

AN ECONOMIC  
HISTORY *of* RUSSIA

BY  
JAMES MAVOR

VOLUME ONE

*SECOND EDITION*  
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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

ALTHOUGH the materials which have been utilised in the preparation of this book are almost exclusively in the Russian language, the primary and secondary sources are given fully. In the early chapters I have drawn heavily upon the masterly work of the late Professor Kluchevsky, the greater portion of which, since this book was written, has been translated into English by Mr. Hogarth. In some of the later chapters I have also drawn heavily upon the writings of Mr. V. E. Semevsky, and I am besides indebted to this author for generous assistance by correspondence. For other portions of these volumes the authorities are very numerous.

I have to express my grateful acknowledgments to the Imperial Russian Ministry of Finance, to the Departments of Commerce and Industry and of Customs, and to the Imperial Free Economical Society of St. Petersburg, and also to several of the Zemstvo authorities in various parts of European Russia for a large number of statistical books and papers. I am indebted to the University of Columbia College, New York, for the loan of many volumes from its valuable collection of materials for the study of the Russian Revolution; to Professor V. V. Svyatlovsky of St. Petersburg, to whose suggestion and encouragement the present volumes are due, for never-failing kindness in procuring material and for replying to inquiries; to Professor Kaufman of the University of St. Petersburg, to Professor Odarchenko of the University of Warsaw, to Professor Den of St. Petersburg, to Mr. V. E. Varzar of St. Petersburg, Mr. A. Konshin of Serpukhov, Mr. A. F. Gryaznov of Yaroslav, Mr. Glyebov of Chernigov, and Mr. Dunayev of Moscow, for numerous books and papers. I am very specially indebted for self-sacrificing and most skilful assistance, extending over several years, in translation and investigation and for the careful reading of the proofs to Mr. P. P. Nikolyaev of Moscow. I have also to express my obligations to Dr. Nathan Shakhnov, and to

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my efficient helpers, Ivan Lebedev, Zinoviy Peshkov, and Michael de Sherbinen.

Many other Russian friends to whom I am overwhelmingly indebted for knowledge of Russian affairs, I must refrain from mentioning explicitly by name.

JAMES MAVOR.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO,  
1st January 1914.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE reception accorded to this book was so generous that a second edition was called for soon after publication. The outbreak and continuance of the War of 1914-1918, and subsequent chaos in Russia, rendered filling up of gaps in execution of the original design as well as continuation of the critical record impracticable.

Even now it is not feasible to render a detailed and systematic account of the various phases of the economic system of Russia in the convulsive movements of the eight recent tragical years. Adequate materials for such an account are inaccessible and travelling in Russia is at present denied to disinterested observers.

While errors in the original edition have been corrected, and a chapter upon certain aspects of the Revolution has been added, no attempt has been made to bring this work in any sense down to date. I have preferred to issue a supplementary and provisional volume, in which the Russian Revolution is described and discussed with the aid of such materials as are at present available.

The most instructive reviews of the original edition were contributed to the Russian press in 1914 and early in 1915. I have made use of the suggestions conveyed in these reviews, in revising the text. I have also made use of private memoranda sent to me shortly before his death, by Professor V. V. Semevsky; and of many notes conveyed to me by my friend Pantelyemon Nikolaiev.

When I began to write this book in 1905 the question of transliteration of Russian into Roman characters engaged a portion of my attention. I was not writing a treatise upon language and therefore the subject seemed to me of subordinate importance. I should gladly have availed myself of any system which had met with general or even wide acceptance; but no such system was available, and instead there were numerous rival systems all more or less open to objection—they were too exclusively founded upon phonetics—an uncertain and variable basis—they were too academic and the like. I therefore employed a system of my own, probably more open to objection than any of the others, because I introduced at least one perfectly arbitrary form.

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If these volumes had had to be re-set in type, I should have unhesitatingly adhered scrupulously to the system adopted by the School of Slavonic Studies in the University of London; but the volumes had been stereotyped, and any but indispensably necessary alterations in the plates had to be avoided. I have made a few desirable corrections in transliteration, but I have been compelled in general to leave the volumes in this respect as they stood. The interval of peace and the portentous events of the years from 1914 till the present time comprise the subject-matter of the third volume.

Some critics have objected to the absence of a map of Russia. This absence was deliberate. What is necessary for a study of the geography of Russia and for the relation of the history to the geography is not a map, but an atlas. I must leave the provision of such a convenience to the geographers. For a corresponding reason I refrained from including a bibliography. Fortunately, so useful an aid to study has been provided in *Slavic Europe, A Selected Bibliography*, etc., by R. J. Kerner, Cambridge (Mass.) and London 1918, 402 pp.

JAMES MAVOR.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO,  
*Christmas 1924.*

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

WHILE the development of the Russian State may not be, as the Slavophiles seem to imply, absolutely unique, immensity of the area of Russia, complete contiguity of its territories, comparative recency of its conquests, annexations and separations, profound changes in its economic system, ethnical diversity of its people, fecundity of its nuclear race, "particularism" of many of its constituent groups, and variety in physical geography and natural resources, present a total of characteristics to which there is no exact parallel. In Central Europe the fabric of wide extended Empire was erected, to be destroyed in the Middle Age, to be re-erected in modern times, and to be destroyed once more, while in Russia the fabric of Empire was erected more slowly and the process of destruction was retarded by the presence of a numerous race which constituted the nuclear group. The conflicts between local autonomy and imperial autocracy which were waged in Europe throughout and after the Middle Ages, had their counterparts in the struggles between the Russian free towns and rural principalities on the one side and the Moscow principedom on the other. In Europe the imperial idea gave way before the idea of nationality; but in Russia the imperial idea was victorious, town after town, principality after principality passed under the control of Moscow and came to be welded into one political whole. This task was accomplished by means of a highly centralized administration, by an Imperial Government partly founded upon Russian tradition, and partly modelled upon the later Roman Empire.

The success of the Russian imperial system appears to have been due to the continuously pressing need of resisting attacks of Asiatic peoples, whose hordes were always hovering upon the Russian frontiers, compromising their safety and cutting off the avenues of trade by means of which the Russians lived. Russia stood between Asia and Europe, and in order that her people might exist, the Asiatic hordes had to be repelled or subjugated. The geographical position of Russia has thus determined at once the unity of the Empire and the rôle of her people. If they have

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acquired some Asiatic blood, and if they exhibit some Asiatic traits, they have at least kept the frontier of Europe since the Middle Ages from Asiatic conquest. The Mongols defeated Russia but broke themselves upon her. Even when the Kiev Russ were ground to powder and dispersed, the exhausted Tartars penetrated Europe no farther than Moravia, while in later centuries they were crushed by the Russians who held them constantly on their own frontier. If Russia has absorbed some Mongolian elements, she has at least saved Europe from Mongol invasion. This great service, in the view of some Russian writers, has enabled Western Europe to pursue the arts of peace, saving during internecine quarrels, and to accomplish rapid progress in civilisation. The rise of numerous nationalities and the democratisation of their political system was, according to this view, possible only on condition of immunity from attack by external hordes. The gain to Europe was however offset by the great sacrifice to Russia involved in the deprivation of immediate share in that progress. The stability of European civilisation has been secured by continuous settlement in the same comparatively restricted region for a thousand years, while not only were the Russians migratory by habit during a large part of that time, but the pressure from without caused on more than one occasion wholesale migrations. The continuity of the national life was thus interrupted and the progress of it retarded.

Only since the disappearance of absolutism in Western Europe can Russia be held to have occupied an unique position in a political sense. In spite of the great advantages of position, the victory of the Revolution over absolute authority was not by any means rapidly accomplished in the West, where traces of absolutism lingered until quite recent days. In Russia, notwithstanding enormous difficulties both within the Government and outside of it, important modifications were effected during the strenuous closing years of the Romanov Tsardom. It must be said also that at no period of their history were the Russian people entirely quiescent under autocratic rule. Anciently the people, in spite of their generally peaceful character, were by no means infrequently engaged in violent disputes with the representatives of authority, and in modern times the country has on several occasions been plunged into chaos by revolutionary movements.

External causes have at frequent intervals profoundly affected Russian development. The defeat of Peter the Great at Narva by

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Charles XII of Sweden occasioned directly the reorganisation of the Russian military system; and indirectly that of Russian society. The invasion of Russia by Napoleon drew Russia into the vortex of European diplomacy. The defeat of Russia by England and France in the Crimea led on the one hand to the Emancipation of the serfs and on the other to the building up of the Russian Far-Eastern Empire. The defeat of Russia by Japan occasioned the Revolution of 1905-06 and endowed Russia with a quasi-constitutional system. After the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, Russia emerged from her defeat at the hands of Germany as a formidable menace to the peace of the world. From the time of Peter the Great until now Russia has benefited rather by her defeats than by her victories. She has the Asiatic quality of resilience. She is never more to be feared than when she has just been beaten.

To the spiritual and intellectual energy of Russians Europe already owes much. Russian social life has made for the development to an extraordinary degree of critical acuteness—witness the penetrative literary criticisms of Byelinsky; as well as of artistic power—witness Pushkin in poetry, Turgueniev and Tolstoy in prose, Tchaikovsky in music, and Repin in painting; and of ethical enthusiasm—as in Tolstoy, for instance. The conditions of Russian life, sordid enough for the cultivator and the artisan, have preserved the best minds of the nation from falling victims to commercial materialism. If sometimes, to the practical Western European, many Russians seem visionary and impracticable, it is well that self-complacent satisfaction with comfortable material fortune resulting from the exercise of mercantile shrewdness should receive a mental and moral jolt from those who consider none of these things, but who look upon life from a detached point of view. If the Western European points out that Russian culture and the idealism to which it gives rise have been rendered possible by serfdom, the Russian may retort, as in high probability he would, that European culture is similarly dependent upon the exploitation of the free labourer, but that, compared with Russian culture, it is rather destitute of idealism.

The maintenance of serfdom in Russia long after it had been abandoned in Western Europe, and the maintenance of absolute government until recent days, have contributed importantly to the retardation of the development of the country in a social as well as in a political sense. From the point of view of social progress

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this has been a deplorable disadvantage; but from the point of view of the student the retardation has led to the survival of customs and institutions which in somewhat similar forms previously existed in Western Europe, and there have disappeared at a more or less remote age, leaving indefinite indications of their former existence. The structural changes which brought Russia from a mediæval to a modern economic and social state went on during the past seventy years under the eyes of close and competent observers. Every stage in these structural changes has been watched and described with a minuteness which leaves nothing to be desired; and, moreover, some of these changes are still in progress. No other country, therefore, offers the student an equal opportunity for a study of economic history. Indeed without taking into account at least the salient features of Russian social development general economic history cannot be written.

Up till recent years, an economic history of Russia could not have been satisfactorily attempted. It was necessary in the first instance that the documentary evidence afforded by the great mass of official, ecclesiastical, and private papers should become available, and that the evidence should be examined by competent scholars. This work engaged the attention of large groups of Russian historians, economists, and jurists, especially from about the year 1890 up till the outbreak of war in 1914. A great mass of valuable historical literature poured from the Russian press, subjecting previously accepted conclusions to criticism in the light of fresh evidence, and as well offering new interpretations of previously known documents. What is equally interesting and important, the same scientific enthusiasm and skill were applied to contemporary conditions. The literature of the subject is so extensive, and the ramifications of the problems which emerge at every point so numerous, that it would be idle to pretend that the following pages do more than suggest the extent and content of the field. Until the publication in 1911-1913 of the translation of the *Course of Russian History*,<sup>1</sup> by the late Professor Kluchevsky, there was not in English any indication of the wealth of new

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, V., *Course of Russian History*. 4 vols. Moscow, 1906-1910. And English translation by C. J. Hogarth. 3 vols. London, 1911-1913. The references in the text are throughout to the original work—to the second edition of vol. i. (Moscow, 1908), and to the first editions of volumes ii. (1906), iii. (1908), and iv. (1910). The reason for this is that the first volume of the present work was wholly written before the publication of Mr. Hogarth's translation. Vol. v. of Kluchevsky's work was published in Moscow in 1921.

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historical material which during the past few years has made its appearance in Russia.<sup>1</sup>

In the following pages an attempt is made in accordance with the new point of view, to give an account of the currents of Russian economic history. The foundation of Russian national life in the trading towns, the dispersal of the Kiev Russ, their appearance on the Great Russian Plain, their comparatively late devotion to agriculture, the means they took to defend themselves against surrounding hostile tribes, the development of the appanage system, the growth in power of the Moscow principedom and the eventual absorption by it of the free towns are sketched broadly. Beneath the changes of political forms there is observable the series of economical and juridical changes which led to the binding of the peasant in the triple knot of bondage. The process by which a person obtained the right to hold another in bondage on account of pecuniary obligation or otherwise, was long recognised in practice before it came to be the subject of bondage law and before it came to be consolidated and conditioned by that law.<sup>2</sup>

When modern industry began in Western Europe early in the eighteenth century, Peter the Great, partly driven by necessity and partly induced by the desire to imitate the West, utilised the bondage system in the exploitation of the iron in the Ural Mountains, and in the building of ships, docks, and cities, by means of the forced labour of tens of thousands of bondmen. Due credit must be given to Peter for his self-sacrificing devotion to what he considered were the interests of his country; but in the pursuit of his industrial policy he was wholly regardless of life, liberty, or personality. Retribution came in succeeding reigns. Throughout the eighteenth century and later, the peasant question was discussed endlessly, but it remained in a horrible *impasse*. Successive sovereigns down till the time of Nicholas I grappled with the question only to find themselves foiled. They tried the impossible—to liberate the peasants without removing them from the control of their masters, to give them benefits without cost to anyone, and to increase their economic freedom without regard to political liberty. Eventually the knots of bondage were loosened, and

<sup>1</sup> The important work on "Russia" by Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace was written before the new material was available.

<sup>2</sup> Some critics have erroneously assumed that the expression "bondage right" is intended to be equivalent to "bondage law." The phrases have distinct meanings as indicated in the text.

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finally cut, and the peasant emerged into something like freedom. But, as he found ere long, he was freed at his own cost. Successive generations of peasants had toiled for a bare subsistence, now they were free from formal obligations; but they were forced still to work for the price of their freedom. It is little wonder that some of them found Emancipation an illusion; and that after the first moments of enthusiastic anticipation they should have turned upon their former proprietors, sometimes with violence. High rents, want of agricultural capital, lack of credit, and lack of education combined to keep the peasants in extreme poverty. An occasional bountiful harvest merely preserved them from ruin, while frequent inferior harvests plunged them into the miseries of famine. No summary can put the peasant question quite fairly. It must be studied in detail in order that its intricate character may be fully grasped.

While agriculture is the main occupation of the Russian people, the great industry has been highly developed. Large industrial towns have grown up; and there grew within them two classes new to Russian social history—the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletarian artisan. The free hired labourer succeeded the serf both in factory and in field. Yet some of the traditions of serfdom remained in both spheres; that which serfdom denied, viz. personality, asserted itself very slowly, and as it did so it encountered new obstacles. Under serfdom economical pressure was most insistently experienced; under economical freedom, political pressure became equally galling. Education and the life of the towns gave the working man a wider outlook. He began to realise that elsewhere than in Russia working men even had interest and influence in politics and in legislation. In Russia, labour combinations were forbidden by Government, which was therefore held to have identified its interests with those of the employers in the same way as the interests of the landowners and the interests of the Government had been identified in the peasant mind during the days of bondage right.<sup>1</sup> A strike was thus not merely an economical but was also a political act. The working men were

<sup>1</sup> The word *bondage* is employed throughout in preference to *serfdom*, because in Western Europe the latter word has acquired a certain specific meaning appropriate to the incidents of serfdom in Western Europe. The expression has thus become polarised and its employment in the case of Russia would be misleading. For the same reason, the word *votchina* which in certain aspects is equivalent to *manor* is employed instead of the latter, the history and character of the Russian *votchina* being distinct from those of the English *manor*.

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inevitably drawn into political action hostile to the Government. Meanwhile the capitalist bourgeoisie found the confusion of economical and political issues in strikes extremely troublesome. As a class they were as yet too insignificant numerically to hope to exercise political influence alongside of or opposed to the political influence of the gentry, the proletariat, and the peasantry. Thus although an increase in political freedom might have benefited in some ways their economical interests, democratisation of the political system involved certain risks for them. Many of the employers of labour in the industrial centres were foreigners to Russia, and their interest and practice lay in acquiescing in the existing Government, whatever its character might be, conceiving that their economical interests might be seriously compromised by any other course. The employing class as a whole were thus not favourable to the Revolution.

While the bulk of the gentry remained loyal to the Throne, sympathy with the peasantry brought into the field of politics many who had traditionally regarded themselves as wholly apart from the mass of the people. During the revolutionary periods, *i.e.* from 1905 till 1906 and in 1917, there was an apparent unanimity among the oppositional elements. This unanimity had a real existence only in respect to opposition to the Government; whenever the necessity arose for positive action, differences developed, the revolutionary movements of 1905-06 crumbled into dust in spite of the revolutionary state of mind with which all classes were affected, and the Revolution of 1917, although supported by all classes, resulted in chaos.

The history of Russia may conveniently be divided into *Five* periods: *First*, from the eighth till the thirteenth century; *Second*, from the thirteenth till the middle of the fifteenth century; *Third*, from the middle of the fifteenth till the second decade of the seventeenth century; *Fourth*, from the latter date until the middle of the nineteenth century,<sup>1</sup> and *Fifth* from the middle of the nineteenth century until towards the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The *First* period was characterised by the political division of the land under the leadership of the trading towns. The *Second* period was characterised by the agricultural exploitation of the

<sup>1</sup> The division of the earlier periods is in accordance with the plan adopted by Prof. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*

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heavy clay soil of the Moscow region, by means of free peasant labour under the princes of the Udeli of the Upper Volga. The *Third* period was characterised by the political union of the principalities into the Russian State, the chief economic fact being the working of the heavy soils of the Upper Volga and of the Don Black Soil region, still by free peasant labour. But the freedom of the peasant was beginning to be encroached upon by the consolidation of large estates in the hands of the military class surrounding the princes. This was the period of Tsar-boyar-military tenure. The *Fourth* period witnessed the formation of a military class, formed out of, but distinct from the nobility, and witnessed also the political unification by the aid of this class of the now widely scattered elements of Russian nationality; and in the economic field, the firm binding to the soil of the peasant cultivator, with the growth from the middle of the eighteenth century of the great industries. The *Fifth* period witnessed a rapid increase in the population and the still greater expansion of the Imperial domains, an expansion which outran the means of military defence, with resulting diminution of Imperial prestige; and in the economical field the exploitation of the mining, forest, and agricultural resources of Siberia, together with an intensified protective policy, with encouragement of industry and formal emancipation of the bondaged peasantry, with subsequent relapse of large numbers of the peasants into economical dependence upon their former owners and others. This period also witnessed an immense expansion of the agricultural productive powers, and of the exportation of cereals. The closing years of the Fifth period witnessed two series of grave events separated by seven years of tranquillity. The *First* series consisted of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, commencement of the Revolution in 1905-06, adoption of a measure of constitutional government and creation of a representative assembly. The *Second* series consisted of the Great War, military defeat, fall of the Romanov dynasty, collapse of the Imperial system, failure to establish a constitutional republic, civil war, formation of independent States out of the constituents of the Empire, and for the Moscow State, victory of the so-called Dictatorship of the Proletariat, destruction of the landholding and mercantile classes, division of the land among the peasants, ruin of agriculture, transportation, industry, commerce, and above all, of education. The close of the period is marked by modification



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of the communist-state-collectivism avowed by the Dictatorship and slow, uncertain steps towards some form of capitalism, controlled by a central governmental body of variable character.<sup>1</sup>

Geographically, the first four periods may be indicated by the region of the Russian Plain, and the fifth by the still greater area upon which, during each period, the mass of the population had been extended: 1st. The valley and plain of the Dnieper; 2nd. Those of the Upper Volga; 3rd. The Great Russian Plain as a whole; 4th. Russia as a whole; 5th. The Empire of Russia, including a large part of Central Asia and parts of Manchuria and Mongolia. The *first* essential point in this analysis of political and economical development is that the earliest chief occupation of the nuclear group was not agriculture, but was trade. The commodities exchanged were thus, in the first instance, not the products of cultivated soil, but those of the forest—furs, honey, wax and the like—although the most considerable article of commerce was, as it was elsewhere in the ancient world, the slave. Yet so early as the period of the foundation of Kiev, the hunters were also, if to a relatively small extent, engaged in agriculture for, according to the Russian *Annals*, they paid tribute partly in furs and partly in agricultural products.

The *second* essential point is the exploitation of the various soils in various regions, this exploitation having an important bearing upon the political and economical forms which developed contemporaneously. It will be observed that the beginnings of the great industry were almost coincident with demands for changes in these political and economical forms which, even if they had been entirely appropriate to an agricultural order, may not have been appropriate to an industrial one.

The *third* essential point is that the growth in numbers of the bourgeoisie was not commensurate with the growth of the peasant and industrial classes, because the bourgeoisie was not sufficiently recruited either from above or from below. The bourgeoisie had not exercised political power under the Imperial autocracy and had gained little during the brief period of quasi-constitutionalism. The fall of bourgeoisie and aristocracy alike in the Moscow State followed inevitably the collapse of the Imperial system and the separation from the Moscow State of the Baltic provinces, Finland and Poland, where the bourgeoisie was relatively strong.

<sup>1</sup> The present volumes include only the economic history up till the close of the first stage of the Revolution in 1907. The second series indicated in the text is discussed in a separate volume, entitled *The Russian Revolution*.

## BOOK I

SKETCH OF THE EARLY ECONOMIC HISTORY  
AND OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL  
FORMS OF THE RUSSIAN STATE, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO THE RISE OF BONDAGE RIGHT

## INTRODUCTION

THE fundamental fact of Russian history is the colonisation of the Great Russian Plain by people who are not known to have been indigenous in any part of the region. The Eastern Slavs, who formed the nuclear group of these people, had an origin which is now obscure; but they appear to have entered upon the Russian Plain from "one of its corners," from the Carpathian Mountains on the south-west. From thence these people made incursions into the Roman Empire, and later made numerous migrations by means of which they overran the Great Russian Plain. When the Eastern Slavs lived in the forests and swamps of the upper waters of the Dnieper, their mode of existence, and probably also their polity, can hardly have differed materially from those of the tribes of other races which at the same or earlier epochs occupied the forests and swamps of the Central European Plain. The characteristic features of both regions appear to have been the growth of trading towns on the river systems, the political and military control of the river routes and of the surrounding regions by these trading towns, the rise of petty principalities, the union of these into groups, and in Europe and Russia at somewhat different periods, imperial organisation.

Russian historians are by no means unanimous in their interpretations of the accepted facts of Russian history. Their various views upon the early periods are indicated in the immediately following pages.

The importance of the Slavophil School of historians is undoubted. Many of them were men of first-rate genius. It cannot be denied, however, that the school as a whole exhibited a tendency to idealise Russian institutions and to attribute to them characteristics which human institutions rarely exhibit. The influence of the Slavophiles, alike in a personal and in a literary sense upon foreign writers such as Haxthausen,<sup>1</sup> Rambaud<sup>2</sup> and Wallace<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baron August von Haxthausen *cf. infra.*

<sup>2</sup> A. Rambaud, author of *Histoire de la Russie*, Paris, *v.d.*

<sup>3</sup> Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, *cf. infra.*

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for instance determined their views and the tone of their writings.

While it appears to be necessary to maintain a guard against extreme Slavophilism, especially in respect to its idolatry of the *mir*, it seems not less necessary to maintain a guard against extreme eclecticism and even against the tendency to compromise which Kluchevsky exhibits.

My most dear and lamented friend Prince Kropotkin<sup>1</sup> states his own thoroughly instructed view in the following passage.

The fact is (as Milyukov has well put it in the Efron *Encyclopedia*<sup>2</sup>) that in the 80's and 90's *eclecticism* came to substitute itself for the brilliant school of historians we had in the 60's. Thereupon came Kluchevsky who found a compromise between the historians of the 60's (Kostomaroff, Byelyaëff, Serghyéevich, Zabyelin, etc.<sup>3</sup>), the eclectics and the Marxists (economical materialists—those about whom Marx said to Engels: "Give me any names you like, but don't call me a Marxist") who dominated in the 90's. His (Kluchevsky's) *Course* is brilliantly written, like Fustel de Coulanges' *Cité Antique*; but like it, it ignores the original structure of all European states—the village community stage, and the stage of the free cities and their *sovereign* folk moots—a stage which, down to the Mongol invasion, Russia had in common with all Western Europe.

Kluchevsky wittingly ignores that Rambaud, I think, has already paid more attention to that period. In Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, where I had to write *History* in the article *Russia*, I gave, in a short sketch, the conception arrived at by the Russian historians of the Auguste Thierry-Maine, etc., School of the "sixties"; also in *Moscow* for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th edition. But here, I had to reduce the history of Moscow to one third of my first MSS. "The State and the Nationality"—these are the chief subjects he is going to study in his (Kluchevsky's) *Course (Handbook)* as he himself says.

[In my review of your *Economic History in the Nation*] I have very gently remarked that for a sketch of Russian history, Kluchevsky's *Course* is not exactly the best source, although in Russia it is decidedly considered the best.

Kluchevsky is a historian of the State and an idealiser of the State. The State is not for him a form of equilibrium attained at a given moment between the different groups and forces (classes, layers)

<sup>1</sup> Prince Peter Kropotkin died 8th February, 1921, near Moscow. The passage quoted is in a private and unpublished letter to the author, dated 19th January, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Brockhaus and Efron *Encyclopædia*, St. Petersburg, v.d.

<sup>3</sup> The transliteration of Russian names in this letter is according to Prince Kropotkin's own method.

of which society is composed at a given moment; it is a force whose substance is "general well-being,"—and is opposed by him to the economical life of the nation, the leading motive of which, he maintains, is personal well-being.

Due importance must be attached to every word of this weighty utterance, yet discriminating criticism cannot afford to ignore Kluchevsky any more than it can afford to ignore the Slavophiles or the school represented by Thierry and Maine which found in the village community the primitive social form. The *Course* of Kluchevsky is chiefly concerned with modern history and with Russia not merely as a group of primitive communities, but as a State, therefore the State formed the principal topic of his history.<sup>1</sup>

No injustice is done to the *mir* by tracing the growth of the State, for although the *mir* survived, its relative importance declined with the growth of centralised power. Moreover, recent historians have shown that the character of the *mir* was by no means either uniform or constant.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It has been no part of my design to enter upon the controversy regarding the village community. I have endeavoured to describe the course of economic history in Russia, leaving comparison of that history with the contemporaneous or earlier history of other countries to others.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra* p. 360-363.

## CHAPTER I

### FIRST PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY—EIGHTH TILL THIRTEENTH CENTURY

It has been observed that the origin of the Eastern Slavs is obscure. The present state of knowledge upon the subject is summarised as follows by Professor Kluchevsky :

“Putting together the vague reminiscences of the Russian chronicler<sup>1</sup> and foreign statements, we can, to some extent, not without effort and suppositions, represent to ourselves what led up to the original facts of Russian history. Towards the second century A.D. the streams of nations brought Slavs to the middle and lower Danube. Formerly they had been lost in the population of the Dacian dominions, and only about this time they began to be segregated in the eyes of foreigners as well as in their own recollections from the general Sarmatian mass. . . . The Russian Annals narrate that the Slavs suffered heavily from attacks by the Volokhi, *i.e.* from the Romans, during the reign of Trajan, and that they were compelled to leave their Danubian dwellings. But the Eastern Slavs, who brought this recollection to the Dnieper, went not directly from the Danube, but only after continuous migrations. The movement was indeed very slow, and it was characterised by a long tarrying in the Carpathians, which lasted from the second till the seventh century. The conquests of the Avars gave an impulse towards the dispersal of the Slavs in various directions. As in the fifth and sixth centuries the Germanic tribes had been moved to the south and west . . . by Hunnic invasions . . . so in the seventh century the invasions of the Avars had a similar effect upon the Slavic tribes. These were moved to emptied places. . . . In this century, in connection with the Avarian movements, there originated a series of Slavic dominations, and

<sup>1</sup> The principal editions of Nestor, the Russian chronicler, are as follow : St. Petersburg, 1767 and 1809-1819 ; Moscow, 1824. German translation, Göttingen, 1802-1805, and French translation, Paris, 1834.

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the Eastern Slavs began to settle in places where the Goths used to predominate."<sup>1</sup>

The view of the early history of the Slavs contained in the above passage differs from the views of the earlier historians of Russia. The fundamental features of the view of the German historian A. L. von Schlözer, who was a member of the Russian Academy of Science, are these: Prior to the middle of the ninth century people were living on the great Russian Plain without rule, "like beasts and birds." Into this region, populated by poor, scattered savages—Finns and Slavs—the elements of civil life were first brought by the Scandinavians. This view was based upon certain phrases concerning the Eastern Slavs contained in the "Narration about the beginning of the Russian Land"—the primary annals of Russia. Von Schlözer's view was shared by the celebrated Russian historians Karamsin, Pogodin, and Soloviev. On the other hand, opposed to this view are the views of the Russian historians Byelyaev and Zabyelin. The fundamental point of their view is that the Eastern Slavs had since ancient times been living where the primary annals found them; that they settled there probably several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, and that, from primitive small family unions, there were gradually formed tribes. Among these tribes cities originated, and tribal confederations were formed. Finally, about the time of the "calling of the princes," the chief cities began to be united into one general Russian confederation. "Notwithstanding its schematic character and sequence," Professor Kluchevsky says, "this theory to some extent embarrasses the student by the circumstance that such a complicated historical process is developed by theory without regard to time and historical conditions. It is not seen to what chronological point we might refer the first and the further movements of this process, and how and in what historical surroundings it was developed."<sup>2</sup> The period at which the Eastern and the Western Slavs<sup>3</sup> separated from one another cannot at present be precisely determined; but prior to the seventh century

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 128-9.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 117-118.

<sup>3</sup> The Western Slavs comprised the Moravi, Chekhi (Czechs), Lyakhi, (Polaks or Poles), and the Pomerani (Pomeranians); the Eastern group comprised the Khorvati, Serbi, and the Khoroutanyi (probable progenitors of the Ruthenians).

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their destinies seem to have been closely connected. In that century the Eastern Slavs certainly appear as a specific group.

According to this view the history of the Russian region must be regarded separately from the history of the Russian people. The history of the former is a record of successive occupations of the same territory by peoples of different races; the history of the latter is a record of successive occupations of different territories, some of them non-Russian, by the same people.

Professor Kluchevsky and others recognise in the northern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains "the tarrying place" or general nest of the Slavic tribes.<sup>1</sup> In these fastnesses they consolidated their tribal relations and formed military unions, consisting of "fighting detachments," drawn from various tribes.<sup>2</sup> At least from the fifth century these detachments swept down upon the frontiers of the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> In the mountains they seem to have lived in widely-scattered *gentes*. According to the statements of the Byzantine historians,<sup>4</sup> the Slavs were ruled in the sixth and seventh centuries by numerous little "Tsars," or tribal chiefs and seniors of *gentes* or *philarchs*. These rulers used to meet for consultation about common affairs. The Byzantine historians also notice the lack of harmony among the tribes, which resulted in frequent quarrels—"a usual feature in the life of small separated *gentes*."<sup>5</sup> From the fact that tradition has preserved the name of one only of the tribes of the Eastern Slavs at this time—that of the *Dulebi*—it is inferred that these people had acquired a tribal leadership, and that the Prince of the *Dulebi* had become the leader of the Carpathian Slavs. It appears that under his leadership the Slavic tribes were welded together into a military union, frequent attacks upon the Empire contributing to this process of consolidation. In the seventh century the invasion of the Avars<sup>6</sup> converted the Slavs from an attacking to a defensive force, and from this period for two centuries the Byzantine records are silent about the Slavs—their incursions into the

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup> On these inroads see J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, ii, pp. 114 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> As summarised by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Bury, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 115.



Empire having ceased. Conquest by the Avars seems to have led to the dispersal of the Slavs. According to an Arabian geographer of the ninth century, Mas'ûdi,<sup>1</sup> the breaking up of the union under the leadership of the Dulebi,<sup>2</sup> resulting from the Avar invasion, caused the Eastern Slavs to separate into individual tribes, each tribe electing a separate Tsar.<sup>3</sup> The Russian chronicler, writing a hundred years later, confirms this Arabian statement. "Everyone lived with his *gens*, in its own place, everyone having his *gens*."<sup>4</sup> The region between the Dniester to the west and the Dnieper and the Don on the east is described by Jornandes as having been covered in his time with dense forests, and as presenting frequently impassable swamps.<sup>5</sup> The Slavs naturally preferred the forests, and there they seem to have established themselves, hunting fur-bearing animals, keeping bees, and engaging in agriculture in the "clearings" which they made. "Such places were remote from one another, like islets amid a sea of forest and swamp."<sup>6</sup> On these islets the Slavic settlers established their isolated houseyards, or *goroditscha*, dug them about, cleared fields in their vicinity, and set traps and hives in the neighbouring forest. The houseyards, remains of which are still found in the region, were usually round, although occasionally angular, surrounded by a low wall, partly for purposes of defence and partly to protect the cattle from wild animals. These *goroditscha* were scattered throughout the Ad-Dnieper region, situated usually from two and a half to five and a half miles<sup>7</sup> from one another. The dispersed Slavs

<sup>1</sup> Cited by Kluchevsky, i. p. 133. Mas'ûdi (c. 880-c. 957). The passage will be found in Maçoudi, *Les Prairies d'Or*. Texte et traduction par C. Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille (Paris, 1864), vol. iii. pp. 64-5.

<sup>2</sup> The leader of the Dulebi, according to Mas'ûdi, was "Madjek, roi des Walinana." See Maçoudi, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>5</sup> Jornandes, *De rebus geticis*, ch. xxiii., ed. Muratori. Milan, 1723, i. p. 203.

<sup>6</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 135. The reason for isolation was no doubt the difficulty of obtaining sufficient food in any one place for any but a small number. Cf. on this reason for separated families Westermarck and Hildebrand, quoted by Nieboer, H. J., *Slavery as an Industrial System: Ethnological Researches*. The Hague, 1900, p. 192.

<sup>7</sup> Four to eight versts. Kluchevsky, i. p. 135. The fortified farmhouse has disappeared from Russia, but it may still be seen in Manchuria. Fortified villages are to be found in great numbers in north-western China—in the plain of Huailai, for instance.

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appear to have occupied the valleys of the Dnieper and its tributaries to begin with, and then to have colonised at a later date the region of the Upper Volga, where similar houseyards were established. Out of these fortified houseyards or *goroditscha* the city or the *gorod* grew. The Russian Chronicle narrates that three brothers, the eldest of whom was Ki, the senior of his *gens*, and therefore a prince in the early sense, came to the edge of the forest on the mountainous bank of the Dnieper, established three houseyards, and occupied themselves with hunting in the neighbouring forest. The three houseyards had a common fortified enclosure. This enclosure, with the houseyards, became the city of Kiev. Up till the period of the dispersal of the Slavs the property of the *gens*, with high probability, was inseparable, and the power of the senior of the *gens* was in effect absolute. "The cult of the *gens* and the worship of ancestors made both of these characteristics sacred." But on the dispersal, the power of the senior of the *gens* might be exercised only with difficulty, over widely scattered houseyards. His power must therefore have waned. So also the beginning of agriculture appears to have conduced to the separability of the fields of the *gens* among the separate houseyards. Thus the joint family or the occupants of a single houseyard, consisting of two or more generations, seems to occupy an intermediate position as regards land ownership between the *gens* and the later simple family.<sup>1</sup>

The Slavs who migrated from the Carpathians to the Dnieper were not unhappy in their choice of a new country. They had emerged from the mountains upon what was at the time the main street of the world. For the Dnieper comes close to the river systems which afford access on the north to the Baltic, and by its own delta it affords access on the south to the Black Sea. Moreover, the tributaries of the Dnieper come near the river systems of the Dniester and the Vistula on the west, and the Volga and the Don on the east, and thus even touch the Caspian and the Sea of Azov. From time immemorial the Dnieper had been a great avenue of trade. Its current is slow, and its navigation practically uninterrupted. Light boats could readily be portaged from one river system to another.<sup>2</sup> The trade of the Dnieper region

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> The primitive "dugout" may still be seen in use on the Dnieper and its tributaries.

## FIRST PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY 11

seems to have been an important factor in inducing colonisation and conquest by non-Russian tribes, and thus to have given a stimulus towards the formation of those political unions which eventually resulted in the Russian Empire.

When the Slavs came into the valley of the Dnieper and added their products to its trade, they found already existing an extensive commerce. This commerce may have been of very ancient date, but it certainly existed in some considerable measure from the founding of the Greek colonies on the northern coast of the Black Sea and the eastern coast of the sea of Azov.<sup>1</sup>

The "Narration" thus describes the trade route of the Greeks: "The way from the *Variagi* to the Greeks was up the Dnieper, and, by dragging" (across the intervening land) "to the river Lovot, down the Lovot to Ilmen Lake, from which the Volkhov River flows into the great Lake Nievo (Lake Ladoga). From that lake there is a mouth" (the river Neva) "into the Variag's sea" (the Baltic), "and down that sea one may go to Rome, and by the same sea to Tsargrad" (Constantinople), "and from Tsargrad to Pont Sea," (the Black Sea) "into which the Dnieper flows."<sup>2</sup>

The Eastern Slavs, in settling on the Dnieper, thus found themselves on "a mighty feeding artery," which drew them into the complicated trade movement that connected the Black Sea with the Baltic, and that gave an outlet in two directions for an export trade in furs, honey, wax, and other forest products. The earliest types of Russian economic life were the hunter,<sup>3</sup> the bee-keeper, and the trader. The inroads of the Slavs upon the Eastern Empire and assaults upon surrounding tribes resulted in an accumulation of slaves.<sup>4</sup> When the town houseyards were filled with such ac-

<sup>1</sup> The most important of these Greek colonies were Olvia (colonised from Miletus about 600 B.C.), in the delta of the Eastern Bug; Khersonesus of Tauridas, on the south-western coast of the Crimean peninsula (now excavated, with an interesting museum containing antiquities found on the site); Theodosia and Pantikoepea (now Kertch) on the south-eastern coast of the Crimea; and Phanagoria, on the Taman peninsula (in North Caucasus). The trade in amber, for example, was developed by these Greek colonies from the Baltic by the Dnieper route. Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> The farmers in the northern guberni of Russia, in the forest regions of these guberni, are still hunters as well as cultivators. In Novgorodskaya gubern., e.g. they hunt bear and moose. They were armed with good modern types of hunting rifles until the winter of 1908-9, when these weapons were taken from them by the Government.

<sup>4</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 339. The word for slave is *chelad*.

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cumulation, the surplus was sold. Eastern writers of the tenth century give vivid pictures of the Russian slave trade. "In the towns, Bolgar and Itil on the Volga, the Russian merchant sets his benches in the market, and seats upon them his living goods—slave women." With the same goods he appeared also in Constantinople. "When a Greek or an inhabitant of Tsargrad required a slave, he went to the market where the Russian merchants came to sell slaves."<sup>1</sup>

Trade in general appears to have been so profitable that, up till the end of the tenth century, the Russians did not trouble themselves about agriculture. The slaves were thus not employed in the fields. The population was concentrated in towns, and the demand for slave services being limited, the chief use of the slave was as an article of export. It was not until the eleventh century, when the slave came to be used in agriculture on a considerable scale, and his local price consequently began to advance, that the export trade was checked.<sup>2</sup> About the period of the settlement of the Eastern Slavs in the Dnieper region, a new trading group sprang into importance. This was the Asiatic horde of the Khozars, who seem to have been for a long time wandering between the Black and Caspian Seas. Although of Turkish descent, and habituated to a nomadic life, the Khozars seem, about the seventh century, to have become "peaceful traders," establishing themselves in "winter cities," while they continued their nomadic life in the summer. Their success as traders attracted to their cities numerous groups of Jews and Arabs, the former of whom acquired so great influence among the Khozars that the ruling family accepted Judaism. The Khozars founded the centre of their state on the Lower Volga, where their capital, Itil, became "a huge polyglot trading city," in which there congregated Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, and pagans. The Khozars became gradually, together with the Bulgari of the Volga, the middle-men of the trade between the Baltic and Arabia. The Khozars are represented by tradition as exacting tribute from the Eastern Slavs. This "tribute" may perhaps more properly be regarded as payment for leave to carry on trade upon waterways and land routes previously controlled by the Slavs. In the ninth century an Arabian author,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i, pp. 339-340. See also *infra*, p. 20 n.

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Khordâdhbeh, mentions that Russian traders were in his time carrying on trade through the Greek cities, where the Emperor of the East took from them a tenth (as a royalty upon their trade), and that these merchants then made their way to the Khozarian capital, where they disbursed another tenth, and then by the Caspian Sea passed to its southern coasts, where, loading their merchandise on camels, they penetrated so far as Baghdad, in which city Khordâdhbeh saw them.<sup>1</sup>

During recent years there have been found in the Dnieper region many buried treasures containing Arabian silver dirhems of the end of the seventh century onwards till the ninth and tenth centuries.<sup>2</sup> These treasures indicate an extensive commerce. The success of the Dnieper trade led to the establishment of cities by the Eastern Slavs along the Dnieper-Volkhov route, and of outpost cities on the tributaries of the Dnieper, with one (Rostov) on the Upper Volga. The process of the growth of these cities is thus described by Professor Kluchevsky.

The isolated fortified houseyards of the Eastern Slavs became also trading posts, some of them being more important than others. To these posts the trappers and bee-keepers came to exchange their furs, honey, and wax for foreign products. They came, as the old Russian phrase has it, for *gostba*. Thus the places came to be known as *pagosti*, or trading places. Upon these village market-places, the usual meeting-ground of the people on the introduction of Christianity among the Slavs, churches were built. Round the church the villagers buried their dead, and the peasantry came to apply to the cemetery the word *pagost*, which is still in use as a peasant word for graveyard.<sup>3</sup> Some of the village markets grew larger as the trade expanded, and those which occupied strategic positions, either in a military or in a commercial sense, became storage points from which goods were distributed to the industrial districts which formed around them.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 148. See text and translation of Khordâdhbeh in *Biblioteca Geographorum Arabicorum*, ed. M. J. de Goeje. Pars Sexta (Leyden, 1889), p. 115. The Russian merchants, according to Khordâdhbeh, went even farther afield. They went on the west to Spain and Morocco, and on the east, by more than one route, to India and China. See *ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* There are interesting collections of such antiquities in the two museums of Chernigov.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 149. (Translation, i. p. 53.)

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Two important economic facts emerge from these considerations.

1. The development of the Southern and Eastern Black Sea-Caspian export trade of the Slavs, and the development of their forest industries called into existence and sustained by this trade.

2. The development of cities with industrial districts which gravitated to them.

Both of these developments had their beginning in the eighth century during the period of the domination of the Khozars. In the ninth century the very success of this commercial people in trading enterprises over a vast region excited the cupidity of other groups, and new hordes made their appearance.<sup>1</sup> These were the Pechenegs and the Uzo-Turks. Although the Khakhan of the Khozars invited in 835 Byzantine engineers to erect for him the fortress of Sarkel (known in the Russian Annals as Belaya Veja), probably at the point where the Don approaches the Volga, the Khozars were unable to resist the attacks of the Asiatic hordes. The barbarians seem to have penetrated the Khozarian defences, and to have passed through their settlements westwards to the steppes of the Dnieper. This invasion of Pechenegs had an important effect upon the Slavs. The failure of the Khozars to protect their trading allies and tributaries weakened their hold upon the Slavs, and forced the latter into military operations on their own account. The Pechenegs appear to have succeeded in approaching Kiev, then the greatest of the trading posts on the Dnieper, and thus to have cut off the middle Ad-Dnieper region from the Black Sea and Caspian markets. In another quarter, also, the Kiev Slavs were being assailed by the nomadic Black Bulgars, who occupied the country between the Don and the Dnieper. It thus became necessary for the Slavic trading cities to arm themselves, since their very existence depended upon free communication along their trading ways by the rivers, and by the land portages which their long routes involved. They had not only to "belt themselves with walls," but they were also obliged to reintroduce among themselves military organization which, during the domination and protection of the Khozars, had fallen into disuetude. They had even to employ mercenaries in order

<sup>1</sup> It is not, of course, suggested that the desire to enter into a profitable trade was the only cause of the migrations of these tribes.

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to protect their travelling traders, and to engage in punitive expeditions against the Asiatic hordes and against the Bulgars who harassed their industrial centres and plundered their convoys of merchandise:

The characteristic political unit of this time was thus the fortified trading city, the centre of a region either depending upon it for protection voluntarily, or held in subjection to it by force. From very early times—how early it is impossible to say—these trading cities seem not to have been composed of tribal units. Each city seems rather to have contained people of diversified tribal origin. Thus the city of Novgorod and the region round it were occupied partly by Slavs of Ilmen and partly by Krivichi; the region of Chernigov was occupied by the tribe of Viaticchi, with numerous groups belonging to other tribes; while Kiev contained all of the Polani, nearly all of the Drevelani, and some branches of other tribes, the other branches being in other cities. "Thus the ancient tribal divisions did not coincide with the divisions of the cities"<sup>1</sup> and city districts. The principle of political union seems to have been common trade rather than common origin.

The Russian Chronicle notices the presence about the middle of the ninth century of a new element among the Slavic population. This new element is known as the *Variagi*,<sup>2</sup> by which there seems to be indicated people of non-Slavic origin—Swedes, Norwegians, Goths, and Angles. These Variagi passed through the Dnieper region on their way to the service of the Eastern Emperors, to trade by the way, or even to plunder the Greek traders if opportunity offered.<sup>3</sup> The military, commercial, and industrial class, which was growing in the trading centres, recruited the Variagi, and employed them as mercenaries to guard the trade routes, and to convoy the Russian caravans.

The result of this "arming of the cities" was independence of the domination of the Khozars, and, later, control by the cities of the surrounding regions. The Variagi succeeded eventually in converting their wages as armed mercenaries into tribute, and in establishing their leaders as princes of the trading cities. The im-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 161. (Translation, i. p. 62.)

<sup>2</sup> Some have derived this word from the Scandinavian *væring* or *varing*. Professor Kluchevsky regards it as a Russian word meaning *vendor* or *pedlar*. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 156-8. (Translation, pp. 58-9.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158. (Translation, i. p. 59.)

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portance of this conclusion is that it is incompatible with the traditional idea that the princes were "called" in order to put down internal disorder. Professor Kluchevsky's narrative seems to show conclusively that the Slavs had in the ninth century a developed political system, and that their need for armed assistance arose, not from internal disturbance, but from external causes.

The Scandinavians asserted their authority, but not without difficulty.<sup>1</sup> The transformation of the Variagi from mercenaries into usurpers appears to have been effected through the bringing of recruits of their own race from the north. By the aid of these they were able to seize the cities which they had been hired to protect. For example, at Kiev, in 980, according to the Russian Chronicle, the comrades of Vladimir said to him: "Prince! The city is ours. We took it. So we want to take tribute from the citizens—two *greevnas* per man."<sup>2</sup>

Although the process was not precisely similar, the result of the appearance of the Variagi on the Dnieper was the same as the appearance of the same people under the names of the Danes and the Northmen in Western Europe. They acquired the mastery of the people among whom they went.<sup>3</sup> These "princes"<sup>4</sup> were the military leaders of the cities which they had been employed to guard; and they established themselves so firmly that they were able to transmit their military, and consequently their political, authority to their descendants.

Rurik appears to have established himself, in the first instance,

<sup>1</sup> The Russian Annals narrate, for example, about a conspiracy against Rurik which was put down by him by force, the leader, "*Vadim*" (The Brave), being killed with his fellow-conspirators. Kluchevsky, i. p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163. Two *greevnas* were equal in consumption value to about 18 roubles, or 36s. of present money. It is to be observed that the weight of silver in the *greevna* varied very much in different places.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 167. The rôle which the Normans played in Italy in the eleventh century was very similar to that which the Variagi played in Russia. They were employed as mercenaries, and they then became usurpers. Cf. Gibbon, ed. J. B. Bury, vi. pp. 173 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> The word "prince" is the customary, though not altogether correct, translation of the Russian "kniaz." The latter is the Slavonic form of the Norse, "konung." The word might therefore be appropriately rendered in English—"king." The status of the "kniaz" in the Russian city republics and in appanage times resembled that of the "Dux" of the Roman Empire and the "Doge" of the Italian republics. The Russian *Vêlehê Kniaz*, applied to the members of the Imperial family, is customarily translated "Grand Duke," following the rendering in official Latin documents, "Magnus Dux." The Norse word "viking" appears in Russian as *vityazya*.



in the town of Ladoga, where he erected a fortress, "either to defend the natives against his piratical countrymen or to defend himself against the natives in case of disagreement with them."<sup>1</sup> In Ladoga he was sufficiently near his native country to escape in case he might be overpowered by superior numbers. Later he established himself at Novgorod, where he met with some resistance. The *Novgorodtsi* "felt themselves insulted, saying, 'we are to be slaves, and are to suffer much evil from Rurik and his countrymen.'"<sup>2</sup> Some of the people of Novgorod revolted against Rurik, and some left the city and went to Kiev, where the Variagians had also established themselves under Askold.<sup>3</sup> "It is evident that the foreign princes, with their detachments, were called by the people of Novgorod and by the tribes allied to them, for the defence of the country against external enemies, and that the princes, with their troops, received definite subsistence for their guardianship. But the hired guards seem to have desired to feed themselves too copiously. So that among the payers of subsistence, grievances arose which were responded to by armed force. Having felt their power, the mercenaries converted themselves into dominators, and their wages were converted into compulsory tribute, with an increase of amount. This is the simple prosaic fact which seems to have been concealed in the poetic legend about the 'calling of the princes.' Thus the region of the free Novgorod became a Variagian principedom."<sup>4</sup>

Although in the tenth and eleventh centuries, a "decisive majority" of the princely families were of Variagian origin, princes of native Slavic race were not unknown. The "princely comradeship" had indeed to some extent assimilated the merchant and military classes of the towns, and it was not at this epoch very sharply distinguished from these classes, excepting from the circumstance that it was still predominantly Variagian. As for the classes in Russian society beneath the military and merchant orders, there can be no doubt that even prior to the coming of the Variagi, there was slave ownership. The old Russian common law recognised a privileged class bearing the name of *ognitschan*,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> *The Annals*, quoted by Kluchevsky, i. p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 166.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 167.

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or slave-owners. Between the slave-owner and the slave, or *chelad*, there appears to have been a tribal difference, the *chelad* being a captive taken in tribal wars, or the descendant of a captive. The tribal differences were thus transformed into class distinctions, the upper classes being of mingled Variagian and Slavic origin, and the mass of native Slavs being of varied tribal origin, some of them being recognised as *cheladi*, or slaves. The princes—Variagian and native—and the merchants of the great towns constituted a class which came to be known, at least in the tenth century, as the *Russ*. The origin of this “problematic word” is obscure; but about this period it was generally applied to the higher class of Russian society, and later it came to be applied to the country, chiefly, to begin with, to the district of Kiev, where the newly-arrived Variagi were more densely settled. When the Variagian element was wholly absorbed in the Slavic, the expression came to be applied to the whole people and to the whole area. In the tenth century, however, the native Slavic population—paying tribute to the *Russ*—was sharply distinguished from that class, although even by this time the latter was not of wholly different race. The foreign blood had already been “greatly diluted by native mixture, and the social structure was in this way deprived of relief.”<sup>1</sup> The upper class contours were not sharply defined, and the social antagonisms were therefore softened.

Beneath the surface the foundation of Russian society at this epoch rested upon the ownership of slaves. In the tenth and eleventh centuries slaves were the chief exports, and the prosperity of the great towns depended very largely upon the income derived from their sale in the foreign markets. Up till the eleventh century it does not appear that agriculture was extensively practised. The towns seem to have lived chiefly upon the imports which they obtained in return for their slaves and the forest products of their neighbouring regions, with slender agricultural production in their immediate vicinity. In that century, however, the accumulation of slaves (*cheladi*) in the urban houseyards seems to have suggested the employment of some of them in the exploitation of the land. In the twelfth century there are indications of the development of estate possession, and of the cultivation of the land of these estates by *cheladi*. The possessors of *cheladi* were the possessors of such

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 202.

lands—princes and their families, princes' men, ecclesiastical establishments, monasteries, &c. Lands without labourers were useless, and thus slavery appears as the "distinguishing mark" of land ownership. Only where lands were settled and exploited by "*cheladi*" were they really possessed. The very right to own the land came thus to follow from slave ownership. "This land is *mine*, because the people who cultivate it are *mine*. Such was, it appears, the dialectical process by which there was instituted among us (in Russia) the juridical idea of the right of land ownership."<sup>1</sup> The slave conveyed, as it were, the land to his master. The employment of slaves in agriculture led to a change in name; the *chelad* became a *kholop* or cultivator. It also led to the formation of the *voitchina* or heritable estate with serfs. The old Russian privileged *ognitschan* and the fighting princes' man of the tenth century became the *boyar*, a privileged landowner, possessing a heritable estate or *voitchina*. But the use of the slave in agriculture had effects other than juridical. The new demand for his services raised his price. The advance in price made the life of a slave more valuable. Under Yaroslav (1016-1054) a slave who had inflicted a blow upon a freeman might be killed; but under Yaroslav's immediate successors this was forbidden. The rise in the price of slaves led also to the employment of free workers upon the land. These free workers or *zakupi* worked upon their master's land for wages, their master supplying the implements and cattle. But if the *zakup* stole his master's property, or if he ran away from his service, the master might transform him into "a full *kholop*" or slave. In the eyes of a Russian landowner there was very little difference between a *zakup* and a *kholop*, although, in the eye of the law, one was a freeman and the other was a slave. The provisions in agreements relating to *zakupi* are very strict about leaving service without a proper discharge.<sup>2</sup> From this circumstance, and from the fact that many flights took place, it is evident on the one hand that the proprietors of land found difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of cultivators, and, on the other, that the terms of employment were felt by the *zakup* to be op-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Presnyakov, A., *Princely Law in Ancient Russia. Sketch of the History of the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries*. St. Petersburg, 1909, pp. 248, 264, 298-302.

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pressive. But the process of the enslavement of the free worker went on. "The liberal life of the social heads was supported by the juridical oppression of the mass of the people."<sup>1</sup> This progressive reduction in the social and economical status of the common people was one of the causes of the ultimate downfall of Kiev. It produced immense inequality—great wealth for a few, and grinding poverty for the mass. But the enslavement of free workers was not the only means adopted by the princes in recruiting cultivators for their fields. They practised raids upon the appanages of one another, carrying off "free" and "unfree" alike, and reducing the captives to servitude. The prince shared the plunder of his raids with his *drujina*, or fighting comrades. For example, Yaropolk, in 1116, captured Drutsk, in the principedom of Minsk, and transferred the whole of the inhabitants of the town to Periaslavsk, where he built for them a new town at the Falls of Sula on the Dnieper. These raids led to reprisals, and the consequence was a "plunderous struggle for working hands, followed by a decrease in the numbers of the free population."<sup>2</sup> This process involved the Russ in a vicious circle, for it destroyed the prosperity of the people, by which alone could agricultural exploitation be supported.<sup>3</sup> The connection between the economical situation just described and the easy victory of the Tartars over the Kiev Russ in 1229-1240 is very evident. The dissensions of the princes, aggravated by repeated raids upon the territories of one another and the impoverishment and enslavement of their people, reduced their power of resistance, and the Tartar scourge brought desolation to the Dnieper region.

The Tartars swept everything before them. The population fled from the plain of the Dnieper, lingered in the marshes and forests, or met death or captivity at the hands of the Tartars. After five centuries' occupation of the Dnieper region the Slavs were thus dispersed. Most of those who escaped fled north-east-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i, p. 342. (Translation, i, p. 187.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, i, p. 344.

<sup>3</sup> The external trade of the Russ in fish, for example, had probably been adversely affected by the formidable competition of Venice in the twelfth century, and the fall of Constantinople before the Venetians and the French in the Fourth Crusade (1203-1204) had probably further injured the Russian Black Sea trade. The decay of external commerce may thus have forced the Kiev Russ into more extensive agricultural exploitation.

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wards. A Papal missionary, passing through Kiev in 1246, six years after the final onslaught of the Tartars, found the fields strewn with a "numerous multitude of human bones and skulls."<sup>1</sup> In the formerly populous and wealthy city of Kiev he found only two hundred houses and a handful of miserable and oppressed people. Surrounded by Tartars, Turks, Polovtsi, and Pechenegs, Kiev remained in this state of desolation for three hundred years, when it was once more colonised from Poland and Lithuania.<sup>2</sup>

The dispersal of the Slavs north-eastwards resulted in their occupation of the plains of the Upper Volga ; but their political structure was broken up, and their whole social and economical life was disorganised. The dispersal left them in detached groups, little "local worlds" without cohesion and without common interests. Professor Kluchevsky points out that a similar social disorganisation in the west resulted in feudalism, while in Russia it produced the appanage order which, though it bears a certain resemblance to feudalism, has, nevertheless, distinguishing peculiarities.<sup>3</sup> From the end of the first period to the end of the second the Russians were relieved of the necessity of defending their southern frontier by the payment of tribute to the Tartars, and they were thus left free to develop their institutions unimpeded by aggression upon that side. It was long, however, before they recovered from their economical and political *débâcle*.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, i. p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 352.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 23-27.

## CHAPTER II

### SECOND PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY—THIRTEENTH TILL THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE dispersal of the Kiev Russ marks the beginning of the *second* period of Russian history. During this period the mass of the Russian people inhabited the valleys and plains of the Upper Volga and its tributaries. Although the social composition of the migrating mass was, to begin with, the same as it was before the dispersal—the princes with their *drujina* or fighting comrades, the merchant class, the free common people, and the *kholopi* and *cheladi* (cultivators and houseyard slaves)—the relative importance and numbers of these classes had been changed by the circumstances of the enforced migration. Undoubtedly the *kholopi* and *cheladi* had suffered most in the onslaughts of the Tartars; their bones bleached on the fields of Kiev. The merchants were ruined, and the political influence which they had exercised had disappeared. Thus in the new region the trading town no longer held its head so high against the prince as it did before the dispersal, and no longer determined the political boundaries.

The channels of external trade had been rudely interrupted, and some of them had been closed altogether. Economical necessity thus threw the population more and more into agriculture. But there was no longer available the ample money capital of the Kiev economy, and it was thus not possible for agricultural exploitation to be conducted very speedily. The forests had to be cut down or burnt up and the heavy clay had to be modified by cultivation and by manure before a full yield could be obtained. For a long period the husbandry was half-migratory. While the whole population was poor and capital was scarce, there was little effective demand for capital, although partly under the influence of the clergy, the rate of interest was much lower than it had been

in Kiev.<sup>1</sup> The profitable Black Sea and Caspian markets were cut off and the population was thrown back upon natural economy. Society was thus broken up into small self-contained groups without definite cohesion and without collective consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

The land was divided into *udeli* or princely appanages, the boundaries of these being determined by the river systems. The branching basins of the rivers Volga and Okà at once separated the population of the different appanages, and through their hydrographical connection, prepared the way for ultimate unification.<sup>3</sup>

The status of the appanage prince was personal; it did not depend upon his ownership of land.<sup>4</sup> He derived it by inheritance from ancestors who probably owned no appanages, but who shared, with other members of their family, in the exercise of supreme authority. The status of the prince thus rested upon a dynastic foundation. He possessed an appanage because it had been bequeathed to him, but his descent alone entitled him, as a member of the princely family, to share in the exercise of the authority which was acknowledged by the people to be its inheritance. This acknowledgment, in pre-Variagian days, was based upon military leadership or patriarchal relations, while the Variagian princes appear to have obtained it originally by force, and often maintained it by the same means. In either case the succession of princely authority depended upon descent. The prince was a prince because he was a Yaroslavich. Such was the source of the autocratic power exercised by the appanage princes. But in the appanage ages this autocratic authority was exercised in a peculiar manner. Subjection to it was voluntary. If one who served a prince chose to do so, he could leave his service and enter the service of another prince without forfeiting his heritable estate, if he had any. There was thus no relation between the prince and his subjects corresponding to a feudal relation. Their relations were not

<sup>1</sup> In Kiev the law of Monomakh permitted interest at 40 per cent.; and even higher rates were charged. Capital must thus have been highly productive and the profits of external trade very large. In the Suzdal country (the Upper Volga region) the rate of interest fell to 12 to 14 per cent. The return to capital was slow and small. Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 457.

<sup>2</sup> The Russian historian Soloviev puts this picturesquely: "All are sitting, . . . and thinking their own thoughts. Here are open doors and people are coming out upon the scene; but they are acting silently." Quoted by Kluchevsky, i. p. 439.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 221 *et seq.*

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obligatory, but were the result of consent, and they could be broken at will.

About the fourteenth century it appears that this autocratic authority was re-enforced by a change in the views about the ownership of land. When the prince regarded his appanage as a *voitchina*, or heritable estate, his autocratic power became associated with his landownership, and, although it had a separate historical origin, it came to lean upon that ownership.<sup>1</sup> Thus the autocratic rights of a *prince-voitchinik*, or princely owner of a heritable estate, formed an important economical asset, so to say; and these rights came to be divided and devised in the same way as the heritable estate itself. Thus there came to be established juridical relations between the prince and the free inhabitants of his appanage. In effect, a prince without an appanage was powerless. He was obliged to go into service either to one of his relatives, or to the Grand Prince of Lithuania.<sup>2</sup>

The appanage *voitchina*, or inherited appanage, consisted of three kinds of lands: 1st, palace lands; 2nd, "black" lands; and 3rd, boyar's lands.

1. The palace lands were exploited by the prince in the same way as the lands of a private owner. Their produce was used for the maintenance of his household. They were sometimes granted in lieu of wages for the maintenance of his servants. The palace lands were cultivated by "the 'unfree' people of the prince, or they were given to free people, who were obliged to furnish the palace with a certain amount of grain, hay, or fish,"<sup>3</sup> or to supply the palace with carts and horses when wanted.

2. The "black" lands were rented by the prince, or were given "on *obròk*"—that is, for a fixed payment—to individual peasants or to whole peasants' communities.

3. Although all the land of the prince was his heritable property, he shared some of it with other private *voitchiniki*, or persons inheriting and having the right of bequest in respect to such lands. In all the important appanages there were private *voitchinal* owners, both secular and clerical, before the land became a special principedom or princely appanage. The rights of these owners were recognised, and similar *voitchinal* rights were granted by the prince to

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 447.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448.



private persons and to the Church in respect to other lands. In such grants the prince sometimes included a portion of his autocratic rights, and thus there arose in Russian landownership incidents similar to the feudal incidents of Western Europe. Yet the similarity was not complete, for the occupancy of heritable land was not contingent upon serving, and the agreement to serve or not to serve was voluntary. From the side of the prince, as sovereign and supreme owner of the land, there may be recognized a resemblance to the feudal seigneurial status; but the servants of the prince are not his vassals.<sup>1</sup> They might serve at the court of one prince and possess heritable property in the appanage of another.

Moreover, the appanage princes of the Suzdal region, although owing their status to inheritance, and being thus subordinate to the *Grand Kniaz* because they were subordinate members of the princely family, came to be, in the fourteenth century, practically independent of the *Grand Kniaz*; they owed their allegiance and paid their tribute to the Khan of the Lower Volga.<sup>2</sup>

The administration of the appanage princes was carried on in the following manner: *Boyars*, or privileged landed proprietors holding heritable estates in the appanage of the prince, as well as "free servants"<sup>3</sup> of the prince, were employed by the prince to govern the towns and the districts surrounding them, groups of villages, and sometimes separate large villages. Such administrative functions were profitable. They involved the right to exact fees in judicial proceedings as well as other payments. For this reason, to be in service of this kind acquired the nickname "in feeding."<sup>4</sup> In addition to these profits incidental to the service, the boyars

<sup>1</sup> The interpretation of Western European feudalism given by Professor Kluchevsky is as follows: Feudalism arises from the meeting of two processes starting from opposite directions. On the one hand the district rulers, taking advantage of the weakness of the central authority, usurped the government of the districts held by them and became their autocratic proprietor, passing on their autocratic and proprietary powers to their descendants. On the other hand, the allodial landowners who became by commendation vassals of the king took advantage of the same weakness to obtain or to usurp full governmental authority. These processes, acting together, divided the State authority geographically, and broke up the State into seignories in which the autocratic prerogatives were joined with land ownership. The seignories were in turn divided into baronies with secondary vassals, who were hereditarily under obligation to their baron. All this military land-possessing hierarchy was based upon the immovable ground of the vellein population which was bound to the land. See Kluchevsky, i. p. 450.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Volnikh slug.*

<sup>4</sup> *Vokormleniye.*

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and free servants were sometimes the possessors of inherited estates, or *votchini* within the appanage, in which they were granted certain immunities involving exemption from obligations respecting court or financial duties. But the areas over which the "feeders" exercised administrative jurisdiction were not their landed property, and the immunities enjoyed by "feeders" in their *votchini* were not hereditarily transmissible by them along with the *votchinal* property. These immunities lapsed with the cessation of service. Thus no baronies emerged out of such conditions; and this circumstance constitutes one of the marks of difference between the appanage and the feudal systems.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that in the fifteenth century some of the Grand Princes of the Moscow principedom attempted to bring their appanage princes into vassal relation with them; but this was rather a sign of State centralization than of feudalism in the strict sense.<sup>2</sup>

The distinguishing mark of the appanage system as opposed to the feudal system was the different economic basis. In the feudal system the economic foundation was a village population fixed to the soil; in the appanage system the village population was not only moveable, but, in the ages during which the system was in vogue, distinctly migratory.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the structure in general of the appanage system was probably less formal and rigid than the structure of the feudal system.<sup>4</sup>

In further contrasting the appanage with the feudal system Professor Kluchevsky points out that the freeman, under the feudal system, surrounded himself, as with a fortified wall, with a chain of permanent heritable relations. These relations acted as "concentrated inferior social powers," or close corporations, which were guided by the freeman and therefore committed to his support. But the fluctuating local groups afforded to the appanage prince no fit soil for the growth of feudal relations, or for the maintenance of his freedom by means of them. His "free servants" could leave his service if they wished to do so.

The desire on the part of the appanage princes to secure the advantage of permanent service led to the endowment by them of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> It is possible, however, that in comparing the two systems, Professor Kluchevsky overestimates the uniformity of feudalism. The facts of feudal life may not always have corresponded with the provisions of feudal law.

their free servants with land, and thus to the binding of them to the service of the prince. This land-endowment system was applied to military and civil service alike. There was also another reason for such endowment. We have seen that the Upper Volga Russ, for a long period after the dispersal of the Slavs, suffered from lack of liquid capital. There was little money in the country, and the slender external trade brought little into it. Thus the payment of the salaries of administrative functionaries, and even the payment of wages of the household servants of the prince, were accomplished only with difficulty when their settlement in money was necessary. The system of giving land in lieu of wages for past and prospective service thus became usual. But the land was given for this purpose specifically, and when the service ceased the occupancy of the land ceased also. There thus grew up a class of estate owners distinct from the *votchinněkh*, or owners of heritable estates. Such estates came to be known as *pomyestya*. The full development of this system of landownership belongs, however, to the third period of Russian history. The consequences of the appanage system, as it developed in the second period, were these—increase in number of appanages and diminution of their area by division among the families of the princes, consequent impoverishment of the princely class, and the occurrence of frequent quarrels. "Political disintegration led inevitably to the degeneration of political consciousness, and to the cooling of popular feeling. Sitting in their appanage nests, and flying out of them only for prey, with every generation growing poorer and deteriorating in their loneliness, these princes gradually became unaccustomed to ideas rising higher than the care of their nestlings."<sup>1</sup> In the end, however, this disintegration was not unfavourable to political unity, for when one appanage princely family, whose appanage, though not remaining intact, still remained large, and whose political ambitions were larger still, succeeded in subjecting the other families gradually, the mutual ill-will of these rendered the process of consolidation easier than it would otherwise have been. Thus the appanage age represents a transition period between the old Russian state of Kiev and the new Russian state, which now begins to be consolidated in the Upper Volga region.

Special notice must be taken of the growth during the second

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 458.

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period of the free towns,<sup>1</sup> of which the most important were Novgorod the Great and Pskov.<sup>2</sup> These city republics had developed certain democratic elements, very different from the aristocratic character of the older Kiev Russ. Theoretically, all Novgorodians were equal before the law—"boyar and simple inhabitant, young and old."<sup>3</sup> At the head of Novgorod society, however, stood the *boyarstvo*, the body of "free serfs," servants of the prince or *kniaz*. Beneath the *boyars* were the *jētīē* or *jētīē lyudē*.<sup>4</sup> To this class belonged the large landowners and capitalists, other than those who were also *boyars*. Their property in land was not, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, cultivated, but they derived a revenue from their estates in furs, wax, tar, building timber, &c. Beneath this class of proprietors were the merchants who received credit from the *jētīē*, and who undertook the business of selling the produce of their properties. The *jētīē* and the merchants together formed a middle class between the *boyars* and the common people. This middle class was distinct alike from the select circle of *boyars'* families and the "black" or common folk. The merchants of Novgorod had formed themselves into a society of a form analogous to the guild of Western Europe, at least by the twelfth century.<sup>5</sup>

The "black" or common people were the small tradesmen and working men, who obtained money for work from the higher classes. In the villages and also in the town of Novgorod we meet with people in the social structure inferior to these. There is a numerous class of *kholopi*, or cultivators. The large heritable estates are exploited chiefly by means of such *kholopi*. There are found, however, as well, groups of free peasants. The "free peasant" class in Novgorod is known under the contemptuous name of *smerd*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Taking the possession of a *veche* or folk-mote as the sign of freedom of a town, the following were free towns in the eleventh century: Belgorod, Vladimir, Volhyn, Berestie, Ryazan, Mourom, and Pronsk, Smolensk, Poloczk and Kursk, Rostov, Suzdal, Pereyaslavl and Vladimir (on the Kliazma), Kiev, Novgorod, Pskov, and Viatka. See Kovalevsky, Maxime, *Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia*. London, 1891, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> "Elder brother" was the nickname of Novgorod the Great and "younger brother" that of Pskov.

<sup>3</sup> A phrase in the first article of the *Sudniy Dokument*, an early judicial document of Novgorod. See Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> These words may be rendered—"people of substance."

<sup>5</sup> This society was called "The Ivanovsky Merchantry," or "Guild of St. John the Baptist," according to western phraseology. It is referred to in a document of Vsevolod in 1135. Cf. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 97. There were also other societies of inferior status.

<sup>6</sup> From *smerdet*, to have a bad smell.

Strictly speaking, the *smerd* was a free peasant cultivating upon the State domain. In addition to the *smerd* there was also the *polovněk*,<sup>1</sup> who cultivated the land of private owners, and received for doing so half of the yield—a system common in old (Kiev) Russ. Sometimes the *polovněk* were required to give to the proprietor of the land only the third or fourth sheaf. These free peasants seem, however, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, to begin to approach the condition of the *kholopi*. The process of change, which appears to have begun in the thirteenth century, is evident from the extension of the already existing inadmissibility of the testimony of a *kholop* in the law courts to the testimony of a *smerd*. In the fourteenth century (1308) *polovněk* (or metayer tenants) who ran away from the estates which they had been cultivating, were required to be returned, in the same manner as fleeing *kholopi*. In Moscow, however, such measures do not make their appearance until the middle of the fifteenth century. Indeed it appears that in the free city of Novgorod the practice of reducing the free peasant to the status of a *kholop*, or bound cultivator, was adopted before its adoption in any other part of Russia. In strange contradiction to the above, we meet, in the structure of Novgorod society, a class not to be found at that time elsewhere in Russia, viz. a class of peasant landowners. This class was known as *zemtsi*, or *self-zemtsi*, i. e. men having their own lands. There seems to have been a considerable number of these peasant owners in Novgorod.<sup>2</sup> They possessed about eighteen dessiatines of land on the average (48.6 acres) per holding. But the holdings were seldom in severalty. The *zemtsi* were usually settled by "nests"—agricultural corporations or societies—in which the members were associated through relationship or by mutual agreement.<sup>3</sup> Some of these possessed and worked together, some of them separately, living in one village or in different special villages; but their lands were usually contiguous. Separate possession of previously jointly possessed land sometimes occurred. The *zemtsi* did not always culti-

<sup>1</sup> From *polovēna* = half. The tenure was substantially the same as the "Metayer Tenancy" of France.

<sup>2</sup> In three districts—Novgorod, Ladoga, and Norikhov—there were in 1500 (according to the Novgorod Land Book composed in that year) four hundred *zemsti* owning 7000 dessiatines (18,900 acres). Kluchevsky, ii. p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> In one estate of 84 dessiatines (226.8 acres) there were thirteen co-possessors. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

vate their own land; they sometimes rented it to *polovněkē* on sharing terms.

That the *zemtsi* lands were held in full ownership is evident from the facts that these lands were bought and sold by peasants, that the shares of individual owners in jointly-possessed lands were redeemed by the other owners, that the lands were given in dower, and that women frequently appear in the registration books as owners. In the Pskov Annals the *zemtsi* lands are even spoken of as *votchini*. The origin of this class of small owners is not quite clear; but it appears that the *zemtsi* owners were sometimes merchants who had their town houses (or courtyards), and who acquired land in the country, and sometimes sons of priests whose fathers were attached to town churches. On the whole, it seems that the *zemtsi* lands belonged mainly to citizens, who either let the lands for rent or on *polovněk* terms, or cultivated the lands themselves, renting their town courtyards. Land possession in Novgorod and Pskov was thus not a privilege enjoyed exclusively by the higher serving or *boyar* class. Other classes of the free population also possessed lands in the country, exploiting them or cultivating them individually, in families or in small industrial or agricultural companies. Companies of this kind received the special name of *Syabrove* and *Składnikove*, or neighbours and shareholders. It is possible that originally all the *Zemtsi* lands corresponded to this co-operative or joint-stock type, although some of them came to be possessed in severalty. This joint-stock type thus distinguished *zemtsi* landholding from the personal ownership of the *boyars* and the *jētīē lyudē*. In the Novgorod and Pskov regions, during the period of the freedom of these great cities, the development of the town and the increasing wealth of its citizens thus created a form of landownership which was not to be found elsewhere within the Russian limits.

So much for the economical and social structure of the society of the Free Towns; the political system corresponded to this structure to a certain extent. Although, before the law, all classes were equal, and although all free inhabitants had equal voice in the *veche*, or municipal assembly, yet the political influence of each social class was, to a large extent, determined not by mere numbers but by relative economical importance. The capitalist *boyars* and *jētīē lyudē* were the political leaders. Their influence in the *veche*

and in the administration depended upon their position as commercial magnates. The merchants who carried on the real business were dependent upon them for capital and credit, and for this reason were politically and socially subordinate, as were also the "black" or common people.<sup>1</sup>

Although the higher as well as the lower administrative functionaries were elected by the *veche*, and although the *veche* was entitled, in terms of its constitution, to elect even the *posadnik*, or mayor, from any class, custom, which, so far as is known, was never departed from, determined that the *posadnik* should always be a *boyar*. Neither a merchant nor a *smerd* was ever elected to so high an office. Custom also required that a merchant or a *smerd* should not advocate his own cause in the *Tiuna Odrina* (corresponding to the Bailiff's Court), but that he should employ an advocate who belonged either to the *boyarstvo* or the *jētiē lyudē*. The merchants had, however, their own court and their own elected officers. Every free man had in his hundred (*stio*) the privilege of having *kholopi* upon his land as well as *polovnēkē* (metayer tenants), and was entitled to take part in the courts to which causes connected with these classes were brought. The clergy had their separate ecclesiastical courts. All this complicated social and administrative structure was held to exist by the authority of the *people*; yet this authority had only a dim existence behind many contradictions in practice.

The relations of the free town to its prince were not less characterized by inconsistency. The prince, as military leader, was held to be necessary alike for defence against external attack and for the maintenance of internal order; sometimes the town kept him at his post by force, and yet the people usually regarded him with distrust, limiting his powers and sometimes driving him away. This continuous struggle led to quarrels among rival princely houses, to political intrigues, and to frequent changes in the princely lines. The personal element in these quarrels was unimportant; but behind them there lay large political issues, involving the extension of the boundaries of the Novgorodian city state and the foreign commercial relations of the Novgorod merchants. These external commercial relations and the competition of the Novgorod capitalists and the mercantile houses with which they were associ-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 103.

ated lay at the root of many of the earlier riots and disturbances which ultimately weakened Novgorod so much as to compromise any claim that it might have on historical grounds for the hegemony of the Russian State. The later disturbances seem to have been caused by the struggle which began in the fourteenth century between the lower classes and the higher classes of Novgorod society. This struggle resulted from the increasing inequality in the distribution of property. Inequality of property, in presence of the theoretical and to some extent practical political equality and ostensibly democratic constitution, led to a condition of struggle which often resulted in open violence. The working population, dependent upon the *boyar*-capitalist class for employment, became in some numbers hopelessly indebted to that class. Such debtors joined themselves to *kholopi* who had fled from their masters, and betook themselves to the highways; and their robberies beyond the limits of Novgorod involved that town in quarrels with the princes of the lower Volga, especially with those of Moscow. Even so early as the middle of the thirteenth century the smaller people had been discontented, and this discontent was utilised by some of the *boyars* for their political advantage; thus the domination of the *boyarstvo* as a whole was even increased by the discontent, although the *veche*, in consequence of appeals to its authority, assumed an increasing prominence. Under these influences the *veche* became at times a riotous popular assembly, and reverted to ancient customs which had long fallen into disuetude, as, for example, the throwing of political offenders into the river,<sup>1</sup> and the form of execution for grave offences known to old Russian law as "flood and pillage." The abandonment of the developed forms of law for these primitive practices led to a merely anarchic condition, under which, for a time, social order was submerged.

While, however, the *boyarstvo* retained and exercised their political authority without effective check, and while increasing wealth on one side and poverty on the other were widening the breach between the classes, the democratic order notwithstanding, riot appeared to be the only method of changing the current of affairs.

This situation was by no means a necessary outcome of the constitution of the free town, as is shown by the case of Pskov,

<sup>1</sup> Probably a survival of the "ordeal by water."



where such turbulent scenes did not occur. The reason for this is probably to be found in the relatively smaller area of Pskov, and in its geographical and strategic situation. It was too constantly under the necessity of concentrating its powers to resist external attack and to maintain its frontiers intact, to afford the distraction of internal disorder. Moreover, the political life of Pskov was characterized by more popular elements, and, although its subordinate towns were partially autonomous, there was at the same time a more highly centralized administrative system for military purposes than was the case in Novgorod.

While the dissensions in Novgorod no doubt facilitated the subjection of that free town by the Moscow prince, the gradual advance of that principedom to the leading position in the Russian State would have led in any case to the ultimate absorption of the free towns. The unification of the State on a broad basis appears to have been a political necessity. The interests of the free towns were subordinated to the larger general interests which, amid all the interior conflicts, were beginning to be recognized. Moscow had become the centre round which the forces of the neighbouring political units were rallying. The ambitions of the Moscow princes harmonized with the exigencies of the time. The fate of Novgorod and that of the other independent political units were mere incidents in the larger movement which seemed to be necessary in order to liberate the Russian people from the control of the Tartars, and to enable Russia to achieve political unity. The particularism of Novgorod was inconsistent with the solidarity of the Russian State. Novgorod could not sustain itself as an independent political unit, refusing assistance to Moscow for the defence of its southern frontier against the Tartars,<sup>1</sup> while it enjoyed the advantage of the Moscow defences.<sup>2</sup> Absorption was, under the then conditions, an inevitable result of ostentatious independence.

<sup>1</sup> As it did in 1477. Cf. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 126.

<sup>2</sup> The same considerations determined the Russian attitude toward Finland in later times.

## CHAPTER III

### THIRD PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY, FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH

THIS division embraces the time from 1462 till 1613, or from the accession of Ivan III, Grand Prince or Duke of Moscow, until the passing of the Moscow throne to the Romanov dynasty. The characteristic features of this epoch are the gradual consolidation of the Russian State under the powerful leadership of the Moscow princes, the formation of a new military and serving class round the prince—the *boyars*, whose individual existence in previous ages has already been noticed—the gradual recruiting of this class by the granting of princely lands, and the consequent progressive limitation of the rights of the peasant cultivator and his increasing economical dependence upon the landowner.

Russia of the middle of the fifteenth century may be described as follows: To the north, extending to the Gulf of Finland, there was the region of Novgorod the Great; between it and Livonia on the south-west there lay the region of the other important free town Pskov; White Russia, a part of Great Russia, Smolensk, and Little Russia belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian State under the Grand Duke or Prince of Lithuania. Beyond Tula and Ryazan there lay a vast prairie or steppe region extending to the Black, Azov, and Caspian Seas. Over this region the Golden Horde held sway, and there were few settled Russians upon it. The central Upper Volga region was occupied by a number of great and small appanage principedoms, one of these being the principedom of Moscow.<sup>1</sup>

*Landownership in the new Moscow State.*—The gradual growth of the Moscow principedom, its absorption of the older appanage

<sup>1</sup> After the death of Vsevelod (fl. *circa* 1084), his appanage was divided among his five sons. When the grandchildren of Vsevelod came to be provided for, these appanages were again subdivided, one of the subdivisions being the appanage of Moscow. Cf. Kluchevsky, i. p. 440.

principdoms, and the consequent extension of its boundaries, together with a similar extension carved out of the desert lands by which its earlier frontiers were surrounded, led to a great increase in the number of persons who were engaged in the military and civil service of the Moscow prince. The preservation of the frontiers against the inroads of the barbaric people hovering upon them, and against the formidable attacks of the Tartars, rendered it advisable to spread out the "serving people" along the frontier. In order that they might defend it effectively, they were given possession of the land which they were called upon to defend, and were expected to settle upon it the people necessary at once to cultivate it and to protect it. This form of military tenure was fully developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the estate or *pomyestnaya* system. The "estate" (*pomyestyē*) was sometimes given by the prince out of State lands, or it was given by the ecclesiastical establishments to "serving people" on condition of their rendering military service. The estate was thus fundamentally different from the *vochina*. The latter was a heritable property held unconditionally and free of obligations of service; the former was held by condition, and was not transmissible by will. The origin of this form of landownership has not yet been fully elucidated. Nevolin, the Russian jurist, traces its beginning to the first half of the fifteenth century, and regards it as having been copied from Byzantine law and practice, the marriage of Sophie Palæologus to Ivan III, Grand Prince of Moscow, having brought about many imitations of Byzantine customs. Gradovsky, on the other hand, attributes the growth of the *pomyestnaya* system to imitation from the Tartars. The Tartar theory of sovereignty involved the absolute ownership by the prince of the land under his domination, and it was thus permissible for him to grant lands with or without conditions to his servants or others. Professor Kluchevsky points out that the word *pomyestyē* is older than the date of the marriage of the Greek princess to the Russian Grand Prince; and also that the origin of the right and the origin of the system of social relations founded upon it "are quite different historical moments."<sup>1</sup>

We have already recognised the existence of the estate system in appanage times.<sup>2</sup> The increasing demands for the military and

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. pp. 272-3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 27.

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administrative service of the Moscow principedom led to the growth of both of the classes of princes' servants whose presence at the court of the appanage princes has been noticed. These classes were (1) the free military "serving people," and (2) the "serving people" in the court of the prince, so-called "serfs under palace regulations." (1) The free "serving people," or free serfs, were retained for military purposes. They served by agreement, and they were at liberty to leave the service of the prince if they wished to do so. They might or might not have heritable estates, but, if they had, these were not forfeited by the departure of their owner for service elsewhere. (2) The palace "serfs" were not bondmen. They were the household servants of the prince—"key-keepers, *tiuni* (or chamberlains), kennelmen, stablemen, gardeners, bee-keepers, and other tradesmen and working men."<sup>1</sup> This class was sharply distinguished from the first, and in the agreements between the military serfs and the prince, the latter bound himself to refrain from accepting household servants for military service. "Some of the palace 'serfs' were personally 'free,' others were 'unfree' serfs of the prince."<sup>2</sup> Both the military serfs and the palace serfs were supported in appanage times by grants of lands given for their service, and surrendered by them to the prince when for any reason their service ceased.<sup>3</sup> It appears that even when the "free serfs" purchased land within the appanage of the prince whom they served, and whose service they might leave because they were personally free, they must surrender their purchased lands on leaving the service of their prince. Thus their ownership of the land, whether acquired by service or by purchase, depended upon the service, and for that reason the land was not held in full ownership. Thus, personally free, the servants of the prince, military and personal alike, were, in effect, economically bound to the service of the prince, unless they had inherited *votchinal* lands or unless *votchini* had been specifically granted to them. The exercise of profitable administrative functions was confined to the "free"

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> e.g. In the will of the Prince of the Serpukhov appanage in 1410, instructions are given to the son of the testator to discharge those household servants whom he did not want to retain, and to deprive them of the lands occupied by them. Those also who did not wish to remain in service might go, excepting those "upon whom there are full papers." That is to say, excepting *kabali* and *kholopi*. Cf. *infra*, p. 151, and Kluchevsky, ii. p. 274.

military "serfs"; the palace "serfs" were not assigned to such duties. The expression "free" is, indeed, applied in the contractual documents only to those who were engaged in the discharge of duties of an administrative or military description. The palace "serfs" were paid either by grants of land or by grants of the right to purchase land, in either case conditionally upon continuance of service. As the Moscow principedom increased in power, and as its demands for military and administrative servants increased, the relatively elastic system which had obtained in appanage times was made more rigid. In the middle of the fifteenth century the "free military serf" lost the right to leave the service of the Grand Prince of Moscow, in order to enter the service of another appanage prince, and in like manner he lost the right to go beyond the Russian frontier. But this deprivation of previously existing personal freedom was accompanied by a change in the nature of the grants of land which were made in return for military service. The conditions no longer related strictly to service, but involved grants for life.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these changes in the status of the "free military serfs," there occurred also a change in respect to the exclusiveness of the class. The "palace serfs" of the Moscow prince now became entitled to enter military service, and grants of land were made to them upon condition of their rendering such service. The word *pomyestye*, estate, seems to have come into general use contemporaneously with these changes; and the formerly differentiated classes of military and household "serfs" of the prince came to be mingled together. At this time also estate possession comes to be regulated by precise rules, which determine the size of the separate allotments. The estate system seems to have been fully organized within twenty years after the conquest of Novgorod by the Moscow Grand Prince. Levies for military and administrative service were thus provided for, and the governmental lands became rapidly "estitized."<sup>2</sup> For example, in 1550 the Government of Moscow levied from various districts one thousand of the

<sup>1</sup> In this connection Kluchevsky quotes the will of the Grand Prince Basil the Dark (1462), in which an estate is granted to a "free serf" for life, with a reversion in favour of the wife of the Grand Prince. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> From the Land Register of *Votškaya Pyatina*, in Novgorod, it appears that at the period mentioned about one-half of the arable land had been "estitized." *Ibid.*, p. 278.

town gentry and children of *boyars* for metropolitan service. Estates were given to these persons, varying in dimensions with the importance of the offices to which they were assigned. Thus the higher functionaries received 300 dessiatines of arable land, and the inferior functionaries received from 100 to 200 dessiatines.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these allotted estates, the functionaries were given money salaries, also graduated according to the character of their service. This complicated system of land grants was under the care of a special department of the Government known as the *Pomyestny Prikaz*, or Estate Office. The system involved the exercise of the required functions in or near the estate which was granted for the maintenance of the "serving" person. Thus functionaries in Moscow were granted lands in the suburbs of Moscow, while those whose duties lay in the outskirts were granted lands there. Moreover, it appears that, though the *votchinal* land tenure, or tenure of heritable property, rested upon different foundations originally, the development of the estate system led to the *votchinal* owners, who were also serving people, being required to render service on their *votchini* as well as on their *pomyestya*—that is, on their heritable property as well as on the lands allotted to them in respect of service. In that way the mere holding of land involved the discharge of duties. By the middle of the sixteenth century these duties were fully and exactly determined. "From every 100 *chetey* of good useful land (that is, from every 150 dessiatines of arable land) there must appear in the march one militiaman" on a horse, with complete equipment; and for a long march he must have two horses.<sup>2</sup>

The lands granted to serving people who possessed *votchini* were known as *dachi*, and these latter land grants were inversely proportionate to the extent of the *votchina*; but they were also determined by the "illustriousness of the race" of the serving man, as well as by the character and length of his service. In the end of the sixteenth century, when available land was becoming relatively scarce, the extent of the allotments was sometimes limited by the total amount of land available for "estating" in

<sup>1</sup> In other levies persons of the highest rank received upwards of 3000 dessiatines. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280. Compared with similar provisions in feudal charters in Great Britain, for example, this was a small obligation for so much land.

the district in question. The area of the grants was also frequently determined by the relative density of the population. But in the actual working of the system it appears that what was counted arable land was not always arable in a strict sense. Areas counted as arable had sometimes been allowed, under the care of previous *pomyetschékē*, to revert to forest or waste land. This mode of reckoning affected also the amount of the salary attached to the office and the land, so that the "serving-man" sometimes found himself with an area of land which might be brought into cultivation, but without the agricultural capital to enable him to cultivate it. The proportion of lands held upon serving conditions to the total area of lands varied in different districts; but, speaking generally, the *voitchini* were fewer, and the "estates" (*pomyestya*) were more numerous, towards the south. In the extreme south the *voitchinal* lands were very few.

