting transfer to the factory had a long tradition predating the nineteenth century. Much of the resistance at the turn of the century fit the set pattern. The peasants of Sevsk and Trubevsk districts of Orël province reported in January 1797 that they were being forced during the agricultural season to provide the transportation of materials to their master's distillery, located some 50 kilometers from their villages. They further were required to transport wine from the factory during planting and harvesting seasons. Although they were paid for this labor, they were not paid what it actually cost to transport the goods, and thus were forced to pay out more than twice what they received in wages to accomplish these tasks. Their suffering associated with the distillery, however, did not end with the labor dues. During crop failure in 1787 and 1788, the steward had taken grain for the distillery and, according to the peasant petition, left them only chaff and mash to eat. In addition, the lord had confiscated their lands, seized their animals for arrears, and had cheated them on weights when grinding grain. Receiving no relief through their petition to be converted into state peasants, they rebelled, eventually burning down the distillery and killing the steward along with seven house serfs.<sup>199</sup>

The rebellion thus followed the predictable path described in this study. But the peasants justified their refusal to work at the factory with reference to the Statute on Wine of 17 September 1781.<sup>200</sup> They argued that the distillery was breaking the law by directly selling the remainder of its wine after state procurement, rather than as provided for in points 20-21, 52, and 113-129 of the Wine Statute, which allowed the sale of wine only through state stores. They informed the tsar in their petition:

In particular, the factories have been built extraordinarily large: two in Sevsk district, and another two in Trubchesk, at which they have produced and continued to produce more than 100,000 buckets of wine per year and from which according to the state contract they should produce no more than 44,000 buckets, the remainder being sold in Orël province in many towns to taverns in violation of His Imperial Majesty's laws set forth in the Statute of the College Regulations.<sup>201</sup>

Therefore, they reasoned, they should not be required to continue to work in an illegal operation.

The appeal to codified law, however, was not universal. In 1807 the state peasants of Viatka province, upon being informed that they were to be made "indispensable" factory workers, responded "with rude and impassioned words" that they would *not* be assigned to the factories. And "they answered, at last, all in one voice, 'even if you cut off our heads we will never give anyone our names and will never go to the factory'".<sup>202</sup> For four days they continued to resist, only to eventually collapse before armed force. Similarly the peasants of Novosergeivsk village over ten years earlier had cited fear of being sent to work in a wine factory in their refusal to accept the authority of their new lord. Their claim was that without the permission of their former owner they could not accept the authority of anyone else over them. Their demand was simple: "to live as before."<sup>203</sup> The peasants of Berestinka village in Vladimir province petitioned against their master, N. V. Solianilov, that they were being forced to work in his paper factory "day and night," even on Sundays and holidays. As a result they could not even feed themselves; yet their master failed to provide them with food at the time of a crop failure. Solianilov further refused to provide them with passports so that they could attempt to locate work in the towns and thereby avoid ruin. Instead he forced them to continue to work in his factory for less food and clothing allowance than necessary for survival. He even compelled children aged seven to ten to work in the factory, yet paid them nothing.<sup>204</sup> Children aged fifteen to eighteen were forced to work with a food ration of less than a third of that provided adult workers. Housing too was abysmal; up to six families were forced to live in one cabin with but a single stove. The peasants' proposed solution was to be transformed into state peasants.<sup>205</sup>

Formal law was not merely a weapon to be used to

“improve” the condition of serfdom, the view of the limited nature of serf resistance discussed above. Rather, the evidence from the first half of the nineteenth century clearly demonstrates that peasants also challenged, through recourse to codified law, the very privilege of landlords to claim the right to serfs. A basis for challenge was the senate decree [*ukaz*] of 21 September 1815 which declared that peasants who were not registered by the First or Second Revision (1722--1727 and 1743) as enserfed to a lord were to be registered with their families as state peasants.<sup>206</sup> This decree was not interpreted by the government to apply to Ukraine [Little Russia], which experienced its own enserfment under Catherine the Great. But the peasants of Voronezh province nonetheless began to cite the *ukaz* as justification for their refusal to recognize their lords. Thus on 29 November 1817 Voronezh Governor M. I. Bravin reported to St. Petersburg Governor General S. K. Viazmitinov that the peasants of Petrovsk village had disavowed the authority of their lord, citing the Senate *ukaz* as justification and arguing that they were state peasants in 1757 and thus could not be enserfed.<sup>207</sup> The same argument was made by the peasants of Ekaterinoslav province in the village of Guliai-Pole, who were quick to add that they had not been mistreated. They simply were by law, state peasants.<sup>208</sup>

Ever attempting to gain their freedom, the Kutka peasants in October 1817 petitioned to the “Minister of Police” S. K. Viazmitinov for his assistance to defend them from the oppression of their lord.<sup>209</sup> Having earlier failed in an effort to gain legal release from serfdom, this time they made recourse to two separate laws. First, they argued that they had been settled on state land before 1763 and therefore were not serfs. But secondly, they continued:

According to point 11 of the Instructions to the Governor of Slobodo-Ukraina Province and of the Provincial Chancellery of 6 June 1765, persons serving in either the military or civil service, are prohibited from purchasing lands, houses, settlements, etc., to be under their control whether in their own name and in the name of someone else.<sup>210</sup>

Accordingly, they concluded, they were state peasants.

This belief that law protected them against illegal ownership was manifested even before the turn of the century. In December 1796 the peasants of Dubrovka village in Kaluga province resorted to armed resistance against a military

detachment sent to force them to accept the lordship of A. A. Davidova. The peasants explained their behavior by asserting that their purchase by Davidova had been fraudulent; therefore, they should become state peasants.<sup>211</sup>

In like vein, the peasants of Kalli village, Petersburg province, petitioned in April 1805 to the Minister of Internal Affairs V. P. Kochubei that they were being held illegally by a merchant to whom the land had been sold. Their former owner had illegally allowed the merchant to claim them, and now they were being ruined by overwork in the merchant's trade, having had their lands reduced. Their major argument was that they should be recognized as state peasants because as a merchant the land purchaser had no right to be their lord.<sup>212</sup> In a similar case, the peasants of Vel'sk and Kadnikovsk districts, 319 male souls in all, refused to accept the lordship of A. I. Iakovlev. The peasants argued in a petition of April 1812 that the seller, a certain Shcherbinina "had no legal right whatsoever to inherit following the death of her mother, the Princess, and her brother, the Prince Dashkov, who were preparing to give us to the family of Count Vorontsov or to grant us our freedom."<sup>213</sup> These peasants were about to be sent to factory work, but this was not the basis of their refusal to obey. They even offered to all accept conscription into the army, leaving behind only the very old and the very young men, so that their village would survive and their heirs would become state peasants.<sup>214</sup>

This case exemplifies one of the primary sources of peasant disturbances in the first half of the nineteenth century: the death of an owner and the transference of an estate to an heir. A growing phenomenon appeared where peasants refused to subordinate themselves to the new landlord on the argument that the new owner had no "legal" right to them, the essence of their case being that serfdom ended together with the death of the landlord.<sup>215</sup>

But it was in the defense of individual home and family, and not simply the collective and traditional rights of the *mir*, that the peasants expressed a confidence in codified law, reflecting a developing concept of the need for, and the existence of, a relationship between the individual and the state. An immediate area of concern was sexual exploitation of female family members. In May 1818 the peasants of Rep'evka village petitioned against the illegal forced sexual relations of the steward with their wives and daughters.<sup>216</sup> A similar petition that

laid claim to family rights, this time submitted directly to tsar Alexander I by the peasants of Makovishch, alleged that “our daughters are being forcefully taken from us and given away in marriage to our lords’ peasants against their will.”<sup>217</sup> This same lament appeared in the petition of the peasants of Filinsk village to tsar Alexander I, who claimed that the landlord Ivan Kaftyrev had kidnapped nine of the village girls and given them against their will to be married.<sup>218</sup> In another petition to the tsar, the peasants of Malakhov village charged their mistress with breaking up the family of the peasant Ivan Fedorov, sending Ivan and his wife and newborn off to her steppe estate and separating them from their five- and three-year old children.<sup>219</sup>

It should be noted that in each of these examples the peasants made no specific mention of a violated law; instead, they referred to the “ruin” being visited upon them and the “cruel” treatment they were receiving at the hands of their lords. These were traditional “rights” of the peasantry – protection from ruin and cruelty—that exemplify what Scott has referred to as the peasants’ understanding of a “right to reciprocity” based on trust and mutuality of interest.<sup>220</sup> However, this is not so much a sign of the unwillingness to use codified law, or ignorance of it, as it is evidence of the lack of any law protecting the peasant family in the first quarter of the nineteenth-century. When confronted with an attack on their perceived family rights for which there was no “legal” recourse, the peasants were capable of laying claim to their ancient right, or at least what they still considered to be a right, to petition their “Little Father” for protection against extraordinary abuse. This reflected, once more, the adaptability of the peasant approach to law. The absence of a law was not the same as the absence of a right, in this case a claim to human rights that had formed one of the bases of the French Revolution. Law was only part of the defense mechanism. Traditional rights and the protection of the tsar were equally strong defenses, but the best defense was a combination of the two. However, a loss of faith in the image of the tsar as “our Little Father,” as evidenced in the arson panic of 1839, and the absence of law, would leave the peasants with little choice but to seek “justice” through their own means.