In addition to the land grants for service, money salaries make their appearance as customary in the seventeenth century. These money salaries do not, however, appear to have been paid uniformly, nor do they appear to have been paid at short intervals. They varied with the nature of the office and with the size of the estate. The period of their payment varied also. The people employed in the metropolitan centre received their salaries yearly, but others received them every third, fourth, or even fifth year. If, however, the "serving man" had a profitable employment, he might receive no money salary, or, in other cases, he might receive money only to pay for his equipment should he be called upon to render military service.

Although estate possession, as distinguished from *voitchinal* ownership, was not, in its early stages and strictly speaking, heritable, yet service came to be looked upon as hereditary. The sons of serving people were under obligation to render service as soon as they reached the age when they might render it—viz. fifteen years, unless they were expressly exempted by the sovereign. When the son of a "serving man" attained the age of fifteen years he was granted an estate, and this was added to as his service continued. In the case of an aged parent who was unfit for active service, a son was accepted as a substitute, and this son, after the death of his father, inherited both his father's land and his serving obligations. There grew out of this a complicated series of regula-

tions about the maintenance of "serving men's" families. Estates even passed to girls who were able to find husbands among "serving men," and who could settle their shares of the "estate" upon them. Thus all the members of a serving family served. "The sons mounted their horses to defend the fatherland, and the daughters 'went under the crown' to prepare the reserve of defenders."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these developments, there emerged the idea that landownership and land possession alike were identified with service. Whoever owned or held the land must serve, and land must be in the possession of those who served. This idea is reflected in the legislation of the sixteenth century regarding the limitation of *votchinal* rights. It was important to prevent the *votchini* from passing into the hands of persons who were not capable of rendering service. Those who inherited *votchini* were not permitted to sell more than half of them; but even the permission to sell one half was surrounded with difficulties and disabilities. Childless widows were only permitted to enjoy *votchini* for life; after their death the *votchini* went to the sovereign. In 1572, owners of *votchini* were forbidden to devise them to monasteries.<sup>2</sup>

These limitations of the right of bequest previously enjoyed without limitation resulted in *votchinal* ownership ceasing to have the characteristics of full private ownership, and in its approaching more and more closely to the "obligatory and conditional" character of estate (*pomyestny*) possession.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the limitations just described had the effect of diminishing the area of *votchinal* lands, so that by the end of the sixteenth century "estate" possession considerably exceeded *votchinal* ownership. Yet a hundred years later, or in the latter half of the seventeenth century, there grew up the practice of granting to *pomyetschékē*, or estate-possessing serving men, either a *votchina* or the right to acquire one by purchasing lands in *pomyestny* tenure, and converting them into *votchini*. Side by side, however, with this process there went on the process already referred to of the increasingly inheritive character of estate possession as such. Both forms of landownership came gradually to be altered in character; *votchinal* ownership became no longer fully heritable, and *pomyestny* possession became conditionally heritable. In an ukase of the Tsar Mikhail there

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.



occurs the curious and apparently contradictory expression heritable *pomyestya*,<sup>1</sup> which sufficiently indicates that some estate possession, at all events, had become quite indistinguishable from *votchinal*. Later there are abundant evidences of the bequest of "estates," of their transference in dower, and even their alienation to strangers for a money payment.

Finally, that which had become gradually the fact, viz. that estate possession had been transformed into estate ownership, was recognized in the eighteenth century by an ukase of Peter the Great, which confirmed the possessors of estates in ownership, the word *votchina* passed out of use, and the word *pomyestyē* replaced it for all forms of estate ownership.<sup>2</sup>

An important incident of the development of the estate system was the growth of a class feeling, or, in more modern phrase, class consciousness among the landowners. This expressed itself in the formation of societies or corporations<sup>3</sup> composed of the local gentry. These societies elected from among themselves certain of their number, ten or twenty for each district. The elected persons, or *okladchēkē*, gave the necessary information about the numbers and character of the "serving people" of their district to the functionaries who were empowered to distribute the offices and the lands among them. The *okladchēkē* were responsible to the Government for the accuracy of the information they gave, and for the production when required of the number of men, horses, and armament which they had declared as belonging to their district. The *okladchēkē* were in turn supported by the *mutual guarantee* of the serving people in the district. This system of *mutual guarantee* was developed in detail—each serving person having his bondsman or pledger, and this again became still more complicated, three or four bondsmen pledging themselves for one another.<sup>4</sup> The *mutual guarantee* of the serving people, unlike that of the peasant communities, was not a "circular" pledge, but was a "chain" pledge.<sup>5</sup>

Through their elected representatives, or *gorodovie prekatschēkē* (town officials), the landowners also took a large share in local administration. These elected representatives administered the taxes and duties of the landowners, had control of fortifications, and they

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the discussions upon *frankpledge*, e.g. Stubbs' *Constitutional History*, vol. i, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 298.

were responsible for the defence of the district in case of war or irregular inroads. These elected representatives of the landed gentry were members of the council of the governor of the province, and they were expected to defend the landowners against arbitrary action on the part of the governor. Gradually the *okladchéké* acquired increasing political importance through the increasing importance of the class which they represented. They appeared as deputies in the *Zemskie Sobori* and advocated the interests of their districts before the central government.

The increase in the numbers of the serving class, together with the comparatively generous distribution of land to them, brought the State in course of time to an *impasse*. The drafts of land were made first upon the palace lands, then upon the lands of *voitchini* which had lapsed to the crown, then the so-called Black Lands and Treasury Lands, both lands whose profits went for the general service of the State. Land became scarce, and thus there occurred that intensification of land hunger which has characterized the Russian State and characterizes it still. The defence of existing land required constant encroachment upon neighbouring lands. Moreover, under the estate system the land was not well cultivated. The estate owner was rather a militiaman than a farmer; and his estate was organized primarily with a view to strategical purposes, and only secondarily for agricultural exploitation. The newer lands on the outskirts of the Russia of successive periods were scantily populated. Only in the central heavy clay region of the Middle Okâ<sup>1</sup> were there people in abundance. It was therefore necessary to promote migrations from the centre to the south and east. From the middle of the sixteenth century these migrations assumed considerable proportions. In this way ultimately the estated "serving people" were able to secure labourers for their lands. Meanwhile, however, owing to the undesirability of the possession of land without labourers, there began to arise a class of "serving proletarians," or landless serving people for whom there were found no convenient estates. At the end of the sixteenth century the Government was obliged to reduce land grants and salaries alike.<sup>1</sup> Its capital in land had been seriously depleted, and lands which formerly had yielded revenue to the crown had now passed into the hands of *pomyetschéké*. Under these circum-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 302.

stances gifts of land to "serving people" gradually diminished, and ultimately came down until sometimes they were no greater in area than peasant allotments. Thus there are met with *pomyetschĕkĕ* with land measuring no more than thirty acres.<sup>1</sup> Such an area was not more than one-fifth of the area assigned by law for the furnishing of one trooper. The result of this state of matters was that the poorer *pomyetschĕkĕ* could not serve, or could not serve as required. They went on foot, for example. The poor landed and the landless "serving people" became very numerous about the end of the sixteenth century. Many of them, although belonging by birth to the gentry, fell into the position of peasants, hired themselves as labourers, or engaged in some artizan employment.

Together with the deterioration of the estated and non-estated "serving people," there came the effect of the system upon the character, growth, and prosperity of the towns. Such as they were, the "serving people" were the most intelligent and best bred of Russian society. The steady withdrawal of this class from the town populations, and the drafting of them to frontier estates, prevented any recruiting of the town commercial and industrial classes from their ranks,<sup>2</sup> and at the same time deprived these classes of their best customers. The estate owners in many regions, living at a distance from towns, were forced to organize their life upon a self-sufficient basis. They had to establish their own household tradesmen (*dvorovie lyudĕ*).<sup>3</sup> The great increase of rural population in Russia thus failed to react upon urban industry and trade; and for nearly three hundred years Russia remained predominantly rural and self-sufficient, and the growth of urban centres, with their industry and trade, was correspondingly slow.

On the more purely political side, strangely enough, it is to the reign of Ivan IV (the Terrible) that we must look for the germ of what may be called parliamentary institutions in Russia. Assemblies of notables—officials and others—had been in existence in the Polish Lithuanian Tsardom—but no council or assembly of that kind appears to have met in Russia until Ivan IV called to Moscow the elective officers employed to collect the revenue and

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> On the influence of this withdrawal of the élite of the towns upon the subsequent history of Russia, see *infra* (vol. ii. Book VII. chap. xiv.).

<sup>3</sup> For a lively description of the *dvorovie lyudĕ*, see Prince Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston, 1899), p. 28 *et seq.*

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the "serving people," metropolitan and provincial. This seems to have been really a representative assembly in the sense that it included in its membership persons drawn from all classes, although it was not representative of the whole people. But it is significant to notice that even at this time (in the reign of Ivan IV) there were demands that a really general assembly should be convened, viz. a *Zemsky Sobor*, or People's Assembly.<sup>1</sup> Indeed during the age of anarchy, when Vladislav was elected to the throne by the *boyars*, he was required to agree to such an assembly or a General Council of the people to be held yearly.<sup>2</sup> But the reign of Vladislav was brief, and on the evacuation of Moscow by the Poles in 1610, the confusion of the anarchy, scarcely interrupted, continued. The development of assemblies and councils, both representative and other, belongs to the next period.

We have now to turn to the other side of the estate system, viz. the relation of the landowner to the peasant—the relation of the possessor of the soil to the cultivator of it.

The absorption by the Moscow principedom of the Tsardom of Kazan on the east, and the Tsardom of Astrakhan on the south-east, had opened up an immense region previously scantily occupied by migrating pastoral tribes. A great part of this area was composed of rich black soil. The military servants of the prince were, as has been described, granted estates upon the indefinite and shifting frontiers, and in order to sustain themselves upon these estates it was indispensable to exploit the resources of them. To do so it was necessary to procure cultivators. Thus from the middle of the fifteenth century there went on a considerable migrating movement of peasants seeking the new Black Soil regions. These peasants rented lands upon the estates of the "serving people," or hired themselves to the estate possessors or to the renting peasants as labourers. This migration had, however, an effect which such migrations always have; it drew off taxpayers from the older settled regions. Such people, in leaving the districts to which they belonged as responsible owners of courtyards, and therefore as taxpayers, evaded their responsibilities, and the economical equili-

<sup>1</sup> The demand was formulated by Kurbsky, collaborator and afterwards antagonist of Ivan the Terrible. On the criticisms of the Tsar's policy by Kurbsky, see Kluchevsky, ii. p. 205.

<sup>2</sup> See Kovalevsky, Maxime, *Russian Political Institutions*. Chicago, 1902, p. 60.

brium was thereby disturbed. In the peasant courtyards there lived the "undivided"<sup>1</sup> family, whose head was responsible for the *tyaglo* or tax, and in this family there were not only "unseparated" brothers and sisters as well as children of the head of the family, but unrelated people "sitting on the back,"<sup>2</sup> not responsible for taxes and living like parasites upon the courtyard means.<sup>3</sup> The latter class were especially drawn upon for the new lands, where they became independent farmers, although they entered upon their new settlements without agricultural capital, a circumstance which very materially affected their status when their settlement came to be of magnitude and when cultivators were no longer scarce.

Thus the growth of the estate system in the new regions drew off from the central districts some "responsible" peasants, some separated members of the "undivided" households, and large numbers of the "sitting on the back people." The results were a simplification of the peasant households in the central districts, embarrassment in the payment of taxes by the depleted households owing to the diminished number of working members, embarrassment for the estate owners in the centre in the collection of their rents and in procuring labour for their fields, and embarrassment for the Government in the collection of taxes. These conditions induced the Moscow Government, in the middle of the sixteenth century, to impose a check upon migrations. This check was effected by limiting the freedom of movement of peasants and by compelling the return to their former homes of peasants who had migrated within a certain period.<sup>4</sup> These measures were not devised for the purpose of imposing personal bondage upon the peasants who were as yet personally "free," according to the accepted criterion of freedom, viz. direct responsibility to the Government for the payment of taxes; but they had the effect of imposing "police bondage" or limitation of the mobility of the peasant.

It has already been noticed that the money salaries of estatized "serving people" were determined in inverse proportion to the

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, vol. ii. Book V. ch. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 304.

<sup>3</sup> These parasitic "neighbours and under-neighbours" (*podсосыednéhž*) are still a familiar feature of Russian peasant and country life. The courtyards of peasants are frequented, and those of noblemen are often thronged with such people. No doubt their labour, inefficient as frequently it is, is sometimes exploited, perhaps mercilessly.

<sup>4</sup> This limitation is known as "determined years." See *infra*.

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profitableness of the land in their possession. The possessors of the new prairie lands were more highly paid in money than others, because these lands, in the early stages of their occupancy at all events, were of little value; indeed expenditure was necessary to enable any part of their value to be realized. The estate owners of the new lands were thus endowed with an annual income in cash which afforded them the means of employing agricultural capital upon their estates.

According to the calculations of Professor Kluchevsky, the Treasury transferred from 1555-1600, through money grants and salaries to the estate owners of the twenty-six districts which lay between the first and second fortified lines, between the Middle Okà and the heights of Alatyr-Orel, and beyond the second line, an amount equivalent to 64,000,000 roubles of modern money, or nearly £7,000,000.<sup>1</sup>

The estate possessors by means of this, for that time really large capital, were able to promote an extensive migration of untaxed peasants and to organize agricultural colonies of them on the new and previously uncultivated lands. The peasant colonist arrived on the prairie lands without means to establish himself. It was thus necessary either that he should hire his labour to the estate owner for wages, or that he should agree to pay rent for the land and interest upon the capital advanced to him by the landowner for the purpose of enabling him to establish himself. The redemption of waste land and the bringing of it into cultivation is a toilsome process, and the yield from land cultivated for the first time is usually small in proportion to the previous labour when compared with the yield of old land in proportion to the labour actually expended upon it within the year. Thus the estate owners, who were, moreover, without the means of effective supervision of large numbers of labourers, found it more economical to rent the land for a fixed payment, and to lend the necessary amount of agricultural capital for a fixed rate of interest, than to engage in agricultural exploitation on their own account, by the employment of hired labourers, or even by the use of *kholopi*. In other words, to rent the land was to exploit both land and labourer more effectively than would have been possible by mere employment. Thus from the beginning the peasant colonist was in debt to the landowner.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 306.

Although he enjoyed nominally the right of going away, a right which he had already exercised in respect to his former place of residence, the fact of his indebtedness presented a judicial obstacle to his leaving until his debt was paid, and the isolated position of the prairie settlements left him from the outset at the mercy of his landlord-creditor. Thus in the new prairie soils there were conditions which made gradually for the debt-servitude of the peasant, and ultimately for his servitude in a juridical as well as in an economical sense.

In the central regions events were making, although in another way, in the same direction. The whole of the land of these regions was in the sixteenth century held under three forms of tenure. (1) There were the lands belonging directly to the sovereign—palace lands, the nature of which has already been described, and Black Lands, or lands which were not in the private possession of anyone. The profits from both of these kinds of lands were usually derived in produce, and in the end of the seventeenth century the two kinds came to be indistinguishable, their administration being then conducted in one department. (2) Church lands, including lands belonging to monasteries and other ecclesiastical establishments. Since these lands had for the most part been given to the Church by bequest, they were usually *votchinal* lands. (3) The lands of "serving people."

At this period (the sixteenth century) there does not seem to have been within the limits of the Moscow State any other kinds of ownership. All peasants lived upon the lands of others. There was no peasant proprietary. Even when the peasants cultivated the Black or State lands, which were not in private ownership, they spoke of the land as belonging to the Grand Prince, but as in their possession. Yet they appear to have had a sense of temporary ownership of land actually in cultivation by them: "That land is God's and the sovereign's, but ploughed places and rye are ours."<sup>1</sup>

The peasant of the sixteenth century, alike juridically and economically, was "a landless grain cultivator working upon the land of some one else."<sup>2</sup> Yet he was free. His relation to the landowner was a contractual relation, not a relation of servitude. His freedom consisted in his right to go away from his rented land, and in his right to refuse to work for the landowner for whom he

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 369.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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had been working.<sup>1</sup> But there were certain limitations upon these rights from very early times, and there were certain limitations upon the powers of the landowners in respect to the peasants. For example, a peasant could not leave his rented farm without having settled his account with the landlord after finishing the harvest; and a landlord could not drive a peasant away from his farm before the harvest was reaped. These natural limitations upon freedom of movement were recognized by law. The code of Ivan III prescribed a certain term during which peasants might leave their farms, the period being after the harvest and before the beginning of winter—from the week before St. George's Day (26th November O.S.) till the end of the week after that day. In Pskov, the corresponding day was "Phillip's last day of eating flesh" (*Zagovënie*—14th November). The extant agreement papers or leases show that the peasant and the landowner contract together as persons equally possessing juridical rights. The area of a peasant's farm varied with local conditions. In the Novgorod region the unit of farm measurement was the *obja*, the extent of which varied from "10 to 15 dessiatines, according to the quality of the soil."<sup>2</sup> In the central districts the unit was the *vit*, which also varied from 18 to 24 dessiatines. A new-coming tenant was often required to find guarantors for the discharge of his obligations. The tenant bound himself to live in "peasantry" in such and such a village, to plough the land, to build a courtyard, to erect farm buildings, to keep them in repair, and not to run away. In some agreements relating especially to new lands, the peasant tenant bound himself to fence the fields, to clean up the meadows, to live quietly and peacefully, not to keep liquor illicitly, and not to steal anything.<sup>3</sup> Penalties for breach of these undertakings were provided for in the contract. In some of the contracts the rent payment was to be made in money, in others in grain. Both of these were fixed in amount, and the payment was known as *obròk*. In other cases the peasant bound himself, in return for the temporary possession of land, to perform certain services for the landowner. This form of payment was

<sup>1</sup> The difference between this practice and that customary in England in the thirteenth century lay in the tendency of the latter towards the absence of definite contracts between the landowner and the peasant. Cf. Vinogradoff, Paul, *Villainage in England*, Oxford, 1892, p. 73; see also "The Dialogue of the Exchequer," in *Select Charters*, &c. Oxford, 1894, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 371.



known as *izdyelie* or *boyarskoye dyelo*, boyar's affairs. Frequently both *obròk* and *izdyelie* appear in the same case. These two forms of payment have a different origin. *Obròk* was a fixed payment, either in money or in kind, in lieu of service obligations or of a part of them. *Izdyelie* arose from the payment of interest for a loan received from the landowner. Instead of paying the interest in money, the peasant undertook in his contract to pay it in the form of work—usually he undertook to cultivate a certain area of the landowner's land. Since a loan by the landowner to the peasant was a very usual incident, the *izdyelie*, from being a special kind of payment of the interest upon this loan, came to be rendered on account of the obligations of the tenant considered as a whole.

Such being the relations of the free peasant renter to the landowner, his relations to the State remain to be considered. Strictly speaking, the peasantry did not form a class in the political sense of the word. The peasant's peculiarity was his occupation. He became a "peasant" when he "started his *sokha*"<sup>1</sup> upon taxed land, and he ceased to be a peasant when he became an artizan. At that time therefore (in the sixteenth century) the obligation tended to rest, not upon the person, but upon the land. Later the obligation came to rest upon the person, and a peasant came to be responsible for the tax levied upon him whether he was a cultivator or not, in the same way as a nobleman was obliged to serve whether he possessed land or not. But in the sixteenth century, this was otherwise, the land tax had to be paid by the responsible person, whether he was a peasant or a landed proprietor. The peasant who cultivated the land and paid the land tax was by this means brought into relations with the State. The State knew the peasant as a *tyaglo* man—as a taxpayer. So strictly was the tax levied upon the cultivation of land, that land in fallow was not taxed. Land was taxed only in respect to its production. The organization for the levying and payment of taxes was effected by the formation of administrative districts called *stani*, or stations, and *volosti*. These *stani* and *volosti* were, in the first instance, the village communities or *mir*s, which were bound together by *mutual guarantee* for the payment of taxes. The districts were governed by functionaries of the central government; but alongside these there were executive officers elected and paid by the administrative assemblies

<sup>1</sup> Russian plough.

of the *mir*. These executive officers of the *mir* sat with the *okladchēkē*, mentioned above, and assessed the taxes upon the members of the *mir*. So also the executive officers of the *mir* superintended the allotment by "sentence" or decision of the *mir* of the waste sections of the *volost* to new settlers, collected the rents of the rented lands, represented the *volost* in the local court, and advocated the rights of the *volost*, at need, before the central government. The process of taxation seems to have been as follows: The area of "living" or ploughed land was ascertained, and this land was taxed at so much per unit (*obja* or *vit*). The total amount was then divided by the *tyaglo* or tax, court, according to the area of land cultivated by each peasant courtyard. Once fixed, this amount was not varied until a new registration of the taxable land had been made. If, therefore, any peasant who cultivated land upon which the tax fell left the community without paying the tax due upon the land, the other members of the community suffered, because the tax-payment of the defaulting peasant had to be met out of the tax funds of the *mir*. This system had come down from the appanage ages, and it continued until the sixteenth century. At that period the communal character of the *volost* gradually fell into decay. This process of decay was hastened by the withdrawal from the obligations of the *volost* of peasants who cultivated votchinal or estate lands, the owners of which had acquired special privileges as noticed above. Exemptions of this kind tended to break up the solidarity of the *volost*, through the carving out of the *volost* of special judicial and administrative areas. Thus the larger homogeneous community of the *volost* began to be split up into smaller communities, each being a *selo* or large village. This process did not go on everywhere; but where it did go on, it reduced the importance and influence of the community by reducing its size, and it conferred on the smaller area the same character of financial union which the *volost* had previously possessed.

It is now necessary to discuss the character of the "community" as it emerged in the sixteenth century from these processes, especially in respect to the ownership of land.<sup>1</sup>

While the rural community in early times was called the *mir*,

<sup>1</sup> Nearly every point dealt with in the sketch given in the text has been the subject of extended controversy. An outline of the discussions is given in Book II, chap. x, "The Slavophiles and the Discussions about the *Mir*."

the word which came into use at the period of the Emancipation to designate the community was *obtschëna*.<sup>1</sup> The essential feature of the *obtschëna* is the common possession of land. This common possession of land is further characterized by (1) the obligatory equality of the allotments; (2) the strictly class character of the community; and (3) the *mutual guarantee* for the payment of taxes.<sup>2</sup>

After Emancipation in 1861, the land was divided according to the working and the taxable capacity of the peasant groups. Together with the formal allotment in accordance with the number of working members of the groups—the number being revised periodically, it was hence the number of “revision souls”—there existed a real allotment according to the then working strength of each courtyard. This allotment was made compulsorily. Thus each peasant group had its class duties, which must be rendered by the group until at the next division, in accordance with the changes in the numbers due to births and deaths, these duties were readjusted. The land was thus not the source of the obligations, but was an aid for their performance.<sup>3</sup> But in the rural communities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there is no compulsory equality of allotment on revision, nor is there present the class character of the land obligations of the peasant. In these centuries the peasant took much or little land as he might desire, or as his agricultural capital or his credit enabled him to take. He agreed with the possessor of the land without reference to the community as a whole. The extent of the allotment determined his taxable capacity. He was taxed by the area and quality of the land. The land was thus the bearer of the peasant's burdens and the source of his obligations. The peasant himself was not bound to his allotment, nor was he bound to the community. He might leave his land and go away.<sup>4</sup>

Still, in the sixteenth century there were instances of communal ploughing. On the lands of the Troitsë Sergiev Monastery in the Dmëtrovsky District, *e.g.*, there were some cases of this kind; sixteen peasant courtyards, for instance, ploughed together 22 dessiatines. The distribution of the labour was determined by a functionary elected by the village or by the *volost*. Here also

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, Book II, ch. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 379.

<sup>4</sup> One village changed its peasant owners six times in thirty-five years in the fifteenth century. Kluchevsky, ii. p. 379.

was the *mutual guarantee* for the punctual payment of taxes ; but the *mutual guarantee* was not peculiar to the village community—it was the general principle upon which all taxes were collected. The periodical redistribution arose out of the *mutual guarantee*, for when courtyards were abandoned, the lands attached to them, or the courtyards themselves, if there were no arable lands, were either given to one courtyard or divided among several, the tax upon them being divided also.

Thus, although in the sixteenth century there was not communal possession of land with compulsory redistribution, the management of peasant lands was confided to groups, because by this means the collection of taxes was facilitated, and this joint management, together with the *mutual guarantee*, "bred understandings and customs which later, with other conditions, brought about communal possession of land."<sup>1</sup> These conditions were compulsory labour and compulsory distribution of the working strength of the peasant groups. Such conditions make their appearance in the sixteenth century. Professor Kluchevsky conjectures that they became evident, to begin with, not among the peasants, but among the *kholopi*. We find that, in the sixteenth century, the general mass of the peasantry were free renters ; but there were besides *kholopi*, or cultivators, to whom were allotted lands which they might divide among themselves, or which they might cultivate in common and divide the yield.<sup>2</sup>

But free and mobile as the peasant renter was, he was rarely endowed with sufficient agricultural capital to enable him to carry on the business of a farmer. This was true even in the central regions, and it was still more manifest in the outskirts, where the peasants in general were people who had not had an opportunity to accumulate means. They had been "living on the back."<sup>3</sup> Such people were obliged to obtain on loan from the owner of the land which they rented, the means to establish themselves. This loan was customarily made in grain ; but it was also sometimes made in cattle or in money. It assumed two forms, which were distinguished in the agreements. *First*, there was the "support loan," which was given for the building of dwellings and farm buildings, and for fencing. This loan was non-returnable unless the peasant failed to start cultivation according to the agreement.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 45.

*Second*, there was the loan of cattle or of money for use by way of agricultural capital. This loan was returnable should the peasant leave his rented holding.

Loans of money were given in addition to these initial loans. These also were of two forms. *First*, the loan which was repayable by means of work for the landowner upon the land of the latter, known as "silver *izdyelni*" or "work money." *Second*, the loan which was repayable with interest.<sup>1</sup>

When a peasant undertook the cultivation of new land—hitherto uncultivated prairie, or land which required to be cleared of timber in order that it might be cultivated—he was sometimes exempted from taxation for one or two years, or he was exempted from the payment of rent for the same period.

In the case of the interest-bearing loan, the interest was sometimes paid in work and sometimes it appeared in an addition to the rent, the principal remaining as a debt and passing from father to son. The extent of the allotments varied very much even upon the same estate. The registers of the Troitsky Monastery show, for example, that one peasant cultivated 47 dessiatines, another 24, another 3.<sup>2</sup> The voluminous details of even the larger estates have not yet been fully worked out; but so far it appears that at the end of the sixteenth century there was a tendency towards the diminution of allotments. The average peasant allotment in the middle of the sixteenth century appears to have been between 5 and 10 dessiatines; and at the end of the century between 3 and 4½.

Owing to the great difficulty in ascertaining exactly what number of persons occupied the peasant courtyards, and owing to the great diversity of the areas of the allotments, the subject is very obscure; but Professor Kluchevsky thinks that there is reason to believe that the peasant of the end of the sixteenth century had a rather smaller allotment than his descendants obtained under the Act of 1861.<sup>3</sup>

The obligations which rested upon the sixteenth-century peasant were very numerous and very complicated. In the *first* place, he had to pay State taxes, in money, in kind, and in labour. In the *second* place, he had to pay to the *pomyetschik*, or estate owner, *obròk* in money and in grain. Besides these there were various subsidiary

<sup>1</sup> On the lands of the Kiril Belozersky Monastery, *e.g.*, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, seventy per cent. of the peasants were indebted to the monastery for seed advanced upon loan. (*Cf.* Kluchevsky, ii. p. 383.)

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 384.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

payments—in eggs, poultry, cheese, &c., and in labour. The great Monastery of Solovietsky, in the White Sea, possessed large estates, and on these estates the peasants “ploughed and seeded the arable lands of the monastery, repaired the monastery buildings, erected new buildings, drove and split the wood for the court of the monastery, supplied carts and horses for carrying the monastery grain to Vologda, and for carrying salt from thence to the monastery.”<sup>1</sup> No pecuniary estimate of these numerous burdens is possible; but it is highly probable, if the monastery exacted from every peasant who rented land upon its estates, the full toll of his obligations, that the peasants had very little time left for the cultivation of the land to enable them to support themselves while they were rendering the obligations.

There are available, however, some indications by means of which it is possible to acquire a conception of the gravity of the burdens of the sixteenth-century peasant as compared with that of the burdens of the peasant of the nineteenth century. In 1580, in some of the large villages in Nijigorodsky district the peasants paid in full settlement of *obròk*, exclusive of taxes, 9 quarters of rye and oats *per vît*. Reckoning this quantity at the average prices of 1880–1890, the value of 2½ roubles per dessiatine is obtained. The average Redemption Tax-payment (after 1861) in the same district was 1 r. 88 kop. That is to say, that the *obròk* amounted to about 25 per cent. more than the Redemption Tax-payment.<sup>2</sup>

It appears also from the accounts of an estate belonging to Troitsky Sergej Monastery that where the *obròk* was wholly paid in cultivation, the cost of that cultivation was from one-half to one-third of the cost in 1880–1890. On the other hand, in an estate of the palace lands of Tver, belonging to the Grand Prince Simeon Bekbulatovich in 1580, the money and grain payments in *obròk* amounted to more than three times as much as the Redemption Tax of 1861. Cases are even met with in which the sixteenth-century peasants paid in *obròk* from four to twelve times the amount of the Redemption Tax.<sup>3</sup>

According to Margaret, a Frenchman, who served Boris Godunov and the pseudo-Demetrius I, and who wrote an account of Russia in the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the taxes (in which he includes the *obròk*) amounted to 11–22

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 389.

rubles per dessiatine. At the Emancipation in 1861, the total amount of tax and rent charge upon the peasant lands did not amount on the average to more than the minimum amount mentioned by Margaret.<sup>1</sup>

In the sixteenth century the peasant sometimes paid instead of a specific sum as *obròk*, a share amounting to one third, fourth, or fifth of the produce of his allotment. Out of the balance he had to pay the taxes and to meet his own needs. Although these indications are not conclusive on any question of comparison, they seem, on the whole, to show that the free renting peasant of the sixteenth century was not in a position to accumulate any reserves, and that he was for the most part working for the landowner and getting a bare living for himself. Indeed it is fairly certain that in many districts his *obròk* and taxes absorbed all or more than all the produce yielded by his allotment. His living must, therefore, have been supplemented, as it was in many cases, by fishing, hunting, bee-keeping, cattle-raising, and by industry.<sup>2</sup>

The peasant of the sixteenth century was thus free, but heavily burdened alike with obligations and with debt. Since his obligations were measured according to the amount of his land, he was inclined to keep this amount low. The allotments were therefore tending to diminish. He was creating no reserves, and he was eking out his subsistence by other than strictly agricultural employment.

We now pass to the next phase of peasant history—the gradual enslavement of the debt-burdened cultivator.

The origin of Russian serfdom is customarily described as follows:

The difficulties arising from the migration of peasants to the estates on the outskirts, which have already been noticed, became intensified as the estate system developed, and as some of the owners of *votchini* as well as some of the *pomyetschĕkkĕ* became wealthier than others. The wealthier owners and possessors enticed peasants away from the poorer estates, offering to pay their debts for them. The poorer proprietors were sometimes ruined because they were left without either renters or working hands. They were thus

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, an inventory of fourteen peasant courtyards in a large village of the Troitsĕ Sergiev Monastery in 1630, where, although the peasants had a very small amount of land (only 1.7 dessiatines per soul), they had bees, horses, cows, sheep, pigs, &c., in relatively considerable numbers, *Ibid.*, ii, p. 391.

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unable to perform the State service, and they ran the risk of forfeiting their estates. The withdrawal from State service of impoverished "serving people," or the inability of these to perform their duties adequately, inconvenienced the State as well as the "serving people." This is alleged to have been the reason for the celebrated legislation of Boris Godonov, who issued, in the time of the Tsar Feodor, an ukase abolishing the right of peasants to go away from land once taken by them. This limitation of the mobility of the peasant was regarded as the first step in his enslavement. The remaining steps followed inevitably and automatically. There are thus distinguishable in the slavery or serfdom which ensued two separate elements—bondage of the peasant to the land, which was effected by the ukase of 1597, and the right of the proprietor of the land over the personality of the land-bonded peasant which ensued afterwards.

But this interpretation of the ukase of 1597 is open to criticism. The ukase, in fact, does not declare that there should be any general bonding of the peasant to the land; it declares only that if a peasant ran away from the land which he had taken within five years prior to the 1st September of 1597 (then the first day of the new year), and the landowner began a suit about him, the court must authorize the compulsory return of the peasant to the land formerly occupied by him "with his family and property, wherever he lived." But if the peasant had run away prior to the 1st September 1592, and if prior to that date the landowner had not begun a suit about him, no action would lie. So far as appears, these provisions apply only to those peasants who had left the land occupied by them before the expiry of their term under their contract and without notice. Moreover, the ukase is retrospective, and is not intended apparently to provide for the future. Professor Kluchevsky thinks that the ukase was issued with the design of reducing the number of actions in connection with the flights of peasants, then pending in the law courts. It did not import any new principle into the law; it only regulated the court proceedings. On the other hand, while admitting the force of a similar and earlier statement to the same effect as the ukase of 1597, Byelyaev supposed that there must have been in 1592 or earlier (perhaps in 1590) another hitherto undiscovered ukase which limited the right of movement of the peasant. But this suggestion is set aside by Professor Kluchevsky, who does



not find any ground for believing in the existence of such an ukase.

The renting contracts of the peasants with the landowners in the seventeenth century are expressed in the same terms as those of the sixteenth century. There is no provision in them relating to any restriction of movement other than had been customary before, viz. that prior to his going away, the peasant must arrive at a settlement with the landowner in regard to all of his obligations under the contract. Thus the power of movement is evidently assumed. His right to go away was qualified only by the condition that he should not go away until he had paid to the landowner what was due to him. There are even some contracts which involve conditions relatively favourable to the peasant. As, for instance, a peasant, being in debt, ran away from monastic lands occupied by him. He was found and brought back in 1599. Under the old Russian common law he might be turned into a full *kholop* or cultivator in personal bondage; but the monastery not only did not treat him in this way, it gave him a new contract or lease of his land, and gave him a new loan.<sup>1</sup> In another case a contract of 1630 provides a money compensation in case of leaving without notice, and that compensation alone—that is to say, the peasant was obliged simply to pay a compensation for breach of contract. If he paid the compensation he could go where he pleased. These cases occurred after the issue of the ukase of 1597.

Thus there could not be any general binding to the land at this time. But there were, nevertheless, instances of bound peasants. The village communities of the district of Vajsky were entitled by special authorization of the Tsar to require the return of peasants who had run away from the community.<sup>2</sup>

The Strogonovs, the rich salt boilers, a celebrated Russian mercantile family, were granted in 1560 vast waste lands on the rivers Kama and Chusovaya. They were given the right to colonize these lands with people wherever they could find them, including peasants whose names were entered as taxpayers in the Land Tax Books; but they were obliged to give back peasants who had run away without notice.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 397.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398. Inconveniences of a similar character arose from similar causes in England in the thirteenth century. Cf. Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*. Oxford, 1892, p. 357.

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The ukase of 1597 thus does not appear to have effected any radical change either in the law or in the practice. There were flights, returns, and legitimate removals both before and after the ukase. The origin of land bondage and of bondage right must therefore be sought elsewhere.

From about the end of the fourteenth to the end of the sixteenth century there was going on continuously a migration of peasants from the central Okà-Volga region, at first towards the north beyond the Upper Volga, and afterwards, about the middle of the sixteenth century, towards the Don and the Middle and Lower Volga. During these migrations two different kinds of peasants make their appearance—the “sitting” or settled “old livers,” and the “shifting” or “wandering comers and goers.” The “old livers” were peasants whose fathers had lived upon the allotments occupied by them or who had occupied their allotments for five years or more. Although the “old livers” had no juridical status to distinguish them from the others, yet the operation of the *mutual guarantee* caused the responsibility for the due payment of the taxes to rest upon them.<sup>1</sup> The existence of a class of wandering “comers and goers” imposed disproportionate burdens upon the “old livers,” and resulted in the accumulation of arrears. It was thus very important for the community to prevent, if possible, the “old livers” from leaving the community, and thus “going out” was rendered difficult. When an old liver did “go out,” he was obliged to pay a penalty according to his original contract, the amount of which was determined by the number of years he had spent upon his allotment. In order to secure its taxes, the Government was beginning in the sixteenth century to assist in binding the people to estates in the “Black” and palace lands. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the binding of “old livers,” not merely to estates, but to the place in which they lived, became general, through the adoption of measures which had previously been private and temporary. Some of the reasons which led to this binding of the peasants on the State lands appear in an interesting document of the year 1610, containing instructions to the manager of one of

<sup>1</sup> Communal liability also existed in England in the thirteenth century. Cf. Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England* (Oxford, 1892), p. 356. Communal liability was imposed upon the senates (*ordines*) of the towns by Constantine the Great. Cf. Codex Justinianus, xi. 59, 1; cited by Vinogradoff, P., in *Cambridge Mediæval History*, vol. i. p. 556.

the "Black" *volosts*. The manager was ordered not to allow peasants to leave the State *volosts* "until the ukase" (that is, until there should be legislation on the subject), because the rich peasants were diminishing the amount of their arable (that is, also taxable) land. Instead of a whole tax unit or *vîit*, they were returning for taxation only one-half or even one-third of that unit, in order that they might have less taxes to pay. Simultaneously with this contraction of taxable arable land, these peasants (who are described as brawlers or noisy fellows) were bringing waste lands into cultivation and were paying no taxes upon the portions thus redeemed. In the same way, while contracting their taxable meadows, they were cutting hay upon the untaxed waste. In consequence of the tax collection falling off through these practices, the manager was instructed to investigate the subject and to order the peasants to plough all the arable land and not to alienate it, as well as to see that they took taxable lands in proportion to their working strength, and thus to pay taxes in proportion to that strength. The carrying out of these regulations, though it interfered with the mobility of the peasant, was nevertheless merely a police measure; it had nothing in common with *bondage right*. The limitation of the right of movement, however, transformed the State peasants into a "closed class," mutually responsible in groups for the punctual payment of taxes and under the special regulations of the State.<sup>1</sup>

The *mutual guarantee* thus prepared the way for, and gradually brought into being, the *land* bondage of the State peasants. In a similar way peasants upon private estates were being gradually passed into bondage to the owners of these estates through the loans which were made by the owners to the peasants.

In the middle of the fifteenth century, apart from the serious question of debt through these loans, the peasant was in a relatively favourable position. At that time, owing to the demand for peasant cultivators, he was free to transfer himself from one estate to another. He could even make a settlement of his debts to the landowner two years after leaving his land. "Old livers" remained for generations in the same place, and even those who left the estates to which their fathers had belonged sometimes returned to these voluntarily. But at the end of the fifteenth century there is already a great change. We find the clergy criticizing the landowners for

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. pp. 401-2.

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laying upon the shoulders of the peasants burdens heavier than they could bear, and for charging high *obròk*. On the other hand, laymen attack the monastic establishments for "pillaging the peasants by greedy usury and inhumanly driving the pillaged people from their villages."<sup>1</sup>

Herbertstein, who travelled to Moscow twice in the time of the father of Ivan the Terrible, says that the peasants were working for their masters six days in the week, that their condition is very pitiful, and that their property is exposed to the caprices of the "serving people."<sup>2</sup>

The monk Gerasim Boldinsky, who founded a monastery at Vyasma, had collected some peasants from neighbouring *volosts*, who established themselves in a village in the neighbourhood of the monastery. An official who was travelling through the districts discovered these peasants, and demanded angrily why they were not "drawing *tyagio*"—that is, not taking taxable land—along with the peasants on secular estates. Notwithstanding the protests of the monk, the official ordered the peasants to be beaten mercilessly.<sup>3</sup>

The increase in the taxes, due partly to the continuous wars and partly to the enormous increase in the number of officials, together with the laxity of the State authority in the regulation of relations of peasants to the landowners, were the principal reasons for the deterioration of the peasantry at this epoch, and for their being, so far as the State was concerned, more and more at the mercy of the landowners.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the country seems to have been covered with villages well populated. But towards the end of the sixteenth century the population seems to have seriously diminished. Lands formerly cultivated had gone out of cultivation, hamlets became scarcer, and deserted courtyards made their appearance.<sup>4</sup> With this contraction of the peasant population, the land lapsed into forest or uncultivated prairie, or it passed into the

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> In a suburb of Murom the number of taxable courtyards seems to have diminished from 587 to 111 in eight years, 1566-1574. Fletcher, the English ambassador, says that at this time between Vologda and Moscow he saw villages nearly a mile long, with houses spread out on both sides of the road, without a single inhabitant. *Ibid.*, ii. p. 404, and Fletcher, "Of the Russe Common Wealth" (London, 1591), in *Russia at the Close of the Sixteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society, London, 1856), p. 61.

hands of the landowner, who undertook to cultivate it, employing for this purpose *kholopi*.

Simultaneously with these occurrences in the central region, the loan-supported households on the outskirt estates were increasing; and the migrants were leaving the "old livers" in their former villages to support the whole burden of the *mutual guarantee* for constantly augmenting taxes.<sup>1</sup> The "old livers" tended thus to become deeply insolvent debtors, while the new households on the outskirts were also deeply indebted to the landowners. The *mutual guarantee* applied to taxes primarily; but it was also frequently used for the purpose of obtaining loans, not always from the landowner, but sometimes from other persons—that is to say, it was employed as a form of co-operative credit.

It has already been observed that, especially in the outskirts, the landowner was endowed by the State with magisterial powers. He held a court and exercised police supervision. He had the right to exempt peasants from the State *tyaglo*, or tax. He thus inevitably became involved, as responsible authority, in the relations of the peasant to the State, the *mutual guarantee* notwithstanding. In the sixteenth century the landowner had already begun sometimes to pay the taxes for his peasants. This payment by the landowner contributed to the permanent settlement of the peasant by creating an additional civic obligation on the part of the latter. To this end also the natural disposition of the peasant generally inclined. He preferred, on the whole, to live on the estate on which he was born, excepting when some furore for migration seized him, and the new prairie soil, unencumbered by forest and easily cultivated, lured him from the heavy clay and the hard toil of clearing. Thus the landowners in the central region found it to be to their interests to give new privileges to their peasants, and even to pay their taxes for them by way of inducing them to remain upon their land. At the same time, increased obstacles were thrown in the way of their leaving. The amount payable by an "old liver" who wished to transfer himself to another estate came to be probably beyond the usual means of his class. In the end of the sixteenth century the amount payable by an "old liver" who had rented land for ten years was in general altogether about 200 rubles in modern money.<sup>2</sup> Less than this would rarely be paid;<sup>3</sup> larger amounts were often payable. For

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 407.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

instance, in the year 1585, two peasants who had resided on State lands settled in a village belonging to a monastery. They undertook to erect buildings for their household needs, and to plough and fertilize deserted arable land. In order to enable them to do this they received a loan of 5 rubles. Three years were allowed for the performance of the contract. If they failed to perform the contract and desired to leave, they were bound to pay for "the use of the place," to repay the loan, and to pay in addition 10 rubles for breach of contract. The total of these payments would be about 700 rubles in modern money.<sup>1</sup> They were free to go without paying, but if they went the monastery would institute proceedings against them. The court would decide in favour of the monastery, and would hand them over to the monastery "until redemption." They would thus, in the normal case, be obliged to work for the monastery as "temporary *kholopi*" until the debt was paid. Thus the peasant had a choice between going on with his cultivation, fulfilling his obligations as best he might, and leaving what he could not pay to accumulate indefinitely, or to leave, with the risk of being returned to the land as a "temporary *kholop*." This situation was not the outcome of any police measure; it was the outcome of economical indebtedness coupled with the right to recover as general civil right.

The right of going away at the end of the sixteenth century was thus dying out of itself, although there was no formal legal abolition of it.<sup>2</sup>

"Old livers" practically ceased to exercise the right; it was in practice exercised only by people whose debt to the landowner was small, consisting merely of *pojēloye*, or payment for the use of the courtyard during the period of occupancy. This system of accumulation of a deferred portion of the rent charge for the courtyard, payable only upon leaving the courtyard, inevitably contributed to fixity of tenure.

The tenor of all the relevant documents of this period is to the effect that the crux of the land question in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the migratory habit of the people. The various devices of the law and the tendencies of practice were all towards fixity of tenure—a condition which limited mobility and to that extent compromised freedom, but which also imposed obligations

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 408.

upon the landowner. For if the peasants were unable for any reason to make a living upon the land allotted to them, the landowner was obliged in his own interest, in order to keep up the supply of working hands for his own arable land, to support the peasants himself. When crops failed, as they did in 1601, 1602, and 1603,<sup>1</sup> the peasants who were not supported by the owners of their allotments had to fly, hoping to find means of livelihood elsewhere.

During the sixteenth century there were four forms of transference of peasants: "going away" after settlement with the landowner of the debt due to him; "taking away" by another landowner; substituting another peasant for the peasant who desired to leave, and flight. These different forms were adopted at different times in varying proportions according to the circumstances of the time. On the palace lands of the Grand Prince Simeon Bekbulatovich in 1580, there were three hundred and six cases of peasant transferences. There was not among these any case of substitution (*zdacha*); cases of "going away" number only 17 per cent.; cases of "flight" were 21 per cent. Of cases of taking away there were 61 per cent. This was indeed the prevailing form at that time. The explanation is not far to seek. Peasant hands were relatively scarce; substitution was rarely to be arranged; flight was difficult and sometimes ruinous; "going away" after full settlement was so difficult as to be rather unusual excepting in the case of peasants who had incurred small liabilities (for "old livers" it was practically impossible); "taking away" was the most convenient method. This "taking away" meant one or other of two things—either the "taking" landowner took by force, or he effected a settlement for the peasant with the landowner-creditor. The peasant was not thereby freed from his burden of debt; this was only transferred along with himself and his family to another scene of labour.

Monasteries, great landowners, small *votchinnēkē*, and *pomyet-schēkē*, and even the State in respect to "Black" and palace lands, participated in these "takings away." The struggle in which the peasant was the bone became very acute towards the end of the sixteenth century. When each St. George's Day came round on the 26th November, and the harvest was all in on the peasant lands, and when peasant contracts were customarily made for the ensuing

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. 412.

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year, the clerk of a great landowner, or some upper servant of a monastery, would ride into the villages and endeavour to entice the peasants to migrate, offering to pay their loans for them. The peasant communities and the smaller landowners were thus forced either to make concessions to the peasants for the purpose of keeping them or to let them go; but letting them go meant reduced taxpaying power and increasing weight of the burden of taxes upon those who remained. Some endeavoured to terrorize the leaving peasants by pillaging their property or by imposing additional burdens upon them; others forged iron fetters upon the peasants who were in process of being "taken away," and met the "enticers" by force of arms. Numerous complaints bear witness to these St. George's Day encounters.<sup>1</sup>

In this struggle for peasant hands, the great landowners, possessing at once numerous forces and local magisterial power, had a great advantage over the peasant communities and the smaller landowners. But the struggle compromised the interests of the State at all events in many districts, brought the collection of taxes into confusion, and did not result in any increase in the freedom of the peasant. Indeed, the hopeless condition of insolvency into which peasants in numbers were reduced, induced some of them to seek to escape from their burdens by sacrificing their freedom, and by agreeing with their landowners to transform themselves into *kholopi*, or bonded cultivators. Cancelling their debts and removing themselves from the roll of free taxable peasants, they became subject to personal bondage.

That this had become at least not uncommon in the middle of the sixteenth century appears from a comparison of the code of 1497 with that of 1550. In the former the conditions under which a peasant may go away after settlement of his debts are set forth; in the latter the following clause is added, "and any peasant from the ploughing" (that is, any peasant cultivator) "who sells himself to some one into full *kholopstvo*" (that is, into the condition of personal bondage), "may go permanently, and no payment of expense is due from him."<sup>2</sup>

Thus a peasant who had sold himself into *kholopstvo*, freed himself from his obligations by transferring them to the shoulders of his owner, but enslaved himself. Flight even was a kind of ruin, for

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.



in fleeing from his cultivated allotment, the peasant left behind him what addition, if any, he had made to the agricultural productivity of his land, as well as some portion, no doubt in many cases, of even his movable property.

Boris Godunov, who had already under the Tsar Feodor in 1597 meddled with the agrarian question, became himself Tsar in 1598, and on 26th November 1601, he issued an ukase dealing with the subject. This ukase was directed against the wholesale "taking away" of peasants by the large landowners. It permitted only small landowners to "take away," and limited the taking away to two peasants at a time. The ukase explains that the reason why the "going away" of peasants had been previously permitted was that the peasants should be allowed to escape from those landowners who were overburdening them with payments. Under this ukase peasants are still permitted to "go away" under conditions.

A supplementary ukase of 24th November 1602 repeated the limitation upon "taking away" imposed by the ukase of the previous year, giving as a reason the desire on the part of the Tsar to put an end to the fights and the pillage which had accompanied the practice. The effect of these two legislative acts was that from thenceforward the consent of the landowner as well as of the peasant, was a condition precedent to "taking away." The ukase also forbade the removal of peasants from the rolls as taxable people. They could not be transferred into the untaxed classes.

In 1606, by a ukase of 1st February of that year, issued by the pseudo-Demetrius, the transference of peasants into *kholopstvo* was expressly forbidden. During the famine years of 1601, 1602, and 1603, many peasants had become *kholopi*, having run away from non-supporting landowners and thrown themselves upon the tender mercies of others to whom they bound themselves as *kholopi* in return for support. The ukase of 1606 provided that those peasants who had become *kholopi* in the famine years should return to their former lands, and should resume their former status.<sup>1</sup> The effect of this act was to repeal the provision of the code of 1550 which permitted peasants to sell themselves into *kholopstvo*, and thus to get rid of their liabilities.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii, p. 412. It appears, however, that these peasants did not return, and that they remained where they were in the condition of *kholopi*. (*Ibid.*) The absence of provision for compensation to their proprietors in respect to the purchase money paid to the *kholopi* probably accounts for this.

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The general effect of these acts was to make more clear and binding the civil obligation of the peasant under his original contract with the owner of the land cultivated by him, and to prevent external interference with him in the performance of this obligation. They did not touch the right of the peasant to go away, provided he met his obligations. They also prevented a peasant from relieving himself of his obligations by enslaving himself formally as a *kholop*. The motive of the acts was probably not so much to improve the position of the peasant, although, perhaps, for a time they had this effect, as to prevent the abuses of "taking away" and transference into non-taxable classes, because these practices had brought the tax-system into confusion, and the State interests had suffered heavily. Up till this time "to run away" was a ground of civil action; the "runaway peasant" had evaded his obligations and had committed a breach of contract. In "running away" simply he had exposed himself to action in the court of civil law, but he had committed no crime. This situation was altered by the ukase of 9th March 1607. By this ukase "running away" became a crime; the capture and bringing back of offenders came to be an affair of the State. The district administration was entrusted with the duty of finding and bringing back delinquents, and was required to perform it. In addition to compensation to the landowner on account of the breach of contract, the runaway peasant was liable to a fine, payable to the State, of 10 rubles for each courtyard (100 rubles in modern money), or for a single peasant. The "enticer" was also punished. In addition to a money penalty, he was liable to public whipping with the knout.

The law of 1st February 1605 had limited the period during which actions at law could be brought in relation to flights of peasants to five years from the date of flight; the ukase of 9th March 1607 extended this period to fifteen years. The essentially civil character of the peasant's obligation was thus preserved even in this ukase. The effect of it was to strengthen the bond of obligation which tied the peasant to the landowner, but it did not abrogate his right to "go away" under the conditions of his contract.

These latter ukases were issued during the anarchy which ensued after the death of the Tsar Feodor, and the extinction of the family of Kalita to which he belonged, and to which the Moscow State had been indebted for guidance during the period of its early growth as

dominant Russian principedom. During this period of anarchy (1598-1613) the whole structure of the State was shaken. External pressure had been greatly mitigated by constant watchfulness and determined defence, the boundaries of the State had been greatly enlarged, and progress had been made towards unification, leading to a national life at least to some extent homogeneous, when the collapse of the dynasty threw internal affairs into confusion. In this confusion all classes endeavoured to escape from the pressure of those State obligations which had been very burdensome, but the relatively adequate performance of which had enabled the Moscow State to assume and to play a dominant rôle.

During this transition period the landowners, resting upon the altered relation of the peasant in respect to his civil obligation under his contract, imported by the ukase rendering a breach by a peasant of his contract, unlike any other breach of contract, a criminal offence, began to regard the peasants upon their estates as *bondaged*, although there was as yet no legal justification for their doing so. This state of mind appears in wills of the second half of the seventeenth century. Landowners in their wills ordered not only their courtyard people, or *dvorovie lyudē*, to work for their widows, but also the peasants upon their estates.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of the anarchy—that is, about 1610—the idea arose that, in order to put an end to the difficulties about peasants going, or being taken away, and peasants' flights, the only effective measure was the binding of the peasant, not temporarily to the land by contract, but permanently to the landowner. Three documents express this idea—the Convention of Saltikov and Sigismund of 4th April 1610; the convention of the Moscow *boyars* of 17th August of the same year, and the *Zemsky* "sentence" of the militia of Lyapunov of 30th June 1611. So also the same idea finds expression in deeds of endowment and gift of monasteries at the same period. Yet there was no decisive formulation of law on the subject, and practice varied. In deeds of sale of lands, for example, the decision as to whether the peasants should go or should not go with the land was left to the courts.

Thus at the end of the *third* period of Russian history—that is to say, up till the beginning of the seventeenth century—the land bondage of the peasants had been somewhat firmly established through

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, ii. p. 415.

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the falling off in practice of the exercise of the right of "exit"; but the personal bondage of them remained only an idea, which was sought to be carried out in individual cases, but which had as yet no general application. It was left to the *fourth* period to develop this idea fully.

It is now necessary to summarize the condition into which personal bondage had fallen on the eve of the anarchy and during its course.

In old Russia personal bondage (*kryepost*) was created in one or other of the following ways:

1. By captivity during war.
2. By voluntary consent or by the act of parents, through sale of a free person into slavery.
3. By way of punishment for the commission of certain crimes.
4. By birth from a *kholop* or bonded man.
5. By insolvency of a merchant through his own fault.
6. By voluntary entrance on the part of a free person into the service of another without a contract guaranteeing the freedom of the servant.
7. By marriage to a *rob*, or bonded woman, without a similar contract.<sup>1</sup>

A "full" or *obyelnyy kholop* was not freed by the death of his master, but was considered as bonded also to his master's children. The *kholop* could not pass out of his bonded condition, save by the will of his master.<sup>2</sup>

In the end of the fifteenth or in the beginning of the sixteenth century a somewhat mitigated system of bondage came into use. This was called *dokladnoë*, because the deed of bondage was confirmed. This was done by a public functionary, the *namyestnik*. *Kholopi* of this order were distinguished from full *kholopi* by the circumstance that after the death of their master to whom they had been bound, they passed to his children, but no further.<sup>3</sup> So also there appeared in appanage ages and later, in the seventeenth century, temporary *kholopi*, or more properly, mortgagors,<sup>3</sup> who agreed to work for a master until a certain debt was paid. When this debt was paid, the mortgagor resumed his freedom.

But there were mortgages by which the mortgagor bound himself only to set his service against the interest of the debt, and not against

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

the principal. The deed which was drawn in connection with a mortgage of this kind was known by the word *kabala*, derived from the Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> This practice was recognized by an Act of the sixteenth century. Sometimes the *kabala* provided for serving on account of the principal without interest. The *Sudebnik* or legal code of 1550 limits the sum to be lent under personal mortgage by *kabala* to 15 rubles.<sup>2</sup>

The mortgagor by *kabala* was not, however, entirely reduced to servitude. He was still an independent juridical person. When he bound himself to pay the interest by means of service, he did not exempt himself from an action at law for the recovery of the principal.<sup>3</sup> *Kabala* men were thus mortgaged, but they might redeem themselves if they could. Some *kabala* men or mortgaged persons, however, were evidently taken into full *kholopstvo* by their own desire in order to escape from the responsibility which the *kabala* involved. Yet the *kabala* system, in its earlier stages, may be regarded as involving simply a contract for work to be performed for certain wages, which were to be paid in advance, the deed simply securing, under penalty of complete enslavement, the due performance of the work which had been paid for beforehand. The personal character of the relations established by the *kabala* is further shown by provisions which appear in some of the documents to the effect that the *kabala* man must serve the wife and children of his master, should the master die, and in other documents of the sixteenth century, we find obligation on the part of the *kabala* man to serve only until the death of his master.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the *kabala* documents disclose the fact that the *kabala* man was entitled to any property which he might acquire during his period of service.

While thus the recognition by the law of these contracts laid the juridical foundation of personal bondage, up till the ukase of 1597 there were still certain elements of freedom even in these contracts. The documents in question exhibit transactions of the following character: A freeman borrows from an estate owner a certain sum, always for one year. He agrees to work on his master's land or in his master's courtyard during that year, "all days," by way of payment of interest upon the sum borrowed. If at the end of the

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Seven to eight hundred rubles of modern money. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 211.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

year the principal sum is not paid, he undertakes to go on serving for the interest until the principal is paid. For example, in 1636, a father gave his son to a creditor to work for a year in payment of interest upon a debt. In the event of the debt not being paid within the year, the son was to pass into the *dvorovie*, or people of the courtyard, permanently.<sup>1</sup>

These various forms of servitude or *kholopstvo* had become so common in the sixteenth century that their administration required the establishment of a special department of the Government, the *Kholopsky Prekaz*, or Ministry of Serfdom. The ukase of 1597 imposed upon this ministry the duty of regulating the possession of *kholopi* and of prescribing a stable method of bonding, clearly with a view to diminish the intricacy of the system. No new principle in this respect was imported by the ukase; but it limited the legality of "the serving *kabala*" to those *kabala* that were entered in the Moscow *Kabala* Books of the Kholop Court, and in the office of the *Kholopsky Prekaz* in other towns;<sup>2</sup> and it gave legal form to certain evidently previously established practices. For example, it required *kabala* men, with their wives and children, as well as *dokladnoe* people to remain in *kholopstvo*—that is, in servitude—until the death of their masters; nor was previous redemption permitted. The masters were not allowed to receive money from the *kabala* people. Petitions from the *kholopi* about their release through redemption were not to be considered by the courts. The children of a *kabala* man, entered in his *kabala* or born during his *kholopstvo*, are bound to their father's master until his death. From these provisions it is evident that the *kabala* men had come to be indistinguishable from *kholopi*, excepting that they became free on the death of the master. In 1571 there had become common the expression *kabala kholop*, which replaced the previous form, *kabala people*, so that in practice the *kholop* and the *kabala* had come to be similar although not quite the same, before the law recognized the fact.

Side by side with the full *kholop*, or completely bound cultivator, and the *kabala* man, scarcely distinguishable from the first, excepting that he became free upon the death of his master, there were free hired servants, or "voluntary *kholopi*," as they are described in the documents. These "voluntary *kholopi*" usually engaged for a term of years—generally ten years—for a specified amount of wages. The

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. p. 214.

right of these "voluntary *kholopi*" to "go away" when they wished was recognized in the ukase of 1555. The ukase of April 1597 changed the position of this class very seriously, by fixing the period for a contract of this kind at six months. If a "voluntary *kholop*" served for more than that period, he was obliged to give a *kabala* upon himself to his master, "who fed him, dressed him, and supplied him with boots."<sup>1</sup>

Under the ukase of 1597, when runaway *kabala* men were returned to their masters, they might be transferred into harder slavery if they themselves desired. Thus, on the whole, the ukase of 1597 "intensified rather than diminished bondage slavery."<sup>2</sup>

A monk called Avraamiy Palitzin, cellarer in a monastery, describes the state of matters at the time of the passing of this ukase. He says that in the time of the Tsar Feodor, the officials, especially the adherents of the "all-powerful Boris Godunov, as well as the great noblemen," became very anxious to enslave whomsoever they could. They lured people into slavery by every means, by coaxing, by gifts, by force and by tortures, by offering inducements to sign a "serving contract" or a "serving *kabala*." They called people into their houses and gave them *vodka*. "The thoughtless guest would drink two or three glasses, and would then be ready to become a *kholop*. For three or four glasses he would become a slave (*chelad*)." <sup>3</sup>

The historian Karamsin, courtly and conservative as he was, describes this law as "not deserving the name of a law, with its open injustice, so singularly in favour of the titled gentry."<sup>4</sup> This law was repealed in 1607, and the law of 1555 brought into force once more; but the *Boyarshkaya Duma*, or Nobles' Assembly, replaced the half-yearly term for "voluntary *kholopstvo*."<sup>5</sup>

Then came the anarchy and starvation. The masters were unable to support the numerous groups that had through these changes become dependent upon them. Some peasants they set at liberty formally, some they merely drove from their estates without formal process of manumission, others fled of their own accord. The ranks of the discontented were thus being constantly recruited by landless and purseless peasants.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Quoted, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> In the seventeenth century the term was cut down by the *Ulojenie* to three months. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER IV

### FOURTH PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY—FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVENTEENTH TILL THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

#### PART I

##### GENERAL ACCOUNT, AND ESPECIALLY FROM 1613 TILL 1700

THE Fourth Period of Russian history began with the accession of the Romanov dynasty to the Moscow throne in 1613, at the close of the age of anarchy, and ended with the death of Nicholas I in 1855. The salient facts of this period are the expansion of the Moscow State over the whole of the Russian plain, and the absorption of numerous Russian and non-Russian nationalities. Gradually the State extended itself southwards, eastwards, and northwards, swallowing up great areas fully occupied or partially occupied, and absorbing into its administrative system, founded as it was upon a bureaucratic autocracy, numerous previously independent political units.

Ambitious as they were, the groups of people surrounding the throne of the early Romanovs cannot be said to have possessed talents adequate to the performance of so formidable a task.<sup>1</sup> The centralization of power in the hands of the Moscow State destroyed the independence, or diminished the local self-government, of the outlying provinces, and at the same time it increased their burdens. The new central administration was costly and inefficient. From the beginning fate seemed to be against the House of Romanov.

All the Romanov Tsars of the direct line were mere boys on their accession.<sup>2</sup> With the exception of Peter, who was a giant of nearly seven feet, and who was possessed of enormous muscular strength, although he inherited an abnormal nervous

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 88-9.

<sup>2</sup> The following were the ages of the male Romanovs on their accession: Mikhail, 16½ years; Alexis, 16 years; Feodor, 15 years; Ivan V, 16 years; Peter I (the Great), 10 years; Peter II, 11 years; Ivan VI, 2 months.



organization, all were physically feeble, and at least one (Ivan V) was an imbecile. The princesses of the House, on the contrary, were physically vigorous, mentally alert, and ambitious.<sup>1</sup> The extreme youth of the Tsars when they assumed the throne threw them inevitably into the hands of counsellors who gave a certain direction to their subsequent reigns.<sup>2</sup> Incompetence in administration expressed itself chiefly in connection with external relations, and plunged the country into a conflict with Poland which endured for twenty-one years, and left Russia exhausted.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century the frontiers of Russia were still "unscientific," and tribute was still being paid to the Crimean Tartars.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile the older structure of society had undergone great changes. The *boyarstvo*, or boyar class, which formed the chief support of the Moscow throne in earlier times, had "deteriorated genealogically, and had become poor economically."<sup>5</sup> Its political influence, which had formerly been so great as to impose a check upon the exercise of autocratic authority, now became inconsiderable. Excepting in so far as the *boyarstvo* came to be dissolved in the newly-arising class of the *dvoryanstvo*, which was formed out of the metropolitan and provincial "serving people" and which now assumed a leading administrative, political, and social rôle, the *boyarstvo* ceases to have significance. These changes are accompanied by more definite stratification of the mass of society. Each class is separated sharply from the others, each is burdened with specific obligations and each forms a world of its own, with, excepting in the earlier phases, little transfusion of blood between the classes. When these changes in social structure have worked themselves out, the peasant is no longer personally free, bondage slavery (*nevolya*, absence of will) is the special characteristic of his class, and the rendering of his labour is his special social function. In the eighteenth century his labour is no longer purely agricultural. Although agriculture remains the chief employment of the national productive powers, these are directed more and more into special industries, and these industries are carried on by means of bondage labour after the same manner as agriculture had been conducted.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iii, p. 306.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *infra*, Book III.

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Recital of the economic history of the *fourth* period will make manifest two parallel currents :

1. "Up till the middle of the eighteenth century the external territorial extension of the Russian State goes on in inverse proportion to the development of the interior freedom of the people."

2. "The political status of the labouring classes establishes itself in inverse proportion to the economical productivity of their labour."<sup>1</sup>

Beginning as before, at the top of the social structure, we find the new ruling class, the *dvoryanstvo*, recruiting itself not merely from the older *boyarstvo*, but also from the classes beneath, and even in the time of Peter the Great from foreigners. The abolition of the so-called *myestnichestvo*,<sup>2</sup> or order of seniority, in 1682, tended to the democratisation of administration, and in 1722 the door is "opened widely" for the admission to its ranks of *raznochintzi*, or plebeians of low birth. The estates became the property of the members of the new class, and the peasants became bonded to them. In the time of Peter III, obligatory service was removed from the upper class, and at the same time this class was endowed with a large measure of class autonomy, with new powers in local administration. In the time of Nicholas I these privileges were further extended by granting the right to the *dvoryanstvo* assemblies to make representations to the Government, not only in reference to the interests of their own class, but also to the interests of other classes.<sup>3</sup> All this indicates a gradual growth of political influence. Since the central and local administrators were alike drawn chiefly from this class, its power in detail became very great. The Government ruled through the *dvoryanstvo* in the seventeenth century, and in the eighteenth century the *dvoryanstvo* practically ruled through the Government.<sup>4</sup> Thus gradually the Government of Russia ceased to be aristocratic, or even consistently autocratic—it was in effect bureaucratic. This development was accompanied by a corresponding social cleavage, and the ruling class became economically and "morally estranged from the governed mass."<sup>5</sup> During these centuries the ruling class was acquiring Western European culture, and was becoming aware,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Savën in *Collection of Essays dedicated to V. O. Kluchevsky*. Moscow, 1909, p. 277.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iii, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

especially in the eighteenth century, of the progress of thought and letters in the western world ; but these currents " slid over the tops of society, dropping to the bottom only by partial reforms of a more or less cautious and fruitless character." <sup>1</sup> Civilization thus became " a class monopoly," in which it was supposed the common people could not share without danger to the State, and without much preliminary education.<sup>2</sup>

The stimulating influences of external territorial expansion and of increased material wealth, due to the exploitation of the natural resources of the country, were thus felt practically exclusively in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by the ruling class, and this circumstance accounts for the " historical antinomies " which have been noticed above. Contrary to the experience of the people of Western Europe, the Russian people have not in general shared in the advancing culture of humanity, and their political status has retained a form which, from a Western European point of view, may be described as archaic.

The development of the ruling class in Russia and its separation from the mass of the community led to the absence in that country of the spontaneous and continual co-operation of practically all of the citizens of a country in securing the general welfare, which is characteristic of the best examples. The dislocation of Russian society as distinguished from the " consecutive life " <sup>3</sup> of the people of Western Europe is one of the marks of difference between them in

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> On the question of the susceptibility of the common people to material progress, Professor Kluchevsky thinks (*op. cit.*, iii. p. 5) that the productivity of Russian labour during the period of serfdom contravened the generally accepted rule that serf labour is less productive than free labour. The point is, however, a very difficult one to decide with certainty in a particular case. The efficiency of labour depends upon the driving power. Whether the driving power of " avarice," to use the expression of Hume, is greater than the driving power of a slave-driver with a whip is perhaps impossible to determine. It is generally thought that the slave evades work as much as possible, and that therefore the necessity of a greater amount of supervision than is the case with the freeman renders the net total of his work less productive, because the supervision has to be paid for. But from the point of view of individual life the important question, after all, is not one of productivity, but is one of amplitude of life. The peasant farmer working on his own land for himself may produce more than he would as a serf, and yet he may merely lead the life of a serf, a slave not to another's, but to his own avarice, and therefore the susceptibility of a peasant farmer to high material progress may not be greater than that of a serf. Upon local over-production of grain in the last days of serfdom, see *infra*, p. 424.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 8.

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the past. So also has been the view of the functions of the State which has been prevalent in Russia. The State has assumed control of everything, and it is therefore held responsible for everything. The burden of life which falls upon it thus tends to become intolerable, and the deficiencies of the overburdened Government tend to become intolerable also. The course of Russian history abounds in examples.

When the youthful Mikhail, the first Romanov, was elected Tsar by means of the *Zemsky Sobor*, he naturally turned to the land-owners for collaboration in reconstructing the governmental system, which had fallen into disorder during the anarchy. But he found "neither useful collaborators nor responsible taxpayers."<sup>1</sup> The Moscow merchants persuaded him that it was necessary to import foreigners in order to supply men, money, and ideas for the development of the country and for the establishment of industries, by means of which the national burdens might be met. Later, especially in the time of Peter the Great, foreigners were called in, factories were established, and schools were opened to which the scholars were driven. But this external artificial stimulus was disastrous. The need for education was not felt by the people, and they looked upon it as another obligation imposed upon them by the Government. "There were established costly cadet corps, engineering schools, educational societies for highly-born girls and for girls of the merchant class, academies of painting, gymnasiums, &c."<sup>2</sup> But this feverish activity produced only "a crudely utilitarian view of knowledge as a pathway to rank and bribes."<sup>3</sup> The products of this artificially forced system were the "green young men" of Griboyedov's comedies.<sup>4</sup> The Government offices were filled with these half-educated youths, obsessed with the superficial aspects of Western European culture and quite unable to bring into relation with the national life the more valuable suggestions which serious study of Western Europe might have afforded.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the constantly

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kropotkin, P., *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*. London, 1905, p. 196. Griboyedov's comedy, *Misfortune from Intelligence*, although it applies particularly to Moscow society of 1820-1830, is applicable also to earlier and more recent periods of Russian history.

<sup>5</sup> The same phenomenon has made its appearance in Peking with the return of half-educated Chinese youths from the American universities. The introduction of Western European education in India has resulted in corresponding phenomena.

extending territorial conquests added to the responsibilities of the State without adding either to the efficiency or to the insight of its functionaries. The establishment of factory industry benefited the Treasury and enriched individuals, but remained without favourable effect upon the working masses.

"All these defects had one general cause, the unnatural relations of the exterior politics of the State to the interior growth of the people."<sup>1</sup> The increase of the population produced changes in the molecular structure of society which mere increase in numbers involves. The rapid territorial expansion and the inclusion of new peoples increased the area of the authority of the Government, and to this extent increased its internal and external prestige, but at the same time the maintenance of this authority exhausted the national resources.<sup>2</sup> These factors together sufficed to confront the Government with a constant succession of fresh problems with which it was unable to cope, and before which, from time to time, it shrank in a state of hopeless bewilderment—seeking advice from anybody and everybody, conducting endless investigations and arriving at the most meagre results.<sup>3</sup> The State thus gradually became a huge and cumbersome mechanism, whose parts were fitted badly together and whose action was intended to accomplish that which can only be effectively accomplished by a whole of organically associated parts.<sup>4</sup>

The apparent anomalies of Russian life are, as Professor Kluchevsky acutely observes, not really anomalies, but are more properly to be described as "abnormal phenomena corresponding to its disorganization."<sup>5</sup>

The most important influence in the promotion of national, as of social unity is external pressure. In all of the earlier periods of Russian history this force had been exercised. In the *first* period the external pressure of the warlike tribes surrounding the Eastern Slavs contributed to their unification; in the *second* period the attacks of the Tartars on the south and of the Lithuanians on the north-west split the Russian people into two branches, the Great and the Little Russians, each of them possessing a strong feeling of

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> This is also true of the period immediately succeeding the Russo-Japanese war.

<sup>4</sup> The parallel between the state of Russia in the seventeenth century and that of China in the beginning of the twentieth is very instructive.

<sup>5</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 3.

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nationality. The first branch, the Great Russian, found itself engaged in a continuous struggle against external enemies. It was thus forced to succumb to these or to develop within itself military strength sufficient to cope with them. The unification of the whole of the Russian people and the whole of the Russian area still under the pressure of imminent external enemies, was the task of the *third* period. The anarchic close of this period resulted in territorial losses, which had to be recovered in the succeeding age, and national unity had to be striven for afresh. Up till the time of the battle of Poltava (1709), the Russian wars had been chiefly defensive.<sup>1</sup> They had been undertaken to resist attacks, or to recover lands which had been regarded by the Russians as properly theirs by right of old occupation or of early conquest. From that date the Russian campaigns were for the most part offensive; they were intended to maintain and to extend the predominance of Russia in Eastern Europe, which had been achieved by Peter the Great, or "to preserve the balance of power in Europe," as the Russian diplomats were elegantly expressing themselves."<sup>2</sup>

The services of Peter the Great to Russia were undoubtedly enormous. His prodigious energy infused part of itself into the Russian mind of his time; and the productivity of the people increased importantly. This alone could have sustained the increasing weight of the State burdens.<sup>3</sup> Russia could not, in such desperate haste as he urged, be made a first-class power without the additional cost which is always due to speed. These new and heavy burdens, especially during the reigns of the weak immediate successors of Peter the Great, were not sustained by a proportionate increase of productive power, and their mere weight, together with extravagant and unintelligent administration brought the stability of the throne into jeopardy.

In this evil case the throne turned to the *dvoryanstvo*, and in return for its support, conferred upon it new immunities and privileges, some "crumbs" of these also falling to the share of the higher merchantry.<sup>4</sup> But for the common people there resulted only fresh burdens arising from these newly-granted privileges.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The best authority for the finances of the reign of Peter the Great is Melyukov, Paul, *State Economy in Russia in the First Quarter of the Eighteenth Century and the Reforms of Peter the Great*. St. Petersburg, 1905.

<sup>4</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 13.

“ If the people had endured patiently such a state of things, Russia would have dropped out of the number of European countries.”<sup>1</sup>

The people did not bear their burdens patiently. Throughout the seventeenth century there had been seditions. They had been directed against the Government and against landowners and functionaries ; but from the middle of the eighteenth century sedition assumed a more formidable aspect. The fermentation became general, and when Pugachev raised the standard of rebellion in 1773, he was joined by 30,000 discontented people with arms in their hands.<sup>2</sup> Pugachev was put down, but the fermentation remained. Katherine II had been excited about the condition of the peasantry, and the question of mitigating the “ bondage right ” had, on her initiative, come to be matter of feeble and fruitless discussion. From that period, for nearly a hundred years, the official class, “ chewing over the same plans, and from reign to reign postponing the question by pusillanimous attempts at improvement,”<sup>3</sup> kept the solution of it hanging like a nightmare over the country until, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the fall of “ Sevastopol struck the stationary minds,”<sup>4</sup> and the imperative and immediate necessity of emancipation became abundantly evident.<sup>5</sup>

Professor Kluchevsky points out that so long as the external conflicts of Russia were of a defensive order, the burdens of the State, though great, were not intolerable ; her peasantry were relatively free, and their conditions were not wholly unfavourable ; but whenever the campaigns of Russia became offensive campaigns, the upper classes gained steadily in privileges and immunities, and the increasing and excessive burdens of the State fell more and more upon the common people. “ The special obligations were removed from the upper classes and class rights were substituted for them, while special obligations were piled upon the lower classes.”<sup>6</sup>

The discussions upon the nature of sovereignty in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with which contemporary European scholars were familiar, and of which the mass of the people had at least some general knowledge, were, if not quite unknown, at all events quite unimportant in Russia. These discussions in Western

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> The details of the long discussions upon the question of bondage right are given in Books II and III, *infra*.

<sup>6</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, Book IV, chap. ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

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Europe had been in a large measure fundamental.<sup>1</sup> Although the historical and ethnographical groundwork was as yet very inadequate, the discussions were carried on by men of superior intelligence as fully as the scientific progress of the time permitted. They had, moreover, the inestimable advantage of the stimulating influence of the Renaissance. In Russia, on the other hand, no such fundamental discussions took place, or could take place. Contemporary Russian scholarship was unequal to the task. Opinions about sovereignty there depended upon tradition, chiefly from the times of the appanage princes, and upon a crude development of that tradition, not at all upon a logically-developed theory of sovereignty in harmony with a similarly logically-developed jurisprudence.

The tradition was that the Moscow State was the *votchina* or heritable property of the Moscow sovereign. The owner of a *votchina* was primarily the owner of the land; his relation to the people who cultivated it and to the people who served in his administration was primarily a contractual relation. The population of his *votchina* not only possessed a high degree of mobility, but exercised it. As we have seen, these fluctuations of the population and this elasticity in the conditions of service became so inconsistent with stability and defence that they were seriously checked by legislation and by the exercise of stringent measures in practice. The people inhabiting the *votchina* thus came to be looked upon as belonging to it, and therefore as belonging to the sovereign, as did the other elements which entered into the composition of the *votchina*. The interests of the people were of concern to the sovereign only in so far as they conformed to the interests of the dynasty—in other words, the household existed for the House. Law was a domestic affair.<sup>2</sup>

In all this there is no conception of nationality. The conception of the State which is here embodied is that of a household filled

<sup>1</sup> An admirable recent summary of these discussions is to be found in the Presidential Address to the Section of Anthropology of the British Association, 1909, by Professor Myres. See *Transactions* for 1909.

<sup>2</sup> This view is curiously reflected in *Grajdaniin*, the organ of the reactionary Prince Meshtshersky, e.g. 1st March 1904: "If a father may chastise his son severely without invoking the help of the courts, the authorities—local, provincial, central—should be invested with a similar power to imprison, flog, and otherwise overawe or punish the people." (Quoted by the author of the article, "The Tsar," in the *Quarterly Review*. London, 1904, vol. 200, p. 190.) The patriarchal and the *votchinal* views are here confused together. Historically they have quite different origins.



with servants to whom were assigned obligatory duties ; but up till the seventeenth century there is no legislation which defines, in any fundamental way, the nature of the authority of the sovereign, or of his rights and duties, together with the nature of the rights and duties of the people. So that although frequent seditions and occasional rebellion revealed the fact that deep in the consciousness of the people there lay the conviction that all of the rights which were enjoyed by those above them, and all of the duties which were imposed upon them, were fundamentally limited, yet there was no articulate and complete expression of these rights and duties, or of their limitations, either in the law or in any sustained criticism of it. The ideas about sovereignty were vague and un-coordinated, and they had little apparent influence upon the practice of administration. The State assumed " a shadowy form " high above the contemporary political consciousness of the people; and the real society of the State, with its organic structure, was dissociated from this overmastering shadow of supreme authority. In this abnormal relation of the people to the sovereign we have at least a partial explanation of the antinomies which have been observed. These antinomies account for the chronically morbid attitude of the people towards the crown, regarding as they did its shadowy form with undue prostration and without a due sense of human dignity, or regarding with too acute a feeling of disappointment its non-performance of an impossible rôle, and heaping upon its head all the sins of the State with savage energy of recrimination.

We now pass to the consideration of the status and condition of the peasantry which constituted during this epoch the great mass of the rural population. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the peasantry upon the State domain—the " Black and Palace lands "—had already been bound to the land or had been fixed in the rural communities. The peasants on the estates of private owners were becoming similarly bound ; but as yet there was no definite change in their legal status. The bondage was one of fact, although not of universal fact ; it was not yet recognized by law. In the life of the peasant throughout the sixteenth century and at the beginning of the seventeenth there were three important elements :

1. The payment of the land tax.
2. The right of " going away."

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3. The need of agricultural capital, resulting in loans to the peasants by the landowners.<sup>1</sup>

The number of peasants whose need for agricultural capital drove them into indebtedness to the landowners seems to have increased greatly towards the middle of the sixteenth century ; and the description which has been given above of the reactions which occurred from this fact has already shown how the "right of going away," though still existing, had become "a juridical fiction."<sup>2</sup> The pressure of debt and the increasing pressure of the land tax, together with the "land bondage" which prevented the escape of the peasant from his burdens by leaving them, led to attempts to escape the burdens without leaving the land. This was effected by the peasant through sale of himself into *kholopstvo*. That is, he bound himself to work for the landowner as a *kholop*, and in so doing, freed himself from his burden of debt and from responsibility for taxes payable to the State, and at the same time sacrificed his personal freedom. A peasant who did this in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century fell into the old Russian personal bondage (*kryepost*), which has already been described, and therefore fell out of his class. He ceased, indeed, to be a peasant properly so called.

Apart from such incidents, however, the peasants were gradually falling into debt servitude to the landowners. A peasant who accepted a loan from the owner of the land occupied by him did not necessarily accept it on *kabala* terms. He might perform work for the landowner (*bartschina*) in payment of interest upon his loan without any *kabala* papers ; but in the seventeenth century such loans began to approach in their character the *kabala* loan, and those of the peasantry who were engaged in such payments gradually approached the position of *kabala kholopi*. The *kabala* man usually served in the "court," while the peasant worked in the field. But the distinction became indefinite, and whenever the idea of the personal bondage of the *kabala kholop* became firmly established, there was an apparent tendency on the part of the landowner to look upon a peasant who worked for a loan or for the interest upon a loan as his personal bondman, whose situation was for him precisely that of a *kholop*.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time there was a corresponding approach of the

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iii. p. 217.

*kholopstvo* towards the peasantry. The *dvorovie lyudē*, or courtyard people, who performed the household service, were landless people (*bobyeli*), *kabala* people, full *kholopi*, temporary *kholopi*, or voluntary *kholopi*. Their customary duties were in the house, the garden, the stables, &c. When, after the confusion of the anarchy was over, and a scarcity of agricultural hands manifested itself, many proprietors turned their *dvorovie lyudē* into the fields, giving them loans to start them with courtyards and giving them allotments of land. Special agreements were made with *kholopi* who had been *dvorovie lyudē*. This process, which became common in the beginning of the seventeenth century, had already made its appearance before the end of the previous century. It had indeed been carried on to such an extent that such people formed a special class with a special name—"backyard people" (*zadvorni lyudē*), because they lived in special *ēzbas* "behind" the court of the landowner. There thus grew up in the villages this "unfree" class of cultivators. It became very numerous in the seventeenth century. In Byelyevsky district, in 1630, the "backyard people" numbered 9 per cent. of the peasant population; in the same district in 1678 they numbered 12 per cent. The "backyard" man under the law of 1624<sup>1</sup> was so far removed from the position of a full *kholop*, that he was himself responsible for crimes committed by him, and his master was not responsible.

Thus, although his property was not fully his own, he was so far an independent personality that he was himself liable for fines and compensation for injuries committed by him. A special contract transferred him from the *dvorovie lyudē* to his special class. This transference was for the *kholop* a step towards freedom. He was transformed from a non-taxpaying man to a taxed grain cultivator; but he was still under the obligation of the loan which had been given him, and the terms of which still kept him in *kholopstvo* and out of the peasantry.

The expression is indeed sometimes used in the documents, "putting *kholopi* into peasantry"; but the use of this expression shows only how near the peasantry had come to *kholopstvo* in practice, although even yet the juridical difference was considerable.

In some of the peasant contracts in the beginning of the seventeenth century there are already observable conditions which leave only a very fine distinction to be drawn between *kholopstvo* and

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 218.

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peasantry. For example, in 1628 a freeman contracted to live with his master "till the end of his life." Formerly, as has already been pointed out, a peasant who ran away without paying his loan was under his contract liable to the landowner-creditor for compensation; now the contracts provide for more serious penalties. The condition makes its appearance that the landowner "is at liberty" (in the event of the flight of the peasant) "to take me to himself, wherever I might be, and for the future I will live upon the allotment as a peasant and taxpayer always, and I will not run away anywhere," &c.<sup>1</sup>

The peasant thus agreed that he would pay compensation if he was brought back after flight, and that he would moreover live always in peasantry upon the allotted land. Thus these agreements contained in themselves the principle of personal bondage.

These two currents of change, in the *kholopstvo* towards the peasantry, and in the peasantry towards the *kholopstvo*, were connected with the effects upon both of the disorganization produced by the anarchy in the first decade of the seventeenth century. The movement of "old livers" from the villages, and the other migrations which have already been described, brought the *mutual guarantee* for taxes of the old *zemsky mir* into confusion. One of the first duties of the new administration of Mikhail, the first Romanov, was to re-establish the *mir*s and to make the *mutual guarantee* once more effective. The *Zemsky Assembly* of 1619, six years after the accession of Mikhail, resolved that the taxable inhabitants should be registered, that runaways should be returned to their former villages, and that "mortgagors" <sup>2</sup> of their own responsibility should be made taxable. This attempt at a census was a failure, and moreover, in 1626, during the Great Fire of Moscow in that year, the Land Registers in the Metropolitan Bureau were burned. A new census was ordered in 1627-1628. This census was, of course, designed chiefly for tax-collecting purposes, and the registration of taxpayers did not necessarily alter the relation of landowner and peasant; but in certain cases it confirmed existing relations by the mere fact of registration. For example, if a wandering agricultural labourer was found by a census clerk in a village, he was registered as being upon a certain estate. His temporary contract was thus in effect made permanent by the registration.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. 219-20.

<sup>2</sup> Zakladchiki.

But the census and registration, and the attempts to re-establish the punctual payment of taxes through the *mutual guarantee* notwithstanding, the conditions of the peasants' contracts at this time become bewilderingly complex. Peasants agreed to live with their master until his death, even although they had received no loan. Sometimes a loan was not repayable unless the other obligations were not performed. Sometimes a loan was to be returned at a fixed date, with penalties for non-payment, &c. &c. The following characteristics seem to emerge from these varying conditions :

1. Registration for census and taxation purposes had the effect of binding the peasants both to land bondage and to personal bondage.

2. Loan indebtedness was having the same effect.

3. Bondage was increasing through the *kabala kholopstvo* and the entrance of the *dvorovie lyudē* into the fields.

4. By voluntary consent peasants were entering into bondage relations.<sup>1</sup>

The first two were general causes of bondage ; the others were causes which acted in individual cases. The earliest known agreements in which bondage obligation is specifically stated belong to the census year 1627. The new contracts of that year contain a clause binding peasants "not to go away from the landowner, not to run away from him, to remain steadfast to him in peasantry."<sup>2</sup> In the case of "old livers," whose indebtedness made them "helpless sitters upon their allotments,"<sup>3</sup> their acceptance of this new condition was inevitable. Sometimes, however, the peasants at this time simply obliged themselves "to be bound as formerly."<sup>4</sup>

The registration for tax purposes raised the question of the relation of the peasant to the landowner upon whose estate he was found. This had to be settled, and in order to do so, in the absence of new legislation on the subject, the landowner and the peasant alike had to fall back upon customary forms, and even upon some which did not, in a strictly legal sense, apply to the peasantry at all. The legal relations of the different kinds of service thus became mingled and confused. The general disintegration of society during and after the anarchy contributed to this state of matters. The migrations of peasants during the anarchy and their dispersal led to the abandonment of much of the arable land, and thus the price of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iii, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

land fell. Contemporaneously the rate of interest rose; so also did the price of peasants' labour. The policy of the landowner was changed by force of circumstances. It became less profitable for him to rent his land and to lend agricultural capital to his tenants than to manage the cultivation on his own account. The difficulty of procuring working hands led the landowners, however, to make efforts to keep the "old livers" upon their allotments; thus, in 1647, although peasant bondage was by that time fully established, the landowners were obliged to promise their peasants that they would not drive them away from their "old built-up courtyards."<sup>1</sup>

This situation, which might have resulted favourably for the peasant, did not do so. The agreements of former times had related to land and the cultivation of it; now they relate to claims of the master upon the service of the peasant. The question of the right of the master to the labour of the peasant came to be the important question, and this right was used as the ground of authority over the person of the peasant. In the same way the new registration meant that instead of the Government regarding the tax as being paid for the land, no matter who owned it or cultivated it, the Government now regarded the tax as payable by certain persons whether they worked the land or not.

The interests in the cultivator of the State and those of the landowner diverged sharply at this point. If the cultivator laboured under an excessive burden of obligations other than taxes, he could not be a punctual taxpayer. If the tax-collector took the whole of the margin between a bare subsistence and the produce of the labour of the cultivator, there was nothing left for the landowner. The State interests required that the taxpayer should be readily discoverable, or that his taxes should be punctually paid through the *mutual guarantee*. The interests of the landowner lay, or appeared to lie, in having a sufficient number of cultivators bound at once to the land and to him personally, who were either obliged to render him labour to the fullest extent, or who were obliged to pay him everything but the amount of subsistence necessary to maintain themselves as cultivators. In addition, his interests required that his peasant cultivators should be at his disposal to sell or to give or bequeath.

The new dynasty was under so great obligations to the land-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 222.

owning class, that the State could only with difficulty take measures which militated against the interests of the *boyars*. Although the Zemsky Assembly of 3rd July 1619 passed a "sentence" which declared that the "mortgagors" who had been taken "by the large proprietors and by the monasteries" should "be returned into *tyaglo*"—that is, should be registered as taxpayers, and released from their servile condition, the powerful interests concerned contrived to evade the requirement. The Government was helpless. "Around Mikhail, a Tsar quite without ability, there was not one able statesman, and the Government walked after current affairs, never overtaking them, and allowed life itself to tie the knots with which later generations did not know what to do."<sup>1</sup> What life did work out has already been indicated; but the chief currents may now be summarized:

1. The *kholopi* were transferring themselves into "peasantry," and peasants were transferring themselves into *kholopstvo*.
2. The *dvorovie lyudē* were ploughing like peasants, and peasants were doing the work of the courtyard.
3. The landowner was binding the peasant to himself by loan agreements, which were sometimes even without any indication of definite allotment.

All these were "voluntary," or rather unregulated, processes. There was no legal restriction upon the term or upon the conditions of service. At the same time the State was trying, for purposes of taxation, through registration, to bind the peasant to a specific lot.

The details of the *bartschina*, or work required by the landowner from the peasant, varied widely in different parts of Russia in so far as the agreements indicate, and no doubt varied still more widely in practice. From the contracts of peasants in Zalessky, of the years from 1646-1652, it appears that in that region a peasant without land (*bobyel*), contracting with a *boyar*, agreed to do the *boyar's* work one day a week on foot; a peasant (*krestyanin*) agreed to work one or two days with a horse. Either might work one day in one week or two days in a fortnight.<sup>2</sup>

The general stereotyped form in the contracts throughout the Moscow State is, however, the following:

The peasant binds himself "to do every *pomyetschiiskoye* work" (that is, every work required by the *pomyetschĕk*, or estate owner), "to

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iii. p. 226.

pay the *obròk* as he (that is, the *pomyetschëk*) requires. In relation to my allotment, I will lay the *obròk* upon me together with the neighbours, or I will obey the *pomyetschëk* in everything, do the ploughing for him, the *dvorovie* (or courtyard work), &c.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in the seventeenth century, through the operation of the processes above described—processes primarily of an economical character, supported, however, by legal forms, the peasant was gradually and steadily sinking into bondage, both land and personal. The peasant contracts of this epoch are characterized by conditions wholly in favour of the landowner. The State was unable or unwilling to impose any check upon his short-sighted individualism.

The next step towards complete legal confirmation of the now established fact of peasant bondage was the abolition of the limitation of the period during which actions at law might be brought for the return of peasants who had run away.

In the middle of the sixteenth century a five-year period of “determined years” had been established. The ukase of 9th March 1607 had extended this period to fifteen years. After the disorders of the anarchy, the period was again reduced to five years. Under the influence of their increasing political power, the landowners, in 1641, asked the Tsar to abolish the “determined years”; but this application was granted only in so far that the “determined years” during which an action at law might be brought against a peasant who had run away were extended to ten years, and the “determined years” for cases of “taking away” to fifteen years. In 1645 the ukase of 1641 was confirmed, but the agitation of the landowners still continued.

When a new census was taken in 1646, by an order of that year the Government undertook to provide that all peasants with land (*krestyanie*) and peasants without land (*bobyelie*) registered in this census, with their children, brothers, and nephews, would be bound without “determined years.” The provision was effected by the so-called *Ulozhenie* of the Tsar Alexis in 1649. This document “legalized the return of peasants who were named in the agreement books of 1620–1630, and who were registered in the census books of 1646–1647, ‘without determined years.’”<sup>2</sup> The new law did not, however, alter the legal character of peasant bondage; it merely reverted to the state of the law before the “determined years”

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 227.



clause came into force, and the breach of a peasant contract came to expose the offender to a civil suit without limitation. But it had the effect of still further assimilating the peasantry to the *kholopstvo*, in which there never had been any limitation of the period in which actions of law might be brought on account of escaping *kholopi*. This had the most grave influence upon the fate of the peasants, because under the law it was now possible for a landowner to compel the return of a peasant, no matter how long he had been gone from his estate. It had also the effect of bringing more manifestly into play the hereditary character which peasant bondage had assumed. From this time onwards this hereditary character is distinctly impressed, not only in new peasants' contracts, but it is also evident from the fact that a peasant's son, inheriting his father's courtyard and his father's obligations, did not require a new agreement. New agreements, from 1649 onwards, frequently contain clauses extending the obligations incurred by the contracting peasant over his family, and there is one agreement of a peasant settling upon the land of the Kirilov Monastery, in which he extends the obligations over his future wife and the children "whom God might give him after marriage."<sup>1</sup>

The *Ulojenie* is in many ways the most important legal document relating to peasant bondage. Its importance consists, however, not in positive definitions of the status of the peasant, but in the absence of these, with the result that the relations of the peasant to the landowner upon whose estate he had his registered place, were in effect left to this landowner to determine. The consequence of this neglect was that the legal position of the peasant became quite anomalous. He was regarded as a person entitled to enter into obligations based upon his possession of property, and yet his property was not his own; nor was his person his own, because if a peasant married a runaway peasant woman, he was (under chap. xi. clause 12 of the *Ulojenie*) handed over to the former possessor of the runaway wife, without property; and that even although his own possessor was aware of the marriage. The chief care of the authors of the *Ulojenie* was to secure the interests of the State in respect to taxes, e.g. owners of *votchini* were forbidden to transfer peasants from the State lands to their own, and *pomyetschĕkĕ*, or estate possessors, were forbidden to make *kabala* agreements with their peasants, and were forbidden

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, iii. p. 228.

also to allow their peasants to "go away," because in all these cases the "Treasury would be deprived of taxpayers."<sup>1</sup> It permitted the liberation of peasants on *voitchini*, because by this means the State would gain taxpayers, and it also allowed landowners to make bargains between themselves as to the transference of peasants from each others' estates without consent of the peasants themselves. A landowner, for example, who unintentionally had killed a peasant of another landowner, was required to replace the dead peasant with another from among his best peasants, together with his family.

In this way the personal rights of the peasant disappeared. He was left wholly at the mercy of his possessor, excepting when the interests of the State as tax-collector were involved.

Under these conditions the property of peasants—their household goods and agricultural implements and animals—acquired by means of the landowner's loan or by their own accumulation, occupied the peculiar position of belonging both to the peasant and to his possessor, in this respect resembling the "peculium" of Roman law and the *otaritza* of old Russian customary law.<sup>2</sup> The possession, in fact, belonged to the peasant, and the right of ownership to the landowner. The *Ulojenie* (x. 262) provides for the debts of defaulting landowners being exigible upon their estates—that is, upon their *kholopi* and peasants;<sup>3</sup> but even prior to the *Ulojenie* the landowners clearly considered the property in the possession of peasants as belonging to the landowners, and not to the peasants. In 1627–1628, e.g. estate owners complain that peasants had run away with stolen property—that is to say, that they had taken their own household goods with them. The *kholop* had long understood that his very clothes were his master's, for in the *kholop* jargon there is a special word for such property, viz. *snos*. It is evident that these conceptions of non-ownership by peasants of the belongings in their possession arose from the long-standing indebtedness of the peasant to the landowner. The loan gave the master a lien upon all property in the possession of the peasant.

It has been noticed that in the sixteenth century the landowner had already begun to pay the taxes for his peasants. In this and other relations he stood between the peasant and the State. When

<sup>1</sup> Kluhevsky, iii. p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234. In the twelfth century the *kholop* could hold property in this way. Such properties were called *sobeni*. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

the peasant was taken into *kholopstvo* by the landowner, and when he thus passed out of the taxable class, the tax (*tyaglo*) did not cease to be paid for the land cultivated by him. The landowner had to pay the tax. The relations of the landowners' economy and the peasants' economies, even when the peasants remained "in peasantry," were so intimate, their respective properties were so slenderly separated, in the end indeed to be completely merged as regards ownership, that the *tyaglo*, or tax due to the State, was included in the *barskoë tyaglo*, or total of obligations due by the peasant to the landowner. Even when peasants ran away, the landowner had to pay taxes until the next registration of his peasants, as if they had remained. This practice is acknowledged and confirmed by the *Ulojenie*.

The above three incidents, the loan agreement, registered as it was in the Court Roll, the inheritive character of the obligation which ensued from the abolition of "determined years," and the mingling of the State *tyaglo* with the payments due to the landowner, "formed," Professor Kluchevsky says picturesquely, "three knots which are drawn into a dead loop—called peasants' bondage."<sup>1</sup>

Under the influence of these three elements the legislation was guided; but there was in the guidance "no sense of justice," nor was there recognition of general custom. The legislation even cannot be said to afford evidence that the establishment of a *right* was contemplated. It seemed to be desired to produce only a "temporary condition."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, that the *pomyetschêkê* were regarded as possessing their peasants by suffrance of the Tsar as in former times they possessed their estates. The theory seems to have been that the peasants belonged to the State, and were temporarily confided to the estate owners.

In yet another manner the peasants were left by the State in the hands of the landowners. The practice of endowing some landowners with rights of jurisdiction in respect to offences against the laws committed by peasants upon their estates, has already been noticed as existing from early times. Although in the seventeenth century the landowners were not entitled to deal with offenders charged with the more serious offences, murder, pillage, and the like, they possessed through the *votchinal* court a great amount of authority over their peasantry, which grew out of their endowment with

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 235.

limited rights of local jurisdiction. The landowner thus stood towards the peasantry in the mingled relations of creditor and magistrate, public prosecutor, private litigant, and judge on the bench in his own causes.

Still the law seemed to preserve a fractional remnant of recognition of the possession by the peasant of a personality which he could call his own. The old Russian conception of a free man was that of a man who was responsible to the State for taxes ; in this sense the peasant still was free ; and in this sense also the peasantry, as a class, remained distinct from the *kholopstvo*.<sup>1</sup> In respect to this responsibility for taxes the peasant thus retained "an appearance of civil personality." The reservation was undoubtedly made, not out of regard for the peasant, but in the interests of the *tyaglo*, or State taxes. This is evident from the fact that when the landowner became responsible for the *tyaglo* applicable to the land occupied by a peasant, the peasant himself might be deprived of his freedom. or at all events such freedom as had remained to him.

Another mark of distinction between the peasant and the *kholop* in the seventeenth century was that the possessor of a peasant, unlike the possessor of a *kholop*, was obliged to start him with an allotment of land and "an agricultural inventory" ; in other words, he had to give him land to work, and capital to enable him to work to advantage. In the third place, while the estate peasant could not be liberated, he could not be deprived of his land by any decision of a court.<sup>2</sup> Fourthly, his property, although he only enjoyed possession of it, subject to the rights of the landowner, could not be taken away from him by force, without infringement of the law. Fifthly, he could complain against the exactions of his master, or against "violence and pillage" by his master, and by means of process in a court might obtain compensation.<sup>3</sup>

But the maintenance of these remanent rights was left in the hands of the very persons whose interests lay in their decadence. The result of leaving the administration of justice in the hands of landowners instead of placing it in the hands of specially appointed public functionaries, although it inevitably and naturally grew out

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> We have already seen that through marriage with a bonded woman a peasant might lose land and freedom alike ; but excepting in the cases provided by law, a peasant could not be deprived of his land.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 238

of the whole estate-serving system, was the elimination of these distinctions between the peasant and the *kholop*, not necessarily in law, but in custom.

Professor Kluchevsky sums up in a brief but pregnant sentence the net outcome of the gradual establishment of personal bondage :

“ With the establishment of this right ” (that is, with the endowment of the landowner with the right of taking a peasant into personal bondage) “ the Russian State stepped upon the road which, under the cover of exterior order and even welfare, led to the disorganization of national powers, being followed, as it was, by the general lowering of national life, and from time to time also by profound disturbances.”<sup>1</sup>

The incidents of servitude in Russia had assumed a startlingly close similarity to those of the Roman Empire of the third and fourth centuries A.D. There is indeed a close parallel between the economic condition of Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the earlier period of the decline of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

The mode in which the national life was lowered and the national powers were disorganized may be indicated without undue detail. The sharp differentiation of classes—debtor-serf face to face with creditor-possessor-magistrate—produced throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries incessant struggles, in an intimate view of the details, “ trifling and cavilling,”<sup>3</sup> between the bondmen and their masters, and among the masters for the bondmen. The *kholop* departmental office “ was piled up ” with the sworn testimony of masters about the flights of peasants and others, and of the “ taking away ” and “ enticing ” of peasants, and about arsons and murders which accompanied these flights and “ takings away.” Such evidence was necessary for the proprietors to obtain, in order that they should not be held responsible for damage done by their fleeing serfs. The binding of the peasant to the land, so dearly bought at the cost of his personal liberty, and in the end even of his personality, had not been successful after all. Towards the end of the seventeenth century there were epidemics of flights. “ Every-one was running ”—the “ serving *kabala* ” men, the *kholopi*, the peasants, even *dvorovie lyudē*, who occupied superior positions in the

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Vinogradoff, P., in *Cambridge Medieval History*, i. pp. 543 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 241.

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households of noble masters, clerks and private secretaries, household chaplains, all were "running." Nor were they running empty handed. They took with them the property which they held in their possession, and the ownership of which, legally the master's, might be regarded morally as at least ambiguous; but they also carried off sometimes property to which they had not even an ambiguous claim, the immediate property of the master, his money and his strong boxes in which he held his deeds of bondage. The last were, indeed, special objects of appropriation; because the deeds, where they were not destroyed, might be tampered with and the names altered, thus bringing the management of the estate into confusion.

These flights led to the hunting of the fleeing peasants by the masters and their dogs—not on inhuman grounds, but because the dogs recognized the peasants.

One or two instances must suffice to suggest what was going on. A petty public functionary, whose business took him occasionally from Suzdal, where he resided, to Moscow, had a bondman who, in the absence of his master, attempted to set fire to the master's house, in which his mistress and her children were living, and then fled with his family, carrying with him much of his master's property. On the return of the master from Moscow, he pursued the fleeing peasant, in order to recover him and his belongings, but immediately after the master had left his estate in this pursuit, another of his bondmen ran away with the rest of the movable property.<sup>1</sup>

In 1698 a *kabala* man and his wife ran away from a functionary to whom he belonged. Eight years afterwards he came back as a priest, whether to act as household chaplain or not is not known; in the same year he ran away again, and "carried off 28 roubles of his master's money."<sup>2</sup>

The pall of personal bondage spread itself even over education. Children were given in bondage by deed for a certain number of years, to priests and others, with the obligation on the part of the master that they should be taught to read, and the right on his part to punish the pupil for disobedience with every means of punishment.

In 1624 a woman living in the Moscow Orphanage gave her son in

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Such cases must have been rather common, for there is a clause about them in the *Ulozhenie* (xx. 67).

bondage for twenty years to a priest of the Moscow Nunnery, on condition that the priest taught him to read, the boy being required in return to do *dvorovie* work. A nun guaranteed the good behaviour of the boy. The boy turned out to be a sharp pupil, and he learned to read in four years. In order to save him from the subsequent sixteen years of bondage to the priest, the nun and the boy's mother entered into a plot to abduct the boy from the priest, and then, by way of diverting suspicion from themselves, to demand that the priest should produce the boy.<sup>1</sup>

Such cases show to what an extent the spirit of bondage had entered into the life of the people, although, of course, the element of personal obligation in these cases must be distinguished from the principle embodied in an indenture of apprenticeship to which deeds of the kind described are somewhat analogous.

The conditions of the peasantry under the highly-developed bondage right in the eighteenth century, and the course of the discussions which eventually led to the abolition of the system, will be discussed in some detail in subsequent books.

We have now to consider the effect of the establishment of personal bondage, together with the incidents to which it gave rise, upon the legislative and administrative institutions which meanwhile had been assuming definite form.

The germ of an institution corresponding in some senses to the English institution of Parliament and to the French "States-General" has already been noticed as making its appearance in the reign of Ivan IV (the Terrible, 1533-1584). It has also been pointed out that, under the new dynasty, the *boyarstvo*, now the *dvoryanstvo*, steadily exercised the political power of which the *boyars* found themselves possessed at the end of the anarchy. The new Romanov dynasty owed everything to the *boyars*, and thus, although undoubtedly the assemblies, or *sobori*, acted predominantly in aristocratic, "serving," and landowning interests, they did form a body which in a sense represented the nation, and to which all questions about taxation, loans, and "benevolences" should be submitted. In the *Sobor* of 1621 even the question of war with Poland was decided.<sup>2</sup> But this institutional limitation of autocratic power did not endure. Professor Maxime Kovalevsky explains, in his *Russian Political*

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iii. pp. 242-3.

<sup>2</sup> Kovalevsky, M., *Russian Political Institutions*. Chicago, 1902, p. 62.

*Institutions*, how it was that Russia, instead of a monarchy with two controlling or advisory councils—a council of nobles and a council of the representatives of the people—became a “twofold monarchy,” involving a Tsar and a Patriarch, whose respective functions were so loosely defined that friction became incessant and intolerable. The patriarchate was abolished by Peter the Great, who substituted for it the Holy Synod; and in more recent times, through its civil “procurator,” appointed by the Tsar, the Holy Synod has exercised sometimes great influence not merely in ecclesiastical but in general political affairs.

In the later years of the reign of Mikhail, the first Romanov, the *sobori* ceased to be summoned; but they exercised renewed influence in the reign of Alexis, his son, and they were customarily consulted on questions of peace and war, and on finance.

In addition to the *Sobor* (States-General or General Council) the Tsar called to his assistance the *Boyarskaya Duma*,<sup>1</sup> or Privy Council, composed of *boyars*. Sometimes, as in 1681–1682, the *Boyarskaya Duma* was convened together with the “serving people.”<sup>2</sup> This was the assembly which abolished the *myestnichestvo*, or order of seniority, by which rank in the army depended upon the rank of family and the length of time the family had been supplying “serving people” to the State, and not upon personal qualifications.

The last *sobor* to be convoked was that of 1698. In this instance it was not called for legislative or financial purposes, nor to decide upon peace or war; it was called as a court of law to hear the case against the Tsarevna Sophia, the sister of Peter the Great, who was accused of intrigues against Peter while he was absent in Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The *sobori*, like the parliaments and assemblies of England, were not established by law. They sprang into existence through summons. To the earlier *sobori* there were summoned only the official and military classes. After the anarchy, representatives from all

<sup>1</sup> For the meaning of the word *Duma*, see Glossary, vol. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Kovalevsky, M., *Russian Political Institutions*, p. 70. This assembly was convened for the purpose of reforming the military administration; but it performed the same service for Russia that the priest and the barber performed for Don Quixote; it burned the books of heraldry, as they did those of chivalry.

<sup>3</sup> That this *sobor* was convoked rests exclusively upon the authority of Korb, secretary of the German legation at the time. Cf. Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 71.



the recognized estates were summoned—the superior clergy, the higher nobility, the lower clergy, the lower nobility, or the “serving people,” the three guilds of the Moscow merchants, citizens of the towns, and in the case of two *sobori*—those of 1614 and 1682—the State peasants. Sometimes the army was represented by delegates from regiments.<sup>1</sup>

Professor Kovalevsky gives a copy of a writ of summons. The writ is dated 9th September 1619.

“In the name of the Tsar Mikhail, the *Voyevoda* of Ustujna, named Buturlin, is ordered to elect among the clergy one man or two, and from the nobility two persons, and two more from the inhabitants of the urban district. The persons must be well-to-do and intelligent, capable of narrating the wrongs they have sustained, and the oppression and destruction which they have suffered. The election rolls must be sent by the *Voyevoda* to Moscow, and should be received not later than St. Nicholas Day.”<sup>2</sup>

These writs were sent to the *voyevode*, or governors of *guberni*, and to *gubnie starosti*, or district elders. It was the duty of one or other to summon the electors and to order them to choose their representatives. Each estate elected its member separately. Occasionally it appears that the “returning officer,” as he would be called in English phraseology, took upon himself to nominate and return a representative without consulting the electors. In one such case at least the officer was sharply reprimanded from headquarters.<sup>3</sup> The representatives were usually drawn from the class which they represented, but this was not an invariable rule.<sup>4</sup> It appears that it was customary for electors to give to their representatives *nakasi*, or instructions, upon the attitude they should adopt towards the subjects which might be discussed at the *sobor*.<sup>5</sup> They also received supplies of victuals (*zapasi*) for the period during which they had to remain in Moscow.<sup>6</sup>

But the *sobori* were not composed exclusively of elected elements; their composition was really very complex. In addition to the members of the *Boyarskaya Duma*, there were also summoned the

<sup>1</sup> Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75. Unfortunately no copies of such instructions have been found. They seem to have been similar to the “Instructions” of the English constituencies.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

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clerks from the *prekazi*, or Government departmental offices, and it included also the *osvyatschennie sobor*, or ecclesiastical assembly, consisting of the Patriarch (until the abolition of his office), the metropolitans, and bishops, with others of the higher clergy who were summoned. Within the elected elements there were also, usually, the highest metropolitan functionaries.<sup>1</sup> The composition of the *sobori* was by no means uniform. Frequently persons were summoned who did not usually fall within any of the numerous categories of persons who were habitually summoned. In general the *sobor* appears to have consisted largely of "placemen," functionaries to whom the actual business of legislation inevitably fell as a rule. It should be mentioned that foreigners were also summoned from the higher commercial ranks of those who resided permanently in Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

"On two occasions only, in 1649 and in 1682, the members of the *sobor* assembled in two different chambers—a higher and a lower";<sup>3</sup> but the estates seem always to have deliberated separately.<sup>4</sup> The *sobori* made their wishes known to the Tsar by means of petition; they had no right to initiate legislation. Fletcher, the English Ambassador to Russia in 1588, notices this point, and attributes to it the inefficiency of the *sobor* when compared with the English Parliament.<sup>5</sup> The decisions at which the estates arrived were finally "condensed into a single document" known as the *zemskie prigovor*, "decree" or "sentence" of the people.

It is very evident that the general deterioration of society which followed the legal confirmation of personal bondage, and which removed the peasants *en masse* as "unfree" from any participation in the elections to the *sobori*, must have inflicted a grave injury upon the *sobori* themselves. They ceased altogether to be representative

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iii. p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> This was the case also in Finland until the recent changes. The Diet was divided into four estates, each estate meeting in a separate chamber, the chambers giving upon one circular gallery. The constituent estates of the Diet were the nobles, the clergy, the merchants, and the farmers. So also in Sweden.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 76. See also *Of the Russe Commonwealth*, by Dr. Giles Fletcher, Hakluyt Society, London, 1856, p. 30. On the *sobori* and their history see Latkin, *Materials for a History of the Sobors*, and the very interesting sketch by Professor Kovalevsky, of which use has been made above. See also Kluchevsky, ii. 475-504, and iii. 97.

of the mass of the people in so far as they may be said at any time to have been so ; and their development into useful representative assemblies was arrested. The *zemsky sobor*, or peoples' assembly, was no longer entitled to its name. It now represented only the ruling class ; and from thenceforward it enjoyed neither the consideration of the Tsar, who naturally recognized in it a class institution, and not a popular assembly, nor the confidence of the mass of the people, who were not represented in it, and who were disposed to expect from it merely extensions of the privileges of the class to which it belonged.

“The *sobori* were never abolished by law. They simply ceased to exist, just as did the States-General of France, between the beginning of the seventeenth and the end of the eighteenth century.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FOURTH PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

#### PART II

(a) 1682-1725

#### THE MILITARY, FISCAL, AND COMMERCIAL POLICY OF PETER THE GREAT

WHEN Peter I acceded to the throne at the age of ten years, two gigantic tasks remained to be performed. So soon as he became conscious of his powers and able to exercise them, Peter set himself to the performance of these tasks. They were the political unification of the Russian State and the fixation of a "scientific frontier." When he acceded, about one-half of the total area of his subsequent empire was beyond the effective boundaries of Russia, and towards the south and the west the frontiers were exposed to continuous aggressions.<sup>1</sup> The defence of the southern boundaries was his first concern. To this end it was necessary to consolidate the control of the north coast of the Black Sea and the shores of the Sea of Azov. In the Sea of Azov the first Russian fleet made its appearance; and dockyards sprang up along the reaches of the Don. By means of his new navy, Peter took Azov from the Turks, and he then built great fortifications at Petropolis.<sup>2</sup> The aggression of Sweden, then at the height of its power, drew Peter from the south to the north, and, moreover, drew Russia, through alliances with Poland and Denmark, into the network of European international affairs.

Peter's visits to Western Europe gave him fresh ideas, which he impulsively proceeded to put into immediate execution. He re-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Navy, docks, and fortifications were all built by means of the forced labour of thousands of State peasants. For example, five thousand were employed on the works at Petropolis.

turned abruptly to bring down an energetic hand upon the head of his sister Sophia, and upon the revolt of the *Streltsi*.<sup>1</sup>

Peter<sup>2</sup> then directed his attention to the Baltic. He took advantage of the restiveness of the Livonian landowners under the rule of Sweden, and allied himself with Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, and with Frederick IV, King of Denmark. The outcome of the alliances was a simultaneous attack upon Riga by Poland, and upon Narva by Russia. Charles XII, then a youth of eighteen, acted with vigour; he compelled Augustus to raise the siege of Riga, and at once marched upon Peter, who was investing Narva with a large but ill-equipped and ill-disciplined force.<sup>3</sup> Peter had gone temporarily to bring up reinforcements, leaving in command the Duke von Croi, who, being a German, had slender authority over the Russian troops, which were composed partly of people of Slavic origin and partly of "serving Tartars."<sup>4</sup> At this juncture Charles arrived before Narva, attacked at once, routed the Russian outposts, and forced the main body to retire.

Defeat at Narva was more beneficial to Peter than victory was to Charles. Peter at once set himself to the task of military organi-

<sup>1</sup> The *Streltsi* (literally, musketeers) make their first appearance in Novgorod under Vasili Ivanovich. They were endowed with certain privileges, and they thus constituted a definite class in society. Their affairs were administered in the *Streltsi Prehaz*, or Bureau for *Streltsi* Affairs. In the reign of Ivan IV (the Terrible) they became the nucleus of a regular Russian army. Peter the Great reduced their number to 20,000, and brought them under the direct control of the Military Department. (Cf. P. L—n in Brockhaus and Ephron's *Russia in the Past and Present*. St. Petersburg, 1900, p. 171.)

<sup>2</sup> At this time Peter was twenty-eight years of age. He was of enormous stature (almost 7 ft.), and, like most giants, was of simple character, devoid of affectation, and impatient of intrigue. His constant use of hammer and axe had developed his muscular power, which he liked to exercise in unusual feats of strength. He rolled up silver plates into tubes with his hands, and he severed pieces of cloth with a knife when they were thrown into the air. Peter inherited his physique and his mental alertness from his mother's family the Naryshkins. This family produced several able men, one of whom, who seems not to have made a dignified use of his talents, appeared as a clown in entertainments at the court of Katherine II. Either from hereditary tendencies derived from his paternal ancestry, the previous history of which indicates a weak stock, from fright at the sanguinary scenes in the Kremlin of Moscow in 1682, or from the debauches of his youth, or from all of these together, Peter was from his twentieth year subject to nervous disorder. From that time, in moments of thought or excitement, his head shook involuntarily and his face was distorted by nervous spasms. He had a habit while walking of swinging his arms violently. Sketches of Peter at later periods confirm these impressions of his personality. (Cf. *infra*, p. 162.) Cf. also Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 34-5.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, pp. 104-109.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 104.

zation. This great measure reacted upon the whole administration, induced the complete recasting of the public service, and promoted the education which was necessary to prepare the men who should have to deal with the new problems that the policy of Peter forced the nation to encounter. Charles, on the other hand, inflated with victory, marched upon Cracow, took the city, advanced into Saxony, and forced Augustus to abdicate. Victorious everywhere, Charles now determined to invade Russia. He crossed the Vistula, then the Berezina, and turned southwards towards the Ukraine, where Mazepa, the hetman of the Cossacks, had promised to join him. The Russians, pursuing the tactics made famous by a later and even more significant campaign, hung upon the flanks of the Swedish army; and the severity of the winter of 1708-1709 decimated and demoralized the Swedes, who, nevertheless, laid siege to Poltava. There Peter attacked and defeated them on 27th June 1709. Charles, who had been wounded, fled with Mazepa, and took refuge among the Turks.

Poltava gave to Peter the command of the Baltic, and secured for his country the status of an European power; but the influence of the victory upon the interior development of Russia was a still more important fact. The building up of a regular army on the Western European model, out of the social elements available to the hands of Peter, had of itself altered materially the social structure. The obligation of military service had been extended to the non-serving classes. War had ceased to be a profession exclusively reserved for noblemen and gentlemen. The army, previously composed of noblemen and their serfs, was now drawn from all the social ranks, and the serfs went into military service as soldiers forming the rank and file of regiments, and no longer as members of groups headed by the serf-owners. Although the process was a long one, extending as it did over fully a century and a half, the organization of a regular army may be held to be the first phase of the downfall of bondage right.<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the *Oprichnia*, or Regiment of Life Guards, by Ivan IV (the Terrible) had, however, been the first blow at the military and political influence of the nobility, because this regiment was composed of persons of all classes, serfs as well as noblemen, selected individually for the purpose of guarding the person of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 109.

the Tsar. In the time of Ivan IV the danger of attack upon the Tsar lay chiefly in the spheres of the *boyarstvo*; thus the formation of this body of men-at-arms was aimed directly at the nobility.<sup>1</sup> The *oprichnia* was utilized by Ivan IV, and also by Boris Godunov, in the conflicts between the central authority and the local nobility and gentry.

In the sentence of the *zemskoë sobor* of 30th June 1611, the nobility had declared itself not merely as representing the country, but as the country itself—ignoring altogether the other constituent elements of society.<sup>2</sup> This conception of the status of the nobility grew inevitably out of the bondage right. Since the population was divided into two categories, the masters and the serfs, the masters regarded themselves as alone constituting the nation, because their serfs had no political status. The possessors of bondage right, in spite of the numerous social layers of which the group was composed, came to look upon themselves as having a certain solidarity of interest. When *myestnichestvo* was abolished in 1682, the *boyarstvo* generally was “drowned”<sup>3</sup> in the mass of the possessors of bondage right. The scant courtesy with which Peter and some of his underbred entourage treated the old Russian *boyars*, who represented for them all that savoured of Byzantism, still further contributed to diminish the influence and importance of the *boyars* in the eyes of the people.<sup>4</sup> Peter even extinguished the name of *boyarstvo* by giving the class in which it was now absorbed a new double-barrelled Polish-Russian name—*Shlyachetstvo e dvoryanstvo*—nobility and gentry. This class was not educationally fitted to grapple with the administrative problems which confronted the nation, nor was it fitted to have any cultural influence of a high order; yet there fell to it inevitably the task of reform.

The material with which Peter fought and lost the battle of Narva, and the material which he had to improve into an effective fighting force wherewith to defeat the Swedes at the battle of Pol-

<sup>1</sup> The *oprichnia* consisted of a body of 1000 men, afterwards raised to 6000. Their duties were largely those of a military police or gendarmerie. On his saddle bow each man carried a dog's head and a broom. The first was to indicate that his duty was to track down the traitors to the Tsar and to bite them, and the second was to indicate that they must sweep aside all sedition. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 224-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* “Contemporary writers place the hour of the death of the *boyarstvo* as a ruling class in 1687.”

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

tava have been described with some severity by a peasant who made a complaint in 1701 about the conduct of military affairs. He speaks of the pusillanimity and incompetence of the military class. "There are," he says, "many people who go to military service who cannot be looked at attentively without a sense of shame. The infantry had inferior muskets, and they could not use them. They fought with their fists, or with spears and halberds—these latter being usually blunt; and they lost their heads to an extent three or four times greater than did the enemy. . . . Then the cavalry—thin jades, blunt swords, poor and ill-dressed soldiers, without muskets, incapable of loading or of aiming at a mark. . . . They do not care to kill an enemy. They care only to get home. They pray that they may be wounded slightly, so that they might not suffer, and yet that they might be rewarded for their wound by the Tsar. . . . In the field they skulk behind bushes, or hide themselves in the woods or valleys. I have heard the nobility say, 'God grant that we may serve the Tsar, and not draw our swords from their sheathes.'"<sup>1</sup> Allowing for the prejudice of a peasant, this seems to present the military class which Peter had to hammer into an army; and this class was composed of members of the serving families which in times of peace hung about the Moscow court.<sup>2</sup> Racially, the class was variously composed. There were Tartars from the Tartar hordes on the confines of the Empire, there were Lithuanians and Germans as well as Moscow Russ properly so called. These latter were also variously composed. There were the scions of old Moscow houses, and there were members of provincial noble families who had distinguished themselves in the service of the Tsar, and who for that reason had been brought to the capital. During peace these people formed the court of the Tsar and attended upon him on ceremonial occasions. From their ranks were drawn the commanders of provincial battalions and the officers of the administrative system. "In brief, the class so composed was an administrative class, a general staff, and a corps of the guard."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> In 1681 the numbers of men in the military serving class was 6385; in 1700 (at the time of Narva) there were 11,533, according to the lists. These, with their *kholopi*, made up the fighting force. The families to which this class belonged formed about one-third of the population of Moscow. *Ibid.*, iv. p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 97.



These functions bred in the serving class a habit of exercising power. Their constant presence in the capital gave them an outlook upon international relations, and they thus became the medium through which the western world acted upon that portion of Russian society which had little sympathy with western ideas.<sup>1</sup> Through this class Peter had to act in order to carry out the plans which had been suggested to him by his own studies of western affairs. When he imported, as he did, western experts, he had to place alongside them men from the serving class to learn from them and to adopt their methods. The schools and colleges which he established were for the benefit of the youth of the serving class.

The reorganization of the army was begun by the gradual formation of guard regiments out of the nobility in the capital. Some of the officers were sent by Peter to study abroad. From this class also Peter took his heads of civil and ecclesiastical departments, and the superintendents of the industrial enterprises of the State. In the absence of ready money, the salaries of these various functionaries were perforce paid in land, and thus the serving class became by far the greatest landowners, and, of course, also serf-owners. The feverish activity of Peter, and the demands which he made upon their service, left the conscientious functionaries little time to devote to their estates, and the unconscientious found means to evade their public duties by hiding themselves in remote villages, where mobilization orders could not reach them.<sup>2</sup> Peter's enthusiasm for education led to his insistence that children of the serving class should pass an examination before being admitted to the public service.<sup>3</sup> He even required that before a marriage licence was issued, a certificate from a teacher should be produced showing that a certain educational standard had been attained. By an ukase of 1714, compulsory education of laymen was introduced. The education was, however, not very extensive—arithmetic, elementary geometry, geography, and elementary religious knowledge alone were required. This education was to be derived between the ages of ten and fifteen. At the latter age the public service was to be entered upon, higher education, even when desired, was not to be permitted, because a too advanced education was injurious to the service,<sup>4</sup> and because

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, iv. p. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Especially in arithmetic and geography. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 104.

the pursuit of higher education might conduce to the avoidance of service altogether.

Notwithstanding the fact that the ukase rendered education obligatory, and notwithstanding the fact that schools and teachers were provided, the nobility failed to send their children for education. They even considered the obligation to learn arithmetic a "useless burden." Peter was, however, determined to carry out his compulsory system. He imposed a penalty upon non-observance of his edict. This penalty was pile-driving in the Moskva River. In accordance with his habit, he visited the scene of the punishment in person; and it is related that on one occasion he saw his General-Admiral (Apraksin) driving piles together with juvenile members of his family. He demanded of the Admiral why he was so engaged. The Admiral answered that all his nephews and grandsons were pile-driving, and added, "Who am I, that I should have a preference over the rest of the family?"<sup>1</sup>

The reorganization of the army involved necessarily the reorganization of the serving system and the division of "serving people" into two classes—the military division and the civil division. Moreover, the former territorial division of the army was abolished. Regiments ceased to be territorial, and became mere military units. "The barracks extinguished provincialism."<sup>2</sup> The soldiers, no longer confined to their native province, found themselves transferred to distant places. They thought of themselves no longer as belonging to this or that district, but as belonging to this or that regiment of the guard.

The result of these changes was the formation of a military class, which might under strong hands become the blind instrument of centralized power, and in weak hands might become like the Pretorian Guards or the Janissaries.<sup>3</sup>

Although Peter carried this reorganization to a high pitch, the process had really begun earlier. During the anarchy the regiments of nobles who congregated in Moscow under Prince Trubetskoy in 1611, conceived the design of conquering Russia, and of controlling its destinies under the pretence of defending it from the Poles. The Romanov dynasty, through the establishment of bondage right,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104. The schools were, however, very indifferent. For an excellent account of the educational administration under Peter, see Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 317-37.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 111.

made a regular army ultimately inevitable, and Peter, without realizing fully what use might be made of such a force by his successors, was obliged to create a regular army in order to secure his frontiers.<sup>1</sup>

But it was necessary to readjust the complicated service conditions with the related system of provisional landowning, in order to bring them into accordance with the new professional military system. The hereditary service system had broken down, but its consequences remained. The problem was how to adjust the inheritance of estates granted on conditions of service, to the new circumstances under which selection for service depended rather upon capacity than upon heredity. The problem was solved by an ukase of 20th March 1684, two years after the accession of Peter, and while he was still a youth. The solution involved the granting to direct heirs of large estates, land inherited by them, independently of service or of salaries for service, and to grant such estates to indirect heirs only under certain conditions. The effects of this ukase were the *familization* of estates, and later the division of these among members of the family, a process which was not compatible with the holding of land contingent upon service. The creation of a regular army thus meant the decay of estate possession through service, and the transference of *pomyestya* into *votchinal* lands. Through this process, by the beginning of the eighteenth century serving landownership had practically disappeared.

The ukase of 23rd March 1714 established the hereditary character of estate possession, and settled the ownership of estates of all kinds as a family affair. Immovables—land, &c.—were to pass from a testator to one of his sons, selected by the testator. Movables were to be divided by the testator among the other members of his family. In cases of intestacy, immovables were to go to the eldest son, whom failing, the eldest daughter, and movables were to be divided equally among the other children. A childless testator could leave his immovables to any member of his family he pleased, and he could bequeath his movables as he liked. In cases of intestacy where there were no children of the deceased owner, the immovables went to the nearest heir, and the movables to the other heirs. In the same ukase there is a provision that, should a cadet of a noble family become a merchant, or should he after forty years of

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. III.

age enter the "white clergy," the act should not be regarded as dishonourable to himself or to his family.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to place this law to the personal credit of Peter, for he was only a boy of twelve, but it must, nevertheless, be ranked with the reforms of his reign. The estates ceased to be burdened with the support of numerous heirs, involving the exaction of excessive works by the peasants; the cadets were obliged to "seek their own bread." The principle of "single heredity," which differed wholly from that of primogeniture, was not derived from any system in vogue in Western Europe, but was of purely Russian origin. It was, indeed, devised to meet the contemporary conditions of Russian life. Professor Kluchevsky<sup>2</sup> characterizes the new system as a hereditary indivisible and perpetually obligatory system of ownership, in which the owner was bound to serve, and the family was forced to provide this serving owner.

Under the old Russian system the *votchina*, or heritable estate, was not divisible; while the *pomyestye*, or estate held by service, was not hereditary. By means of the ukase of 23rd March 1684 the two forms of estate were combined—all estates became hereditary, indivisible, and inalienable from the family, and all owners of estates were bound to serve. The new serving ownership was the field from which afterwards Peter drew the officers for his regular army.

But the ulterior effects of this ukase were the creation of a proletarian gentry, composed of the "wronged" brothers and sisters of the selected heir, and the prevalence of family disputes and of actions at law. Subsequent ukases during Peter's reign modified the provisions of the original law, and gave back to the unselected members of the family some of the privileges which had been taken from them. The net result was that in succeeding reigns, the provisions of the ukase of 1684 were entirely abrogated, divisions of estates became frequent, and the attempted reform produced in the long run only confusion.<sup>3</sup>

The composition of Russian society in the early years of the reign of Peter was as follows:

1. Serving people—the owners of estates, obliged to render military or civil service.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119. See also *infra*, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

2. The merchantry

3. The peasantry.

The latter class was divided into

(a) The bonded peasants belonging to private owners ;

(b) The State and Court peasants.

Within and among these latter groups there was, however, an intricate series of minor groups :

Full *kholopi*, under perpetual or temporary bonds.

Free people—consisting of freed *kholopi*, of peasants who had abandoned their occupation and had ceased to pay taxes, of serving people who had left their estates, and of professional beggars.

Aged poor who received alms, or who were sheltered in houses, monasteries, and churches.

Servants in the monasteries and churches, who served unbonded.

Children of the clergy (*tserkovnĕkĕ*), either hanging about the churches, or engaged in trade or in private service.

4. The clergy.

The above detail indicates how far the disintegration of society had gone. A certain proportion of the social mass had retained a definite status, but great numbers had ceased to have any taxpaying relation to the State, and had fallen out of any definite place in society, wandering about—mere vagabonds—free, but without useful enjoyment or exercise of their liberty.

Peter turned his eyes towards this drifting mass, and began to recruit his army from it. He did not confine himself to the drift—he openly violated bondage right by recruiting, with or without the consent of their owners, what *kholopi* he required. Indeed, many *kholopi* left the estates to which they belonged and voluntarily enlisted in the army, thus exchanging one form of service for another—abandoning cultivation for service as soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Out of these two elements, serfs and others taken from, or voluntarily leaving their estates and the proletarian vagabonds, the army with which Peter fought in the battles of Narva, Riga, and Schlüsselburg was chiefly composed. Some of them died on the field, some of them died of infectious diseases, or of cold and hunger, most of them ran away.<sup>2</sup>

The exigencies of the Treasury, and the absence of an administra-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

tive organization corresponding to the numbers of his new army and the requirements of his new system, compelled Peter to call upon the nobility to provide barracks in their districts for the soldiers who were sent there. The nobility evaded this duty as much as possible, quartering the soldiers in peasants' houses. Then compulsory building of barracks began. Peasants were taken from their customary labours; funds were raised by poll taxes; but the business of barrack-building was ill-organized, and quantities of building material were wasted.<sup>1</sup>

The army, such as it was, could not be kept in idleness. Peter utilized it as a police force; by means of it brigandage was put down, peasant flights were prevented, and smugglers were seized. Meanwhile, a certain element of local government was introduced spontaneously by the landowners, who found it indispensable that they should act together. But the presence among them of colonels of regiments owing obedience to no one but the Tsar, and themselves belonging to districts other than those to the garrison of which they belonged, led to increased centralization, for the colonels were endowed with certain powers which enabled them to bring under the rebuke of the Tsar the nobility of their district. The inevitable result was a conflict of the new military authority with the older authority of the *pomyetschëk*, the governor, and the *voyevoda*, or military governor under the old system. Peasant and *pomyetschëk* alike resented the new system of centralization, with its military tentacles spread in every direction, reaching into the peasant's *ëzba* as into the manor house of the *pomyetschëk*. The officers of the army were employed not merely as policemen, but also as tax-gatherers. Armed visitations were made three times a year for the purpose of collecting the taxes, which all persons were now required to pay. Only after the death of Peter did the Senate take notice of these proceedings. The military tax-gatherers took "the last means of the peasants in taxes"; and peasants sometimes realized all their belongings for what prices they would fetch, and "ran away into strange borders" in order to escape the rapacity of the military agents of the Government. These flights became so frequent that in the Kazanskaya *gub.*, for example, one group of peasants, numbering 13,000, was diminished by one-half.<sup>2</sup> It is little wonder that

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. There were 126 of these military police commands in ten *guberni*.

the peasant population were frightened, and that they fled beyond the reach of the new tax-collecting army whenever they could do so. With one hand Peter had set about consolidating and reorganizing society, and with the other he had set about dispersing it. He organized one set of free vagabonds to produce another set out of the settled peasant groups. On this side, at least, Peter's reforms did not make for progress.

That readjustment of taxation was necessary there can be no doubt ; but it is doubtful if Peter, or any of his entourage, clearly perceived the reactions which must follow the legislative measures which were adopted. It is probable that, in imposing a poll tax, Peter had in view exclusively the bonded peasants ; but the effect of his policy of taxing per census soul was to bring upon the tax-rolls all the Court and State peasants as well as free single householders and townsmen.

In thus arbitrarily imposing taxation upon all classes, disregarding historical exemptions and privileges, Peter "surpassed his ancestors."<sup>1</sup> In 1722 there was issued an extraordinary ukase, by which all persons found living in or about churches, not being "priests, deacons, cantors, or sextons," were not only inscribed on the poll-tax rolls, but were also bound "for nothing" to the proprietors of the lands upon which the churches in question stood. In case the churches stood apart from private land, the "hangers-on" might chose to whom they should be given.

By means of successive ukases, *kholopi* set at liberty by the deaths of their proprietors, as well as all *kholopi* who were liberated during the lives of their masters, were obliged to present themselves for examination for entrance into the army. If they were accepted, they were bound to serve ; or if they preferred to bind themselves anew to some proprietor, that proprietor was obliged to find a substitute. If they were rejected, the liberated *kholopi* were obliged either to go into public service other than the army, or to bind themselves anew to some proprietor. Non-observance of these rules brought upon the offender the punishment of the galleys. No idler was allowed to exist. Everyone must belong to one or other of four classes—he must be an officer or a soldier, a master or a servant.

Military service was perpetual, and in that respect was more restrictive of liberty than was temporary *kholopstvo* or *kholopstvo*

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. p. 130.

limited by the life of the master. It must be realized also that the compulsory and perpetual service of the army was imposed not only upon transferred *khologi*, but upon freed *khologi*, as well as upon other free people.

The effect of the imposition of the poll tax, and the collection of it, in the first instance through the military organization as described, and afterwards through the landowners, was the fusion of the numerous varieties of bondmen into one mass. Previously the *kholog* was a non-taxpayer, and was therefore separable from the mass of the free and land-bondaged peasantry. Under Peter he became a taxpayer, and the system of bondage was extended over the free peasantry. Inscription upon the tax list was no longer the criterion of freedom; it became indeed a sign of servitude. The land bondage of the peasant and the personal bondage of the *kholog* were fused together, and the resulting class came to be subject to land and personal bondage alike.<sup>1</sup>

The collection of taxes by the military was temporary, but when the local commissaries were left to collect the taxes, and later, when the *pomyetschêkê* were required to collect the taxes for the Government, they were obliged to sustain the expectations of the Treasury by obtaining and producing amounts equal to those which had been extorted from the peasants by the military functionaries. Peter had said in 1723 that, in order to make "a good beginning," the first year's poll tax should be collected by his own army officers. The "good beginning" had been made, and the tradition of severity had been established.

The foundation of many subsequent difficulties is here apparent. The enrolment of all persons living upon an estate as taxpayers, and the appointment of the proprietor of the estate as tax-collector, had, as logical consequences under contemporary local conditions, the endowment of the proprietor with police powers, frequent application to the Government for the strengthening of these, and eventually the complete identification in the minds of the peasants of the *pomyetschêkê* and the Government. Both stood before him as oppressors of the poor and as extortioners from the necessitous. The relations between the *pomyetschêkê* and the Government brought about acquiescence on the part of the latter in changes which now

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 132, and Semevsky, *Peasants in the reign of Katherine II*. St. Petersburg, 1903 edition, i. ch. xi., *passim*.



began to make their appearance. The various classes of peasants, full *kholopi*, *dvorovie lyudē*, peasants who were working out loans, *tyaglo* peasants who paid the State taxes, backyard people, &c., cease to be sharply distinguished from one another. The *dvorovie lyudē* are sent into the fields, and field-working peasants are brought into the courtyard. The transference from hand to hand of estates with peasants became common. No doubt these changes grew gradually out of the practice of landowners. The imposition of the poll tax, however, revealed the practice and encouraged it.<sup>1</sup>

While the total tax per peasant soul upon his estate was demanded of the *pomyetschēk* in a specified sum, the amount which he might individually collect was not specified. The payment of taxes was confused with the other obligations of his peasants, and wide opportunities for extortion and for misunderstanding were opened up.

The utilization of the *pomyetschēk* as Government agent for tax-collecting, and for police and magisterial duties, had other results in the minds of the peasants. During the reign of Peter the peasants seem to have regarded the *pomyetschēk* as a commissary of the Tsar, who had recently assumed this office and who might be removed from it.<sup>2</sup> This attitude of the peasant toward the *pomyetschēk* has appeared at every agrarian crisis from Peter's time until now.<sup>3</sup>

A really far-sighted reformer, in so far as peasant affairs were concerned, during Peter's reign, was the peasant author, Pososhkov. Pososhkov proposed that a congress of great and small proprietors should be convened, and that the advice of this congress should be taken about the taxation of the peasants, that this taxation should be fixed and certain in respect to individual peasants, and should not vary at the caprice or under the extortion of the landowner. He also suggested that the number of days of *bartschina* should be fixed; and still more importantly, he anticipated the provisions of the Emancipation Law of 19th February 1861, by suggesting that the peasants' allotments should be separated from the landowners' land.<sup>4</sup>

These were not isolated ideas. Peter seems often to have been

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> This view is expressed by Pososhkov, himself a peasant, who may be regarded as giving literary expression to current peasant ideas. Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, ii. p. 333.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 135.

advised to curtail or to abolish bondage right ; but he consistently refused, apparently afraid of a general upheaval of the peasant mass. He disliked the traffic in human flesh which the sale of peasants involved, yet his central authority was not powerful enough to put a stop to it in the teeth of the hostility of the small gentry.<sup>1</sup>

The system of poll-tax payment and the consequent fusion of the *kholopstvo* with the bonded peasantry, induced or contributed to a change in the method of distributing the land. Previously the method in vogue was known as *cherezpulosye*, or the cultivation of separated, and sometimes widely separated, strips by the same peasant.<sup>2</sup> Now under the influences described, this system was replaced by the *sovmeštnoj*, or mutual system.<sup>3</sup>

The net results of the reforms of Peter the Great, so far as the bonded peasants were concerned, were an alteration in the character of the bondage relation, and an alteration in the constituents of the class under bondage, rather than either a mitigation or an intensification of the pressure of bondage right. Nevertheless, the changes which were effected seem to have bred in the bonded peasants, and in the *pomyetschêkê* alike, new ideas. The peasants began to look forward to a time when bondage would disappear, and the *pomyetschêkê* began to regard the bonded peasant more as an economical unit than as an irremovable portion of his estate, while at the same time he began to regard the *kholop* also as an economical unit rather than as a personal bondman. The fusion of the two latter classes, and the absorption into bondage of previously unbonded elements, increased the number of bonded people—who now came to be known by that name which was then new—in Russian, *kryepostnye lyudê*,<sup>4</sup> or bonded people.

While thus the reforms of Peter did not either formally intensify or formally limit bondage right, the effect of the legislation of his reign was to throw society back into Græco-Roman conditions. The bulk of the Russian population were in uniform bondage. The antique Græco-Roman expression was strictly applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> As in Germany, France, England, and Scotland. See Seeböhm, Vinogradov, &c. Perhaps the most perfect survival of the intermixture of strips is to be found in the village of New Aberdour, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. On the inconveniences of the system, see Khodsky, *Land and Cultivator*, St. Petersburg, 1891, i. pp. 158 *et seq.*; and A. de Foville, *La Morcellement*, pp. 150 *et seq.* Cited by Khodsky, *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

"Slavery is one and indivisible. . . . About a slave nothing can be said, but that he is a slave."<sup>1</sup>

Peter cared little for liberty; what he did care for was revenue for his Treasury; but notwithstanding his disregard for traditional justice, he succeeded in adding only one hundred thousand taxpayers to his tax rolls.

The economical results otherwise were, however, not to be despised. Under the old Russian system of taxation, the taxes were levied upon plough-land. The increasing weight of the taxes not only tended to prevent the taxpayers from accumulating agricultural capital, but also to prevent them from maintaining the level of agricultural production. For this reason, and also because of the prevalence of a desire to disappoint the Treasury, considerable areas of plough-land passed out of cultivation, and the yield from the taxes upon plough-land diminished. In order to counteract this tendency towards loss of revenue, the State tax was placed upon households, and not directly upon land. This expedient was only moderately successful, because the practice was adopted of crowding numerous peasant families into the same courtyard. The Treasury gained slightly, but village well-being deteriorated. When again the tax upon households was abrogated, and the tax upon peasant souls substituted, the motives which induced diminution of cultivation disappeared, and although the tax per soul was somewhat heavy,<sup>2</sup> the amount of land under cultivation increased. While there were many causes for this increase of cultivation, the effect of the poll tax must be regarded as one of them. Through it the bonded people were bound more firmly to the land, and were, as we have seen, increased in number. There was no room for the evasion of the tax, either by diminishing production or by concentrating peasants in a relatively small number of households. The area of land under cultivation increased enormously during the eighteenth century, and the resources of the peasants and of the *pomyetschëkë* increased also, while the State finances gained with the increase of population.<sup>3</sup>

If Peter thus succeeded in inducing an increase in agricultural

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> The amount of the tax was 70 kopeks per soul (about 5 rubles 60 kopeks in modern money); but the individual incidence of it varied on different estates. See also *infra*, pp. 136-7.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 139.

production, perhaps rather by accident, or through the operation of the social forces, than by design,<sup>1</sup> the case was otherwise in regard to the increase of industrial production. No one realized more fully than Peter the Great the significance of the truth which after his time was expressed in the famous first sentence of *The Wealth of Nations*. If the organization of an army and a navy occupied the first place in his thoughts and in his plans, the increase of the productive powers of his people certainly occupied the second. His greatness is nowhere more manifest than in the tireless energy, the breadth of vision, and the masterly economic ability with which he prosecuted his industrial aims. His task was, in effect, to create industrial enterprise among a people used certainly to commerce and to agriculture, but whose technical ability in craftsmanship was not high, and among whom the management of industry on a large scale had not as yet existed. The resources of his country were, and are, so vast that after more than two hundred years of exploitation, they are even now scarcely more than superficially touched.

When Peter visited Western Europe for the first time, in 1697-1698, he was deeply impressed with the productivity of the labour of the West. He attributed the productiveness to the habit of study which western people practised, and to the intelligent application of the knowledge they acquired; and he determined to induce the same habit among his own people.

As a young man of twenty-five, he cannot be supposed to have made any deep researches into the effects upon the economic life of England and Holland of the mercantile system, then in the full blast of its activity. He appears, however, to have grasped the idea that it was highly expedient for a nation to produce what it uses, and that a nation should import as little and export as much as possible. This was in brief the economic doctrine current in the end of the seventeenth century. Peter devoted himself to the elaboration of an economic policy in accordance with the maxims of seventeenth-century mercantilism, and before he left the West, he engaged hundreds of craftsmen and overseers to go to Russia to teach his people the trades they professed. But although Peter was thus stimulated by the contemporary economic policy of the West, there was nothing in it which was inconsistent with the common practice of

<sup>1</sup> Although his directly designed improvements in agriculture were important.

Russian life. The typical Russian household was self-contained. Nothing came into it from the external world save some luxuries. Only the application of the economic policy of the household to the nation was necessary. The whole question was one of scale. Peter was easily convinced, and being convinced, he acted, with his customary energy, immediately.

According to Pososhkov, Peter knew very well that to embark upon a national economic policy meant a large initial outlay, and that for some time the cost of production in Russia must be greater than elsewhere; but he also realized that the resources of Russia were enormous, that these had scarcely been touched, and that in time skill and industry would yield large returns. According to the same authority, Peter also realized that, owing to the absence in Russia of concentrated industrial capital, it would be necessary for the State to use even compulsory measures in order to introduce new industries.<sup>1</sup> While Peter thus apparently conceived that large State expenditures would be necessary, he made up his mind that these should be incurred economically. He kept a sharp eye on everything, put down corruption and fraud mercilessly, although unsuccessfully. He engaged an army of prospectors to search for coal, iron, and other minerals, and initiated means for the conservation of the forests and for the economical use of timber. His thriftiness condescended even to meticulous affairs.<sup>2</sup> He trusted nobody, relied upon no one's initiative but his own and entertained a profound contempt for private enterprise. Certainly Peter looked upon the Russian Empire as his *votchina*—his private inherited estate—which he must develop to the utmost. Perhaps somewhere in his mind, there was a sincere desire that all his gigantic labours should make for the good of his people, or perhaps he did it all out of pride of race, and on the principle of *noblesse oblige*; or, again, he may have been irresistibly impelled to his great efforts by the force of his own genius. In brief, he may have done it because he could not help it. In a special sense he could have said, "L'État, c'est moi," for he identified himself with the State, and especially in his later years, more than either

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> For example, small coffins only were permitted to be made of pine; larger coffins were to be made only of deal, birch, and elder. The use of oak for coffins was prohibited. When Peter sent sheep for the tables of the foreign ambassadors, he ordered the skins to be returned. Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 143.

his predecessors or his successors, he conceived that the well-being of the people, as a whole, is the sole aim of the State.<sup>1</sup>

Peter was not content with inviting in Amsterdam, Paris, London, and elsewhere foreign artizans and foreign masters to come to Russia, every one of his ambassadors at the Courts of Europe was an employment agent, whose business it was to find and to forward suitable capitalists and technically skilled persons for Russian enterprises. Peter was most fastidious in seeing that all the promises which were made to the foreigners were punctually performed, and that they were treated with every consideration. One condition only was exacted from them, viz. that they should teach the Russian people everything they knew.<sup>2</sup> This condition was not always fulfilled. The foreign instructors were sometimes suspected of being under obligation to their home guilds to convey as little instruction as possible.

In addition to the importation of foreign technical instructors, Peter adopted, through the Department of Manufactures (the Manufacture Collegium) a system of sending apprentices abroad to learn their business, the premiums being paid by the Russian Government. It became the fashion for aristocratic Russian youths to go abroad to learn Western languages and Western Science. When they returned, they were, as is usual in such cases, exposed to the derision of their less fortunate friends who jeered at their newly acquired and perhaps offensively displayed European manners.<sup>3</sup>

In his efforts towards the establishment of a new industry Peter had to encounter prejudices and difficulties stronger even than the force of his own ideas. The development of Russian society, involving as it did the binding of the peasant to the soil, thwarted the growth of towns and prevented the emergence of a middle class, intermediate between the landowning gentry and the peasantry.<sup>4</sup> A large part of the commerce of the country was conducted by the gentry, through their stewards, and by the monas-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 438.

<sup>2</sup> Peter also invited instructors in superior branches of education. For example, in 1698 he invited Farquharson from the University of Aberdeen to teach mathematics. In 1701 Farquharson became a professor in the School of Navigation at Moscow; in 1715 he was transferred to the Naval Academy in St. Petersburg. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 318.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> On ulterior social consequences of the absence of a middle class in Russia, see *infra*, ii. Book VII, chap. xiv.

teries. The sale of surplus produce from the great estates was thus either managed directly or was managed through middlemen, who were generally despised by those who employed them. The trading class was thus of little social account. In general their reputation for honesty was not high.

Yet the commerce of Russia was conducted on an extensive scale. Its magnitude struck many foreign observers from the sixteenth century onwards. Chancelour, Jenkinson, Fletcher,<sup>1</sup> and other English ambassadors, travellers, and traders in Russia in the sixteenth century all speak of the great trade in hides, tallow, grain, wax, fish, flax, and furs carried on at Vologda, Kazan, and Nijni Novgorod in particular. De Rodes, writing in 1653, remarks, "It is well known to everybody that the energies of the country (Russia) are directed towards commerce and sale. . . . All, from the lowest to the highest, are thriving upon commerce. In this respect the Russian people are more active than all other people taken together."<sup>2</sup>

The merchants bought from individual producers—craftsmen who brought their wares to the warehouses of the merchants, or who took them to the periodical markets, where the merchants made their purchases. The greater merchants imported goods from abroad, and kept them for sale in their warehouses along with those of native manufacture.<sup>3</sup>

The merchants did not, however, attempt to employ artisans and to engage in industry. They were content to control the market so far as they could, and to fix the prices which they paid and the

<sup>1</sup> See their voyages in Hakluyt and in the volumes of the Hakluyt Society.

<sup>2</sup> J. de Rodes, *Reflections upon Russian Commerce in 1653*. Translated by J. Babst in *Magazine of Agriculture and Travel*, v., 1858, p. 234; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *The Russian Factory, &c.* St. Petersburg, 1907, i. p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Storch, writing in the end of the eighteenth century, describes the system, which was still more in vogue in Peter's time than it was later. "The Russian artizans, with the exception of those in the great towns, make nothing to order; on the contrary, they make everything for sale—shoes, slippers, coats, fur coats, beds, blankets, tables, chairs—in brief, everything. All these things are delivered for a definite price to the merchants, who sell them in their warehouses. It is indeed difficult to get things made to order in the interior of Russia . . . but in the warehouses one may buy anything he desires, and even at a third of the price which the artizans may charge who make to order." Heinrich Storch, *Historisch-Statistische Gemälde des Russischen Reichs am Ende des XVIII Jahrhunderts*. St. Petersburg, 1799, iii. pp. 178-9; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

prices at which they sold, in accordance with the exigencies of this market. They did not seek to transform the individual producer into a wage-earner.<sup>1</sup> In order to be able more firmly to keep down the purchasing prices of the goods brought to them by the craftsmen, the merchants throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries insisted upon complete freedom of trade.<sup>2</sup> Liberty to buy in the cheapest market enabled them to fix a relatively low scale of prices for the domestic producer, who might in some cases be starved into submission, while foreign goods took the place of native products.<sup>3</sup>

A tendency towards monopoly among the merchants is already noticed in the eighteenth century. Some of the larger merchants attempted to crush out the smaller dealers.<sup>4</sup> The latter resented this tendency; but the larger merchants were also not without their grievance. The gentry and the monasteries carried on a large trade in the surplus produce of their estates—in timber, grain, &c.—through their own *dvorovie lyudē*, passing by the professional middlemen. This practice not only interfered with the trade of the latter by entering into competition in the markets, but the gentry and the monasteries were exempt from taxation, while the merchants were subjected to a direct tax of 5 per cent. upon their turnover, and

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> So also in England in the sixteenth century, although the craftsmen objected as much to the competition between town and town in their own country as to the competition of countries other than their own. On the struggles between commercial and industrial capital in England at this time, see Unwin, George, *Industrial Organization in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1904), especially chap. iii. p. 72. The struggle among industrial and commercial centres in the United States in recent times has led to the manipulation of railway rates for the ostensible purpose of "giving everybody a chance"—a necessary corollary of a policy of high protection.

<sup>3</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Noticed after the middle of the eighteenth century by Kilburger (cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 4). "There are more warehouses (in 1769) in Moscow than there are in Amsterdam. . . . The *Gosti* (or Hosts, the large merchants) unrestricted, are controlling the commerce of the whole State. They form a greedy and harmful class. In all the great towns they appoint two or three of the best resident merchants to whom the privilege of *gosti* are given. Through their greed they oppress commerce everywhere. The smaller merchants feel it, and speak severely of the *gosti*. In the case of disturbance, it is to be feared that the people will break their necks." Kilburger, J. P., "Kurzer Unterricht von dem russischen Handel" in *Busching's Magazin für die neue Historie und Geographie*. Hamburg, 1769, p. 156. The same tendency is noticed by Jonas Hanway in *An Historical Account of the British Trade over the Caspian Sea*, &c. London, 1753, i. pp. 76 and 84.



in addition were called upon to render to the Government many gratuitous services.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the situation in the earlier years of the reign of Peter the Great. The superior class—the nobility and gentry—looked with contempt upon merchants and artisans. The merchants were jealous of the gentry, and were clamouring against the unfair privileges with which these were endowed. The small merchants grumbled at the “engrossing” of the large merchants, and the artisan felt himself oppressed by the merchants of all ranks, who kept down the prices they paid by means of foreign goods, which they were allowed to import either freely or for small customs duties. These various currents of cross interests and prejudices constituted some of the obstacles which Peter encountered when he embarked on his scheme of industrial expansion.

The introduction of foreign craftsmen and the establishment of manufactories by foreigners—both classes endowed by the Tsar with special privileges and exemptions, some of these being alleged to be obtained through bribery of Moscow officials—naturally aroused great antagonism. In spite of his admiration for Peter, Pososhkov, speaking from the point of view of the peasant craftsman, reproaches the *boyars* for their contempt of the Russian merchants, and blames the *boyars* for the foreign invasion.

“It is time,” he says, “for them to put away their pride. . . . The foreigners have come over here to give to influential people a gift of a couple of hundred rubles, and out of a hundred rubles to profit to the extent of half a million, because the *boyars* did not regard the merchants more than an eggshell. They would have exchanged the whole of the merchantry for a small coin.”<sup>2</sup>

In ukase after ukase Peter endeavoured to overcome the prejudice of the gentry against commerce and industry, and pursued valiantly his policy of technical education. Peter’s activities in the latter direction were concerned with forces whose period of operation was too prolonged to justify expectation of immediate results; nor did favourable results immediately appear. The prejudices of the nobility against commerce were, however, neither deeply rooted nor difficult to remove. By means of concessions and subsidies, Peter induced the nobility to enter upon industrial enterprises, and in order to do so they were obliged to enter into previously unknown

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

relations with commercial people. The highest among the nobility and the most fastidious were among the most active.

The eager energy of Peter, and his desire that Russia should rapidly be assimilated to the great industrial nations of the west, caused him to create a huge artificial structure which was in constant need of governmental assistance in order to prevent its downfall. This governmental assistance, as well as the State control of the factory system, was managed by the *Manufacture Collegium*, or Department of Manufacture, which was established under Peter's orders while he was still abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to the time of Peter commerce had been conducted by merchant families, which, like other families of the time, were undivided, the control of the family property and the family enterprises being vested in the head of the family. Occasionally such a commercial family engaged in some important extractive industry, although it engaged perhaps chiefly in commerce. Of such families that of the Strogonovs was a conspicuous example. Founded in the sixteenth century, this great family carried on the industry of salt-boiling, fur-dealing, &c., penetrating even regions beyond the confines of Russia proper, and steadily encroaching especially beyond the eastern frontier.<sup>2</sup> The Strogonovs possessed a capital of 300,000 rubles, or about 15,000,000 rubles of modern money.<sup>3</sup> The practice of association was, however, sometimes carried beyond the family, but then chiefly for commerce rather than industry. There

<sup>1</sup> Peter left Russia for the second time in January 1716, and returned in the end of the following year. When he conceived the idea of establishing his so-called "collegia" is uncertain. Suggestions of such institutions appear so early as 1712 (*cf.* Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 222); but in 1715 he appears to have determined to introduce new central institutions. The want of suitable officials and the lack of knowledge about the details of administration appropriate to such institutions led to the whole subject being postponed. He ordered inquiries to be made in Holland, Sweden, and Austria. When he went abroad he collected information on his own account, and on 28th June 1717 he transmitted an order to Bruce to proceed at once to establish "collegia" for the administration of military, naval, and foreign affairs. The so-called "collegium" corresponded in name to the old Russian *prehaz*, or superior bureau, and to the West European chancellery or ministry. To the "collegia" named there was added later the "Manufacture Collegium," or Ministry of Manufactures. This ministry was abolished in 1779. *Cf.* Mélyukov, P., *State Economy of Russia in the First Quarter of the Eighteenth Century and the Reforms of Peter the Great*. St. Petersburg, 1905, pp. 421 and 438. See also *infra*, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> For the rôle played by the Strogonovs in the conquest of Siberia, see *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 151.

were, for example, associations resembling the modern German *kartels*, in which the great merchants allied themselves with small merchants, who had insignificant or no capital, for the purpose of maintaining prices of goods for exportation.<sup>1</sup> So early as 1699, Peter urged by an ukase of 27th October that the merchants should form companies after the manner of the West European companies of the time, and called upon them to form merchant councils, in which they might discuss methods of carrying on commerce to the greatest advantage.<sup>2</sup> The Manufacture Collegium, when it was established, was ordered to assist all manufacturing companies in case of need, after inquiry into the circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Such associations were called *Składstwo*. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> This measure frightened the Dutch merchants, who then had a strong footing in the Moscow market; but the Dutch Resident at Moscow relieved them by insisting that the Russians had exhibited no capacity for association or for the "adoption of any new thing," and that the schemes of the Government must inevitably fail. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOURTH PERIOD OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

#### PART II

(b) 1682-1725

#### THE INDUSTRIAL POLICY OF PETER THE GREAT, AND THE EFFECTS OF HIS REFORMS

WHEN Peter came to the throne there were no large factories in Russia ; when he died there were 233 State and private factories and foundries.<sup>1</sup>

These establishments were either founded by the State and managed by State officials, or they were subsidized by the State. In some cases the factories were established by the State, and afterwards were handed over to private firms. The existence of commercial capital and of an already assured market rendered the policy of Peter practicable so far as capital was concerned ; but there remained the great difficulty of securing suitable labourers. Directive skill could be imported, but ordinary labourers could not be imported *en masse*. When a factory was established, the owner was permitted to employ Russian or foreign managers and assistants, "paying them for their services such salary as they might deserve";<sup>2</sup> but under the conditions of Russian society in the early part of the eighteenth century, there was no class of free working men from which wage-paid labourers might be drawn. The labourers were practically all bondmen. The organization of industry in Russia at this time cannot, therefore, be described as capitalistic in the sense of the employment of wage-paid labourers by capitalists.<sup>3</sup> Capital was employed, but it was used rather as commercial than as industrial capital, although it was employed in connection with industrial production.

<sup>1</sup> Kirilov, *The Flourishing Condition of the All-Russian State*. St. Petersburg, 1831, ii. p. 133, cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 24.

The bondmen were bonded to and possessed by the State or by private owners (*homyetschëkë*). Thus, when the State established factories, sufficient numbers of bondmen to perform the necessary labour were drawn from the State peasantry. When the State handed over such factories to private enterprisers, the bonded workmen were handed over also.<sup>1</sup> When factories were established by private enterprisers under the patronage of the State, they were sometimes furnished with working hands by ascription to them of whole villages of bonded peasants belonging to the State.<sup>2</sup>

The merchantry had not been permitted to buy peasants ; but an ukase of 1721 gave the privilege of doing so to those merchants who desired to establish factories either by means of joint-stock companies or individually. Once bought, however, the peasants must remain indissociably connected with the factories. They could not be sold apart from the business, and the business could be sold only by permission of the Manufactures Collegium. Infringement of this rule was to be punished by confiscation.<sup>3</sup>

Even such measures proved to be inadequate to secure a due supply of working hands. Other expedients had to be devised. A needle factory was, for example, empowered to take beggars from the streets and to set them to work. From an ukase of 1st January 1736, it is evident that the children of soldiers had been drawn into the factories. The bulk of the workers in the factories were, however, either State peasants or runaway bondmen. So important and necessary to the factory owners had the latter element become, and so anxious was the Government in Peter's time to promote factory industry, that an ukase of 18th July 1721 prevented the return of runaway bondmen from the factories to their owners, on the ground that the interest of the factory in them was the greater.<sup>4</sup> But even such measures proved to be inadequate. A series of ukases ordered the factories to be recruited from the con-

<sup>1</sup> For example, the firm of Turchaninov & Tsybalshikov were granted, in 1711, a linen factory which had been established by the Treasury, together with the artisans who were engaged in it. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> A foreigner called Tames received, for example, for his linen factory the village of Kokhma (Shuysky district), which contained 641 peasant court-yards. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Full Code of Laws, vi. 3711, cited by Semevsky, *Peasants in the Reign of Katherine II*. St. Petersburg, 1903, i. p. 458.

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

victs in the common jails and the penitentiaries.<sup>1</sup> Convicted persons were committed to the factories for certain periods or for life. Peasants who were bonded to the factories belonging to private owners were known almost throughout the eighteenth century as "ascribed peasants"; only in the reign of Peter III did they come to be known by the name now usually attributed to them—"possessional peasants."<sup>2</sup>

Russian factory industry of the eighteenth century was thus founded upon the same basis as the cultivation of the soil, namely, upon bondage,<sup>3</sup> and the factories became veritable workhouses.<sup>4</sup> There was, however, a certain number of free or unbonded working men in the factories; but the conditions described must have prevented these from being of a superior class, and moreover, the mingling together in the same factory of bonded and free workmen must have presented grave difficulties. Almost from the beginning there appears to have been a disposition on the part of the factory owners to reduce all to a common level—not to liberate the bondman, but to bind the freeman. The culmination of this process came after the time of Peter. The freemen who were working in the factories in the beginning of the year 1736 were at one stroke converted into bondmen, together with their families. The ukase of 7th January 1736 provided that all artizans then working in the factories, who had been taught or who were learning the trade which was carried on in these factories, should remain in the factories in question, together with their families, "for ever." Under the same ukase those artizans who were working for wages paid by the factory owner, but who at the same time belonged to the State, to monastic or to court lands, or to *pomyetschĕkĕ*, were to be paid for to their former proprietors. Those free workmen who had no owners were given to the factory gratuitously; but all common (*i.e.* unskilled) labourers, who had run away from the estates to which they belonged, were ordered to be returned to their owners.<sup>5</sup> By these means the knot of bondage was tightened upon the factory serf and the free factory workman alike.

Even in the time of Peter the usual incidents of bondage were

<sup>1</sup> Ukases of February 10, 1719; July 18, 1721; January 7, 1736; March 29, 1753; March 26, 1762. By a decree of the Senate of September 1771, prostitutes were committed to the factories. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, Book III, chap. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 457.

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 25-6.

not wanting. Discipline was severe, and food was not too plentiful. Sometimes the factory workers lived in villages, and sometimes in barracks belonging to the factory.

The economical consequences of such a system may be surmised. Production was expensive and inefficient. The attempts which were made to rival the manufactures of the skilful silk and velvet weavers of France and England were hopelessly unsuccessful. The silk merchants of Surovsky Posad (in Moscow) protested against the high prices of native goods, and asked to be allowed to import foreign silks free of customs duties.<sup>1</sup> There were other protests of the same kind. Reluctant to give way upon the question of duties, the Government attempted to improve the technical conditions; but in the absence of free skilled labour these attempts were in general failures. Meanwhile, the system was sustained by subsidies and loans from the Treasury, by exemptions from taxation and from obligations of various kinds, and by monopolies. The Government undertook to provide a market for the produce of some of the factories, and some of them worked exclusively on Government account. The Government in this way encouraged combinations of all kinds. Joint-stock companies were promoted, associations and councils of merchants and of factory owners were formed under the auspices of the Government.<sup>2</sup>

The prospect of gain through unusual concessions and exemptions from taxes and other obligations brought into the industrial field numbers of the nobility, who found it at once patriotic and profitable to take a share in the industrial development of the country. Among those who formed or joined companies for cod-fish catching in the White Sea, for moose-hunting in the northern forests, for silk manufacture, &c. &c., there were many who had neither experience of, nor aptitude for, business. These people looked for their profit, not from economical management, but from the subsidies, bounties, and privileges which they enjoyed in excess of those of their competitors. When the subsidies were exhausted, or when the bounties, &c., were no longer adequate to compensate for the lack of competent management, such companies came to grief. Favoured enterprises were assisted, and others were allowed

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Archives of the Customs by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *Course of Russian History*, iv. p. 152.

to collapse.<sup>1</sup> Thus more and more all enterprise came to be aided and controlled by the Government, and private initiative remained unfostered.

The element of compulsion was not wanting in the factory administration. As the bondmen were forced to serve in the factory, so also the merchants were forced into industrial enterprises. Factory service, as a public duty, was added to the military and civil administrative services. In order to secure the interests of the Treasury, in the face of numerous exemptions, it came to be necessary to secure monopoly of production;<sup>2</sup> and this measure contributed also to depress private initiative. Private capital was frightened away, partly by the intimacy of governmental inspection, and partly by the arbitrary exercise of governmental authority. Small merchants and peasants who possessed capital hoarded their money, and the great merchants and nobles sent it abroad for investment to the bourses of Amsterdam, Venice, and London.<sup>3</sup> While this concealment and flight of capital was going on, any circulating capital, whose owner was discovered in evasion of the Treasury tax of five per cent., was liable to seizure by the police.<sup>4</sup> Efforts were made to prevent the hoarding of gold and silver. It was forbidden by ukase,<sup>5</sup> and informers were rewarded with one-third of the discovered hoard, a mischievous and demoralizing provision.

But the principal evils of the dark side of Peter's reforms lay in the attempt of the reformer himself to direct everything. His phenomenal activity was his undoing. He permitted nothing to be done without his explicit direction, and the indolence or dishonesty of his necessary agents, in spite of the severity with which he punished when he discovered them, caused enormous waste of life, of material, and of funds.<sup>6</sup>

Yet when all is said, in so far as the great industry avails for

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> A contemporary account cited by Kluchevsky says that Menshikov, who had been an active "amateur" in unsuccessful enterprises, had more than one million rubles in the Bank of England. See *ibid.*, iv. p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> An ukase of 1700. Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 156.

<sup>6</sup> In 1717, *e.g.*, great quantities of oak were cut for the Baltic Fleet; but Peter was abroad on his own great affairs; no instructions were given, and the timber was washed up on the shores of Lake Ladoga, where it remained for years "half-covered with sand." Similarly quantities of harness sufficient to fill two stores were allowed to rot because no ukase came to cause them to be sent to their intended destination. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 157.



progress, Peter was progressive. He roused Russia from slumber, and created at least governmental enterprise out of nothing. His own energy infused life into everybody. He showed his people in what the material wealth of Russia consisted, and he showed them how it might be exploited. His faults were those of his qualities; if he had been less impatient, less unsparing of his own force, and less optimistic, he might have accomplished nothing. It is true that he was in advance of his time and of his people, but this cannot be set to his debit.

He not only drew them from their national and racial solitude; <sup>1</sup> he took them, or tried to take them, at a bound from mediæval into modern life.

Of all the enterprises of Peter the most materially productive was his exploitation of iron in the Ural Mountains. This great work was placed under the care of General Gennin, one of the most able of Peter's collaborators.<sup>2</sup> The centre of the iron region was Ekaterinburg, on the river Isetë; in that district there were nine Treasury and twelve private iron and bronze works, five of the latter belonging to Prince Demidov. In 1718, at these and other similar works elsewhere in Russia, there were smelted 104,464 tons of iron and 3214 tons of bronze.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-five thousand serfs, drawn from the Bashkir and Khirghiz hordes, were "ascribed" to these works.

The iron and bronze from the "mountain foundries" were sent to the arsenals, and in 1725, when Peter died, the artillery stood at 16,000 guns, besides the guns of the fleet.<sup>4</sup>

Peter had in some industries achieved his aim; he had secured a large surplus of production in raw and partially manufactured materials. He had now to secure an external market for these. In order to do so, it was necessary to attack the problem—even more formidable then than it is now—the problem of transportation. The method of his approach towards the solution of this problem had long been devised. Shut in from the sea, excepting by the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>3</sup> Six and a half million and 200,000 puds respectively. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 160. In 1718 England produced an insignificant quantity of iron, in 1740 it produced 17,000 tons, and only in 1796 did the production reach 125,000 tons. For further details concerning the early history of iron manufacture in Russia, see *infra*, Bk. III.

<sup>4</sup> Kluchevsky, *loc. cit.*

inclement north, through the White Sea, or by the river Ob, Peter determined to strike his way simultaneously to the Black Sea and to the Baltic. The Turks and the Tartars blocked him to the south, and the Swedes to the north. The capture of Azov, though he had to resign it afterwards, gave him for a time the first, and the victory of Poltava gave him permanently the second.

Six years before Poltava, Peter began to build St. Petersburg. The spot he selected, upon the swampy islands among which the Neva flows into the Gulf of Finland, was by no means an ideal site for a great capital city; but there it must be built. Nowhere else could a city be placed which must at once rest upon the vast Russian region behind it and challenge the Baltic in front of it. Here again Peter had to run counter to the prejudices of his people, and especially of his nobility. Moscow was the historical centre of Russian life. It is true that that centre had once been Kiev; but the Russian nation had vastly altered its constituents since the days of the Kiev Russ. Moscow had been the centre for four hundred years. In and near it were, saving Kiev, the most holy places in Russia. In it were the houses in which successive generations of "serving people" had been born. To change the capital was to tear the nation up by the roots. But Peter determined that this should be done, that a definite rupture should be made between Byzantine Russia and all that that implied and West Europeanized Russia, belonging, as she must, to the group of nations whose destiny was to rule the world.

If St. Petersburg was founded upon a swamp, it was, nevertheless, firmly founded. It seemed hardly possible that ever again Russia would turn her back to Europe and her face once more to the East. The cost of the new capital was enormous. It fell partly in direct taxation, but chiefly in obligatory service. Thousands of peasants were drawn into the region, and a great camp was established, the supplies for which were brought in vast trains of wagons from considerable distances from St. Petersburg, since the immediate neighbourhood was incapable of supplying the needs of the workmen upon the foundations of the new city. In the winter the shallow water in the estuary of the Neva, especially inshore, froze completely, while in summer the fresh water of the Neva damaged the then unprotected bottoms of the barges and ships which now began to arrive in the ports of Kronstadt and St. Peters-

burg.<sup>1</sup> Other harbours were therefore sought on the Baltic, but after immense labour had been expended in cribwork and protective jetties, to protect the roadstead from westerly winds, the works at Rogervik, for example, were abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

Great as Peter was as an economist, or rather as a mercantilist in a practical sense, he has no claims to be regarded as a financier. Like a great landowner who found the details of income more irksome than details of expenditure, Peter demanded of his stewards always more money. How that money was to be raised was of less consequence than the hard fact that it must be procured somehow. To borrow abroad was impossible, because Russia had no credit on the foreign bourses; to borrow at home was to draw from the accumulations of commercial capital the funds that were needed to carry on the enterprises in which Peter was most interested. The funds necessary for Peter's enormous expenditure must therefore be found by taxation, within or approximately within the period to which the expenditure applied.<sup>3</sup>

When Peter came to the throne there were some accumulated balances of previous years, when, owing to the scantiness of State enterprise, there was a surplus of income over expenditure; but in the aggregate these balances amounted to no more than sufficed to meet the deficiencies of the earlier years of Peter's activity. In 1710 Peter ordered an investigation to be made into the public income and expenditure. This investigation resulted in the discovery that there was a continuously recurring deficit of half a million rubles. It was resolved to meet this deficiency by an additional levy of 50 kopeks (about 4 rubles in modern money) upon every taxed household. Such a special levy was the form of meeting the contingency of a deficit usual in Russia. But no household census had been made since 1678. The number of households, according to that census, was about 800,000, so that the yield of the tax ought to have been about 400,000 rubles. It was necessary, however, to make a new census, and then it was discovered that the number of households had diminished during the intervening period of thirty years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>4</sup> The census of 1710 placed the diminution at the very large proportion of one-fourth; but Mělyukov, on a review of the evidence, regards this as exaggerated, and prefers to place it at about one-fifth or 19.5 per cent. Cf. *State Economy in Russia in the Time of Peter the Great*. St. Petersburg, 1905, p. 202.

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The diminution was due to the practice of exemption which, in accordance with his policy of military and industrial expansion, Peter had pursued for some years. The drawing of recruits into the army from the taxpaying classes, and the similar drawing of peasants into non-taxpaying groups—working men for the wharves, the canals, and the building of St. Petersburg—had diminished the number of taxable households. Moreover, owing to the absence of capable functionaries, the census was imperfectly performed, and great numbers escaped both reckoning and taxation. The following shows the diminution of households in the period in question, and the increase of taxation to compensate for this diminution.<sup>1</sup>

	1678	1710	Per Cent.
Households (including Siberia) . . . . .	791,018	637,005	- 19.5
Taxation per household . . . . .	3 rubles 30 kop.	4 rubles 10 kop.	+ 25

A similar census in 1716-1717 showed progressive decline in the number of taxpaying households, and for the same reasons.

While the taxpaying elements were diminishing, and the tax per household was increasing, other taxes than the normal household tax were being piled upon the same elements. To the time of Peter there had been carried over from the immediately preceding time, two classes of taxes, one including the carrier tax (*yamskikh*) and bond money (*polonianichmykh*) fell upon the bonded people, and the other *streletskaia* (or bowmen) tax fell upon the remainder of the taxpaying population. But fresh impositions were necessary to maintain the regular army and navy. New taxes were therefore devised for special purposes, e.g. dragoon money, for the purchase of horses for the dragoons, and additions to the carriers' tax. These new imposts fell not only upon the previously taxpaying elements, but also upon the clergy. They amounted to two rubles per household, and to nine rubles from a *possad* or trading establishment, counted in modern money.<sup>2</sup> Indirect taxation of course also existed in the form of customs duties.

<sup>1</sup> Mělyukov, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-2 and 217.    <sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

These new imposts produced not merely economical effects of more or less importance, but they excited criticism and bred in the minds of certain people a political and critical sense, and in this way gave an impetus towards modernity. Some of the people so excited made important suggestions about new forms of taxation. Peter, as was his wont, examined these projects attentively. It is a remarkable fact that some of the most luminous of the suggestions came from people in the ranks of the *kholopi*.<sup>1</sup> For example, the major-domo—a household serf—of the Boyar Sheremetev, who had travelled abroad, suggested that a stamp duty should be imposed. In a letter to Peter in 1699, he suggested this new tax. Although the yield from it was probably not very great, the author of the suggestion was taken into the Department of Trade and Commerce; but, unfortunately, his character was not equal to his aptitude for seizing an appropriate opportunity, for after he had been promoted to a vice-governorship, he had to be dismissed for extravagance in respect to the public funds. Other suggestions were made by similar people, who denounced officials for corruption, and then were themselves afterwards broken on the wheel because similar accusations had, rightly or wrongly, been brought against them.<sup>2</sup> The necessities of the Treasury led it to adopt all sorts of taxes—excise upon hats, boots, and skins, taxes upon inns, upon rented houses, upon cellars, chimneys, baths, water, and upon loading and discharging timber, upon the sale of food in general, and in particular upon water-melons, cucumbers, and nuts. Beards might be worn, but they were taxed.<sup>3</sup> Taxes were to be paid at birth,<sup>4</sup> and at marriage. Dissent from the orthodox religion was permitted, but dissent was taxed. Unbaptized persons were obliged to pay taxes in addition to the amount levied upon the orthodox. In brief, there was an inconceivable jumble of taxes, the sum of them irritating in a high degree, and many of them unproductive.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> By an ukase of 1705 the tax for a nobleman's beard was 60 rubles (about 480 rubles of modern money); for a merchant's, 80 rubles; for the beard of a *kholop*, 30 rubles. If a peasant wore a beard in his village only, he could do so without paying the tax; but if he went into a town, one kopek must be paid on account of his beard for each visit. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 173.

<sup>4</sup> Professor Kluchevsky pithily remarks that by a strange oversight the tax-inventors omitted an impost on funerals. To tax a man on coming into the world, and to refrain from taxing him on going out of it, is, he thinks, financially inconsequent. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 174.

The annual yield usually fell far short of the estimates.<sup>1</sup> Peter's financial policy seemed to consist in demanding the impossible in order to secure the utmost of the possible.<sup>2</sup>

In his desperation for funds, Peter naturally turned to what was then, as it is now, by far the wealthiest of Russian institutions and orders. Immediately after Narva, Peter took many of the church bells—those bells for which Russia is justly famous, although their almost continual clangour in the capitals causes the unaccustomed traveller to pine for the silence of the country. Peter melted them down and cast them into cannon. On 30th December 1701, Peter in effect confiscated the monastic lands by depriving the monasteries of the incomes from their *votchini*. He made the excuse that the monks did not labour to feed the poor, but fed themselves through the labour of others.<sup>3</sup> Peter also took over into the hands of the State the lands and peasants of the bishops and archbishops. The monks were given a capitation grant of ten rubles and ten quarters of grain; a certain amount was devoted to almshouses; but the Treasury appears to have gained to the extent of between one and two hundred thousand rubles a year.<sup>4</sup> Later, after the Swedish war was concluded, the Holy Synod was established, and the right of managing the revenues from the *votchini* of the Church reverted once more to the ecclesiastical authorities. If ever the secularization of the clergy lands is again carried out, those who promote the measure may well fall back upon two important historical precedents.

Pushed by the hard facts of Treasury deficits, Peter increased the number of the State monopolies: resin, potash, rhubarb, glue, as well as salt, tobacco, vodka, chalk, tar, fish, oil, playing cards, dice, and oak coffins,<sup>5</sup> now made the long list of the commodities the production and sale of which the State absolutely controlled.