## **Modernization through resistance**

The examination of the world of the pre-reform peasantry

has focused on several factors: the impact of war on the state's demands of the peasantry and its efforts at modernization; the conception of the *mir* as the foundation of peasant identity as opposed to the "colonial" identity tendered by the elite; and law, and lawful tsar, as the basis for defending what was right and natural, including the peasants' identity as true Russians. With an understanding of how these forces shaped the worldview of the peasantry, we can better understand how resistance to "*kriivda*" led to increased modernization among the peasants of pre-reform Russia. The struggle between peasant and elite society presented here was rooted in the fact that for the vast majority of peasants throughout Russia's history, contact was not with the state but with the tribute collector, engendering a system wherein awe and bribery maintained the status quo. As we have seen, however, such an order inhibited the state from mobilizing the resources a developing state necessitated. But the very efforts of the state to compel acceptance of its views of necessity spawned conflict. Both secular and religious oppositions were directed against a modernizing regime that totally ignored popular attitudes and potential responses as it pursued its own military, imperial, or colonial interests. This state approach to the people ultimately undermined the authority of the tsar.

As early as the 1720s, ascribed factory peasants were resisting compulsory labor, the core of their resistance being a determination to remain agricultural-ists. Pugachev's "Imperial manifesto" invited factory workers to join the true Emperor in exchange for "the cross and beards, river and land, grasses and the sea, lead, powder, and every freedom," meaning liberation and a return to the status of state peasant. The prolonged resistance of the ascribed peasants demonstrates that peasants were more than willing to fight to preserve their understanding of what was "right and natural," a vision of a just order that centered on the *mir* as an imagined and holy community of true tsar and people, standing in opposition to the "other" of the gentry. The Russia that was to be defended by true tsar and chosen people, one inextricably connected to the Orthodox faith, was the combination of a particular type of tsar (the "people's tsar"), a particular people (one excluding the landed elite and rooted in the *mir*), and the true Orthodox religion. Indeed, the peasantry had a genuine alternate vision of society, a full definition of Russianness, one that did not accept landowning nobles as an inevitable part of the rural "scenery," but instead an alternate

conception of a pro-peasant “good” tsar far earlier than has been traditionally assumed. Such a “national” ideal was expressed through the Old Belief. That ideal, central to the peasant definition of Russianness, consisted of a Russia without landlords, serfdom, taxes, or recruitment, a Russia of self-governing communes whose members owned their land and were ruled by a “Little Father” who shared with his people the ancient Russian faith. Thus while the elites were recasting their *mentalités* to fit the mold of the emerging Imperial state, the Russian peasantry struggled to emulate the orthodoxies of the Great Muscovite Tradition of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The inability of the tsar to exhibit the characteristics of the “true tsar” began to shatter the peasants’ imagined community of tsar and people. Of the forces undermining state authority, one of the most powerful was the desanctification of the image of the tsar. The end of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century saw a contest for definitional space that provided a focus for a violent struggle to determine which imagined Russia would prevail. The arson panic of 1839 revealed the merging of religious mysticism and anti-tsarism, with religion providing legitimacy for rebellion. It is not possible to accept the view that prior to Emancipation the institution of serfdom shielded the tsar from the peasants’ rage, directing it solely at the landlords. The image of the tsar was already in flux, allowing peasants to draw upon several (tsar-father, tsar-alien, tsar-landowner) and use them as rhetorical weapons in their struggle to define and defend “Russia.” The peasants possessed the ability to contest images with the elites and to challenge the dominant ideology.

Their “Little Father” was obligated to protect the people from landlord depredations, preserve his children’s economic well-being, and above all else secure their souls. As mentioned above, the failure of the tsar to be “true” was most complete in relation to this last requirement, bringing the legitimacy of the ruling tsar most seriously into question. The Muscovite ideal had been preserved by the continued existence and cultural attraction of the Old Belief, which provided an alternative image of the nation to that being proffered by the Europeanized state to its culturally colonized subjects. Among the peasantry, the image of tsar and people remained fixed on the icon of the true tsar, upon which nineteenth-century imperialist ideas of government

and society could not be overlaid. As we have seen, the Russian peasants, like any colonized people, could be made to obey, but they could not be made to *believe*.

The Russian peasants repulsed repeated attempts by the state and intellectuals to destroy the myth of the peasant nation, wrapped around the symbols of the Third Rome and the Returning Redeemer Tsar, and to substitute a new meaning of Russia based on a Europeanized intellectual system no longer alien to the cultural elite. A close analysis of the resistance of peasants to ascription and of peasant petitions in the last years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth reveals, however, a subtle change in the response of peasants to the forces of the modern state that were impinging on their world. Rather than respond solely by looking backwards and calling for a "father tsar" to protect them on the basis of their appeal to some concept of traditional justice, peasants more and more resisted modernization by utilizing one of its central components: codified law. The peasants had begun to express a belief in themselves as subjects of law, not simply its objects. The appeal to law most often was a mechanism for negotiating between the worlds of the village and that of the state and its agents, that is, for attempting to resolve conflicts with powerful external forces. And in these attempts the peasants reveal a significant awareness of codified law.

From whence this knowledge comes is not revealed in the documents. The signers of the petitions are always disclosed, plenipotentiaries of the *mir*. While it is illogical to assume that these agents would affix their signatures or make their marks on petitions to which they did not agree, often the documents themselves were actually *written* by "marginal individuals," negotiators between the world of the village and that of the state, such as merchants, retired soldiers, students, and parish priests, and it is conceivable that such persons served as a fount of knowledge for codified law. But from whatever source, whether cultural diffusion from outsiders or by the migration of legally conscious Western- [i.e., Polish-] influenced peasants further to the east, the peasantry within this logocentric Russian universe, once made aware of codified law, perceived it as possessing power, perhaps in part simply by virtue of its being written, but primarily because of codified law's association with the authority of the tsar, even as they contested the official image of the tsar.<sup>221</sup>

There is little evidence in the peasant petitions of the

period of recourse to formal law to settle such internal village matters as questions of morality.<sup>222</sup> Nor could the peasants turn to codified law to protect what today would be referred to as basic "human rights," despite evidence of a growing belief among the peasantry in such modern rights, since codified law dealing with this was absent from pre-reform Russia. Rather, reflecting Scott's constructs of the right to subsistence and the right to reciprocity discussed above, peasant appeal to formal rather than to customary law was usually set off by changes in what the peasants regarded as the fundamentals of life, especially by efforts on the part of the state and its servitors to alter such all-encompassing socio-economic structures as labor obligations and land rights. And as these cases have shown, this recourse was not significantly more in evidence among state peasants than serfs, nor more so among those peasants in provinces taken from the former kingdom of Poland than in older Russian areas. If, as Dement'ev argued, this might have been true at the beginning of the century, by mid-century a pan-Russian peasant response was in evidence. Lenin might well have been right when he complained that there was no "law" in Russia, only "Kazan law" or "Kaluga law," but this was not true for how peasants from the former Polish areas, Black Earth zone, Volga region, and Urals came to seek justice via codified law in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Peasants also appealed to codified law in an attempt to transform the most basic structure of the tsarist state: the system of serfdom itself. Such recourse to codified law reveals one of the prime movers of Russian social evolution: as the state created new institutions, society responded by creating alternative interpretations of those institutions, and in this often violent evolutionary process, both state and society changed.<sup>223</sup> Far from being only atavistic objects of state manipulation, by the early nineteenth century the Russian peasants were learning how to manipulate the state through the application of the state's constructs for purposes other than those deemed appropriate *by the state*. And in this process the peasants of Russia were ironically being modernized through their resistance to modernization.

What were the peasants resisting? For the peasants, their "natural" condition was to belong to the state peasantry, or as they so often described it "the crown's." Although the lord-serf relationship by the first half of the nineteenth century was deeply embedded in custom, that custom revealed itself as far less

powerful than the older idea of “freedom” that formed a key element in the peasantry’s basic understanding of what was “just.”<sup>224</sup> As this study demonstrates, this belief in the “natural condition” of belonging to the state peasantry (“free”) existed among peasants in the central agrarian region where serfdom was overwhelmingly the norm, as well as in the western and lower-Volga regions where the institution had more recently been instituted. Whether the peasant petitions came from Vladimir province, Orël, Voronezh, Kaluga, or Petersburg, the desire was the same. Almost any change in their situation could produce the demand that they be recognized as no longer under the authority of a landlord. This was particularly so if they had been taken into guardianship as a result of their owner’s inability to pay his/her debts. For the peasants, once the chain of *pomeshchik* interference had been broken, it was not “justly” possible to reforge the link. But evolving from the late eighteenth century and becoming particularly manifest in the decades before emancipation, a change was emerging in the peasants’ form of resistance. No longer did they solely claim that it was unjust that they be forced to swear allegiance to their lord. Now they made the argument that it was not *legal* for the lord to have authority over them. It was this introduction of the concept of codified law as opposed to only “justice” or tradition into the fight against landlord authority that marked a new approach to the peasants’ efforts to resist the desires and demands of the state. Codified law, which most historians have seen as operating outside of the peasants’ world, and a construct alien to the peasant *weltanschauung*, had by the beginning of the nineteenth century entered into the peasants’ world and was being turned by the peasants from an instrument used to oppress them into a tool for self-liberation.<sup>225</sup>

It must be understood, however, that this acceptance of law was for the peasants a change from their traditional approach to “*pravo*.” Within their world, that which was right and natural had been defined by custom, and that custom was based upon concrete understandings of particular traditions. What was “right” was so not because it was the particular expression of a generalized construct; rather, the particular existed independent of and superior to the general. Their conception of justice thus derived from inductive thought. The incorporation of codified law into the peasant defense system in the nineteenth century therefore represented to them a commitment to abstractions, for it was not simply the specifics of the law to which they turned for defense, but to the abstraction of

law itself. In many ways this was the most significant modernization to have occurred in rural Russia up to that time. And were there ever to be a separation between the authority of the tsar and that of the law, this modernization would bode a great break in Russia's history. But because urban Russia, in particular the members of the enlightened elite, no longer saw law as an abstraction, but had come to see law as specific truths that existed as real entities, communication through law remained problematic.