The Treasury prices for these monopolized commodities were

<sup>1</sup> For example, in 1720 the budget estimate for these miscellaneous taxes was 700,000 rubles; the actual collections were only 410,000. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176. Peter's action was, however, not without precedent. The Tsar Alexis, in 1649, brought the monastic lands under the control of the State. The monasteries, however, had resumed control in the reign of the Tsar Feodor. Cf. Kluchevsky, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> According to Kurakin, quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 176.

<sup>5</sup> The last was added in 1705; later, the use of oak for coffins was entirely prohibited (*ibid.*).

from two to four times as much as they had been before. Salt, for example, became a luxury. The peasants, who had to go without it, contracted scurvy and died in great numbers. The high price of salt must also have greatly prevented thrift among the peasantry, especially in the proximity of lakes and rivers, by preventing them from curing food for winter use.<sup>1</sup>

Nor did Peter stop at the not infrequent expedient of desperate financiers, the clipping of coin. Prior to the time of Peter, the money in common circulation consisted of two small silver coins—the kopek and the half-kopek. These coins were known as *dengē*, money. The units of account were the *altyn*, of the value of three kopeks, the *grēvna*, of the value of ten kopeks, the *polupoltēnnēkē*, of the value of twenty-five kopeks, the *poltēnnēkē*, of the value of fifty kopeks, and the ruble, of one hundred kopeks. But the amount of the silver coins in circulation was so small that pieces of leather were used instead of coins. From 1700, small copper and large silver coins began to be issued, the latter being given the names of previous units of account.<sup>2</sup> This process was, however, accompanied by a gradual reduction of the weight and fineness of the coins, and by the consequent introduction of a fiduciary element, so that the later issues of Peter became token currency.

In detail the following were the principal issues of currency during Peter's reign. From 1690 till 1698, he adopted the method current during the time of the Tsarevna Sophia, and out of a *grēvenka* (weighing ten kopeks in copper), of a fineness which was not fixed, but which may be taken as 84 per cent. of silver, he coined the amount of 5 rubles 4 kopeks. During these nine years he coined 3,135,475 rubles. Between 1699 and 1710, Peter continued to coin 14 rubles 40 kopeks out of a pound of silver of the same indeterminate assay, but probably of the same fineness, viz. 84 per cent. During these twelve years he coined 19,161,155 rubles. Between 1711 and 1717 he coined 4,240,491 rubles, but the fineness of these issues is not known. Between 1718 and 1724 Peter coined 14 rubles 40 kopeks out of a pound of silver, of a fineness of only 70 per cent., the total issues being 4,921,172 rubles. In the beginning of the reign of Peter the silver ruble contained 8½ *zlotniki* of pure silver ;

<sup>1</sup> On similar effects of the salt duties in England, see, e.g., Sir Thomas Bernard, Bart., *Case of the Salt Duties, &c.* London, 1817, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 177.

then it was depreciated until it contained only  $5\frac{5}{8}$  *zlotniki*. It either remained at this weight and fineness, or it was reduced to what it afterwards became, viz. a coin containing only  $4\frac{3}{8}$  *zlotniki* of pure silver. Peter thus depreciated his silver coinage to the extent of 42 per cent. The total gold coinage of Peter's reign amounted to only 706,236 rubles. The coinage of copper during the same period was only 4,354,142 rubles. The total coinage of Peter amounted to 43,441,072 rubles.<sup>1</sup>

These operations were inevitably accompanied by advances in the prices of commodities. The purchasing power of a silver kopek at the end of the reign of Peter was about one-half of what it had been in the reign of the Tsar Alexis.<sup>2</sup>

But the most important innovation made by Peter was the institution of the tax per male peasant soul in order to replace the household tax, which had come to be unproductive. The population had increased, but the Treasury had not gained by the increase, because the taxed households had not increased in number; they had only increased in content. Formerly, the average household had counted three or four persons, now it counted fully five and a half.<sup>3</sup> The census of 1724, accomplished after a long time and under great difficulties, showed a taxed population of 5,570,000 souls—that is to say, souls of male sex and of all ages. The poll tax amounted upon its adoption to 95 kopeks per soul; it afterwards fell to 74 kopeks. The taxed residents in the cities (169,000 souls) paid 1 ruble 20 kopeks.<sup>4</sup>

The tax per soul of male sex puzzled the peasants, because, in their literal way, they looked upon a "soul" as intangible, and therefore not properly subject to taxation. They could understand a tax upon land, upon capital, &c., but they could not understand a tax upon a soul. Nor could they see otherwise than that the revenues out of which the taxes must be paid, must accrue from the labour of the able-bodied members of the family, and that those

<sup>1</sup> These details are taken from the excellent work on the Russian silver ruble by Professor Kaufman, of the University of St Petersburg. See Kaufmann, E. E., *The Silver Ruble in Russia, from its Beginning until the end of the Nineteenth Century*. St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 149-151.

<sup>2</sup> The purchasing power of the kopek of Alexis was fourteen to fifteen times as great as that of the kopek of to-day, while that of the kopek of Peter was only eight times. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 181.



of male sex of great age and of too slender age to exercise any influence upon the family income could not possibly contribute towards the taxes.<sup>1</sup> The "soul," from the point of view of the Treasury, was a fictitious unit, which in its calculations replaced the household, and its estimates were based upon the numbers of such souls as revealed by the census. The peasants gradually came to comprehend that what had really taken place had been an increase and a more rigorous exaction of the household tax, and they even came to regard the soul tax as being divisible into fractions; but why it should have been invented, and why it should be called a soul tax, they never came to understand, although the tax remained with this designation for two hundred years.<sup>2</sup> The incidence of the tax was, of course, anomalous. A poor peasant whose family consisted of four infant sons paid more than another peasant who had half a dozen grown-up daughters, whose labours may have resulted in a considerable family income, or he paid more than a well-to-do peasant who had no family at all. The poll tax, when compared in amount with the household tax, thus meant to some a slight increase, while to others it meant an increase to twice, thrice, or even four times the amount of the former household tax.<sup>3</sup>

The yield of the tax to the Treasury was disappointing. In 1724 the arrears of the poll tax amounted to 848,000 rubles, or 18 per cent. of the estimated total amount which should have been paid. The officials reported that the collection of these arrears was an impossibility, because of the poverty of the peasants, because of bad crops, and because of the large numbers excluded from the tax rolls on account of recruiting for the army, death, ruin by fire, escape, and physical disability due to age or to disease.<sup>4</sup>

The following statistics exhibit vividly the enormous growth of the Russian budget under Peter:<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Pososhkov, quoted by Kluchevsky, iv. p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, p. 183, and *infra*, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> Treasury Report, quoted by Kluchevsky, *ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>5</sup> These statistics are compiled from Mělyukov, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 669 *et seq.* There is apparently a certain confusion of the budgets of 1724 and 1725 in Kluchevsky, iv. p. 188.

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## REVENUE.

	1680.	1701.	1724.
	Rubles (ooo's omitted).		
Old household tax . . . . .	390	466	...
New soul tax . . . . .	...	...	4,615
Tributes paid in furs . . . . .	104	119	116
Trade tax . . . . .	...	...	255
Obroks and sales of State } property . . . . .	146 ...	130 ...	... 220
Indirect taxes . . . . .	650	1,196	2,129
Currency operations . . . . .	40	792	217
Salt monopoly . . . . .	...	...	662
Post monopoly . . . . .	...	...	16
Customs duties . . . . .	34	119	150
Miscellaneous revenue . . . . .	100	135	147
Totals . . . . .	1,464	2,956	8,527
In modern money . . . . .	25,888	50,248	76,739

## EXPENDITURE.

	1650.	1701.	1724.
	Rubles (ooo's omitted).		
Army and navy . . . . .	700	1,965	2,919
Diplomacy . . . . .	...	46	48
Other expenditure . . . . .	1,332	497	3,114
	2,032	2,508	6,081

The details are more accurately set forth, however, in the budget for 1725 than for any previous year, probably because the masterful hand of Peter having been removed, and the necessity for cautious

statement having disappeared, the unrestrained officials were able to set down more boldly the real state of the finances. These details disclose that the cost of the army and navy was more than double the amount that appears in the budget of 1724, suggesting that in that budget either the totals were under-stated, or that there remained concealed expenditures.

The following is the expenditure side of the budget of 1725 :

		(ooo's omitted.)
Army and navy	. . . . .	5974 <sup>1</sup> rubles.
Diplomatic expenditure	. . . . .	163 "
Public buildings	. . . . .	662 "
Miscellaneous expenditure	. . . . .	581 "
		7770 <sup>2</sup> "

The peculiarity of Russian public finance at this time consisted in the fact that each separate item of the revenue was collected for a separate item of expenditure.<sup>3</sup> For example, so far as the original 70 kopeks per soul was concerned, the aggregate yield of the poll tax was devoted to the maintenance of the army, which was quartered in various localities ; so far as the additional 40 kopeks per soul of obrochny tax was concerned, the aggregate was devoted to the maintenance of the regiments of the guard and of the artillery, and the 40 kopeks per soul collected from freeholders were devoted to the maintenance of the land militia. This was the arrangement prior to 1725 ; in that year the distribution was readjusted, and the 40 kopek tax was assigned to the maintenance of the southern army corps, and one-third of the poll taxes, which were collected from the merchantry at 1 ruble 20 kopeks per soul, was devoted to the artillery. Thus the army was maintained out of the total proceeds of the soul tax. The maintenance of the fleet was secured out of the revenue otherwise than from the soul tax. The amount yielded by the salt tax was devoted to public buildings, and the

<sup>1</sup> Exclusive of expenditure in Little Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated from data given by Melyukov, *op. cit.*, p. 498. According to Golekov, however, the expenditure for 1725 was 9,829,949 rubles. Cited by Melyukov, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> A peculiarity which Russian finance had at that time in common with the public finance of many countries in respect to naval expenditure, ship-money, and the like, and in modern times in respect to education. In local and municipal finance in many countries the same feature makes its appearance in respect to roads, parks, &c. &c.

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incomes derived by the Treasury from specific *gubernie* were devoted to specific purposes.<sup>1</sup>

The taxes of 1724 and of 1725 were drawn from the following sources :<sup>2</sup>

Bonded people . . . . .	4,364,653	...	78 per cent.
State peasants . . . . .	1,036,389	...	19 "
Merchantry . . . . .	169,426	...	3 "
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Total number of taxed persons (male souls) . . . . .	5,570,468	...	100 "

The total population of Russia, according to the census of 1722, was 14 millions.<sup>3</sup>

The soul tax, which had not existed in 1701, amounted in 1724 to 53 per cent. of the total revenue. Indeed Peter's financial reform consisted chiefly in the introduction of this tax, which bore heavily upon the peasants ; at the same time other burdens upon them and upon the merchants were not lightened. Indirect taxation and the profits of Treasury enterprises were not as yet productive sources of revenue. The "reforms" thus brought the burdens of the peasants to a limit, which might not be overstepped without grave danger to the State. The sources of productiveness were tapped to the point of exhaustion.<sup>4</sup>

The obligations of the peasants to the State were so formidable that their obligations to their proprietors could not be increased. The pressure of taxation upon the peasants was enormous. Prince Kurakin, writing about the year 1707, says that "on the average, the taxes per household were 16 rubles per year."<sup>5</sup> In modern money this would amount to between 120 and 130 rubles.<sup>6</sup> It is little wonder that the soul tax aroused antagonism among the serf owners. Prices were advancing, yet it was impossible to obtain any increased return from the labour of the serfs, because their whole net resources were swallowed up by the State.

The large amount of unrecoverable arrears in 1724 indicated the degree of exhaustion of the taxpaying capacity of the peasants. The absorption by the State of the slender surplus accruing from

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mělyukov, *op. cit.*, pp. 497-8.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *iv.* pp. 187-8.

<sup>3</sup> Brockhaus, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>5</sup> Prince Kurakin was himself a great landowner. See Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, *iv.* p. 192.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

the practice of an indifferent agriculture and an unskilful industry prevented the accumulation and application of either agricultural or industrial capital, while the funds raised by taxes were expended in filling the marshes of St. Petersburg or in wars on the frontiers.

There were other reactions. Corruption on a great scale honey-combed the public offices; of every hundred rubles collected from the people, not more than thirty actually reached the Treasury.<sup>1</sup>

The urgency of the demands for funds, and the difficulty of procuring them by means of taxation, suggested numerous financial schemes. For example, some one suggested to Peter to issue five million rubles of State credit obligations without interest as fiduciary currency. The notes were to be made of wood, because of the advantage of that material over paper in respect to durability. Peter himself seems to have thought, in 1721, of applying to John Law, the collapse of whose "system" had occurred in France in May of the previous year, and of inviting him to form in Russia a commercial company on advantageous conditions, the first operation of the company being a loan to the Government of one million rubles.<sup>2</sup> The scheme came to nothing; and when Peter died he left not a kopek of State debt. His reforms, costly as they were, had been wholly paid for under his rigorous administration in the period during which the costs had been incurred.

Peter laid the foundation of a great State, but his methods bore heavily upon his own generation. He saved the Russian people of the latter part of the eighteenth and those of the whole of the nineteenth century many burdens, but he concentrated these upon the backs of his contemporary peasantry. To put the case briefly, he expended upon highly permanent but not immediately productive forms of capital so excessive a proportion of the national income as to go perilously near the cureless ruin of his people in order that he might erect the material fabric of a State.

There remains now to notice the changes in governmental institutions which had to be worked out in order that the greatly increased burden of administration involved by the reforms of Peter should be organized. At the beginning of Peter's reign the central authority was the *Boyarskaya Duma*, or House of Nobles. Sometimes, as of old, the Tsar presided. The actual business of administration was carried on by the *prekazi*, or bureaux, now increased in

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 192.

number by the addition of the *Preobrajensky prekaz*, which dealt with affairs of the guard, the military-naval *prekaz*, which had under its care the hired seamen, and the Admiralty *prekaz*, which administered the fleet. In 1699 there was also established the *Prekaz* of Accounts, a kind of Board of Exchequer. To this latter body all the other *prekazi* furnish weekly and annual statements of their financial transactions.<sup>1</sup> The *Prekaz* of Accounts thus came to perform the functions of a control department, and since it had its bureau at the place where the *Boyarshkaya Duma* met, it came to be a secret chancellery of the Duma, which thus came to exercise through it a certain authority over the ministerial departments.

At the same time, an important change in local government was carried into effect : this change was intended to bring the civic administration of the capital into direct relation with the central authority and to give the administration of the capital certain authority over that of the towns.

The *voyevodi*, or military governors, had, from the point of view of the Treasury, acted arbitrarily, and had been largely responsible for the Treasury deficits ; and, from the point of view of the commercial-manufacturing people of the capital, the *voyevodi* and the *prekaz* officials had made from them "unneeded collections." By the ukase of 30th January 1699, it was provided that the "commercial-manufacturing people" of the capital should have the right, "if they wished," to elect from among themselves annually a *burmister*,<sup>2</sup> from "acute and true people," who would take charge not only of the collections of taxes for the Treasury, but would also exercise authority in judicial, civic, and commercial affairs. It was hoped that the taxes would be honestly and competently collected by the new system, and that the Treasury would benefit. Within the commercial-manufacturing class in the city there was a simultaneous change, the *tyaglo* groups, or groups of commercial or manufacturing people paying *tyaglo*, now paid into the Moscow *prekaz*, and no longer to the *voyevod*. The indirect taxes and the direct special tax for the maintenance of the *strelisi* were paid otherwise—

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> A corruption of *burgomeister*. Peter frequently employed German names for newly-invented offices. The word *burmister* is used in current Russian to designate the manager of an estate.

the first into the Great Treasury (*Bolshoë Kazni*), and the second into the *Streltsi prikaz*.<sup>1</sup>

These new administrative arrangements gave the merchants and the craftsmen in the capital a direct interest in the administration, and brought them into organic relations with the machinery of government. Their elected representative was not only head of the city, but was a trusted, though unpaid, servant of the Government. The cleavage between the citizens and the governing body of the city was removed, and at the same time the relations between the administration of the city and the administration of the central government were put on a more cordial basis. The *burgomaster* of Moscow was a dignified official. He reported to the Tsar, not through any bureau, but directly, and the office became a kind of civic ministry. This development was in entire accordance with Peter's policy of breaking down the prejudices of the nobility against the commercial and manufacturing class. The *ratusha*, or Municipal Palace of Moscow, assumed great importance. Under Kurbatov, for example, who was inspector of the municipal administration, a formidable war was waged in the interests of the Imperial Treasury against official corruption and tax-evasion. The revenue was greatly increased. The expectations of Peter of the effect of introducing business-like methods through the enlistment in the affairs of the Treasury of the interest of the commercial class, had not been disappointed.

The reorganization of the civic government of the capital, and the necessities of the Treasury, led to a comprehensive plan for the reorganization of local government throughout the Empire. By an ukase of 18th December 1707, Peter gave the rank of cities to Kiev, Smolensk, and other great towns, which became the capitals of nine *gubernie*.<sup>2</sup>

The division of the Empire into nine departments, or *gubernie*, was not undertaken for the purpose of strengthening local government, although the previous crude centralization might have been held to render an experiment in this direction advisable; it was

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. pp. 198-200.

<sup>2</sup> Moskovskaya, Ingermanlandskaya (afterwards called Peterburgskaya), Kievskaya, Smolenskaya, Arkhangelskaya, Kazanskaya, Azovskaya, Sibirskaya, and Voronejskaya. *Guberni* (properly *guberniia*) may be translated province or *departement*. The modern *gubernie* are different in boundaries and more restricted in area than are those of Peter.

undertaken for purely fiscal reasons. How the local government could be administered in such a way as to produce the maximum income for the central Treasury of the State—that was the problem which Peter set himself to solve. He was obliged to use the materials at his hand—the Menshikovs, Streshnevs, Apraksins, some of them incompetent, some of them avaricious, some of them obscurantists. These were the men who had to be entrusted with the working out of the relations between local administration and the central authority. But they were to be assisted by an army of officials. Under the former system the *voyevodi* exercised arbitrary power, largely through military or semi-military functionaries. Their administration was very haphazard and often unjust. It was not cheap; indeed the cost of it was one of the reasons for the reform. But, although the officials who were employed were generally incompetent and sometimes dishonest, there were comparatively few of them. Any reform, therefore, meant an increase in the number of officials and an increased civil service budget.<sup>1</sup> Under an ukase of 1715 each *guberni* had a governor, a vice-governor, a chief of judiciary, a commissary, and other officers. Under the old system the *voyevoda* acted on his own initiative, or on instructions from headquarters; under the new system the governor was obliged to consult a council of from eight to twelve persons, and he was obliged also to act upon their decisions, arrived at by a majority—the governor having power to cast two votes.<sup>2</sup>

The original nine *gubernie* varied very much in area: Siberia was one vast *guberni*, Moscow was large, Ingermanland was relatively small. Three years after the first ukase on the subject, groups of districts (*uezdi*) were united into provinces (*provintsi*) within the *guberni*.

The old system of centralization had undoubtedly broken down, but the new system of decentralization involved in the erection of the *gubernie* did not fare much better. For a time the new governors, councils, and functionaries were probably more honest than their predecessors—some of them undoubtedly were more alert in conserving the interests of the central government; but the Treasury

<sup>1</sup> The same is true in China at present. The reorganization of the civil service and of local government presents there substantially the same problems as those which Peter encountered.

<sup>2</sup> The decision by majority was quite new in Russian assemblies and councils. The traditional method involved unanimity. Cf. *infra*, ii. p. 10.



gained little from the reorganization of the system of collecting taxes. The old system was corrupt and costly, the new system was honest but expensive. The net result to the Treasury was not greater, when the increase of the revenue due to the increase of taxation is taken into account.

The *guberni* administrative system had other reactions. The control passed from the *Boyarskaya Duma* to the local government councils; and the Duma itself was merged in the Senate. The Senate now became the central governing body, and under the ukase of 5th March 1711 it was required to elect a supervisor of fiscal affairs,<sup>1</sup> who must be a man "clever and acute." This financial censor might be drawn from any class, and he was to exercise his functions secretly.<sup>2</sup> The secrecy of his functions was a grave drawback. His office became that of a spy. In 1713 the financial censorship was denounced as demoralizing by Stefan Yavorsky, a Little Russian Metropolitan, who reflected also with great boldness upon the private vices of Peter. The Senate suspended the Metropolitan, but it is to the credit of Peter that he took no notice of the personal reprimand, and in the following year amended the character of the office of *ober-fiskal*.<sup>3</sup>

The useful reforms accomplished by the Senate consisted in the clearing away of numerous *prekazi*, chanceries, commissions, and departments which had grown up in some cases without any definite relation to one another, and in some cases with traditions of independence and even disobedience to the Tsar. The system of *collegia*, or administrative departments, copied from the foreign chancelleries, was developed between 1715 and 1720.<sup>4</sup> Nine *col-*

<sup>1</sup> *Ober-fiskal*.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 218. Nesterov, who was *ober-fiskal*, and who was merciless in his denunciation of corruption, bringing punishment on Prince Dolgorukov, and sending Prince Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, to prison, and afterwards to the gallows, was himself found guilty of bribery, and was sentenced to be broken on the wheel. Cf. Kluchevsky, iv. pp. 218-9.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. p. 219. Shortly after the philippic of the Metropolitan Yavorsky, another Little Russian, Theofan Prokopovich, suggested that the authors of clerical disturbances and the observers of superstitious customs should be denounced to their bishop by specially-appointed "ecclesiastical *fiskals*." When the Synod came to be organized it did introduce clerical functionaries with the corresponding office under the name of *inquisitors*. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 122. The Swedish system seems to have been the principal model. It had been applied in the Swedish provinces on the south coast of the Baltic. Kluchevsky, *ibid.*, p. 223.

*legia* were established by the ukase of 12th December 1718: (1) foreign affairs; (2) department of the money incomes of the State; (3) justice; (4) department of financial control (a kind of auditor-general's department); (5) department of land military forces; (6) department of naval forces; (7) commerce; (8) mountain (mines and foundries) and factory industries; (9) department of State expenditure.

For nine years between the abolition of the old *prekazi* and the formation of the new *collegia* the Senate undertook the above-mentioned functions. It was the Executive of the State. The personal responsibility of the Tsar devolved upon it. When the *collegia* were established, the same responsibility devolved upon them. For the Senate there remained more general directive and visitatorial powers. Peter even sometimes brought before the Senate his projects, as if he were an ordinary senator.<sup>1</sup> The *collegia* were obliged to act only in accordance with the law as expressed in the written ukases of the Tsar and the Senate. In 1720 the presidents of all the *collegia* were also senators, but in 1722 only the presidents of the foreign, military, and naval *collegia* were retained as senators; the presidents of the others were replaced by representatives elected by the members of the *collegia*. The Senate at this time was in law a very powerful governing authority. Without its sanction nothing was valid; it took the place of the Tsar in his absence, and acted upon its own initiative. Yet the actual exercise of such high functions must depend upon the personal composition and character of the governing body. During the first years of its existence the Senate had the opportunity of acting as a modern cabinet in a constitutional government would act, but it did not do so. It must be recognized that the cabinet system even of England had not entirely assumed its modern form in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. To expect that even the most perfectly-devised mechanism would work smoothly in unaccustomed hands is to expect too much. The old system, casual and inefficient as it was, had grown up in organic relation to the needs of the time. The new system was transferred *en bloc* from another field. The proceedings of the Senate assumed a merely bureaucratic character; and the Senate, which might have been master of the situation and of the country, became the mouth-piece of the Tsar. In the hands of a strong, and, on the whole, bene-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, p. 229.

volent autocrat like Peter, the moulding of the Senate into a political force might have been accomplished ; but Peter did not live long enough to accomplish this task, and his methods were perhaps too rough to accomplish it all. He prosecuted and fined senators for decisions which he thought improper, and he occasionally thrashed a senator—like Prince Menshikov, for example. These proceedings did not contribute to the elevation of the Senate in the eyes of the people. In 1715 there had been instituted the office of inspector-general, which contributed further to discredit the Senate. The inspector-general was present at the sessions of the Senate ; sitting at a table apart from the members. His business was to take note of the ukases of the Senate, to see that they were carried out, and to denounce to the Senate any unpunctual performance of the law. If the Senate took no action against alleged offenders, the inspector-general might carry his complaint to the ear of the Tsar. The result of this system seems to have been that the Senate was afraid to do anything. The senators absented themselves from the sessions, and in three years only three affairs of importance were concluded.<sup>1</sup> In 1721 the performance of the duties of the inspector-general were handed over to the military department. One of the staff officers of the guard, changed every month, was required to be present at all sittings of the Senate. In the event of any member of the Senate offending in any way, the duty of this officer was to arrest him, to put him in the fortress, and to report to the Tsar.<sup>2</sup> Such a state of matters could not endure. In 1722 a new functionary was appointed, called the Procurator-General of the Senate, with general supervision of the Senate, but with powers quite different from those of the military inspector-general. The procurator-general acted as intermediary between the *collegia* and the Senate, received the reports of local functionaries, and had in his power the initiation of legislation. The procurator-general also acted as intermediary between the Tsar and the Senate. The process of legislation was as follows : The procurator-general brought his project before the Senate, then joint sessions of the Senate and all the *collegia* were held, at which the project was “ thought over and discussed under

<sup>1</sup> Report by Zotov (the first of these inspectors-general), quoted by Kluchevsky, iv. p. 234.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235. Such measures were probably not altogether unnecessary. Disorderly scenes and violent personal quarrels in the Senate were not infrequent.

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oath." The opinion of the Senate was then communicated to the Tsar by the procurator-general, and the resolution of the Tsar became the law.<sup>1</sup>

Though the *collegia* were thus not detached from the Senate in the senses that they occasionally met in joint sessions, and that they were subject to visitation by the Senate, they were not obliged to report to it unless they were asked to do so. The Senate had thus no necessary or continuous cognizance of the business of the *collegia*, and therefore laboured under the disadvantage of separation from the actual process of government, excepting so far as general policy was concerned. The Senate was the highest court of appeal; but appeals to the Senate from decisions by the *collegia* were regulated by the Tsar. Appeals did not lie to the Senate without his sanction.<sup>2</sup>

While the central administration was being reorganized, the *collegia* system established, and the relation of the *collegia* to the Senate elaborated, the reorganization of local government through the formation of nine *gubernie* in 1707 had not been realizing the expectations with which it had been initiated. The Swedish system having been applied to the central administrative organs, Peter thought of applying also the Swedish system of local government. He therefore instructed the Senate to inquire how far the Swedish local institutions were compatible with Russian customs. Eventually a new system of local administration was elaborated, and an ukase was issued on 26th November 1718. The new system began in 1720.

The largest unit of local government—the *guberni*—was preserved, and the number of *gubernie* was increased from nine to eleven. The *gubernie* were divided into *provintsi*, and these again were divided into *uezdi*, or districts. In the *gubernie* as a whole there were fifty *provintsi*. The chief functionary in a *guberni* was the *gubernator*, or governor, and in a province, a *voyevoda*. The *voyevoda* had to deal with finance, police, and with economic affairs generally. Upon these matters the *voyevodi* had communication directly with the central authorities, an arrangement which inevitably led to disputes between the governors of the *gubernie* and the *voyevodi*, and which gave the *voyevodi* a quasi-independence, thus splitting up the *guberni* into smaller political units. The *voyevoda* carried on his business in the *zemskaya chancery*, or local government office. Under

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

the *voyevoda* was a local superintendent for the collection of taxes, and under this official was the local treasurer and a commissary, or *provision master*, who took charge of the grain receipts on Treasury account. The manager of the *uzd* was a local commissary, who, under the orders of his chief, looked after financial, economical, and even moral and educational affairs. Beneath these new organs of local government there were the ancient village police, elected at the village meetings. By the ukase of 1719 "aulic courts," and the courts of *emiseyshy* and *rigshy* were established. The courts of lowest instance were *provincial* courts, which were held in the more important cities, and *local* courts, which were held in the less important. In 1722, however, the lower courts were abolished, and judicial power was confided to the provincial chiefs, either personally or with assessors.

In addition to the departmental and provincial organizations which have been sketched, the reforms of Peter extended to city administration. The *ratusha* of Moscow had been transformed in 1708 into a Board of the city; now it was decided to revert in some measure to the former arrangement. The merchants of Moscow were called upon to form themselves into two guilds. To the first of these belonged bankers, large merchants, physicians, pharmacists, and artists, and to the second guild, small merchants and artizans. These latter were required to form trade corporations within the guild. A third group was formed of low people (*podlye lyudē*), composed of unskilled labourers and wage-earners generally. This classification resulted in the members of the two guilds, but especially those of the first, becoming a kind of city patriciate, ruling the city in essential affairs.

These measures assumed in the end an aspect not exclusively fiscal. They became, either directly or through reactions, important influences in the social and economical development of the cities and of the rural districts, and indeed it would appear as if the idea of their doing so had gradually dawned upon Peter. He appeared to realize that without the active aid of his people he could do nothing, and that they could not develop into effective taxpayers in the absence of sound political organization.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary judgments of the reforms of Peter cannot be regarded as of importance, partly because his commanding per-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 241-51.

sonality rendered criticism difficult, and partly because these reforms were so far-reaching in their consequences, and so many of them belong to the last few years of his life, that their full effects could not possibly appear until a later period. Nor can the immediately succeeding years be expected to afford more than suggestions towards a sound appreciation, for although relieved of the masterful influence of Peter's presence, there was some criticism of his reforms, the prevailing attitude was one of adoration of an unexampled personality. This Peter-worship went far. Nartov, a working cabinetmaker who knew Peter, said of him: "Though Peter the Great is no more with us, his spirit lives in our souls, and we who had the honour to be near the monarch will die true to him, and our warm love for him will be buried with us." Lomonosov called Peter "a god-like man"; and Derjavin wrote of him:

"Was it not God  
Who in his person came down to the earth?"<sup>1</sup>

Neptyuev, Russian Resident at Constantinople, after the death of Peter, said of him, "This monarch has brought our country to a level with others; he has taught us to recognize that we are a people. In brief, everything we look upon in Russia has its origin in him, and everything which shall be done in the future will be derived from this source."<sup>2</sup>

The age of Katherine II afforded the possibility of a more detached point of view, and the philosophical temper of the time might lead us to the expectation that a placid estimate might be forthcoming of the net consequences to the nation of the reign of Katherine's great predecessor. But such an expectation would be doomed to disappointment. The fashion of that time was to regard Peter as having diminished the lustre of the Imperial purple rather than as having increased it. The fastidious gentlemen of the later eighteenth century disliked a Tsar who associated with labourers, and who could himself wield an axe. Criticism of Peter went farther. His reforms were looked upon as having been too radical, and as having been insufficiently related to the virtues of the traditional forms of Russian life. Peter was blamed for destroying Russian customs and for contributing to laxity of manners. In

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Neptyuev's *Memoirs* by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 271.

general, the real merits of his reforms were neither understood nor acknowledged, in spite of the intellectual attitude towards many things which his critics undoubtedly exhibited.<sup>1</sup>

With the first wave of revolutionary impulses from the French Revolution, there came a juster appreciation of Peter. To Karamsin, the Russian historian, writing at this time, Peter appeared a great revolutionary. The structural changes wrought in Russian society by Peter's reforms seemed to him to make for civilization. But later, when the French Revolution entered upon its more rapidly changing phases, Karamsin reflected sadly upon the slow and steady progress which Russia had made under the Romanovs, until this progress was arrested by the powerful but "lawless" hand of Peter. "We began," he says, "to be citizens of the world; but we ceased in some measure to be citizens of Russia—and the cause of that was—Peter!"<sup>2</sup>

The Restoration after the Napoleonic episode, and the national movements throughout Europe, reacted upon political thought in Russia, and again the memory of Peter suffered eclipse. The rise of Slavophilism brought new accusations against him as a *Zapadnik* or Westerner. Khomyàkov revived the criticisms of the policy of Peter on the ground that it ruptured the rural life of Russia, and took out of it for his army and for his enterprises the elements which, left to themselves, might have developed spontaneously an indigenous culture.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Kluchevsky has well characterized the pass at which the criticism of Peter had arrived. In place of a scientific examination of the actual course and actual consequences of his reforms, there was merely a comparison of old and new Russia. The former was idealized, "witty conjectures were taken for historical facts, and dreams of leisure were represented as the ideals of the people."<sup>4</sup>

The growth of historical science from the middle of the nineteenth century rendered other views possible. The great Russian his-

<sup>1</sup> The Princess Dashkov, at a dinner in Vienna in 1780, is reported to have said that if Peter had possessed the mind of a great legislator, he would not have trifled with handicrafts; and he would have left to the ordinary course of time gradually to bring about the improvements which he endeavoured to produce by force. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 267.

<sup>2</sup> Karamsin, quoted by Kluchevsky, iv. p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> For the Slavophil movement, see more fully *infra*, Book II, chap. x.

<sup>4</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 269.

torian Soloviev was the first to set the reign of Peter in due historical perspective ;<sup>1</sup> but his account of the reforms is not merely the result of scientific inquiry into documentary evidence—it is a polemic against the detractors of Peter and a vindication of his historical position. From Soloviev's point of view, no nation in the history of the world accomplished so much in so short a time as Russia accomplished in the reign of Peter. No people ever experienced so great, so varied, and so profound a reformation, followed by so important consequences. These consequences appeared not merely in the interior life of the Russians themselves, but they reacted upon the general life of the world. In this interior life the foundations of new principles were laid. The self-activity of society was awakened by the introduction of the *collegia*, or government departmental system, and by the adoption of the electoral principle and of autonomous civic government. For the first time the people realized what an empire meant<sup>2</sup>—an organic union of self-acting political societies. For the first time the oath of fealty was taken, not only to the Emperor, but also to the Empire. For the first time in Russia, personality was vindicated, the oppressive yoke of the family was mitigated, personal merit was recognised, marriage ceased to be dictated by parents or serf owners, women emerged from the *terem*.<sup>3</sup>

The consequences to the world were the transformation of a weak and almost unknown people into a nation led by a strong man, and its appearance upon the historical stage as a potentially formidable power. For the first time in modern history the Slavs, through their representatives, the Russian people, began to take a share in the general life of Europe.<sup>4</sup> This vindication by Soloviev recalls the opinions which have already been quoted from Peter's admiring contemporaries.

Professor Kluchevsky's estimate is free from the bias which gave a polemical tone to Soloviev's treatment of the reign of Peter, and it is therefore more scientific in spirit and more just both to Peter and to his time. He begins by accounting for Peter's early predisposition towards military affairs, through his recog-

<sup>1</sup> Soloviev, S. M., *History of Russia from the Earliest Times*. Moscow, 1851-1878. See especially vol. xviii. (1868) chap. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, the attic.

<sup>4</sup> Soloviev, summarized by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 270.



nition that some means must be devised to control the *streltsi*, who supported his sister Sophia, and whose arrogance made them a danger to the State. From this point of view Peter simply did the obvious and immediately necessary thing. He organized as soon as possible a military force upon a foundation entirely different from that of the *streltsi* in order to combat them. There is no sign at this time of far-reaching plans, or even of the organization of an army for defence, still less for aggressive attacks upon the nations by which Russia was surrounded. His first business was to secure his throne, and to checkmate his ambitious sister; but his method of doing so involved a great step forward, for in opposing her influence, he was opposing also the influences of Byzantism. The force of circumstances thus drove him into reforms. Even when he returned from abroad after his first journey in 1697-1698, he "brought back to Moscow, not plans of reform, but cultural impressions, imagining that he could introduce into Russia what he had seen abroad, and he came back also with the determination of waging war against Sweden in order to recover the control of the sea, which had been wrested by that country from his grandfather."<sup>1</sup>

These two impulses—the adoption of West European methods, especially in military affairs, and the war with Sweden—dominated him for the greater part of his life. Only during the last ten years of his reign, when he was between forty-three and fifty-three years of age, "did he appear to be conscious that he had done something new; but even then not fully."<sup>2</sup> Nor was this consciousness associated with aims for the future; it was rather a realization of achievement in the past.

Peter thus became a reformer, as it were incidentally; he was drawn into the rôle perhaps even unwillingly. "War led him on, and up to the end of his life, pushed him into reform."<sup>3</sup>

Professor Kluchevsky acknowledges that as a rule war is a "brake" upon reform, and that exterior wars and interior reforms are generally mutually exclusive. In Russian history, however, a successful war contributed to the fixation of existing conditions, and an unsuccessful war provoked social discontent and compelled the Government to undertake more or less decided reforms.<sup>4</sup> While the Government was involved in domestic affairs, it usually allowed

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 273.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 274. In the twentieth century history has repeated itself.

international complications to be settled without the intervention of Russia, even at the cost of diminished prestige. Thus reforms at home were frequently purchased at the price of misfortunes abroad.<sup>1</sup> But the forces of war and the forces of reform are cardinal opposites. Although, to use Peter's phrase, war was the school of the nation, the pressure of war gave a certain direction to the reforms; but reform prolonged the war, and the war prolonged the reform. The consequences were apparent in the opposition of the people, and even in uprisings against war and reform alike. In this vicious circle Peter found himself involved.

Nor were the reforms of Peter novel. Programmes of reforms similar to those of Peter had been proposed before. In the time of Feodor, western ideas had even been introduced—at all events in the circles of the court, where people began to study Latin, to speak Polish, and to discard the Russian cloak for the Polish surtout, and the old Russian dances for the *polka-mazurka*.<sup>2</sup> While Peter's predecessor thus adopted Polish models, Peter took his industrial and commercial models from Holland and his constitutional models from Sweden.

While Peter's reforms were not novel, excepting in detail, they were carried out with incomparable vigour. Granted that the reforms might have been carried out gradually without the application of Peter's urgent and formidable energy, and without the reactions which this display of autocratic force involved, in what calculable period of time could they have been carried out? An estimate in answer to this very question was made by Prince Sh'cherbatov, a strong adherent of old Russian ideas, and by no means an upholder of autocracy. "In how many years," he asked, "under the most favourable circumstances, could Russia by itself, without the autocracy of Peter, attain in respect to education and glory that position in which she now finds herself." The answer given in the end of the eighteenth century was to the effect that Russia might do so by the end of the nineteenth. The conditions of the question were impossible, for while Russia was slowly travelling upon her own lonely furrow, who could answer for her neighbours? "Some Charles XII or Frederick II might tear her to pieces and throw her development back for an incalculable period."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> Prince Sh'cherbatov, quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 276.

More important than either the preparedness of Russia for Peter's reforms, or the necessity of the employment of force in carrying them out rapidly, is the question of the duration of their effects.

In order to form an estimate of the consequences of the reforms of Peter, it is necessary, in the first place, to consider the position of the Tzarship when Peter entered upon that office. Although, in a sense, Peter looked upon Russia as his *votchina*—his inherited estate—which it was his duty to improve rather than to lay waste, to pass on unimpaired and, if possible, enlarged to his successors, this was not the actual position in point of law. Under the old dynasty, such had actually been the legal position; but when the Romanovs came to the throne, although they possessed *votchini*, Russia as a whole was not their *votchina*. The superiority of the Tsar was recognized by the hereditary nobility, but the *votchinal* character of the previous dynasty had disappeared with it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there was wanting in the new Tsarship, "a definite juridical physiognomy."<sup>2</sup> The relation of the Romanov Tsars to the nobility and to the nation depended upon the conditions of the time and the character of the Tsars themselves. When Peter practically destroyed the nobility as a political unit by amalgamating it with the gentry and by instituting the Senate, he aggrandized the status of the Tsar; but he also gave to the previously formless and undefined power of the Tsar a politico-moral definition. Prior to his time the idea of the State was inseparable from the personality of the Tsar; but in his insistence upon separate oaths—one to the Tsar and one to the State, and in his frequent references in his ukases to the interests of the State as the highest interests, Peter introduced into the Russian political system a new conception. His whole attitude showed that he regarded himself as Tsar, as the principal servant of the State.<sup>3</sup> He thus gave to the Tsarship a definite position in relation to the State and to the Tsars, his successors, a definite rôle.

Under the old dynasty the law of succession to the throne

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> In a despatch, *e.g.*, he says, referring to the victory of Doberan: "From the time I commenced to serve, I have not seen such firing and such good conduct of the soldiers." Quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 278. This phrase may have been used in a military sense, and may be compared with the dying words of Nicholas I to his son: "I leave you my command in disorder."

was the law of the *votchina*. The *votchina* passed from father to son *by will*. There was no law of primogeniture.

In 1598 the practice arose of election of the Tsar by the *sobori*. When Mikhael Romanov was elected in 1613, the nobles took an oath of fealty to him and to his children—not farther. The dynasty was, as it were, on its trial. No fundamental law of succession was passed, nor was the practice of election confirmed by any statute. Alexis, the son of Mikhael, presented his son Feodor to the people in the Red Square at Moscow, and announced him as the heir to the throne. Later, when Peter and his brother Ivan both became Tsars, they did so not by virtue either of presentation to the people or of election properly so called, but in consequence of a riot on the part of the *streltzi* and of the vote of an irregular *zemsky sobor*.

Peter made such varying practice more difficult for the future, by re-establishing the *votchinal* form of succession. This he did by the statute of 5th February 1722, which became the fundamental law on the subject. "We issue this ukase in order that it shall always be in the power of the ruling emperor to specify the person to whom he shall wish the heritage to pass, and to change that person according to his own judgment."<sup>1</sup> In this ukase, so far from effecting a reform in the relations of the throne to the State, Peter "turned the State backwards"<sup>2</sup> to the old *votchinal* position—the same position which was expressed by Ivan III, "To whom I wish, to him shall I give the rule."<sup>3</sup> Elements of reaction are also to be found in the social legislation of Peter. The old class obligations, so far from being diminished, were rather increased, and under him bondage right, so far from being limited, was really extended by the forced labour in the factories and the mines. The obligatory service of the superior class was rendered more peremptory, and its character was intensified by obligatory education.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv, p. 279. This provision was subsequently altered. The present rule is: "Both sexes have a right to inheritance of the throne; but pre-eminently this right belongs to the male sex, and the order of primogeniture, when interrupted in the last male generation, comes to the female generation. The person who has the right to inheritance of the throne is given the right to resign that right under conditions in which there is no difficulty in the succession to the throne." *Code of the Fundamental State Laws*, vol. i. part i. (edition 1904). *The Nature of the Highest Autocratic Power*, arts. 5 and 15.

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Similarly he imposed upon the merchant class a hitherto unheard-of obligation—compulsory industrial enterprise—in his obligatory formation of companies and obligatory leasing to them of factories established by the State. In order to carry out this policy, it was necessary to endow the merchant enterprisers with the privilege of bondage right—a privilege heretofore almost exclusively enjoyed by the nobility.<sup>1</sup> In unifying the various classes of bonded peasants, Peter really intensified bondage, and in forcing the free but idle groups into bondage or into the army, he considerably augmented the number of persons in bondage conditions. His aim was to compel “idlers to take themselves to trade, in order that nobody should be without some business.”<sup>2</sup>

The final result of these changes was to give Russian society more sharply defined class lineaments and to impose upon the shoulders of each of the classes a “more complicated burden of obligations.”<sup>3</sup> Peter thus simplified the class contours, but increased the interior complexity of the class groups.

Peter may thus be said neither to have disturbed the old foundations of Russian society, nor to have laid new foundations, but to have carried forward processes already begun, to have altered the existing combinations, separating elements hitherto combined, or associating elements hitherto separated. By these means he created a new state with the object of reinvigorating the social forces and the governmental institutions.<sup>4</sup>

The relation of Peter to Western Europe must be similarly examined. Peter was accused by his Slavophil detractors of being a blind worshipper of West European methods, and of being desirous to adopt them merely because they were unlike Russian. But there is no evidence to support this construction. When Peter went as a young man incognito in the train of his own ambassador, he went to the West clearly for one purpose, and one purpose only. This purpose was the acquisition of knowledge about naval affairs. In order to reconquer the command of the Baltic Sea and to regain the Baltic provinces, it was indispensable that Russia should possess a navy. But Russia had never been a naval power. Her people were accustomed to navigate rivers, but not to navigate the sea. She was, indeed, shut in on all sides from the open waters.

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 281.

The attitude of the West towards the Russia of the eighteenth century was not unlike the attitude of the Powers towards China in the nineteenth. There was a decided reluctance to contribute towards the effective arming of a people whose reputation for barbarism induced the belief that such a development would involve international danger, and probable injury to the interests of civilization. Peter seems to have realized this fully.<sup>1</sup> According to Osterman, he said, "Europe is necessary to us for some decades, and afterwards we will show it our back."<sup>2</sup>

The object of Peter seems thus to have been, not to assimilate Russia to the West, but to take from the West what was necessary for Russia to enable her to resist the West, to utilize her own powers, and to continue her own development, and no more. Association with the West was thus a means to an end, and not the end itself. What Peter took from the West were technical, educational, administrative and financial methods; he took nothing of the spirit of the West, and for this reason he is entitled neither to the credit nor to the blame of having westernized his country.

Peter found in Russia no regular army, he made one; he found no fleet, he built one; he found no way to the sea for his commerce, he secured one; he found practically no extractive and almost no manufacturing industries, he brought both of these to a high state of development. He founded a naval academy, a school of navigation, and schools of medicine, engineering, artillery, as well as Latin, mathematical, and elementary schools. The technical excellence which Peter found in Western Europe he endeavoured to induce, and even to compel, his own countrymen to acquire. For all these institutions Peter required money. He increased the income of the State enormously in order to meet the vastly increased expenditure. Yet he left no debt. "He was a creditor of the future, not its debtor."<sup>3</sup> Peter's reforms were thus material and financial—economical in the narrower sense. He increased the material resources of the State, but he did not elevate the standard of life of the people. In the larger economic sense, his reforms did not make directly for progress, although, had his successors been able to perform in their field the feats which Peter performed in his, the

<sup>1</sup> Peter is reported to have stated this in 1724 (the last year of his life) on the occasion of the anniversary of the Peace of Nystad. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.* iv. p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 285.

history of Russia might have been different, and Peter's reforms might have been finally and fully justified by events in which their ulterior effects were recognizable.

The reforms of Peter, while they neither regenerated nor destroyed Russian life, certainly revived it, agitated it, and in some measure changed its direction. His feverish activity, which infected everyone, is accounted for by the circumstances of the time—the war with Sweden, the continuous interior struggles, producing a confusion in the midst of which the reforms had to be worked out. An exaggerated importance was thus given to his methods—methods which were characterized by roughness and by haste. The violence of his punishments for neglect of duty or for offences against his policy produced a neurasthenic condition in his subordinates.<sup>1</sup> His private secretary, Makarov, discloses this in a letter written in 1716. "Truly," he says, "in all affairs we wander as if we were blind. We do not know what to do; everywhere there is great agitation."<sup>2</sup> The forces of reaction arrayed themselves against Peter. There were four serious uprisings and three or four conspiracies. The opponents of the innovations were able to appeal to antiquity, and to denounce some of them as being at once trifling and exasperating. But Peter saw in the apparent trifles—the wearing of beards and of long coats, &c.—symbols of obstinate adherence to traditional forms, and reluctance to enter into relations with those whom he had called to be technical instructors. With this object he insisted upon the wearing of German clothes, and he set officers at the city gates to see that his orders were carried out. There can be no doubt that these measures were real obstacles to the reform which Peter desired, and that they occasioned needless friction and needless sacrifices. "Peter went against the wind, and by his accelerated motion he increased the resistance which he encountered."<sup>3</sup> His attack upon the rooted habits of the Russian people recalls Don Quixote tilting against the thirty windmills.

Towards the close of his life Peter appears to have been more and more influenced by the desire to promote the well-being of his people. His intimate contact with people of all ranks probably gradually induced this state of mind; and it was this which earned for him the worship of his contemporary admirers. Yet Peter seems to have experienced a cynical scepticism of popular virtue,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 287.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 289.

and to have relied chiefly upon the power of authority. Thus "he did not weigh sufficiently the passive might of the mass."<sup>1</sup> Like many strong people, Peter united a passion for reform with an unconquerable belief in his own powers. When suitable means did not exist he thought that it was easy to create them. But the people were even more obstinate than he was. Peter's task was indeed impossible of accomplishment. The prolific Slav race had by mere fecundity founded a mighty empire; but its institutions were clumsy, and its power of resistance to external pressure on occasion feeble. Its strong point was its equanimity in defeat and its continual recurrence to the struggle—its immense reserve of human force. No doubt what the Russian people needed in Peter's time was a strong central administration; but Russian popular life and tradition were opposed to that, and Peter had inherited an autocratic power scarcely as yet firmly established.

The period of the anarchy before the foundation of the dynasty was still recent, and the incipient anarchy of the beginning of Peter's own reign was fresh in his mind. Autocracy seemed to be the only means of maintaining order and of securing reform. The elements of Russian life were too disparate. There was too little national cohesion. Racial divisions were numerous, local patriotisms vigorous, and social distinctions abrupt. Force thus appeared to be the only unifying agency. The national and social framework could only be united by the kind of pressure which a carpenter brings to bear upon his work. Probably Peter, as social and political carpenter, thought merely a temporary application of force was necessary. Yet this application of force gave the reforms of Peter a certain character—it determined the methods of his reforms, and it gave them a revolutionary aspect. This revolutionary aspect was thus not due to the inherent character of the reforms or to any aims of Peter—it was due to the methods employed by him. "Even the good things he did were performed by disgusting force."<sup>2</sup> The exercise of this force and the existence of a free people were incompatible. Peter thought that it was possible to arouse the Russian people from stagnation, to educate them, to bring them into relation with Europe, and to enable them to avail themselves of the knowledge to whose acquisition by the European peoples Peter attributed their material victories, and at the same

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 292.



time to keep them in bondage. He thought that all these signs of progress could be brought about without altering the relation of the serf to his owner—without abolishing bondage right. Prince Sh'cherbatov, who was an antagonist of autocracy, saw in Peter's enthusiasm for education and in the influence of this enthusiasm upon his people, the starting-point of a movement which must eventually destroy autocracy. That this movement should be initiated by an autocrat was probably inevitable—that the autocrat should have fully realized what the ulterior results of his action might be is improbable.

When all is said in criticism of Peter and his reforms, this should be added—that, autocrat as he was, he threw himself into his gigantic task, sparing himself in no way, risking his life, his reputation, everything, in order that he might make Russia a great and powerful nation, fit to rank with the nations of Western Europe. His last act was not the least characteristic nor the least magnificent of his career. He leaped into the waters of the Neva in winter to rescue a young sailor who had fallen overboard. He rescued the sailor, but, as for himself, he contracted pneumonia, and died shortly afterwards.<sup>1</sup> This act of Peter was symbolical—he seized his people as he seized the sailor, forcibly, but to a good end, and he sacrificed himself in the deed. When Peter died, his Empire had been at peace for fifteen months. The wars with Turks, Swedes, Persians were over, and the stormy years of the beginning of the eighteenth century had left, as its first quarter drew to a close, the Russian crown firmly established, the nation in a great measure united, and bondage right still remaining.

The death of Peter was followed by universal grief. Not that his reforms had been hailed with universal approval, but that the force of circumstances and Peter's policy combined had brought the nation to such a pass that a strong sustaining hand seemed to be necessary. This strong sustaining hand was suddenly and prematurely removed, and thus even those who disapproved of his policy bewailed his death.

There is perhaps no such attitude of mind as national gratitude—people soon tire of strong rulers. It is not surprising, therefore, that legends grew up about Peter—legends associated with the

<sup>1</sup> The incident is commemorated by a fine monument to Peter on the bank of the Neva near the spot.

history of Russia before his time—which portrayed him as an impostor, as were the two false Tsars of the anarchy, and as Antichrist, because he had suppressed the patriarchate.<sup>1</sup>

“Peter’s reform swept over the people like a mighty hurricane, frightening everyone and remaining for everyone a mystery.”<sup>2</sup>

The character of Peter has often been sketched. From the foregoing account of his reforms, which relates chiefly to their economic influences, there may be derived the impression of an energetic mind undisciplined by education, but profoundly anxious to impose discipline upon his people. Like most personalities of the same type, Peter exaggerated the force of his own will, and neglected the element of time in evolutionary processes. The events of his reign and the subsequent issue of his reforms, show that he was right in believing that the Russian people needed a vigorous shock to arouse them from their inertia; but he was wrong if he supposed that it was possible to alter their character in one generation. That Peter was impatient, choleric, and in general contemptuous of the capacity of those about him, cannot be denied. Yet, according to the testimony of one who worked with him, “he worked harder than any peasant.”<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Burnet, who saw him often, and “had much free discourse with him,” seems to have recognized in him signs of nervous disorder.<sup>4</sup> According to Burnet, he was “a man of a very hot temper, soon inflamed, and very brutal in his Passion. He raises his natural heat by drinking much Brandy, which he rectifies himself with great application. . . . He wants not capacity, and has a larger measure of Knowledge, than might be expected from his Education, which is very indifferent. A want of Judgment, with an instability of Temper, appear in him too often and too evidently; He is mechanically turn’d, and seems designed by Nature rather to be a Ship Carpenter than a great Prince. . . . He was . . . resolved to encourage Learning and to polish his People by sending some of them to travel in other Countries and to draw Strangers to come and live among them. There was a mixture of Passion and Severity in his temper.”

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 298.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Burnet says that Peter “is subject to convulsive Motions all over his Body, and his Head seems to be affected with these.” Burnet’s *History of His Own Time*. London, 1734, vol. ii. pp. 221-2.

Burnet adds quaintly: "After I had seen him often, and had conversed much with him, I could not but adore the depth of the Providence of God, that had raised up such a furious man, to so absolute an Authority over so great a part of the world. . . . How long he is to be the Scourge of that Nation or of his Neighbourhood, God only knows."<sup>1</sup>

The experienced shrewdness of Burnet notwithstanding, he was evidently as much mystified by the amazing contradictions of Peter's character as were Peter's own peasants and courtiers.

Peter does not lend himself to a sketch, his portrait must be done, if done at all, by means of much under-painting. It must be solid and full of colour, with deep shadows as well as high lights, suggesting refinement as well as crudity, and suggesting the possibility of petulant outbursts of ferocity as well as of impulsively generous and even self-immolating deeds. There is no real contradiction in these qualities, for the man who thinks nothing of sacrificing himself thinks little of sacrificing others, when a great end is to be served. Burnet was right in spirit, but wrong in fact, when he spoke of Peter making a better carpenter than a prince; but indeed Peter was cast in a mould greater than that of the greatest industrial and commercial leaders. The masters of finance, and of the industrial combinations of our time, are mere pigmies when compared with the gigantic, if sometimes sinister, figure of Peter the Great.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, *ibid.*, pp. 221-2. While Peter was in England he lived, January 30 till April 21, 1698, at Sayes Court, belonging to John Evelyn. See *The Diary of John Evelyn* under dates mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> Among the contemporary accounts of Peter the Great and his period are *Passages from the Diary of General Patrick Gordon, 1655-1699* (Spalding Club, 1859); and *The History of Peter the Great, &c.*, by Alexander Gordon of Auchintoul (Major-General in the Russian service) (Aberdeen 1755). An excellent bibliography of the literature of the reign other than Russian is to be found in Count Korff's *Peter the Great in Foreign Literature* (St. Petersburg 1872) (in French).

## CHAPTER VII

### REACTION AFTER PETER'S REFORMS

1725-1762

THE throne was seized on the death of Peter by his widow, Katherine.<sup>1</sup> The legitimate heir, afterwards Peter II, was at that time only ten years of age. Never before had there been a woman on the Russ throne. Her accession was looked upon by the common people with great misgivings. The accession of a woman was not only an innovation, but Katherine was not a Russian, and she came from no one knew whither. Some of the old men in Moscow refused to take the oath of allegiance, saying, with unconscious logic, "If a woman has become Tsar, then let the women kiss the cross for her."<sup>2</sup>

Although Peter's indifference to birth as a criterion of capacity had diminished the political influence of the *boyars*, and although the chief offices of State were commonly filled by men of inferior birth, there remained, nevertheless, a few *boyar* families whose influence began to revive after the death of Peter. The force of circumstances made these representatives of the antique aristocracy opposed to the exercise of autocratic power by a woman, or rather by the functionaries whose services she had inherited from her husband.

Professor Kluchevsky attaches great importance to the influence upon the Russian mind at this period of the writings of Hobbes and Locke, and to the knowledge of the social and political conditions of

<sup>1</sup> Katherine was a Livonian peasant, "Das schönes Mädchen von Marienburg," as her neighbours called her. She was in the household of Gluck, a Lutheran minister, who was taken to Moscow as a prisoner of war after the capture of Marienburg by Russia in 1702. Gluck had married her to a dragoon. Afterwards she is understood to have been the mistress of Menshikov and others of Peter's immediate circle. Peter endowed a "Gymnasium" for Gluck, where he taught "mathematics, the philosophical sciences, and different languages," with a staff of foreign assistants. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

Western Europe gained by Russian travellers.<sup>1</sup> The discussions about the nature of the State and observations upon the personal safety and freedom of the ordinary citizen in the West, even in an autocratic country like contemporary France, aroused desires on the part of large numbers of Russians to realize similar conditions in Russia. Yet it was difficult to bring such ideas home to the general mind. Moscow was habituated to governmental force, or to its alternative anarchy; there seemed to be no possible third condition.

The immediate consequence, in a constitutional sense, of the accession of Katherine was the growth in power of the Senate; but within the Senate there were two parties—the group of representatives of the old *boyarstvo* and the group of new-comers. The former consisted of the Golëtsins, the Dolgoruki, the Repnins, and Trubetskoy, and the latter of Menshikov, Tolstoy, Golovkin, and others. The latter group had surrounded Peter, and into their hands fell the actual rule when Peter died. The Senate was the repository of power, subject to the autocratic will of the Empress; but inside the Senate the new group was the repository of the traditions of the policy of Peter, and its members formed a “cabal,” which experienced a development somewhat similar to that of the English “cabal” of 1667. The Russian “cabal,” consisting of Menshikov, Tolstoy, Golovkin, Apraksin, all new-comers, together with the foreigner Osterman and Prince D. M. Golëtsin, representing the old nobility, composed the Superior Privy Council, which was established by ukase on 8th February 1726. This Privy Council was presided over by the Empress, and was rather an advisory body for the exercise of her autocratic authority than a ministry. The *collegia* remained, and yet inevitably the new Privy Council assumed a form similar to that of the *collegia*. No ukases were permitted to appear until they had been “finally decided” upon by the Council, and until they had been recorded and read to the Empress for her approval.<sup>2</sup>

The Privy Council represented a considerable constitutional step. The responsibility and the power of the throne were diminished by

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 356-7. Cf. also Semevsky, V. E., *Political and Social Ideas of the Dekabristi*. St. Petersburg, 1909, p. 1. Grotius and Puffendorf were also much read in the time of Katherine I. *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Kluchevsky, iv. p. 360.

depriving it of the power of personal action in legislation, and a sharp distinction came to exist between a law and a simple order of the administration. The Council had varying fortunes; its powers were neutralized by modifications of the originally prescribed procedure and by clauses in ukases which reserved the power of the throne to order otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

Yet a beginning had been made. Under the contemporary conditions of the succession, personal autocratic authority was diminished, and a check was imposed upon court intrigues and capricious legislation. The boy Tsar, Peter II, survived Katherine I only three years, and the Superior Privy Council asserted its power by selecting as Empress the Grand Duchess Anna, daughter of Ivan V. The Tsar had died on the day fixed for his marriage. Moscow was crowded. The provincial nobility were in force, and many regiments had been concentrated in the capital. Murmurs at the arbitrary action of the Superior Privy Council were heard; but the old nobility had no positive policy to advocate, nor had they any other candidate for the throne, and the murmurs subsided. The Council was fairly united; the opposition was divided against itself. Rumours were circulated about the adoption of English institutions and about the establishment of a parliament on the English model, in order to impose a check upon the exercise of absolute power.<sup>2</sup>

The consequences of the shake which Peter had given to his people were appearing in the troubled state of mind. Everyone was groping for a new form of government, was scanning the western horizon for light, and was wondering which among the varied political systems of Western Europe would be the best to adopt.<sup>3</sup> A limited monarchy as in England or as in Sweden, an elective monarchy as in Poland, or an aristocratic republic—there were partisans of each of these. The various parties seem to have been

<sup>1</sup> A power rarely reserved at the present time to the Government in Acts of the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain; but very frequently in the Acts of British Colonial Legislatures reserved to their respective governments.

<sup>2</sup> Manian, the French Ambassador, mentions these rumours, and Mardefeld the Prussian Ambassador, speaks of the desire on the part of the nobles to limit the autocratic power, and of their inability to find the means of doing so. The Spanish Ambassador, De Liria, remarked the numerous parties and the possibility of the occurrence of some startling event. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 370-71.

<sup>3</sup> The modern parallel is Japan, whose statesmen turned in 1882 to Europe for constitutional models.

united upon one point—the limitation of autocratic power—but they could not unite upon a method. The reason seems to lie in the disintegration of society which Peter's democratizing policy had produced. The old nobility distrusted the new-comers, and the new-comers, hostile to the old nobility and to the old traditions, held the power which they were able to seize from the dead hands of Peter, and to use it as an oligarchy. To entrust the governmental authority to that group meant to enthrone many tyrants instead of one tyrant. Prince Sh'cherbatov set this point in sharp relief. The Privy Council has, "out of their own number, invented a crowd of monarchs."<sup>1</sup> So also one of the small gentry wrote from the country to a friend in Moscow at this time, "We hear, in this place, about what is going to happen, or what may have already happened, in Moscow—that a republic is going to be established. I doubt it very much. God save us from that. Instead of one absolute monarch, we should have ten self-willed and powerful families. Then we, the gentry, would fall completely; we would be compelled to bow and to seek for grace, and it would be hard to find."<sup>2</sup>

No republic was established; but the Empress Anna announced on 2nd February 1730, immediately after her accession, the conditions under which she assumed the throne. These conditions involved ostensibly the surrender of supreme authority into the hands of the Privy Council and this surrender was the more significant that it was, to all appearance, performed voluntarily. The performance was a play for the benefit of the nervous and excitable elements in Moscow society. There was a good understanding between the Empress and the "cabal." The play had other effects than those which had been calculated upon. The Council was besieged with clamorous petitions for personal promotion and for changes in administrative methods. Critics of the methods of the Executive Government sprang up everywhere. The critics were given to understand that their opposition was inconvenient, and that forcible means might have to be resorted to in order that it might cease. Then the opposition passed into conspiracy. The critics of the Executive met secretly and went about disguised.<sup>3</sup> The knowledge that a powerful group stood at the centre, hostile

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> Letter quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 372.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 374.

to criticism and habituated to the punishment of critics, demoralized the administration. Oppositional activity was carried on, not openly within the existing State organization, but either secretly by small groups or openly by large groups formed for the purpose. Projects and criticisms were formulated, sometimes very crudely, by such groups. One project was, however, of consequence. This was drawn up by Tatischev and was presented to the Senate and to the corps of general officers. Tatischev was a historian, and was well acquainted with the Western European literature in political science. A follower of Puffendorf<sup>1</sup> and Wolff,<sup>2</sup> Tatischev discussed the applicability of autocratic rule to Russia, and argued that when a dynasty comes to an end, an Emperor should be elected, "according to natural law, by the consent of his subjects, some of them personally, and some of them through representatives."<sup>3</sup> Tatischev objected to the method by which, in the case of the Empress Anna, the autocratic power was limited, rather than to the fact of limitation. It was done, he said, by a few people, secretly, ignoring the rights of the gentry and others, and he called upon those who associated themselves with this view to defend their rights to the limit of their power. There were numerous other projects, for the election of higher officials from among the gentry, for the limitation of the number of members of the same family who might sit upon the Superior Privy Council,<sup>4</sup> and for the establishment of an elective assembly,<sup>5</sup> to be endowed with legislative powers, as well as with power to make constitutional changes. This assembly was to be composed of and elected by the nobility and gentry. The clergy and the merchantry were to have some share in constitutional reforms, but only in matters concerning their respective classes. Some of the projects urged the diminution of the burden of taxation. None of them even mentioned the question of the liberation of the peasants. The gentry were indeed chiefly concerned with their

<sup>1</sup> "The Martin Tupper of Jurisprudence," Bonar, J., *Philosophy and Political Economy*. London, 1893, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Wolff (1679-1754). Wolff, although himself the founder of a school, was a follower of Leibnitz. For bibliography, see, e.g., Ueberweg, F., *History of Philosophy*. English translation, London, 1874, vol. ii. pp. 116, 117.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 376.

<sup>4</sup> This was directed chiefly against the Dolgoruki, who had four members upon the Council.

<sup>5</sup> To be called *Obsh'chestvo*, literally *society*. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 377.



own interests, with questions of service, inheritance, privileges, and the like. They did not concern themselves with the larger issues. Thus they did not form a cohesive political party, but suffered themselves to be led by the nobility and by the superior military officers. Throughout the projects the gentry assume that they are the *people*, the possessors of the country, and that the working mass, constituting, as it does, no integral portion of the *people*, have simply to be ruled.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Prince D. M. Golëtsin was working out a project of a constitution. Under this project the autocratic personal power of the Empress was strictly limited; the supreme authority was really vested in the Superior Council, which was to consist of ten or twelve members belonging to the most noted families. The Empress was to have two votes in this Council. The control of the army was vested in the Council. In addition there were to be a Senate, of thirty-six members, which was to prepare material for decision by the Council, and a Chamber of Nobles, of two hundred members, elected by the gentry. The function of the latter was to protect the rights of the gentry from invasion by the Council and the Senate. Finally, there was to be a board of representatives of cities, which was to deal with industrial and commercial affairs, and to protect the rights of the common people. The bonded peasantry were, of course, wholly excluded from political representation.

This scheme satisfied nobody. The opponents of the limitation of autocratic power were not pleased with it because it went too far, and the advocates of limitation objected to the transference of autocratic power to the Council, the safeguards invented by Golëtsin not being regarded as adequate. In the resulting confusion a new party sprang up, headed by Osterman and consisting of nobles who had been excluded from the Council. Osterman was able to convince his party that it would be more easy to obtain what they desired from an autocratic Empress than from a secret Council. He boldly proposed to abolish the Council and to rehabilitate the Senate, promising the army release from the control of the Council. He aroused sympathy for the Empress, who, he said, could "hardly breathe" without the permission of the "dragoon" Dolgoruki, who mounted guard over her.<sup>2</sup> The officers of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.* iv. p. 380.

guard were speedily gained over to the new party, and before Anna made her appearance in Moscow on 15th February, they had already declared that they preferred "one tyrant to many." On that day Anna took the oath as Empress, and not as autocrat, and the oath to the State as prescribed by Peter. For the moment it appeared as though constitutional government had been established in Russia, in spite of the "new party" and its intrigues, of which the Superior Council was either oblivious or negligent. The Council voted Anna an income of one hundred thousand rubles, and no more without the sanction of the Council. She even signed an agreement to return to Courland should she infringe the contract under whose provisions she had acceded.<sup>1</sup>

Ten days later the Empress Anna broke her word. A demonstration was organized by the "new party," consisting of about eight hundred senators, officers of the army, and nobles. A petition was presented to her, asking for a commission for the re-examination of the projects for a constitution. This was a direct attack upon the Council. Anna immediately granted the prayer of the petition; but the petitioners do not appear to have been unanimous, for immediately there arose shouts from the military men and from some of the nobles: "We do not want to wait for laws to be prescribed to our Empress. She must be an autocrat, as were her predecessors." The same afternoon, in the presence of the Council, Anna received another petition from 150 of the nobility, begging her to assume the traditional rôle of autocrat. She is reported to have asked hypocritically, "Were, then, the conditions which I accepted not imposed by the wish of all the people?" They shouted, "No." Anna then turned to Prince V. L. Dolgoruki and said, "Vasili Lukich, you have cheated me." She ordered the document which contained the conditions, and which bore her signature, to be brought to her. This document she immediately destroyed with her own hands. The members of the Council were silent, fearing reprisals at the hands of the military conspirators, and the ten days of constitutional Russia were over.<sup>2</sup>

When the nobility asked for the re-establishment of autocracy, and for the abolition of the Superior Council, they did not propose to yield political power entirely into the hands of the Empress. They proposed to retain a Senate of twenty-one members, elected

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 382.

by the gentry. They also proposed to give the gentry the right to elect the presidents of *collegia*, and even to elect governors. They thus desired to retain an element of representative government.

It must be realised that the constitution proposed by the Superior Council had been of a very restricted character. It limited the autocratic power so far as the person of the sovereign was concerned, but it transferred the balance to the Superior Council, while the fact of autocracy remained. The struggle was thus rather a struggle for power than a struggle against autocracy. It was really a struggle between the great departments of the State—a struggle of all the departments against one, that one attempting to usurp the autocratic power.<sup>1</sup> The division was not one of classes. There were members of the great families on both sides.

The nobility-gentry of Peter's formation had become a very complicated body. It was difficult to determine which were great families and which were not. The old criteria no longer applied. *Myesnichestvo* had been abolished, and the regular army had proved to be a great leveller. There was little class solidarity, and thus fundamental disagreements readily arose. The military men cut the knot of the disputes, and in a rough-and-ready fashion restored the autocracy, realizing that none of the aspirants for power had the capacity to use it. Anna herself exhibited the same readiness to wield the power thus suddenly thrust into her hands. She at once formed a senate of twenty-one members, as she was asked to do; but she did not wait for the gentry to elect its members—she appointed them herself.<sup>2</sup>

The sinister figure of Biron<sup>3</sup> stood in the shadow of the throne; but the real rulers were Osterman, Imperial Vice-chancellor, and Field-marshal Münnich, President of the War *collegium*. This German group ruled Russia. In order to prevent the murmurs about the bad management of interior affairs from being heard, it was necessary to make flamboyant foreign adventures. The siege of Dantzic, the expedition to the Rhine for the relief of Austria, and a campaign against the Turks were conducted not without a certain brilliancy, and dreams began to be entertained about the

<sup>1</sup> "It was a struggle among the organs of government for division of rule." Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 386.

<sup>3</sup> Ernst Johann Biron, Chamberlain and favourite of Anna, had come to Russia from Mitau, where he had been with Anna prior to her accession.

conquest of Constantinople. But diplomatic failure followed upon military success, and the costs of the campaigns increased the mutterings of discontent. When the Empress died,<sup>1</sup> and Biron became Regent, the position of the throne was once more unstable and confused. The Germans still held the reins of power. The heir to the throne was an infant of two months—Ivan VI—son of the Duke of Brunswick, and grandson of Anna's elder sister, Katharine. There were, however, two other possible candidates—Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, and Karl Peter Ulrich, son of the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and grandson of Peter. The latter was a boy of twelve years; Elizabeth was a woman of thirty-one. Agitation began as before among the guard regiments. Conspiracies against the Regent and against the Germans began to be hatched. Eventually in the night of 25th November 1741, a year after the death of Anna, a revolution, led by the guards, sent the infant Emperor to the fortress of Schlüsselberg, and brought Elizabeth to the throne. Uprisings against the Germans occurred in many places. Osterman and Münnich had to seek safety in flight, and many others were forced to resign their offices.

Russia was released from the German yoke, and from the Regency of Biron; but these episodes had not been without their influence. We have seen that after the death of Peter, Russian society was disunited. The nobility was split into fragments, and the internecine quarrels placed it at the mercy of the relatively strong and unscrupulous hands of Biron, Osterman, and their satellites, German and Russian. Pressure of German control brought the disparate elements together. Members of the old noble families and the newcomers for the first time found solidarity of interest in a new sentiment of nationalism. Under Peter the foreign element and foreign influences were identified with reform, while the Russophilic tendencies were reactionary. Now the case is reversed—the foreigners are identified with misgovernment and with lawlessness, while the Russophiles are the reformers.

The exemptions from service secured by the gentry in 1730 enabled them to escape from the army and to reside upon their estates. There they had an opportunity of falling back into old Russian ways of life and of thought, and those who embraced this opportunity came to be impregnated not merely with dislike of a

<sup>1</sup> October 28, 1740.

distant and alien authority, but with a positive national feeling. They passed also from an atmosphere of speculation about the constitutions of other countries to the concrete facts of their own. And these facts were dismal enough. Excessive taxation had exhausted proprietors and peasants alike. Ruin seemed to stare everyone in the face. On 9th January 1727 the Privy Council had placed before the Empress a report to the effect that it was necessary to investigate the effect of the reforms, because in many directions affairs were worse than they were before these reforms were carried out. A long series of changes ensued. For example, the poll-tax was lightened, the Manufacture Collegium was abolished, as well as several offices in order to diminish the cost of administration, the collection of taxes and local administration were entrusted to the *voyevodi*. On 9th November of the same year another ukase dealt with the question of arrears of taxes. These arrears had multiplied to such an extent that the taxpayers became hopeless, and ran away from their obligations. The failure of direct taxation brought about the imposition of increased prices of the commodities subject to State monopoly. The prices of wine and salt were increased to such an extent that consumption diminished seriously.<sup>1</sup> Duties upon both imports and exports were increased. The export duties were successful, because most of the raw materials exported from Russia were the subjects of quasi-monopoly, Russia being almost the only producer of some of them. The import duties fell chiefly upon the official classes and the gentry who lived in towns, because these were practically the only consumers of foreign goods; but the increase in the price of salt fell upon everybody, and in relation to their resources, most heavily upon the peasants.

By these means the finances were brought into a somewhat better position; but the services for which Peter made such gigantic sacrifices were allowed to fall into decay. The army became deteriorated and the navy was neglected. The deterioration of the army weakened the prestige of Russia abroad and imperilled order at home, for brigandage increased and peasant risings became frequent. Ways and communications were indescribably bad.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1756 the price of salt was more than doubled. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 408.

<sup>2</sup> The Imperial Post took two months to go from Moscow to Saratov. A slight increase of traffic congested the service of the post between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 412.

Throughout the whole of the period under review, the condition of the peasantry was becoming worse and worse. They were running away by whole villages.<sup>1</sup> They ran from the central *gubernie* to the steppes, to the Don, to the Urals, to Central Asia, to Siberia. The Privy Council of the time of Katherine I became alarmed in case there should no more be any peasants, either as taxpayers or as soldiers. Bodily punishment was imposed upon peasants who were caught in the act of escaping. Those who were brought back to their villages brought with them tales of the free life in the steppes or elsewhere, and sometimes not only escaped again, but carried their converts with them. During the reign of Elizabeth small local risings of peasants were very frequent, especially on the monastic lands.<sup>2</sup> Detachments of troops sent to "pacify" the malcontents beat them, or they were beaten by them, according to circumstances.<sup>3</sup>

Out of this welter of vicious financial circles, governmental incapacity, dynastic confusion, thriftless landownership, and peasant discontent, there begins to arise about this time the ominous word "freedom." Even in the time of Peter, the *boyars* had petitioned for it; later, in the time of Katherine I, the merchants had petitioned for it; now the peasants began to talk about it. And the peasants also began to be considered in the "higher spheres" as being the backbone of the State. The very needs of the State made this fact evident. Taxes and recruits were both indispensable to the State, and the peasant was necessary in order that either of these should be yielded. Thus the peasant question came to be a socio-political question of the first order. The peasant was a necessity of the State, therefore his condition was a matter of State concern.<sup>4</sup>

The first serious statement of this point of view is to be found in the reports to the Empress Anna and Biron by Onesime Maslov. These reports were followed by a project of an ukase,<sup>5</sup> which was intended to have the effect of determining the obligations of the peasants. In this ukase the injurious effects of bondage right, and the necessity of legislation upon it, were put energetically, and the

<sup>1</sup> Between 1719 and 1727 the number of escaped peasants is officially stated at 200,000. Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 414.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 415.

<sup>5</sup> Recently discovered in the Archives. Kluchevsky, iv. p. 416.

Senate was called upon, under the threat of severe penalties, to formulate a scheme of reform. The Senate was empowered to call upon military and civil officials to the fullest extent which might be necessary to carry out any plan they might devise.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately Maslov died in 1735, and "the affair of bondage law dropped into water for a hundred years."<sup>2</sup>

The discussion of the peasant question relapsed into plans for obviating the accumulation of arrears of poll-tax. The collection of the tax had been entrusted to the *voyevodî*, and the tax was now collected, not from the peasants, but from the *pomyetschêkê*, the *pomyetschêk* in turn collecting it from the peasants, while the local commissions, to which members of the district gentry had been elected, were abolished. Thus the *pomyetschêk* as tax-collector assumed governmental authority. He was really at the same moment land and serf proprietor, police magistrate, and collector of taxes from his own peasants. Although this extension of the functions of the *pomyetschêk* did not affect the bondage relation in point of law, it gave him more intensive control over his serfs by endowing him with the powers of an agent of the Government.

The crop of 1733 was a failure, and peasants trooped into the towns, seeking relief. In April 1734 an ukase was issued requiring the *pomyetschêkê* to feed their peasants and to supply them with seed for the coming year. A further ukase of the same year imposed sharp penalties for disobedience. These ukases were indispensable corollaries of the taxfarming plan, for it was necessary to secure an economical foundation for tax payments.

The years of peace after the time of Peter rendered it possible for the Government to permit the proprietors to return to their estates; and their return permitted them to be used by the Government as tax-collectors. During their frequent absences on campaigns, their peasants had fallen more and more into the hands of the military governors of the provinces and of the local officials; the relations with their proprietor had become occasional and some-

<sup>1</sup> Professor Kluchevsky regards Maslov as "one of those statesmen who appear even in the darkest times, and who reconcile us, not to the times, but to the country in which the appearance of such statesmen is possible. Maslov was of the stock of the Speransky and Mëlutins, who wrought with strong and humane ideas for the solution of the bondage question." Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 415-16.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 416.

times obscure. Under these conditions the *pomyetschĕk* was looked upon as the natural protector of his own serfs, although he was not always present to protect them; indeed, sometimes the military service was too continuous to allow the "serving people" to visit their estates for years together. An ukase of 31st December 1736 limited the term of compulsory service to twenty-five years, and also permitted a father having two sons, to keep one of them upon his estate, sending the other into military or into civil service. There thus grew up a third class among the gentry whose characteristic was that it was non-serving.<sup>1</sup> This class occupied the estates, and brought to their management a certain vigour, which was reinforced by fresh legislation upon the laws of inheritance. The ukase of 23rd March 1714<sup>2</sup> had established the principle of single heredity, and the results had been confusion and family quarrels—sometimes even parricide. Proprietors sold part of their estates in order to provide for sons and daughters who were not to inherit the land, leaving the estate without capital to a single heir. The single heir could not work the estate to advantage without capital, and the brothers and sisters who had inherited the capital did not know what to do with it.<sup>3</sup> An ukase of 17th March 1731 altered this, and required equal division of land and capital among all members of the family. The immediate result was, of course, division of estates, but the proprietors of these divided estates lived upon them; and the ulterior consequences were endless disputes about boundaries, seizure of adjoining lands, irregularities of the bondage relation, insufficiency of capital in the divided estates, and the growth of a parasitic *pomyetschĕk* class which brought the whole system into discredit before the end of the eighteenth century.

These consequences had developed so far by the middle of the eighteenth century, that an ukase was issued on 7th May 1753, providing for the establishment of a Nobles' Bank, with a capital of 750,000 rubles, for the purpose of lending money on mortgage up to 10,000 rubles at 6 per cent., repayable in three years.<sup>4</sup> On 13th May 1754 another ukase provided for a general survey of lands,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. supra*, pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> The current rate of interest at the time was 20 per cent. Kluchevsky, *ibid.*, iv. p. 422.



with the object of determining boundaries of estates, verifying the titles to land and to serfs, and generally of reducing to system the confusion into which landownership had fallen. But this ukase only served to irritate the landowners and to foment litigation. Before the surveys of the Moskovskaya *guberni* were finished, the whole proceedings were stopped. Meanwhile the courts were congested with suits about escaped peasants, and the Senate seemed helpless to relieve the congestion by any plan for more expeditious court procedure. The wealthier nobility enticed peasants from the smaller estates and "lied them away" in their own.<sup>1</sup>

Peter the Great, with his customary contempt for the nobility, had ordered that this practice should be put an end to, and that offenders should be subjected to an enormous fine,<sup>2</sup> and should be compelled to return to their owners the peasants they had appropriated. But after Peter's time the administration relapsed into laxity, and theft of peasants became bolder<sup>3</sup> and more common. At the same time an ukase of 6th May 1736 gave the *pomyetchëk* the right of determining the punishment of a peasant for attempting to escape; another of 2nd May 1758 made the *pomyetchëk* responsible for the conduct of his peasants; another of 13th December 1760 gave the *pomyetchëk* the right to exile peasants to Siberia, and one of 1765 empowered him to send offenders to hard labour. Bit by bit the law deprived the peasant of the last remnants of liberty; the peasant became a chattel; he was bought and sold without land and to anyone; he was sent as a recruit into perpetual military service; he was separated from his family; he could not contract debts, for his security was worthless; in the end he lost even the right of complaint, for he could not petition against his owners. But the powers of the landowner were not inherent in him as landowner, for these powers were conferred also upon the managers of the State peasantry, and the effect of the new legislation was to convert the civil institution of bondage into a governmental institution. Thus, under the ukases of 1729 and 1752, the dependents of the *pomyetchëkë*, escaped or tramping peasants, and clericals without place, were forced into the bonded class, and were assigned to any proprietor who would pay the poll-tax for them. On the other side, the policy of compulsory education for the noble class was carried out strictly. Noble youths who were not members of the corps of

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

cadets were obliged to attend elementary schools, and if they were poor they received a stipend. Such youths might be educated at home, but in that case they were required to pass three examinations, at twelve, sixteen, and twenty years of age. These examinations comprised reading, writing, arithmetic, geometry, and religious knowledge in the elementary stages, and finally fortification, geography, and history. Those who failed in the second examination were sent into the navy. These requirements were stated in the ukase of 1737, which also insisted upon every proprietor of an estate being acquainted at least with arithmetic and geometry.<sup>1</sup>

In the seventeenth century all "serving people," without exception, were entitled to possess serfs. The list of "serving people" was contained in the *barkhatnaya kniga*—the velvet book. The whole of this serving class was ennobled by Peter, and was endowed with the right to possess land and serfs. During Peter's time also estates of serving people were assimilated to *votchini*, and *kholopi* were assimilated to bonded peasantry. At the same time factory peasants made their appearance. But all the legislation of this period had one end, viz. the increase of the fiscal resources. The idea of class privilege came later. In 1739 people who had no estates were forbidden to acquire peasants. The pressure of the poll-tax bore so heavily upon some proprietors that they petitioned to be relieved of the burden by permission to liberate their serfs; but the Senate refused to allow them to escape their obligations in that way.

Prior to 1730, in addition to the hereditary nobility, the following classes of persons customarily possessed serfs: (1) The non-free *boyars*, the bishops, and the monastic authorities; (2) free people, obliged to pay poll-tax, merchants, State peasants, and peasants of the *possad*; (3) "serving people" who were not of the rank of superior officers, and who afterwards were endowed with personal nobility. A series of ukases between 1730 and 1758 deprived these classes of the right of acquiring either land with serfs or serfs without land. Should they have acquired land previously to the promulgation of these ukases, they were obliged to sell it. This process resulted in the separation of the hereditary nobility from the other classes. In 1761 a new genealogical book was compiled in order to make evident who possessed the right to own serfs. Meanwhile the non-nobles endeavoured to secure the position of nobles by service,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 424-5.

especially by civil service.<sup>1</sup> At the end of this period the nobles had acquired and secured the confirmation of the following privileges: (1) The free disposition of their *votchinal*, or hereditary, immovable property; (2) the class monopoly of bondage right; (3) the increase of their judicial and police powers; (4) the right of selling peasants without land; (5) a simple method of detecting fugitive serfs; and (6) a cheap means of obtaining credit through the State by mortgage of their immovable property. These privileges distinguished the hereditary nobility from all other classes of society, and served to alienate it from them both judicially and morally.<sup>2</sup> The nobility was liberated from the obligation of compulsory service by the manifesto of 18th February 1762, the crown, however, reserving the right to call upon the nobles "when special necessity demanded." Otherwise they were free to come and go, and even to serve abroad. Should they return after service under a foreign monarch they were to be received, and were to be confirmed in any rank which they might have acquired abroad. While compulsory education was removed, the manifesto, nevertheless, intimated that education appropriate to the children of the nobility was expected, and uneducated nobles would not be received at Court. The early association between bondage right, on the one hand, and State obligation on the other, was destroyed by this manifesto. The obligations were removed, but the bondage right remained. The net result of this process was, as it were, the "lease" to the nobility of the personality and the labour of the bonded man and woman for the payment of a poll tax—the social relation implied by the association of bondage right with obligation to the peasant and to the State was entirely extinguished.<sup>3</sup> Professor Kluchevsky briefly characterizes the successive forms of bondage right as follows: bondage right by agreement, bondage right through hereditary military service, and bondage by leasehold through the fiscal policy of the State. The consequences of this new phase of bondage right were—absorption of the lands under cultivation by the peasants in the landowners' fields, bonding of previously free peasants for whose poll tax the landowner was held responsible,

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 428.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 433. The number of bonded peasants in 1740 was 4,900,000. They composed 73 per cent. of the taxed inhabitants, and the amount which their proprietors were called upon to pay was 3,425,000 rubles. *Ibid.*

arbitrary movement of peasants from one estate to another, new grants of estates with peasants from the Court or State lands, retail selling of peasants, and finally the binding of peasants to the personality of the owner, and practically complete abandonment of the peasant to the discretion of his owner.<sup>1</sup>

Thus at the moment when the historical justification for bondage had passed away the intensification of it became complete.<sup>2</sup> The unification of *votchinal* or hereditary and *pomyestny* or service landowning in Peter's time had bred in the whole landowning class new ideas about the tenure of land. Land was now looked upon as the subject of the family or of the individual property of the *pomyetschëk*. The peasants ceased to have any recognized rights in the land. Even the most enlightened statesmen and landowners of the eighteenth century saw no injustice in the alteration of the law in favour of the serving class without reference to the peasants upon their estates, excepting so far as concerned the inheritance of them as an integral portion of the estate property. Prince D. Golëtsin, for example, who desired to show an example in the liberation of his serfs in accordance with the legislative project of his relative, Prince V. Golëtsin, repudiated the idea that land should be given to the liberated peasants unless they could pay for it. "The lands belong to us; it would be a crying injustice to take them away from us."<sup>3</sup> The liberation of the personality of the peasant was the only liberation contemplated at that time. The *pomyetschëk* of the eighteenth century had come to look upon his estate, consisting of land and peasants, as his inviolable private property, subject only to due payment of taxes to the State. The payment of these taxes, in addition to the maintenance of the family establishment of the *pomyetschëk*, necessitated management of an economical character; but the training of the *pomyetschëk* had not always prepared him for estate management. Their earlier years had been spent in city barracks, their military education and training had given them the habit of command and a certain severity of discipline; but it had rarely endowed them with the kind of

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 434.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 435. It may be observed, however, that some of the Golëtsin estates were *votchini*, and that for land held under that ancient tenure there was justification for the views expressed by him. On the other hand, for *pomyestnye* lands only the ukase of Peter, and of course previous practice, afforded such justification.

knowledge necessary for successful management of a domain. In cases where there were no other sources of income than those arising within the estate itself, and where there were reckless habits, there was danger of grave deterioration, not only of the *pomyetschëk* families, but also of the peasants. The "low gentry" in 1730 numbered about 50,000, and among the superior nobility there was real alarm about the proceedings of these people. Fears arose that they would supplement their incomes by brigandage, and that their houses would become refuges for robbers.<sup>1</sup>

The character assumed by bondage right in the eighteenth century must be estimated not merely by the ukases; the unsanctioned as well as the sanctioned practices must be taken into account. We have seen that in earlier ages the unsanctioned practice had a tendency to grow into law. This is illustrated in the project for the code of 1754, in which the regulations about the peasants do not form a separate section, but form a part of the section devoted to landowners' affairs. The peasants are assumed to be landowners' property. The code states explicitly, "The nobility has full right, without exception, over their peasants, excepting to take away their lives, punishing them with the knout, or torturing them." The nobleman was also free to control the labour and the personality of his bonded peasants, to give or to withhold his sanction to their marriage, and to impose any penalties, excepting those expressly prohibited.<sup>2</sup>

There is here no suggestion of any definition of the obligations of the peasants or any recognition of his possession of a human personality. Professor Kluchevsky soundly remarks that in such a school of manners there could be bred only automata or adherents of Pugachov.<sup>3</sup> At this moment Russia was behind every country in Europe in respect to the treatment of the class that formed by far the larger part of its population. Everywhere else bondage had either disappeared or active measures were being taken to protect the bonded peasants from the caprice and greed of their owners; and preparations were being made for the entire extinction of bondage right. In Russia the case was otherwise. Bondage right had reached its extreme point, and another century was required for its abolition.

The political life of Russia as a whole corresponded to the par-

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 436. <sup>2</sup> *Cf. ibid.* <sup>3</sup> *Cf. infra*, Bk. II, ch. ii.

ticular fraction of it, which it is our special business to consider. The reforms of Peter the Great had, for the time at least, spent themselves, the administration had fallen into incompetent and dishonest hands, the dynasty had deteriorated until its representatives were sickly children, like Peter II, foreign women of inferior birth, like Katherine I, or foreign princesses, like Anna. The Court was honeycombed with intrigue, espionage was continuous, and military outbreaks not infrequent. Instead of law there was universal "rightlessness"; every spontaneous thought was stifled. There was complete dissociation between the Government and the people; even the privileged nobility had no influence upon State administration. The law courts were congested, and the laws were confused and contradictory.

Under these conditions the gentry retired to their "nests" among their peasants, ruling them as they would or as they could, forcing into relief the abnormal relation of bondage and poisoning the stream of national life.<sup>1</sup>

The system of taxation brought out sharply the extent to which the peasants were supporting the burden of the gentry, who were failing to give in effective administration or in the enhancement of culture any recompense for their maintenance. Such a state of matters could not endure, and within the following century it was seriously mitigated as may be seen from the following:

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBERS OF THE NON-TAXPAYING IN  
RELATION TO THE TAXPAYING CLASSES.<sup>2</sup>

	1740.	1867.	
Hereditary nobles . . . . .	7.5	1.5	} per 100 tax- paying peasants.
Personal and serving nobles . . . . .	3.0	1.0	
Clergy . . . . .	4.5	2.3	
	<u>15.0</u>	<u>4.8</u>	

It is convenient now to divide the historical narrative into two sections—one dealing with the agrarian question as it arose in the time of Katherine II, and pursuing its subsequent history, and the other dealing with the contemporaneous industrial development.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, iv. p. 443.

## BOOK II

THE FALL OF BONDAGE RIGHT.  
AGRICULTURE UNDER BONDAGE

## INTRODUCTION

AN account has been given in the foregoing book of the gradual economical and legal development of land and personal bondage. We must now address ourselves to the tasks of examining the conditions of the bonded peasantry at the conclusion of this process, and of examining the projects and laws devised for the modification of these conditions, which were promulgated with increasing frequency from the middle of the eighteenth century until the middle of the nineteenth. The significant circumstance about the projects is that the advocates for the interests of each class—that of the landowners or *pomyetschêkê* and that of the peasants or *krestyanie*—vie with one another in devising safeguards against rapacity or misconduct on the part of the other class, as if such lapses from virtue were fully to be expected. In almost all the projects and in all the laws it is assumed that each class must pursue its own interests inevitably and remorselessly; and that it is necessary that the Throne should at least affect to hold the balance between the conflicting interests, and to prevent one class from overreaching the other.

The most severe critic of Russian autocracy must allow that Nicholas I and Alexander II both strove most arduously to solve the agrarian problem. Their successive labours extended over the whole period of thirty-six years which elapsed between 1825, when Nicholas I came to the throne, and 1861, when Emancipation was carried into effect. Yet the details of the discussions which follow show that the conditions which were presupposed as fundamental to the solution were such as to compromise the solution itself. Both of the reforming Tsars attempted a task which was in the nature of things impossible of accomplishment. They wished to benefit the peasants without in any way curtailing the privileges of the landowners; and, in addition, they desired to effect the economic emancipation of the peasants without exciting in their minds desires for political liberty or for political power. The system



of autocracy had been built up through the dependence of the landowner upon the autocrat and the dependence of the peasant upon the landowner. If the lower member of the structure were radically changed in its relation to the intermediate member, what would become of the relation of the intermediate to the upper member, and what would become of the solidity of the structure as a whole? The situation was further complicated by the circumstance that abuses were so prevalent in all of the relations that mere liberty, if it were granted at once, might lead to further abuses. The landowners might be expected to do as they pleased or as they could, and peasants might be counted upon to act in a similar way; and the last state of both would therefore be worse than the first. It had been shown many times that large numbers of landowners could not be trusted to arrive at fair voluntary agreements with peasants who had for so long a period been held by them in entire subjection. To substitute judicial for voluntary agreements would involve costly readjustment of the whole system of local administration. Besides, there could be no doubt that there was reasonable ground for fear that if the peasants were given the right to leave the land cultivated by them, they might return in huge numbers to the nomadic habits of their ancestors, and that the productivity of their labour, and therefore their own well-being, as well as that of the nation, would be most seriously diminished.

The cardinal questions in the problem of emancipation in all countries where servile tenures have existed are these: After emancipation what is to become of the peasant and what is to become of the land? If the peasants are simply to be liberated from the incidents of bondage, and to be told to go where they please, freedom to the bulk of them must mean either freedom to starve, or employment by their former masters or others under conditions of free competition in a suddenly inundated labour market and in a slenderly developed industrial field. Their previous servile condition must have rendered it impossible for them to organize industrial combinations or to accumulate farming or industrial capital. Simply to manumit them, therefore, must be to transform them from serfs who at least had access to land, into proletarians—landless folk, whose only function in the State is to produce children and whose poverty must be so great that they can have no reserves sufficient to enable them to resist the most extreme exploitation to which

they might be subjected in return for mere subsistence. The proportion of rural in relation to urban population at the time will be the determining factor in the conditions of contracts entered into under such circumstances. If the urban population is increasing, and urban industry is developing rapidly, the demand for rural labour will be relatively great; and if for any reason rural labour is scarce, the conditions of employment or of contract for the use of land must be favourable to the labourer and the cultivator.<sup>1</sup> But if the rural population is increasing rapidly while the urban population is increasing slowly, and industry is undeveloped or stagnant, sudden transition from a self-contained servile economy to a commercial contractual economy must result in the impoverishment of large numbers of the liberated serfs, and the conversion of these from peasants with fixed places of abode and regular occupation into homeless and landless wanderers.

The related question of the occupation of the land is equally serious in its reactions. The peasant may remain upon the land, the ownership being vested in himself or in the landowner in whose possession were both land and peasant prior to Emancipation. If the peasant remains upon the land, upon how much of it is he to remain? Upon the area of land previously cultivated by him or upon less or more? If more, how much more, and what provision should be made for increase of population? Where is the land allotted to the peasant to be situated in relation to his accustomed dwelling-place? If the peasant is to be vested in perpetual use of the land, and not in fee simple of it, in what sense is the land still in ownership by the proprietor? Ought the proprietor to be endowed with the right of bequest of his rights, such as they are; and ought the peasant to be endowed with similar rights? If manumission of the serf population implies freedom of movement, the peasant may leave the land at will, or he may leave it by permission or under compulsion.<sup>2</sup> In any event, the land will go out of cultivation—to be wholly neglected, to be put into pasture, or to be afforested—or, alternatively, it must be cultivated by means

<sup>1</sup> Such conditions existed throughout Europe in the latter part of the fourteenth century. After the Plague the population of the towns increased rapidly, urban wages were high, and rural labour scarce and dear. Cf. Kovalevsky, M., *Die ökonomische Entwicklung Europas bis zum Beginn der Kapitalistischen Wirtschaftsreform*, vol. iii. Berlin, 1905, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> As in the Scotch crofter cases.

of hired peasant labour. If the land is to be economically exploited, either the cultivation must be greatly intensified or the comparatively inefficient labourers must be greatly reduced in number.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, then, there is the alternative of employing a great amount of additional agricultural capital immediately or of driving a large proportion of the peasants off the land, the former self-contained economy being necessarily greatly modified under the new conditions.

From the point of view of landownership, there is an equally important dilemma. If the Government decides to nationalize the land, it must expropriate it, with or without compensation to the landowners. In either case, the land would be left without even such supervision as the landowners gave it, or a great number of new functionaries must be appointed to supervise the cultivation of the land in the interests of the State. Nationalization would, moreover, convert rent into a tax, and would thus involve a more or less intimately regulative system, with risk of constant friction between the cultivators and the officials. Yet the experience of State management of land on the State domains and on the *Udelnya* lands, which, from an administrative point of view, may be regarded as domains of the State, was on the whole so favourable that the mere fear of intensified bureaucracy would not have deterred the Government from adopting the plan of nationalization in 1861 had the conditions otherwise been propitious. Expropriation without compensation being considered at that time as quite impracticable, the cost of redeeming the whole of the land in private possession was regarded as too great for the country to contemplate. The Crimean War had impoverished the Treasury, and the financial strain of a land redemption operation would have been too burdensome.

The question was not purely a class question. The landowners were not all nobles. Many merchants possessed large estates, and even rich peasants possessed land and serfs. At the time of Emancipation the doctrine was generally held that the peasants must in some way be retained upon the land. It was thought that this

<sup>1</sup> It may be observed that opinions differ as to the relative efficiency of servile and free labour. Professor Kluchevsky entertains the view that Russian experience shows a high relative efficiency of servile labour. (*Cf. op. cit.*, iii. p. 5.) See also *supra*, p. 75.

could be done by giving them the right to use it, and the right to bequeath the use of it, or by giving it to them in fee simple, in either case due compensation being paid to the proprietors for the deprivation of their bondage right, either directly by the peasants, or indirectly by them through the State, which would act as friendly trustee and arbitrator. But the difficulty of carrying out any such plan speedily emerged. The peasant had no agricultural capital, or he had an inadequate amount of it. Even if he received the land on condition of paying for it in instalments, the difficulty of cultivating it with inadequate capital remained. Until he had paid off some portion of his indebtedness upon the land, he could not borrow upon it in order to obtain the necessary capital. Moreover, if he was not endowed with the right of property in the land, but only the right to use it, he could not borrow upon it at all. If, on the other hand, he was endowed with the fee simple of it, would he not at once sell all or some of it? In either case, would the land not be likely to revert to the landowner on account of non-user or by purchase at the low price which would prevail in presence of a general desire to sell?

Thus all the plans of emancipation which might be supposed to be favourable to the cultivator had, under the conditions of Russia, most serious drawbacks. Even if the contingency of expropriation without compensation had been accepted, the absence of peasant capital would have necessitated the granting from the beginning of State credit to the peasants, as well as immediate instruction and supervision.<sup>1</sup>

It must be realized that the juridical relations of ownership and possession of land in Russia have not only been confusing to the student and much more so to the peasant, but they have been confused in fact. We have seen that the appanage prince possessed *votchinal*, or heritable, rights over the whole of his appanage; although the area of this appanage consisted predominantly of *votchini*

<sup>1</sup> Prince D. Khilkov, an ardent land reformer, owner of estates in the Black Soil region, told the writer that in a fit of enthusiasm he determined, about 1898, to surrender, altogether free of rent, some of his lands to the peasants who were cultivating them. This involved his leaving the estate in question and going elsewhere. He had been in the habit of assisting his peasants with advice, and when he left they were like "a queenless hive." Within a year or two they were worse off than before, free land notwithstanding.

belonging to private owners.<sup>1</sup> So also we have found that *pomyetschékē*, or landowners, had rights of ownership, possession, and bequest over land in occupation by the peasants, and over movables in use by the peasants; yet the peasants had indefinitely recognized rights over these also.<sup>2</sup> The obligations and the rights of the peasant, such as they were, were heritable, as were those of the landowner. But the peasant right was not defined, or rather the changes in structure and in practice of the peasant life were not accompanied by juridical changes appropriate to them. The peasant rights developed and decayed without being reflected otherwise than in vague and varying custom. It was thus inevitable that the landowner should entertain one conception of his relation to the land, and that the peasant should entertain another conception, naturally more favourable to himself. The peasant's conception was based upon tradition, and possibly even upon misunderstandings of tradition, while the landowner's conception had a tendency to conform to that of commercial ownership of land—a conception which, especially during the nineteenth century, became dominant in Europe, excepting where it came in contact—as it did in Ireland, for example—with peasant tradition. The development of the agrarian question from the time of Katherine II till Emancipation is described in the pages immediately following. The consequences of the commercialization of landowning are discussed in a subsequent book.

The distribution of bonded peasantry throughout European Russia in the middle of the eighteenth century was approximately as follows: The northern regions—Arkhangel, Olonetz, Novgorod, and Vologda; and the north-eastern regions—Perm, Vyatka, and Ryazan were occupied chiefly by State peasants, and to a less extent by "Court" and monastery peasants. Peasants of private proprietors only begin to make their appearance in the south of Vologdskaya *gub.*<sup>3</sup> Near Lake Onega there was, in 1760, a group of State peasants, who worked in the brass foundry of Petrov and in the iron foundry of Kuchezer, receiving no wages and paying no taxes. In

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> In what is now Vologdskaya *gub.*, the peasants of *pomyetschékē* numbered 34 per cent. of the village population, while in Olonetskaya *gub.* they numbered only 6 per cent. Semevsky, V. E., *Peasants in the Reign of Katherine II*. St. Petersburg, 1903 (2nd edition), i. p. iv.

the southern part of what is now Novgorodskaya *gub.*, more than half of the peasants were bonded to *pomyetschĕkĕ*. Round Pskov there were numerous small groups of Church peasants. Round Smolensk there were groups of bonded peasants belonging to the merchants of that city;<sup>1</sup> in the *gubernie* as a whole, 80 per cent. of the village population were peasants of *pomyetschĕkĕ* and merchants.

Round Tver, although there were many monastery and Court peasants, the greater number of the bonded population belonged to *pomyetschĕkĕ*. In the Moscow region, in addition to those who were bonded to their proprietors personally, there was a class which came into existence in the time of Peter the Great—the *possessional peasants*. These were bonded not to a proprietor but to the factory in which they performed their *bartschina*. In the Moscow region there were several *votchini* belonging to the Tsar personally, apart from the domains of the Court and of the State. Upon these *votchini* there were so-called Tsar's peasants. In Moscow also there were the *stable peasants*, whose *bartschina* or whose *obrĕk* was rendered in connection with the Imperial stables. Towards the south the numbers of *pomyetschĕkĕ* peasants predominated, but there still appeared numerous groups of so-called *odnodvortsĭ* (free-holders), descendants of former "serving people," who had been settled in these regions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the defence of the country against the Tartars.<sup>2</sup>

In the middle of the eighteenth century the eastern outskirts of European Russia, between the Volga and the Urals, were very scantily populated; yet peasants in groups were to be found in these regions engaged in "lumbering" and in charcoal burning for the factories to which they were ascribed.

In Siberia only a few peasants were bonded to individual proprietors. The bulk of the scanty population consisted of State peasants similar to those in the north of European Russia. Some of the State peasants were ascribed to the State industrial establishments, some to the Empress (Tsar's peasants), and some to the monasteries. The following table sums up the situation:

<sup>1</sup> When throughout Russia merchants were forbidden to possess bonded peasants, the rights of the Smolensk merchants, as guaranteed at the conquest of Poland by Russia, were respected. Cf. *ibid.*, i. p. v.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. vi. The *odnodvortsĭ* were subject to land bondage, that is, they were bound to the land, but they were not subject to personal bondage. Cf. *infra*, pp. 112 and 237.

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TABLE SHOWING THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF PEASANTRY ACCORDING TO THE THIRD CENSUS (1762-1766) IN GREAT RUSSIA AND SIBERIA IN NUMBERS OF MALE SOULS:—<sup>1</sup>

	Prior to the Secularization of Clergy Lands in 1764.	Per-centage.	After Secularization of Clergy Lands in 1764.	Per-centage.
State and other Treasury peasants <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	1,815,051	25.4	2,806,812	39.2
Synodal, monastery, and clergy peasants . . . . .	991,761	13.8	...	...
Court peasants . . . . .	494,358	6.9	494,358	6.9
Possessional peasants . . . . .	47,647	0.7	47,647	0.7
<i>Pomyetschéhē</i> peasants (including <i>odnodvortsī</i> ) . . . . .	3,805,073	53.2	3,805,073	53.2
Total . . . . .	7,153,890	100.0	7,153,890	100.0
Exclusive of—				
Inhabitants of Peterburgskaya <i>gub.</i> . . . .	59,330	...	} 264,383	}
Inhabitants of Ukraina	12,680	...		
Merchantry of other <i>gubernī</i> . . . . .	192,373	...		
Orenburg Commercial Tartars . . . . .				
Total male souls . . . . .	7,418,273	...	7,418,273	...

If the numbers of male souls given above be doubled in order to include the bonded females, the result will give approximately the total peasant population of the Russian Empire at the Third Census (1762-1766), viz.: 14,800,000. Since the total population at that period was 19,000,000,<sup>3</sup> it is evident that about seven-ninths of the Russian people were under bondage.

The sources of this bondage may now be summarised. The larger number were the children of bonded parents, some became

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. vii, viii.

<sup>2</sup> A very complicated group including the old serving people, "ploughing soldiers," state peasants properly so called, "unorthodox" Christians, peasants ascribed to State industrial establishments, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. e.g. Brockhaus and Ephron, *Russia, etc.*, p. 75; St. Petersburg, 1900.

bonded through marriage,<sup>1</sup> some through inscription on the poll tax rolls, with or without their own consent, some were captives taken in war, some were arrested rioters, who had been granted in bondage by way of punishment, some were Asiatic tribesmen, who had been purchased by *pomyetschĕkĕ*, and some were State peasants, who had been transferred to private ownership along with lands or factories granted by the State.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i, p. x.



## CHAPTER I

### THE AGRICULTURAL PEASANTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### I. THE LANDOWNERS' PEASANTS

PEASANTRY of all classes were divided into two main groups in respect to the method by which they met their obligations to the *pomyetschĕk* or landowner to whom they belonged. These were the peasants working on *obrĕk* or the *obrochny* peasants, and those who rendered *bartschina* or obligatory labour. A subsidiary group was composed of those who, while paying *obrĕk*, also rendered some *bartschina* days, working in summer on *bartschina* and in winter earning in order to pay their *obrĕk*.<sup>1</sup> The first group predominated in the non-Black Soil *guberniĕ*; e.g. in Yaroslavskaya *gub.* there were among the peasants 78 per cent. of *obrochny* and in Kostromskaya *gub.* 85 per cent. The reason for this large proportion seems to have been that in these *guberniĕ* handicrafts had developed more than elsewhere, the peasants being driven to these because of the ineconomical character of their agriculture. While the peasants often practised their handicrafts in the villages, selling their products in the local markets or to itinerant vendors, they sometimes went to other villages or to the towns, where they were able to earn money by hiring themselves. Their interest thus lay in making *obrĕk* contracts with their owners; and the interest of the owners lay in allowing them to do so. In the *guberni* of Pskov, on the other hand, the number of peasants paying *obrĕk* was only 21 per cent. In all the thirteen *guberniĕ* of European Russia, at the time of Katherine II, 55 per cent. of the peasants paid *obrĕk*. In addition to the two groups of peasants, one paying *obrĕk* and the other *bartschina*, there was a third group which consisted of *dvoroviĕ*

<sup>1</sup> Such cases were, however, rare. Cf. Ignatovich, E. E., *Pomyetschĕkĕ Peasants on the Eve of Emancipation* (Moscow, 1910), p. 78, and Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 47.

*lyudē*, or people of the courtyard or doorway. These domestic peasants were bonded as were the field peasants.

(I) CONDITIONS OF THE PEASANTS PAYING OBRÒK

*Obròk* was a payment of a fixed amount usually based upon the number of souls of male sex in the peasant's family, the amount per peasant soul being determined for a village or group of villages. The peasants who paid it were not, by doing so, released from bondage relations; but the fact that they had contracted with their owner for the payment of a certain definite amount was an advantage to them on the whole. The *obròk* was also an advantage to the proprietors, for the stipulated amount was as a rule punctually paid, and when a proprietor was away from his estate on service, it was more convenient for him to have a known income from *obrochny* peasants<sup>1</sup> than to entrust the management of peasants working on *bartschina* to an estate manager, or, as was frequently the case, to one of his *dvorovie lyudē*.

The law did not fix a maximum *obròk*. The amount was left to voluntary agreement between the proprietor and the peasant. It was not to the interest of either that the amount should be greater than the peasant could pay; but it was not determined in relation to the agricultural income of the peasant from the land allotted to him. *Obròk* cannot therefore be regarded as synonymous with rent. It was a payment by means of which obligations other than those arising out of occupancy of land, as well as those arising out of that occupancy, were compounded for.

A greedy proprietor might exact a high *obròk*; but if the same proprietor had alternatively exacted *bartschina* or work upon the fields on his own cultivated land, he would probably have exacted an excessive number of labour days. From the facts that *obròk* payments were more frequent on the poor lands of the non-Black Soil region than in the richer lands of the Black Soil, and that in the former region the handicrafts were more highly developed than in the latter, it is evident that the *obròk* was paid as a rule not out of agricultural earnings; but chiefly out of industrial income. The *obròk* was thus not composed entirely, or even perhaps largely, of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 50, quoting the opinion of Prince Sh'cherbatov.

economic rent ; it was partly composed of wages upon which the proprietors of the peasants levied a tax.

Although the *obrochny* peasants, or those paying *obròk* were much better off than those rendering *bartschina*, there was some difference of contemporary opinion on the question of the advisability of the extension of *obròk*. Katherine, for example, was not in favour of *obròk* on the ground that the payment of it compelled the peasants to go from home in order to earn it, and that therefore their own fields as well as the landowners' fields were less productive than they otherwise would have been, and that agricultural produce was higher in price on this account.<sup>1</sup>

Storch<sup>2</sup> entertained the same view, as did also several agromical writers of the eighteenth century ; but it can hardly be doubted that *obròk* contracts represented a step towards emancipation, because they involved the payment of a determinate amount in money or in kind in place of an indeterminate number of days in labour.

The average annual amount of *obròk* in the time of Katherine II was as follows : in the sixties of the eighteenth century it was 1 to 2 rubles per male census soul ; in the seventies, it was 2 to 3 rubles ; in the eighties 4 rubles ; and at the end of her reign, 5 rubles.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile the prices of grain advanced considerably, although not to the extent of five times. In addition to the money *obròk* it was customary for the peasants to pay some natural products and to transport these in their own wagons to the places at which they were required to be delivered.

Probably because of the steady increase of the amount of *obròk*, and probably because of the increase of the habit of piling on " natural " obligations in addition to the pecuniary payment, the practice of *obròk* was adopted to an insignificantly increasing extent between the middle of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth. In the Black Soil *gubernie* towards the end of the eighteenth century there were 26.1 per cent. of the bonded peasantry under *obròk*. In the middle of the nineteenth century there were only 28.8 per cent. In the non-Black Soil *guberni* there was a

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Storch, *Hist. Stat. Gemälde des Russ. Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1797), ii. p. 376, quoted by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 53.

slightly greater increase. In the middle of the eighteenth century there were 55 per cent. of *obrochny* peasants, and in the middle of the nineteenth, 58.9 per cent. In the Empire, as a whole, the increase was only from 46.3 per cent. to 47.6 per cent.<sup>1</sup> So long as the *pomyetschëk* retained the right to impose "natural" obligations the *obrok* contract notwithstanding, it is evident that the economical difference between *obrochny* peasants and *bartschina* peasants was more apparent than real, so far as obligations were concerned. Yet owing to the *obrochny* peasants having, as a rule, larger land allotments than the *bartschina* peasants, they were on the whole in a more economically favourable position.

## (2) THE BARTSCHINA PEASANTS

We turn now to the *bartschina* peasants. In 1765, soon after its foundation,<sup>2</sup> the Imperial Free Economical Society of St. Petersburg instituted an inquiry into the nature and extent of the *bartschina* labours exacted from the bonded peasantry. The interrogations were put to *pomyetschëkë*, who may not be suspected of exaggeration in their answers. The results of the investigation showed that bonded peasants customarily rendered three days' *bartschina* to their proprietor, worked three days upon their allotments, and rested on Sundays. When there were two able-bodied men or women in a peasant household, sometimes one of them worked continuously for the proprietor, while the other worked continuously for the household.

But the practice varied. In Alatyrsky province, for example, according to the report given to the Free Economical Society, some proprietors compelled their peasants to work continuously until all the proprietor's grain was "stoned" and all the hay stacked. Only then could the peasant work for himself. In bad or uncertain seasons, this practice must have been ruinous for the peasants; as, indeed, in this particular region, it is reported to have been.<sup>3</sup> In Elezky province some proprietors demanded four and even five days per week in *bartschina* labours.<sup>4</sup> In Tverskaya *gub.* and in Vologodskaya *gub.* some of the proprietors required all their peasants to

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> *Transactions of the Free Economical Society*, xvi. p. 27, quoted by Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

work for them continuously until the work was entirely finished. In 1762 the peasants belonging to the wife of General Tolstoy, upon her estate in Orlovskaya *gub.*, complained to the Empress that they were compelled to work for her continuously, not even excepting Sundays and the "greatest holidays."<sup>1</sup> So also at the same time, peasants of Rostovskaya *gub.* complained that they had to work continuously, even on Sundays. In such cases, in order to keep the families of the peasants alive, it was necessary for the proprietors to send monthly allowances of provisions to them ;<sup>2</sup> although this was not always done.<sup>3</sup>

The peasants of a *pomyetschĕk* named Muromtsev, of Muromsky district, complained in a petition to the Empress in 1775, that they could not sow their spring wheat because they were always at the master's plough or at his *dvorovie* work, and that in addition to these labours they were obliged to pay to the master 2 rubles per soul, while all the women were taken to work in the master's house. No allowance of provisions was made to them. "We are not allowed to work for ourselves," they said, "and we have fallen into such conditions that we do not know what will become of our heads, or how we are going to live. We are driven into extreme poverty and ruin."<sup>4</sup>

From the fact that in some of the petitions which were presented at this time, complaints were made of unequal treatment, it may be surmised that there was considerable inequality of working capacity. Some peasants appear to have escaped exactions on the part of their proprietors, either because they were subservient, or because they were efficient. Yet landowners, who rarely or never visited their estates, or who only visited some of them, because they were on service, or because they lived a life of pleasure in the capitals, were interested only in securing punctual remittances from the managers of their estates. Sometimes when these managers remonstrated with their masters against overburdening the peasants in order to meet their demands, the replies of the *pomyetschĕkĕ* revealed their

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of Justice*, No. 173-3744, p. 593, quoted by Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 65. See also Gribovsky, *Materials for the History of the Superior Court* (St. Petersburg, 1901), p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Rychkov, *Trans. Free Econ. Soc.*, xvi. pp. 26-27, and Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> *State Archives*, vii., No. 2403, cited by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 73.

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attitude towards the peasants as a whole. A nobleman of Kazanskaya *gub.* named Byelavin, for example, wrote to his estate manager in 1785, in reply to a letter informing him that the peasants were being ruined by the excessive obligations which he was laying upon them: "About the peasants in need and those who beg, do not dare to write to me; it is like a knife; I want these thieves to be ruined and to be brought to still worse conditions, so expensive they are to me; I shall for their sins go to them with a sack, and I shall collect from them a thousand rubles, and undoubtedly I shall not ruin them completely."<sup>1</sup> This is not the tone of a proprietor who had done his utmost with idle and dissipated peasants, and who was irritated at the disappointing results.

Between 1780 and 1790 three days' *bartschina* per week appear to have been the rule, only a few proprietors exacting so much as four days, and still fewer five or six days. There were, however, some cases of aggravated extortion.<sup>2</sup>

Not less important than the number of days of *bartschina* was the number of hours per day during which the work was performed. Exact details on this point are lacking, but it appears that some agreements were made in 1780, under which the peasants worked in April and September eleven to thirteen hours per day, and in the summer months fourteen to sixteen hours.<sup>3</sup>

The income of the *pomyetschĕkĕ* from estates cultivated by *bartschina* labour, according to Boltĕn,<sup>4</sup> varied between 5 and 10 rubles per male census soul, in proportion to the amount of land and the facility of transportation of crops to market.<sup>5</sup>

### (3) CONDITION OF THE DVOROVIE LYUDĒ

Although, as one of the petitions cited above shows, the field peasants were sometimes required to perform *dvorovie* or courtyard

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> On this and the following period see N. E. Turgenev, *Collection of Historical Materials taken from the Archives of His Majesty's Chancery* (St. Petersburg, 1891), iv. p. 445, and Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and the first half of the Nineteenth Century* (St. Petersburg, 1888), i. pp. 188-189.

<sup>4</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of Senate*, No. 173-3744, p. 582, cited by Semevsky, *Peasants in the Reign of Katherine II*, i. p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> One proprietor reckoned his income at 9 rubles per soul from an estate in Saratovskaya *gub.* and at 10 rubles from an estate in Ryazanskaya *gub.* in 1790. *Ibid.*

work, they were as a rule free compared to the *dvorovie lyudē* or household bondmen and bond-women. These lived in the house of the master, or in its immediate vicinity, and they were always under his eye or under that of the manager of the estate, and were therefore always exposed to the caprice or ill-will of the members of the household. The growing ostentation of the landowners, together with the inefficiency of the labour of the *dvorovie lyudē*, resulted in the presence of enormous numbers of them in the houses of the great proprietors. Many houses in Moscow and St. Petersburg had from 150 to 200 domestic serfs; Golovin, a wealthy proprietor, had 300; Count Orlov had 500. It must be remembered that these numbers included craftsmen of all kinds, who supplied, or who were supposed to supply, everything which was required for the household. In the country numerous domestic serfs were sometimes necessary to protect the establishment against the attacks of brigands.<sup>1</sup>

The system under which *dvorovie lyudē* were utilized during their whole life, as domestic serfs, was in the eighteenth century only to be found in Russia. There was no such system in France at that period; in Germany the service of the household was rendered by serfs under a certain age, after that age was reached the serfs became free so far as household service was concerned. In Prussia this service began at thirteen years of age and terminated for men at thirty-five, and for women at thirty. After the first five years, moreover, wages were paid, of the same amount as the wages paid to free hired servants, in addition to clothes and other allowances.<sup>2</sup> Similar arrangements obtained in other parts of Germany. Nowhere were bonded peasants kept at household work for life as in Russia. In 1781 obligatory service of bonded peasants' children was abolished in Germany.<sup>3</sup>

The services required of the *dvorovie lyudē* were generally set forth in formal orders.<sup>4</sup> Those who did not serve in the house or in

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Knapp, G. F., *Die Bauern-Befreiung und der Ursprung der Landarbeiter in den älteren Theilen Preussens*, 1887, i. pp. 23-24, 67-68, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> Excepting in the case of orphans, who were obliged to serve between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. Grünberg, *Die Bauernbefreiung und die Auflösung des gutsherrlich-bauerlichen Verhältnisses in Böhmen, Mähren, und Schlesien*, 1893-94, i. pp. 13-14, 286, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> An example is given by Prince Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston, 1899), p. 40.

the courtyard were required to spin or weave, and sometimes to cultivate flax and hemp for spinning and weaving.<sup>1</sup> The education of the proprietor's children was sometimes entrusted to the *dvorovie lyudē*. Between the children and the *dvorovie* there thus often sprang up strong affection. The latter frequently screened the children from punishment by their parents at the risk of punishment of themselves. Among the *dvorovie* also there were actors and musicians. Dramas and operas were sometimes given in great houses, in which the actors and actresses were all domestic serfs, some of them having been trained abroad at the expense of their masters.<sup>2</sup> While the family resided in the capital, the musicians and actors were permitted to play for money at other than their masters' houses. On the estate of Suvorov in Vladimirskaia gub., special buildings were maintained for actors and musicians. The manners of the eighteenth century were not refined. When an actress displeased her master, he would sometimes leap upon the stage and inflict bodily chastisement upon her in sight of the audience, or if an actor similarly offended he might be ordered to the stable to be horsewhipped or even tortured.<sup>3</sup> Suvorov sometimes sent his actors from the stage to the plough.<sup>4</sup> There were pathetic cases of talented *dvorovie*, like the musician Degtyarevsky, who was a bonded peasant to Count Sheremetev. Degtyarevsky had been trained in Italy, where he had the advantage of instruction by the best masters. On his return he pled for liberty, which was refused, notwithstanding that his compositions, especially of church music, had made him known. He drowned his sorrows in drink, and soon afterwards died.<sup>5</sup> It is small wonder that the *dvorovie* often refused to be educated, feeling that education would only make them more miserable in their position of hopeless bondage. The *omyetschēkē*, however, dealt with them quite arbitrarily in this as in other matters. Suvorov, for example, wrote to his manager: "Vasjka is good as a comedian; as a tragedian Nikitka will be the best; but he must be taught expression, which is easy to learn. Instead of rôles in comedy

<sup>1</sup> *Collection of Old Papers preserved in the Museum of P. J. Shchukin* (Moscow, 1897), iii. p. 344, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Count A. G. Tolstoy sent two bonded painters and a clarinet player abroad to study. *Russian Archives*, 1891, iii. p. 260, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. xv, xvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Russian Antiquities*, 1888, lix. p. 311, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 152.



being assigned to Maxim and Bochkin, they must be taught the peasant songs. The barber, Aleksashka, must be compelled to study French grammar, Nikolai will teach him," &c. &c.<sup>1</sup> An officer of the guard, called Esipov, had in his village Umatovo a theatre, in which he had free hired foreign actors, as well as actors and actresses, belonging to his own *dvorovie lyudē*. In this theatre, comedies, tragedies, and operas were presented, and after the play, Bohemian suppers were given, the guests and the *dvorovie* actresses sitting down together.<sup>2</sup>

Passenans, a Frenchman, who lived for some time in Russia in the early part of the nineteenth century, describes a *pomyetschĕk* who in case of need "transformed his cooks, valets, and coachmen into musicians, carpenters, shoemakers, &c., and his chambermaids, nurses, and concubines into actresses. I was often present at his theatrical representations. The musicians went into the orchestra dressed in various costumes according to the rôles in which they were to play. At the sound of a whistle the curtain rose, and they hurried on the stage. In the morning the same people worked with a shovel, broom, &c."<sup>3</sup>

There were even poets among the *dvorovie*. Karamsin, the historian, mentions in one of his letters the case of a bonded man belonging to a *pomyetschĕk* of Yaroslavskaya *gub.*, who, writing under the name of "J. Rosov," composed "excellent" poetry.<sup>4</sup> One of his poems, *Living Resources*, in which the peasantry are described as the animated natural resources of the nation, was suppressed in 1793, on the ground that in it there were expressions adverse to Holy Scripture. The identity of the poet was disclosed in Court, and his name was found to be Ivan Majkov. It appeared that he had been allowed by his *pomyetschĕk* to travel in order to observe the towns of Russia and to write poetry.<sup>5</sup>

Matinsky, a bondman of Count Yagujinsky, was thoroughly educated in music in Russia and Italy at the expense of his *pomyetschĕk*. He wrote many comedies, operas, and songs, both words

<sup>1</sup> Rybekin, *Generalissimo Sworov* (Moscow, 1874), p. 64, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Vigel, *Memoirs of a Village Priest*, ii. pp. 133-6, and *Russian Antiquities*, 1880, No. 1, p. 67; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Passenans, *La Russie et l'esclavage* (Paris, 1822), ii. pp. 140-44.

<sup>4</sup> *Bibliographical Memoranda*, 1861, No. III., pp. 65-68; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 156.

<sup>5</sup> Semevsky, *loc. cit.*

and music; he wrote, besides, books on mathematics, and translated fables and tales. His most successful opera was *The Court of the Merchant*, which represented the life of the merchant class.<sup>1</sup> Matinsky's fate was less hard than that of many others of the bonded *intelligentsia*. He was liberated, and was afterwards a teacher in the Smolny Monastery.<sup>2</sup>

While the treatment of the *dvorovie lyudē* varied very much in the houses of different *pomyetschēkē*, great and small, it was not unusual for each *dvorovie* man or woman to receive an allowance of clothing, of bread, and even of money.<sup>3</sup>

The practices of hiring out *dvorovie lyudē* and of allowing them to make their living in their own way, on condition of the transmission of all or of a portion of their earnings to their *pomyetschēk*, were widely adopted in the eighteenth century. The former practice was recognized by law, for in the code there is a provision that contracts made between *pomyetschēkē* and other persons respecting the hiring of *dvorovie lyudē* should not be valid if they were drawn for a period longer than five years.<sup>4</sup> The latter practice was sometimes adopted with regard to the educated *dvorovie*, and allegations have been made by foreign travellers of the perpetration in connection with it of the most infamous abuses.<sup>5</sup>

The *pomyetschēkē* enjoyed the right, at the beginning of the reign of Katherine II, of selling their peasants, singly or by families, with or without land, and this right was very frequently exercised. Peasants and animals were even sold together, and good-looking peasant-girls were despatched by shiploads to St. Petersburg for sale.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This opera was performed in 1792. Semevsky, i. p. 156.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> In a village of Alatsky province, belonging to Count P. Rumyantsev, the *dvorovie* received money allowances or wages of from one half-ruble to six rubles per year; unmarried people received 3 *chetverti* (= 192 lb.) of rye-flour, 1½ *chetverti* of groats, and 12 puds of salt per year. Some *dvorovie lyudē* received in addition an allowance of 30 lb. of beef per month. The wives of married *dvorovie* received the same amount as their husbands. Allowances of clothing, one fur coat and a coat of cloth, were given every two or three years. (Semevsky, i. p. 157.) Other instances of *dvorovie* allowances in the latter half of the eighteenth century are given by Semevsky, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Code of Laws*, xx. 14,253, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 161.

<sup>5</sup> Sarva Tekel, writing of the years 1787-1788, says of the Russian *pomyetschēkē*: "They are such rascals. They allow beautiful girls to go to Moscow and St. Petersburg to gain money dishonestly on condition that they remit to their masters 100 to 200 rubles a year."—*Russian Archives*, 1878, No. xii., p. 493; and Semevsky, i. p. 160.

<sup>6</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. xvii.

In order to hasten the colonization of Siberia, Katherine permitted proprietors to send their peasants there, and to receive for peasants so sent, discharge of their recruit obligations. It was understood that only able-bodied peasants should be sent, but many frauds were committed, with disastrous results to the unfortunate victims. Aged and infirm peasants were despatched on what was at that time a most arduous journey, for the mere purpose of getting rid of the obligation of supporting them, and at the same time reserving the able-bodied from recruiting service.

Punishments were usually administered only to the *bartschina* peasants or to the *dvorovie lyudë*. The *obrochny* peasants were more able than either of these to protect themselves against the caprice or the malignity of their *pomyetschëkë*. Their villages enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy. They elected representatives, and the "sentences" of the *mir* respecting the division of land and the distribution of the tax-burdens were customarily respected.

Under Katherine II the *pomyetschëkë* were forbidden to be tyrannical and cruel; but complaints by peasants were also forbidden, so that in point of fact the peasants were left absolutely at the mercy of *pomyetschëkë*. There are, however, many cases on record in which the cruelty of the *pomyetschëkë* went so far that the complaints were made at all costs. Maniacs like Saltykova<sup>1</sup> were probably rare, yet the bondage relation bred in *pomyetschëkë* and bonded peasantry alike so profound a degradation that the practice of beating the peasants like beasts was not uncommon even among educated people.<sup>2</sup> The landed gentry stood or were supposed to stand so well together in the eighteenth century, and their support was so necessary to the throne, that the central authority, however

<sup>1</sup> After a trial lasting for six years (1762-1768), Saltykova, a proprietress of land and serfs, was convicted by the Collegium of Justice of having caused the death of thirty-eight of her peasants, mostly women, two of them being young girls of from eleven to twelve years of age. The evidence suggests that she had a mania for torture which would now probably be regarded as due to sexual abnormality. One of the peasants who denounced her was sentenced to the lash. Saltykova was eventually condemned to death; but because she was a noble her sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life in an underground cell. In 1804, at the age of seventy, she was still alive in Nerchinsk, Eastern Siberia. Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 223-7.

<sup>2</sup> Peasants even tortured other peasants, e.g. horse-thieves were customarily tortured. It is probable that this practice has not even yet entirely died out. Recent cases have been reported to the writer in peasants' correspondence.

much it might desire to do so, felt itself unable to put the practice down. Extreme anxiety, however, on the part of the central authority to hold in check the exercise of arbitrary power by the *pomyetschĕk* was not very evident. In the absence of a general police system, the complete subordination of the peasantry to the landowners was an important social fact. The task of the Government in interior administration was rendered easier by the existence of this subordination. Russia has never been fastidious about the sacrifice of individual freedom or comfort, or even about the sacrifice of lives, when large aims seem to demand such sacrifices.

In 1765, Katherine II permitted the *pomyetschĕk* to send their peasants to hard labour to any desired place, and to take them back to the estates to which they belonged whenever they pleased.<sup>1</sup> The *pomyetschĕk* were also entitled to punish by fine or by bodily punishment peasants who offended against the estate regulations. These punishments were often inflicted arbitrarily for trifling offences or even out of mere caprice; and there were frequent cases of torture.<sup>2</sup> Definite penal codes were often compiled for considerable estates. In one of these codes prepared for the estates of Count P. A. Rumyantsev, in 1751, fines were prescribed for laziness, drunkenness, abusive language, and for fighting. Whipping with rods was prescribed in aggravated cases. Theft was to be punished by confiscation of all the property of the guilty party; the loser was to be indemnified, and the balance was to be retained by the master. Unauthorized cutting of timber was to be followed by a penalty of 1 ruble for every tree and the forfeiture of the timber. If a peasant "offended" a superior, he might be fined and punished with rods, half of the fine being paid to the offended person and half to the master. Fines were also imposed for non-attendance at church on holy days, and for making disturbances in church.<sup>3</sup> Count Orlov, in 1770, issued similar regulations, providing among other matters that bodily punishment should be inflicted with rods and not with whips, and that in cases where the offenders were well-to-do peasants who were engaged in commerce, bodily punishment should be replaced by a fine, "in order that their commerce might not be

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 185.

<sup>2</sup> Punishments in the army at this time were very severe. Cf. Semevsky, i. p. xix.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 192.

interrupted." In these regulations the punishment was to be determined by the local superiors and by the peasants' *mir*.<sup>1</sup>

The punishments on certain estates were sometimes "unmercifully severe," as in those of Prince Kurakin in his *votchini* in the northern *gubernie*.<sup>2</sup> On the estate of Lazarov, offenders were first beaten with sticks, and then sent to work in the factory wearing a spiked iron collar, the weight of which was determined by the magnitude of the offence. Horns were attached to this collar, from which bells were suspended. Offenders were also sometimes required to wear wooden foot-stocks, too heavy to permit the feet to be raised from the ground while walking.<sup>3</sup>

Passenans remarks that in the smaller estates the punishment of peasants depended entirely upon the caprice of the master or of whomever the master put in his place, and that peasants were for superstitious reasons punished with rods for overturning a salt-box as severely as they were punished for theft. "I have taken precautions," he says, "to avoid witnessing these cruel proceedings, but they occur so often, they are so habitual in the villages, that it is impossible to avoid hearing the cries of the unfortunate victims of inhuman caprice. Their cries followed me in dreams. Many times I wished that I had not understood the Russian language when I heard orders being given for punishments to be inflicted."<sup>4</sup>

According to Bolotov,<sup>5</sup> a *pomyetschëk* when in his cups ordered all his *dvorovie* to be beaten; a mistress used her own shoe to beat the faces of her *dvorovie* girls;<sup>6</sup> another ordered eighty women to be whipped because they did not gather strawberries as they were told; a *pomyetschëk* ordered the soles of a peasant's feet to be burned because he drowned some puppies which his master had ordered his wife to nurse.<sup>7</sup> Bolotov, an educated proprietor whose memoirs on peasant affairs are very valuable, admits that he had his peasants beaten at intervals and kept in irons for drunkenness.<sup>8</sup> In the house of a *pomyetschëk* named A. P. Narmatsky, there were found, in 1750, cells in which were iron collars, foot-stocks, and

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 196.

<sup>3</sup> Novokreshenykh, *The Building of the Kizelov Workshop* (Ufa, 1892), pp. 36-40, 52-4; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 197.

<sup>4</sup> Passenans, ii. pp. 120-6; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> Bolotov, *Memoirs* (St. Petersburg, 1871), iv. p. 565.

<sup>6</sup> "Tales of a Grandmother," in *Russian Advertiser*, 1878, No. 3, p. 335.

<sup>7</sup> Passenans, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 157, 191.

<sup>8</sup> Bolotov, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 1034-7; all cited by Semevsky, i. pp. 199-200.

other instruments of torture. His son, on the contrary, held views favourable to liberation. For this class heresy he was complained of by the local nobility and was declared to be insane.<sup>1</sup>

Many observers have noticed that at this as well as at other periods the women were in general more cruel than the men. They were more ignorant, more superstitious, and were often surrounded by frightened and spiritless *dvorovie*, who obeyed their slightest whims and became the instruments of their tortures. The Princess Kozlovskaya, evidently a woman of abnormal passions, had one of her valets tied naked to a post and whipped by her women, sometimes using the rods with her own hands.<sup>2</sup> Instances of these disgusting barbarities need not be multiplied. A sufficient number of cases has been cited to show the deplorable condition to which the exercise of bonded right had brought the *pomyetschêkê* class almost as a whole. There were no doubt some humane *pomyetschêkê* who treated their bond-servants well, but the system inevitably brought into relief the worst passions and contributed to the exercise of unbridled license.

During the time of Katherine II it appears that only six cases of alleged cruelty by *pomyetschêkê* were the subjects of judicial decisions. In these cases, one proprietor, a woman, was handed over to the ecclesiastical authorities in order that they might impose penance; another proprietor who was found guilty of causing the death of some of his bonded peasants was deprived of his rank as a noble, was put upon bread and water for one week, and was consigned for penance to a monastery; another, a woman, was similarly dealt with and was afterwards exiled to Siberia; another, a man, was similarly dealt with for inhuman conduct; one who had tortured a whole family of peasants was branded with the first letter of the word "murderer" and was sent to hard labour for an indefinite term; another who had killed a peasant who did not belong to him was deprived of his rank and branded; and another was punished with the knùt, mutilated, and sent to Siberia.<sup>3</sup> In many of these cases the punishment can hardly be said to be in proportion to the crime; in those where severe penalties were

<sup>1</sup> Korsakov, *From the Lives of Russian Reformers of the Eighteenth Century* (Kazan, 1891), pp. 58-61, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 201, note.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Masson, *Memoires secrets sur la Russie* (Amsterdam, 1800-1803), ii. pp. 115-7; cited by Semevsky, i. pp. 202-3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 220-1.

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inflicted they were scarcely less barbarous than the offences on account of which they were imposed.

It is small cause for wonder that under these conditions peasants should have sought to escape by flight, or that sometimes, driven to desperation, they killed their *pomyetschêkê*. During ten years, from 1760 till 1769, in Moskovskaya *gub.* alone there were thirty murders of *pomyetschêkê* by their peasants (twenty-one men and nine women) and five unsuccessful attempts at murder. During eleven years (1762-1772) of the reign of Katherine II there were disturbances in forty *voitchini*.<sup>1</sup>

Such oppressive conditions as have been illustrated in previous pages could not continue indefinitely without arousing even the more peaceable among the sluggish and patient Russian peasants. They began to feel certain that such proceedings of the *pomyetschêkê* must be unknown to the Tsar or must be in defiance of his will. They thought that there must be some Ukase forbidding the *pomyetschêkê* to overwork the peasants. Rumours indeed became current that such an Ukase had been issued and that the maximum *bartschina* had been fixed at two days per week.<sup>2</sup>

Before considering the peasant disturbances which resulted from the conditions described, and for which the prevalence of the rumours in question offered an occasion, it is necessary to notice certain interior affairs of peasant life which contributed to the long-suffering patience of the people, and when the peasants were aroused, contributed also to the remarkable solidarity of the peasant movements.

### COMMON OCCUPATION AND PERIODICAL REDISTRIBUTION

The principal interior affair of peasant life which falls to be considered in this connection is the common occupation and cultivation of lands together with the periodical redistribution of the cultivated areas.

This common occupation and periodical redistribution appears as a "predominant phenomenon"<sup>3</sup> in Central Russia in the middle

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 441.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: The Affairs of the Senate*, No. 82-4983, pp. 380-1; quoted by Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 66. The circulation of false ukases was very frequent during the eighteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 103.

of the eighteenth century. Baron Wolf, in an unpublished paper of 1770, mentions "that the peasants," in the "most accurate manner, divide amongst themselves in strips, their fields and as well the land covered with timber."<sup>1</sup> So also the Court of Exchequer of Kursk recommends in a report to the Senate, that the freeholders' (*odnodvortsy*) lands should be divided, as in the cases of the "Court, economical, and all other State peasants, who divide their land equally—that is, for every taxpaying soul of male sex."<sup>2</sup> There are also evidences of the existence of common land ownership in Peterburgskaya, Novgorodskaya, and Iverskaya *gub.* In the second of these for example, in 1774, "the fields and meadows are in the common use of the villages and the peasants divide them among themselves by lot, for five or ten years. The pastures and woods are common for use if so decided."<sup>3</sup>

This common occupation of land was looked upon with acquiescence by the Government as well as by the managers of the State properties and by the *pomyetschëkë*. It greatly simplified the collection of taxes. The method of fixation of the tax obligation in the eighteenth century was known as the *tyaglo* method. This method involved the distribution of the land among adult taxpayers. The taxpaying unit or *tyaglo* consisted generally of one man and one woman; in some places, in *e.g.* Tverskaya *gub.*, the *tyaglo* consisted of two or three men and the same number of women. Under the system of bondage right the *pomyetschëk* was entitled to determine the age at which *tyaglo* should begin to apply, as well as that at which it should cease to apply. These ages varied on different estates—15–60, 16–60, 17–65 for men, and 15–50 or from marriage till 50 for women. The amount of land apportioned to the household did not, however, always correspond to the number of members of it who were in *tyaglo*, it sometimes depended upon the total number of souls in the family and upon the extent of the family means, or alternatively upon similar conditions in a village considered as a whole. According to Boltën, the system worked out in the following manner. If a village had a population of 250 souls

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the State Council: Affairs of Katherine's Commission*, Affair No. 31, § 3; quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, No. 982–4553, pp. 14–23, quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> *Göldenstädt, Reisen durch Russland* (St. Petersburg, 1791), ii. p. 473; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 105.



of male sex, of which 100 were in *tyaglo*, if this village paid *obròk* to the *pomyetschêk* amounting to 1000 rubles, and in addition paid poll tax and other obligations which brought the total payments up to 1500 rubles, and if the land of the village was divided into 120 portions, one of these portions would be given to each *tyaglo*—that is to say, to each man and woman who was in *tyaglo* (assuming single *tyaglo*, or a *tyaglo* unit consisting of one man and one woman). The remaining twenty portions of land would be divided by mutual agreement among those who had larger families or who were wealthier. Those who received such portions would pay proportionately according to the amount of land which they received. If the amount payable for a single *tyaglo* was 12 rub. 60 kop., the amount payable by a peasant who took a half portion in addition to his original one portion would be 18 rub. 90 kop.<sup>1</sup>

While on the estates of private proprietors the land was divided on the *tyaglo* system, the lands of the State occupied by State peasants in the eighteenth century were for the most part divided according to the number of male souls as shown by the census. In 1770 instructions were sent to the local administrations to introduce the system of *tyaglo* division, because of the inequality of condition which had resulted through land division in terms of souls.<sup>2</sup> It often happened that a peasant whose family consisted of four or five male souls was himself the only adult male in the household. If land were allotted to him in respect of four or five souls, he would be unable to cultivate the whole of it, and yet he would be obliged to pay *obròk* upon it in addition to the poll tax for the full number of male souls in his household. The land thus remained uncultivated and the peasant was impoverished, at all events until his family reached working age. On the other hand, a peasant family of four or five grown up males had a great advantage in respect to the area of land allotted to them. There existed, however, a remedy for this state of inequality. Where a peasant was allotted more land than he could cultivate, other peasants who had deficient land might take his surplus land on lease and work it to joint advantage. Moreover, the *obròk* exacted from the State peasants was always less than that paid by the peasants of the *pomyetschêkê*. Thus soul

<sup>1</sup> Boltën, "*Remarks upon Leclerc*," ii. p. 341; cited by Semevsky, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> On the inequality of the incidence of the soul tax under Peter, see *supra*, p. 137.

division of land continued among the State peasants and among those of the peasants of private proprietors, whose moderate *obròk* payments enabled them in respect to condition to approach the peasants of the State.<sup>1</sup>

The repartition of land was customarily carried out in the eighteenth century at two operations. In the first instance all householders participated in drawing lots for their strips, and in the second instance a group of households participated in drawing lots for the strips allocated to them in the first drawing. Every peasant desired to have a strip of land of equal quality and equally near to the village when compared with the strips of every other peasant. The customary method of cultivation was by the three-field system, and each of the three fields was divided into strips according to the number of *tyaglo* units in the village, the inferior land being compensated for by a larger quantity in cases where it was impossible to secure uniformity. The peasants are reported to have exercised extraordinary skill in carrying out these divisions. One of the reporters to the Free Economical Society remarks upon this fact: "Justice must be done to the farmers. In determining the quality of land and in measuring it, they are great experts, and it must be said that they never make mistakes."<sup>2</sup> This is the more remarkable, because the peasants do not use surveying instruments.

The periodicity of repartition varied in different regions.<sup>3</sup> In Tverskaya *gub.* there were estates in which repartition took place "very often."<sup>4</sup> Turgenev speaks of repartition taking place annually.<sup>5</sup> In Novgorodskaya *gub.* repartition took place every five or ten years.<sup>6</sup> Opinions were divided upon the expediency of frequent as opposed to rare repartitions. Baron Wolf entertained the latter view, and Rychkov advocated annual repartitions.<sup>7</sup> In general, where land was uniformly good, redistribution of it was rarer than where it was poor or unequal.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of Free Economical Society*, No. 188, pp. 111-2; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. on repartition in recent times, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Trans. Free Econ. Soc.*, lxxii. p. 235, and Semevsky, *ibid.*, i. p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> N. E. Turgenev, *La Russie et les Russes*, i. p. 86, and *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Gùldenstädt, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 473; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 120.

<sup>7</sup> *Trans. Free Econ. Soc.*, xvi. pp. 24-5, and *ibid.*

While sometimes the redistribution seems to have taken place at the instance of the proprietor, this was not always the case, for there were examples of *votchini* being split up among different owners, and the repartition together with other communal incidents persisting among the peasants belonging to the different fractions, as if no division of ownership had taken place.<sup>1</sup>

The incidents of the *obtschina*, or community system, arising out of the periodical division of the land, or out of the social sense of the village community apart from that special incident, were very numerous—common labour, help to the poor, to the aged, and to sufferers from fire, mutual fidelity insurance, and the like. In the *tyaglo* division a lot was reserved from which increased portions were given to those who desired them, and out of the balance of this reserved lot *obrôk* and taxes on which were paid by the community, land was given to the poor and the balance still remaining was cultivated by the alderman, the produce being kept in a separate common grain store. This common grain belonged to the *mir*, and it was granted by the *mir* to orphans, &c., the surplus being sold and devoted to the payment of the State taxes. Where there was not sufficient grain to meet this requirement, an equal assessment was levied upon every *tyaglo* or tax-paying unit.<sup>2</sup>

This process is vividly described by Durasov in a report to the Free Economical Society. "Out of the produce of the reserve lot, provisions were given to those peasants who had more than five male children, to widows with small children, and to retired soldiers who had no relatives, as much as the community found to be necessary, none of these persons so assisted being regarded as liable for State, community, or *mir* taxes. Out of the grain gathered by the *mir* from the community fields also the wives of soldiers in service were supported should their relatives refuse to keep them, as well as old lonely people who had outlived their families, in order that they should not go on begging."<sup>3</sup>

The community also employed its collective credit in leasing lands from the State or from private proprietors, and even purchased land, although in the latter case the purchase was made in the name of the *pomyetschëk*. In some places supplies such as salt

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> *Transactions of Free Econ. Soc.*, lxxii. 223-29, and Semevsky, i. p. 123.

were bought by the *mir*, and in some the *mir* possessed or leased mills.<sup>1</sup>

It need not surprise us to find that collective efforts of a more or less highly developed description were sometimes promoted or encouraged by exceptionally able individuals, who preferred or appeared to prefer the common good to their own individual gain. For example, on the *votchina*<sup>2</sup> of a private proprietor in Yaroslavs-kaya *gub.* there was a peasant who had served as a clerk in the business house of a merchant in Moscow, as boy and man for twenty-two years. He retired from this business and returned to his village, intending to carry on trade. In 1794 the *mir* elected him to the office of *burmister* or mayor of the *mir*. The peasants were very poor and he at once set about devising means for the improvement of their condition. He established a system of mutual credit, under which an elected committee granted to those who desired it an open credit for one year to an amount fixed by this committee, under the condition that if any of those who received credit should turn out to be "a waster of the common good he shall be considered harmful to the community and shall be sent into the Tsar's military service." The *burmister* started this fund with a personal loan of 2000 rubles without interest for ten years; other deposits brought the fund up to 6000 rubles. The *burmister* remained in office for eight years, and at the end of that time the capital of the fund was 30,000 rubles, the village square previously empty, had several shops where small wares were sold, and there were besides in and about the village several blacksmiths' shops, an oil mill, and a brick field. Leather shoes and flax and linen wares were produced in the village to an increasing extent; the *ponyetschëk* as well as the peasants bought willingly the local manufactures.<sup>3</sup>

Count Sheremetev ordered, in 1796, that all the ploughed lands in his *votchina* in Shuyskoë District were to be divided among the villages according to the number of *tyaglo* units, and that the villages should then divide among themselves the good, intermediate, and bad lands into equal portions for every *tyaglo*. The division was to be made by lot and in no case by choice, and it was to be made

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Count Rumyantsev ordered a mill upon his estate to be leased to his peasants for 20 rubles a year. Semevsky, i. p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> Of 1250 souls.

<sup>3</sup> Account by the grandson of the *burmister* in *Russky Vestnik*, 1877, No. 7, pp. 332-3, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 126.

under the authority of the *mir* confirmed by the chancery of the owner. It appears that the system of redistribution of the ploughed land upon this estate existed long before this order;<sup>1</sup> what the order did was probably to break up an *obtschina*, or communal society, which embraced the whole estate, into societies embracing each only one village. The object of the change seems to have been to prevent the *tyaglo* peasants from using gratuitously the reserved lands whose produce properly belonged to the community. The larger the community the more difficult it seemed to prevent abuses from growing up.<sup>2</sup> In the instructions of 1815 relating to the *votchina* of the same proprietor, Count Sheremetev, the practice of redistributing ploughed lands every year is condemned on the ground that it tends to prevent careful cultivation, while the practice of dividing the meadow lands every year is encouraged because the meadow lands need no enrichment.<sup>3</sup>

We have in the above cases a picture of proprietors who possessed and exercised autocratic powers over their bonded peasants and beneath them the peasant sphere exhibiting spontaneous movements, autonomous within certain limits, accumulating common peasant property and trading upon common peasant credit. While there can be no doubt that the character and extent of these spontaneous communal activities varied from time to time, the variability of peasant life in such relations being a very definite Russian characteristic,<sup>4</sup> it is nevertheless remarkable that the impulses towards checking them came at a time when Western European influences were active and from persons who were much affected by them. Fluctuating as the communalism of Russia was, there seems no room for doubt that it was indigenous, and if we may regard the frequent repartition of land as an invariable concomitant of it, we may therefore consider repartition also as a native device. There remains, however, to be considered the extent to which this practice of repartition was spontaneous on the part of the peasants or was imposed upon them by the landowner.

<sup>1</sup> A memoir by a peasant of the estate written in 1766 shows this (*Russkoe Archiv.*, 1898, ii, p. 178, cited by Semevsky, i, p. 127).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, i, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> For a vivid account of such fluctuations of peasant opinion, and action, see Sulerjëtsky, L., *To America with the Dukhobors*, Moscow, 1905, pp. 247 *et seq.* The writer's own experience with the same people at the same time strongly confirms Mr. Sulerjëtsky's picturesque account.

In cases where the *pomyetschëk* readjusted the *tyaglo* annually, there were inducements towards the annual redistribution of the land whether the *pomyetschëk* explicitly ordered this redistribution to take place or not. Such correspondence between the periodicity of adjustment of *tyaglo* burdens and repartition of the land was however more frequent in those estates where *bartschina* was customary than in those where *obròk* was the rule. In the *obròk* system there was indeed a strong predisposition towards communal solidarity, especially where the *obròk* was levied upon the village as a whole. The *obròk* being levied according to the number of *tyaglo* units, and there being in addition to the constituent elements of these units a certain amount of working force in the villages, it was natural that this working force should be utilized in the common production out of the yield of which the *obròk* was paid.

On those estates where the peasants worked on *bartschina*, and where therefore there was a close correspondence between the periodicity of *tyaglo* adjustment and land repartition, it is clear that the *pomyetschëk* had more control over the latter than he had in cases where *obròk* was paid.

Boltën, in his report to the Free Economical Society,<sup>1</sup> indicates that the peasants customarily pool, as it were, their obligations and divide the land among themselves in accordance with the decisions of the *mir*. He makes no distinction between peasants on *obròk* and *bartschina* peasants; but it is obvious from evidence otherwise that such a distinction must be made. Some proprietors boasted that they left their peasants to their own devices. One, for example, writes in 1778, "Neither I nor my *dvorovie lyudë* mingle in peasants' affairs. I have given all my lands to the peasants and these are divided among themselves by themselves."<sup>2</sup> Even in cases where *obròk* was paid, however, proprietors did not always act in this way. The following instructions were given regarding repartition of land by a landowner in *Vladimirskaia guberniia* in 1834. "When the new *tyaglo* comes into force next year the peasants of Elochovsky must divide the empty lands of Golikova and Koles-

<sup>1</sup> *Remarks on Leclerc*, ii. p. 342, and Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 128.

<sup>2</sup> "Memorandum upon the Contentment of the Subjects of 'Pomyetschëkë.'" *Archives of Free Economical Society*, No. 22, p. 139, cited by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 128.

nitza, distributing all the ploughed land according to *tyaglo*, the good and the bad places, equally. The peasants of Micheyevskaia must also share in this division, all of them without excuse. This must infallibly be accomplished, so that none may afterwards say that he had shared and another had not shared." The instructions related also to meadow lands. "The peasants of Elochovsky shall mow in the same places where they mowed before. Their meadows are better than those of the Micheyevsky peasants. In the village of Petrovskoë there is a meadow Medvedevo where the Micheyevsky have mowed; but from this time henceforward this meadow shall be mowed by the Elochovsky peasants, because the Micheyevsky peasants have plenty without it. The meadow must be divided equally according to *tyaglo*. In regard to the Micheyevsky peasants, they have from remote times possessed meadows in cleared places. Where a peasant has cleared the piece possessed by him, then the division shall take place equally, but shall be performed according to the disposition of the peasants. In our property there is much burned timber land. It is not forbidden to any laborious peasant who clears the land for ploughing or for meadows to clear as much as he wants, and it will not be taken from him even if he cleared more than anyone else until the next revision, which will be probably twenty years hence. But to burn new places is not permitted. Where this is done I shall make a heavy claim for it."<sup>1</sup>

On this example Semevsky remarks that the object of the *pomyetschëk* in determining the character of the distribution of the land is to secure equality, that is to say, the same general object as that of the community when the distribution is left to its discretion. The proprietor seems indeed to be imbued with the spirit of the community and to act as the unconscious agent of the "will of the people."<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it would be fair, however, in the majority of such cases, to regard the *pomyetschëk* as acquiescing in the method of periodical redistribution from motives of self-interest, or from mere indolence.

In the case just quoted the repartition of land took place by order of the *pomyetschëk* at the period of the census; but in some

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Historical and Practical Knowledge*, ed. Kalachov, 1860-1, St. Petersburg, 1862, iii. pp. 15-7; cited *ibid.*, i. p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 130.

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cases the repartition took place more frequently.<sup>1</sup> According to the report of P. P. Semenov to the Free Economical Society relating to Ryazanskaya *gub.* general repartitions on *bartschini* estates were "nearly always" carried out on the initiative of the *pomyetschëk*, while in *obrochny* estates the division of the land was carried out in accordance with a "sentence" of the *mir*.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the *mir* as the village world, with its specific whole of interests, and in some measure self-acting, was much greater on the *obrochny* estates than on those in which the peasants rendered chiefly or entirely *bartschina* labour. In those cases where the *pomyetschëk* was habitually absent, and where the aldermen elected by the *mir* was trusted by him, the *mir* enjoyed a large measure of autonomy, while in those cases where the *pomyetschëk* habitually resided upon his estate, the measure of autonomy was usually small.<sup>3</sup> During the first half of the reign of Katherine II most of the nobility were absentees from their estates, and one half of the total number of estates were upon *obrök*. It may be considered, therefore, that about half of the peasant *mir*s enjoyed self-government. Where this had been the tradition for some time the peasant groups probably managed their affairs fairly well; but on the contrary, where the autonomous condition suddenly supervened upon a state of matters in which the *pomyetschëk* exercised a benevolent and effective control, there was probably a tendency for the peasants to act like a queenless hive.<sup>4</sup> Autonomy was however rarely absolute. Even when all the peasants worked on *obrök*, and when extensive powers were exercised by the *mir*, and by the elected *burmister* and *aldermen*, the manager of the estate and his clerks were always appointed by the *pomyetschëk*. The general authority of the estate was thus vested in an appointed officer, while the authority of the villages was vested in functionaries elected by the peasants themselves. Punishments for offences against the regulations of the estate were thus imposed by the appointed authority, with or without the expressed approval of the *mir*; but punishment for offences

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 130. After Emancipation, repartitions were carried out less frequently. In some places they disappeared altogether. Cf. *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> "Collection of Materials for the Study of Obtschina Agriculture," *Free Economical and Geographical Society*, St. Petersburg, i. pp. 89-92, and Kachanovsky, pp. 318-9, cited by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of Free Economical Society*, No. 192, p. 132, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> For a more recent example of this, see *supra*, p. 189.



against the customary law or the regulations of the village were imposed by "sentence" of the meeting of the *mir*. In the first case the *mir* was merely a consultative body, but in the second case it had power to arrive at decisions and to insist upon the carrying out of these.<sup>1</sup> The *mir* also usually adjusted the burden of taxation and *obrôk* upon its members, the *pomyetschêk* or his agents rarely interfering with the process of adjustment.

Count Vladimir Gregorievich Orlov undertook, in 1773, the management of the estates of the Orlov family. When he entered upon his duties he propounded a series of questions, the answers to which have unfortunately not been preserved; but the questions themselves throw a certain light upon the organization of the *mir*. The questions were as follows: "How are taxes levied, and what changes have been made in the levying of them? How frequently are meetings of the *mir* called? Who calls them, and for what purpose? Is one peasant summoned from every house or are more summoned? Is everyone who desires to attend the meeting permitted to do so? Who maintains order in the meetings? Are the decisions and the expenditures of the *mir* recorded? If so who keeps the books? Are the 'sentences' of the *mir* signed by everyone? Do those who cannot write thrust others forward to write for them? When there is a difference of opinion at the meeting of the *mir* is a vote taken, and if so is it registered?"<sup>2</sup> Answers to such questions may in some cases be derived from the experience of other estates. For instance, on the estates of Count Sheremetev, in 1808, meetings of the *mir* were held fortnightly.<sup>3</sup> The meetings were convened by the *burmister* or by the alderman. Decisive voice in the *mir* was probably reserved for those who were *tyaglo* men, that is, for those who were responsible for the payment of *tyaglo*. Semevsky says that probably no one was prevented from being present at the meeting. It is certain in some cases at the present time, and probably the practice is traditional that the meetings are held at a distance from the village in order that the proceedings should not be interrupted by irresponsible persons.<sup>4</sup> In the regulations of the Orlov estates all peasants were required to attend the meetings, and in those of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. pp. 289-90.

<sup>2</sup> Orlov-Davidov, Count. *Biography of V. G. Orlov*, i. pp. 271-2; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 294.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> This practice has been observed by the writer.

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the Strogonov estates<sup>1</sup> the meetings of the *mir* were to be composed of heads of families, of full age.

In case of sickness the head of the family might be represented by his son or other relative. The *burmister*, as elected head of the *mir*, was responsible for the maintenance of order at the meetings of the *mir*. The decisions of the *mir* were customarily recorded, although not invariably. The opinion of the minority was not recorded unless the *pomyetschëk* desired that this should be done.<sup>2</sup> Money transactions were recorded. All relations between the *mir* and the Government were conducted by the *burmister* or the alderman.<sup>3</sup> The village priest probably usually attended the meetings of the *mir*, and probably also frequently drew up the decisions or "sentences."<sup>4</sup>

The advantages to the landowner of the equal division of land among his taxpaying peasants was obvious. The practice contributed to the uniform payment of taxes by them, and the communalization of the area of cultivated land threw upon the peasants the burden of supporting the less thrifty and the aged. The advantages of the system to the peasantry as a whole were that there were no landless peasants and that access to the means of production was afforded to everyone. The equality of the division rendered unlikely the exceptional enrichment of any of them and thus prevented the jealousy which rich peasants always inspire among their neighbours. Moreover, the feeling of solidarity which the system contributed to maintain gave the peasants a certain power of resistance against arbitrary acts on the part of their owners. Together with the system of *obròk*, which was in general associated with the system of common ownership and more or less frequent redistribution of land, these elements contributed to the peacefulness and contentment of peasant life. The disadvantages to the landowner were the fixation of methods of agriculture and cultivation at a comparatively inferior level of efficiency. The disadvantage to the peasants was the perpetuation of the system of bondage to

<sup>1</sup> Of 1832, cf. Semevsky, i. p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> The practice of requiring unanimity naturally resulted in the opinion of the ultimately acquiescent minority being disregarded when unanimity had been reached.

<sup>3</sup> "Regulations of Count Orlov" in *Yaroslaushy Gubernshy Messenger*, 1853, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 295.

<sup>4</sup> In recent times this office is often performed by the village teacher. Cf. *infra*.

the land which the equal division involved. It might be held also that there is a social disadvantage in the inferior productivity of social labour where there are strong forces compelling the community to devote itself almost exclusively to agriculture and to neglect industry.<sup>1</sup> The check to the growth of towns which the system of frequent redistribution of agricultural land involved had in Russia undoubtedly a retarding influence upon social progress. The people, *pomyetschêkê* and peasants alike lived an isolated life; the former were insufficiently educated and insufficiently occupied with intellectual interests to sustain the strain of moral isolation on one hand and the still severer strain of the bondage relation on the other. The frequency of abnormal mental phenomena in the cases which have been cited is a natural outcome of conditions whose general character is abnormal.

It must be realized that the precise conditions referred to did not exist continuously in Russia. They existed in a certain measure in earlier times, but they were non-existent in the time of Peter the Great. They became acute only on the abolition of compulsory service in 1762. Even then, although many of the nobility abandoned the capitals and went to live upon their estates, they did not all remain there; many of them returned to town life or to military or civil service, leaving their estates to the management of subordinates. The management of the greater number of private estates thus fell into the hands of underlings, of the less active and enterprising among the *pomyetschêkê*, or of the female and younger members of the family of the owner who was himself on service.

When the proprietor held superior rank in the civil service, and could command a vacation of several months in each year, he spent these months upon his estate not rarely to the advantage of his peasants as well as of himself. After the abolition of compulsory service, the ambitious and energetic continued to serve the crown, and the idle and dissolute went back to their estates for the most part to mismanage them.

The changes in local government brought about by the legislation of 1775, in giving a considerable measure of local autonomy

<sup>1</sup> There is, of course, an equal disadvantage where the social forces drive an undue proportion of the people into industry to the neglect of agriculture.

to the districts and the confidence in the local nobility which such a measure implied, led to corresponding social changes. The nobility felt a new interest in their respective localities, formed mutual acquaintanceships in the provincial towns, and the better *pomyetschĕk* elements began to return once more to their estates where isolation was no longer inevitable. The process involved in these changes was slow, and not until towards the close of the eighteenth century did the effects of the changes begin to be demonstrated.<sup>1</sup>

The revivification of local life in the *pomyetschĕk* spheres brought the *pomyetschĕkĕ* as a class more definitely in contact with the peasants' *mir* than had been the case in the previous epoch, when the landowners were either on service and thus absent from their estates or at home in indolent or ineffective isolation. New relations with the *mir* resulted in more or less friendly consultation with it and in a division of responsibility and authority between it and the *pomyetschĕkĕ*. The presence on large estates of masters who had been trained in the public service led to the substitution for capricious conduct of regular administrative methods and to the growth of new institutions on the estates analogous to the institutions of the larger social unit—the nation. New administrative organs came to be known by names similar to those larger organs which they resembled. Thus on Count Rumyantsev's estates the central administrative organ was called the "home chancellery," on Count Sheremetev's the "home office," on Prince Kurakin's, also "home chancellery," and on Suvorov's the "over-office."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes the proprietors confided the management of their estates to persons elected by the peasants, sometimes the management was committed to bonded peasants, selected by the master, to hired clerks appointed by him, or to some neighbouring *pomyetschĕk* who lived upon his estate. In such cases the owner did not live upon his *votchina*, either because he had more than one estate to look after or because he was habitually on service.

The management of estates came to be recognized as an important function, for the effective exercise of which it seemed to be necessary to arrive at definite maxims. The question was discussed by the Free Economical Society, and in 1768 a prize was

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Semevsky, i. p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 240-1.

offered by Count A. S. Strogonov for the best draft of "Instructions to Managers." The prize was gained by Baron Wolf, who describes the duties of a manager as follows: The manager must maintain general supervision over all work, keeping of cattle, cultivation of gardens, selling of products; to look after the rendering of recruits at the proper time, the collection of the poll tax three times a year, to listen to the complaints of the peasants, to judge and to punish according to the nature of the offence. To the latter end the master's court must be called every Monday; "to this court the aldermen and labourers must be called for decision about complaints, for the punishment of the guilty and for doing justice to everybody. Bodily punishment should not be performed excepting in the presence of the aldermen."<sup>1</sup>

But conditions varied so much in different regions and even in different estates in the same region that universally applicable instructions could not be devised, and the methods of estate administration remained diversified. In various ukases of the middle of the eighteenth century the responsibility of the *pomyetschêk* for the maintenance of the peasants during famine was distinctly recognized. In 1750 the distillation of brandy was forbidden, in order that the grain might not be diverted from the peasants' use. In 1761 the *pomyetschêk* was required to keep a reserve of grain in order to provide for periods of scarcity. The fact that the Government held the *pomyetschêk* responsible for their peasants was in general concealed from the latter, nevertheless, rumours were circulated to the effect that the *pomyetschêk* were responsible. The danger of encouraging thriftlessness by the transference from the shoulders of the peasantry themselves to those of the *pomyetschêk* of responsibility for support during years of inferior crops was well recognized at this time. For example, the agronomist Rychkov and Prince Vorontsev both advocated explicit statement that the responsibility for maintenance must rest upon the peasants themselves. To render this responsibility effective they encouraged common ploughing and common seeding.

The nobility in general advocated the establishment by the Government of reserves of grain. The suggestion was not adopted, for in 1767, a year of scarcity, the *pomyetschêk* were again ordered to support their peasants, and to prevent them from begging;

<sup>1</sup> *Transactions of the Free Economical Society*, 1769, Part XII., pp. 1-32, cited by Semevsky, i. pp. 242-3.

*pomyetschĕkĕ* who did not observe the law were to be punished by the imposition of fines.<sup>1</sup>

#### EDUCATION

Excepting so far as concerned some of the *dvorovie lyudĕ*, whose education the *pomyetschĕkĕ* provided for, and, as we have seen, sometimes even insisted upon, usually for the purpose of exacting from them services for the due rendering of which education was indispensable, the *pomyetschĕkĕ* were in general indifferent to the education of their peasants. During the eighteenth century, however, there appear in several "instructions" prepared by the greater nobles for the management of their estates, requirements about the education of the peasants' children. In all of these cases, the duty of instruction is laid upon the clergy, and the cost of it is imposed upon the peasants through a local tax. A suggestion was made by Polenov to the Free Economical Society, that the Government should aid the education of the peasants by sending to all schools "five books for every hundred census souls."<sup>2</sup> From among the peasants themselves there came, during the same period, demands for educational facilities, and even for compulsory education of peasant children.<sup>3</sup> But these enlightened views appeared only in the Baltic Provinces, and there exclusively among the German population. In the city of Dorpat, *e.g.*, a scheme was elaborated which was to apply to the surrounding country. Schools were to be provided for every one or two hundred families. Education in reading [Russian (civil) and old Slavonic (ecclesiastical)], Christian ethics, and arithmetic were to be compulsory for all children between the ages of eight and twelve. The teachers, clergy and lay, were to be paid partly in money and partly in kind. Bodily punishment was absolutely prohibited. The supervision of the schools was to be entrusted to a noble who should have the power of appointment and removal of teachers, and the duty of reporting any *pomyetschĕkĕ* who prevented the children of his peasants from attending school. This project underwent considerable modification, chiefly as regards the administration of the schools. The superior educational functionary was not necessarily to be a noble, and he was to take counsel

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Free Economical Society*, No. 179, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 278.

with the members of the Synod and to report to the Empress. Emphasis was to be laid in teaching upon the duty of submission to the laws of the State and to the rendering of "obedience and honour to their *pomyetschĕk*."<sup>1</sup>

Even so intelligent an agronomist and humanitarian as Rychkov thought only children of the more well-to-do peasants ought to be taught to read, and that these should be selected from the villages, while not more than two or three children in a village of one hundred census souls should be taught to write, because the knowledge of writing was often employed for the purpose of forging passports.<sup>2</sup>

A general view of the state of education in Russia at the close of the reign of Katherine II would have shown a very few schools provided by the *pomyetschĕkĕ*, a very few schools provided by the peasants themselves, in which instruction was given almost exclusively by the clergy, a number of schools in the towns, to which the *pomyetschĕkĕ* sometimes sent their *dvorovie* children, a number of schools and institutions for superior education, to which the children of the nobility were sent; but no general public system of popular education. Nevertheless, it cannot be held that there was anything approaching to complete illiteracy. The nobility and the merchantry usually had tutors for their children—the former from the educated *dvorovie lyudĕ*, the clergy, or from abroad; and the latter either from the clergy or from native or foreign hired *intelligentsia*.<sup>3</sup> Even some well-to-do peasants had tutors for their children, drawn from one or other of the classes mentioned above.

#### JURIDICAL POSITION

Although up till the date of the Emancipation of the peasants, bondmen had no legal title to either movable or immovable property, they nevertheless possessed both forms of property, and some of them even possessed bonded peasants. The latter practice appears to have originated in the purchase by bonded peasants of others to substitute for recruits that would otherwise be taken from their own

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of Free Economical Society*, xvi., pp. 15–17; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> There is a considerable mass of literature upon early education in Russia, e.g. Belezky, "The Question of the Elementary Education of Peasants' Children in the Reign of Katherine II," in *The People's School*, 1875, No. 4; Count D. A. Tolstoy, "View of Russian Education in the Eighteenth Century," in Supplement to the *Memoranda of the Academy of Science*, St. Petersburg, 1883, xlvii. pp. 65–9. Other references are given by Semevsky, i. p. 280.

number. The practice was forbidden in 1730, and again in 1740, but in 1766 bonded peasants were permitted to buy small populated villages—that is to say, to buy the land and bonded peasantry upon it. At that time the permission applied to the Court *volosts* only; but in 1788 it was extended to the State *volosts*. Notwithstanding the formal prohibition of 1730, bonded peasants appear to have acquired bondmen, both with and without land, and to have employed them in cultivation as well as sending them as recruits. For example, from 1718 onwards, the peasants of Field-Marshal B. P. Sheremetev bought peasants.<sup>1</sup> So also in the Orlov estates, peasants were permitted, with the sanction of the *burmister*, to buy working men and women “for their service.” The *burmister* was, however, to satisfy himself that the intending purchasers were “reliable people, who would not overburden” their bondmen.<sup>2</sup> Each year a return was to be made to Prince Orlov of the number of peasants bought in this way. These purchases were made by the peasants, although they were made in the name of the *pomyetschëk*. In 1794 there were in two villages, belonging to Count Sheremetev, 528 bondmen and 659 bondwomen belonging to his bonded peasants.<sup>3</sup> In some cases the peasant masters appear to have paid to their *pomyetschëk*, *obròk* for their bonded peasants, and in other cases *obròk* does not appear to have been paid.<sup>4</sup>

During the time of Katherine II the *pomyetschëk* exercised control over the marriages of their peasants, although sometimes this control was handed over to the meeting of the *mir*. The rationale of this control is obvious. If peasant girls were permitted to marry whom they pleased, they might easily escape from bondage to one *pomyetschëk* and pass over to another, or even perhaps escape bondage altogether. Control over marriage was thus an inevitable incident of land and personal bondage alike. Even where marriage was proposed between peasants belonging to the same *pomyetschëk*, it was customary to obtain his sanction, although there was no specific law on the subject.<sup>5</sup> The clergy generally supported the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 339.

<sup>5</sup> According to a regulation of 9th March 1607, *pomyetschëk* were obliged to see that their *kholopi* were married—girls when they reached eighteen years, men when they reached the age of twenty, and widows who had been widowed for two years. If this was neglected by a *pomyetschëk*, the *kholopi* were to be liberated. Engelmann, *The History of Bondage Right in Russia* (Moscow, 1900), p. 50; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 303.



authority of the *pomyetschëk* with regard to peasants' marriage, and in 1767 were instructed to do so by the Synod.<sup>1</sup>

Up till the time of Emancipation, the practice appears to have been for the proprietor, either periodically or otherwise, as his caprice or judgment might determine, to procure a list of peasants of marriageable age, and to order the couples as selected and paired by him to be married within a few days.<sup>2</sup>

The marriage of peasant girls or widows belonging to one proprietor with bondmen belonging to another was regulated by a number of statutes from early times. The Ulojenie provides that if a *pomyetschëk* or *votchinëk* allows his bondwomen to marry bondmen of another, he must give the former certificates, and he must be paid the *vyvodnye dengë*, or permit money, according to agreement.<sup>3</sup> The statute is not clear upon the point of the right of the *pomyetschëk* to refuse to grant a permit; but such a right seems to inhere in the bondage right.<sup>4</sup> This appears to have been the general understanding, for Peter the Great, in 1724, made an apparent exception in favour of soldiers to whom the *pomyetschëk* could not refuse the bride he desired, provided he paid the permit money at the rate current in the locality.<sup>5</sup> In 1764 and 1766, under Katherine II, soldiers are forbidden to take brides without permits and the payment of the customary permit money;<sup>6</sup> but *pomyetschëkë* are not forbidden to refuse permits, as in the ukase of Peter. It is true that Katherine expressed the opinion that "oppression and the love of money" on the part of the *pomyetschëk* should not be exercised by him in appropriating parental authority in matters of marriage;<sup>7</sup> but no law was issued as a consequence of this view.

Prince Vorontsev advocated the granting of permits to marry without payment, but on the principle of mutual exchange;<sup>8</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *Collection of the Historical Society* (St. Petersburg), xliiii. p. 55; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 304.

<sup>2</sup> A lively account of this practice is given by Prince Kropotkin in his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Boston, 1899), pp. 52-4.

<sup>3</sup> Section xi. clause 19; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 302.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Byelyaev, *Peasants in Russia* (Moscow, 1879), 2nd ed., p. 219, and Semevsky, i. p. 303.

<sup>5</sup> F.C.L., 4533, section i., clause 5, and 4535, clause 7; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 12,289, section i., clause 6, &c.; cited *ibid.*, p. 304.

<sup>7</sup> *Collections of Historical Society* (St. Petersburg), xliiii. p. 288; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 304.

<sup>8</sup> *Transactions of Free Economical Society*, v. pp. 10-11.

Gadebusch of Dorpat urged that bondmen and bondwomen should be allowed to marry whom they pleased without payment, on the ground that any other course tended to impede the growth of population.<sup>1</sup>

An ukase of Peter the Great in 1724 forbade compulsory marriages, and required the selection of brides by bridegrooms, and not otherwise. But so long as the peasants were prevented from formulating complaints against their proprietors, such ukases were of little avail. Raditschev, whose courageous frankness cost him the favour of Katherine II, and nearly cost him his life, says, in his celebrated *Journey*; "Those who are married by the authority of their master, even though they hate one another, are dragged, as if to capital punishment, to the altar of the Father of all Good. His servant solemnizes the forced marriage, and that is called a sacramental union!"<sup>2</sup>

Compulsory marriages were ordered by the *pomyetschĕkĕ* from economical motives, without any regard to the personality of the victims. This position is put with brutal frankness by a writer to the Free Economical Society in 1791, "Girls of eighteen years of age ought to be married. Good farmers try to breed cattle and poultry, and the civilized man should care even more, with the help of God, for the breeding of the human race."<sup>3</sup>

In the regulations of the Orlov estates, "the oldest member of the family is required to find a husband for each girl of his family within six months after she reaches the age of twenty. If at the end of that period the girl is not married, the family is to be fined 25 rubles if poor, and 50 rubles if rich. . . . Then the superior authority shall invite the old men and the best people of the village to find a husband for the girl according to their own judgment, and they shall be lawfully married; but it shall be observed that the couple are worthy of one another. Bachelors of twenty-five years of age and upwards shall be dealt with in a similar way. Widows are also to be so treated."<sup>4</sup> Some *pomyetschĕkĕ*, however, acted otherwise. Count

<sup>1</sup> German MSS. in St. Petersburg Public Library, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> Raditschev, *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 308.

<sup>3</sup> Ryebkin, *Generalissimo Suwarov* (Moscow, 1874), pp. 24-8; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 309.

<sup>4</sup> *Yaroslavsky Gubernsky Messenger*, 1853, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 310.

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P. A. Rumyantsev, for example, forbade his clerks to interfere in marriage affairs under penalty of the "most cruel punishment." The *dvorovie lyudē* only must receive the sanction of the master before marriage.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of taking "permit money" for leave to marry was not confined entirely to those cases where bonded girls married peasants belonging to other proprietors. Some *pomyetschēkē* exacted considerable sums from their own peasants for permission to marry even on their own estates.<sup>2</sup>

The amount of the "permit money" which might be demanded was not determined by law; and it varied in different cases and at different places and times. In 1760-1769 the customary payment for a bride who was leaving the estate to be married elsewhere was 10 to 20 rubles;<sup>3</sup> in 1780 it was 30 to 40 rubles.<sup>4</sup> These marriage fines were probably rarely important sources of revenue; but they tended to prevent the wholesale migration of peasant girls to other estates, and thus to avoid the failure of population in the estates to which they belonged. In the case of rich peasant brides there was usually great reluctance to allow them to go on any terms, because they carried their property with them, or because their leaving might weaken the families to which they belonged.<sup>5</sup>

The juridical position of the peasants in the time of Katherine II may be briefly summarized. The peasants had no right to bring suits against their *pomyetschēkē*, nor even to make complaints against them to the public authority.<sup>6</sup> They might, however, bring suits against other persons, although this right was denied by some *pomyetschēkē*. The owner of a bonded peasant was responsible for him in the eye of the law. If a peasant committed damage to the property of another, his *pomyetschēk* had to make good the damage. If a peasant killed the peasant of another owner, the owner of the

<sup>1</sup> *Instructions of Count P. A. Rumyantsev* in the Rumyantsev Museum, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of the Free Economical Society*, v. p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Collections of the Historical Society* (St. Petersburg), p. 563; viii. cited by Semevsky, i. p. 316.

<sup>4</sup> F.C.L., xxi. 15,468; cited *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> On the latter point see "Instruction by Prince M. Golëtsin" in *Collection of Old Papers in the Sh'chukin Museum*, iii. p. 338; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 317. On the smaller estates the practices above described must have resulted in in-breeding.

<sup>6</sup> The peasants were not permitted even to give sworn testimony, F.C.L., xi. No. 8473; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 382.

offender was obliged to hand him over, with all his family, to the owner of the peasant who had been killed. If a peasant belonging to a private owner fought with and killed a Court or State peasant, his owner was fined 100 rubles. A *pomyetschëk* might, of course, claim for damage done to his peasants.

A peasant could borrow money only by permission of his owner. A State or Court peasant required the permission of the superior officer of the domain to which he belonged. The peasant was not permitted to leave his village without permission of the representative of the *pomyetschëk*, or of the *pomyetschëk* himself. By an ukase of 1724 even this permission availed only for distances of 30 versts. If the peasant desired to go farther, he was obliged to procure a permit from the *zemsky* commissary. In 1744 a peasant was obliged to have a passport from the governor and the military governor, to whom application must be made, with the consent of the *pomyetschëk*. Shipbuilders only were exempt from this provision; for them the consent of the *pomyetschëk*, of his clerk, or of the village alderman was sufficient.<sup>1</sup> The mobility of the peasant was thus left in the hands of the *pomyetschëk*.

Peasants who were engaged in trade of a certain magnitude (employing a capital of 300 to 500 rubles) might be inscribed in a *possad*, or trading, group, and might pay Treasury taxes with the other members of the group, meanwhile continuing to pay *obrök* to their *pomyetschëk*, the *obrök* being limited to the amount paid in the village to which the peasant belonged.<sup>2</sup> In 1762, and again in 1777, peasants who left their villages to engage in trade were explicitly required by ukases to obtain the permission of their *pomyetschëk*. Peasants could not thus pass from the peasantry into the merchantry without their master's sanction.