This would become extremely clear during the time of the Stolypin reforms at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tsarist society then desired to dismantle the peasants' world through the undermining of the commune, and to this purpose the government would resort to laws. By then, the peasants, however, would be able to negotiate through the "world of law" and use the provisions of the reform for purposes quite unsuspected by those reformers intent on destroying the peasants' world. The fact that the peasants were able to manipulate the provisions of the Stolypin reform in support of what they saw as their own benefit gives proof to the success elite society had achieved in incorporating the peasantry into its world, a success whose roots we can see in this study. There was the possibility, then, for the struggle of social evolution to be fought on a new plain—that of the abstraction of law, rather than the field of war. That would have required elite society to remember that law was not a set of truths but merely an expression of abstract "*pravo*" in a particular form. But by the twentieth century, elite society had confused law, one means of expressing an abstract "*pravo*," with a concrete "*pravda*" [truth]. Now it would be elite society that refused to compromise with truth.

Construction of the meaning of circumstances, in particular a determination of what was realistically achievable given the existing relations of power, would shape future peasant behavior, not "naive monarchism", nor an acceptance of the gentry's right to rule rural Russia, nor some limitation on the peasantry's ability to think outside the cultural constructs of the dominant ideology.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (London: Heinemann, 1958).

<sup>2</sup> On this effort in India, see Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels, 1600–1800* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

<sup>4</sup> See for example, W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960); Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development: An Analytic Study* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966); Eugene Staley, *The Future of Underdeveloped Countries: Political Implications of Economic Development* Rev. ed. (New York: Praeger, 1961); Lincoln Gordon, *A New Deal for Latin America: The Alliance for Progress* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

<sup>5</sup> For more on the dependency-world systems approach, see André Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967); Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Trade* (London: New Left Books, 1972); Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Dependency and Development in Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

<sup>6</sup> For a statement of the contrast between the West and East European rural experience and its implications for capitalist development, see Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: N.L.B., 1974), esp. pp. 195--235.

<sup>7</sup> Erik Amburger, *Die Familie Marselis: Studien zur russischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (published as *Osteuropastudien der Hochschulen des Landes Hessen, Reihe 1*) (Giessen: W. Schmitz, 1957), p. 104; A. M. Pankratova, *Formirovanie proletariata v Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1963), pp. 219, 223; Conrad Grau, "Russisch-sächsische Beziehungen auf dem Gebiet des Berg und Hüttenwesens in der

erste Hälfte des 18. Jh.," in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte der UdSSR und der volksdemokratischen Länder Europas*, no. 4 (1960): 302--330.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to these obvious tasks, unskilled labor was needed to build and repair dams and factories, to defend the enterprises against outraged natives, and to guard caravans en route to market. For a discussion of the obligations of the ascribed peasants, see V. I. Semevskii, *Krest'iane v tsarstvovanie Imperatritsy Ekateriny II*, vol. II (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1903), p. 306.

<sup>9</sup> "Gramota ob otdache Tuleninu Nikite Demidovu zheleznykh zavodov v Verkho-turskom uezde na Nev'e reke: Prilozhenie," published in G. I. Spasskii, *Zhizneopisanie Akinfiia Nikiticha Demidova* (St. Petersburg: XXX, 1833), pp. 79--83. For a secondary account see Hugh D. Hudson, Jr., "Free Enterprise and the State in Eighteenth Century Russia: The Demidov Metallurgical Empire," in *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 26, nos. 2-3 (1984): 185--86.

<sup>10</sup> Semevskii, *Krest'iane v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*, vol. II, 304--05.

<sup>11</sup> For examples of such decrees pertaining to various industries see *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii s 1649 goda* (hereafter *PSZ*), 207 vols. (St. Petersburg: V tipografii II otdeleniia sobstvennoi Ego Imp. Velichestva kantseliarii, 1830--1916), 1 st series, vol. V, no. 3313, pp. 669--70; and vol. VI, no. 3808, pp. 410--11, and no. 4006, pp. 476--77.

<sup>12</sup> "Gramota ob otdache," published in Spasskii, *Zhizneopisanie*, p. 71. B. B. Kafengauz, *Istoriia khoziaistva Demidovykh v XVIII-XIX vv.: Opyt issledovaniia po istorii ural'skoi metallurgii*, vol 1 (Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1949), p. 95, erroneously asserts that Demidov did not at this time receive the right to purchase peasants.

<sup>13</sup> *PSZ*, 1 st. series, vol. VI, no. 3711, pp. 311--12. In fact, with the permission of the Mining and Manufacturing Collegium, transfers of workers from one factory to another were carried out.

<sup>14</sup> I. V. Sokolovskii, "K voprosu o sostoianii promyshlennosti v Rossii v kontse XVII i v pervoi polovine XVIII stoletia," in *Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo universiteta*, 1890, book 3, pp. 46--50.

<sup>15</sup> Rates for ascribed labor were set by edict of 20 January 1724 during the summer, at ten kopeks per day for peasants with horses and five kopeks for those without; during winter, six kopeks per day for those with horses and four kopeks for those without: *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. VII, no. 4425.

<sup>16</sup> Decree of 23 March 1734, in *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. IX, no. 6559, pp. 290--96.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>18</sup> *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. IX, no. 6559, pt. 9, pp. 290--96.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. IX, no. 6858, pp. 707--12. To satisfy landlord's complaints against factory owners holding their peasants, the state ordered industrialists to pay compensation for skilled fugitives and to return runaway common laborers to their lawful owners.

<sup>20</sup> See N. I. Pavlenko, "K voprosu o rynke rabochei sily dlia metallurgicheskikh manufaktur v 20--40 kh godakh XVIII veka," in *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1952): 99--123; *ibidem.*, "Zum Problem der Struktur der russischen Manufaktur im 17--19. Jh.," in *Jahrbuch für Geschichte der sozialistischen Länder Europas*, Band XIII, no. 2 (1969): 109--120.

<sup>21</sup> This parallel is suggested by Reginald Zelnik, "The Peasant and the Factory," in Wayne Vucinich (ed.), *The Peasant in Nineteenth Century Russia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 165--66.

<sup>22</sup> See the relevant documents in E. I. Zaozerskaia and L. N. Pushkarev, *Volneniia rabotnykh liudei i pripisnykh krest'ian na metallurgicheskikh zavodakh Rossii v pervoi polovine XVIII v.*, vols. I and II (Moscow: Institut istorii SSSR AN SSSR, 1975).

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion of the disturbances in the Urals during the 1750s and 1760s, see A. S. Orlov, *Volneniia na Urale v seredine XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MGU, 1979), and V. V. Mavrodin, *Klassovaia bor'ba i obshchestvenno--politicheskaia mysl' v Rossii v XVIII v. (1725--1773)*, vol. I (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1964), pp. 47--64.

<sup>24</sup> At the behest of Catherine II, the Senate on 15 September 1763 forbade the ascription of peasants from Isetsk province to the Ekaterinburg mines. The prohibition established a nationwide precedent that remained in effect throughout the remainder of her thirty-four year reign. N. I. Pavlenko, "Naemnyi trud v metallurgicheskoi promyshlennosti Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XVIII v.," in *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (1958), p. 43, argues that this pronouncement signified the end of all ascription to mines and manufactories. The legislation is unfortunately not included in PSZ.

<sup>25</sup> *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. XV, no. 11490, p. 966.

<sup>26</sup> Four months after Peter's edict, his successor, Catherine II, on 8 August 1762, confirmed the decision in an edict of her own: see *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. XVI, no. 1638, pp. 47--48. An exception was made for certain foreign-born entrepreneurs. In 1798, Paul I reinstated the right of non-nobles to purchase villages of serfs for industrial work; but relatively few entrepreneurs seem to have taken advantage of the right.

<sup>27</sup> This is the figure given by Catherine herself nine years later: see *Sbornik imperatorskogo Russkogo istoricheskogo obshchestva*, 148 vols. (St. Petersburg: Obshchestvo, 1867--1916) [hereafter cited as SIRIO], 10: 380. If Catherine's figures are correct, then some thirty-five per cent of the ascribed peasant population was in revolt at the time of her accession.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. VII, pp. 188--96.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, point 7, p. 192 (erroneously paginated as 182).

<sup>30</sup> Many of the petitions may be found in Orlov, *Volneniia na Urale*, pp. 192--263.

<sup>31</sup> PSZ, 1 st series, vol. XVI, no. 11790, pp. 214-19. Although the edict made reference to Kamsk peasants, the Empress intended it to apply to the whole industry.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of Viazemskii's final report, see Orlov, *Volneniia na Urale*, pp. 158--60. Tax increase was decreed on 12 October 1761.

<sup>33</sup> Eventually (1767), the government adopted the edict of 9 April 1763 for state enterprises. It also applied them to disturbances at private plants: Roger Portal, *L'Oural au XVIIIe siècle: étude d'histoire économique et sociale* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1950), p. 319; Semevskii, *Krest'iane v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II*, vol. II, 405-08; and Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 124-25. On 27 May 1769, Catherine issued an edict that granted peasants both a pay raise and travel money: PSZ, 1 st series, vol. XVIII, no. 13303, pp. 895-96. Although the wage increase and travel money were attempts to improve conditions for the ascribed peasants, they meant little because of the previous year's tax increase. (1768): *ibid.*, no. 13194, pp. 767-68.

<sup>34</sup> Contributions of small enterprises to the rebellion are treated in A. V. Prussak, "Zavody, rabotavshie na Pugacheva," in *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 8 (1940), pp. 174--207.

<sup>35</sup> *Dokumenty stavki E. I. Pugacheva povstancheskikh vlastei i uchrezhdenii* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1975), pp. 30--31.

<sup>36</sup> A.I. Andrushchenko, *Krest'ianskaia voina 1773--1775 gg.: na Iaike, v Priural'e, na Urale, i v Sibiri* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1969), pp. 237--238.

<sup>37</sup> N.I. Pavlenko, *Istoriia metallurgii v Rossii XVIII veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1962), pp. 475 ff.

<sup>38</sup> John T. Alexander, *Autocratic Politics in a National Crisis: the Imperial Russian Government and Pugachev's Revolt, 1773--1775*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> Catherine to G.A. Potemkin, undated note, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> PSZ, 1 st series, vol. XX, no. 14878, pp. 822--24.

<sup>41</sup> See *SIRIO*, vol. XXVII, 174.

<sup>42</sup> Krivonogov, *Naemnyi trud*, pp. 110--11; L. A. Gol'denberg, *Mikhail Fedorovich Soimonov (1730--1804)* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1973), p. 140. This, in fact, was the number set in 1807 for private factories; each state factory would have its number determined individually: *PSZ*, 1 st series, vol. XXIX, no. 22498, p. 1052. According to the decree of 15 March 1807, the indispensable workers were placed in a legal and social position analogous to that of the *vechno otdannye*: "Polozhenie dlia neprenennykh robotnikov pri gornykh zavodakh," in *ibid.*, p. 1071.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. XXVI, no. 19641, pp. 379--82.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. XXIX, no. 22498, pp. 1052--1057.

<sup>45</sup> For a discussion of the disturbances of the early nineteenth century, see O. S. Tal'skii, "Polozhenie i klassovaia bor'ba uglepostavshchikov metallurgicheskoi promyshlennosti Rossii v feodal'nom periode," in *Voprosy istorii SSSR i metodiki prepodavaniia istorii v srednei shkole* (Barnaul: Barnaul'skii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut, 1972). On the fate of the ascribed peasants of Olonets and the state's decision to exclude them from the legislation of 1807, see *PSZ*, 2nd series, vol. III, no. 1916, pp. 350--57. The general emancipation is "Manifesto of 19 February 1861," in *ibid.*, vol. XXXVI, no. 36650, p. 128 ff. On the freeing of the remaining ascribed peasants at private works, see "Dopolnitel'nye pravila o pripisannykh k chastnym gornym zavodam liudiakh vedomstva Ministerstva Finansov," in *ibid.*, 36667, pp. 376--82. The liberation of unfree labor by state works followed on 1 May 1861. (The legislation is not contained in *PSZ*.)

<sup>46</sup> For a debate on how "real" this imagination was among the peasantry see Pavel Grigor'evich Ryndziunskii, "Ideinaia storona krest'ianskikh dvizhenii 1770--1850-kh godov i metody ee izucheniia, *Voprosy istorii*, no. 5. (1983): 4--16, and Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976).

<sup>47</sup> Valerie Kivelson, "The Devil Stole His Mind: The Tsar and the 1648 Moscow Uprising," *American Historical Review*, 98, no. 3

(1993): 733--756. She would place a possible break between tsar and people in 1648 with the Moscow uprising against tsar Aleksei's favorites. But she is dealing with the capital-city service nobility, musketeers (*strel'tsy*), and townsmen, not the peasantry whom I address here. Her argument that Muscovites felt alienated from the growing bureaucratic ("routinized") state further does not indicate that they had defined the then ruling tsar as not "true."

<sup>48</sup> See, Sergei Timofeevich Aksakov, *Chronicles of a Russian Family* (London: G. Routledge & sons, ltd, 1924); Nicholas Riasanovsky, *Russia and the West in the Teaching of the Slavophiles; A Study of Romantic Ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952); Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution; A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (New York: Knopf, 1960) [A translation of Franco Venturi, *Il Populismo Russo*, (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1952)]; Richard Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967); Cathy Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth Century Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1986). The weakness of the urban middle classes, the social force most often responsible for peasant culture falling apart, contributed to the relative strength of the peasant imagining of Russia; however, the issue of the weakness of "middle-class" Russian society is beyond the scope of this article. For a provocative treatment of this problem, see Edith Clowes, Samuel Kassow, and James West, eds., *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>52</sup> Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Russkoe staroobriadchestvo: dukhovnye dvizheniia semnadtsatogo veka* (Munich: W. Fink, 1970).

<sup>53</sup> Aleksandra Nikolaevna Lozanova, *Pesni i skazaniia o Razine i Pugacheve* (Moscow: Academia, 1935); Paul Avrich, *Peasant Rebels, 1600--1800* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972).

<sup>54</sup> Aleksandr Viktorovich Buganov, *Russkaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian XIX veka i natsional'noe samosoznanie* (Moscow: Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk, Institut etnologii i antropologii im. N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia, 1992).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 121--28.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84---85. Translation by author.

<sup>57</sup> Maureen Perrie, *The Image of Ivan the Terrible in Russian Folklore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 60--65; Buganov, *Russkaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian*, pp. 82--88.

<sup>58</sup> Buganov, *Russkaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian*, p. 92.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90--94; Kivelson, "The Devil Stole His Mind," p. 747.

<sup>60</sup> Buganov, *Russkaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian*, pp. 157--72

<sup>61</sup> Robert Crummey, *The Old Believers and the World of the Antichrist: The Vyg Community and the Russian State, 1694--1855* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552--1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 218.

<sup>63</sup> Georgii Kavtaradze, "K istorii krest'ianskogo samosoznaniia perioda reformy 1861 g.," *Vestnik LGU: Seriia istorii, iazyka i literatury*, no. 14 (1969): 57--58. Clearly this process involved a selective understanding of the law, especially chapter 11, "The Judicial Process for Peasants," of the Ulozhenie of 1649, the fundamental statute on enserfment: Richard Hellie, ed. and trans., *The Muscovite Law Code (Ulozhenie) of 1649*. 2 vols. (Irvine, CA: Charles Schlacks, Jr., Publisher, 1988--89), 1: 85--94. Peasants by the late eighteenth century particularly were seeking decrees that would provide a justification for invalidating their enserfment.

<sup>64</sup> Aleksandr Vasilevich Kamkin, "Pravosoznanie gosudarstvennykh krest'ian vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka (Na materialakh Evropeiskogo Severa)," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 2 (1987): 163--73; Dmitrii Il'ich Raskin, "Ispol'zovanie zakonodatel'nykh aktov v krest'ianskikh chelobitnykh serediny XVIII veka (Materialy k izucheniiu obshchestvennogo soznaniia russkogo krest'ianstva)," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 4 (1979): 179--92.

<sup>65</sup> Kamkin, "Pravosoznanie gosudarstvennykh krest'ian vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka," pp. 166--69.

<sup>66</sup> Vsevolod Ivanovich Krutikov, "Pravosoznanie krest'ian i ego otrazhenie v krest'ianskom dvizhenii," *Sotsial'no-politicheskoe i pravovoe polozhenie krest'ianstva v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1983), pp. 177--86. A. A. Pushkarenko, "Pravosoznanie rossiiskogo krest'ianstva pozdnefeodal'noi epokhi," *XXVI s"ezd KPSS i problemy agrarnoi istorii SSSR (sotsial'no-politicheskoe razvitie derevni)* (Ufa: Bashkirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1984), pp. 419--23, warns against assuming too specific a knowledge of the laws' details. Knowledge tended to be general. Further, if the peasants saw a law as disadvantageous, they tended to deny its legitimacy.

<sup>67</sup> Richard Wortman, *The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>68</sup> For example, see the case involving economic peasants involved in a land dispute with a neighboring lord, "Proshenie Petra Leonova, poverennogo ekonomicheskikh krest'ian Dem'ianskoi vol. Ministru finansov D. A. Gur'evu o vozvrate kazennykh zemel', zakhvachennykh pomeshchikami Okunevymi," June 1817, in Sigizmund Natanovich Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1961), pp. 512--22, where the peasants not only cite three separate Senate decrees but also the regulations governing land surveys. For additional examples see, Kamkin, "Pravosoznanie gosudarstvennykh krest'ian vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka"; Dmitrii Il'ich Raskin, "Ispol'zovanie zakonodatel'nykh aktov v krest'ianskikh chelobitnykh serediny

XVIII veka (Materialy k izucheniiu obshchestvennogo soznaniia russkogo krest'ianstva)," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 4 (1979): 179--92.