Bonded peasants could not pass into the secular clergy. They were not permitted to do so, because if they did, they would escape the poll tax. Peasants might enter a monastery, but only with the consent of the *pomyetschëk*. This was not always given when demanded, because the proprietor was obliged to pay taxes for such a peasant until the next census. In the time of Peter the Great

<sup>1</sup> On all of these points see Semevsky, i. pp. 382-3; on some of them see Byelyaev, *Peasants in Russia*, pp. 144-5, &c.; *Historical Society* (St. Petersburg), 1861, iii. p. 133; and F.C.L., xv., ii. 204, xviii. 12,498.

<sup>2</sup> Pobyedonostsev, K. P., *Historical Inquiries and Articles* (St. Petersburg, 1876), pp. 151-4; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 384.

*dvorovie lyudē* who wished to enter military service could do so without the consent of their masters; but in 1727 this practice was forbidden. When the Moscow University was founded, bonded peasants could enter it as students only by permission of their *pomyetschēkē*.<sup>1</sup> This provision was brought into effect by the Rector of the University, J. J. Shuvalov, who argued that if the peasants entered, they would learn through their education the advantage of freedom, and would all the more feel the inferiority of their position.<sup>2</sup>

Under the legislation of Peter the Great the soldier became free the moment he entered the army, and even his wife became free also by implication; yet the soldiers did not always realize the full meaning of this right,<sup>3</sup> and sometimes remained in obedience to their former owner; while some of the nobles required the wives of soldiers to remain in bondage.<sup>4</sup> In 1764 retired soldiers who wished to return to their *pomyetschēkē* might do so if they accepted them; but children of soldiers born after their return were inscribed in the poll tax rolls at the next census as belonging to the master.<sup>5</sup> In the same year a general rule was made that children born to a soldier before his military service belonged to the *pomyetschēk*, and children born while the father was at service belonged to the military departments, and therefore had themselves to become soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

It is thus obvious that as the army increased in numbers and the obligation of providing recruits became more onerous, there came about a tendency for the number of bonded peasants to be smaller than it otherwise would have been.

Another condition making for retardation in the increase of bonded peasantry was migration to Siberia from European Russia. When a peasant was exiled to Siberia, his wife had to be sent with him. Children born before his exile were left in bondage with the *pomyetschēk*, but children born in Siberia were free.<sup>7</sup> So also the growth of the cities made in the same direction, for as the cities enlarged their boundaries and annexed surrounding villages, the

<sup>1</sup> Shevyrev, *History of the University of Moscow, 1755-1855* (Moscow, 1855), p. 11; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 385.

<sup>2</sup> *Transactions of Society of Ancient Russian History, 1867*, iii. p. 105; cited *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Snejevsky, "Towards the History of Flights," in *Nijni-Novgorod Collection*, x. p. 566; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Soloviev, S. M., *History of Russia* (Moscow, 1879), xxvii. p. 331.

<sup>5</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

peasants in these were bought by the Government and were given their freedom.<sup>1</sup> Still other means of freedom occurred through the provisions that prisoners of war on their return were liberated, and that non-Christian bondmen of non-Christians were freed upon conversion to orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup>

Such means of emancipation depended upon State regulations or upon natural causes; they were independent of the will of the owner. In the time of Katherine II, however, the owner could, if he chose, liberate his peasants during his life, or he could bequeath their freedom to them.<sup>3</sup> *Dvorovie lyudē* were in this way often freed after long and faithful service.<sup>4</sup> Purchase of freedom by peasants who had accumulated money in trade was not uncommon; but some proprietors refused to make such agreements, because they regarded with pride the fact of their possession of rich peasants as bondmen, who themselves possessed hundreds of serfs.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, some proprietors offered to liberate all their peasants provided they agreed to pay a certain aggregate sum; others offered their peasants their freedom individually on payment of a fixed amount. An example of the first was Prince Repnin, who offered the peasants of his Yaroslavsky estate, of whom there were 2500 souls, their freedom, together with all the lands and buildings on the estate, for 60,000 rubles; but the peasants could not obtain the money. An example of the second was a *pomyetschĕk* called Khitrovo, who gradually liberated all his peasants on payment of 300 rubles each.<sup>6</sup>

These various means of liberation resulted, towards the end of the reign of Katherine II, in the creation of a considerable group of "freedmen." The structure of Russian society made it indispensable that these "freedmen," having been liberated from the peasantry, must be regularly inscribed as belonging to another order. They were thus obliged, within one year after liberation, to enter the army, the merchantry, or one of the trade corporations, or alternatively to re-enter bondage by binding themselves to a *pomyetschĕk* other than their former owner.<sup>7</sup> Only in 1775 were "freedmen "

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. also Pobyedonostsev, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20 and 51.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 388.

<sup>5</sup> Like Sheremetev, e.g. Semevsky, i. p. 389, and Turgenev, *La Russie et les Russes* (Paris 1847), ii. pp. 90-91.

<sup>6</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> F.C.L., vii. 4963; xi. 8836, p. 16; xii. 9023, p. 11; and 9154; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 390.

permitted to describe themselves as residents, and to avoid bondage to anyone. This provision appeared in a manifesto, and immediately afterwards, "freedmen" were prohibited from rebinding themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The explanation of this gradual relaxation of bondage right appears to be that the Government was slowly arriving at the opinion that bondage was disadvantageous from a fiscal point of view. The bonded peasants paid less per soul into the Treasury than did the State peasants, or than any other of the taxpaying classes. It was thus more advantageous for the Treasury to have free, and therefore direct taxpaying peasants, than to have bonded peasants paying taxes through the *pomyetschĕkĕ*.<sup>2</sup>

But the "freedmen" brought some embarrassment to the Government. Many of them desired to go, not into the towns, but to join the ranks of the State peasants, and to settle upon the domains of the State. After discussion as to whether or not they should be permitted to do so, the Senate decided that they should, but only in those villages where there was sufficient land, in order that no disadvantage should accrue to the previous inhabitants.<sup>3</sup>

When whole villages were freed at once, and when the land occupied by them was purchased by them, no material difficulties arose; but when cases of individual liberation occurred, and when the "freedmen" left their villages and attempted to enter other social groups in the towns, for example, they were not always cordially received.<sup>4</sup> The social groups had formed compact masses, entrance to which was not easy, and the disintegration of the peasant groups implied by the increasing frequency of liberation, resulted in a certain conflict of class interests.

So many freed people were still without definite occupation or definite status, that Katherine II, after a report by the General Governor of Moscow, Eropkin, in 1788, ordered that selection from the still unenslaved "freedmen" should be made for the army, the Swedish and Turkish wars having created a demand for an increased number of troops.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xx. 14,294, p. 11; cited *ibid.*, p. 391.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Byelyaev, *op. cit.*, p. 298, and Semevsky, i. p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., xxii. 16,235; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. p. 393.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AGRICULTURAL PEASANTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### 2. THE CHURCH PEASANTS

NEXT to the peasants of landowners, in the time of Katherine II, the most important group numerically was formed by the peasants of the Church. In 1760 these peasants numbered nearly one million souls, or about 14 per cent. of the village population of Great Russia and Siberia.<sup>1</sup> Nearly two-thirds of the monasteries possessed populated estates ;<sup>2</sup> and the Holy Synod, the bishops, and other high clerical dignitaries, many cathedrals and other churches, also possessed them.<sup>3</sup> Bondsmen were even devoted to the service of certain *ikons*.<sup>4</sup> The lands of the clergy, which had been secularized in 1649 by the Tsar Alexis, had afterwards been resumed by the clergy, had again been secularized in 1701 by Peter the Great, and after the Swedish war had been handed over to the Church, were destined to be once more secularized. Peter III began in 1762, and Katherine II continued in 1764, the secularization of the clergy lands for the third time, and established an Economical Collegium for their administration. The million peasants of the Church thus passed into the hands of the State. From the name of the department under whose care they were placed, these peasants were henceforward known as Economical Peasants.

With exception of the comparatively brief intervals mentioned, the ecclesiastical authorities controlled the peasantry belonging to the *votchini* which had been bestowed upon them by the Crown, or had been given or bequeathed to them by private devotees. The Church peasants were not less burdened with obligations, and were

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii. p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Of 822 monasteries and convents, 457 had "populated" estates, or estates with bonded peasants. *Ibid.*, ii. p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Five hundred and sixty-six cathedrals and parish churches.

<sup>4</sup> As, for example, the *ikon* of the Iberian Mother of God at Moscow.



not less discontented than were those belonging to private owners. The peasants of Nikolaevsky Ambrosiev-Dudin, in the district of Nijni-Novgorod, for example, complained that the Archimandrite "put the men in chains, inflicted torture, and whipped them with lashes for no crime."<sup>1</sup> So also the peasants of the celebrated Monastery Novospassky accused the administrator of extorting money from them, and of putting them in chains and irons for five or more weeks at a time, and, while they were so shackled, of beating them almost to death with sticks, and afterwards throwing them into prison to starve from cold and hunger.<sup>2</sup>

The peasants of the Tumensky Troitsky Monastery in Siberia complained that there were exacted from them 173 days' *bartschina* per year, and 88 kopeks in money. If the money should not be paid, or if, "on account of sickness or age," a peasant was unable to perform the work required, the Archimandrite Sofronii, ordered "torture" to be applied, and "merciless punishment by one, three, or five hundred lashes."<sup>3</sup> In addition to the obligations due to or exacted by the ecclesiastical authorities, the Church peasants were obliged to pay the poll tax to the State. Since recruits were required to be sent from the ecclesiastical *votchini*, the peasants were obliged to supply these or to pay a fine for failing to do so. They were also obliged to pay taxes for absentees who had been counted in the previous census, whether they were recruits or not.<sup>4</sup>

The number of petitions which came into the hands of the Government from peasants who suffered from misuse of *votchinal* power in the ecclesiastical estates was necessarily small in comparison with the number which the peasants formulated, or even attempted to forward. It was not unusual for the ecclesiastical authorities to refuse passports to the peasants who were elected by the *mir* to carry the petitions, and then, if the peasant attempted to carry out his mission without a passport, to arrest him as if he were a fugitive, and to punish him as such. In some cases the peasants were, however, fortunate enough to have their complaints brought before the

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Economical Collegium*, bundle 276, Affair No. 18, p. 32; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, bundle 2141; cited *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of the Council of State: Affairs of the Legislative Commission of Katherine II*, bundle 92. *Peasants of Siberia*, pp. 165-7, cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of Economical Collegium*, bundle 2150, Affair No. 53, pp. 13-16; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 219.

attention of the authorities. For example, the peasants of Muromsky Cathedral complained that the arch-priest "tortured them mercilessly at the time of enlistment of recruits, and beat them with rods."<sup>1</sup> This complaint was sent in 1739 to the Bishop of Ryazan, who ordered an inquiry. Nothing came of this inquiry, and the peasants then carried their complaint to the Holy Synod. Meanwhile the arch-priest had complained to the *voyevoda*, or military governor, about the disobedience of the peasants, forty of whom were then, by the orders of the *voyevoda*, arrested and beaten. In 1741 the peasants again complained to the Synod, and an inquiry was again ordered, only to be hushed up as before. In 1754 the peasants petitioned the Senate to inquire into the conduct of the *voyevoda* as well as into the conduct of the arch-priest. An inquiry was ordered, with what result does not appear.<sup>2</sup>

Occasionally complaining peasants were assisted in forwarding their petitions by sympathetic ecclesiastics. For example, the peasants of the Savvin-Storojevsky Monastery petitioned to the Synodal Office at Moscow respecting the conduct of the Archimandrite of the monastery, Johan Pavlutsky; but as the latter was himself a member of the Synodal Office, nothing came of the petition. The peasants therefore elected fresh representatives, furnished them with money, and sent them to St. Petersburg. The deputies were accompanied by two monks belonging to the monastery, who on their own account bore an accusation of embezzlement of monastic funds against the Archimandrite. The travelling group was attacked by an officer and a military party, who arrested them, abstracted from them the copy of the petition which they carried, took their money, and brought them back to the monastery. On the way thither they met a group of peasants, who followed them, attacked the monastery, and rescued the peasant deputies, together with the two protesting monks; but they were unable to recover their money or the copy of the petition signed by the representatives of the *mir*. The deputies made their way to St. Petersburg without their credentials. The Archimandrite denounced them as bondmen who had fled from a *votchina* of the monastery, and they were at once arrested and sent to the Synodal Office at Moscow.

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of Economical Collegium*, bundle 2142, Affair No. 3, cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, and *Senate Archives*, iv. p. 639; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 220.

All of the deputies, as well as the two monks, were flogged, and the latter were put in irons and exiled to two different monasteries, while the former were kept in chains. A further attempt was made by the peasants of this monastery, with similar want of success.<sup>1</sup>

Peaceful complaints having proved to be useless, some of the ecclesiastical peasants resolved to adopt more strenuous means towards redress of their grievances. In 1748 a movement began in Vyatsky Province. Peasants belonging to the Bishop and to the monasteries refused to pay taxes, and engaged in illegal cutting of timber upon Church lands. Similar disturbances occurred in 1751. Then troops were sent. Two peasants were killed, and the troops were cut off until they were rescued by reinforcements. In 1752 similar disturbances occurred in the Olonetsky *votchini* of Khutynsky Monastery. In 1753 peasants of Novospassky Monastery, numbering 2194 souls, engaged in agitation, with the result that dragoons were sent, who beat the aldermen and the other men, as well as women peasants. Meanwhile petitioners from various districts succeeded in reaching St. Petersburg, and deriving there by some means the impression that important changes in the legal position of the peasants were brewing, returned to propagate in the market-places the rumours that they had heard. Among these was the rumour that the Church peasants were shortly to be handed over to the Empress. When this rumour was repeated in the villages, it was received with shouts, "Thanks be to God! What we wished in the *mir*, God has brought about for us. Long may you live, Orthodox! Let us thank God."<sup>2</sup> The leader of the movement in the village of Spasskoë was a peasant called Mërzën. The authorities attempted to arrest this man, but village watchmen kept a sharp look-out night and day. There was, however, much division of opinion, and even conflict, among the peasants regarding the expediency of carrying on the struggle against the ecclesiastical authorities. Fifty-five of the recalcitrant peasants were arrested and thrown into prison at Voronej, where they were placed in foot-stocks and in chains. Twelve of them shortly afterwards died in prison. In August 1756 a detachment of fifty dragoons, under an officer called Syeverstov, was sent to Spasskoë for the purpose of arresting Mërzën. An unsuccessful attempt was made to persuade the peasants to surrender him. The peasants, declaring that they expected a new

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 228.

ukase of the Empress, surrounded the troops and attacked them with flails, clubs, and sticks. An officer slashing out with his sword at the ranks of peasants about him, wounded one of the peasants. This infuriated the people; rushing upon Syevertsov, they pursued him until he took refuge in a swine-house, and then they proceeded to burn this over his head. Syevertsov fired upon them and killed a peasant. Eventually the peasants defeated the dragoons, took their officers, and chained them in the market-place to the body of the peasant who had been slain in the *melée*. There the women and children proceeded to beat them. The peasants shouted to the defeated detachment, "Even if a whole regiment should come, we shall beat every one in it to death. We have decided, even though everyone of us should die, that we will not surrender. We have many people, and we can collect about five thousand." Shouts were also heard, "Let us do away with the *boyars*, so that they may not exist any more in this world!" The officers were kept chained to the decomposing corpse for four days without either food or drink. For four days more they were kept in close confinement, as were also the dragoons. The party was only released on the ninth day after the attack.

After these events the Synod proposed to place the peasants on *obrok* instead of upon *bartschina*; but unfortunately this proposal, which might have satisfied the peasants, was not carried out. Instead of so pacificatory a measure, three companies of soldiers were sent to the village of Spasskoë upon a punitive expedition. When they made their appearance, the alarm bell of the village called the peasants from the fields, and when the troops reached the outskirts they found extemporized fortifications, and behind them a large force of peasants, both mounted and on foot. The officer then read to the peasants an ukase. They denounced it as false, and demanded a printed ukase with the signature of the Empress. Until this was received they refused to surrender any of their number. The troops were greatly outnumbered by the peasantry, who were evidently in a determined mood. There was nothing for the troops to do but to retire. Their retreat was impeded by the peasants of a village through which they had to pass, and they were attacked in the rear by the people of Spasskoë. After killing sixteen peasants the troops made good their retreat. The next step was to attempt in the spring of the following year, 1757, to reduce the still recalcitrant

peasants by means of a stronger force, armed, moreover, with a piece of field artillery. To begin with, the peasants offered a stout resistance; but after a number of them had been killed, the remainder took to flight, and the troops occupied the village, arresting all the stragglers whom they found. The troops were quartered in Spasskoë and in the neighbouring villages, and for nearly five months they were engaged in pillaging and in disposing of the peasants' belongings.<sup>1</sup> The main body of the troops left the villages in June, leaving a force of five companies to continue to occupy the villages. Soon afterwards Mërzën was arrested, together with about two hundred peasants; some of these were imprisoned on the spot, and some of them were sent to Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

In 1758 the peasants of the Belevsky Preobrajensky Monastery, according to the complaint of the Bishop of the diocese, refused to pay *obròk*, and had given the monk who was sent to collect it a ducking. In the same year the peasants of all the *votchini* belonging to another monastery in the same diocese refused "unanimously" to pay the usual dues and taxes. They put the monastery clerks to flight, and tore the hair from the head of the priest of one of the villages. In numerous other villages belonging to monasteries there were disturbances, indignities were inflicted upon the clergy and upon their officers, and military detachments were sent, with the customary results. These proceedings became so frequent that in 1757 the Government, in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, ordered that the monasteries and the bishops should employ in the administration of their *votchini*, retired military officers; but no material improvement was effected. In February 1762 Peter III established an Economical Collegium in Moscow, as a branch of the Department of the Senate.<sup>3</sup> He also, in an ukase of March of the same year, defined the amount of *obròk* which might be taken by the monasteries, and ordered that the ploughed lands should be given to the peasants. All the proceedings instituted against the monasteries were to be suspended, as well as all proceedings brought by the monasteries against the peasants, excepting those which involved murder; and all exactions by the monasteries over and above the newly prescribed amounts were to be returned to the peasants.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There were reported instances of violation of peasant women, and even of very young girls. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> On this whole incident, see Semevsky, ii. pp. 227-31.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. pp. 236-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 237.

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These measures infuriated the clergy; but in spite of their protests, the process of diminution of ecclesiastical authority over their *voichini* was carried out.<sup>1</sup> When Katherine II came to the throne she felt herself on the horns of a dilemma: to confirm the ukase just issued by her predecessor was to alienate the clergy; to repeal its provisions was to promote further disturbances among the people. She handed the delicate question over to the Senate. That body proposed a compromise. The estates were to be given back to the clergy, but the *obròk* which peasants might be called upon to pay was fixed at one ruble per male census soul, one-half to be transferred to the Treasury and one-half to remain in the hands of the clerical authorities. The administration of the monastic lands was to be handed over to elected peasant aldermen. There was, however, no unanimity upon these points.<sup>2</sup> Katherine was afraid to act even in the suggested direction. After seeking advice from Bestujev-Ryumèn, she issued an ukase on 12th August 1762, returning the clergy lands and abolishing the newly established Economical Collegium, but providing for the appointment of a Commission to deal with the question of the rights of the clergy. At the same time she confirmed the definition of the *obròk* as stated in the ukase of Peter III, at one ruble, directed that the peasants should not be overburdened with obligations, and also that *until better regulations* were adopted, the peasants should obey the ecclesiastical authorities. Complaints against the Synod were to be inquired into, and in case of disobedience of the decisions of the Senate, the peasants were to be handed over to the civil law.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, although the amount of *obròk* was defined, the principal cause of dispute between the clergy and their peasants—the amount of *bartschina* which might be exacted—was left undetermined by law.<sup>4</sup>

The commission which Katherine had promised was appointed on 20th November 1762. It was composed of three clerical and five lay members.<sup>5</sup> The net result of the labours of this Commission was the removal from ecclesiastical control of about one-half of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Soloviev, xxv. p. 79, and *Society of Ancient Russia* (1867), iii., "On the Services of Troitsky-Sergievsky Monastery," p. 27; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Soloviev, xxv. pp. 146–9; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 238.

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., xvi., No. 11,643; cited *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 239.

<sup>5</sup> Zabyalov, *The Question of Ecclesiastical Estates in the Time of Katherine II* (St. Petersburg, 1900), pp. 122–5; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 239.

*votchini* previously in the possession of the clergy, and the re-establishment of the Economical Collegium. The Collegium was, however, not to interfere with the ecclesiastical authorities in the administration of the *votchini* which were left under their control. The result of this concession speedily appeared in complaints from the peasants of the clergy about their excessive burdens. Although there were fewer Church peasants, the situation of those who remained was worse than ever. For example, certain peasants having been elected from the peasantry belonging to a *votchina* of the Troitsky-Sergievsky Monastery to petition against the personal exactions of a monk named Ilarion, were severely beaten and tortured,<sup>1</sup>

The oscillations in the policy of the Government, the frequent secularization and resumption of the clergy lands, confused the peasants and made them discontented. The remaining peasants of the clergy had been required by the ukase to promise in writing to obey their ecclesiastical owners; but in some cases they refused to sign the documents.<sup>2</sup>

While many disturbances took place in the ecclesiastical estates in 1762 and 1763, the incidents of these disturbances were not usually violent. When they became discontented, or when they were treated with exceptional severity, the peasants refused to render *bartschina*, took for their own use the produce of the harvest, caught fish, and cut timber illegally. In this respect the Church peasants differed from the *pomyetschêkê* peasants, who at this time fought pitched battles with the troops. One incident occurred in common among peasants of all classes. This was the circulation of forged ukases. These ukases were drawn up in accordance with the ideas of the peasants. Sometimes they applied to only one estate, sometimes they were of general application. One of the latter purported to be an Imperial ukase, transferring from the clergy to the peasants the plough-lands and meadows in order that they might divide these among themselves in equal proportions. This false ukase also confided to the Economical Collegium the administration of the estates of the clergy.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 244.

<sup>2</sup> Altogether 8539 souls belonging to the monasteries had, up till 12th December 1762, refused to sign. Soloviev, xxv. p. 171; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Economical Collegium*, bundle 276, Affair No. 17; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 246.

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While Katherine was timorous about risking a conflict either with the clergy or the peasantry before she had succeeded in seating herself firmly upon her not very secure throne, she was not really reluctant to secularize completely the estates of the clergy. To do so meant to increase the number of State peasants, and at the same time to diminish the material power and prestige of the ecclesiastics, by whose arrogance she was disturbed.

On 26th February 1764 a genuine ukase secularizing the Church lands and peasants was issued.<sup>1</sup> The whole of the *votchini* of the Church in Great Russia and in Siberia were transferred to the Economical Collegium. The complicated mass of payments which had been piled upon the peasants was removed and the payments simplified. In addition to the 70 kopek poll tax, the peasants were to pay a yearly *obròk* of 1 ruble 50 kopeks per peasant soul, and no more. *Bartschina* was abolished.

This sweeping change affected about one million souls of male sex, or approximately two million peasants of both sexes. The measure was not only the end of clerical temporal domination over a large fraction of the total number of bonded peasantry; it was the beginning of the end of bondage right in general. Moreover, the secularization of the Church peasants, and their inclusion in the ranks of the State peasants as a special class under a special administration, afforded an example of how such a transference might be made upon a still larger scale as a preliminary to complete emancipation. The two important circumstances of the transference were that *bartschina* was abolished, and that the amount of land allotted to the peasants was almost the same as they had occupied previously. The question of land allotment had been dealt with by the Commission of 1763. This body had proposed that "the lands and meadows which the peasants had ploughed and mowed for the bishops' houses and for the monasteries should be *all* given to the peasants, with the exception of those lands which were 20 versts or more from their place of habitation."<sup>2</sup> Such lands were to be given on lease to other peasants. In the working out of the transference, the peasants were not necessarily left upon the precise areas which

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xvi., No. 12,060; cited by Semevsky, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Economical Collegium*, bundle 376, p. 1, and Zabyalov, *op cit.*, pp. 217-18; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 255.



they had previously occupied. In the instructions by the Government to the Economical Collegium in 1771, after the process of transference had been going on for seven years, the importance of giving sufficient land was insisted upon—a minimum of 3 *dessyatin* of ploughed land for each census soul, with meadows in addition—was prescribed, and it was provided that where there was insufficient land about the peasants' native villages for the required distribution, some of the peasants should be transplanted.<sup>1</sup>

Had the administration been conducted continuously in the spirit of the original arrangements, the improvement of the peasants formerly belonging to the Church would probably have gone on progressively; but unfortunately, the obligations which had been placed upon the peasants by the State were speedily tampered with and subjected to increase. In 1768 the total of *obròk* and taxes was raised from 1 ruble 70 kopeks to 2 rubles 70 kopeks, thus equalizing the State and the Economical peasants; in 1783 this charge was again raised to 3 rubles 70 kopeks. These payments pressed heavily upon the Economical peasants, especially in the less fertile parts of European Russia; and arrears of unpaid taxes and *obròk* began to pile up.

Abuses in management also ere long began to develop. While *bartschina* had been abolished, and while all the Economical peasants had been placed upon *obròk*, the obligations and works customarily associated with *obròk* had still to be performed. Recruits had to be provided, and labour on roads, bridges, &c. had to be rendered. The local functionaries were not always considerate about the period nor about the amount of such labours. Peasants were called upon to transport upon their own carts material for building bridges, sometimes for great distances. Bribed by neighbouring *pomyetschêkê*, the officials in charge of the Economical peasants required them to do work which should have been performed by the peasants of private landowners.<sup>2</sup> The Economical peasants also were required sometimes to work in the factories of the State, when working hands could not otherwise be obtained; in such cases small wages were usually paid. For example, at the Government works for the distillation of brandy in the Cosmo-Damian district, fifty men were

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xix., No. 13,590; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affair of First Department*, No. 479-4050, p. 153; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 270.

drawn from each Economical *voitchina* of one thousand souls; the wages of these men were to be 2 rubles per month.<sup>1</sup>

In Siberia the Economical peasants were required to provide both in cash and in kind for the expenses of the local administration, in addition to their ordinary *obròk* and tax obligations.

Many of these increased impositions were no doubt incidental to increase of population, to development of central and local administrative mechanism, and not least, perhaps, to the increasing demands upon the State Treasury which the reforms of Katherine II entailed. The administration of the Economical peasantry was attended with considerable expense. Four sub-offices of the Economical Collegium were established in 1770 in Yaroslav, Kazan, Eletz, and Vologda.<sup>2</sup> The officials of these offices were required to visit the Economical peasants periodically, to examine into their condition, to furnish them with seed in case of failure of crops or other cause of damage, to see that the correct obligations were paid, and to receive complaints. They were also obliged to attend to the survey of the lands, to see that sufficient reserves of grain were maintained, to give the elected aldermen books for recording taxes, and to have the records in these verified by the peasants annually.<sup>3</sup>

So far as formal legislative prescription is concerned, all these arrangements appear favourable to the interests of the Economical peasants. They were apparently drawn up with a view to the possibility of their forming models for the *pomyetschëkë* to copy. How far did the reality correspond with the prescribed form?

Contemporary opinion was by no means unanimous on this point. Some of the reactionaries feared that the transformation of the peasants of the *pomyetschëkë* into Economical peasants might follow the transformation of the peasants of the Church. Some desired a further change in the direction of the lease or sale of Economical peasants to the *pomyetschëkë*.<sup>4</sup> Both of these parties were interested in discrediting the Economical Collegium, and in showing that the condition of its charges was in no wise better than it was when they were under the control of the clergy. In those cases where the monastic lands were administered by Abbot Samsons, it is quite conceivable that when the lands fell into the hands of individual

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, No. 288-3859, pp. 47-56; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 270-1.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., xix., No. 13,487; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 272-3.

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., xix., No. 13,590; cited *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, ii. p. 274.

peasants, or into groups of peasants of varying skill, the lands as a whole produced less than they did when they were under the experienced control of an efficient taskmaster. For example, when the Bishop of Rostov was deprived of the means of maintaining his famous stud, there was no continuance of the supply of thoroughbred horses which the stud produced. On the other hand, it must be allowed that the distribution of the blood of these horses raised the level of the peasants' horses in the region.<sup>1</sup> There is no definite proof that the area of cultivated land, considered as a whole, was less under the new conditions than under the old, although, owing to the redistribution, probably some lands at a distance from the villages went out of cultivation. One of the causes of the discontent of the peasants was indeed that more or less distant lands had to be cultivated, so that when the redistribution took place, the nearer lands were preferred. When the proportions of the cultivated land of the Economical peasants are compared with the proportions of the cultivated land in the *voichini* of the *pomyetschëkë* in the same neighbourhood, the result is as a rule favourable to the former. For example, the Economical peasants in Yaroslavskaya *gubernie* cultivated 3.5 *dessyatin* out of a total of 7 *dessyatin*, while the peasants of the *pomyetschëkë* cultivated only 3.4 *dessyatin*. Yet in this very *guberni* the nobles complained that the Economical peasants allowed the fields to lie fallow.

On the whole, if there was a decrease of the cultivated land under the new system, that decrease was not sufficient to attract attention.<sup>2</sup>

Those who criticised the transference of the Church peasants to the Economical Collegium most severely were people of the Baltic Provinces, who had observed there the effects of large landownership, especially in the breeding of cattle. Among these was the Governor of Novgorodskaya *gub.*, Sivers, who objected to the system of giving land on *obrôk*, on the ground that it divided the land into small holdings, with the result that cattle-breeding on a large and effective scale was impeded, and that the population did not grow so fast as it would have done otherwise.<sup>3</sup> In order to avoid these results, Sivers

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup> On the face of it, these results seem to be inconsistent. It is quite true that small holdings impede cattle-breeding; but it is not true as matter of universal experience that they impede the growth of population. When the ranches in Western Canada, for example, were broken up, and small holdings took their place, population increased rapidly.

proposed to lease the Economical peasants to the nobles, and to appoint a general director of the Economical Collegium to look after them. He proposed by these means to prevent the abandonment of agriculture by the Economical peasants, and to prevent their going into the towns to engage in industries, promoting at the same time the establishment of industrial enterprises in the Economical leased estates, as well as the development of cattle-breeding. Although these ideas of Siviers found support at Court, they found none among the people, who preferred household ownership, or ownership by groups of households, to exploitation at the hands of a magnate, even although the latter method might be the more productive. Prince Sh'cherbatov was one of those who supported the project of Siviers; but he admitted that it "is a dangerous affair, although it cannot be said to be impossible."<sup>1</sup>

The secularization of the clergy lands was a gradual process; only after twenty-two years from the date of the ukase of 1764 was it completed.<sup>2</sup> No such reactionary step as that advocated by Siviers and Sh'cherbatov was carried into effect. Although Katharine II granted many populated estates to her favourites, she granted no Economical peasants to them. These were indeed not disturbed until the reign of the Tsar Paul, when in 1797 he devoted 50,000 souls from them to the knights of the Russian Orders.<sup>3</sup> In 1816-1818 the peasants of a few of the Economical *volosts* were formed into military settlements. Otherwise the Economical peasantry remained in a position, on the whole, considerably better than the peasantry of the *pomyetschékē*. This is evident from the circumstance that, prior to 1764, while they were under the clergy, disturbances among them were very frequent, while after 1764, under the Economical Collegium, such disturbances did not exist.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Society of Ancient Russia*, 1859, iii. p. 82; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 284, for the successive steps.

<sup>3</sup> *Society of Ancient Russia*, 1867, i. pp. 131-9; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 286.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AGRICULTURAL PEASANTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### 3. THE PEASANTS OF THE COURT, OF THE TSAR, AND OF THE STABLES AND THE FALCONERS

##### (a) THE COURT PEASANTS

THE Court peasantry make their appearance in the appanage ages, when the princes and grand princes gave lands to their servants for their maintenance. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Court lands were increased by adding to them from the "black lands" of Central Russia, which up till that time had belonged neither to private proprietors nor to the Court. This process of transferring lands into the Court domain continued until the beginning of the seventeenth century. At this time they were administered by the so-called Great Court.<sup>1</sup> But grants of land were continually being made from the Court lands to private persons who had in some way served the throne. In 1646, under the administration of the Great Court, there were 37,200 households, and in 1678 the number had increased to 90,550. In 1701, however, the number had diminished to 74,402 households. In the Kazan Court lands there were in addition 5580, so that the total of Court lands possessed 79,982 households.<sup>2</sup> These households consisted of ploughing peasants, who rendered certain money obligations and certain obligations in kind to the Court of the Tsar, reserving the balance of their produce for themselves. Besides these there were non-ploughing peasants, who supplied the Court with fish, honey, &c., and who paid money *obròk*.<sup>3</sup> There were also in the Court villages some landless peasants.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mělyukov, *History of Russian Culture* (St. Petersburg, 1898), i. pp. 205-6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Miklashevsky, *Towards the History of the Economical Life of the Moscow State*, part i. (Moscow, 1894), pp. 122-3; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Dyakonov, *Outline of the History of the Village Population of the Moscow State* (Moscow, 1898), iv.; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

A characteristic example of the Court village is to be found in Ismaylovo, an ancient *votchina* of the Romanovs and a favourite residence of the Tsars. In this village large fruit orchards were planted, as well as gardens for the cultivation of medicinal herbs. There were also mulberry plantations and apiaries. Fowls were kept in great variety, swans, peacocks, Chinese geese, English ducks, &c. There were herds of cattle and parks of deer. There was even a zoological garden, where there were lions, tigers, bears, &c., and there were ponds with many species of fish. There was also a brandy distillery. The labour was performed partly by the peasants of the village and partly by means of free hired labourers. At harvest-time the ordinary working force was supplemented by 700 harvesters. Towers were built in the fields, that the workmen might be watched and the crops guarded.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of the seventeenth century between six and seven hundred peasants were drafted into Ismaylovo from other places, yet in 1676 there remained in the village only 183 households. The work was so heavy that the peasants fled in large numbers.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the first census, in 1722, the number of Court peasants was 357,328; and at the time of the fourth census, in 1782, there were 597,238 souls of male sex.<sup>3</sup> In 1796 this number had diminished to 471,307 souls.<sup>4</sup>

The payments in kind which were in earlier ages furnished to the princely households were gradually replaced by payments in money, although *bartschina* continued to be exacted in the fields and meadows of the Court *votchini*. When the transference from "natural" to money payments took place, the amount of the money payment was calculated upon the prices of the natural products which had been previously furnished. In the Moscow *votchini* of the Court, however, exclusively "natural" payments survived until 1732.<sup>5</sup>

Up till the year 1750 the customary *obròk* was 40 kopeks per male peasant soul. The payment of this was rendered partly in money, calculated as indicated above, and partly in natural products

<sup>1</sup> As was the case in the vineyards of the Imperial Palace of Livadia, in the Crimea, e.g.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Moscow Branch of General Archives of the Ministry of Court Affairs*, Nos. 30-293, p. 74; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *German Statistical Inquiries* (St. Petersburg, 1819), p. 95; cited, *ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. pp. 13-14.

and labour. From that year the increasing expenses of the Court led to the increase of the *obròk* charge to 55 kopeks—80 kopeks, according to locality, by increments of from 9 to 26 kopeks in each of three successive years.<sup>1</sup> In 1754 the *obròk* was raised to 1 ruble, with, in many of the Court *votchni*, the rendering of natural obligations in addition. In the early part of the eighteenth century ploughing of the Court lands had been required of the peasants; in 1758 this requirement was abolished, and in place of it, an additional *obròk* of 30 kopeks was required, so that the total *obròk* came to 1 ruble 30 kopeks; in 1762, in the majority of the *volosts* of the Court, this amount was reduced to 1 ruble 25 kopeks. To the *obròk*, however, fell to be added the 70 kopek poll tax—so that the total obligations of the Court peasants at this time were 1.95 rubles per male soul, or 25 kopeks per soul more than the amount payable by the State peasants at that time.

In November 1768 the total obligations of all Treasury peasants were raised to 2 rubles 70 kopeks, and in 1783 to 3 rubles.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding these considerable augmentations, the burdens upon the Court peasants were lighter than were as a rule the burdens of the peasants of *pomyetschëkë*. The *obròk* was less, as was also the amount of labour required otherwise.

The Court peasants were subjected to a fine on marriage of 20 kopeks; the amount of *vyvodnye* money was not defined. The amount varied from 3 rubles 50 kopeks to 5 rubles 50 kopeks<sup>3</sup> for marriages of Court peasant girls to peasants of *pomyetschëkë*. They were permitted to marry Economical peasants without extra charge. The State taxes paid by the Court peasants were 70 kopeks per soul up till 1794, when the tax was raised to 85 kopeks.<sup>4</sup> Recruit obligations and recruit money<sup>5</sup> were also exacted from the Court peasants as from others. Those among them who were well-to-do purchased substitutes for recruits; but in 1739 this practice was prohibited. In 1766 Court peasants were permitted to purchase small villages from the *pomyetschëkë*. Such villages came under the same regula-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. pp. 20 and 22. In modern money these sums would be nearly 11 rubles and 12 rubles respectively. Semevsky puts the latter at 6 rubles in error. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> In modern money, 23 rubles 25 kopeks to 42 rubles 62 kopeks. Semevsky, ii. p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Usually 10 kopeks per male soul. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

tions as the Court villages, and were really additions to the heritable property of the Court. It does not appear that the Court peasants had the right to sell them. In the eighteenth century the Court peasants might work out their poll tax in either Treasury or private "mountain works," and many of them were ascribed to these works for that purpose. In times of scarcity of working hands, Court peasants were obliged to work in these establishments. For example, in 1772, 4458 peasants were handed over to the Commerce Collegium for employment at the potash works. There they worked out both their *obròk* and their poll taxes.<sup>1</sup>

In 1766 the question of the maintenance of the system of repartition of the land became acute among the Court peasants. Some peasants of northern Court *volosts* having petitioned the Court Chancellery to be permitted to divide their land in such a way as to provide an equal area according to the number of souls in the *volost*, "without offence to anyone," the Chancellery, apparently imagining that it was meeting the wishes of the peasants, ordered that repartition should be carried out in every village, large and small, the village being regarded as a unit. In the northern *volosts*, however, the villages are customarily much smaller than the huge villages in Central Russia, and it was not satisfactory to carry out repartition in that way. The *volost*, or group of villages, was the real unit when the land came to be divided, and thus a repartition within the village was not considered by the peasants as a repartition at all.<sup>2</sup>

The question came to be better understood at a later period. In 1795 the Exchequer Court of Vologda ordered a repartition in accordance with the ideas of some peasants who had applied for permission to redistribute their lands. In 1798 also, the Inferior Zemsky Court of Velsk provided for the equalisation of peasant lots under the following conditions: (1) Purchased and cleared lands were to be excluded, whether the clearing had been done by the occupants or by their ancestors; (2) those households which had land enough could not demand a share of the redivided lands in addition; (3) villages to which were allotted plough-land from another village had to transfer from that village a corresponding number of families.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 26. A large number of these peasants fled from the works. They were not recovered.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.



In 1797 the Department of the *Udelny* was established for the purpose of administering the lands of the Imperial Family, and the control of the Court peasants passed into its hands. The policy of the newly organized department in relation to the repartition of lands was indefinite and inconsistent. Repartition was sometimes encouraged and sometimes prevented.

Vasili Vorontsev expresses the opinion that the Udelny administration interfered only in cases of repartition when the peasants could not agree among themselves. It then made an inquiry, examining the elected representatives of the contending parties. In 1801 and 1802 the Udelny administration issued instructions that where the *mir* had decided upon repartition, the repartition should be carried out according to its decisions; but where unanimity could not be secured, that the land should remain in the hands of its possessors and should not be divided.<sup>1</sup>

In 1798 the local court of Velsk had, as we have seen, excluded from repartition in that region the lands cleared and purchased by individual peasant families. This exclusion was in the first instance local, but the principle was probably widely adopted. Peasants who had little land objected very strongly to this provision. They were sufficiently influential, and their arguments were sufficiently plausible, for the Udelny authorities to direct the inclusion of these lands at both the sixth and the seventh census periods—1812 and 1816. These repartitions produced many disputes and complaints; but finally the peasants seem generally to have acquiesced in the expediency of complete repartition, and thus the hereditary use of the land of the peasants of the Court *volosts*, so far as the Vologdskaya *gub.* was concerned, was abandoned after a struggle of twenty years.<sup>2</sup>

In Arkhangelskaya *gub.* the practice of repartition of the lands of the Udelny did not begin until 1812, at the time of the sixth census. At this time the Udelny authorities still further enlarged the area of the unit of repartition by adopting an artificial unit—the local *prekaz*—which embraced many *volosts*, each *volost* in its turn embracing many villages. *Volosts* which had little land were thus enabled to share in the partition of land in other *volosts* where there

<sup>1</sup> V. V. [Vasili Vorontsev], "The Beginning of the Repartition of Lands in the North of Russia," in *Russian Thought* (1897), No. 11, pp. 6-11; No. 12, pp. 19, 25-27; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> V. V., *ibid.*; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 76.

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was a relative excess. But it does not appear that this measure was carried fully into effect.

Vorontsev, after study of the archives of the Udelny administration, arrived at the conclusion that "the realization of the idea of the equal use of land among the Udelny peasants of the northern *guberni* came about through the stubborn demands of the peasants who had little land. Such peasants constituted, in fact, the majority."<sup>1</sup>

The practice of moving Court peasants from one region to another, which was adopted by the administration with some frequency in the early part of the eighteenth century, created discontent. No doubt these movements were looked upon as an administrative necessity, and the Court peasants were regarded as the most easily manipulated material for colonization. For instance, the region of the river Bitug, in what is now Voronejskaya *gub.*, offered a suitable field for colonization, and about five thousand peasants of both sexes were drawn into it from Rostov, Yaroslav, Kostroma, and Poshekhonov regions in 1701, and in 1704 a further draft of nearly the same number was made from other regions.<sup>2</sup>

Complaints from the Court peasants about their hard conditions were brought to the notice of the Empress Anna in 1734. She addressed a memorandum on the subject to Saltykov, over-steward of the Court peasantry: "It is known to us that our Court *volosts* are ruined, and are in bad condition, because of the neglect of the Court Chancellery and of the worthless clergy. Thus Court incomes, poll taxes, and recruiting are greatly in arrear. As you have already written, the money arrears amount to more than forty thousand (rubles). . . . We cannot leave the matter in such a state; it must be seen to."<sup>3</sup> After this date, however, the condition of the Court *volosts* was improved. Observers in the time of Katherine II—Rychkov, for example—notice the general well-being of some of them. The by-Kama Court villages possessed tanneries, soap-works, and exported grain. "These villages," remarks Rychkov, "surpass in their buildings and in the well-being of their

<sup>1</sup> V. V., *op cit.*; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Pereyaslavl-Zalessky, *Historical Inquiry into Horse-breeding in Russia* (1893), 2nd ed., p. 17; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> "Letters and Ukases of the Empresses Anna and Elizabeth," *Society for the History of Ancient Russia* (1878), i, p. 145; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 84.

inhabitants many district towns. The village of Sarapul, on the river Kama, has three churches within its wooden walls, and six hundred peasant houses."<sup>1</sup> There was a good market and many shops in Sarapul, and the trade of the village, especially in the summer, was extensive. The peasants sailed up the rivers Kama and Belaya, carrying their exportable produce, and brought back fuel, salt, and iron.<sup>2</sup> In another village of the Court *volosts* in Kazanskaya *gub.* the peasants were brassworkers, ikon-painters, and silversmiths.<sup>3</sup> The conditions, however, varied. Only sixty-four miles from Sarapul, another village presented a different aspect. There the peasants engaged in no industry, and occupied themselves exclusively in farming and fishing. "They were far from being well off."<sup>4</sup> Such peasants suffered severely when there was a bad harvest. In the year 1733, for example, a crop failure produced great distress. Subsidies of grain were given from the army supplies, but only to the extent of one-sixth of the quantity asked by the peasants. In Porechsky *volost* of Smolenskaya *gub.* an inventory of effective crops showed that while thirty-five households had approximately sufficient grain for their requirements, 1852 households had no grain at all. In the following year (1734) the collection of the poll tax from *pomyetschĕhĕ* and from clergy peasants was deferred; but the Court peasants were forgotten, and collections were attempted to be made from them.<sup>5</sup> The managers reported that payment of taxes by large numbers of the Court peasants was impossible, because the peasants were completely ruined through the failure of the harvest of the previous year. Many of them had left their villages, and were scattered about, and the remainder were dying of starvation.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in July 1734, the Senate forbade the collection of taxes from the Court *volosts* until they should enjoy a good harvest,<sup>7</sup> the harvests of the three preceding years having been deficient. The normal amount of taxes receivable from the Court *volosts* in 1734 was over 150,000 rubles; the amount actually received was little more than one-half of that amount.<sup>8</sup> Like Peter the Great, the Empress Anna thought that grain reserves should be created, in order to

<sup>1</sup> Rychkov, *The Journal and Memories of a Traveller in 1769-1770* (St. Petersburg, 1770), i. pp. 43 and 167; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Elabuga, an example of a fortified village. See Rychkov, *op cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, ii. p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

equalize consumption ; but nothing was done at that time, the harvest of 1734 having been as deficient as that of the three preceding years.<sup>1</sup>

In 1765 the Empress Katherine II sent an ukase to the Court Chancellery respecting grain reserves :

“ The village economy demands that to provide against an exceptional occasion, there should be in stock a sufficient grain capital to supply the inhabitants in case of need. We learn with great pleasure that with real economy some of our nobles reserve each year a certain amount of grain for seeding and for food in case of crop deficiency ; and that they do not sell the last-mentioned grain before a similar quantity is harvested in the succeeding year. If such an economy is introduced into the administration of our *votchini*, it will give us great pleasure, but in so far as up till the present time this has not been done, then we order that efforts must be made to introduce the formation of such reserve stores, and every six months a report should be made on the subject to the Court Chancellery.”<sup>2</sup>

The fact that this ukase was in effect repeated in 1769 suggests that the required measures were not taken, the inferior harvests of the preceding years having, no doubt, rendered accumulation of reserves impossible. The Court Chancellery reported to the Senate in 1766 that there were no reserves of grain in the Court *volosts*.<sup>3</sup> Reserves seem to have been created to some extent in 1775, and in 1778 these reserves were ordered to be drawn upon for the relief of the peasants, with the understanding that the quantities of grain so disbursed should be returned out of the first good harvest, with an increase of 6 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

In consequence of the appearance of beggars in the towns and on the highways, some of them being from the Court *volosts*, these were ordered to be taken to the Moscow workhouses, and a fine of 2 rubles for each beggar so dealt with was to be imposed upon the managers, elected representatives, and aldermen of the *volosts* to which the beggars belonged.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *General Archives of the Ministry of the Court*, No. 1629, Affair No. 113, p. 41. A similar ukase was issued to the Economical Collegium. F.C.L., xvii., No. 12,351. See Semevsky, ii. p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> F.C.L., xx., No. 14,358 ; cited by Semevsky, p. 92.

The central administration of the Court peasants had been entrusted in the seventeenth century to the Great Court. For a brief period in the eighteenth century, from 1703-1709, the administration fell into the hands of Prince Menshikov, in an institution known as the Ijorsky Chancellery.<sup>1</sup> When the *gubernie* were created in 1709, the administration of the Court lands was confided to the governors of the *gubernie* in which the Court *volosts* were situated. The central administration was thus abolished, and the control devolved upon the local governmental authorities. In 1721 Peter the Great restored the central authority. In 1725, after the death of Peter, this authority came to be known as the Court Chancellery, or the *prikaz* of the Great Court, indifferently.<sup>2</sup> Up till 1746 the chief office of the Court administration was in Moscow, and the subordinate office in St. Petersburg. At that date the offices were transposed.<sup>3</sup> In 1765 the administration of the State peasants was combined with that of the Court peasants, excepting in so far as concerned the Court Stable peasants, who were still under separate jurisdiction in the time of Katherine II. In 1775 another change in the administration of the Court peasants took place. They were then transferred to the care of the newly established Courts of Exchequer in the *gubernie*; and the central institution was once more abolished.<sup>4</sup>

The local control of the Court *volosts* from the beginning of the eighteenth century was in the hands of clerks. About 1725 the chief local authorities came to be called managers, and by this name they continued to be known. In 1765 there were sixty-two local administrations, sometimes these controlled only one *volost*, sometimes a large number.<sup>5</sup>

In the eighteenth century the meetings of the *mir* could not be held otherwise than at the discretion of the manager. Everyone who paid taxes was entitled to be present at the meetings. The numbers of taxpayers in the *volost* varied. In some *volosts* there were 85 census souls, and in some 15,000. In large *volosts* the distance from the place of meeting was sometimes very great. For this reason the Court administration proposed to introduce a system of representation. The proposal was not received with favour by

<sup>1</sup> Called in 1705 the Ingermanland Chancellery.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., vii., No. 4677; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., x., No. 7468; xi., Nos. 8212, 8251; xvi., No. 9358; cited *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. pp. 98-9.

the peasants, who were accustomed to meetings of the whole *mir*; and the project appears to have been abandoned, apparently owing to anticipation of the difficulty of securing general acceptance of decisions arrived at by the representatives.

The frequent changes in central administration and the fluctuations of policy undoubtedly militated against competency in the local management. There were cases of corruption and of misuse of the labour of the peasants. In 1774 the local management of the Court *volosts* was abolished, and the elected representatives of the *volosts* were brought into relation to the central administration through seven provincial sub-offices, after the manner of the administration of the Economical peasantry. The new administrative mechanism was expected to improve agricultural methods, to collect *obròk*, and to settle or prevent disputes among the peasants, and even disputes in the peasant families. In the ukase establishing this new system, the elected *volost* heads are called *mayors*.<sup>1</sup> The fixation of obligations and the administration of interior affairs were left to the meetings of the *mir*.

Soon after Katherine II came to the throne she recalled from exile J. P. Elagin, who had been useful to her in 1758, during her relations with Ponyatovsky.<sup>2</sup> Elagin was placed by Katherine in the Court Chancellery, and was almost immediately afterwards engaged in the elaboration of a project which was intended to alter completely the status of the Court peasantry. He prepared a memorandum, the burthen of which was that the community system, with its repartition of lands and its other common incidents, could not make for prosperity in the State generally, or in the Court *volosts* in particular. He therefore advocated individual ownership. Elagin proposed that the peasants should have their own immovable property; but that they should be supervised by authorities whom they would regard as their *pomyetschêkê*, and whom they would "love and fear." He pointed out that in progressive Western European States the process of the alienation of the lands of the Crown into the hands of peasant proprietors had had good results, and also that the system of *obròk* had had the effect in Russia of driving the peasants from agriculture in order that they might make

<sup>1</sup> *Moscow Branch Archives of the Ministry of Court Affairs*, No. 293, *Affair* No. 109; No. 10, *Affair* No. 218, p. 70; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tooke, *Life of Catherine II* (London, 1800), i. pp. 101 *et seq.*

money in industry. Elagin proposed to give the peasants allotments of land in heritable property, and to fix certain taxes and certain work in respect to that land. He desired to begin the experiment with the Court peasants; and he pointed out that in Prussia, Denmark, Holstein, and Mecklenburg, the Governments of these countries had given State lands to the peasants on these terms, and soon afterwards the landowners had taken example and had done so also. He suggested that the "household" should be arbitrarily constituted of four male workers, that equal portions of land should be given to each "household," and that each household should be called upon to pay the same amount in *obrok* and taxes to the State. He proposed also that one headman in each household should be elected at a meeting of the *mir*, and that he should hold office for life, all the other members of the household rendering him obedience. The total amount of land for each household, according to him, should be  $6\frac{1}{2}$  *dessyatin* per household. He considered that the peasant owner of the land should be irremovable from his property, and that he should not be permitted either to sell it or to borrow upon it. Over the peasant proprietors Elagin proposed to place hereditary nobles and serving people who had attained the rank of staff officer. Those superiors were to obtain a lease of the peasants and of their land from the Crown. The taxes which he assumed to be payable by the peasant proprietors would, he thought, be higher than the previously existing taxes, and thus the Treasury would benefit. His project was, however, not advanced for fiscal reasons, but was advanced for the purpose of leasing the peasants and the land together to members of the nobility. At the same time similar projects were advanced in regard to the Economical peasants.

Such projects bore a German stamp; they were quite alien to the Russian peasant, and even to the Russian official mind. Semevsky points out that apparently Elagin thought that the amount of land cultivated by the peasant would be varied, and customarily was varied by action of the *pomyetschĕkĕ*, or of the Court authorities. This was not the case. On the contrary, there seems to be no evidence that the Court authorities diminished the amount of land in use by the peasants, and the cases in which the *pomyetschĕkĕ* did so were quite exceptional.<sup>1</sup> The project of Elagin was not adopted, and the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. pp. 111-17.

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Court peasants were in the reign of Katherine amalgamated with other peasants belonging to the Treasury.

### (b) THE TSAR'S PEASANTS

In 1708 Peter the Great gave to his wife Katherine six country seats, one of which was Sarsky Selo, or Sarsky village, now known as Tsarskoë Selo.<sup>1</sup> These country seats were separated from the Court villages in general, and were placed directly under the control and in the ownership of Katherine. In 1712 the Court *volosts* in the districts of Novgorod and Pskov were devoted to the provision of the private income of the Tsar, the Tsaritzza, and the Tsarevna.<sup>2</sup> Peter the Great regarded himself as a *pomyetschëk* of 800 souls in Novgorodskaya *gub.*—no great estate in comparison with the estates of many of his nobles—and he drew for his private purse the small income of this estate.<sup>3</sup> In 1713 Peter ordered that the *votchini* of Komzy Patrékyeëv in Nijigorodsky, and other districts, should be inscribed to the Tsarevna Anna.<sup>4</sup>

When the Court and Stable villages were amalgamated in 1721, those villages which had been inscribed to the Tsar and to the members of his own family were expressly exempted. In 1723 a separate votchinal chancellery was established for the management of the private estates of the Empress Katherine I.<sup>5</sup> In 1726 the Empress ordered that this office should be wholly independent of the other bureaux of the Court; but in the next reign the administration of these private *votchini* of the Crown was transferred to the Court Chancellery.<sup>6</sup> When Katherine died, in 1727, she left the bulk of her estates (about 5000 households, with 20,457 souls) to two of her relatives.<sup>7</sup> On the birth of Elizabeth, afterwards Empress, her father, Peter II, gave her the *votchini* of her mother, one of which was Tsarskoë Selo. During the reign of the Empress Anna the Grand Duchess Elizabeth possessed a chancellery for the management of her estates. Besides those mentioned, there were many other

<sup>1</sup> There were ninety-five villages in these six country seats, or *myza*, with 21,754 *dessyatins*. See Yakovkin, *History of Tsarskoë Selo* (St. Petersburg, 1829), i. pp. 35, 42-46; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 123.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., iv., No. 2550; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> F.C.L., vi., No. 3737, &c., and *Collections of Historical Society*, lxi. pp. 810 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 125.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.



grants of *votchini* to members of the Imperial family. Whenever these grants were made, the subjects of them were withdrawn from the general mass of Court lands. When Elizabeth acceded to the throne, her own chancellery became a Government institution, and from that time onwards the Tsar's peasants become manifest as a special class. At the second census (1742) the Tsar's peasants numbered 60,531 souls, and the Court peasants numbered 401,603 souls. When Katherine II acceded, the number of Tsar's peasants was 62,052 souls of male sex,<sup>1</sup> or about double that number of both sexes.

The conditions of the Tsar's peasants varied very much. We have seen that although the regulations of the Court peasants were subject to many fluctuations, and although certainly the practice varied in different *volosts* of the Court in consequence of variation in local management, yet the regulations applied to the whole body of the Court peasants. This was not the case with the Tsar's peasants. Since these belonged to individual members of the Imperial family, and were directly or indirectly actually controlled by them, each estate was subject to the caprice or the discretion of its owner to a degree even greater than was the case in the estates of the *pomyet-schékē*, because of the influence and power of their Imperial *votchinnēkē*. The customary laws of the locality in which the *votchini* were situated, and the economical conditions of the locality, also contributed, as in all other classes of land and peasant ownership in Russia, to produce important variations.<sup>2</sup>

The six country seats in Ingermanland, which had been given in 1708 by Peter the Great to his wife Katherine, had, as part of Ingermanland, formerly belonged to Sweden. We therefore meet with a nomenclature and with customary obligations of a non-Russian character, some of which are gradually being brought into harmony with Russian nomenclature and with Russian customs. The country seat, which in Russian would be called a *datcha*, was in Ingermanland called a *myza*. Obligations which in Russian estates were met by *bartschina*, were in Ingermanland met by *opsa*, which was customarily four days' labour. The peasants were grouped together, not in *tyaglo*, but in *osmak*—an *osmak* being composed of four married couples. The *osmak* was the unit of taxation. For example, in 1723 the peasants of Tsarskoë Selo paid 45 rubles per

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, ii. p. 130.

*osmak*, or at the rate of 11 rubles 25 kopeks per married couple per year.<sup>1</sup> From data of a slightly later period, it appears that the *osmak* usually contained about fifteen souls of male sex, so that the *obròk* per census soul in the period 1725-1730 may be taken at about 3 rubles. This was counted a heavy *obròk*. In the Little Russian and in the Moscow estates occupied by Tsar's peasants, the *obròk* at this time was relatively much lower than it was in the north. Thus in Ponurnitsy, e.g., the *obròk* was only 28 kopeks; in Toninsky *volost*, near Moscow, 38 kopeks; in Saratov, 1 ruble 1 kopek; in Dorpat, 1 ruble 72 kopeks; in Reval, 2 rubles 2 kopeks. In addition to these there were various obligations in labour or in kind.<sup>2</sup>

The Tsar's peasants, like the Court peasants in general, had been subject to the payment of *vyvodnye* money;<sup>3</sup> but in 1766 Katherine II ordered that brides should be allowed to go out of Tsarskoë Selo without payment, hoping that the neighbouring *pomyetschëkhë* would follow this example.<sup>4</sup> This policy of permitting brides to go freely was, however, altered in 1774, when a fee of 5 rubles was again exacted for marriages with peasants outside the Imperial *volchini*, and 3 rubles in money, with 2 quarts of rye, 1 of wheat, and 4 of oats.<sup>5</sup>

The poll tax appears to have been paid on the Tsar's estates by the *dvorovie lyudë* as well as by the field peasants. In the Tsar's *volchini*, in Peterburgskaya *gub.*, the Tsar's peasants, instead of paying poll tax, were obliged to furnish fodder for the horses of the regiments of the guard. The Empress Elizabeth, however, released her Tsarskoë Selo peasants from the poll-tax obligation. These circumstances suggest a certain confusion of public and private obligations in spite of the separation of the Tsar's peasants from other classes of peasantry.

Recruiting and the maintenance of roads and bridges fell upon the Tsar's peasants as obligations.

The area of land allotted to the Tsarskoë Selo peasants was fairly generous. They had 56 *dessyatin* per *osmak*, or, at the rate of 15 census souls per *osmak*, equal to 3.73 *dessyatin* per male soul. At

<sup>1</sup> That is, 78 rubles per year in modern money for each married couple, according to Semevsky, ii. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> In 1716 the amount was \$5. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> Yakovnik, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 200-1; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 138.

the rate of 6.2 male souls per household,<sup>1</sup> the area of land in the possession of each household would be 23.126 *dessyatin*.

Among the Tsar's peasants, as among the peasants of the Court *volosts*, there existed the community system, with periodical or frequent redistribution of the land. In 1768 Katherine II, impressed with the arguments of Elagin, to which allusion has been made, proposed that artificial households should be formed, each consisting of six men and six women,<sup>2</sup> and that to this *tyaglo*, or tax unit, there should be given 60 *dessyatin* of land "into their perpetual keeping." This meant the abolition of repartition. From each *tyaglo* there was to be supplied for the work of the Treasury, one mounted workman, and one workman and two women on foot. The estimated income from the Tsar's *votchini* on this new basis was equivalent to 42 rubles per *osmak*. In 1770 the project of Katherine was further elaborated by the manager of Tsarskoë Selo. He recommended that the plan be adopted not only there, but in others of the Tsar's *votchini*. Some of his suggestions were that to each *tyaglo* group there should be allotted 60 *dessyatin* of land, according to the suggestion of the Empress, and as well 6 horses, 12 cows, 12 sheep, 3 pigs, and 30 chickens. The peasants were not to be permitted to sell cattle fodder, no matter how much of it they might have. The practice of living in large villages was not convenient, therefore not more than twenty *tyaglo* groups should be permitted to settle in each village. For every hundred *tyaglo* there should be allowed 600 *dessyatin* of plough-land, and the same amount of meadow-land in Treasury occupation. This land should be stocked at the rate of one cow and one sheep per *dessyatin*, as well as with pigs and poultry in proportion.<sup>3</sup> Those peasants who would not, or who could not, engage in agriculture, should be settled in large settlements, and should be allowed a small amount of land for pasture ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  *dessyatin*), with access to forests. These settlements should be near great rivers or near roads. From these people no Treasury obligations should be exacted; instead of these they should pay an *obròk* of 5 rubles 45 kopeks per male soul. In order to gain this amount, as well as to

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> Between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five, according to the plan as amplified by the manager of Tsarskoë Selo in 1770. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 145.

<sup>3</sup> Udolov considered that such a method should yield an income of 5402 rubles per hundred *tyaglo*, or 54.02 rubles per *tyaglo*. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 145.

secure their own subsistence, they could work in the factories or engage in handicrafts.<sup>1</sup>

This project was not carried out. Had it been so, it would have contributed through the Tsar's peasantry towards the destruction of the Russian community, and in this way must have tended to break up the rural life of Russia.

When the rebellion of Pugachov took place in 1775,<sup>2</sup> there were disturbances among the Tsar's peasants in the Volga region. Siviers, the Governor of Novgorod, in reporting about these disturbances to the Empress, observes that at that moment Elagin, to whom the administration of the estate had been confided, was attempting an experiment in a new economical system. He does not say that the disturbances were due to this cause, but the inference is obvious.<sup>3</sup>

Complaints having been made to the Tsarevich Paul (afterwards Paul I) by the peasants upon his estate of Gatschina, he seems to have made an unsuccessful attempt to adopt some such system as Elagin had suggested. Swinton, who travelled in Russia in 1788-1791, describes the situation at Gatschina after this attempt had been made: "The serfs complain of the heaviness of the work, and strive towards liberty, not realizing that they are not fit to enjoy it. . . . His Highness (the Tsarevich) ordered that the English method of farming on lease should be adopted, and that the tenants should be provided with all that is necessary for their farms, as well as with instruction in agriculture. Within two years the peasants succeeded in selling their newly acquired property and in drinking the proceeds. They appeared to be incapable of paying even an insignificant rent, and they asked that the old order should be re-introduced."<sup>4</sup>

In 1775, while the rebellion of Pugachov was going on, and while the whole peasant world was in commotion, an attempt was made to impose six rubles of *obròk* per *tyaglo* upon the Tsar's peasants in Kiyasovkaya *volost*, where already sympathy with Pugachov had been expressed. Orders had been given that this *volost* should supply a number of *Uhlans* for the purpose of strengthening the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 145 and 146.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, vol. ii. Book IV. c. ii.

<sup>3</sup> Blum, *Ein Russischer Staatsmann*, ii. p. 240; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 146.

<sup>4</sup> Swinton, *Travels into Norway, Denmark, and Russia in the Years 1788, 1789, 1790, and 1791* (London, 1792), pp. 447-8; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 146 and 147.

forces then engaged against Pugachov, or for purposes of local defence against any attack he might make. Bolotov, who had to review the company of Uhlans, observed one tall and strapping fellow, whom he complimented upon his military air. "Yes," the peasant answered, "but I would not fight against my brothers. If it came to fighting you boyars, I would be ready to spit ten of you on one spear."

After the execution of Pugachov, at which he was present, Bolotov returned to Kiyasovky. Shortly afterwards a large group of peasants, headed by one whose name was Romanov, came to him, a number of voices shouting :

"You ordered six rubles *obròk*. What is that for?"

"It is ordered by the Prince."

"But why do the rest of the Tsar's peasants pay less?"

"This I do not know. It is the wish of the Prince and the Empress."

"That is impossible," answered Romanov; "we do not believe it. The Empress knows nothing about it. It is one of your novelties, and you want to fill your pockets with our money."

Bolotov swore at Romanov, and Romanov answered him in kind. The upshot of this disturbance was that two peasants were sent as deputies to Prince Gagarin at Moscow. They were sent to the Treasury factories, and Romanov was sent to Siberia, after having made an unsuccessful attempt to get a petition into the hands of the Empress.<sup>1</sup>

The collapse of the rebellion of Pugachov led to the suppression of overt disturbance among the Tsar's peasants for the time.

### (c) THE STABLE PEASANTS

Stable peasants make their appearance in the time of the Kalitas dynasty. In the latter part of the seventeenth century there were in the stables of the Tsar upwards of 40,000 horses, and these were attended to by Stable peasants, the fodder for this vast stud being drawn not only from them, but also from Court peasants and from the monastic lands in the Moscow region.<sup>2</sup> These horses were, of

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Bolotov*, iii. pp. 483, 491-9; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 156-8.

<sup>2</sup> *The Horse-breeding Journal* (1844), vol. viii. p. 598; Merder, *Historical Sketch of Russian Horse-breeding* (St. Petersburg, 1897), p. 19, and Semevsky, ii. p. 161.

course, kept not merely for the use of the Court, but the studs were maintained with the view of reinforcing the cavalry studs by the introduction of good stock. In 1738 the Stable peasants numbered 34,684 souls of male sex. Certain *votchini* were ascribed to the use of studs in specified places; for example, in 1760, Pochinkovsky *volost*, which had formerly been ascribed to the potash works of the State, was ascribed to the studs of the Household Cavalry, and was placed under the control of the regimental commander. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the taxes imposed upon the Stable peasants were collected chiefly in kind; for example, from the town of Romanov, the peasants had to deliver 3000 horse shoes, and from the town of Skopin 300, together with specified quantities of geese, swine, &c. The money payments at this period were small in amount.<sup>1</sup>

The policy of abolishing *bartschina* among the Court peasantry was carried out with comparative rapidity, the same policy was applied to the Stable peasantry, but more slowly. In 1756, for example, the peasants of Bronnitsky *volost*, owing to the deficiency of plough and meadow land, were obliged to burn half a million bricks.<sup>2</sup>

In the sixties of the eighteenth century complaints of overwork begin to be common. The officials regarded with pride the stable and other buildings which had been erected by the *bartschina* labour of the Stable peasants; for example, in the above-mentioned *volost* of Bronnitsky, stables which, had they been built with free hired labour, would have cost 200,000 rubles, were built by the peasants at the cost to the administration of 50,000 rubles. The exaction of these heavy labours not unnaturally produced disturbances. A proposition was made in 1758, by the over-equerry, to give Treasury plough land into the ownership of the peasants, to supply them with seed, and then to exact a specified proportion of the crops (three quarters) leaving the remainder of the crops in the possession of the peasants. But the scheme was handicapped with the provision that a certain average of grain must be delivered whatever the crop might be. The peasants had besides to deliver the amount of straw necessary for the horses. These terms were objected to by the peasants because they

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Studs and Hunting* (1842), vol. iii. pp. 135-7; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 165.

considered them too onerous.<sup>1</sup> The Stable peasants appear to have frequently offered to pay a relatively high *obròk* on condition that they should be relieved of all other obligations ; and to a certain extent their demands seem to have been met. Towards the end of the reign of Katherine II the obligations in kind seem to have been altogether replaced by money *obròk*.<sup>2</sup>

Up till 1765 *vyvodnye* money was charged for outgoing brides from the Stable *volosts* ; in that year the Court Chancellery repeated a previous regulation forbidding the exaction of payment from outgoing brides. This remission of the marriage tax does not seem to have had everywhere the desired effect, for in 1767 the peasants of Gavrilovsky and Shekshovsky *volosts* complained to the Stable Chancellery that in their villages there were girls and widows whom none of their own peasants desired to marry, "and thus they get old without any use, and wander about from house to house."<sup>3</sup>

Problems of the same character as those which arose in connection with the Tsar's peasants arose also among those of the Stable—the problems of repartition of land, of the accumulation of reserves of grain against deficient harvests, &c.

The administration of the Stable peasants in the beginning of the eighteenth century was in the hands of the Stable *prekaz*, or bureau of the Stables ; in 1705 it was transferred to the Ingermanland Chancellery for Court Affairs ; in 1709, together with the Court *volosts*, the Stable *volosts* were transferred to the administration of the governors of *gubernie*. In 1721 Peter the Great ordered that the Court and Stable *volosts* should be put under the charge of an official in Moscow. After minor changes in 1724, the Stable *prekaz* was re-established, and was entrusted with the management of the Stable *volosts*, and also of those Court *volosts* in which there were Imperial studs. In 1733 the Stable Chancellery was established in Moscow for the management of the studs, and a new department—the Equeries' Chancellery—which was afterwards called the Court Stable Office was established. In 1762 the two last were united, both being taken to St. Petersburg ; in 1765 they were redivided, the former being sent to Moscow, while the latter remained at St. Petersburg.<sup>4</sup> In 1786 the Stable Chancellery was abolished, and the peasants who had been under its care were handed over to Directors

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. ibid.*, p. 177.

of the Household, and were made to rank equally with the State peasants.<sup>1</sup>

(d) THE FALCONERS

The favourite sport of the Tsars from early times was falconry, and for the purpose of procuring birds—falcon, gerfalcon, and vultures—sometimes from the remoter regions of the North, a separate group of peasants was maintained. These birds were not only used to provide princely and Imperial pastime, they were sent as presents to Asiatic and European Courts. The falconers were empowered to take from the villages chickens and pigeons for food for birds of the chase, and they were sent on hunting expeditions to obtain ravens for training the gerfalcons, as well as wild pigeons for their food. On these expeditions they carried with them an order of the Tsar requiring people everywhere to provide them with accommodation, and with food for their horses and their birds, as well as for themselves, and to render them every assistance, including the provision of as many peasants as they might require. The captured birds were to be transported to Moscow in peasants' carts requisitioned by the falconers. In 1723 those of the falconers who had lands were counted in the same category as the "freeholders," and were obliged to pay poll tax, to submit to the quartering of troops upon them, and to supply recruits.

In 1724, 1725, and 1727 each falconer received by way of wages 5 rubles, and in 1726 and 1728, 2 rubles, with additional amounts for travelling expenses and food for the birds. Bonuses were given for successful hunting, and a fine was imposed when it was unsuccessful. The number of birds which they might take was limited. In 1731 the Senate ordered the gerfalcon hunters on the River Dvina to furnish to Moscow yearly 20 grown gerfalcon and 30 pouts, for which they were to receive for ordinary gerfalcon 5 rubles, and for pouts 3 rubles, and for coloured birds 6 and 4 rubles respectively. The falconers were required to build and to keep in repair the boats they used on their expeditions, and to provide for the transportation of the birds to Moscow. One half of the price was to be paid on departure for the chase and the other half on delivery of the birds.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Collections of the Historical Society*, vi. p. 282; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., viii., No. 5791, and ix., No. 6986; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 188.



In 1742 the falconers complained that they were suffering from excessive burdens, whereupon the Senate invited from the then newly established Chancellery of the Master of the Hunt information about the number of the falconers and as to whether they were all required. The Chancellery reported that there were of falconer-peasants at that time 868 souls, and that they were all required, partly for the sport of the Empress Katherine<sup>1</sup> and partly for gifts to ambassadors. Katherine, indeed, greatly reinvigorated the sport, and even sent her falconers to Spitzbergen and into the frozen coasts of Siberia to obtain gerfalcons.<sup>2</sup> This renewed interest in their functions led the falconers to try to improve their condition. Some of them even endeavoured to secure leave to abandon the chase and to enter into business. The Senate refused to permit them to trade, although Katherine herself protested, "What is the reason," she wrote to the Procurator-General Glyebov, "for refusing to allow the falconers to trade when the Tartars and the coachmen are granted this right?"<sup>3</sup>

The obligations borne by the falconers varied in different regions. Some paid no taxes, having no land, some paid the 70 kopek poll tax, some paid an *obròk* of 2 rubles.<sup>4</sup>

Only in 1827 were the falconers ascribed among the State peasantry.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whether for political reasons or for the reason that she liked the sport, Katherine amused herself with falconry in Moscow in 1763. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> *Coll. Hist. Soc.*, vii. p. 288; cited, *ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 192.

*Ibid.*, p. 193.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE AGRICULTURAL PEASANTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### 4. THE AGRICULTURAL PEASANTS OF THE STATE

WE have seen that under Peter the Great large numbers of the peasants on the domains of the State were ascribed to the various industrial enterprises of the Treasury, and that large numbers of them were ascribed to the similar enterprises of private persons and of joint-stock companies. The peasants ascribed to the works, of the State, as well as those ascribed to other works, are the subject of subsequent treatment.<sup>1</sup> At the present moment we shall confine ourselves to an examination of the condition of those peasants who were engaged in agriculture upon the State domains, from which class, indeed, the industrial peasants were chiefly drawn into the State enterprises, and to a considerable extent also into private industrial establishments. The agricultural peasants of the State were known as Black Ploughing Peasants—that is to say, peasants cultivating the Black, or the soil.<sup>2</sup>

Had the Black Ploughing Peasants been suffered to continue upon the State domains, and had their obligations to the State been converted into rents or into rents and taxes, payable by them to the State, provided these rents had not been too burdensome, had they been given sufficient land and had they been allowed to divide this land among themselves in groups of sufficient but not of too great dimensions, it might be held, from the point of view of the national ownership of the land, as an ideal system, that the Russian form of land ownership as applied to these peasants was as near perfection as human legislation might be expected to accomplish. But the mania for change, which we have recognized as an element under-

<sup>1</sup> See Book III.

<sup>2</sup> Although many of them were in the Black Soil Region, they were not confined to that part of Russia.

lying apparent stagnation, prevented any such condition from being realized. Peasants were torn from their fields in the time of Peter the Great, and were thrust into servitude either in the factories of the State or in the factories of private owners, while those who remained were burdened with obligations not quite so great, perhaps, as those of the peasants of the neighbouring *pomyetschêkê*, but great enough to produce on occasion serious discontent. Proposals were even advanced that the State peasants should be sold at so much per head to private landowners, and that they should remain in bondage to them.<sup>1</sup>

Although at the beginning of her reign Katherine II was undoubtedly desirous of improving the condition of the peasantry, she came to be frightened at the spectacle of the attempts which the bonded peasants were making to improve their position for themselves, so that the net result of her endeavours was a further tightening of the chain of bondage. Instead of gradually absorbing the peasants in private bondage into the peasantry of the State, and thus eventually securing their effective liberty, she enlarged the area of bondage right by extending it to Little Russia and to the Ukraine, both regions having previously been exempt from it, and she gave away into private possession from the State domain, or from Court property, populated estates with 400,000 peasant souls of male sex.<sup>2</sup>

At the time of the second census, in 1742, there were 554,425 souls; and at the time of the third census, in 1762, there were 627,027 souls, both of male sex, belonging to the Black Ploughing Peasantry.<sup>3</sup> Up till the times mentioned these were the numbers of the State peasants who had escaped being handed over to private owners, or who had escaped being ascribed to State factories.

When the Legislative Commission, appointed by Katherine, was formed,<sup>4</sup> all peasants were required to elect from each *volost* (in some cases from each village) a deputy; and the deputies so elected were required in turn to elect district deputies, to whom they were

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, by Prince Sh'cherbatov in the reign of Katherine II, who proposed that the State peasants be disposed of at the rate of 80 rubles per soul. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 598.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. xxvi.

<sup>3</sup> To arrive at the total peasant population these numbers should be approximately doubled. The total population of Russia at these times was 16 and 19 millions respectively.

<sup>4</sup> See *infra*, pp. 314 *et seq.*

to deliver written "instructions," or reports, concerning their economical conditions and their needs. These "instructions" were to be handed on to the provincial deputies, who were to present them to the Commission.<sup>1</sup> The deputy from Velëkë Ustug province carried to St. Petersburg from the Black Ploughing Peasants of that province, one hundred and ninety-two "instructions." Lesser numbers of "instructions" were brought by the deputies of other provinces. These documents show that the Black Ploughing Peasants, like other peasants at that time, suffered from want of land. They demanded more land, and demanded also that they be permitted to re-distribute it among themselves.

The general survey of two of the northern *gubernie* of European Russia—Vologdskaya and Olonetskaya *gub.*—which was undertaken at the same time reveals the existence of *volost* repartition among the Black Ploughing Peasants. In other *gubernie* village repartition, such as we have seen existed among the landowners' peasantry, obtained also among the Black Ploughing Peasants.<sup>2</sup> Among them, therefore, both forms of repartition may be held to have existed at this time.<sup>3</sup>

Some communities in Solvyechegodsky district are said by Sherbina to have possessed for two hundred years a complicated structure, involving *volost* repartition. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that during this long period the repartitions were accomplished at regularly recurrent intervals. In the district in question, in some cases a very large number of villages entered into the scheme of repartition. In one *volost*, for example, one hundred and sixty-three villages "were bound together by common land relations."<sup>4</sup> Among the Black Ploughing Peasants in Arkhangelskaya *gub.* there were subject to repartition common forests, meadows, pastures, and even fisheries.<sup>5</sup> In the north of Russia the *volosts* were sometimes

<sup>1</sup> These documents have never been published. The particulars disclosed by them are taken from Semevsky, ii. pp. 604-5.

<sup>2</sup> According to Semevsky, *volost* repartition existed in these *guberni* up till the seventies of the nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, p. 605.

<sup>3</sup> On this question see Sherbina, "Land Community" in *Russian Thought* (1880), No. 7, pp. 106-7; cited, *ibid.*, p. 606, and Sokolovsky, P. A., *Outline of the History of the Rural Community* (St. Petersburg, 1877), pp. 85-88; cited, *ibid.*, pp. 598-9. See also on the whole question, the important work of V. G. Simkhowitsch, *Die Felägemeinschaft in Russland* (Jena, 1898).

<sup>4</sup> Sherbina, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> *Arkhangelskaya gub. Messenger* (1870), No. 60; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 607.

very large. Thus one *volost* contained nearly forty square miles. In Siberia some *volosts* were even larger. These complicated land relations thus applied to great areas, because occasionally the area subject to redistribution comprised not only one *volost*, but two and even three adjacent *volosts*.<sup>1</sup>

The system of common possession of land with recurrent repartition did not apply merely to peasants of one category. In the sixties of the eighteenth century there were instances of mutuality among different categories of peasants, and even among different categories of people, for merchants and other persons sometimes entered into the community in this relation.

Thus the Black Ploughing Peasants had association in land possession with Economical peasants and with private owners in Vel'kē Ustug, Solvyechegodsky, Lalsky, Krasnoborsky, and other districts.<sup>2</sup> Peasants living in one district had even shares in common property in other districts.<sup>3</sup>

Yet there does not appear to be any evidence of the plough lands of the Black Ploughing Peasants having been subject to redivision. The result of this condition, together with the possibility of transferring land from one household to another, was great inequality in the areas of land in individual household occupation.

The peasants of Molsky *volost* in Tolemsky district, for example, complained that the lands "now possessed" are not according to the census souls, but are in accordance with the distribution of two hundred years before—"what was then inscribed for each one, so it has remained to their heirs. Some have so much land that they sell it. Not a few people have much land."<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, the practice of mortgaging peasant lands having become more or less common, mortgages and sales were effected with officials, merchants, and even with clergy; the peasant interests in the land tended to diminish, and the interests of these extraneous mortgagees and owners tended to increase. The peasants of Lyabel'skoy *volost*, for example, complained that "the village owners—the Ustinsky merchants, Andrei Panov and Ivan Protodiakonov, have plough lands in our *volost* to a greater extent than the Black Ploughing Peasants, have indeed the greater half of the whole of the lands,

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 610.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by *ibid.*, ii. p. 614.

and three times as much in meadow ; and they take the benefit of it, and become immeasurably rich." <sup>1</sup>

In other districts of the same province the greater part of the land was mortgaged by the peasants to merchants in the neighbouring towns.<sup>2</sup> The loans had been effected, not for the purpose of stimulating production, but entirely for consumption during inferior harvest years. Since the peasants had not succeeded in paying off these consumption loans out of the produce of good harvests, it was inevitable that they should become gradually impoverished, and that they should sink under the load of accumulating interest. When, as was the case in Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, for example, the mortgagees entered into possession of the Black Plough Lands, they sometimes went to the villages which they now possessed, abandoning their business and engaging in agriculture. Such newcomers evaded when they could the obligations which the previous peasant owners had had to perform, and evaded also their share of the taxes for absentee peasants and of the burden of social service in elective offices. There thus grew upon the Black Plough Lands, belonging to the State domain and nominally in the possession of the Black Ploughing Peasants, a new class of "village owners," who, in effect, enjoyed the same privileges as *pomyetschĕkĕ*, and collected *obrĕk* from cultivating peasants. This class was composed not merely of money-lending merchants, but in it also were to be found money-lending peasants, who had accumulated means and had come to be possessors of villages with poorer peasants cultivating the land and paying *obrĕk* to them. Sometimes these "village owners" arranged for the cultivation of the land with *polovnĕkĕ* or metayer tenants. Where "village owners" possessed a considerable area, as some of them did (tens of *dessyatin*),<sup>3</sup> they naturally inspired dislike in the minds of peasants who were feeling the pinch of land scarcity, and who were in presence of a condition in which, owing largely to the advent of the "village owners," *obrĕk* had advanced. Thus in their "Instructions," conveyed through the deputies to the Legislative Commission of Katherine II, the peasants of Orlovsky district, in the province of Viatka, asked the Commission "to take away from the merchants and the peasants (village owners) the fisheries and the bee-hives, and to give them to the village aldermen, so that the living

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the "Instructions" by Semevsky, ii. p. 616.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 616.

<sup>3</sup> Fifty *dessyatin* is about 135 acres.

peasants (the Black Ploughing Peasants actually engaged in cultivation) could have the possession of these according to the number of souls, and that the possession of them by the well-to-do in order to preserve their capital should not be permitted. It is necessary also to take away the villages from the merchant and peasant 'village owners' in order to satisfy those who have little land."<sup>1</sup> In Arkhangelskaya *gub.* the governor reported that it was advisable to take from the merchant "village owners" the lands owned by them and cultivated by *polovněkē* (metayer tenants), and to give them to the Black Ploughing Peasants, on the understanding that compensation for disturbance be paid by the latter.<sup>2</sup> In some places the peasants appeared to desire the re-possession of the alienated lands in order that these lands might be redistributed along with the lands still in possession of the Black Ploughing Peasants. The repartition of peasant lands had probably in such cases come to be difficult where the land of the "village owners" constituted intrusive strips exempt from repartition. The peasants of Molskoy *volost*, for example, demanded the inclusion in the repartition scheme of *obročny* lands, or lands on *obròk*, as well as the lands on *tyaglo*<sup>3</sup> for this reason.

There thus appears among the Black Ploughing Peasants a strong tendency towards repartition, arising partly out of early if not ancient practice, as well as out of the persistency of the desire for uniformity of condition, strengthened as this desire was by the uniformity of taxation. In addition to these causes there was a further physical cause, which was operative chiefly in the northern *gub.* This was the shifting of the rivers in the swampy plains.<sup>4</sup> These rivers carried off the soil from one bank and piled it upon the other, so that unless there was more or less frequent redistribution the peasants on one bank would gradually be deprived of their land by erosion, while the peasants on the other would be enriched.

The demands of the Black Ploughing Peasants, which were brought before the Legislative Commission of Katherine II, were not without historical justification. In 1649 the peasants of Trans-Onega villages were forbidden to sell or to mortgage their lands, and those lands which had been alienated were required to be returned by the purchasers or mortgagees without compensation; in 1663 the Kargo-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 620.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 621.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, ii. p. 622.

polsky and other peasants were permitted to buy back lands which had been sold;<sup>1</sup> in 1651 the monasteries, churches, and private persons, by whom lands had been purchased, or obtained through defaulting mortgagors from the lands of the Black Ploughing Peasants, were required to return them, although the order does not appear to have been obeyed.<sup>2</sup> In 1690 the peasants of Pomorsk were forbidden to sell their lands to the monasteries, to the churches, or to the Strogonovs. Where, as in the case of the merchants of Velékê Ustug, "village owners" were allowed to keep their purchased lands, they were required to see that the *polovněkē* by whom the lands were cultivated discharged all the *volost* obligations in the same way as the other peasants.<sup>3</sup> In 1751 the lands of Pomorsk, which had been alienated by the peasants, were resumed by the Treasury. In 1753 the peasants of this region were permitted to sell lands to merchants and to certain other persons, but they were not permitted to sell lands to the *pomyetschēkē* or "other strange people," or to sell or give them to the monasteries, bishops' houses, or churches.<sup>4</sup>

In 1778 Katherine II so far acknowledged the reasonableness of the complaints of the peasants that she ordered the selling of free lands—that is to say, lands in occupation of State and Treasury peasants of all categories—evidently, thinks Semevsky, in order to provide a means of increasing the holdings of those State peasants who had insufficient land.<sup>5</sup> Numerous ukases about the apportioning of increased allotments to the State and other Treasury peasants followed.

When, in 1775, the affairs of the Black Ploughing Peasants were entrusted to the exchequer courts of the *gubernie* complaints of the insufficiency of land became frequent. The peasants complained that through the concentration of land in the hands of a relatively small number of persons, through purchases, inheritance, and otherwise, peasants who wanted to cultivate land could not obtain it. On 30th June 1775 the Directors of Economies, who administered the affairs of the peasants under the exchequer courts, carried out in many *gubernie* an arrangement for the equal division of land among

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., i., Nos. 10, 112; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 623.

<sup>2</sup> Dyakonov, *Sketches of the History of the Rural Population of the Moscow State* (St. Petersburg, 1898), p. 167; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 623.

<sup>3</sup> Ukase of 1652. F.C.L., i., No. 79; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> F.C.L., xiii., Nos. 9874, 10,082; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 633.



the peasants. This arrangement varied in different regions. In Olonetskaya *gub.*, for example, the land was subjected to repartition;<sup>1</sup> but the "village owners" remained as part owners of the whole.<sup>2</sup> In the lands ascribed to the Petrov Iron Works, the deeds given by the peasants to the merchants in respect to the sales of land were cancelled on the ground that the peasants had already repaid by their products their obligations to the merchants.<sup>3</sup>

The increase in numbers of "village owners," whether from the merchantry or from the rich peasantry, had not merely produced discontent among the peasants with insufficient or with no land—it produced also in the eighteenth century a group of interests opposed to repartition. For example, in the village of Pudojsk repartition was carried out in 1784; but a rich peasant felt aggrieved that his holding was seriously diminished, and brought his case before the courts. The local court ordered the land to be returned to him, dealing in the same way with the lands of other peasants in the same position. The peasants refused to obey the order of the court, insisting that they had acted in accordance with the instructions of the Exchequer Court of the *guberni*. The Governor, Derjavin, asked the Exchequer Court to issue orders to the effect if the division of land was not accomplished peacefully, it should not be accomplished at all.<sup>4</sup> The effect of this case was spread widely. In other districts the "village owners" objected to repartition, or clamoured for return of the lands of which they had been deprived. Derjavin was no doubt correct in his statement that repartition developed hatred among the peasants.<sup>5</sup> For example, twenty peasants of Ostrechinsk complained that "lands cleared by their ancestors, and by their labours brought into cultivation, had been taken from them and given to people who not only never cared about the ploughing of plough-lands and the clearing of meadows, but whose ancestors were like them; while the ancestors of others had sold their lands . . . and now they ask that the land be divided."<sup>6</sup>

While Derjavin took the part of the "village owners," the General-Governor, Tutolmin, took the part of the peasants. He saw in the sales of Treasury lands by peasants in occupation, but not in landownership, to peasant or other purchasers, merely a breach of

<sup>1</sup> Both by *volosts* and by villages. Semevsky, ii. p. 635.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. pp. 636-9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 638.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 636.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 642.

the law. The peasants sold what did not belong to them, and they could give no title of possession. On the principle of *caveat emptor*, the people who made an illegal purchase had themselves to blame. The Senate agreed with Tutolmin, reprimanded Derjavin, and removed him to another office, telling him that in the future he "must try to act according to law, and that he must not arrogate to himself powers with which he was not entrusted."<sup>1</sup>

Tutolmin was required by the Senate to carry out the law. This he proceeded to do by instructing the Exchequer Court of Olonets to see that all the deeds connected with the sale and mortgage of the Treasury lands of the Black Ploughing Peasants were delivered up to it; and "since in almost every one of the Treasury *volosts* there is sufficient land to satisfy all the peasants, it remains to the Director of Economies to convince the peasants *that the necessary amount should be cultivated by the common force.*"<sup>2</sup>

The result of this attitude of Tutolmin was the effective repartition of a portion of the land of Olonetskaya *gub.* The whole of the land was not subjected to repartition, probably because in certain parts of the *guberni* the population was scanty.<sup>3</sup> But excepting in Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, there was no general adoption of the practice of redividing and of then practising cultivation "by the common force."