<sup>69</sup> "Proshenie Ivana Artem'eva, poverennogo krest'ian s. Kutki ministru iustitsii D. P. Troshchinskomy o zashchite ikh ot razoreniia opekunami," 1816, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 393--96; "Donosenie voronezhskogo gubernatora M. I. Bravina peterburgskomu general-gubernatoru S. K. Viazmitinovu ob otkaze krest'ian ispolniat' povinnosti i ob areste imi administratsii imeniia," 29 January 1817, in *ibid.*, pp. 438--44; "Donosenie i. d. bessarabskogo oblastnogo prokurora P. F. Gladskogo ministru iustitsii D. V. Daiskovu o soprotivlenii tsaran v seleniakh Khotinskogo, Iasskogo i Orgeevskogo uezdov politseiskim vlastiam pri vvedenii Polozheniia o bessarabskikh tsaranakh," 1834, in *ibid.*, pp. 245--47; Aleksandr Vasilevich Kamkin, "Pravosoznanie gosudarstvennykh krest'ian vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka (Na materialakh Evropeiskogo Severa)," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 2 (1987): 163--73.

<sup>70</sup> For instance, the decree of 22 January 1724 forbidding the infliction of punishment until an investigation was complete was interpreted to mean that they were not required to obey their lord when they were petitioning against him to the tsar until their petition had been answered by the tsar himself: Raskin, "Ispol'zovanie zakonodatel'nykh aktov v krest'ianskikh chelobitnykh serediny XVIII veka," p. 187. Similarly, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, peasants in Iaroslavl province made ready use of Alexander I's expedited procedures for review of petitions by peasants who claimed to be illegally held under landlord authority. Lazar' Borisovich Genkin, "Krest'ianskie zhaloby pervoi poloviny XIX v. kak istoricheskii istochnik (po materialam Gosudarstvennogo arkhiva Iaroslavskoi oblasti)," *Voprosy istorii sel'skogo khoziaistva, krest'ianstva i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii: sbornik statei k 75 letiiu Akademika Nikolaia Mikhailovicha Druzhinina* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1961), pp. 164--71, cites, for 1827 alone, 122 peasant petitions in Iaroslavl Province that made use of Alexander's decrees of 1815 and 1816.

<sup>71</sup> Krutikov, "Pravosoznanie krest'ian i ego otrazhenie v krest'ianskom dvizhenii." One of the laws that appears most often

in peasant petitions was that of 8 November 1847, which allowed peasants the opportunity to purchase their freedom when the estate was sold for debt at auction: Morgan Abdullovič Rakhmatullin, "Zakonodatel'naia praktika tsarskogo samoderzhavii: ukaz ot 8 noiabria 1847 goda i popytki ego primeneniia," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 2 (1982): 35--52; Vsevolod Ivanovich Krutikov, "O kharaktere krest'ianskikh trebovanii v period razlozheniia feodal'no-krepostnicheskoi sistemy i pervoi revoliutsionnoi situatsii v Rossii," *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii vostochnoi evropy 1964 god* (Kishinev: Izdatel'stvo 'Kartia Moldoveniaske', 1966), p. 598.

<sup>72</sup> Boris Nikolaevich Mironov, "Gramotnost' v Rossii 1797--1917: Poluchenie novoi istoricheskoi informatsii s pomoshch'iu metodov retrospektivnogo prognozirovaniia," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 4. (1985):137--53; Marina Mikhailovna Gromyko, "Kul'tura russkogo krest'ianstva XVIII--XIX vekov kak predmet istoricheskogo issledovaniia," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1987): 39--60.

<sup>73</sup> Teodor Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of Century*, 2 vols. (New Haven: 1985--86), vol. 2, *Russia, 1905--07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth*, p. 87.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120--137.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Gilroy, "*There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack*": *The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Hutchinson, 1987).

<sup>77</sup> For example, see Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812--1855* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961).

<sup>78</sup> Steven Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambou* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 133.

<sup>79</sup> James Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition, Part I," *Theory and Society* 4, no. 1 (1977): 10.

<sup>80</sup> The peasants were thus acting in conformity with the findings of Edward Said, deriving a sense of their identity to a large extent negatively. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), p. 54.

<sup>81</sup> Pavel Ivanovich Mel'nikov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii P. I. Mel'nikova*, 14 vols. (St. Petersburg: M.O. Vol'f, 1898):14375.

<sup>82</sup> Frederick Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962; originally published Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), pp. 239--49.

<sup>83</sup> Stephen Baehr, "Regaining Paradise: The 'Political Icon' in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Russia," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 11, nos. 2--3 (1984):157.

<sup>84</sup> Buganov, *Russkaia istoriia v pamiati krest'ian*, pp. 98--115.

<sup>85</sup> Lozanova, *Pesni i skazaniia*.

<sup>86</sup> Maureen Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism in Early Modern Russia: The False Tsars of the Time of Troubles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Perrie would like to disassociate the pretender phenomenon of the Time of Troubles from "popular socio-utopian legends," but her arguments that the lower classes sought merely a "world turned upside down" rather than systematic change does little to challenge the evidence that the lower orders sought redemption from the "true tsar" pretenders.

<sup>87</sup> Kirill Vasil'evich Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy XVII--XIX vv.* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1967), pp. 24--33; Kivelson, "The Devil Stole His Mind," pp. 743--44; Perrie, *Pretenders and Popular Monarchism*, p. 247.

<sup>88</sup> Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*, pp.135--38.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 136. Chistov, however, also could not fully divorce himself from belief in the peasantry's "tsarist illusions." For example, see pp.222--23.

<sup>90</sup> James Scott, "Protest and Profanation: Agrarian Revolt and the Little Tradition, Part II," *Theory and Society* 4, no. 2 (1977): 225.

<sup>91</sup> Sergei Aleksandrovich Golubtsov, ed., *Pugachevshchina*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1926--31), vol. 1, *Iz arkhiva Pugacheva (manifesty, ukazy i perepiska)*, pp. 40--41. Emphasis added.

<sup>92</sup> David Goldfrank, "Pre-Enlightenment Utopianism in Russian History," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 11, nos. 2--3 (1984): 136. See also Aleksandr Il'ich Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial'naiia utopiia v Rossii XIX vek* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1978), pp. 83--163.

<sup>93</sup> On everyday forms of resistance, such as dissimulation, pilfering, work slowdowns, and flight, see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For an example in Russian, see E. S. Paina, "Zhaloby pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian pervoi poloviny XIX v. kak istoricheskii istochnik," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 6 (1964): 110--17. On flight as a form of resistance among Russian peasants in the first half of the nineteenth century, see, for example, Elena Kots, "Pobegi pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian v Nikolaevskuiu epokhu," *Arkhiv istorii truda v Rossii*, kn. 5, ch. 1 (1922): 3-29 and P. G. Ryndziunskii, "O nekotorykh spornykh voprosakh istorii krest'ianskogo dvizheniia v Rossii," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 8 (1987): 79--88.

<sup>94</sup> Ben Eklof, "Ways of Seeing: Recent Anglo-American Studies of the Russian Peasant (1861--1914)," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 36, No.1 (1988): 57-79.

<sup>95</sup> Despite the seriousness of the disturbance and its brief description in almost all reviews of peasant unrest in the nineteenth century, the arson panic has been the subject of little historical analysis. N. Varadinov included the events in his *Istoriia Ministerstva vnutrennikh del* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Ministerstva Vnutrennikh del, 1861), III, book 2, pp. 458--60 and E. Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e v 1839 g.," *Trudy instituta istorii RANION*, 1 (1926): 433--62; the only previous article on the affair.

<sup>96</sup> V. I. Semevskii, *Krest'ianskii vopros v Rossii v XVIII i pervoi polovine XIX veka*, Vol. II: *Krest'ianskii vopros v tsarstvovanie Imperatora Nikolaia* (St. Petersburg, 1888), p. 581.

<sup>97</sup> Fire also came to dominate discourse on Russia's backwardness, future, and need for law and enlightenment in the late nineteenth century: see, Cathy A. Frierson, "Of Red Roosters, Revenge and the Search for Justice. Rural Arson in European Russia in the Late Imperial Era," in Peter Solomon, ed., *Reforming Justice in Russia, 1864--1996: Power, Culture, and the Limits of Legal Order* (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 1997), pp. 109--132; and *idem*, "Apocalyptic Visions and Rational Responses: Fire Narratives in Fin-de-Siècle Russia," *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 38, nos. 3--4 (1996): 357--384.

<sup>98</sup> On the use of the language of crime to delegitimize peasant protest see Stephen P. Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856--1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

<sup>99</sup> On transference during rebellion see Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, especially pp. 23--28.

<sup>100</sup> Pushkarenko, "Pravosoznanie rossiiskogo krest'ianstva pozdnefeodal'noi epokhi"; V. Kruitikov, "Pravosoznanie krest'ian i ego otrazhenie v krest'ianskom dvizhenii," *Sotsial'no-politicheskoe i pravovoe polozhenie krest'ianstva v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii* (Voronezh: Izdatel'stvo Voronezhskogo universiteta, 1983), pp. 181--82.

<sup>101</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> Scott J. Seregny and Rex A. Wade, "Saratov as Russian History," in Rex A. Wade and Scott J. Serengy, eds., *Politics and Society in Provincial Russia: Saratov, 1590--1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), p. 3. This is the most detailed study of the Middle Volga area in English; however, despite its title, it concentrates almost exclusively on the post-Emancipation period.

<sup>103</sup> On the socio-economic structure of the Middle Volga region, see James G. Hart, "From Frontier Outpost to Provincial Capital:

Saratov, 1590--1860," in Wade and Serengy, eds., *Politics and Society in Provincial Russia* and Iu. I. Smykov, *Krest'iane Srednego Povolzh'ia v period kapitalizma* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1984). According to Smykov, pp. 41--42, the peasant population of Simbirsk province at mid-century was 40.5% serfs, 7.4% state peasants, and 49.3% crown peasants [*udel'nye*], whereas in Samara the percentages were 15.7 serfs, 64.5 state peasants, and 18.1 crown peasants.

<sup>104</sup> For a discussion of the crop failure in Tambov province, slightly to the west, see Steven L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, A Village in Tambov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 51--56.

<sup>105</sup> Kots, "Pobegi pomeschich'ikh krest'ian v Nikolaevskuiu epokhu"; David Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: Interaction between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825--1855* (London: The MacMillan Press, Ltd., 1992), pp. 23--61.

<sup>106</sup> A. I. Klivanov, "K kharakteristike ideinykh dvizhenii v srede gosudarstvennykh i udel'nykh krest'ian v pervoi treti XIX v.," *Iz istorii ekonomicheskoi i obshchestvennoi zhizni Rossii. Sbornik statei k 90-letiiu akademika N. M. Druzhinina* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1976), pp. 153--167.

<sup>107</sup> Report of Major General of the Corps of Gendarmes Perfil'ev to the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs A. G. Stroganov of 29 July 1839, contained in "Osnovnye bumagi k ispolneniiu Vysoch. porucheniiia po Simb., Sarat. i Penz. gub. i doneseniiia o deistviiakh--s 10 iulia 1839 g." l. 45; quoted in Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," p. 456.

<sup>108</sup> The affected *guberniias* were Kazan, Khar'kov, Kostroma, Nizhegorodskaia, Orenburg, Penza, Perm, Riazan, Saratov, Simbirsk, Tambov, Tula, Voronezh, and the Land of the Don Cossack Host [Donskogo Voiska Zemlia].

<sup>109</sup> "Otchet o deistviiakh III otdeleniia sobstvennoi Vashego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii i korpusa zhandarmov za 1839 god," in E. A. Morokhovets, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*

1827-1869 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Gosudarstvennoe sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe, 1931) I: 28.

<sup>110</sup> Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," p. 436.

<sup>111</sup> On the role of the legend of Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich in peasant disturbances, see Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie*, pp. 196--219.

<sup>112</sup> "Svod mnenii naschet vnutrennego sostoianiia Rossii i deistvitel'noe ee sostoianie," in A. V. Predtechenskii, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1826--1849 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1961) [hereinafter *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*], p. 349.

<sup>113</sup> On the use of arson as a weapon of the peasantry in Western Europe see, Eric J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), pp. 198--203 and Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973), pp. 118--120. On arson in India and the confusion of criminality with rebellion, see Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, pp. 109--66.

<sup>114</sup> On the role of rumors in the peasantry's conceptualization of the behavior of the government, see M. M. Gromyko, "Kul'tura russkogo krest'ianstva XVIII-XIX vekov kak predmet istoricheskogo issledovaniia," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1987): 39--60.

<sup>115</sup> The following account is taken largely from "Donesenie simbirskogo gubernatora N. I. Komarova upravliaiushchemu Ministerstvu vnutrennikh del A. G. Stroganovu o volnenii pomeshchich'ikh i udel'nykh krest'ian Syzranskogo, Sengileevskogo i Karsunskogo uezdov v sviazi s pozharami o rasprave s krest'ianami," in *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 350--61.

<sup>116</sup> Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, p. 164.

<sup>117</sup> "Donesenie simbirskogo gubernatora N. I. Komarova upravliaiushchemu Ministerstvu vnutrennikh del A. G. Stroganovu o volnenii krest'ian v seleniakh Anikeevke i Rep'evke Karsunskogo uезда v sviazi s pozharami i o rasprave s krest'ianami," *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*, pp. 361--63.

<sup>118</sup> Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," pp. 439–40.

<sup>119</sup> "Osnovnye bumagi k ispolneniiu Vysoch. porucheniia po Simb., Sarat. i Penz. gub. i doneseniia o deistviakh—s 10 iuliia 1839 g." ll. 11, 37–38; quoted in Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," p. 439.

<sup>120</sup> "Donesenie simbirskogo gubernatora N. I. Komarova upravliaiushchemu Ministerstvu vnutrennikh del A. G. Stroganovu o volnenii pomeshchich'ikh i udel'nykh krest'ian Syzranskogo, Sengileevskogo i Karsunskogo uezdov v sviazi s pozharemi o rasprave s krest'ianami," *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*, p. 358.

<sup>121</sup> In 1830–1831, members of Polish patriotic societies rose in rebellion against tsar Nicholas I, who ruled in Poland as King of the Congress Kingdom of Poland, established by tsar Alexander I at the end of the Napoleonic Wars to grant part of Poland independence under a Russian protectorate. Following the defeat of the uprising in the autumn of 1831, numerous members of the Polish nobility involved in the disturbance were exiled to the Volga region, where they remained objects of great suspicion.

<sup>122</sup> Valerie A. Kivelson, "Through the Prism of Witchcraft: Gender and Social Change in Seventeenth-Century Muscovy," in Barbara Evans Clements, Barbara Alpern Engel, and Christine D. Worobec, eds., *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 74–94.

<sup>123</sup> The officials had perhaps unwittingly uncovered the significant role that Old Believers played in shaping the cultural values of the peasantry. See, Gromyko, "Kultura russkogo krest'ianstva," pp. 53–56. The myth held by super-ordinate groups that outside agitators are the primary source of unrest among their subordinates is, of course, universal: see, for one example, Anand A. Yang, "A Conversation of Rumours: The Language of Popular *Mentalités* in Late Nineteenth-Century Colonial India," *Journal of Social History*, 20, no. 3 (1987): 485–505.

<sup>124</sup> On the sharing of rumors by the gentry and the peasantry see M. A. Rakhmatullin, "Sotsial'noe nastroyenie krepostnogo krest'ianstva i klassovaia bor'ba (1826--1857 gg.)," *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 3 (1988): 54--79, especially 59--62.

<sup>125</sup> The Gendarmerie reported 553 private houses, an Old-Believer and Orthodox church, the city hall, the post office, 87 retail shops, 72 black smith shops, two mills, and two marketplaces burned: Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," p. 436.

<sup>126</sup> "Osnovnye bumagi k ispolneniiu Vysoch. porucheniia po Simb., Sarat. i Penz. gub. i doneseniia o deistviiakh—s 10 iulia 1839 g." l. 89; quoted in Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," p. 437. The cantonists were Jewish children, aged twelve to seventeen, but often illegally seized when but eight or nine, who were taken from their families for preparatory military training before beginning their twenty-five year service.

<sup>127</sup> *Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossiiskoi imperii s 1649 goda*, 2nd. ser., 55 vols. (St. Petersburg: V tipografii II otdeleniia sobstvennoi Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1830-1916), II, no. 1330 (26 August 1827). On the impact of the draft, and its associated efforts at forced conversion, see Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), pp. 29--32.

<sup>128</sup> The entire affair, however, did not serve Bibikov so well. An investigation by the Committee of Ministers led to his firing: "Otchet o deistviiakh III otdeleniia," pp. 28--29. The arrested Jews fared better. They were freed, returned to their homes, and each provided with 500 rubles' compensation.

<sup>129</sup> Rakhmatullin, "Sotsial'noe nastroyenie," p. 71.

<sup>130</sup> "Svod mnenii naschet vnutrennego sostoiianiia Rossii i deistvitel'noe ee sostoianie," *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*, p. 347. Tsar Nicholas I found this report so disturbing that he especially noted it in the secret police report.

<sup>131</sup> "Svod mnenii naschet vnutrennego sostoiianiia Rossii i deistvitel'noe ee sostoianie," *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie*, p. 343.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 347--48.

<sup>133</sup> B. G. Litvak, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1775--1904 gg.: Istoriiia i metodika izucheniiia istochnikov* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1989), pp. 141--157.

<sup>134</sup> B. G. Litvak, "O periodizatsii krest'ianskogo dvizheniia v Rossii," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 3 (1986), pp. 72--74.