The same attitude of mind towards the peasant community, which is observable in the actions and expressions of Tutolmin, appears at the same time in the orders of the Director of Economies of Arkhangelskaya *gub.* He instructed the aldermen and the peasants of all the *volosts* under his direction, "to equalize among themselves all the *tyaglo* lands, and where there is insufficient land, the forces of the *mir* should be directed towards the cultivation of "new

<sup>1</sup> Ukase of Senate of 16th December 1785, cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 646. On the whole case, see *Arch. of Min. of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, Nos. 831-4402, pp. 180-316. Derjavin, *Works* (St. Petersburg, 1872), vii. pp. 56-95 and 688-9; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 646.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 647.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 648. From the time of Tutolmin, the lands redistributed by him were, as regards some of them, redistributed at each successive census. As regards others, they were not redistributed, although the peasants seem to have regarded the principle as established and only the practice held in abeyance. Here, as in many other parts of Russia, there do not appear to have been any repartitions for many years. According to Lalosh, quoted by Semevsky, in two districts—Petrozavodsky and Novyetsky—there have been no repartitions since 1870. *Ibid.*, ii. p. 647.

plough-land."<sup>1</sup> The latter instruction is a logical consequence of the system of repartition. If cleared land is to be expropriated by the community, it is obvious that land must be cleared at the common charge, otherwise, save in rare cases, it will not be cleared at all. It seems, however, that this part of the instructions was rarely carried into effect.<sup>2</sup> The equalization was, however, carried out with results similar to those which appeared in Olonetskaya *gub.* The well-to-do peasants complained that they were being deprived of their property. Here also were concessions made to them. The repartition was ordered not to be forced—it was only to be carried out by general consent. The Director of Economies, however, made strenuous efforts to carry his point. "Justice demands," he said, in an order of 1786, "that inhabitants who pay equal taxes should have equal shares in the land by which the taxes are yielded. Therefore the equalization of land, especially in those districts and *volosts* where the population is occupied chiefly in agriculture, is to be considered necessary in order that the population may have the means to pay taxes without arrears," as well as to "pacify the peasants who have little land"; but he ordered that the rights of those peasants who had either cleared land themselves, or who possessed cleared land by virtue of lawful documents, should be respected; therefore only the common *tyaglo* land—that is, such land as is not cleared and land which has not been acquired by purchase or otherwise—should be subject to equal division. All lands other than the last mentioned were to be left in the hands of their owners.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the protests from the well-to-do peasants, there was a reason for this concession. The total area of plough-land was insufficient for the needs of the peasants, even if it had been equally divided. The forced division of it and the expropriation of recently cleared land, which such a division would have involved, would have imposed a sharp check upon individual clearing, and common clearing would in any case have been too slow a process to mitigate the disintegrating consequences of forced repartition. The Director seems to have relied upon the well-to-do peasants, who were thus left in possession of their land, acknowledging this concession by surrendering to the poorer peasants some of their horses and

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 649.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 649.

<sup>2</sup> See, however, *infra*.

cattle.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear that this sanguine anticipation was realized.

The conscientious Director, being prevented by the force of circumstances from carrying into effect his ideal of equal distribution of land, proposed to adjust the equilibrium of burdens upon the peasants by levying the taxes, not in respect to souls of male sex, but in respect to land and to the working force upon it.<sup>2</sup> Semevsky points out that this was "an attempt to perform the 'repartition of taxes,' which appears to be a phase in the development of community landownership."<sup>3</sup>

The proposal to readjust the basis of taxation opened up, however, a very large question, to which at that time the Government was not prepared to address itself. The logical consequences of equal taxation, as the Director of Economies of the Arkhangelskaya *gub.* pointed out, was equal land or equal means to pay taxes. While the Government was inclined to favour repartition because it made for equality of tax-paying capacity, it shrank from the disturbance to existing economic relations which the forcible carrying out of repartition involved. In placating the poor peasant, the rich peasant was infuriated. Moreover, all the previous laws, grants, and privileges passed or conferred by the Government, as well as all contracts and title-deeds, were called in question by the project of redistribution.

Referring to the numerous disputes and legal proceedings to which the repartitions gave rise, Anna Ephemenko remarks soundly, "The main knot of the confusion consists in the fact that two principles of right cut across one another. These two principles have nothing in common. One right is based upon ancient documents and other legal foundations, and the other is the right, also recognized by law, that every census soul should have secured for him a certain amount of land. . . ." <sup>4</sup> This inherent contradiction accounts for the vacillation of the Government, for the variation of the practice in different parts of Russia, and in the same part at different

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable account of the peasant community in the North of Russia, see Ephemenko, A., *Inquiries into the Life of the People* (Moscow, 1884). On the point in the text, see vol. i. pp. 331-4. On the general question of repartition, see also "V. V." (Vasili Vorontsev) in *Russian Thought* (1897), No. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ephemenko, A., *op. cit.*, i. p. 326; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 651.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Ephemenko, A., *op. cit.*, i. p. 326.

times, as advocates of the maintenance of one right or the other obtained temporary ascendancy.

The Government attempted to solve the contradiction gradually by trying from time to time to prevent fresh inequalities from arising and fresh vested interests from developing, by prohibiting the sale of peasant interests in Treasury lands; but these measures were taken without success. The laws in this regard were persistently evaded. Peasants continued to mortgage their lands, and even to sell them, only disguising the process in such a way as to keep apparently within the law, while really violating it.<sup>1</sup> Many of them disposed of their interest in their land as Black Ploughing Peasants of the State and became *polovnikē*, remaining upon the land and cultivating it, but paying one half of the produce to the new owner.<sup>2</sup>

In 1790 the Government ordered all the village lands owned by merchants and town residents to be taken from them and transferred into the *tyaglo* lands of the villages to which they belonged. This measure was carried out within two years, excepting in one case<sup>3</sup> where the lands had been granted by Peter the Great. The community lands were further increased by the addition to them of the lands held on *obròk*, a measure which had been demanded by the peasants in their representations to the Legislative Commission of Katherine II. Notwithstanding this formal transference, however, it appears that lands were still given upon *obròk*, although the peasants who had insufficient land between repartitions seem to have enjoyed a preference in the allotment of the *obrochny* land.<sup>4</sup> In 1797 the distribution of Treasury lands on *obròk* in Arkhangelskaya *gub.* was so arranged that the total of allotted land should reach the amount of 15 *dessyatin* per male soul. This division of the Treasury lands for the purpose of equalization "prepared the way for the general repartition of the community land."<sup>5</sup>

In 1829 the Minister of Finance issued a circular letter to the Exchequer Courts of the *gubernie* to the effect that lands which belong to settlements in the Treasury domains should be divided among the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ephemenko, A., *op. cit.*, i. p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 652. For *polovnikē*, see *infra*, pp. 284-7.

<sup>3</sup> The case of Bajenin of Vavchuga in Kholmogorsky district. Semevsky, ii. p. 652.

<sup>4</sup> This appears in a decree of the Arkhangelsk Government Department in 1795. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 653.

<sup>5</sup> Ephemenko, A., *op. cit.*, i. pp. 343-4; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 656.

settlers upon them for cultivation and for the payment of taxes by *tyaglo*, according to the decision of the *mir*; and that the Treasury settlers should not give on lease or mortgage their lots for money or grain payment, but they should cultivate it themselves equally, nor should the transference be permitted of lots on condition that those who acquire them should pay taxes for those from whom they are acquired.<sup>1</sup>

A decision of the Senate, confirmed by Imperial order, in 1831 required "the equalization in Arkhangelskaya *gub.* of lands among the peasants." The repartition was to be conducted in such a way that each peasant should retain out of the land in his possession so much as he was entitled to according to the number of male souls in his household. Thus the well-to-do peasants, who had more land than they were entitled to, and who were therefore obliged to surrender some of it, kept the best land and gave up the inferior. The repartition was quantitative, and not qualitative; moreover, it was conducted, not according to *volosts*, but according to "settlements." Thus not only was there inequality in the land, and therefore in the condition of the peasants within the "settlement," but there was inequality among the "settlements."<sup>2</sup> Some had more land than others. The result appeared in grave discontent among the peasants. Fights over land occurred in the villages, and many suits were brought before the local courts.<sup>3</sup> After 1831 repartitions became frequent in the Treasury lands of Arkhangelskaya *gub.* The next repartition occurred in 1834, the third in 1852, and the fourth in 1858, each at a census period. Although pressure was brought to bear upon the peasants by the administration to redistribute the lands by villages separately, there were some cases of redistribution by groups of villages, and there were also some cases of permanent occupation as well as of bequest.<sup>4</sup>

In the history of land repartition among the Black Ploughing Peasants of Vologdskaya *gub.* there are some details which further illustrate the difficulties encountered by the Government in attempting to secure continuous equality in the condition of the peasants. Upon receipt of a petition from "many" of the Treasury peasants the Exchequer Court of the *guberni* ordered that the lands should be

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 657.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., xxiv., No. 18,082, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Archive of the Gubernskiy Messenger* (1871), Nos. 44, 45, 51; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 659.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

redivided, and that every family should receive as much land as might be in its power to cultivate. The *volost* authorities were required to allot sufficient land to those families the members of which were without work (that is, who were not industrious), and to watch them. On the first sign of negligent cultivation, land sufficient for the actual working hands was to be left to them, and the remainder was to be given to other peasants. The Exchequer Court explained that the sole aim of the repartition was the common benefit, and that the plan was devised in order that landless peasants should not suffer from want of food, and that peasants who have more land than they need should not sell it.<sup>1</sup> The repartition was accomplished gradually, and, as in Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, it was not accomplished without complaints from the landless peasants on the one hand, and the peasants with land on the other. Three years after the original order was issued, or in 1798, another order required the immediate settlement of the quarrels which had arisen among the peasants, by means of repartition by the *volost* alderman and one peasant elected from each village. Minute instructions were given to them as to the manner of procedure. They were required to measure all the plough-land and meadows of every village, to draw up an account of this land according to a prescribed form, to calculate the average area per male soul, and to divide the land "without offending anybody and by common consent, according to their official conscience, and not partially or in any way favouring their relatives." They were also required, in case any village had a surplus of land, to transfer the surplus to another village.<sup>2</sup> The repartition according to souls was to apply to the *votchini* (or heritable estates), the field plough-land, and the meadows; and "the general *mir*" had to decide in each case whether the peasant to whom the plough-land was allotted was fit to cultivate it or not. The out of field plough-land and the places which had been cleared by the then owner, or his father or grandfather, were not to be divided. If the plough-land so exempted from partition was not cultivated for three years, or if hay was not taken from the meadows in the forest clearings for ten years, any peasant might claim it by a written declaration in the *volost* court, and the latter might grant him a certificate of ownership. If the new owner neglected the land for one year, it might be claimed by another. If there were more claimants than one, the alderman might divide the

land in dispute "according to the number of working men and families."

Purchased land, unless the Senate decreed otherwise, was to be left in the hands of its owner; but his heirs must submit it to repartition. *Obrochny* lands were left in the hands of their owners, excepting where in addition to these, the owners had a surplus of purchased lands, in which case the *obrochny* lands were subject to repartition. Lands which were allotted to families of minors were to be cultivated according to the decision of the *mir*, and the taxes were to be paid by the cultivators, the minors being meanwhile under the care of the alderman.<sup>1</sup>

The amount of land allotted in these repartitions is difficult to state with precision. In Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, the plough-land only in the possession of the Black Ploughing Peasants appears to have varied from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 10 *dessyatin* per household, each household having 3.5 souls of male sex, a number small when compared with that of households in other parts of Russia.<sup>2</sup> There were, however, some households with 14 to 16 *dessyatin*. In Vologdskaya *gub.* the peasants had 2.8 *dessyatin* per soul of plough-land, and of all land on the average over the whole *guberni*, 35 *dessyatin* per soul.

The complaints and quarrels of the Black Ploughing Peasants in the two northern *gubernie* were not without foundation, as is evident from the efforts which the Government and the *guberni* officials both made to meet their views. It is also evident, however, that their difficulties arose largely from causes in the interior of their village life. There seems to have been among these peasants a number of thriftless people, who accumulated obligations and mortgaged or sold their interest in the land occupied by them. In the first case eventually, and in the second case immediately, they became landless. There was little developed industry in the region, and notwithstanding the fact that they had separated themselves from the means of life, either by misfortune or by their own acts, they remained in the villages. The women sometimes became seamstresses in the houses of merchants in the neighbouring towns;<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 655.

<sup>2</sup> Especially where the undivided household was prevalent. Cf. *infra*, vol. ii. Book V. ch. ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of the Council of State: Affairs of the Legislative Commission of Katherine II*, bundles 111-106; Affair No. 121, bundle 89; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 665.



sometimes the men were able to find constant or casual labour; but a large number of them remained in the villages begging or otherwise existing as a burden on the community. These *bobili*, or landless peasants, formed sometimes a considerable proportion of the village population. For example, in two *volosts* of Arkhangelsk district there were 116 *bobili* in a population of 602, or 19 per cent. In another part of the same *guberni* they formed 12 per cent. of the peasant population. These people had not only somehow to be supported by the community, but taxes had to be paid for them. Meanwhile, the people who had taken their places on the land did not, save perhaps in rare cases, enter into the life of the village. They were not responsible for the village obligations, and having purchased only the peasants' interest, they had no clear title to the land occupied by them. Moreover, the peasants upon whom the burdens of the community really fell were sometimes, at all events, suffering from want of land, not because there was a net insufficiency, but because some of the available land was occupied by new-comers from the towns. The prices of meadow-lands and of plough-lands were also increased at the annual auctions by the new-comers, who, having more agricultural capital, were able to pay more than the villagers. Thus the situation which has been described in detail arose quite inevitably.

It should also be remarked that the evidence shows that repartition of land in Northern Russia was a comparatively modern affair, and that it did not become common until after a prolonged triangular struggle, in which the poorer peasants, the rich peasants and other "village owners," and the administration, local and central, were involved.

The situation of the Black Ploughing Peasants of the State, who had gone or who had been sent to Siberia, is of interest in respect to a few special conditions.

In the seventeenth century there were already considerable numbers of Black Ploughing Peasants in Siberia. They had been drawn for the most part from the northern *gubernie* of European Russia, and they were, therefore, not familiar with the practice of repartition. The phenomena which we have been observing do not for this reason make their appearance in Siberia until a comparatively late period. The obligations of the Treasury peasants in Siberia were connected exclusively with the provision of supplies in

kind for the maintenance of the civil and military forces. The available area of land was practically unlimited, and large allotments were made to the peasants on condition of the discharge of their obligations. In Tobolsk, for example, in the seventeenth century, the peasants received a certain area of land, the whole of the produce of which they were bound to render to the order of the Government, and they were allotted from four and a half to six times as much, which they might cultivate for themselves.<sup>1</sup> In 1684 the peasants in Eastern Siberia were given five times as much land as the amount they had to cultivate for the Government, and they received besides for every *dessyatin* of plough-land so cultivated ten *dessyatin* of pasture.<sup>2</sup> These generous terms were, however, modified in the eighteenth century. In 1722, Prince Cherkassky, Governor of Siberia, ordered that each peasant should cultivate three *dessyatin* for the service of the Government, irrespective of the land cultivated for himself, no specific allotment being mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

In the eighteenth century the question of land distribution assumed in Siberia an entirely new form. The comparatively poor Russian agricultural peasants found themselves settled among or alongside rich nomads and semi-nomads, whose herds covered large areas, and into whose minds ideas of land allotment and equalization had yet to be introduced. Besides these there were other non-Russian peoples settled in villages, who were, as a rule, much better off than the Russian peasants. And perhaps more disturbing to them than any of these was the presence among themselves of "eaters of the *mir*," the *kulaki* (or fists) the grasping peasants, who made themselves rich while others suffered want. When the Black Ploughing Peasants were required to cultivate land for the Government irrespective of their holdings, inequalities speedily manifested themselves, and in order to remove these, the local authorities attempted to introduce the practice of repartition, including in this even villages inhabited by foreigners, and annexing to the lands of the Russian peasants, lands taken from the Tartar groups. The methods which were adopted were similar to those which had been employed in the introduction of repartitions in the northern *gubernie*

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 667.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. of Council of State : Aff. of Legislative Commission of Kath. II.*, bundle 360 ; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Pyreselenets : "On Landownership in Siberia," in *Russian Dialogues* (1860), XIX, p. 122 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 668.

of European Russia—deeds and mortgages were cancelled without compensation—and sometimes the foreign settlements were included in the scheme of repartition along with the Russian peasants' villages.<sup>1</sup>

##### 5. THE POLOVNĚKĚ OR METAYER TENANTS

There appear in the eighteenth century in certain parts of Russia and in Siberia, as a separate class among the peasantry, the *Polovněkě*, or peasants cultivating land and sharing the produce with the owner of the land. These peasants were chiefly to be found at this time in the regions which afterwards became Vologdskaya and Arkhangelskaya *gub.* in the province of Viatka and in Siberia. The total number of *polovněkě* prior to the eighteenth century does not appear, but in one district (Usolsk) in the north of Russia, there were of them 4000 souls. The practice of giving land upon shares grew up as a custom before it received any legislative sanction. In the early part of the eighteenth century the practice was greatly re-enforced by the passing over into the *polovněkě* of landless peasants from the Black Ploughing villages in consequence of the sale of their lands, especially in Vologdskaya *gub.* At that time the *polovněkě* enjoyed the right of "free passage," that is, they could leave their villages without the permission of the *volost* authorities. The enjoyment of this right led to the existence in certain districts of tramps, a strange phenomenon in a country where elaborate precautions were taken against wandering.<sup>2</sup> In so far as they had been previously Black Ploughing Peasants, the *polovněkě* were State peasants, and to begin with were not bonded to the landowner whose land they cultivated; but they speedily lapsed through debt dependence into bondage conditions, for with debt dependence there came the suspension of the right of "free passage." An Ukase of 1725, however, forbade the bonding of *polovněkě* and regulated their employment. Under this Ukase the *polovněk* was given the right to stay as long as he wished on the land of the *pomyetschĕk* with whom he was at the time of the census. If he desired to go to the land of

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 672.

<sup>2</sup> The right of "free passage" was enjoyed exclusively by *polovněkě* and "peasant contractors." See Diakonov, *Sketches of the History of the Rural Population of the Moscow State* (St. Petersburg, 1898), pp. 151, 204-5; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 701.

another, the two *pomyetschĕkĕ* were obliged to go before the local civil and military authorities and make a declaration, one that he allows him to go, and the other that he accepts him. The landowner to whom the land cultivated by the *polovněk* belongs was responsible for the taxes payable by the latter. Should a *polovněk* desire to return into the Black Ploughing Peasantry, he was permitted to do so on the prescribed formalities being observed. Transference within the district was permitted without charge; but in case of a *polovněk* passing from one district to another, a fine of 50 rubles had to be paid.<sup>1</sup>

At the second census, in 1742, there were 14,847 *polovněkĕ*; and at the third census, in 1762, 11,277 *polovněkĕ* (male souls), a decrease which is accounted for by the reversion to the Black Ploughing Peasantry of the *polovněkĕ* who cultivated monastic lands.<sup>2</sup> At subsequent censuses the numbers of the *polovněkĕ* were found to have further declined.

The *polovněkĕ* cultivated not only the lands of monasteries and of *pomyetschĕkĕ*, they were frequently to be found on those of merchants,<sup>3</sup> officials, and even of peasants.

The *polovněkĕ* were obliged to render recruits to the State, as well as the maintenance of roads and other obligations to the *mir*. As his name implies, the *polovněk* was obliged to render to the owner of the land cultivated by him one half of the crop after seed for the next crop had been reserved. In some cases the amount required to be given to the landowner was greater than the nominal half. The *polovněk* was also required to perform other obligations—mowing and stacking hay (sometimes the half of the hay went to the *polovněk*, but not always), clearing land, sowing flax, cultivating, reaping, bleaching, spinning and weaving linen for the landowner without remuneration. The women and children were required to work in the landowners' meadows. Besides these works the *polovněkĕ* had to cut timber, to deliver it to the landowner, to build houses for him, dry his barley, gather fruit for him, and look after his cattle. The labours required of the *polovněkĕ* were often so great that they could with difficulty find time to cultivate the land out of which they

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 702.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 704.

<sup>3</sup> One merchant, Bajenin, mentioned above, had forty-seven *polovněkĕ*. Semevsky, ii. p. 705.

had to make their own subsistence, and therefore, even in good seasons, their crops were often poor.

Sometimes the *polovněkē* even hired at their own expense labouring men (*kazakov*) and labouring women (*kazachikh*), to do the landowners' work. The *polovněkē* seem to have complained that they had to pay over and above all of these obligations a money *obrōk*, or so-called "living money." It is not clear what this was, but sometimes it was probably money paid for the hire of ploughs or horses.<sup>1</sup>

But *polovněkē* were employed not merely in field and other similar labours; some of them were occupied along with and in the same way as *dvorovie lyudē*, and some of those who had entered into relations with merchants acted as peddlers, going off on long journeys occupying two or three years. The difference between the bonded peasant and the *polovněk*, who was technically a peasant of the State, and therefore free in the sense that he could not at the same time be bound to a *řomyetschēk*, was thus very slender. Indeed the *polovněk* was not exempt from bodily punishment by the landowner with whom he was in alliance.<sup>2</sup>

The *polovněkē* of the eighteenth century seem to have been generally illiterate. Among the contemporary State peasants, at least a few could place their own signatures to the "Instructions" for the delegates to the Commission of Katherine II; but the "Instructions" of the *polovněkē* are signed altogether in their names by others.

The Commission, in 1767, inquired into the grievances of *polovněkē*. The delegate of the Black Ploughing Peasants of the province of Velēkē Ustug, named Klucharev, stated the case for the *polovněkē*. He urged that *polovněkē* should be taken from the merchants and ascribed to the *volosts* to which they had previously belonged, and that merchants should be prohibited from having *polovněkē* ascribed to them. He also urged that merchants residing in villages should be compelled to remove into the towns, and that their lands should be returned to the State *volosts*.<sup>3</sup> The delegate from the town of Velēkē Ustug, named Plotnikov, gave the other side of the question. He said that from patriotic and philanthropic motives, the merchants from the time of Peter the Great had taken the landless and bankrupt peasants, who were really beggars, built houses for them,

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 710.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. pp. 712-13.

had given them cattle, food, seed, and money, and had established them as *polovněkē*, or sharers in the profits of production. Plotnikov added, not without point, that the Black Ploughing Peasants of the Treasury *volosts* were offenders equally with the merchants, for they also had *polovněkē*, and even their spokesman, Klucharev, had himself seventy souls of them.<sup>1</sup> A more independent authority, the Governor of Arkhangel'skaya *gub.*, Golovtsin, proposed to remove the *polovněkē* from the keeping of the merchants and to ascribe the lands of the latter to the *volosts*, compensation being, however, paid to the merchants for disturbance from their lands. The Commission of Katherine II did not act on the question; but in 1810 the Senate decided that the lands upon which the *polovněkē* were settled should be left in the hands of their owners. This decision was confirmed by the Council of State in 1827, and fresh regulations were issued for the conduct of the relations between *polovněkē* and landowners. A year's notice of change on either side was to be given; but agreements might be made for from six to twenty years. Later the Government facilitated the transference of *polovněkē* to Treasury lands.<sup>2</sup>

#### 6. THE ODNODVORTSI OR FREEHOLDERS

The *odnodvortsi*, or freeholders, have already been mentioned incidentally as a class of peasants descended from serving people settled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries upon the southern and eastern frontiers of Russia, in order to defend that frontier against the attacks of the Tartars. In the *projet de loi* of 1730 on the formation of a Land Militia, reference is made to the fact that "in earlier times, in Novgorod, Belgorod, Sevsk, Kazan, Simbirsk, and other districts, 'serving people,' namely town gentry, children of boyars, spearmen, horsemen, dragoons, soldiers, cossacks, and other similar people were given State lands by means of which they performed foot and mounted service, and defended the borders."<sup>3</sup> These border militia were thus paid in land instead of in wages, in money, or in kind. "The estates of the serving children of the boyars of the Ukraine (frontier) towns varied from 40 to 350 tchertverti

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 713-16.

<sup>2</sup> Second F.C.L., ii., No. 1675; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 718.

<sup>3</sup> *Archive of Ministry of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, I Dept. Nos. 105-3676; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 722.

(1 tchetvert =  $\frac{1}{2}$  *dessyatin*) according to the town and to the rank to which the serving man belonged ; but the allotments of land given to the ancestors of the *odnodvortsi* were often much less extensive."<sup>1</sup> According to Soloviev, the usual allotments ranged from 5 to 30 tchetverti, the children of the boyars receiving 8 tchetverti and the soldiers and "border guardians" 20 and 30 tchetverti respectively.

The name of *odnodvortsi* was applied to the defenders of the frontier in some places in the seventeenth century ; and in 1719 it was applied generally to all serving people, who performed this function and who received land in payment for doing so. In 1713 the Land Militia was organised, and the status of the *odnodvortsi* was thereby changed. Previously these people entered the service at fifteen years of age and retired from active duty only when they were invalided. Now the *odnodvortsi* were required to serve only between the ages of fifteen and thirty.<sup>2</sup> In 1730 there were twenty regiments of land militia, each more than one thousand strong. One third of this force was kept upon a regular footing, the remaining two-thirds were called out when they were required. In the provinces of Voronej and Tambov, in addition to their military service proper, they were obliged, between 1733 and 1742, to supply materials and carts, with drivers and helpers, for the construction of fortifications. So also during the Turkish and Crimean campaigns, the *odnodvortsi* were obliged to build ships as well as military buildings. They were obliged also to provide horses, forage, provisions, clothing, shoes, &c., for the land militia regiments.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these military obligations the *odnodvortsi* had obligations common to all peasantry, the maintenance of roads, of ferries, and of post stations ; they had also to provide guards for the moving of Government money and of prisoners, and the *odnodvortsi* in towns had to render service as policemen. The exaction of these services was frequently accompanied by abuse of authority on the part of the functionaries with whom, in connection with the services, the *odnodvortsi* came into contact.<sup>4</sup> "Owing to the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 722.

<sup>2</sup> Soloviev, "On the Odnodvortsi" in *Memoirs of the Fatherland* (1850), lxi. p. 89 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 723.

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. of Council of State : Aff. of Kath. II Comm.*, Case 102, *Affair No.* 431, pp. 1-21, and *Affair No.* 439, pp. 1-16 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 731.

<sup>4</sup> For cases of abuse of authority in this connection, see *Arch.*, *loc. cit.*

insupportable labours of the *odnodvortsi* many thousands of them died." <sup>1</sup>

In 1732 orders were given to settle the land militia, with their wives and children, along the frontier ; but these orders do not seem to have been carried out fully, because in 1760 the land militia regiments were differentiated into two classes, "settled" and "unsettled." <sup>2</sup> In 1764 the land militia was reorganized in one dragoon and ten infantry regiments, and their administration was brought into accordance with the regiments of the line. When the militia-men retired after fifteen years' service, they returned into *odnodvortchestvo*, the class of *odnodvortsi*. Up till 1764 enlistment took place once in five years ; but in that year the calls seem to have been more frequent, for the *odnodvortsi* complain of enlistment being made twice in one year. <sup>3</sup> The numbers drawn for recruits became also more numerous, for the *odnodvortsi* complained that one recruit was, in at least one place, called from every twenty-five souls. <sup>4</sup>

At the third census, in 1762, there were 510,000 *odnodvortsi*. <sup>5</sup> Gradually the distinction between State peasantry in general and *odnodvortsi* was broken down, excepting so far as concerned the peculiarities of their military service. In 1769 the regiments of the Ukraine were wholly absorbed in the regular troops of the line, and the special military obligations of the *odnodvortsi* ceased to exist. <sup>6</sup> The extension of the frontiers by the annexation of the Crimea rendered the existence of a special border force unnecessary, and by the removal of the frontier to the north coast of the Black Sea the situation of the *odnodvortsi* settlements, considered as frontier posts, became anomalous, and the military obligations of the *odnodvortsi* came to be equalized with those of the other peasants of the Treasury. <sup>7</sup> The household tax had been imposed upon the *odnodvortsi*, as upon peasants of all classes, on its introduction in the seventeenth century, <sup>8</sup> and when the taxation of peasants was readjusted in the time of Peter the Great, the *odnodvortsi* and the other peasants remained upon an equal footing. Under the Ukase of 2nd September

<sup>1</sup> *Arch., loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 727.

<sup>3</sup> *Statistics in Arch. Min. Justice : Aff. of Senate*, Nos. 105-3676, p. 772, corrected by Semevsky, *ibid.*, ii. p. 728.

<sup>4</sup> F.C.L., xviii., No. 13,230 ; cited, *ibid.*, p. 729. <sup>7</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 729.

<sup>8</sup> Lappo-Danelevsky, N. S., *Organization of Direct Taxation in the Moscow State* (St. Petersburg, 1890), p. 52 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 729.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 726.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



1724 the principle of "mutual guarantee" was extended to the *odnodvortsii*.<sup>1</sup> Minor differences emerged later. For example, the advance from 40 kopeks to 1 ruble *obròk*, which was imposed upon other State peasants in 1760, was not applied to the *odnodvortsii* until 1764;<sup>2</sup> and the advance in 1768 to 2 rubles 70 kopeks did not apply to the *odnodvortsii* until 1783, when they were equalized at 3 rubles 70 kopeks.<sup>3</sup>

Although the principle of "mutual guarantee" had been applied to the *odnodvortsii* in 1724, it does not seem to have been operative in all their settlements. In some places only the well-to-do peasants entered into it, and they had therefore to bear the burden of the taxes for retired soldiers. In order to remedy this, the local authorities ordered that the "mutual guarantee" should apply to *all* the inhabitants of the villages. The reactions of this "well-intended provision"<sup>4</sup> were detrimental to the poorer *odnodvortsii*, because, having paid the taxes for the whole community, the well-to-do *odnodvortsii* were now entitled to compel the poor who had not contributed, to work out their taxes either on the fields of the former, or in other places for hire which was to be taken in repayment of the money advanced in payment of taxes. The result was that the poorer people were reduced to "extreme poverty."<sup>5</sup>

Alienation of the lands granted to the *odnodvortsii* in military tenure produced controversies and reactions similar to those which we have found in the case of the Black Ploughing Peasants of the State. The nobles and the children of boyars were forbidden to exchange their estates, to sell, to mortgage, and even to lease them to the serving people of other cities for more than a year; but "serving people" of the Ukraine, the ancestors of the *odnodvortsii*, were entitled to exchange, to buy, or to sell their estates among themselves only, if they belonged to the same town, but not otherwise. In 1714 the system of granting estates was suspended, the estate and the *votchinal* systems were unified,<sup>6</sup> the limitation of the right of alienation lost its power, and the *odnodvortsii* began to sell their lands

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., vii., No. 4563; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 730.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi., No. 12,185, p. 18; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 731.

<sup>5</sup> *Archiv. of Council of State: Aff. Kath. II Commission*, Case No. 102, Affair No. 439, pp. 1-16. *Arch. Min. Justice*, Nos. 982-4553, pp. 14-23; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 731.

<sup>6</sup> *Cf. supra*, p. 107.

to purchasers of any class who might offer themselves. Under an Ukase of 1727 these transactions were recognized and legalized by the Government so far as the past was concerned ; but for the future the *odnodvortsi* were forbidden to alienate their lands.<sup>1</sup>

Like many other ukases of different periods and in relation to different classes in connection with the same matter, the Ukase of 1727 was frequently violated. Numerous cases might be cited. Some *odnodvortsi* of the town of Nijni Lomovo, who were settled in new lands elsewhere, had mortgaged and sold their lands in that town to *pomyetschêkê* and officials. The purchasers entered upon their acquisitions, and soon began to encroach upon the lands of their neighbours. The latter complained in 1752, and the Government ordered that the lands should be taken from the purchasers without compensation. This order was, however, not carried out. In 1754, on the occasion of a general survey, the lands were again ordered to be returned, provided there was not sufficient land to provide 30 *dessyatin* per household of the group of *odnodvortsi*. The result of this second order does not appear. The *odnodvortsi* of the town of Koslov complained that the *pomyetschêkê* and the higher officials were purchasing lands, transferring their peasants to them, and taking the best places. In the province of Voronej there were many distilleries and iron-works. The owners of these purchased lands from the *odnodvortsi*, and cut down the timber upon them ruthlessly, sometimes even cutting timber arbitrarily upon lands belonging to *odnodvortsi*, as well as upon lands belonging to the Treasury. The practice, indeed, seems to have been common for *pomyetschêkê* to purchase a small piece of land from *odnodvortsi*, and then, having obtained a foothold, to annex forcibly surrounding property, disregarding the rights of the owners. The "instructions" to delegates to the Legislative Commission of Katherine II are full of complaints of this practice. The people of the province of Voronej, for example, made the general charge that the nobles, military officers, and civil officials had appropriated to themselves the estates of the *odnodvortsi*, and had settled upon them not merely their own peasants, but had brought to them free Little Russians. Complaints were also made that the same people

<sup>1</sup> Soloviev, J., *On the "Odnodvortsi," op cit.*, pp. 86, 87, and 96 ; Pobyedonostsev, *The Course of Civil Law*, i. p. 498 ; F.C.L., vii., No. 5138 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 734.

had built many water-mills, built dams across the rivers, drowned the meadows of the *odnodvortsi*, and forbade the latter even to fish. In the province of Tambov in the south, and in the province of Smolensk in the west, there were similar complaints.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of these purchases and expropriations was the impoverishment of large numbers of the *odnodvortsi*. Impoverishment was also produced by extreme subdivision of the land through the operation of the custom of equal inheritance. When, by the operation of this custom, the piece of land inherited by an individual became too minute to support him, he was obliged to sell it either to a neighbouring *odnodvortsi* or to some one else. One result of these various causes was the migration of many of the *odnodvortsi* beyond the Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> In cases where the landless *odnodvortsi* did not migrate to new lands they were obliged to hire themselves as labourers; their wives and children often had to resort to the charity of the *mir*.<sup>3</sup> Many of those who remained in the *odnodvortsi* settlements had very small quantities of land.<sup>4</sup> Those who were able to do so rented land either from the well-to-do *odnodvortsi*, or from the *pomyetschêkê* who had purchased *odnodvortsi* estates.<sup>5</sup> Some of them were given "empty" State lands. These new allotments were ordered to be given on the basis of 32 *dessyatin* per household, the household being counted at four souls, or 8 *dessyatin* per soul. If it were possible, they were to get an additional area of 28 *dessyatin*, or in all 15 *dessyatin* per soul in order to provide for increase of population. The *odnodvortsi* of Odevsky district complained that the original normal allotment of 32 *dessyatin* per household was not enough. They represented that one half of the land consisting of pastures, meadows, and forests, there remained only 4 *dessyatin* per soul in the three fields of plough land, or 1½ *dessyatin* in each field. This small amount, they said, was not sufficient to secure the punctual pay-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. 739-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 740. For example, 1000 souls of *odnodvortsi* received permission in 1780-1790 to migrate to Ekaterinoslav. *Arch. Min. Justice*, Affair No. 982-4553, pp. 14-23; F.C.L., xxii., No. 16,572; *Arch. Coun. of State: Aff. Kath. II Comm.*, Case 89, Affair No. 215, p. 31, No. 228, p. 9; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 741.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 742.

<sup>4</sup> For example in some districts the *odnodvortsi* had only half a *dessyatin* per soul. *Arch. Council of State: Aff. Kath. II Comm.*, Affair No. 440, pp. 11-12, 17; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 742.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, Nos. 982-4553, pp. 14-23; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

ment of taxes, and was, indeed, barely enough for the production of an adequate amount of food. The *odnodvortsi* of Tambov regarded even 15 *dessyatin* per soul as an insufficient allotment, and asked for more.<sup>1</sup> Semevsky suggests that the reason for these demands was that the *odnodvortsi* thought that if they could establish a high normal allotment, that the Government might be more readily induced to cancel the sales of land which had been made, and to cause the lands formerly in possession of the *odnodvortsi* to be returned to them.<sup>2</sup> Some of the complaints to the Legislative Commission of Katherine II contained recommendations that a general survey should be made of *odnodvortsi* lands, including the lands that had been sold, and that these lands should be taken from their possessors, and that the peasants who had been established upon them by the *pomyetschêkê* and others, should be turned out of the lands, further purchase of *odnodvortsi* lands being prohibited. Others, for example the peasants of the district of Korensk, in the province of Shatsk, asked for repartition of land among all of them equally, according to the number of souls put in poll tax, "for equal maintenance without offence to anyone. In this way, every one would be equally capable of paying the taxes."<sup>3</sup>

In the province of Tulsk, and in the district of Odoëvsk, the nobles proposed to Katherine's Commission that the *odnodvortsi* lands in these regions should be sold outright, and that the *odnodvortsi* should be transferred to "wild country places," e.g. in Voronejskaya *gub.*

When additional lands were given to the *odnodvortsi* they did not always agree among themselves about the distribution of it. For instance, in Kurskaya *gub.*, some of the *odnodvortsi* wanted to divide the additional lands among those of the inhabitants who paid poll-tax; but the composition of the communities in question was too complex for this to be done without dispute.

Advocates of the community system of landownership find in the misfortunes of the *odnodvortsi* just retribution for the adoption of the

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Council of State : Kath. II Comm.*, Case 102, Affair No. 439, p. 17; Case 84, Aff. 110, pp. 1-8; cited Semevsky, ii. p. 746.

<sup>2</sup> There was probably another reason, viz. that having been cultivated without enrichment for many consecutive years, the land became exhausted, the yield per acre was diminished, and a larger area was necessary in order that the cultivators might obtain a livelihood. The Tambov region has indeed been conspicuous for this land exhaustion.

<sup>3</sup> *Archives of Council of State : Affairs Commission of Katherine II*, Case 102, Affair 440, pp. 17-23; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 748.

system of individual ownership. For this, of course, the *odnodvortsi* were not primarily to blame. Their ancestors received the land not in common property, but for their individual use, as wages for individual service. But the absence of the spirit of the community to which this fact contributed, prevented them from resisting the external pressure to which they came to be subjected. We have seen that repartition was not unattended with difficulties among other classes of the peasantry ; but early adoption of it might have prevented the dispersal and impoverishment of this class. The *odnodvortsi* had, however, little communal feeling, as is illustrated by the fact that although their forest land, unlike their plough land, was the property of the community, they often voted " decisively " for its distribution among them individually.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the *odnodvortsi*, who were heirs of old " serving people " of the district, there were *odnodvortsi* of other families, and there were also nobles, some of whom had inherited the lands and some of whom had acquired the lands themselves. Moreover, nobles and *odnodvortsi* possessed contiguous strips in the same fields.<sup>2</sup> It was difficult, under such circumstances, to arrive at common consent. Even in the interior life of the *odnodvortsi*, there were difficulties and discords about the division of land and the payment of taxes. The State taxes were levied upon the community as a whole—that is, all the *odnodvortsi* in a district were collectively responsible for the payment of a tax levied in respect to the number of male souls as ascertained in a census undertaken at intervals.<sup>3</sup> We have seen that the *odnodvortsi* did not hold their land in common, with the exception of the forests, and that they habitually subdivided the land through the custom of inheritance. The incidence of taxes was thus very unequal, because the tax was imposed per male soul, and the amount of land which was inherited had no necessary correspondence with the dimensions of the family of the owner. From the Western European point of view, since the middle ages, this condition was piously regarded as a dispensation of Providence ; from the Russian point of view it was an injustice which might and should be rectified by the Government.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 749.

<sup>2</sup> *Cherezpolosnoë* ownership.

<sup>3</sup> The census was taken in the eighteenth century as follows : 1st, 1722 ; 2nd, 1742 ; 3rd, 1762 ; 4th, 1782 ; and 5th, 1796 : in the nineteenth century, 6th, 1812 ; 7th, 1815 ; 8th, 1835 ; 9th, 1851 ; and 10th, 1858. The first census after Emancipation was taken in 1897.

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The *odnodvortsi* looked at their grievance in this respect somewhat in this way: two heirs inherit the same amount of land—one has a family of girls all of working age, the other has a family of boys all infants; the first is required to pay taxes upon one male soul only, the second upon say half a dozen: their resources in land are equal, but their working force and the incidence of the tax are both unequal. A more serious condition of affairs resulted when the *odnodvortsi* had no land at all. The Director of Economies in Kursk, for example, found that many of them had a farmhouse, but no farm. So long as the population was scanty in the region surrounding an *odnodvortsi* settlement, the landless among them were able to appropriate “arbitrarily” land which they might cultivate; but increase of population and accurate surveys made this practice difficult. The landless were thus unable to pay their taxes unless they rented lands; and the conditions which have been described contributed to the steady advance of rent. Moreover, the *odnodvortsi*, unlike the other peasantry, were not in the habit of distributing the taxes, or the maintenance of the aged and the young, over the whole community. Each man had to bear his own family burdens. When the taxes were imposed formally upon the community as a whole, the well-to-do *odnodvortsi*, as we have seen, paid the taxes and then charged, and no doubt sometimes surcharged, them upon the poor, taking the taxes out in work.

The scheme of applying the principle of “mutual responsibility,” superposed as it was upon the fundamentally individualistic economy of the *odnodvortsi*, did not work well. The remedy which the *odnodvortsi* proposed involved a modification of their individualism, viz. the division of the family lands equally among the members of the family. This measure was not regarded as sufficiently drastic by the Director of Economies of Kursk, and he suggested that the *odnodvortsi* should adopt the community system of land-ownership with periodical repartition of land. “Among these people,” he said, “it is a great necessity that there should be equalization of land, as among the Court, Economical, and all other State peasants, who divide the lands of their settlement according to the number of taxed souls in that settlement. The *odnodvortsi* ought to do so because they carry the same burden of taxation as the other peasants.”<sup>1</sup> The local administration did not adopt the suggestion

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 754.

that the *odnodvortsi* should be obliged to alter their form of land-ownership without referring the affair to the "higher spheres." Application was made to the Senate for the issue of an ukase on the subject; but owing to the opposition of the General-Governor of Kursk, the Senate took no action.<sup>1</sup>

The *odnodvortsi*, however, to a large extent carried out the change, spontaneously and gradually. In 1851 there were altogether 1,190,285 *odnodvortsi* souls, and of these about one half had adopted common ownership of land.<sup>2</sup>

Hitherto we have been dealing with the *odnodvortsi* communities chiefly in relation to the poorer families. There were, however, among them not merely many well-to-do people, but some of them had even bonded peasants of their own. This came about owing to the fact that the *odnodvortsi* inherited their estates with peasants upon them, from the old "serving people," and that some of them even possessed *votchini*, which had been granted to their ancestors. In addition to the acquisition of peasants by grant, or by the usual methods of bondage, the *odnodvortsi* had a right of acquisition, peculiar to themselves, of captives taken in the military operations in which they were engaged.<sup>3</sup> The peasants belonging to the *odnodvortsi* altered in numbers in course of time through sales of them to the nobility, marriage presents, &c., and through purchases of others by the *odnodvortsi*. At the third census, in 1762, there were 17,675 souls of such peasants, and at the fourth census, in 1782, 21,531 souls.<sup>4</sup>

Up till 1754 the *odnodvortsi* still retained the right to sell their peasants, but only to others of the same class and within the same district (*uyezd*); and they were not allowed to sell them excepting with the land upon which they were settled.<sup>5</sup> In 1754 they were permitted to sell them without land; but although the nobility were at this time allowed to liberate their peasants, the *odnodvortsi* were not allowed to do so.<sup>6</sup> At the same time the question arose

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 756.

<sup>2</sup> Soloviev, J., "On Land Ownership in Russia" in *Memoirs of the Fatherland* (1858). Book ii., pp. 622-3; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 761.

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., xxv. No. 18,676, cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 770.

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. Council of State: Affairs of Kath. II Commission*, 102, Aff. No. 439, pp. 1-16; Aff. No. 441, pp. 6-10 and pp. 32-8; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> F.C.L., xiv., No. 10,237, ch. xxiii., sec. 7; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 771.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 772.

whether or not the peasants of the *odnodvortsî*, now called by the special name of *odnodvorchesky polovněkē*, should be "put into poll-tax" as were their owners. It was decided that this should be done. The Black Ploughing Peasants of the State were obliged to pay taxes for their *polovněkē*, and the *odnodvortsî* had to do so also. The measure was, however, not carried into effect until 1786.<sup>1</sup> Recruit service was also required of the *odnodvortsî polovněkē* in the same manner as it was required of other classes of the peasantry.<sup>2</sup>

It appears that in one *gubernî*, at least, that of Tambov, an attempt was made in 1796, on the part of the Government, to liberate the peasants of the *odnodvortsî* by purchasing them by means of voluntary agreement, and transferring them into the Treasury peasantry; but the *odnodvortsî* could not be persuaded to sell them.<sup>3</sup>

The *polovněk* of the *odnodvortsî* worked upon the land of his master and paid *obròk* in the same way as other peasants worked for and paid to their *pomyetschēkē*; yet the difference between master and serf in the former case was slender. "We lived with our peasants in one house," the *odnodvortsî* of Kursk told the Zemstvo statisticians in later years; "the *barin* would sleep on the bench and the *mužik* under the bench; and sometimes it would happen that the *barin* would come drunk and lie down under the bench. We ate from one plate, worked together, and together we would sew our *laptē*; but nevertheless we were called *Barin*." Sometimes the peasant was sent away on *obròk* because his *barin* could not feed him, and then, perhaps, he lived better than his master.<sup>4</sup> Such were the abnormal relations between the deteriorated descendants of old "serving people" and the descendants of their bondmen.

## 7. OLD SERVICE SERVING PEOPLE

Having the same origin as the *odnodvortsî* and scarcely distinguishable from them in any essential particular, yet differentiated from them in a separate statistical category, in the third census, in 1762, are the "Old Service Serving People." This group was also regarded as separate by the Legislative Commission of Katherine II,

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xxii., Nos. 16,393 and 16,536; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 773.

<sup>2</sup> *Coll. Hist. Soc.*, viii., p. 266; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "Archive Materials for the History of the Region of Tambov," *Tambovskaya gub. Messenger* (1880), No. 2; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 774.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*



for delegates were received from it independently of all other classes of the population. In the second census the "Old Service Serving People" are not clearly separated, but under the name of *Raznochēntsi* they are apparently counted along with the *odnodvortsii*.<sup>1</sup> At the third census "Old Service People" and "ploughing soldiers" are counted together; along with them were also counted Treasury blacksmiths and a few "guardians of the border." These classes numbered altogether about 17,000 souls, although it is clear that the statistics are incomplete. The bulk of the people concerned were in *Moskovskaya gub.*<sup>2</sup>

The duties of these classes seem to have been almost entirely of a military character. The "Old Service People" of *Kazanskaya gub.* alone supported two regiments, recruiting taking place, if not every year, at least once in two years.<sup>3</sup> The burdens upon the "ploughing soldiers" were still heavier.<sup>4</sup> Some of the "Old Service People" were employed in the workshops of the arsenals. In 1766 they petitioned that their military obligations should be assimilated to those of other peasantry.<sup>5</sup> Up till the time of Peter the Great the "Old Serving People," like the *odnodvortsii*, paid the poll-tax of 80 *kopeks* per soul, and afterwards 70 *kopeks*, together with the 40 *kopek obrók*. So also did the Cossacks of Novgorod and the Treasury blacksmiths. The "guardians of the border" paid no *obrók*, but paid the poll-tax. The Senate ordered in 1766 that all "Old Service People" who did not render land militia service should pay 1 *ruble* 70 *kopeks* in taxes. In 1783 all were required to pay 3 *rubles* of *obrók* in addition to the poll-tax of 70 *kopeks*. The burden of recruit enrolment fell so heavily upon the groups in question that they protested their inability to pay their taxes punctually. "We have to sell our cattle and other belongings, and we pay our taxes with great difficulty. Other peasants pay the same taxes, but they are not overburdened with recruit obligations as we are."<sup>6</sup> Some of them, therefore, petitioned to be relieved of the *obrók*.

The large drafts from the "Old Service People" for military service, and their frequent long absences on active duty, rendered it quite impossible that they should be good farmers. Their agricul-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 777-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 778.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. p. 783.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* See also *Arch. Council of State: Aff. Katherine II Commission*, 89, Aff. No. 228, pp. 1-7.

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tural methods were indeed archaic. The system which was in vogue known as the *peryeljnoë* system, involved the cultivation of fields for about ten years, and then the abandonment of them and the cultivation of other places.<sup>1</sup> Such a system did not contribute to economy of land, and the quantities of plough lands belonging to the "ploughing soldiers" diminished from that and other causes. Among these causes was the appearance in the Volga region of German colonists,<sup>2</sup> whose superior farming methods enabled them to be formidable competitors in the local markets; and in Central Russia there occurred alienation of the land of the "Old Service People" to the *pomyetschëkë*, partly by purchase, but often by mere seizure on the part of the latter. These seizures were analogous to the illegal "enclosures" of the eighteenth century in England, and they produced somewhat similar results. The people whose "reserve land" had been taken protested without avail, and they then proceeded to take back the land by force. In the town of Mikhailov such proceedings occurred on the lands of the "ploughing soldiers," and military detachments were sent to punish them. This they did with the *knüt*, and with exaction from them of *obrök* for the land they had taken. It does not appear in this case whether the *pomyetschëkë* had seized or had paid for the land in question; but, undoubtedly, it had formerly belonged to the "ploughing soldiers." The latter complained that "more than two hundred of their brethren" were beaten to death, and several thousands of rubles exacted from the community, "what for we do not know." Moreover, two hundred of the "ploughing soldiers," including their wives, were held in the town under strict guard during the winter, and into the busiest time of the summer. During this imprisonment they suffered from want of food, and "were ruined." Not satisfied with this, the "adjacent *pomyetschëkë* on 3rd November 1766 took a full company of grenadiers . . . who killed with firearms our brethren in different settlements and wounded a great number, destroying our houses and taking away all of our provisions. This they did without exhibiting any ukase. . . . Because of all this we are in great want; insufficient crops have been raised by us, and we do not have enough food. Our widows and orphans are walking about begging in the

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv. Council of State*, 89, Aff. 228. Instruction No. 3, cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 792. Cf. as to the similar practice in Wales, Seebohm, F., *Tribal Laws of Wales*.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 792.

name of Christ, and many of us through dread are leaving their estates and are scattered over various towns, some with passports and some have even fled without passports.”<sup>1</sup>

Although precise information upon the question is not yet available, there seems a reasonable probability that the “Old Service Serving People” were not so purely individualistic in their customs as the *odnodvortsii*. The inequality of land and of condition, which was characteristic of the latter, does not appear among the “Old Service People.” When they were poor, the whole community was poor. The customary expression of some of them to indicate the community—viz. the *mir*—does not necessarily imply common ownership or repartition, but it contrasts with the constant use of the word “estates” (*pomyestneye*) by the *odnodvortsii*. The “Old Service Serving People” regarded their “reserve” lands as common property, and the whole influence of the community was brought to bear, sometimes without result, as we have seen, against encroachments.

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv. Council of State : Affairs Kath. II Commission*, 84, Aff. No. 114, pp. 9-11 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 793.

## CHAPTER V

### THE AGRARIAN DISTURBANCES IN THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

THE legislation of Peter the Great had placed the estates of the serving people and the *votchini* of the nobles upon equal footing as heritable property ; the Manifesto of 18th February 1762 had liberated nobility and serving people alike from obligatory service ;<sup>1</sup> nothing had been done for the peasants. Yet these incidents seemed to suggest that the peasants' case was not hopeless. The autocracy was no longer quite as it was. Freedom had been given to the superior classes ; it might even extend below them to the mass of the people. Nothing could be more logical or inevitable. Rumours began to circulate among the peasants that something concerning them was going to happen. The obligations of the nobles having been abolished, the next step must be the abolition of the obligations of the peasants. The Manifesto inevitably aroused such hopes. The existence of rumours about liberation soon became evident to the Government, and fearful of the consequences of precipitate anticipation of freedom on the part of the peasantry, it issued on 19th June of the same year an ukase calling upon the peasants to render their customary obedience to the *pomyetschékē*.<sup>2</sup> But the movement among the peasants had already begun. It began in the districts of Klin and Tver, among the peasants of two *pomyetschékē*, Tatishev and Khlopov. The Government determined to act sharply, without delay. A command of 400 infantry with four guns, and a regiment of cuirassiers was sent under Witten to put down the disturbance.<sup>2</sup> On Tatishev's estate the peasants had levelled his house to the ground ; at Khlopov's they had pillaged the house, carried off his money, which had been paid for *obròk*, and plundered his granaries. On Tatishev's estate seven hundred peasants were

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 419.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., xv., No. 11,577 ; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

concerned in the disturbance, on Khlopov's four hundred. The peasants told both of the *pomyetschêkê* that they had better not venture to make their appearance among them any more. Agitation was also going on at Belevsk, on the estate of Madame Zybina, at Golitsk, on one of the Dolgorûki estates, and at many other places. Altogether there were in the districts mentioned nearly 7000 peasants in open revolt. When Witten arrived at Tver with his force he met with a stout resistance. There was a pitched battle, in which three peasants were killed and twelve wounded by the troops, while the peasants wounded one officer and took sixty-four soldiers as prisoners.<sup>1</sup> In many districts throughout Russia the peasants were agitated. When Katherine II acceded to the throne she said that there were altogether in agitation 50,000 peasants belonging to the *pomyetschêkê*, and 100,000 peasants of the monasteries.<sup>2</sup>

A few days after Katherine acceded she issued a Manifesto which repeated literally an ukase of Peter III.

"Because the well-being of a State, in accordance with the Law of God and all the laws of the people, requires that all and everyone shall remain upon his estate and shall be assured of his rights, we decide to preserve to the *pomyetschêkê* the right to their estates and properties, and to keep the peasants in necessary obedience to them."<sup>3</sup>

This ukase was followed by concessions to demands for relief to *pomyetschêkê*, who suffered loss through the agitations. The relief took the form of cancelling the claims against them for military and other assistance during the disturbances upon their estates. The Senate, by which these concessions were granted, also proposed to the Empress that "in order that the peasants might feel more," in case of fresh disturbances, the cost of suppressing them should be exacted from the peasants themselves; and in July 1763 an ukase in this sense was issued, imposing the burden not only upon the bonded but also upon all other peasantry.<sup>4</sup>

In October 1763 the Military Collegium, or War Office, issued

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 420.

<sup>2</sup> *Collection of the Historical Society*, x., No. 37,381; cited *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> F.C.L., xvi., No. 11,593, July 3rd, 1762; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 420.

<sup>4</sup> *Archive of the Ministry of Justice and the Protocoll of the Senate*, Nos. 1011-3494, p. 406; F.C.L., xvi., No. 11,875; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 427.

general regulations respecting the conduct of military operations in connection with the peasant disturbances. "When the military division approaches its destination," said these regulations, "guns are to be loaded and the piece of artillery is to be charged with blank cartridge. Then the officer in command must send for the priest of the parish, who must be required to bring a certain number of neighbours as witnesses. Halting his main force at a distance of 200 *sajen* (1400 feet), the commander is required to send the priest, a commissary, a clerk, and an officer with fifty privates to endeavour to persuade the peasants to give obedience to their *pomyetschêkê* and to the authorities. In the meantime he is also required to arrange pickets so that none of the peasants should be permitted to escape (that is to say, he must quietly surround the village while the conference is going on). Then the main division is to approach the village gradually, and three shots of blank cartridge are to be made from the field gun. Should the negotiations be unsuccessful the officer is to report to the commander, who must then himself go to the peasants to endeavour to persuade them to submit themselves. Should these efforts be unsuccessful, the village must then be shelled, the straw and hay burned, and a beginning must be made to carry the place by assault. If these measures frighten the peasants, the commander will then require the presence of the *starosta*, or head of the village, together with that of the best peasants. He will then, treating them with kindness, examine them about the cause of their agitation, and endeavour to procure the names and persons of the agitators, and to extinguish the fire. Then those who had been arrested must be sent to the nearest place where there is a court, and all the other peasants must be required to sign a promise that they should not agitate any more. If, however, the peasants should not submit at once, shots must be fired over their heads; if this should be ineffectual, the troops must approach nearer and fire a cannon shot also over the heads of the peasants; but if, even after that, they continue to throw stones at the soldiers or to assault them, then a part of the division must open real fire. As soon as the crowd begins to fly, the firing must cease and arrests must be made. Finally, if they are not even then brought to reason, the commander must act with them as he would against the enemies of Her Majesty."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice*, Nos. 924-3407, pp. 591-600; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 429.

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The Senate remarked upon the contents of these regulations that to foresee every contingency was impossible, and therefore the Military Collegium must be left with ample powers; but with the condition that written orders must be issued in each case, and with the understanding that the important consideration is that the peasants must be "pacified" without ruining them, and more especially without bloodshed. To act severely was permissible only in extreme cases, and then only in conformity with the military regulations.<sup>1</sup>

The agitations continued. In 1766 Little Russian peasants of many *pomyetschëkë* in Voronejskaya *gub.* were in a state of disturbance, which lasted into the following year. The estates of Count Buturlin, in Kozlova district, two settlements belonging to Prince R. Vorontsev in Dobrensk, the estates of General Safonov and of Prince Trubestkoy in Pavlovsk, were chiefly affected; but there was agitation throughout the adjacent districts of Belgorodskaya *gub.* The peasants were "pacified" by the persuasions of the Governor, and were obliged to promise in writing to obey their *pomyetschëkë*. They did this, however, on the condition that if they chose to do so, they could migrate to other places from the estates upon which they lived.

The Senate continued to carry out its policy of peaceful "pacification";<sup>2</sup> but in 1767 and 1768 the agitations increased. The peasants firmly believed that some great change was about to happen, and they were impatient to see their anticipations reduced to reality. In this state of mind they were peculiarly exposed to the influence of false rumours. The contemporary discussions of agrarian problems in the higher spheres<sup>3</sup> and the debates upon them in the Free Economical Society might have given currency to some of the various rumours had the peasants known anything about them. It is hardly possible to believe that they did, although one contemporary writer found an explanation of the peasant disturbances in rumours of projects which were being developed in high places.<sup>4</sup> Whatever leakage may have occurred from the debates of

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Min. of Justice*, Nos. 924-3407, pp. 591-600; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F.C.L., xviii., Nos. 12,966 and 13,008; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 432.

<sup>3</sup> Discussed *infra*, pp. 311 *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> *Papers of the Society for the History of Old Russia* (1861): iii., *Thoughts about the giving of Freedom to Peasants*, pp. 98-99; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 433.

the Free Economical Society, the discussions on the peasant question in the Legislative Commission of Katherine II could not have produced agitations in 1766 or 1767, for these discussions did not take place until 1768.<sup>1</sup> While the course and the nature of the discontent among the peasants, which have been recounted, suggest that the agrarian movement at this time was spontaneous, the convocation of the Legislative Commission by the Empress, of which the peasants were aware, although they did not have direct representation upon it, may have contributed to excite the peasants' hopes. This is indeed to be inferred from an ukase of 1767, which, referring to complaints by peasants against their *pomyetschĕkĕ*, remarks that the violent disturbances have occurred "in most cases because of evil-minded people who spread false rumours about a change of law."<sup>2</sup>

When Katherine II made her journey on the Volga early in May of the same year (1767) the peasants belonging to the brothers Olsufiev, in the district of Kashinsk, succeeded in presenting to her a petition complaining of their treatment by their masters. The Empress ordered that the peasants should be told that they must obey their *pomyetschĕkĕ*; but the peasants flatly refused to do so. They ceased to work for them, collected money, and sent to Moscow a delegate to deliver a formal protest. An infantry regiment was sent to "pacify" them; and one hundred and thirty of the chief agitators were arrested and imprisoned. Some of these were punished with the *knüt* and with sticks, in accordance, as was customary, with the desire of their owners.<sup>3</sup>

An agitation on two estates in the district of Simbirsk, led in 1767-8 to the despatch of a detachment. The peasants, both men and women, attacked the troops, and although some of the assailants were wounded, the soldiers were defeated. A larger body of troops was then sent, and the peasants made no further resistance. On the order of the *pomyetschĕkĕ*, twelve of the agitators were beaten with the *knüt*, and fifty with sticks.<sup>4</sup>

The peasants of Bejyetsk, then in *Moskovskaya guberniya*, refused to pay *obrök* from 1765 to 1768. An inquiry was instituted, and the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. p. 433, and *infra*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., xviii., No. 12,966; cited *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Archive of Min. of Justice: Affairs of the Senate*, No. 82-4983, pp. 380-1; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 434.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 250-3821, pp. 713-4; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 435.



peasants consented to pay ; but sixteen of them were beaten with sticks.<sup>1</sup> In the same district in 1769 Prince Metschyersky complained to the chancellery that his peasants refused to obey him.

Thus, for about seven years, from 1762 until 1769, agitation was practically continuous, breaking out sporadically and apparently spontaneously in many different parts of the country. For three or four years after 1769 there were few disturbances. Then there came the first mutterings of the storm, which broke in its full violence in 1775, in the rebellion of Pugachev.

The causes of these preliminary disturbances were undoubtedly also those of the general agrarian rising, aggravated as they were by the further piling of burdens upon the peasants during the intervening years, and by the indifference, apparent or real, of the authorities. The principal cause of the disturbances appears almost undoubtedly to have been the manner in which the *pomyetschêkê* exercised their power. The case of Saltykova,<sup>2</sup> whose atrocities occurred during the years immediately preceding 1762, was fortunately probably unique, but there were many others nearly as bad ; and there can be no doubt, if we may trust the numerous ukases on the tyranny and cruelty of the *pomyetschêkê*, that their normal and common attitude was bound inevitably to result in reprisals of at least equal violence. It may or may not be that the Russian people have less control over themselves than the people of Western Europe,<sup>3</sup> but the mere fact of the bondage relation is sufficient to account for the deterioration of character which resulted on the one hand in the tyrannical *pomyetschêkê*, and on the other in the subservient and vindictive peasant. Nearly all the Russian writers on the subject are inclined to attach great importance to the fact that in the eighteenth century the State peasants were on the whole treated with the consideration due to human beings, while the peasants of the *pomyetschêkê* were treated otherwise. We have seen that the peasants of the State had their difficulties ; but these arose partly from the avarice of some of themselves and partly from the avarice of the neighbouring *pomyetschêkê*, who encroached upon their lands. They had rarely to endure the capricious action of the central authority ; while the local authority was frequently, as we have seen, inclined to measures intended for their benefit, even often

<sup>1</sup> *Archive of Min. of Justice : Affairs of the Senate*, Nos. 250-3821, p. 789.

<sup>2</sup> See *supra*, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> See *infra*, ii. p. 3.

in spite of the peasants themselves. The autocratic action of a central authority is nearly always distant, and is, moreover, controlled in a large measure not only by the current of general opinion within the nation, but also by the general opinion outside of it. The autocratic action of a *pomyetschĕk*, on the other hand, is immediate and insistent, and is practically independent of public opinion even in the neighbourhood. In a country so great as Russia, and in the eighteenth century, when means of communication were scanty and costly in time and in money, the owner of a great estate, and even sometimes of a small one, was a petty deity who could, within very large limits, do what he pleased. The slender development of local administration as an organic part of the general administration, and the prevalence of local customary law, threw into the hands of the *pomyetschĕk*, for a long period of time, powers which are rarely entrusted by modern governments to private persons; and the want of education, added to the desire for power which is inherent in all men, irrespective of race, resulted in the injurious use of those powers.

Whatever faults, in point of culture and in point of spirituality, the bourgeoisie of Western Europe may be held to have exhibited, they nevertheless, consciously or unconsciously, contributed to mitigate the tyranny of the aristocracy over the peasant at least from the thirteenth century onwards. This they did, from motives of gain, no doubt, by offering in relatively high urban wages, irresistible inducements to flight from the estates of tyrannical masters. In Western Europe, in the later middle age, the aristocracy frequented the towns; they did not remain, as the Russian nobility did, during long periods, continuously in their rural "nests," leading a self-contained life, served by numerous domestics, in half Oriental squalor, independent of the rest of the world. In Russia there was no bourgeoisie,<sup>1</sup> and there was therefore no buffer class between the nobility and the peasantry, and no competition for the peasants' labour. The middle age, with its sharp though varying class contours, which had passed in Western Europe nearly four hundred years earlier, projected itself in Russia into the eighteenth century. Ignorant, the Russian peasant customarily was, yet he could not be unaware of the movement of life around him. The absence of newspapers was compensated for in great measure by the gossip of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*.

the market-place and of the church porch on Sundays and holy days. Distorted scraps of knowledge, as well as baseless *canarás*, found their way everywhere. Migrants and pilgrims, the latter in enormous numbers, carried news, if not in their wallets, then in their heads, and there were not wanting foreign colonists,<sup>1</sup> whose criticisms of the local customs with which they found themselves in conflict were no doubt scornfully received, but nevertheless much discussed. Reforms even brought their economic and social reactions, and had their victims; moreover, reforms were directly costly, and cost meant increased taxation. In a country where the agricultural had not yet given way to the commercial régime, and where there was a slender stock of ready money, increase of taxation, together with unequal incidence of it, disturbed the economic equilibrium and brought some people to the edge of want. Want does not always produce rebellion, but hope in the presence of want often does. No matter how weak in character or how wanting in sustained energy he may be, the man who seizes the psychological moment, when hope is at its maximum and want is not severe enough to emasculate hope, may be able to lead a revolt. Pugachev was a natural consequence of Peter the Great.

Peter had forged more firmly than ever before the fetters of the nobility. He treated them, indeed, with the same contempt with which they were themselves accustomed to treat their peasants. He also bound the peasants more firmly to their masters. When the nobility was able to throw off the burden of obligatory service, and when the "serving people," who had become fused with the nobility, were no longer obliged to render service for the land which had been given to them, it seemed to the peasants quite reasonable that the next step should be their own liberation, or at least a very serious mitigation of their obligations either to their *pomyetschékē* or to the State, or both. Soon after the manifesto of Peter III which abolished the obligatory service of the nobility, the peasants began to petition to be taken off the tax rolls as peasants of *pomyetschékē*, and to be inscribed as peasants of the State. Such a transference at that time would, they thought, relieve them of *bartschina*, and would probably also have reduced the amount payable in *obrók*. The rumours which were in circulation in 1766-7 were to the effect

<sup>1</sup> There were many German colonists, for example, in the eighteenth century.

that an ukase had been issued by the Empress ordering that the estates of *pomyetschêkê* who had been overburdening their peasants with obligations should be transferred to her, and that the maximum amount of *bartschina* exigible on all estates should be one day per week. The convocation of the Commission of Katherine II gave credence to the idea that some such measure was in contemplation ; and the peasants seem to have widely arrived at the conclusion that the last days of the *pomyetschêkê* were at hand. For some of these, this was unfortunately too true, for the murdering of *pomyetschêkê* by peasants dates from this period.

The progress of agitation was very rapid, for when the peasants of one estate came into conflict with their master, or with the military authorities, the local solidarity of peasant life led to the peasants of neighbouring estates joining with those who were in active opposition. When the military authorities were informed that a few scores of peasants had refused to pay *obrôk*, or were in open revolt, a body of troops, proportionate to the estimated magnitude of the rising, was sent down to the estate from the military headquarters of the district. On the arrival of the troops it was found that they had to deal, not with a few scores, but with a few hundreds, perhaps with a few thousands, of peasant men and women armed with scythes, flails, pitchforks, and reaping-hooks, and with stones. Notwithstanding their superior armament, the troops were often overpowered by mere force of numbers. The subsequent appearance on the scene of larger detachments, especially if they were accompanied by artillery, generally put the peasants to flight, and resulted in numerous arrests. As a rule, at this time the casualties were not numerous, although frequently a few peasants were killed and a few soldiers were wounded.<sup>1</sup> There were, however, exceptions. On an estate of Prince Dolgoruki there was a disturbance in 1762, in which twenty peasants were killed and about the same number wounded ; on the estate of Ev. Demidov, in 1758, thirty people were killed at once, and thirty-three mortally wounded ; on the estate of a *pomyetschêk* called Passek, in 1768, about thirty peasants were killed and wounded, and about thirty soldiers were wounded, a captain being wounded mortally.<sup>2</sup>

One of the enthusiasms of the peasants was to see an ukase signed by the hand of the Empress. In order to secure this they frequently

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

equipped and despatched delegations to proceed to the capitals at great risk.<sup>1</sup>

After the peasants had been afforded an opportunity to send their "Instructions" through deputies to the local organ, and through that again by deputies to the Commission of Katherine, they waited patiently from 1770 till 1773, in order to see the result of their representations. Meanwhile the sale of peasants and the increase of *obròk* went on ; the *pomyetschēkē* did not seem to realize that they were trifling with a volcano. The eruption took place in the rising of Pugachev, which, beginning among the Cossacks of the Yaēk, rapidly extended to peasant spheres.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 441.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN THE "HIGHER SPHERES" IN THE TIME OF THE EMPRESS KATHERINE II— 1762-1796

SERIOUS discussion of the agrarian question in modern Russia began in the reign of Katherine II. At that time the exercise of bondage right was carried to extreme limits. "Crowds of people were exposed for sale in the market places";<sup>1</sup> numbers of serfs were brought in barges to St. Petersburg for sale.<sup>2</sup> The condition of the serfs in the hands of estate owners was almost unendurable. Flights of peasants from the estates to which they belonged, and even from Russia, were frequent. Contemporary writers, even of conservative leanings, urged that measures should be taken to limit bondage right. For example, Count P. E. Panin, a member of a family always distinguished for its devotion to the throne, presented in 1763, to the Empress Katherine, a memorandum in which he said that the *pomyetschĕkĕ* "were collecting from the peasants taxes and laying upon them works not merely exceeding those imposed by their near neighbours in foreign countries, but *very often even beyond human endurance.*"<sup>3</sup> He stated also that many *pomyetschĕkĕ* were selling their peasants to other *pomyetschĕkĕ* for recruiting purposes. The flights of peasants to Poland from Russia were, in Panin's opinion, due to the exercise by the estate owners of unlimited authority. Panin suggested that governors of *gubernie* should be empowered to deal with those estate owners who treated their peasants arbitrarily, that trading in recruits for the army should be forbidden, that when serfs were disposed of, only whole families should be permitted to be sold, and that a statute should be promulgated defining the obligations of peasants to their proprietors.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, V. E., *The Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (St. Petersburg, 1888), i. p. 477.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *Peasants under Katherine II*, i. pp. 152-3.

Panin also suggested that these measures should be taken secretly, so that the bonded peasantry should not be excited to disobedience.<sup>1</sup>

The customary *obròk* paid at that time by the bonded peasant was two rubles per soul, and in addition, although his obligations were indefinite, he was customarily required to render weekly three days' *bartschina* or work upon the land for his proprietor. Panin proposed to limit the *bartschina* which might be exacted to four days weekly; thus no doubt tending to improve the condition of the peasants on the estates where they were most seriously exploited, but probably increasing by one day's *bartschina* the burdens of the general mass of the peasantry.

About the same period Prince D. A. Golëtsin, through his relative Prince A. M. Golëtsin, Vice-Chancellor to the Empress, made representations of a more liberal character. Prince D. A. Golëtsin had lived for some years in Paris in the late fifties of the eighteenth century. He had become acquainted with the Physiocratic writers, and had become infected with their enthusiasm for the peasantry. From 1762 till 1768 he was Ambassador of Russia at Paris, and from 1767 he became a frequenter of the celebrated Tuesdays at the house of the Marquis de Mirabeau, and an avowed "economist."<sup>2</sup> During this period Golëtsin conducted a correspondence with the Vice-Chancellor largely upon the peasant question. This correspondence undoubtedly passed under the eye of the Empress, who annotated the letters.<sup>3</sup>

Under the influence of physiocratic ideas thus derived, Katherine resolved to establish a society in St. Petersburg for the discussion of the peasant question. "The Imperial Free Economical Society" was thus founded by her in 1765.<sup>4</sup> She gave to the society immediately after its formation, a sum of money to be awarded as a prize

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *The Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, i. p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Higgs, Henry, *The Physiocrats* (London, 1897), p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, p. 23. Twenty-seven of these letters are in the Archives of Foreign Affairs; five of them only have been published. See *Russkoe Vestnik* (1876), No. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Khodnev, A. È., *History of the Imperial Free Economical Society, 1765-1865* (St. Petersburg, 1865), pp. 1 *et seq.* During the hundred and forty-five years of its existence the society has continued to render the greatest services to economico-historical science. Its magnificent library contains collections of the materials of local governmental and economic history of a completeness probably unrivalled in any country.

for the best essay upon "The Relative Advantages of Private and Public Ownership of Land." One year after the prize was announced, one hundred and sixty-two essays had been received, the competitors representing nearly every country in Europe. The essays were of "enormous length," and were written in French, Latin, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, &c.<sup>1</sup> The Russian authors were generally in favour of public ownership, the foreign writers generally in favour of private ownership.<sup>2</sup> The prize was awarded to Beardé de l'Abbaye, Doctor of Law, of Aix-la-chapelle.<sup>3</sup> His paper contained a systematic treatment of the peasant question, and, on the whole, reflected the influence of the Physiocrats. The author divided his subject into two parts, each of them containing the discussion of a problem: (1) "Which is more useful for the State—that a peasant should have the right to possess property or not? (2) How should the theoretical conclusion thus arrived at be applied to existing conditions?" "The peasants," he says, on the first point, "are the foundation of the whole State. They are a barometer showing its real strength. The poorest peasant is more useful than the idle and ignorant miser-courtier. The peasants bring profit to the State mainly from the fact that owing to them population is increased,<sup>4</sup> therefore peasants should possess property inalienably, in order that they should not fear that their children might suffer hunger. Before giving him land, it is necessary to make the peasant personally free. The whole universe demands of the Sovereigns that they should emancipate the peasants. The strength of England is founded upon the perfection of its agriculture, which in turn depends upon the fact that the peasants are free, and that they possess land.<sup>5</sup> Contrarily, in Poland poverty is an outcome of the serfdom in which the peasants are kept. Everywhere the power of the State is the direct consequence of the freedom and welfare of the peasants. The farmer feeds the others with his toil, and has a right to demand for himself premiums and distinctions, and especially property in land. The

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 51. The present writer was shown in the library of the Free Economical Society some of the manuscripts of these essays.

<sup>2</sup> Communicated by Professor Svyatlovsky, formerly Secretary of the Society.

<sup>3</sup> Then a French city.

<sup>4</sup> There is a touch of eighteenth-century mercantilism here.

<sup>5</sup> No doubt the author thinks of the yeomen farmers.



best means of facilitating agriculture is to make the farmers the owners of the land they cultivate. To possess only movable property is to possess almost nothing.<sup>1</sup> Where land is scarce, precautions must be taken to prevent land passing in too great quantities into the hands of peasants; but in a vast, scantily populated empire (as Russia was in the eighteenth century) no means should be neglected for the increase of the population. It is especially necessary that land should be the inalienable property of peasants, or that it should not be alienated excepting for debts or for some such reason." On the second point, the author urges the danger of haste. "It is dangerous," he says, "to let a bear free from the chain, without taming him."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the Gargantuan pile of theses, nothing came of the great competition. According to the newspapers of the time, Beardé de l'Abbaye was duly paid his pecuniary award, and that was all.<sup>3</sup>

The next phase of the question was characterized by the appointment in April 1768 of a Commission for the drafting of a new statute on peasant affairs. The Commission ostensibly represented all classes, but the privileged landowners greatly preponderated. There were a few peasant members, but these were "all from the northern provinces, where serfdom was almost unknown."<sup>4</sup>

While these academic discussions were going on, the arbitrary exercise of bondage right by the *pomyetchêkê* was rapidly bringing the peasantry to the point of rebellion. The inherent difficulties of the question were great enough, but the chief difficulty undoubtedly lay in the attitude of the estate owners over whom the autocracy had insufficient authority. Ukase after ukase was issued, ostensibly to

<sup>1</sup> Prince D. A. Golëtsin, *e.g.*, had earlier suggested that peasants should be given the right to possess movable property. Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. pp. 58-9. The essay was published in Amsterdam in 1769. (See Kleinschmidt, *Drei Jahrhunderte russischer Geschichte* (1598-1898) (Berlin, 1898), p. 131 n.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53. Professor Maxime Kovalevsky mentions (in his *Russian Political Institutions* (Chicago, 1902), p. 135) that Diderot presented to the Empress about this time (1767) a paper in favour of the emancipation of the serfs.

<sup>4</sup> Kovalevsky, *op cit.*, p. 134. For a full account of the proceedings of the Commission, see Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. pp. 95 *et seq.* Cf. also Semevsky, *Peasantry in the Reign of Katherine II*, and Priesnyakov, A. E., "Nobility and Peasantry in the Commissions of Katherine," in *The Great Reform* (Moscow, 1911), i. p. 204.

improve the condition of the peasants, but their provisions remained a dead letter. Strong as Katherine was, she was not strong enough to deal drastically with the aristocratic landed proprietors, who were the inheritors of bondage right, and who were at the same time the chief supporters of the Throne. However anxious Katherine might have been at certain moments to improve the condition of the peasantry in the general interests of the State, she was unable to carry her designs into effect, because the whole administrative machinery was in the hands of the class whose power over the peasantry it was necessary to curtail. The inevitable outcome of a deadlock of this kind was an explosion. The explosion came in the form of a peasant revolt led by Pugachev.<sup>1</sup> The rising was suppressed after a formidable campaign, but the incident afforded an excuse for frowning upon all open discussion of the peasant question. Raditshev, for example, was condemned to death "because in his account of a journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow he gave a fair description of the intolerable condition of the serfs."<sup>2</sup> The influence of Katherine, together with the fear of arousing extravagant hopes in the minds of the peasants, extended long after her reign was over. Open discussion of the agrarian question was for the time practically closed.

During the eighteenth century, however, a rule came to be established gradually that only hereditary gentry, or those who became gentry by service to the State, should be entitled to possess estates with serfs, or to possess serfs without land. When, under Katherine II, merchants were permitted to rise to the eighth class, those who did so were not permitted to possess estates.<sup>3</sup> Although this rule did not alter the then existing conditions under which bondage right was exercised, it prevented in a certain degree the extension of that right.

<sup>1</sup> See vol. ii. Book IV, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Kovalevsky, *op cit.*, p. 135. Raditshev (1749-1802) was exiled to a remote region in Eastern Siberia. He was permitted to return to European Russia in 1801; but he found in the early acts of Alexander I no prospect of reform, and he committed suicide in 1802. His *Journey* was prohibited in Russia up till 1905. It was, however, published in London in 1858, and in Leipzig in 1876. Cf. Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities of Russian Literature* (London, 1905), p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 485.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE QUESTION OF THE LIMITATION OF BONDAGE RIGHT IN THE REIGNS OF PAUL I AND ALEXANDER I

WHEN Paul I ascended the throne, in 1796, the peasant, in spite of numerous projects for the improvement of his condition, was still really at the mercy of his owner. The peasant had no right of complaint; he could not marry without leave from his owner, or without payment to the owner for his wife; he had no property in the movables he might have acquired; his obligations were undefined, and were usually burdensome; he had no right to demand redemption from his personal bondage, even although by some means he might be able to pay for redemption. The owner of serfs had practically unlimited power of punishment, and he might, if he wished, sell or bequeath his peasants, with or without the land they cultivated.<sup>1</sup> In short, the serf was not recognized as a man—he was a chattel or a beast of burden. At the same time his owner—the *pomyetschêk*—though an autocrat in his own sphere, was himself a serf of the Tsar. Russian life had come to be involved in a vicious circle from which escape was destined to be by a hard path.

The severe censorship of the reign of Paul I notwithstanding, a considerable body of influential opinion had gradually arisen in favour of the limitation of the rights of the *pomyetschêk*. This opinion was strong enough in 1801, the last year of the reign of Paul, to secure the enactment of the ukase of that year by means of which two important steps towards emancipation were taken. These were the modification of obligations on the part of the peasant and the limitation of the right to sell peasants without at the same time selling the land cultivated by them. The amount of *bartschina* which might be exacted was fixed at three days, and so far as Little Russia was concerned, serf-owners were forbidden to sell serfs without

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and the first half of the Nineteenth century* (St. Petersburg, 1888), i. p. 477.

land.<sup>1</sup> This was not much, but it was a beginning. The peasant question now assumed a new phase. The extension of the principle of non-alienation of serfs without land came to be the leading question. The *pomyetschêkê* facilitated the settlement of this stage of agrarian reform by the shameful extent with which they carried on the traffic in human flesh.<sup>2</sup> Immediately after his accession Alexander I ordered several projects of agrarian reform to be presented to the State Council. Of these the most typical were the project of Count A. R. Vorontsev, friend of Raditschev and sympathizer with his ideas, and the reactionary measure of Arakchêev,<sup>3</sup> a military martinet.

Between 1801 and 1803 an "unofficial committee" was entrusted by the Emperor Alexander I with the task of making recommendations on the peasant question; but their labours led to no practical result. While this committee was still sitting, the Emperor called to his assistance Count C. P. Rumyantsev, son of the Field-marshal. Rumyantsev had studied law at the University of Leyden, and had come to be imbued with Western ideas. In 1802 he handed to the Emperor a memorandum which contained a series of important suggestions upon a policy which he believed would lead to the gradual extinction of serfdom. The cardinal point in Rumyantsev's project was the inexpediency of permitting the liberation of the serfs without at the same time settling the land question. Proprietors, Rumyantsev says, in effect, will act in accordance with what they conceive to be their self-interest. If it is more profitable for them to allow serfs to buy freedom, they will sell. They will even liberate whole villages on certain terms. Therefore the proprietors should be allowed to do so, provided that they were willing to allot "arable lands to each peasant separately," or to give "the whole allotment to the community." Rumyantsev appears to be alone among his contemporaries in making the latter suggestion. His design was to render possible the establishment of communal landownership.<sup>4</sup> The Government was to exercise an

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 478.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Arakchêev maintained his ascendancy over Alexander I by means of "the crudest flattery" and simulated religiosity. (Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities of Russian Literature* (London, 1905), p. 34.) See also S. P. Melgunov, "Gentleman and Serf on the Eve of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Great Reform* (Moscow, 1911), i. p. 254.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 252.

impartial and strict jurisdiction, and to see that the conditions were properly observed. The new class of peasants formed by this process of liberation was to be definitely recognized by law. Rumyantsev supplemented his memorandum by a project of law or a proposed ukase. This document declares: (1) that the right to possess peasants belongs exclusively to the privileged class; (2) that this class should be endowed with the right to set peasants free by whole villages, "concluding with them bondage agreements";<sup>1</sup> (3) when whole families are liberated, the proprietor can arrange with each peasant to allot a certain area of land; (4) villages can be redeemed as a whole, on payment of the sum demanded by their proprietor; (5) "partial freedom" may also be granted in cases where land is legally allotted on condition of the payment of an amount of *obrok* determined by the master, or where a specific sum is payable by instalments instead of a perpetual annual payment. Where peasants were unpunctual in their payments, Rumyantsev recommended severe punishment—setting the unpunctual peasants on State work, drafting them into the army, and the like. The Council of State admitted that the proposed ukase of Rumyantsev was quite consistent with the existing law, and that it might be very useful; but it considered that the proclamation of it would excite the peasants to believe that general emancipation was approaching, and that they were about to obtain unlimited freedom. The Procurator-General, Derjavin, said that although in the old laws, proprietors had no rights over serfs, yet "political views having bound the peasants to the land, slavery became a custom which, being rooted by time, became so far divine, that great discretion is required to touch it without harmful consequences." The opposition to Rumyantsev's proposals did not come exclusively from the reactionary side. Some of the members of the Council of State objected to the proposed ukase on the ground that it would expose the peasants to the "avarice of the proprietors." The bondmen would be anxious to acquire freedom, and some proprietors would take advantage of this anxiety to lay upon their former serfs burdens, pecuniary or otherwise, which would ruin them. Well-to-do bondmen would thus be transformed into *bobili*, or peasants without agricultural equipment or capital. Notwithstanding these objections, the Council approved of the ukase. Derjavin, however, did not allow the matter

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, agreements as to the conditions of liberation.

to rest. He rode at once to the palace and laid his criticism before the Tsar. "A slave for his freedom will promise all, and then will appear to be unpunctual in payment. The peasants will then return to their former condition of bondage, or to even graver slavery, because the proprietor will take revenge for the trouble and loss which he has incurred. The interest of the State would also suffer, because the peasants, once free, may migrate, and their recruits and taxes will be rendered irregularly."<sup>1</sup> Derjavin appeared for the time to succeed in convincing the Tsar, but after further apparent vacillation, the ukase became law, and there was established the class of Free Grain Cultivators, or groups of peasants liberated by their proprietors on certain terms prescribed by the statute. The influence of his former tutor, La Harpe, seemed after all to have triumphed in the Emperor's mind over the forces of reaction.<sup>2</sup> The foregoing, and other related details,<sup>3</sup> show clearly what was the strength of the opposition to reforms even of a quasi-emancipatory character, notwithstanding the apparently strongly sympathetic attitude to them of the Tsar. He was not at that time sufficient of an autocrat to impose his will without difficulty upon the formidable body of landowners. Yet the ukase of 20th February 1803 was only a logical outcome of the manifesto of 1775,<sup>4</sup> which permitted a liberated serf to remain free without registering himself with anyone, and thus gave legal sanction to the class of freed peasants, or *Volenoötpush'chennie*, and of the ukase of 1801, by which such freedmen were permitted to possess land. These legal provisions had not been utilized to any material extent, and the new law was intended to encourage landowners to liberate their peasants, as well as to provide a certain amount of governmental supervision of the process, and to establish a new class of freedmen, to be known as Free Grain Cultivators, or *Svobodnêkê Khlebopashtsi*. The ukase of 20th February 1803 provided for the liberation of peasants individually, or by whole villages, with allotments of land or whole estates, under conditions arrived at by mutual agreement between the peasants and their former owners. These agreements were to be presented for approval to the Tsar through the provincial marshals of nobility

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 255.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, and cf. *infra*, ii. p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Very fully given by Semevsky, *ibid.*, pp. 254-5.

<sup>4</sup> See *supra*, pp. 231-2.

and the Minister of the Interior. After approval the conditions were to be observed on both sides in the same manner as the bondage obligations had been required to be observed. Individual peasants, or whole villages of peasants, whose obligations under the Act had not been implemented, were to be returned into bondage with their families. Rumyantsev's suggestion, that they should be recruited for the army or for the works of the State, was not adopted. *Dvorovie lyudē*, or household serfs, were also permitted to be liberated, and to enter the class of Free Grain Cultivators, provided land was given to them along with their liberty or was obtained by them otherwise. The tax per soul was to be paid by the Free Grain Cultivators in the same way as the tax paid by the landowners' peasants. The tax was thus not to be confounded with the *obròk* payments. On the other hand, the Free Grain Cultivators were to render the same military and *zemstvo* or local administrative services as the State peasants. After the land came into their possession, on the discharge of their obligations to the former landowner, the peasants might sell, mortgage, or bequeath it, but no division of the land was to be made into smaller portions than eight dessiatines per soul. Free peasants under the Act might also purchase more land, and therefore might migrate, with the sanction of the local government office, from one district to another, or from one province to another.<sup>1</sup> The following were prescribed as the conditions under which agreements for liberation might be made: (1) When proprietors of peasants grant personal liberty and give land to the freed peasants as their property, for a sum agreed upon between the parties, and paid at the time of liberation; (2) when the payment is made in instalments, the peasants meanwhile rendering definite obligations; (3) when the peasants, in return for the grant of personal freedom, remain to cultivate the land of the landowner, and to pay *obròk*, in money or in kind, for a certain number of years or perpetually (the amount of the *obròk* being, of course, fixed). The Minister of the Interior was instructed to observe (1) that peasants remaining the property of the landowner as bondmen should not be entirely deprived of land in favour of liberated peasants; and (2) that the proprietor, when he allotted land to liberated peasants, should divide it into separate holdings, so that each liberated peasant should have a definite piece of land.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. pp. 255-6.