<sup>135</sup> "It [the serfs' concept of freedom] did not extend beyond the limits of the feudal structure, for the basis of this conception lay in the struggle to transverse into a less wretched estate": B. G. Litvak, "O nekotorykh chertakh psikhologii russkikh krepostnykh pervoi poloviny XIX v.," in *Istoriiia i psikhologiiia*, eds. B. F. Porshnev and L. I. Antsyferova (Moscow, "Nauka," 1971), p. 206. Quotation: Litvak, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1775--1904 gg.*, p. 61. Maureen Perrie, "Folklore as Evidence of Peasant *Mentalité*: Social Attitudes and Values in Russian Popular Culture," *The Russian Review*, 48, no. 2 (1989): 142, similarly concludes: "And where the socialists sought to abolish gentry landownership and to eliminate class distinctions, the peasants seem to have envisaged simply greater justice and a fairer distribution of wealth within the existing system." See also, M. A. Rakhmatullin, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v velikorusskikh guberniakh v 1826--1857* (Moscow, "Nauka," 1990), pp. 226--52. These authors in fact are repeating the claim set forth by the Marquis de Custine in his *La Russie en 1839*, where he observed that "other peasants with less kindness and more indirect shrewdness revolted against their masters, solely in the hope of becoming serfs of the crown—which is the ultimate ambition of all Russian peasants". See *The Journals of the Marquis de Custine: Journey for Our Time*, ed. and translated by Phyllis Penn Kohler (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1951), pp. 86--90, quotation p. 89.

<sup>136</sup> Litvak, "O nekotorykh chertakh psikhologii," p. 206.

<sup>137</sup> A. I. Gertsen, "Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie," in *Sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1954--1965) VII: 67--68.

<sup>138</sup> By far the most common form of serious protest by peasants in the first half of the nineteenth century was not violence, but flight. See, Kots, "Pobegi"; Iu. I. Gerasimova, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1844--1849 gg.," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 50 (1955): 224--68.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, the petition of 10 January 1816 to the Minister of Justice by the peasants of the village of Kutka, challenging the efforts of their guardian to raise dues based on a very close reading of the Provincial Statute: "Proshenie Ivana Artem'ova, poverennogo krest'ian s. Kutki ministru iustitsii D. P. Troshchinskomu o zashchite ikh ot razoreniia opekunami," in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 393--96. A year later peasants throughout Voronezh province refused to recognize the authority of their lords based on an edict of the Senate of 1815 that forbade the enserfment of peasants not registered as serfs in the first and second Revisions (1722--1727 and 1743): "Donosenie voronezhskogo gubernatora M. I. Bravina peterburgskomu general-gubernatoru S. K. Viazmitinovu ob otkaze krest'ian ispolniat' povinnosti i ob areste imi administratsii imeniia," in Valk, ed., *Krestianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 438--444.

<sup>140</sup> This is not to say that violence in peasant society was rare. In fact as Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia*, has argued, violence formed the heart of Russian serf culture, especially violence used by serf officials and village elders to control younger members of the village. But whereas Hoch sees most of the violence in serf society working to maintain landlord control through a symbiotic relationship between master and village elders, what we see in the arson panic of 1839 is a rhetorical and often physical struggle that pitted peasants against masters. Social control was not nearly so effective as in Hoch's village in Tambov.

<sup>141</sup> For a discussion of the significance of millennial thought in peasant disturbances in both Europe and Asia, see Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, pp. 332--35.

<sup>142</sup> Klibanov, "K kharakteristike."

<sup>143</sup> The *Molokane* (milk-drinkers [on fast days]) were members of a sectarian movement that paralleled the Old Belief. Basing their beliefs not on the teachings of the Orthodox church but on the reading of the scriptures, they stressed the congregation's collectivism and mutual responsibility. Although they accepted the tsar's right to rule, they were far less tolerant of the state's intermediate agents.

<sup>144</sup> The chiliastic movement among the German pietists appears to be part of a larger revivalist movement that was affecting the German community in Russia. See John B. Toews, "The Early Mennonite Brethren and Conversion," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 11 (1993): 76--97.

<sup>145</sup> Klibanov, "K kharakteristike," pp. 163--65.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.* 160--63. See, too, *idem*, *Narodnaia sotsial'naia utopiia v Rossii XIX vek*, pp. 36--44.

<sup>147</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p.333.

<sup>148</sup> Maureen Perrie, "Folklore as Evidence of Peasant *Mentalité*," pp.119--43; quotation p. 131.

<sup>149</sup> On the significance of "turning things upside down" in peasant rebellion, see Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*, pp. 28--76.

<sup>150</sup> On rumors and their being mistaken for "conspiracy" see *ibid.*, pp. 251--65; quotation p. 262.

<sup>151</sup> Ryndziunskii, "Ideinaia storona krest'ianskikh dvizhenii 1770--1850-kh godov," pp. 4--16.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

<sup>153</sup> V. A. Fedorov, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Tsentral'noi Rossii 1800--1860* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1980), p. 164.

<sup>154</sup> Kavtaradze, "K istorii krest'ianskogo samosoznaniia perioda reformy 1861 g.," pp. 59--62.

<sup>155</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p. 332.

<sup>156</sup> Allan K. Wildman, "Retrospect," in Wade and Sereniy, eds., *Politics and Society in Provincial Russia*, p. 339. On the impact of "outside influences" on peasant rebelliousness, especially those connected with the labor market and the grain trade, but also literate outsiders in general, see Fedorov, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Tsentral'noi Rossii 1800--1860*, especially pp. 108--120.

<sup>157</sup> Morokhovets, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Povolzh'e," pp. 448-49.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 453--54; quotation, p. 453.

<sup>159</sup> James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

<sup>160</sup> Litvak, "O periodizatsii." M. A. Rakhmatullin, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v velikorusskikh guberniakh*, pp. 205--10, 242--52, concedes that some peasants in the pre-Emancipation period had ceased to believe in the "good tsar," but limits this to a handful of peasant-intellectuals: "The peasants as a mass continued to believe in the 'good' will of the tsar" (249). Haruki Wada, "The Inner World of Russian Peasants," *Annals of the Institute of Social Science* [Tokyo] no. 2 (1979): 76--86, would have it that in the first half of the nineteenth century the tsars were seen as the "Reigning Emancipator Tsars." Such faith in the tsar emancipator is said to have lasted until the mid-1880s.

<sup>161</sup> Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*.

<sup>162</sup> Rakhmatullin, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v velikorusskikh guberniakh*, p. 137.

<sup>163</sup> Golubtsov, ed., *Pugachevshchina*, 1: 29.

<sup>164</sup> Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no-utopicheskie legendy*.

<sup>165</sup> Marina Mikhailovna Gromyko, *Traditsionnye normy povedeniia i formy obshcheniia russkikh krest'ian XIX v.* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1986).

<sup>166</sup> "Proshenie Grigoriia Dmitrieva i Koz'my Matveeva, poverennykh krest'ian Bogoiavlenskoi vol. Nikolaiu I o vzyskanii s volostnogo golovy Arsakova nezakonno sobrannykh deneg," 17 February 1826, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 758--62; "Donesenie nizhegorodskogo gubernatora A. S. Kruikova upravliaiushchemu Ministerstvu vnutrennikh del V. S. Lanskomu o smene krest'ianami Bogoiavlenskou vol. volostnogo golovy," 1825, in *ibid.*, pp. 755--57.

<sup>167</sup> Gromyko, *Traditsionnye normy povedeniia*, p. 106.

<sup>168</sup> Mironov, "Gramotnost'."

<sup>169</sup> Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, argues that the first of the very few cases of Populists successfully penetrating peasant society was the Chigrin affair in Ukraine in 1877, and even here it involved working within the myth of the people's tsar.

<sup>170</sup> Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency*.

<sup>171</sup> Anton Chekhov, *The Portable Chekhov*, ed., and with an introduction by Avrahm Yarmolinsky (New York: Viking Press, 1947). For more recent debates on the economic situation of the peasantry in the nineteenth century, in particular the peasantry's "stage of development," see Teodor Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of Century*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985--86), vol. 1, *Russia as a 'Developing Society'*, pp. 150--73.

<sup>172</sup> Rose Glickman, "Peasant Women and Their Work," in Ben Eklof and Stephen Frank, eds., *The World of the Russian Peasant: Post-Emancipation Culture and Society* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 48. See the other articles in this collection for additional evidence of the stamina of pre-emancipation peasant culture in the face of drastic economic and social changes.

<sup>173</sup> “Raport varnavinskogo zemskogo ispravnika N. Basova kostromskomu gubernatoru N. F. Pasynkovu o vooruzhennom soprotivlenii krest’ian voennoi komande,” 24 September 1815, in Valk, ed., *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796-1825 gg.*, pp. 334-36.

<sup>174</sup> Valk, ed., *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796-1825 gg.*, p. 786, note 217.

<sup>175</sup> “Proshenie krest’ian s. Nikol’skogo imperatritse Marii Fedorovne o zashchite ikh ot razoreniiia vsledstvie prinuzhdeniia k rabote na bumazhnykh fabrikakh,” end of October–beginning of November 1815, in Valk, ed., *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796-1825 gg.*, p. 337.

<sup>176</sup> PSZ, 1st series, vol. I, no. 1 and vol. XXVII, no. 20352.

<sup>177</sup> Valk, ed., *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 787, notes 221 and 222.

<sup>178</sup> Western historians as of late have concentrated more on legal consciousness among the post-reform peasantry, with far less attention to the pre-reform. See, for example, Frierson, “Of Red Roosters, Revenge and the Search for Justice” and *idem.*, “Apocalyptic Visions and Rational Responses.”

<sup>179</sup> Krutikov, “Pravosoznanie krest’ian i ego otrazhenie v krest’ianskom dvizhenii.”

<sup>180</sup> Genkin, “Krest’ianskie zhaloby pervoi poloviny XIX v. kak istoricheskii istochnik,” p. 169.

<sup>181</sup> Pushkarenko, “Pravosoznanie rossiiskogo krest’ianstva pozdnefeodal’noi epokhi,” p. 421.

<sup>182</sup> Rakhmatullin, “Zakonodatel’naia praktika tsarskogo samoderzhaviiia.”

<sup>183</sup> Rakhmatullin, *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v velikorusskikh guberniakh*, pp. 102--113.

<sup>184</sup> E. I. Dement'ev, "Russkaia derevnia posle otechestvennoi voiny 1812 g.," *Istoricheskie zapiski*, vol. 116 (1988): 301--312.

<sup>185</sup> Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*.

<sup>186</sup> Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform*, pp. 60--61.

<sup>187</sup> "Proshenie Ivana Artem'ova, poverennogo krest'ian s. Kutki ministru iustitsii D. P. Troshchinskomu o zashchite ikh ot razoreniiia opekunami," 10 January 1816, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 393--96.

<sup>188</sup> "Donesenie i. d. bessarabskogo oblastnogo prokurora P. F. Gladkogo ministru iustitsii D. V. Dashkovu o soprotivlenii tsaran v seleniakh Khotinskogo, Iasskogo i Orleevskogo uezdov politseiskim vlastiam pri vvedenii Polozheniia o bessarabskikh tsaranakh," in Predtechenskii, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1826--1849 gg.*, pp. 245--47.

<sup>189</sup> The *tsarany* were a special category of state peasants.

<sup>190</sup> "Donesenie nizhegorodskogo gubernatora A. S. Kriukova upraveaiushchemu Ministerstvu vnutrennikh del V. S. Lanskomu o smene krest'ianami Bogoiavlenskoi vol. volostnogo golovy," in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 756--757.

<sup>191</sup> M. M. Gromyko, *Mir russkoi derevni* (Moscow: "Molodaia gvardiia," 1991).

<sup>192</sup> "Proshenie Grigoriia Dmitrieva i Koz'my Matveeva, poverennykh krest'ian Bogoiavlenskoi vol. Nikolaiu I o vzyskanii s volostnogo golovy Arsakova nezakonno sobrannykh deneg," 17 February 1826, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 759.

<sup>193</sup> PSZ, 1st series, vol. XXIV, no. 18082.

<sup>194</sup> When Catherine the Great confiscated the church's serfs, they were renamed "economic peasants," and became a special category of state peasants.

<sup>195</sup> "Proshenie Petra Leonova, poverennogo ekonomicheskikh krest'ian Dem'ianskoi vol. ministru finansov D. A. Gur'evu o vozvrate kazennykh zemel', zakhvachennykh pomeshchikami Okunevymi," June 1817, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 512--522.

<sup>196</sup> A *desiatina* equals approximately two and three-quarters acres.

<sup>197</sup> "Donesenie kurskogo gubernatora A. I. Neligova glavnokamanduiushchemu v Peterburge S. K. Viazmitinovu o volnenii krest'ian A. S. Annenkovoii v sviazi s prodazhei ikh raznym litsam bez zemli," 3 January 1813, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 311--15.

<sup>198</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian Pavlu I o zashchite ikh ot razoreniia i neposil'noi raboty na bumazhnoi fabrike pomeshchika," 19 January 1797, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796-1825 gg.*, pp. 77--79.

<sup>199</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian N. P. Golitsynoi Pavlu I o perevode ikh v kazennoe vedomstvo v sviazi s pritesneniem ikh upravliaiushchim i chrezmernoii rabotoi na vinokurennykh zavodakh," prior to 23 January 1797, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 107--112.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107. PSZ, 1st series, vol. XXI, No. 15231.

<sup>201</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian N. P. Golitsynoi Pavlu I o perevode ikh v kazennoe vedomstvo v sviazi s pritesneniem ikh upravliaiushchim i chrezmernoii rabotoi na vinokurennykh zavodakh," p. 107.

<sup>202</sup> "Donesenie viatskogo gubernatora V. I. Bolgarskogo ministru vnutrennikh del A. B. Kurakinu o soprotivlenii gosudarstvennykh krest'ian Stretenskoi (Iuskinskoi) vol. Sarapul'skogo u. pripiske k gornym zavodam," 25 June 1807, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 211.

<sup>203</sup> "Raport Kurskogo namestnicheskogo pravleniia v Senat o vooruzhennom soprotivlenii krest'ian s. Novosergievskogo

(Radutino) L'govskogo u. mestnym vlast'iam i shtatnoi komande pri vvode vo vladenie imi pomeshchika Iz"edinova," 12 December 1796, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 39--49.

<sup>204</sup> The complaint against child labor also appeared in the petition of the peasants of Atrada Tsaritsynskii, Saratov province, where the additional complaint was made that mothers, too, were being forced to work in the factory and thus children were being left unattended: "Zhaloba krest'ian s. Atrady Tsaritsynskogo u. Pavlu I na ekspluatatsiiu ikh pomeshchikom N. V. Smirnovym f raspravu s nimi," prior to 10 April 1797, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 143--46.

<sup>205</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian Pavlu I o zashchite ikh ot razoreniia i neposil'noi raboty na bumazhnoi fabrike pomeshchika," 19 January 1797, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 77--79.

<sup>206</sup> PSZ, 1st. series, vol. XXXIII, no. 25947..

<sup>207</sup> "Donosenie voronezhskogo gubernatora M. I. Bravina peterburgskomu general-gubernatoru S. K. Viazmitinovu ob otkaze krest'ian ispolniat' povinnosti i ob areste imi administratsii imeniia," 29 January 1817, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 438--444.

<sup>208</sup> "Donesenie ekaterinoslavskogo vitse-gubernatora V. El'ganinova peterburgskomu general-gubernatoru S. K. Viazmitinovu ob otkaze krest'ian s. Guliai-Pole Verkhnedneprovskogo u. priznat' svoimi vladel'tsami naslednikov pomeshchika Korbe," 6 May 1817, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 448--52.

<sup>209</sup> "Proshenie poverennykh krest'ian slob. Kutki upravliaiushchemu Ministerstvu politicii S. K. Viazmitinovu o zashchite ikh ot pritesnenii so storony vladel'tsev i o perevode v kaznu," October 1817, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 446--48.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448.

<sup>211</sup> "Donesenie kaluzhskogo gubernatora A. D. Obleukhova general-prokuroru A. B. Kurakinu o vooruzhennom soprotivlenii krest'ian voennoi komande pri popytke zastavit'ikh podchiniat'sia A. A. Davydovoi," 1 January 1797, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 36--38.

<sup>212</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian der. Kalli Sofiiskogo u. ministru vnutrennikh del V. P. Kochubeiu ob osvobozhdenii ikh ot iznuritel'nykh rabot na kuptsa Usol'tsova," 27 April 1805, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, pp. 199--201.

<sup>213</sup> "Donesenie vologodskogo gubernatora N. I. Barta glavnokomanduiushchemu v Peterburge S. K. Viazmitinovu ob otkaze krest'ian Vel'skogo i Kadnikovskogo uezdov priznat' svoim vladel'tsem A. I. Iakovleva," 25 April 1812, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 282.

<sup>214</sup> "Ob"iavlenie krest'ian der. Kur'ianovskoi asesoru gubernskogo pravleniia G. A. Vakhrushevu ob otkaze ikh podchiniat'sia A. I. Iakovlevu," 2 September 1812, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 285.

<sup>215</sup> "O vosstanii krest'ian pomeshchikov Kalantarovykh v sel. Maslovskom Piatigorskogo u.," 14 January 1853--24 October 1853, in S. V. Okun', ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1850-1856 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literatury, 1963), pp. 358--86.

<sup>216</sup> "Donesenie upravliaiushchego Simbirskoi gub. i predsedatelia Simbirskoi ugolovnoi palaty E. Andreeva peterburgskomu general-gubernatoru S. K. Viazmitinovu o volnenii krest'ian v s. Rep'evke," 28 May 1818, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 639.

<sup>217</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian s. Makovishcha Aleksandru I o zashchite ikh ot zhestokogo obrashcheniia pomeshchikov Miliukovykh i Muromtsevikh i razoreniia imi," 5 March 1819, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 661.

<sup>218</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian Aleksandru I o perevode v kazennoe vedomstvo v sviazi s razoreniiem ikh Kaftyrevymi," no later than

20 March 1819, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 690.

<sup>219</sup> "Proshenie krest'ian E. E. Zdraevskoi v sel'tse Malokhove Bronnitskogo u. Aleksandru I o zashchite ikh ot zhestokostei pomeshchitsy," no later than 4 January 1818, in Valk, ed., *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1796--1825 gg.*, p. 628.

<sup>220</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>221</sup> On the power of the written document on peasants, see Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*.

<sup>222</sup> For a discussion of the tremendous staying power of customary law in regulating the internal life of the village, see Gromyko, *Mir russkoi derevni*.

<sup>223</sup> George L. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government: Social Evolution in the Domestic Administration of Imperial Russia, 1711--1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973).

<sup>224</sup> Chistov, *Russkie narodnye sotsial'no utopicheskie legendy*; Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial'naia utopiia*.

<sup>225</sup> Krutikov, "Pravosoznanie krest'ian i ego otrazhenie v krest'ianskom dvizhenii"; Pushkarenko, "Pravosoznanie rossiiskogo krest'ianstva pozdnefeodal'noi epokhi."

# The Donald W. Treadgold Papers

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