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The new law came into operation very slowly. The reason for this appears to have been that the peasants, however anxious for liberty they may have been, were reluctant to convert indefinite obligations into the exorbitant definite burdens which many of the proprietors demanded as the price of liberty. During the twenty-two years which elapsed between the passing of the ukase and the death of the Tsar Alexander I, there were only 161 cases of liberation of peasants from bondage under the provisions of the Act. These 161 cases represented 47,153 souls of male sex, or a population of about double that number.<sup>1</sup> As there were at that time upwards of ten million souls of male sex in the possession of landowners, this number forms an insignificant fraction of the total. The following table shows how the movement towards emancipation went on during the years from 1804 to 1825 :

(Inclusively)	Number of Peasant Souls of male sex liberated,
1804-1808 . . . . .	20,747
1809-1813 . . . . .	10,508
1814-1818 . . . . .	4,696
1819-1823 . . . . .	10,057
1824-1825 . . . . .	1,145
	47,153 <sup>2</sup>

In the first period there is included the important case of Prince A. Golëtsin, who liberated 13,371 peasant souls for the sum of 5,424,618 rubles, or an average of 406 rubles per soul.<sup>3</sup> The sum was advanced by the Treasury, and afterwards punctually paid by the peasants as agreed upon. The obligation to pay to the proprietor a definite sum, either at once or in instalments extending over a number of years, as a condition of liberation, was undertaken by 28,944 souls, or 61 per cent. of the aggregate above mentioned. The minimum payment was at the rate of 139 rubles per soul ; the maximum in two cases being respectively 4000 and 5000 rubles per soul. In some cases the proprietors did not require any payment to be made to themselves personally ; but they required the liberated peasants to pay for a certain number of years an annual subscription to churches or to benevolent societies. Some of the branches of the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Bogdanovich, *History of the Tsar Alexander I*, i. p. 147; quoted by Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 266. See also N. E. Turgenev, *La Russie et les Russes*, ii. p. 50.



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Russian Bible Society, for example, benefited considerably by donations of this kind. The total of the fixed money payments is estimated at 396 paper rubles per soul, or 127 silver rubles.<sup>1</sup> The largest number of liberations took place in Voronejskaya *gub.*, where the estates of Prince A. Golëtsin were situated. Excluding Vilinskaya *gub.*, where all the peasants liberated (7000) belonged to one proprietor, who liberated them by will without land, although they were afterwards made Free Grain Cultivators, all of the *gubernie* in which the number of liberated peasants exceeded 1000 are in Great Russia. "It may therefore be said that the Great Russian proprietors alone used the law of 1803 for the emancipation of their bondmen.<sup>2</sup> Only seventeen proprietors were wealthy enough, or generous enough, to set their peasants free without payment. Among these was the testator above mentioned; the remaining sixteen cases included only 415 souls. In those cases where the peasants were required to pay a certain sum in *obròk* until the death of the proprietor, the annual amount per soul of these payments was from 6 to 25 rubles in Novgorodskaya *gub.*; 15 to 26 rubles in Nijigorodskaya *gub.*; 20 rubles in Petersburgskaya *gub.* Some cases of highly exorbitant payments occurred. Most of these cases are of women proprietors—widows. Thus in one case a woman of Simbirskaya *gub.* liberated 108 souls on condition that they paid *obròk* to her during her lifetime to the extent of 19 rubles per soul, and after her death a lump sum of 7000 rubles to the beneficiaries under her will—an original method of life insurance. Some pro-

<sup>1</sup> The following, however, makes clearer the actual payments made by the peasants for recovery of their personal freedom.

Payments per Soul.	Number of Souls affected.
139-199 rubles, . . . . .	900
200-300 " . . . . .	7,172
301-400 " . . . . .	1,667
401-500 " . . . . .	14,968
501-600 " . . . . .	907
601-700 " . . . . .	3,187
701-800 " . . . . .	44
801-1000 " . . . . .	11
1001-2000 " . . . . .	78
4000-5000 " . . . . .	10

*Cf.* Semevsky, i. p. 268 *n.*

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 267.

There was at least one important breach of the conditions of the Act. This was in Tavrecheskaya *gub.*, where 1452 Noghaïtsi were liberated without land. There were three other minor cases of the same kind. *Cf.* Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. pp. 271-2.

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prietors who were themselves under heavy financial obligations saw in the liberation movement a means of getting rid of these. Thus a proprietor called Shiskov of Vologdaskaya *gub.*, liberated 75 souls on condition that they should pay into a bank on his account 8500 rubles annually for eight years, and to himself for the same period 250 rubles. The peasants had thus to pay over 900 rubles per soul for their liberty—an enormous sum at this time and in this region. After the expiry of eight years they were not yet free of obligations. They were obliged to pay annually, in perpetuity, various subscriptions to the Humane Society, to the Bible Society, and to the Church, amounting in all to 8 rubles per soul.

In some cases *bartschina*, or work upon the proprietor's land, was included in the new obligations as well as *obròk*. In other cases mingled methods of payment sometimes included eccentric forms. For example, in a case in Saratovskaya *gub.*, a woman proprietor liberated 52 souls on condition that they should pay her a yearly *obròk* of 400 rubles, build a house for her of the value of 400 rubles, and pay 100 rubles for each peasant girl who reached fourteen years of age. Sometimes even the Act, which was intended to be an Act of liberation, was employed as a fresh device for imposing additional bondage obligations during the lifetime of the proprietor. For example, a woman of Orenburgskaya *gub.* liberated 124 souls on condition that they would weave her *obròk* cloth, give her one *pud* of pork, half a *pud* of butter, one goose, and one ram per year, and would not prevent her from taking from them people to add to her *dvorovie tyudē*, or household serfs.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the case of Prince A. Golëtsin above mentioned, in which the Treasury made a large loan for the purpose of securing the liberation of peasants, the Treasury advanced in two other cases 70,000 and 40,000 rubles respectively, and in one case gave, on account of distinguished services rendered by the peasants in question during the war of 1812, 20,000 rubles to their proprietor for their redemption.<sup>2</sup> The total amount advanced by the Treasury was thus about five and a half million rubles.

There were some cases in which peasants who were alleged to have failed to implement their obligations were "returned into bondage"; and there were some cases of retention in bondage in spite of the payments by the peasants. In Ryazanskaya *gub.*, for

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 270.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 271.

example, a proprietor who had received part of the payment agreed upon, refrained from liberating his peasants. Kozodaviĭev, the Minister of Interior, in reporting upon this case, reported to the Tsar that the peasants should be protected against arbitrary conduct on the part of the proprietors, and that "the establishment of Free Grain Cultivators, introduced for the mutual advantage of peasants and *pomyetschĕkĕ*, must not be turned into "a means of oppression of peasants."<sup>1</sup> The peasants in question did not receive their freedom until ten years after the original agreement, and even then were obliged to pay 275,000 rubles, with a further sum by way of payment to the trustees of the estate. There were some cases of actual fraud. A proprietrix of Saratovskaya *gub.*, for example, after having received payment of 700 rubles each from 262 souls, sold separately 26 of these souls to different people. Although this was reported to the Senate, and although the Senate ordered the return of those peasants who had been sold, this decision does not seem to have been carried into effect.<sup>2</sup> Some proprietors appear to have attempted to secure the favour of the Tsar by promising to liberate their peasants, and then to have refrained from doing so.<sup>3</sup>

The historian Karamsin said of the ukase of 1803 that it must fail of its purpose, because peasants of good proprietors do not want freedom, and the peasants of bad proprietors are too poor to buy it.<sup>4</sup> N. E. Turgenev,<sup>5</sup> who was one of the most fervent advocates of agrarian reform, regarded the ukase as a benevolent measure, burdened, however, with formalities which reduced it to unreality. Turgenev thought that these formalities were devised for the protection of the peasants, but owing to their being formulated without knowledge of the actual conditions, they exposed the peasants to arbitrary treatment by the *pomyetschĕkĕ*.<sup>6</sup> Turgenev seems to have leaned towards governmental regulation of rent, and to have been willing to consent to landless emancipation.<sup>7</sup>

From 1804, experimental reforms were effected in the "outskirts" of European Russia. The limitation of bondage right was introduced into the Livland Statute of 1804;<sup>8</sup> the peasants were

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> See his *La Russie et les Russes* (Paris, 1847).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 294.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

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emancipated in Estland in 1816, in Courland in 1817, and in Livland in 1819.<sup>1</sup>

Under an ukase of 1804, merchants who obtained the rank of gentry were permitted to buy villages on condition that they arrived at agreements with the peasants occupying them by which the peasants entered the class of "free grain cultivators," as provided by the ukase of 1803. They were not permitted to purchase serfs without land, nor were they allowed to keep *dvorovie lyudē*, or domestic serfs. Those merchants who had acquired the rank of gentry prior to the ukase of 1804, and who had become possessed of villages, were allowed to possess them for life, but were not permitted to bequeath them. In 1814 also the personal gentry—that is, the class of persons who, owing to their official position or their education, were recognized as gentry, were allowed to continue to possess peasants and *dvorovie lyudē* who were in their possession at that time; but they were not allowed to transmit them to their heirs. Personal gentry who had not reached the eighth class by service were for the future prohibited from obtaining bondmen.<sup>2</sup>

In 1816 a report was received by the Emperor to the effect that government officials were purchasing peasants, and were sending them into the Cossack military lands on the river Don, thus "ruining peasant households and separating peasant families."<sup>3</sup> This practice was at once prohibited.

In 1820 the purchase of estates with peasants in the provinces conquered from Poland was forbidden. At the same time non-gentry and foreigners who had been in possession of villages by *volchinal* (inheritive) right under the provisions of the law of 1775, were required to sell them within three years. Jews had long been forbidden to possess serfs, but evasions were frequent. Powers of attorney were given to Jews and others by estate owners, and by this means persons to whom the law forbade the ownership of serfs became in fact owners of them. In 1812 the practice of giving letters of attorney under these circumstances was prohibited, as well as the practice, which had grown up, of selling land with peasants to non-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 485. Semevsky quotes the following for details: Richter, *History of the Peasant Class in the Ad-Baltic Provinces joined to Russia* (Riga, 1860); Samson von Himmelstern, *Historischer Versuch über die Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft in den Ostseeprovinzen, in besonderer Beziehung auf das Herzogthum Livland* (1838); Samarin, *Outskirts of Russia*, vi. chap. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

gentry on the condition that the peasants were to be sold. Abuses had also grown up in connection with apprenticeship, the long terms of which involved in effect a form of bondage right. To meet this condition, the period of legal apprenticeship was restricted to five years. This provision was frequently evaded. Unauthorized persons (non-gentry, &c.), for example, kept *dvorovie lyudē*, and on being called in question produced agreements with the nominal serf-owner, providing that the serfs should be taught trades—the person making the agreement being frequently not a member of the trade in question, and the agreements being drawn sometimes for twenty or thirty years.<sup>1</sup> In 1817 Princess Bolkhovskaya agreed with a woman citizen of Kazan to give into her service a *dvorovie* girl for five years, for a payment of 200 rubles in advance, and authorized the woman to punish the girl if she misconducted herself. The case came to light through a complaint by the girl that she was being maltreated. The Senate found that this practice involved “a kind of *kabala* forbidden by law.”<sup>2</sup> Under a pretence a breach of the law is openly permitted, because after the lapse of the period of five years, the serf-owner could make successive agreements with the same party about the same person, and thus under this form there might lurk the sale of serfs to persons who had not the right to possess them.” So also abuses appeared in the system by which estate owners gave passports to peasants, permitting them to hire themselves to anyone whom they might wish to serve. The *pomyel-schēkē* were forbidden to make agreements about the services of their peasants, though this provision was sometimes evaded through the passport system.

A rule existed at the time of Katherine II providing that a free man who married a bonded woman became by that act himself a bondman—“*Po robye—kholop*” (by a slave woman you become a slave). This rule was abolished at that time, but there remained another, which was not abolished until the time of Alexander I—“*Po kholopu—roba*” (by a slave man you become a slave woman).<sup>3</sup> In 1808 the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 487.

<sup>2</sup> In the reign of Katherine II the bonding of free people even by their own wish was forbidden. Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 499.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 488. There were a few special exemptions from these rules even in the time of Katherine II. The pupils of a monastic school at St. Petersburg were exempt, and those of the Academy of Painters were partially exempt, from the rules.

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ukase limited the latter rule by providing that a woman of free origin who had married either a free man or a bondman could not after the death of her husband be made a bondwoman.<sup>1</sup> The status of illegitimate children in respect to bondage had been dealt with in 1783, when it was provided that illegitimate children of free women were taken into the class of State peasantry, or into State establishments, or otherwise as they might desire ; only illegitimate children of bondwomen were to be bound to the possessors of the mothers. In 1806 it was provided that the illegitimate children of soldiers might be given to estate owners for education, but only by sentence of a court, after full investigation and proof that they could not otherwise be provided for. Children so given became bondmen. But children given to *pomyetschëkë* otherwise than by this rule were regarded as being under military jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup> So also the illegitimate children of soldiers' wives, widows, and daughters are by the ukase of 1812 placed under military jurisdiction. At a later period the bonding of the illegitimate children of soldiers by estate owners was confined to those who were registered as bonded to them prior to the sixth census. In 1815 illegitimate foundlings who had been educated by personal gentry, clergy, or by certain inferior classes of officials, were ordered to become State peasants ; those who were educated by merchants or by peasants were declared to belong to the same class as that of the persons to whom they owed their education.<sup>3</sup>

Minor reforms and restrictions upon the exercise of bondage right by estate owners now began to multiply. In 1818, for example, the Emperor ordered that peasants were not to be required to perform *bartschina* on Sundays. This provision was extended to the twelve holy days and to the days of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker.<sup>4</sup>

The ukase of 23rd March 1818 recites the results of investigations into the condition of the peasants in the *guberni* of Minsk. It appeared that on the estates of some *pomyetschëkë* the peasants had been suffering from poor harvests and from epidemics among their cattle, with consequent scarcity of cattle for cultivation, and that their poverty had compelled them to mix chaff, straw, and maple

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 488.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>4</sup> The twelve holy days are Jan. 6 ; Feb. 2 ; Mar. 25 ; the 40th, the 49th, and the 50th days after Easter ; Aug. 6 ; Aug. 15 ; Sept. 8 ; Sept. 14 ; Nov. 21 ; and Dec. 25. The day of St. Peter and St. Paul is June 29 and the days of St. Nicholas are May 9 and Dec. 6.

leaves with flour in making their bread.<sup>1</sup> The ukase goes on to provide that the *pomyetschëkë* and the renters of estate lands disregarded the poverty of the peasants, imposed excessive *bartschina* upon them, forbade them to grind grain in their own hand-mills, in order that they might have to pay the milling dues to the estate owner or renter, forbade them to sell their products in markets outside the estate, without payment for permission to do so, and forced supplies upon them in greater quantity than they wanted, and at a higher price than the price of neighbouring markets. These practices are sharply condemned in the ukase. *Pomyetschëkë* are required to supply their peasants with grain for consumption and for seed. Until the peasants of an estate are secured against want, the use of grain for liquor-making upon the estate and the export of grain from the estate are forbidden. The punishment for neglect of these provisions is the administration of the estate by a State official. In cases where peasants have no working cattle by means of which their fields may be ploughed, the *pomyetschëk* is obliged to apply to these fields the whole resources of the *votchina* (or estate). Everything must give place to this duty, and when it is finished the peasants must be supplied with cattle as soon as possible. In the event of a peasant being sick on days when *bartschina* should be performed, or in the event of the weather being too unfavourable for work, the days are to be counted as if *bartschina* had been performed. In addition, the peasants are to be allowed to mill their own grain in their own mills, and to sell their own produce where they please. Excessive punishments are forbidden. The imposition of *bartschina* in excess of the limit prescribed by law<sup>2</sup> was prohibited.

This ukase was not generally applicable ; it applied only to the provinces formerly Polish. Even there it seems to have been a dead letter.<sup>3</sup> Like much other Russian legislation, there was no will to carry it into effect on the part of the people, and no means of seeing that it was carried into effect on the part of the Government.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 492. I was told by a peasant that in 1910 some peasants did this (in Mohilevskaya gub., e.g.). Though most of those did so from sheer want, some well-to-do peasants did so from motives of frugality, or because they liked the astringent properties of the bark.

<sup>2</sup> The law of Paul I limited *bartschina* to three days per week.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 493.

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While these abortive efforts were being made to regulate the interior economy of the estate system, the laws against selling peasants without land by power of attorney were being openly disregarded. A flagrant case of the open sale of peasants under these conditions at Urupinskaya Fair led to wide republication of the edicts against this practice.<sup>1</sup>

New penalties were prescribed. Peasants sold in this way, on the act of sale becoming known, were to become State peasants, and the purchasers were to be prosecuted under the laws concerning obtaining possession of the person by means of violence. This order also appears to have been abortive; for until the date of Emancipation, Urupinskaya Fair remained a serf market, where even Asiatics were to be found as purchasers.<sup>2</sup> It is to be observed that by a ruling of the Senate the prohibition of 1812 in respect to the selling of peasants without land applied alone to the selling of peasants through a third party by means of a power of attorney. The ukase of 1822 prohibited advertisement of sales of serfs in the newspapers, but permitted announcement through the local police in the town where the sale was to take place.

The question of selling peasants without land came up again and again during the reign of Alexander I, but at the close of his reign it remained unsettled.

The practice had been well established, at least from the time of Katherine II, of hiring out bondmen to factories,<sup>3</sup> &c., payment for their services being made to the *pomyetschëk*, or being devoted to the discharge of his obligations. The practice also had come to be established of sending bondmen to schools and to medical academies. They were even sometimes sent abroad to learn. When their education was finished, these bondmen were expected to return to their functions as *dvorovie lyudë* or as peasants. Both of these practices were subject to regulation in 1803. In the case of bonded students, it was provided that on the completion of their courses of study they should remain as bondmen for six years, and afterwards they should be free; meanwhile they should be provided with the same kind of food which they had had in the educational institution to which they had been sent, and should be exempt from bodily punishment. In case of complaint, the student bondman could appeal to the local courts.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, i. p. 493.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 490.



In the beginning of the reign of Alexander I the bound peasant was endowed with the right of redeeming himself in the same manner as the free grain cultivators.<sup>1</sup> In the Caucasus the bound peasants of Gruzia received the exceptional right of redeeming themselves in the event of the estate to which they belonged being sold by auction.<sup>2</sup> The rule was also established in 1818 that persons who had enjoyed freedom even for a short time should not again become bondmen.<sup>3</sup>

The close of the reign of Alexander I, notwithstanding a quarter of a century of discussion about agrarian affairs, and notwithstanding numerous ukases upon them, found the peasant little better off than he was at the beginning of the reign. The more progressive of the ukases were inoperative, and those which were less progressive made little difference in the peasants' condition. In one thing only he had gained—excessive punishments were probably rarer. The demands which had been advanced by those who were anxious for reform, and which had on occasion been sympathetically regarded by the Tsar, but which at the close of his reign still remained unsatisfied, were these: complete prohibition of the sale of serfs without land; definite limitation of the obligations of the peasants to their possessors; prohibition of the transference of peasants into *dvorovie lyudē* (that is, from serfdom with land to serfdom without land); recognition of the bondman's right to his movable property; and prescription of a definite plan of redemption.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 500.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PEASANT QUESTION BETWEEN 1825 AND 1844

ALTHOUGH the movement of the *Dekabristi* in 1825 was primarily a political and aristocratic movement, some at least of its adherents advocated the complete abolition of serfdom, and all of them advocated the foundation of "constitutional guarantees" against absolute monarchy.<sup>1</sup> The relation of the movement to the peasant question consists, however, rather in the circumstance that its defeat led to a period of reaction, in which agrarian as well as general political reform was almost submerged for more than a quarter of a century. While this condition successfully prevented any movement from beneath, it did not prevent the ripening of the elements which ultimately rendered emancipation inevitable, nor did it prevent discussions of the agrarian question in the "higher spheres." Prominent among these discussions is the treatment of the subject of bondage right by M. M. Speransky.<sup>2</sup> During the reign of Alexander I, Speransky had formulated his views<sup>3</sup> without being able to carry them into effect. Speransky's first important relation to the peasant question arose in 1826, when he became a member of the newly appointed committee upon peasants' affairs. The expression

<sup>1</sup> On the Dekabrist movement, see *infra*, Book IV, chap. iii. Baron von Vëzin, *e.g.*, one of the Dekabrists, advocated the emancipation of the peasants, with land, and also the preservation of communal ownership. Cf. Semevsky, ii, p. 386.

<sup>2</sup> Count Mikhael Mikhaelovich Speransky (1772-1839). Son of a priest, professor of mathematics and physics 1797, afterwards private secretary to Prince Kurakin. Victim of intrigue and banished to the provinces in 1812. Recalled to the service of the State in 1816. Served in Penza and in Siberia. Appointed Member of the Council of State in 1821.

<sup>3</sup> These views have never been fully published. They are to be found partly in N. E. Turgenev's *La Russie et les Russes* (Paris, 1847), iii, pp. 292-328. The account there given is supplemented by V. E. Semevsky (in his *Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, i, pp. 340-351 and ii, pp. 5-10), from documents in the Imperial Public Library at St. Petersburg. An abstract in French of Speransky's views was edited by Tsayer and published at Paris.

of his views began, however, seventeen years earlier, when he wrote his *Draft of Introduction to the State Laws*.<sup>1</sup>

In this document Speransky discusses the legal position of the bondmen, and outlines a plan of emancipation, which he thinks should be applied gradually. Slavery, he says, is of two kinds, political and civil. Russian bondmen not only have no participation in the exercise of the powers of the State, but they cannot even dispose of their personality and property. Civil freedom has also two forms—personal freedom and material freedom. The characteristic of the first is that no one may be punished excepting by the sentence of a court of law. The characteristic of the second is that no one may be obliged to perform a personal service otherwise than by law. In order that the peasant may be free in the first sense, it is, therefore, necessary to endow him with the right of appeal to the law courts, and it is also necessary that he should be separated from the estate owner in order that he may go to the law courts on a footing of equality with those against whom he has complaints to make. In order that the peasant may be free in the second sense, it is necessary that he may be able to dispose of his property as he desires, in so far as this is in accordance with the general law; it is also necessary that he should be exempt from the performance of a material service, and from the payment of taxes, or other obligations of a like nature, at the will of another person merely, and that he should be required to render such services or payments by law, or by agreement alone.

Speransky goes on to say that there is no difficulty in establishing personal freedom in Russia. All that is necessary is (1) to establish peasant courts and village police; and (2) to subject the recruiting for the army levied upon estate owners to the rules which apply to the State peasants.<sup>2</sup> But as regards material freedom, the case is different. The peasants have no property, therefore to give a right to dispose of what does not exist is merely idle. It is necessary to prepare for material freedom by granting to the peasants the right to obtain immovable property. From these considerations Speransky draws the conclusion that in the fundamental law there should be a general statement of the equality in respect to civil rights of all persons, without distinction of class.

<sup>1</sup> A manuscript preserved in the Imperial Public Library, St. Petersburg. The date of it is 1809.

<sup>2</sup> That is, that recruits should be taken, not arbitrarily but by rotation.

This was a counsel of perfection ; it was all very simple and direct, but the obstacles presented by the intricate Russian society were not surmounted—they were merely ignored. It is not surprising that Speransky's first draft, of which the above is an outline, was cancelled, and that in the second draft he modified his views regarding the ease with which personal freedom might be given. He now considered that the service of the State in the higher offices required special educational preparation. So also the possession of serfs presupposes appropriate qualities on the part of the possessor. An enriched peasant is not necessarily fitted by education for the care of peasants similar to, though poorer than, himself. In the second draft, Speransky protested against the landless liberation of peasants. Although Speransky was an ardent *Zapadnĕk*, he points out that in England and the United States, where land is cultivated by wage-earning labourers, these have "no steady settlement." Such a condition would, he says, be inadvisable in Russia—(1) because the military system and the need for the extended occupation of land require steady settlement ; (2) to cultivate the land in Russia by means of wage-earning labourers would be impossible, because of the extent of land and the scarcity of population ; and (3) the peasant who performs his legal obligations, having for his reward his piece of land, is incomparably better off than the *bobĭli*, or landless folk, as are the working people in England, France, and the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Speransky urged the institution of an Imperial Duma, to which only nobles and gentry should be admitted. He also suggested that the sons of hereditary gentry should remain only personal gentry until after ten years' service, when they then might be enrolled as hereditary gentry. Speransky sums up Russian society in a few striking phrases. "I find," he says, "in Russia only two classes—serfs of the autocrat and serfs of the *pomyetschĕk*. The first are free only in comparison with the latter. In Russia there are in reality no free people excepting beggars and philosophers. The relations in which the two classes of serfs exist must eventually extinguish every energy in the Russian people. The interests of the *pomyet-*

<sup>1</sup> The ownership of land up till the present time in the United States has been chiefly in the hands of the cultivators largely because of the relative scarcity of the population, the abundance of land, and its consequent cheapness. With the increase in the population and the advance in the price of land, renting has become common. The landless agricultural and mechanical labourers in the United States are very migratory.

*schēkē* require that the peasants should be quite subjected to them ; and the interests of the peasants require that the *pomyetschēkē* should also be subjected to the Crown. In the minds of the bondmen the Throne is the sole counterbalance to the power of their lords. . . . What could education be for the peasant but a cause of riot, which would mean either his greater enslavement or the subjection of the country to all the horrors of anarchy ? For the sake of humanity, as well as on political grounds, one should leave the serfs in ignorance, if one does not want to give them freedom."<sup>1</sup>

Speransky's plan of emancipation follows. This plan was intended to be carried out in two epochs. In the *first*, obligations were to be defined, and a court was to be established for the special purpose of dealing with disputes between *pomyetschēkē* and peasants. Thus without a formal law the serfs would become *adscripti glebe*. This would be the first step of their emancipation. Then the practice must be instituted of recognizing in all deeds, not the number of souls,<sup>2</sup> but the extent of land forming the subject of bargain. The *second* epoch should be preceded by various secondary statutes, and then there should be restored to the bonded peasants their old right to transfer themselves freely from one landowner to another. This last provision was, of course, in contradiction to Speransky's previous position in which he objected to the granting of personal freedom to the peasant without land.<sup>3</sup>

Such were Speransky's views upon the peasant question in 1809. We now pass to the Memorandum presented by him to the committee on peasant affairs, on 6th December 1826.<sup>4</sup> In this Memorandum Speransky recites the provisions of all of the laws relating to bondage from the *Ulojenie* onwards. He then compares the former with the then contemporary bondage right. Speransky's interpretation of the former bondage right is as follows : (1) Peasants were the property of the *votchina* (or heritable estate), and could not be separated from it either by sale or by mortgage. They could, however, be transferred from one portion of the land of a *pomyetschēk* to another portion. (2) *Dvorovie lyudē* who were full *kholopi* and their posterity belonged to the *pomyetschēk* personally as pro-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, i. p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> As is well known, the magnitude of estates during serfdom was reckoned, not by measurement, but by the number of peasant "souls" occupying the villages and subject to bondage.

<sup>3</sup> This account of Speransky's views is condensed from Semevsky. See *op. cit.*, i. pp. 340-7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 89.

perty, and therefore could be mortgaged or sold separately. (3) *Dvorovie lyudē* who were *kabala* people, or people serving for debt, belonged to the *pomyetschĕk* only during his life, and could be neither mortgaged nor sold. (4) *Dvorovie lyudē* who had been taken into the court of the *pomyetschĕk* from the peasantry serving in the *votchina* were counted as being on the same footing as the peasantry from which they came. The characteristics of the new bondage right were as follow: (1) Peasants as well as the land on which they live belong to the *pomyetschĕk*. The land is his immovable and the peasants his movable property. The land could be sold or mortgaged without the peasants, as the peasants could be sold without the land. The peasants might be transferred, taken into the courtyard of the *pomyetschĕk* (as *dvorovie lyudē*), or might at the will of the *pomyetschĕk* be banished without trial. (2) *Dvorovie lyudē*, no matter what their origin, are exactly the same kind of movable property of the *pomyetschĕk* as are the peasants. . . . In Speransky's opinion, the latter state of the peasants and of the *dvorovie lyudē* is worse than the first; it approaches nearer to the condition of slavery. It is true, he says, that the introduction of this system has been due to important causes—to the necessity of ensuring punctual payment of State taxes and performance of military service. Yet the inconveniences of such a system must be recognized. . . . "The conversion of peasants into *dvorovie lyudē* led to the houses of the *pomyetschĕkē* being inundated with crowds of idle servants, and the *pomyetschĕkē* themselves fell into senseless luxury and ruinous ostentation. New wants emerged among the *pomyetschĕkē*, and new taxes were imposed upon the peasantry, with the result that both fell into hopeless insolvency."<sup>1</sup> The idle crowd surrounding the *pomyetschĕk* not only lived upon the village peasants, but since they were counted as peasant souls, the soul tax and the recruit obligations to which they would otherwise have had to contribute fell altogether upon the peasants of the village. Moreover, since the *pomyetschĕk* supplied most of his wants by means of his *dvorovie lyudē*, though badly and wastefully, the growth of cities was impeded.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An instance of this may be found in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, where there is a lively description of a household in which this process had been going on. "This year (1806) the old count had plenty of money, having mortgaged all his possessions, and consequently Nikolusha (his son) kept his own fast trotter and wore the most stylish riding trousers, such as had never before been seen in Moscow, &c. &c.," ii. chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See also Prince Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1899), Part I. chap. viii.

In order to put an end to this state of matters, Speransky recommends, as a first and immediate step, cessation of the practice of granting "populated estates," or estates with serfs. In addition he recommends two series of steps—preliminary and gradual. As preliminary measures he advocates: (1) prohibition of sale of peasants without land, together with prohibition of mortgaging, or granting or giving in dower of peasants; (2) regarding as ineffectual the sale of land without the peasants who are settled upon it, as well as the sale of villages with small pieces of land, apart from the land which belongs to them, the selling of certain portions of a village with an amount of land less than that which is its due quota, and finally the selling of land with peasants, and the return of the land to the original possessor without the peasants.<sup>1</sup> The operation of these measures would result, Speransky thought, in the return of bondage right into its former legal position. The peasants would come to be tied to their possessor through the land, and would cease to be tied through the person. This would put an end to selling the persons of serfs, and would also put an end to the low opinion entertained in and out of Russia of the slavery of her peasants. By way of intermediate measure, Speransky suggested that the method of liberating peasants should be changed. Under the ukase of 1803 there existed the following limitations of the power to liberate peasants: (1) They could not be set free by testament; (2) they could not be set free by whole villages in such a way that the peasants might be made personally free, while the land might be given to them by lease; (3) peasants set free by one *pomyetschëk* were not allowed to settle on the lands of another under an agreement to pay *obrôk*. Speransky thought that these limitations should be removed, and that the provision under which the *pomyetschëk* was obliged to pay taxes on account of liberated peasants until the next census<sup>2</sup> ought to be altered. Semevsky, in criticizing these proposals of Speransky, remarks that the State might well forego the last mentioned point, but with the understanding that those peasants whose liberation was made the ground for remission of taxes should not be old or useless persons.<sup>3</sup> Semevsky also points out that the per-

<sup>1</sup> This provision was not included in the project of law which embodied Speransky's proposals.

<sup>2</sup> The period between one census and the next was fifteen years.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii, p. 7.

mission to liberate villages as a whole, with the proviso that land be given them on rental agreements, even although the agreements were entered into voluntarily, might have harmful consequences unless the agreements were subject to legal regulation.<sup>1</sup> Speransky's proposals amount to this—that the whole question could be solved by eliminating the obligatory element in the relations of the peasants and their proprietors, and by substituting voluntary agreement. But complete solution could only, according to him, be brought about gradually. The gradual steps ought, however, to be preceded by a reform of local administration. The first step in this connection should be the improvement of the condition of the peasants of the State.<sup>2</sup> When this improvement was effected—by the introduction, for example, of specific for indefinite obligations—the State villages might form a model for the villages of private proprietors. The difference between the State peasants and others would then consist in (1) the character of the police supervision, and (2) that *obròks* in the estates of the *pomyetschêkê* would be substituted for *bartschina*. It is not, however, very clear how Speransky proposed to apply his method of voluntary agreement to the case of the State peasants.<sup>3</sup>

The committee, as might be expected, saw in the suggestion of Speransky about the improvement of the State peasantry a means of dealing with the peasant question without the adoption of extraordinary measures. They hoped that if the State villages became models for the *pomyetschêkê* to copy, the best of them would make their villages correspond to the model, and the others could easily be coerced into doing so, and that in this way the question might pass without drastic answer. Upon the question of the alteration of the conditions of liberation, the committee recommended that

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 7. This is in effect a plea for rent courts. Semevsky thought that if the proposals of Speransky were carried into effect, the peasants would be, on the whole, in a worse position.

<sup>2</sup> Accounts of the condition of the State peasants at this time vary. Speransky says that they are not less impoverished than the peasants of the private proprietors, that their obligations are indefinite, and that the local chiefs of police are merely *pomyetschêkê* who are changeable every three years, and against whom complaints may be lodged. At the same time, the local chiefs of police (*ispravnikê*) have no such interest as the *pomyetschêkê* have in maintaining the conditions of peasant life. On the other hand, N. E. Turgenev speaks in 1819 very strongly against those who exaggerate the bad condition of the State peasants. Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 8 n.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., on this point, Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 8.



liberated persons must register themselves in some class, and that communities and State villages in which the liberated persons desired to register themselves should not be at liberty to refuse, although they should not be required to give them land. Liberated peasants might also form themselves into special communities of "liberated agriculturists," like the previous communities of "free grain cultivators." Like these, they would form special recruit divisions, with the right to transfer themselves from place to place under the usual regulations about passports. They should also be endowed with the right to purchase land.

Speransky was not the only advocate of changes in bondage right before the committee of 1826. Among other projects brought before it was that of the Marquis Paulucci, who had presented the Tsar with a memorandum on peasant bondage in Pskovskaya *gub.* In answer to the memorandum of Paulucci, the committee reported that although the abuse of their power by *pomoyetschêkê* had somewhat abated, it was very desirable that decisive measures should be taken for the prevention of these abuses, although too sudden changes were to be deprecated, on the ground that the public order might be imperilled. "The Government has only to support the law by offering in its own relations with the peasants an example of strict justice, and little by little to put legal impediments in the way of the commission of arbitrary acts, and this it is always doing."<sup>1</sup>

The committee, which carried on its labours for four years, continued to blow hot and cold. For example, on the intimation that the Tsar proposed to issue a peremptory order forbidding the sale of peasants without land, it observed that while many *pomoyetschêkê* would welcome such legislation, others who were "uneducated and of rough manners" might regard the measure as an interference with the rights of private property. Therefore, the committee proposed to silence any murmurs on the part of persons of this kind by countervailing concessions.

Meanwhile, apart from the committee, the subject of the sale of peasants without land was being discussed by the State Council and

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 10. This was no doubt true; e.g. on 22nd June 1828, an order was issued which provided for a penalty in the cases of banishment of peasants by *pomoyetschêkê* without reasonable cause. The banished peasants were not to be counted as recruits, and their wives were to be regarded as soldiers' wives—that is, they were not to be subject to *barschina* (*cf. ibid.*).

by the Departments of Law and State Economy. In connection with these discussions, Prince Kurakin proposed, (1) to consider bonded peasants as being divisible into two classes—peasants and *dvorovie lyudē*—to permit the selling of the first with land, and to prohibit the selling of the second on any conditions; (2) at the next census to separate the two classes, and to forbid the transference from peasantry into *dvorovie lyudē*; (3) the obligation to supply recruits to apply separately to peasants and to *dvorovie lyudē*, but to permit *pomyetschēkē* to send the latter instead of the former; (4) to raise the soul tax in respect to the *dvorovie lyudē*, such tax to be paid by the *pomyetschēk* himself; (5) to forbid the sale of peasants without land, but allowing removal of peasants by permission of the provincial authorities, and then only with guarantee of settlement in new places and without separation of families; and (6) to permit liberation of peasants by families for settlement upon lands obtained by themselves from the State, or from other *pomyetschēkē* or merchants. Two important members of the Council of State, Count Strogonov and Speransky, entertained views somewhat different from those of Prince Kurakin. They urged—(1) that the sale of serfs of either kind without land should be altogether prohibited; (2) that it was not wise to extend the rights of the owners of a *possession fabrik*<sup>1</sup> by permitting him to purchase serfs; (3) that the registration of *dvorovie lyudē* “to houses” should be forbidden; (4) that the sale of peasants and *dvorovie lyudē* with land, but without separation of families, be permitted; (5) that the sale of peasants and *dvorovie lyudē* “by removal” be permitted only on condition that the purchaser had land convenient for their settlement.

On 22nd April 1829 a special committee, consisting of the then existing committee on peasant affairs, with the addition of one member, was appointed to draw up a project of law. The final results of the labours of the special committee were—(1) a new law about the social classes, which dealt with the civil service regulations in respect to the gentry, clergy, citizens, and peasantry; (2) a project of law about *dvorovie lyudē*; and (3) a project about the limitation of the division of land with peasant villages upon it. The committee also proposed to leave in force, with certain modifications, the law of 1803 respecting “free grain cultivators.” The peasants liberated under the conditions of that ukase were to be

<sup>1</sup> See *infra*, p. 489.

held strictly to the obligations agreed upon by them as a condition of their liberation. In the event of their failing to implement their agreements, they might be confined in work-houses,<sup>1</sup> or, in case of continued failure, they might be sentenced by the court to be returned into their former state of bondage.<sup>2</sup> The ukase of 1803 had contained a provision that when villages of peasants were liberated with land, the *pomyetschĕk* should parcel out the land among the peasants, each peasant being allotted a certain piece of land. This provision, of course, was adverse to the communal possession and use of land; and probably for this reason was not strictly observed, yet, in so far as it was observed, it constituted a protection against the liberation of peasants without land. The provision was not incorporated in the new law.

The committee of 1826 demitted in 1830. In 1835 (March 25th) a new committee was appointed by the Tsar for the purpose of dealing with questions relating to confiscated estates, State peasants, and the peasants of *pomyetschĕk*. The members of the committee were all experienced in peasant affairs—the president was Prince Vasilchikov, and the other members were Speransky, Kankrin, Kisilyev, and Dashkov. At an early stage the committee decided that they must be guided by the principle that means must be found for “real but cautiously gradual transference” of the peasant from a bound condition to a condition as free as justice and the interests of the State might permit.

The committee divided the peasantry into three groups: (1) those with obligations to their *pomyetschĕk* not limited by law; (2) those whose obligations were moderate, and which were dependent upon the amount of land received by them; (3) those who enjoyed the right of free transference from one proprietor to another, and who cultivated the land under agreements. In addition to these three main groups, there were besides—(a) small peasants owning their own house and land, and (b) “free grain cultivators,” who possessed their land and who had, moreover, special rights. Those two groups were not included, because they were to be regarded as affording a foundation for the gradual steps. As regards the State peasants, they were regarded as belonging to the second group.

<sup>1</sup> This was proposed by Rumyantsev during the discussions prior to the ukase of 1803, but it was not adopted.

<sup>2</sup> This provision also appears in the ukase of 1803.

Throughout Great Russia and Siberia the State peasants were paying a definite amount of *obròk*, and were exempt from other payments and from *bartschina*. The committee considered that the transference of the bulk of the Russian peasantry from the first group into the second would be a great step in advance; but that in order to secure the "future peace and prosperity of Russia," it was necessary that the peasants should be further prudently transferred from the second to the third group—the group of free peasants working under agreements.

The next phase of the peasant question is marked by the appointment of the secret committee of 1839–1842. This committee was ostensibly appointed to deal alone with the obligations of the State peasants in the western *gubernie*; but it received secret instructions to deal with the whole peasant question. Its composition did not promise a settlement of any very novel description. Prince Vasilchikov presided, as he did in the previous committee. The other members were not conspicuous for the liberality of their views: Count Orlov, Count Kisilyev, Count Panin, Bludov, the Secretary of the Committee of 1826, Tutchkov, Taniev, and Count Strogonov. The manager of the proceedings was Khanikov.

The state of matters when the committee began its labours had not changed for the better since the previous committees had begun to attack the peasant question. The "free grain cultivators" were not more numerous, excepting through natural increase.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for the failure of the ukase of 1803 have already been alluded to. The forms were too complex and the amount of capital required was too considerable for any great number of peasants to avail themselves of its provisions. The views of the Government and of the members of the previous committees had been, on the whole, adverse to the landless liberation of peasants, yet the practical outcome of the committee of 1826–1830 was an increase in landless liberation. It seemed impossible to avoid it. The impoverishment of the landed gentry and the extremely incompetent management of their estates led to their selling their peasants when they could, and to the liberation of them on almost any terms when the peasants were unfit to

<sup>1</sup> In thirty-five years only 60,000 souls of male sex had been registered in this class. At the eighth census they amounted to 70,000. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 29.

work.<sup>1</sup> The Government and its committees found themselves on the horns of a dilemma. They desired the liberation of the serfs, but if they allowed liberation of peasants without land to go on, the collection of taxes became more difficult and expensive, and recruiting for military service might become more difficult also. In the Russian system the *pomyetschĕk* was not only serf-owner and proprietor of land—what was more important, from the point of view of the State, he was tax-collector and recruiting agent, although he was not directly paid for these services by the State. The liberation of the serf without land meant a complete change in the administrative system, especially upon its fiscal and its military sides. To liberate the serf with land was to take the land from the *pomyetschĕk*; and, after all, the *pomyetschĕk*, autocrat as he was in his own sphere, was the chief support of the higher autocracy.

The fundamental reason for the failure of the various committees to effect any improvement in the condition of the peasantry was not so much that they did not want to do so; it was that they began at the wrong end. A complete change in the methods of government was necessary to begin with.<sup>2</sup>

The landless liberation of peasants found a defender in the committee of 1835. This was Khanikov, who presented a memorandum in which he advocated the preservation of the possession of land in the hands of the gentry exclusively. He urged that the sale of land to persons other than gentry should be prohibited. From this it follows that if peasants were to be liberated at all, the liberation must be without land. He suggested that *pomyetschĕkĕ* should be permitted to liberate their peasants on payment by them of redemption money not exceeding 2000 rubles per family, or, in the case of a whole village, not exceeding 300 rubles per revision soul. Those peasants who were liberated singly in this way might go where they pleased, but when villages as a whole were liberated, the peasants should become "obligatory villagers," and should not be permitted to leave their villages without permission of the authorities. In order that they might have land for their support, they were to be obliged to enter into obligations with their *pomyetschĕkĕ*, receiving

<sup>1</sup> As we shall see later, this process went on at an accelerating rate as the period of Emancipation approached.

<sup>2</sup> That this problem was not grappled with even at the time of Emancipation accounts for the partial failure even of that plan to solve the agrarian question. Cf. *infra*.

not less than  $4\frac{1}{2}$  dessiatin per revision soul. In case the *pomyetschĕk* had not sufficient land for this purpose, the "obligatory villagers" might migrate to the land of another *pomyetschĕk* on making agreements for twenty-five years, or to the State lands on making agreements for fifty years—in both cases paying *obrôk*, and in both cases receiving permission from the authorities. If the agreements were not implemented, the peasants might be returned into the condition of bondage. These measures, had they been carried out, would have resulted in the personal freedom of the peasant, except in the cases just mentioned, and in confirming the *pomyetschĕk* in the exclusive possession of land—thus denying altogether the principle which through all these discussions the Government was endeavouring to establish, viz. that the peasant, bound as he was, ought to have a legal right to the usufruct of the land cultivated by him, as he had a traditional right to it.

A Memorandum by Kisilyev possesses great importance because of the circumstances under which it was presented. The chief points are as follow: (1) The *dvoroviĕ lyudĕ* must be reorganized; (2) recruits must be taken from the estates in the hands of *pomyetschĕkĕ* by rotation in the same manner as in other cases; (3) the allotments of peasants must be defined, and they must be granted the right of possessing movable property; (4) the right of *pomyetschĕkĕ* to inflict punishment upon peasants must be limited; (5) while the influence of *pomyetschĕkĕ* should be recognized, the village administration should be so organized that the peasants might be enabled to have recourse to the law courts in the same manner as the free grain cultivators.

Prior to the presentation of the Memorandum of Kisilyev to the committee, it was submitted to the Tsar, who endorsed it in the following manner:

"I have read this memorandum with special attention and complete pleasure. The foundations upon which the project is based seem to me to be very just and reasonable. I have no remarks to make upon it, and I permit it to be placed before the committee."<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding this formidable certificate, the projects of Kisilyev met with serious opposition at the hands of the most influ-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 33.

ent members of the committee—Menshikov, Panin, Bludov, Strogonov, Tutchkov, *e.g.* Their objections to the scheme were chiefly based upon the fact that it took no account of differences of soil, climate, &c., in different parts of Russia. This part of the criticism applied to the *third* point, in which it was proposed that the allotments should be defined. Kisilyev had proposed that the *pomyetschëk* should receive as his share half of the produce of the lands allotted to peasants, or one-third of the produce of arable lands and meadows. Count Panin argued that while in the northern and in a great part of Central Russia such an arrangement would not be unduly burdensome upon the peasant, it was otherwise in South Russia, on the Lower Volga, and in some parts of Eastern Russia. Bludov insisted that the scheme, if carried out as proposed, would tie the hands of the Government, of the *pomyetschëk*, and of the peasant, and would really constitute an impediment in the way of emancipation. Strogonov argued that in many cases the scheme would throw into the hands of peasants more land than they had cultivated previously, and that, owing to the absence of agricultural capital, it was improbable that this land would be cultivated to advantage. Moreover, in many cases the *pomyetschëk* would be entirely deprived of land. Strogonov also laid stress upon the different conditions which obtained in different parts of the Empire.<sup>3</sup>

The outcome of the labours of the committee of 1839–1842 was the project of law which was eventually embodied in the ukase of 2nd April 1842.

The principal feature of the project was the granting to the *pomyetschëk* of the right to enter into a mutual agreement with his peasants, under which he gave the peasants certain allotments of land, not in property, but in use. For this land the peasants were to undertake reasonable obligations. Peasants who concluded such agreements were to constitute a class to be called *Peasants under Obligation*. Kisilyev's proposal about mutual agreement was thus agreed to; but as there was no definition of the normal allotment, nor any fixed limit in regard to it, his recommendation on that point was not accepted. A relation was, however, established between the area of land allotted and the amount of *bartschina* which might be exacted from the "peasant under obligation." He could not be required to tender more than three days' *bartschina*<sup>2</sup> in any case, but

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.* i. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> That is, three days per week.

the number of days which might be required in relation to the amount of land allotted was fixed by special local statutes. Kisilyev's insistence upon the maintenance of communal ownership resulted in a provision being embodied in the project which rendered it possible for the management of the aggregate of the allotted land being vested in the whole community of "peasants under obligation."<sup>1</sup> Kisilyev pressed upon the committee the prohibition of the practice of sending peasants to work in *possessions fabriken*,<sup>2</sup> but the committee explicitly permitted the *pomyetschĕk* to set apart a certain number of peasants for factory work, and to take the *bartschina* due by "peasants under obligation" in that way; but the intention to do so must be distinctly stated at the time of transference into the new class, and must form part of the agreement. Obligations of another character entered into at the time of liberation could not afterwards be transformed into *bartschina* in a factory.

Under the provisions of the project, *obrĕk* might be substituted for part or all of the *bartschina* specified in the agreement, the equivalent of the working day being defined either for a certain period or for ever, according to agreement. The *obrĕk* at that time was expressed in the cereals most cultivated in the district in question; the average price of these cereals for twelve years being the basis for the determination of the *obrĕk*.<sup>3</sup> In the case of estates where the peasants were employed in industries, as in brewing, sugar-refining, &c., the amount of *obrĕk* was required to be fixed in relation to the necessary expenses of his family, the payment of his taxes, and the accumulation of savings. In the latter case the *obrĕk* might be greater or less than would be represented by the legal three days' *bartschina*.

The due payment of the obligations of "peasants under obligation" was to be guaranteed by the mutual guarantee<sup>4</sup> of the whole village community. If the community failed to pay the obligations of its members, it returned to the position in which it was formerly, until the debt due to the *pomyetschĕk* was paid.

The "peasants under obligation" were endowed by the project with a considerable measure of personal freedom. The restrictions which had hitherto been placed upon marriage among the peasantry, so far as concerned the new class of peasants, were removed. The

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 55 n.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, Book III. chap. ii.

<sup>3</sup> A process similar to the fixation of the fiars prices in Scotland.

<sup>4</sup> "Krugoviya poruka."



"peasants under obligation" had the right of appeal to the courts of law; they could acquire movable and immovable property (excepting estates upon which there are peasants) including houses (excepting in the capitals—St. Petersburg and Moscow). They might enter into contracts, engage in commerce or in industry, and they could establish factories or workshops. They could not be dispossessed of the use of land cultivated by them and allotted to them. As for recruiting, they were placed on the same footing as the State peasants. With all this, however, they remained "peasants under obligation" unless they received permission from the *pomyetschĕk* to whom their obligation was due and of the village community to which they belonged. In the event of permission being given, the village must retain upon its shoulders the burden of the obligation due by the peasant in question. If the *pomyetschĕk* agrees to let him go, and the community does not, the peasant can go only if no arrears of obligation are due, and if he is not drawn as a recruit. In such a case his land allotment reverts to the *pomyetschĕk*, and the village is relieved of the burden of his obligation. A "peasant under obligation" could also transfer himself into another class if he was able to arrive at an agreement with his *pomyetschĕk* for the payment of a definite sum of money, and with his village to give him a certificate declaring that there was no impediment to his transference. Whole villages of "peasants under obligation" also could on certain conditions transfer themselves.

The position of the *pomyetschĕk*, in so far as regarded his ownership of land, was left by the project where it had been formerly. He retained full right of *votchinal* (or heritable) property in his estate, including those lands which had been allotted to the "peasants under obligation." He could mortgage, sell, or alienate his land in any lawful way, the established position of the "peasant under obligation" being understood. In case of inheritance of a *votchinal* estate where there was only one *votchina*, it was provided that those estates upon which there were "peasants under obligation," could not be divided, but must pass to the "eldest heir by descending line."<sup>1</sup> The *pomyetschĕk* retained his right to hold a court in the

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky remarks pertinently that this association of primogeniture with the class of "peasants under obligation" must necessarily limit the development of the form of emancipation which the formation of that class implies. The practice of dividing heritable estates equally among the children of a testator is deeply rooted in Russia. Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii. p. 58.

village, and to prescribe punishments for offending "peasants under obligation." Although the peasants had a popular assembly in their *skhod*, the village administration was also to be conducted by the bailiff of the *pomyetschëk*, together with two aldermen elected by the "peasants under obligation." Not only has the *pomyetschëk* to take cognizance of offences against the village statutes and against the customary law of the village, but he is in a sense also the agent of the national Government, for it is part of his duty to see that State obligations are performed. For the hearing of causes in which "peasants under obligation" sued, or were sued by, *pomyetschëkë*, provincial committees were established.<sup>1</sup>

This project for a ukase came before the Tsar Nicholas I in October 1841. When it was presented later<sup>2</sup> to the Council of State, the Tsar was present. He made a lengthy speech upon bondage right:

"There is no doubt," said the Tsar, "that bondage right in its present condition is an evil, palpable and evident for everybody. Yet to touch it just now would be an evil still more ruinous. The Tsar Alexander I, whose intention at the beginning of his reign was to grant liberty to the bonded people, afterwards abandoned this idea as quite premature and impossible to carry into effect. I also will never venture to do it. If the time when it will be possible to take this step is yet very far, then at the present epoch any excitement about it would be only a criminal conspiracy against the social peace and the welfare of the State. The riot of Pugachev proved to what extent rioting might reach among the Black people.<sup>3</sup> Later efforts of this kind were always happily suppressed,<sup>4</sup> and such attempts will continue to be (with the assistance of God) the subject of special carefulness on the part of the Government. But we cannot hide from ourselves that ideas have changed, and to every reasonable observer it is clear that the present condition cannot be continued for ever." The Tsar then went on to say that "certain

<sup>1</sup> These committees consisted of the Governor of the Gubernie, who was President of the Committee, the Marshal of the Nobility, the President of the State Chamber, the Manager of the Department of State Domains, the Provincial Procureur, and two others chosen by the Governor from a list submitted by the Marshal of Nobility. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 58 n.

<sup>2</sup> On 15th March 1842. The Tsar's speech was on 30th March.

<sup>3</sup> That is, people of the soil.

<sup>4</sup> Alluding, doubtless, to the *Dekabristi*.

*pomjetschëkë* (though, thank God, a minority of them), forgetting their duty as nobles, exercise their authority in an evil fashion. To cause the discontinuance of these evil practices, the leaders of the gentry cannot find any means in the law, which does not at the same time impose limits upon the authority of the *pomjetschëk*. If the present condition is such that it cannot continue, and if decisive measures for the discontinuance of this condition are impossible without entailing general disturbance, then it is necessary at least to prepare the means for a gradual change to another order of things, and, without being afraid of change, coolly to discuss its utility and its consequences. We should not give liberty, but we should open the way to another transition phase, associating with it the irrefragable right of heritable property in land. . . . Means to that end are fully presented in the project of ukase now proposed to the State Council. While it is only a development of the existing law about free grain cultivators, it avoids the injurious principle of that enactment, viz. the alienation from *pomjetschëkë* of property in land. On the contrary, it is desirable to see such property for ever in the hands of the gentry, and this is an idea from which I can never resile. The new law gives to every well-inclined owner the means of improving the conditions of his peasants; but in no way does it force this upon him, nor does it limit the rights of property. It leaves everything to his good will and to the inclination of his heart. On the other hand, leaving the peasants strongly attached to that land to which they are registered as belonging, the project avoids the inconveniences which at the present time are operating in the Ad-Baltic provinces, conditions which have brought the peasantry to the most pitiful state, turning them into free serfs. These circumstances have induced the gentry of these provinces, at the present time, to ask for that which is now proposed in this ukase. In order to protect the interests of the *pomjetschëkë*, there is provided voluntary action on their part, and their own carefulness, as well as the interests of the peasants, will be protected by supervision of projects of agreements not only by local authorities, but also by the central Government, with the sanction of autocratic authority. To go farther at the present moment, and to adopt other and perhaps more extensive principles, is not possible. It is impossible to expect that this system will be adopted immediately and universally. Such a course would not correspond with the views of the Government.

In the law only the main principles should be set forth. Details will be worked out as occasion arises."<sup>1</sup> The Tsar went on to warn the members of the Council against premature disclosure of the project, and concluded by stating that the proposed ukase was only a first step in the direction of the limitation of bondage right, and that on the basis of the agreements which might be entered into voluntarily by the proprietors who availed themselves of the provisions of the ukase, another, and a principal, law should be brought into force of an obligatory character.

The terms of the ukase met with a considerable amount of opposition from many members of the Council. Prince D. A. Golëtsin urged that to leave the liberation of the peasants to voluntary action on the part of the *pomyetschëkë* was to render the ukase ineffectual, as no one would adopt mere suggestions. A better plan would be to limit the authority of the *pomyetschëkë* at once. To this the Tsar replied, "I am, of course, autocratic and self-potent; but I will never decide to take such measures any more than I should order *pomyetschëkë* to conclude agreements. This should be an affair of their own good will, and only experience can indicate to what extent it would be possible to effect a transition from voluntary to obligatory action."

Count Kisilyev accepted the measure on the understanding that it was intended only as an instalment, and that afterwards something better and more extensive would follow. Then the draft of a circular, which was to be issued with the ukase by the Minister of the Interior, was read to the Council, and the session was closed. Three days afterwards—on the 2nd April 1842—the ukase was signed by the Tsar.

The ukase was not materially different from the project of which an outline has been given. It laid great emphasis upon the voluntary character of the mutual agreements between *pomyetschëkë* and peasants, and upon the maintenance of full votchinal right on the part of the former. The obligations to which the peasant might be subjected in return for the grant of a certain extension of personal freedom were not limited by law; they were to be defined only in the contract. Once made, the contracts must remain "for ever unbreakable," except by mutual consent; and then changes might be made only in the allotments and in the obligations.

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 62.

Thus, although there was rendered by this ukase a diminution of personal bondage, this diminution was to be effected without material cost either to the State or to the *pomyetschĕk*, and wholly at the cost of the peasant, who was thus to carry the entire weight of this permissive reform upon his own shoulders. At the same time, the ownership of the land was to be even more rigidly than formerly reserved as the exclusive right of the gentry, and the peasants were still left in the yoke of land bondage. The ukase was undoubtedly intended to effect an improvement in the condition of the peasants, but the means by which this improvement was to be effected were left in the hands of the very *pomyetschĕk* who had, by the abuse of their power, brought the whole system of bonded peasantry into the pass at which it had arrived.

It is not surprising that the plan of limited and gradual emancipation under the conditions of the ukase of 2nd April 1842 failed egregiously.

Simultaneously with the ukase, two circulars were issued, one by the Minister of the Interior, which was published in the newspapers, and the other a "secret" circular to the governors of *gubernie*. The first circular warned the *pomyetschĕk* and the peasants that the ukase meant nothing "substantial," that it meant nothing more than precisely what it said—that complete emancipation was not contemplated. The "secret" circular required the governors to exercise the utmost vigilance in putting a stop to false rumours of the intention of the ukase, so that every cause of disobedience on the part of *pomyetschĕk* should be removed; and for this purpose they should "watch the direction of rumours among the people, and to this end should keep in constant communication with the officers of the *gensdarmerie*."<sup>1</sup> In case of the occurrence of disorders, these were to be reported immediately to the Minister of the Interior.

The next committee on the peasant question sat from 1840–1844. It concerned itself chiefly with the *dvorovie lyudĕ*, or the people of the doorway or courtyard. According to the classification of Chernyshev,<sup>2</sup> these people were in 1840 divisible as follows: (a) Domestic servants; (b) managers, clerks, those engaged in trade,

<sup>1</sup> According to Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 67, these words were added by the Tsar himself.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 113.

and those working in foundries, factories, &c., belonging to their masters; and (c) those paying *obròk* and serving in employment in other places. According to the Tsar Nicholas I, in 1843, the following were the class of *dvorovie lyudē* as at that date: (a) Those in domestic service at houses in towns, (b) the same in estates in the country, (c) *dvorovie* tradesmen, and (d) foundry and factory *dvorovie lyudē*.<sup>1</sup>

The numbers of *dvorovie lyudē* in 1840 were estimated by Chernyshev at 1,000,000 males, and by Kisilyev at 1,200,000, or between 9 and 10 per cent. of the total number of bondsmen.<sup>2</sup> The general opinion of the committee was to the effect that the class of *dvorovie lyudē* was not useful for the State, and that therefore it should be gradually extinguished. Bludov and Kisilyev, however, proposed to emancipate the *dvorovie lyudē* without land, and, in order to prevent vagrancy, they were to be required to register themselves in trade groups (*tsiechi* and *arteli*) in towns. In addition, they proposed to impose limitations upon the transference of peasants into *dvorovie lyudē*.

These discussions resulted in the issue of two ukases, one on 4th July, and the other on 10th July 1844. Neither of these had any real effect. They permitted proprietors of *dvorovie lyudē* to liberate them without land if they consented to liberation on terms fixed by the proprietor. These terms might involve the payment at once, by instalments, or by a yearly *obròk*, either till the death of the proprietor or for a fixed number of years. The *dvorovie lyudē* thus liberated were to be counted as free whenever the agreement was concluded.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 115 n.

<sup>2</sup> For estimates of the number of bonded peasants at different periods, see *infra*, pp. 418 and 590.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 131.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PEASANT QUESTION IN THE RUSSIAN LITERARY MOVEMENT

It would have been surprising, considering the large rôle bondage and its consequences have played in Russian life, if the contemporary drama, romance, and art were silent about it. The romantic movement in literature which stirred all Europe in the early thirties of the nineteenth century found in the lot of the peasant ample material for artistic treatment.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the Romantists idealized the peasant ; but, after all, in their hands he was a more real creature than the pictorial models of the eighteenth-century Classicists. One of the earliest among Russian men of letters to become infected at once with the new movement in art and with enthusiasm for the peasant was V. G. Byelinsky,<sup>2</sup> who afterwards became the Sainte-Beuve of Russia. In 1831 Byelinsky wrote a drama inspired by Schiller's *Die Räuber*. One of the characters in this drama is an old *mujik*, who says, for example : " When the old master died, the Barina ( lady ) began to tyrannize so much over us, that God preserve us from giving such a life even to a fierce Tartar, either here or in the next world. She beat us like dogs, sent us into the army, made us beggars, deprived us of bread and cattle, searched our granaries, broke our implement chests, and took money and cloth. Whoever was found guilty of some trifling offence might be sent into a far-distant *votchina*. One could not tell what next she might do to us. The chained men in the gaols were better off than, for our sins, we were with the Barina." The hero of the tragedy is the illegitimate son of a *pomyetschêk*. This outbreak on the part of a bondman causes him to reflect : " Are these people only born into the world to serve

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, by Balzac.

<sup>2</sup> 1810-1848.

the lusts of people such as themselves? Who gave this destructive right to some people of enslaving under their authority the will of other similar beings, and of depriving them of the sacred right of freedom? Who permitted them to defy the rights of nature and of humanity? A master can for enjoyment and recreation skin his slave, can sell him like cattle, or can exchange him for a dog, a horse, or a cow, separate him for a whole lifetime from his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and from all that he holds dear. Merciful God! did your wise hand bring into this world these reptiles, these crocodiles, these tigers that nourish themselves on the flesh and bones of their neighbours, and drink like water their blood and tears?"<sup>1</sup> Byelinsky was advised not to submit this play to the Committee of Censors, who were at that time all professors in the University of St. Petersburg, where Byelinsky was a student. He refused to be guided by this advice. His play was submitted, and was rejected on the ground that it was immoral. In the same year its author was expelled from the University. Byelinsky had previously written to his parents, saying: "In this composition, with all the glow of my heart, burning with the love of truth, and with all the indignation of a spirit loathing injustice, in a pretty vivid and true picture I represented the tyranny of people who have seized unjustly the right to torture beings similar to themselves."<sup>2</sup> Byelinsky was twenty-one years of age when he wrote his drama and when he was expelled from the University. Immediately afterwards he plunged into the study of German philosophy, especially into that of Hegel, which at that period was exercising much influence upon the Russian youth. The study of Hegel contributed to the modification of Byelinsky's views upon the peasant question, but he never became a reactionary.<sup>3</sup> He became, however, optimistic about the results of the efforts of the Government towards emancipation, and he thought that, owing to the absence in Russia of a law of primogeniture, the gentry

<sup>1</sup> See Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 296. For critical notice of Byelinsky, see Prince Kropotkin's *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature* (London, 1905), p. 288. The figure of Byelinsky is one of the most interesting and attractive among the men of letters of his time.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> He died at the age of forty-eight, of tuberculosis. A policeman waited to arrest him, should he recover. Had he recovered, he would doubtless have ended his days in Siberia or in a fortress. Cf. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 288.



must die out, and along with them the right of bondage and its effects.<sup>1</sup>

It was during this period that the so-called "circles," or debating clubs, began to occupy a conspicuous place as a means of intellectual development among the Russian youth. The suppression by the censorship of public discussion rendered private intercourse among small groups of persons who could trust one another the only means of communicating ideas and of developing plans of social progress. Many important personalities formed the centres of such "circles," and even although in some cases they wrote nothing, their influence extended widely.<sup>2</sup> Among these was Stankevitch.<sup>3</sup> Stankevitch had gone abroad in 1837, and had come to be inoculated with liberal ideas. At the house of a Russian lady who lived abroad, a discussion took place one evening in which Granovsky, the Russian historian, and others participated, upon popular representation and upon the expediency of throwing open to all classes even the highest offices of the State. After this discussion, Stankevitch said that, so long as the mass of the people were subject to bondage dependence, and so long as they were deprived of even generally recognized human rights, it was impossible to talk fruitfully of popular representation. Sooner or later, he said, the Government must remove this yoke; but, even when that should be done, there would remain the serious condition that the newly emancipated people would not be sufficiently advanced in mental development to discharge their new duties efficiently. It was therefore before all things necessary that education should be widely spread among the people.<sup>4</sup> The exposition of this idea made Stankevitch the centre of a "circle" which speedily exercised a considerable influence. In pursuance of Stankevitch's idea, his "circle" concerned itself chiefly with poetry and general philosophy.

Another remarkable "circle" formed round Herzen.<sup>5</sup> This "circle," which devoted itself chiefly to the study of history and social

<sup>1</sup> This was a mistake. The gentry were impoverished owing to the extreme subdivision of estates, which would, of course, have been prevented by primogeniture, and this subdivision saddled upon the land an increasing class whose functions were indifferently performed, and which therefore became to a large extent parasitic.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 299.

<sup>3</sup> 1817-1840.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Herzen (1812-1870).

philosophy, was composed of the poet Ogaryov,<sup>1</sup> the folklorist Passek, and others. Herzen had been at an early age saturated with the literature of the French Encyclopædists, and, in common with the Russian youth of his period, had been profoundly influenced by the French Revolution of 1830. When, therefore, the pamphlets of Saint-Simon fell into his hands, he was fully prepared to receive the gospel of "*Le Nouveau Christianisme*." Herzen's "circle" had been formed in the autumn of 1831, while both Herzen and Ogaryov were at the University of Moscow. The Dekabrist movement was fresh in the minds of everyone. With the enthusiasm of youth, the "circle" pledged itself to avenge the "martyrs" of 1825, and determined to form a new society upon the earlier model. This society was never established, but they found among their fellow-students an audience sympathetic with their somewhat crudely conceived ideas. These comprised the establishment of a constitution for Russia, the foundation of a republic, and meanwhile the study of political writings. Their propaganda was carried on with some boldness for three years. At the end of that period the "circle" attracted the attention of the authorities, and the members of it were arrested on the ground that they formed a secret society. The committee which was appointed to investigate the case found that the group entertained opinions which were against the spirit of government and were revolutionary. It also found that it was imbued with the distinctive doctrines of Saint-Simon, and that the members of the group had the intention to found a secret society, this intention being only frustrated by their arrest. Herzen was banished to the guberni of Perm; and although he was dealt with more leniently, owing to the illness of his father, Ogaryov was banished from Moscow. Herzen's banishment was a real advantage to him. He had previously lived almost altogether in Moscow, and he had therefore looked at the peasant question from a point of view largely abstract. But his experience at Perm brought him into touch with the realities of peasant life, and also for that reason brought him into conflict with Byelinsky, whose views at that time had been becoming more and more Hegelian. In 1840 Herzen went to St. Petersburg, and gradually won Byelinsky over to his views. In 1841 Herzen was again banished from St. Petersburg to Novgorod. At this period Bye-

<sup>1</sup> 1813-1877.

linsky wrote to his friend Botkin a letter which indicates how Herzen's views had touched him :

" You know my nature ; I abandon an old idea with difficulty and pain. I object excessively, but I transfer myself to the new idea with all the fanaticism of a proselyte, and thus I have come to a new extreme. This is the idea of socialism, which means for me the idea of ideas, the alpha and omega of belief and knowledge. . . . ' Sociability '—this is my device. What is there in me which lives as a whole when my personality suffers ? What does it mean for me when genius lives in heaven while the crowd is lying in the dirt ? What does it mean for me that I understand that the world of ideas in art, in religion, and in history is open to me, when I cannot share this with all who ought to be my brothers by humanity, my neighbours by Christ, but who are foreigners and enemies to me because of their ignorance ? . . . My heart bleeds and trembles spasmodically at the sight of the crowd and of its representatives. Grave distress takes possession of me at the sight of barefooted boys playing in the street, of ragged beggars, of drunken cabmen, of soldiers changing guard, of an official running with a portfolio under his arm, of a self-complacent officer, and of a proud statesman. . . . People see all these things, and no one is concerned about them, and yet this is a society upon a reasonable foundation, a phenomenon of reality. And notwithstanding all this, a man has a right to indulge in art and knowledge and in forgetfulness."<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing here directly upon the peasant question, but it is clearly involved. In the forties the post was by no means inviolable. Mention of bondage right even in a letter to a friend might have resulted in a domiciliary visit and in arrest.<sup>2</sup>

In 1843 Herzen lived in the village of Petrovskoë, and set himself to further studies of peasant conditions.

" The greediness of *pomyetschëkë* and the disorganization of the State peasants throw the peasants into a condition of poverty. . . . In what way are we better than the colonists of Surinam or than the Englishmen in India ? We are worse, because our peasants are better than savages. Modestly and sorrowfully our peasants

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 300-301.

<sup>2</sup> Even Count Kisilyev and Prince Vorontsev, in spite of their high position, did not trust the ordinary post at this time. Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 301.

are bearing their burdensome cross, having in prospect lashes, hunger, and *bartschina*. . . . All the while our Slavophiles are talking about our communal basis, about division of fields, and saying that we have no proletariat. These are good, and what they say is founded partly upon fact . . . but they forget, on the other side, the absence of self-respect and the stupid endurance of oppression. . . . Is it wonderful that in our peasant there is not developed any sense of property or of right of personal possession, when his field is not *his* field, when even his wife, daughter, and son are not *his*? What property has a slave? He is worse than a proletarian. He is a *res*, a thing, a tool for the cultivation of fields. . . . Give him the right to go to law, then he will be a man."<sup>1</sup>

In 1846 Herzen's novel, *Who is Guilty?* was published in Moscow, less certain passages excised by the censor. This novel deals with the peasant question, and gives details gleaned from Herzen's experiences.

Meanwhile Byelinsky was becoming afflicted by the condition of the peasantry, which he found in lurid contrast to the condition of those in Russian society who were occupying themselves with *belles lettres* and philosophical speculations on abstract questions.

"You do not realize," he wrote to Gogol in 1843, "that Russia must see its salvation, not in mysticism or pietism, but in the advance of civilization, education, and humanity—in awakening a feeling of human dignity among people lost for so many centuries in dirt and ordure. Russia needs rights and laws corresponding to sound sense and judgment, and justice and strictness in the administration of them. . . . The most vivid national questions now are abolition of bondage right and of bodily punishment, together with strict administration of laws that already exist."

This letter was written apropos of Gogol's *Correspondence with Friends*,<sup>2</sup> in which Gogol declares his repentance for his previous writings, and devotes himself to mere abuse of the peasant, whose "unwashed muzzle" he satirizes mercilessly. Byelinsky, who had been the greatest admirer of Gogol's earlier writings, because

<sup>1</sup> Herzen, quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

<sup>2</sup> "A very unwholesome book," Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

of their realism and their admirable humour, denounced his former friend with unsparing vituperation. "Preacher of the whip, apostle of ignorance, and enthusiastic agent of obscurantism and extreme reaction, panegyrist of Tartar rights! What are you doing?"<sup>1</sup>

Herzen left Russia in 1847, and did not return. Byelinsky died in 1848.

The first book of the great Russian novelist, Turgenev,<sup>2</sup> was published in 1845. Although Turgenev dealt with the peasant question in nearly all of his novels, he did not treat it as a detached problem, but rather as an integral factor in the social development of Russia. The effect of serfdom and of its abolition in producing a series of types which contributed largely to the total of Russian society constituted the material out of which he built up his artistic conceptions. Prince Kropotkin soundly observes that Turgenev did not trouble himself about plots.<sup>3</sup> "He painted vivid scenes in which his creations—all the more real because he had created them—lived and moved. He wrote no pamphlets about serfdom, nor did his characters, as in Byelinsky's early drama, fulminate about the indignity and iniquity of personal bondage. His peasants exhibited the effects of bondage in their character and in their every action. So also did the proprietors. They showed in every slightest thing they said or did the effect upon them of the bondage relation. This objectivity, vividly intelligible as it was in its result, "gave a decided blow to serfdom."<sup>4</sup>

The poet of the peasant movement of the pre-emancipation days was Nekrasov,<sup>5</sup> whose *Red-nosed Frost* and *Peasant Children*—one "the apotheosis of the Russian peasant woman,"<sup>6</sup> and the other that of the peasant children—"are real pearls in the poetry of nations."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Byelinsky, quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 311. See also *Vestnik Evropa* (1872), No. 7, pp. 439 *et seq.* For Gogol's reply, which is not convincing, see Pyepin, *Characteristics of Literary Opinions* (St. Petersburg, 1873), p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> *A Sportsman's Note Book.*

<sup>3</sup> Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94. In 1851 Turgenev was imprisoned for a month by order of Nicholas I, and afterwards relegated to his estate. He remained practically under arrest until 1855. *Moumou*, a powerful indictment of serfdom, was written during the month of imprisonment. Cf. Prince Propotkin, "Tourguéneff," in *The Scottish Art Review* (London, 1889), p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> 1821-1877.

<sup>6</sup> Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

Chernyshevsky,<sup>1</sup> in *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*),<sup>2</sup> exercised a great influence upon the discussions of the peasant question prior to Emancipation. He advocated the maintenance of the village community and the self-government of the peasant communes.

<sup>1</sup> Nikolai Gabrelovèch Chernishevsky (1828-1889) was the son of a priest of Saratov. For an excellent sketch of his influence, see Kropotkin, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-281.

<sup>2</sup> Published 1857-1862.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SLAVOPHILES AND THE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE *MIR*

AMONG the societies associated with the *Dekabrist* movement of 1816-1825 was the Society of South Slavs.<sup>1</sup> This society, under the vigorous leadership of Paul Pestel,<sup>2</sup> marks the beginning of the Slavophil movement in Russia. The reaction following the suppression of the rising of the *Dekabristi*, as will be described more fully in a subsequent chapter, drove the agrarian and political questions "underground" and into the "higher spheres," and executed or exiled the conspicuous men of letters of liberal tendencies. In the thirties of the nineteenth century the spirit of the previous time rose again with a new generation, and the Slavophil ideas came once more to be uppermost. They appeared then, however, as imported conceptions. The importation is probably traceable through Poland<sup>3</sup> and Bohemia from Germany. The German philosopher Herder had developed a thesis of the evolution of society, and in this thesis he had arrived at the conclusion that the "less a nation is pressed upon, and the more truly it is obliged to maintain its more simple and savage way of life, the more exactly does it also maintain its original conformation or type."<sup>4</sup> In the application of this principle to the Slavic peoples, Herder found in the *mir* an unique institution peculiar to these people and asso-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, Book IV chap. iii. The best account of this society is given by Garvatsersky in the *Moscow Journal of Russian Antiquities* (Moscow, 1882). See also slight account of it by Sophie Bogatina von Minsk in *Beiträge der Russischen Geschichte, 1816-1825* (Bern, 1909), pp. 43 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*, Book IV chap. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Probably through the Lelliwell and Miskievich group.

<sup>4</sup> *Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit* (originally published 1784-1787) (edition Leipzig, 1869), pp. 96 *et seq.* On the relation between the speculations of Herder and those of Darwin, see R. Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben und seinem Werken* (Berlin, 1885), ii. p. 209, and H. Nevinson, *A Sketch of Herder and his Times* (London, 1884), pp. 353 *et seq.*

ciated with their special characteristics. Herder's view was seized with avidity by the Slavophiles, who found in it the philosophical justification for their opposition to Western influences and for their adherence to the special forms of Russian development. The founders of the new Slavophil movement were A. S. Khomyakov,<sup>1</sup> the brothers Ivan V. and P. V. Kireyevsky,<sup>2</sup> Dmitri Valuyev, a nephew of Khomyakov, Constantine and Ivan S. Aksakov,<sup>3</sup> U. F. Samarin,<sup>4</sup> and A. E. Koshelyev.<sup>5</sup>

The rôle of the Slavophiles in the intellectual development of Russia, between about 1840 and Emancipation in 1861, was important. They were very hostile to Western European influence, and in that sense were averse from the adoption by Russia of the particular forms of progress which had characterized especially England and Germany. They were averse from the embarkation of Russia upon an industrial phase and upon a governmental policy which might result in the stimulation of the growth of the towns at the expense of the rural districts. They idealized the *mir* and the concomitants of rural life generally. They were not opposed to emancipation of the peasantry, but they held fast to the maintenance of the forms of village life which had grown up along with serfdom, and which had become closely associated with it. While the Slavophiles ran the risk of being interpreted as reactionaries, they nevertheless adhered closely to the view that the evolution of Russian society must be an organic evolution, and that any attempt to alter its character fundamentally by any change in methods of administration to methods which were alien to the spirit and temper of the Russian people must fail.

While some of the men of letters whose views have been indicated above were not unfavourably disposed towards the Slavophil movement, although they were not of it—as, for example, Byelinsky—others like Herzen, for example, were somewhat strongly opposed to it. In 1842 Herzen wrote, "Slavophilism brings daily abundant proofs that an open hate of the West is an open hate of all processes of the development of mankind. The West is the heir of the old world,<sup>6</sup> is the result of all movements, is the past and the present of

<sup>1</sup> 1804-1860.

<sup>2</sup> 1806-1856 and 1808-1856.

<sup>3</sup> 1817-1860 and 1823-1886.

<sup>4</sup> 1819-1876.

<sup>5</sup> 1806-1883.

<sup>6</sup> Herder himself had said, "We must warm ourselves at the fire of the ancients, till better times come round." Nevinson, *op. cit.*, p. 403.



humanity. Together with hatred and contempt of the West, there is hatred and negligence of the right of freedom of thought, and of all the guarantees of civilization. Glory to Peter, who departed from Moscow! He saw in it the roots of a narrow nationality which counteracted Europeanism, and which would separate Russia from humanity." <sup>1</sup>

This was the view of the *Zapadnĕkĕ*, or Westerners, who conceived that given the idea of social evolution, it was inevitable that Russia should pass from an agricultural into an industrial phase in a manner similar to that into which Western Europe had passed—that great manufactures must arise, that the population would exhibit a tendency to concentrate itself in towns, and that the individualism which characterized the West must eventually also characterize Russia.<sup>2</sup>

In 1848 the discussions about the *mir* received a new external stimulus from the Baron August von Haxthausen, who visited Russia in 1843, performing a journey very similar to that of Arthur Young in France, seventy years earlier.<sup>3</sup> Haxthausen published the results of his social and agricultural studies in 1848.<sup>4</sup> He described the agrarian community as he found it in various parts of Russia, and compared it with the agrarian communities of Germany, France, and England, attributing to it a considerable antiquity.<sup>5</sup>

The attribution of antiquity aroused Professor Chicherin, of the University of Moscow, to protest against the view that the village community of the nineteenth century was descended from, or was a survival of, an early village community of joint families enjoying a common possession of land.<sup>6</sup> Chicherin argued that the Russian rural community acquired its special character at a comparatively recent period, and that it was finally formed not earlier than the last quarter of the eighteenth century, under the influence

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> The Russian writers of the forties of the nineteenth century do not appear to have been touched by the views of Comte, although, so far as concerned the differentiation of national peculiarities, these harmonized with those of Herder.

<sup>3</sup> Haxthausen refers to Young as Sir Arthur Young.

<sup>4</sup> *Études sur la situation intérieure, la vie nationale et les institutions rurales de la Russie* (Hanover, 1848) (in French and German editions).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, i, pp. 95 et seq. (French edition).

<sup>6</sup> Chicherin, *Essay on the History of Russian Equity* (Moscow, 1858).

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of the land bondage of the peasants and the tax per peasant "soul."<sup>1</sup>

According to Byelyaev<sup>2</sup> the causes of the foundation of the peasant community of our own day were also in operation in Russia from the very earliest times; they made their influence felt, indeed, long before the ninth century.<sup>3</sup>

Since 1860 the Emancipation and its effects have greatly stimulated interest in the subject, and the early economic history of Russia has been practically wholly rewritten. The serious study of the *mir* really began with the publication of Orlov's book in 1879.<sup>4</sup> This was followed by a continuous stream of works, the most important recent contribution to the subject being the work of Kachanovsky, the publication of which began in 1900.<sup>5</sup>

The most fruitful and interesting special studies have been the detailed local researches into the history of individual communities like those of the so-called *volost mir* in Arkhangel, Olonets, and North Vologda.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile out of Slavophilism there arose a long series of political and philosophical speculations, and a corresponding series of political and economic groups and parties. On one hand there were various groups of Russian nationalists, with leader such as N. I. Danelevsky,<sup>7</sup> Leontev,<sup>8</sup> Katkov,<sup>9</sup> and on the other, the Narodnĕkĕ or People's Party, of which the most conspicuous figures were "V. V." (Vasili Vorontsev) and "Nikolai-On" (N. Danielson).

<sup>1</sup> As summarized by Kluchevsky (ii. p. 378); see also Kovalevsky, Maxime, *Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia* (Ichester Lectures, 1889-1890) (London, 1891), p. 70. The views of Chicherin harmonized with the theories of M. Fustel de Coulanges upon the prevalence of private property in land in early times. Cf. Fustel de Coulanges, *The Origin of Property in Land*, translated by Margaret Ashley, with an Introduction by W. J. Ashley (London, 1891), p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Byelyaev, E. D., *Peasantry in Russia* (Moscow, 1860).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 378. For emphatic approval of the position of Byelaev, see Kovalevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Orlov, *Peasant Economy: Forms of Peasant Landownership in Moskovskaya gub.* (Moscow, 1879). Orlov was the founder of the Zemstvo Statistical System.

<sup>5</sup> Kachanovsky, *The Russian Community* (1900), 2 vols.

<sup>6</sup> By Paul Sokolovsky and A. Ephemenko.

<sup>7</sup> Author of *Russia and Europe* (5th ed.) (St. Petersburg, 1895).

<sup>8</sup> K. N. Leontev, 1831-1891.

<sup>9</sup> 1818-1887. The editor of the "Moskovskaya Viedomosti" (*Moscow Gazette*).

The socialist revolutionary groups were indirectly the outcome of Slavophilism.<sup>1</sup>

The earlier writers, under the influence of the new Nationalism, were inevitably imperfectly acquainted with the real significance of the *mir* and its relation to allied forms of the village community. They idealized the institution rather than studied it. Like Herder, their humanitarian sympathies were more prominent than their philosophical insight.<sup>2</sup>

This applies to many of the later, and even to the more eminent of the Slavophiles, their congeners, and their allies. Slavophilism had a very important bearing upon the peasant question, because its influence was wholly directed towards establishing the position that in the coming emancipation of the serfs the *mir* must not be sacrificed. The Slavophiles held that, whatever may have been the course of development in Western Europe, social evolution must take a different direction in Russia, that the community was an essential feature in Russian polity, and that however the details of the emancipation of the serfs from personal bondage might be accomplished, the community must remain. In other words, the serfs must be retained upon the land, and collective responsibility and common cultivation must be recognized. The whole weight of the Slavophil movement was directed against the inroad of individualism from Western Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The discussion was not, however, allowed to take only one side. The *Zapadnĕkĕ*<sup>4</sup> called in question the desirability of the perpetuation of the *mir*. They were impressed with the development of Western Europe under a more elastic land system, and they looked with equanimity upon the disappearance of the Russian system, with its definitively organized community.

While the disputation between *Zapadnĕkĕ* and Slavophiles was still going on, the economical situation of the fifties was solving the peasant question to a small extent and after a fashion. Agriculture

<sup>1</sup> The Social Democrats may be said to be indirectly derived from the *Zapadnik* movement.

<sup>2</sup> Khomyakov (who wrote 1850-1870) was an important writer upon the philosophical basis of Slavophilism. He was followed by a large school of younger writers.

<sup>3</sup> It also made at a later stage against the adoption by its adherents of the collectivist ideas as represented in Marxism.

<sup>4</sup> Or "Westerners."

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was inefficient and unremunerative, the price of grain had been low for fully twenty years, and exports were comparatively slender. When the Crimean War broke out, export almost entirely ceased. The landowners found that serfdom imposed obligations which they had difficulty in meeting. Thus in the government of Pskov, for example, some of the most ardent believers in serfdom on principle liberated their serfs and employed free labourers.<sup>1</sup> Under circumstances of this kind, families of serfs migrated to the towns, and the numbers of free labourers increased.

Meanwhile the intellectual movement, stimulated by the Russian imaginative writers of the fifties, especially of the period immediately after the war—a period of enormous literary activity<sup>2</sup>—aided by the state of feeling induced by the disasters of the Crimean War, brought about a situation analogous in many ways to the period immediately succeeding the disastrous campaign in Manchuria. In this situation everyone, including even reactionaries, felt that the old régime had worked itself out—that military and civil incompetence had reached its lowest depths,<sup>3</sup> and that at the least serfdom must be abolished as a worn-out institution. The discredit into which the Government had fallen, the financial difficulties with which it was embarrassed, the depreciation of the paper ruble, and the onerous terms upon which alone the State could raise the funds necessary for the administration of the country, gave the liberalizing elements their opportunity; but years of discussion were yet to elapse before bondage right was abolished.

<sup>1</sup> From a correspondent.

<sup>2</sup> For a most vivid account of the writers of this epoch—Turgenev, Dostoevsky, &c., including Tolstoy, then fresh from the Fourth Bastion of Sevastopol and beginning his career as a writer, see Prince Kropotkin, *Ideals and Realities of Russian Literature* (London, 1905). *Kolokol* (The Bell), edited in London by Herzen and *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary), to which Chernishevsky and Dobrolubov were important contributors, were extremely influential. Several chapters in T. G. Masryk's *The Spirit of Russia*, 2 vols., London (1919) are devoted to the Slavophiles and the Westerners.

<sup>3</sup> Though the troops fought with great bravery, and Sevastopol maintained an obstinate resistance, the commissariat throughout the war was execrable. Provisions were stolen, arms were antiquated, there was great lack of munitions of war, and there were no roads. Some of the higher officials, even, were illiterate. The finances during the years 1854, 1855, and 1856, were in inextricable confusion. Even up till the present time, no exact account of the cost of the Crimean War has been rendered.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PEASANT QUESTION AND THE COMMITTEES OF 1844-1847

THE discussions of the peasant question in the earlier committees have been described in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> Little had come, after all, of numerous investigations, reports, projects of law, and even ukases. Bondage right still remained, and abuses of it were notorious. Meanwhile the Tsar, impatient at the long-delayed reform of bondage conditions, demanded that some decisive measures should be taken to check the abuse of their powers by *pomyetschëkë*. The Minister of the Interior, Bibikov, decided to make an experiment in one large region. With this in view, the committees of the western *gubernie*<sup>2</sup> were instructed to obtain from the landowners inventories of their estates, drawn up in accordance with definite instructions. These instructions required a statement of the obligations due to the landowners by the peasants. Where this information was not given in the inventories, the committees were empowered to take evidence on the subject themselves, and to fix the obligations of the peasants for six years at the amount which they found to be that of the existing practice.<sup>3</sup> This experiment had important ulterior effects, for some of the landowners, rather than submit to have the relations between them and their peasants regulated in this formal manner, began to think of liberating them altogether. Yet the compulsory inventories afforded little definite guidance in settling the peasant question. The labours of the committees were finished in 1846, and in that year Bibikov informed the Government that, owing to the great variety of conditions and of obligations, it was impossible to formulate definite regulations of a general character. He said, moreover, that the inventories were frequently inaccurate

<sup>1</sup> Book II chap. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Vilenskaya, Grodinskaya, Kovinskaya, Minskaya, Kievskaya, Volinskaya, Podolskaya, Vitebskaya, and Mohilevskaya.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii. p. 491.

and incomplete, and that the exaction of them from the landowners had not altered the pressure upon the peasants or prevented ill-treatment of them by the *pomyetschêkê*. To carry out such a plan successfully, a staff would be requisite of skilled persons in such numbers that the expense would be unendurable. The plan was therefore modified by Bibikov, and, as a first trial, a general form of inventory for Kievskaya guberni was drafted and issued by Bibikov in May 1847. The compilation of the inventory having been accomplished certain rules were then to be observed: (1) All the land which was in use by peasants at the time of the inventory must remain in their use without change, and the peasants might rent additional land by agreement; (2) *bartschina* must be worked for the allotments, but this must be defined; (3) *tyaglo*, or taxes, must also be worked out, but the amount of these was also to be defined;<sup>1</sup> (4) no other obligations were to be permitted. No carrying over of working days was to be allowed, excepting that one day might be carried over from one week to the next; and working days in the winter must not be exchanged for working days in the summer. In each year the peasants might be collected for twelve *sgony* days, or days of general work, but these must be paid for at a rate fixed by the General Governor of the guberni. The peasants must also furnish one night watchman, each man serving once a month.<sup>2</sup> Those peasants who had only garden land should pay *obròk* for that; but the amount of the *obròk* was to be fixed by the General Governor. If the number of hands working *bartschina* was not sufficient for the needs of the landowner, then the additional hands must be secured by payment of wages, the amount of these being determined by mutual agreement. In addition peasants must not be transferred into *dvorovie tyudê*. As regards the Church, peasants must cultivate the land of the village priest on their own, and not on the landowners' days.

In addition to the discussions and legislation of the forties in relation to the question of bondage right in the hands of *pomyetschêkê*, there occurred during the same period certain discussions and legislation about other elements in the peasant question. For

<sup>1</sup> Three days with horses for men and one day for women for full *tyaglo* families; and for half *tyaglo* families, two days for men and one day for women.

<sup>2</sup> This custom is still in use.

example, on 25th December 1841 an ukase was issued which had the effect of transferring the management of populated estates (*i.e.* estates upon which the peasants were in bondage) from the higher clergy<sup>1</sup> to the Government Department of State Domains. This step was regarded with approval by the peasants, who greeted the officials who executed the transfer with the quaint ceremonial of bread and salt.<sup>2</sup> But this measure was restricted in its application, and Bibikov insisted that the peasants on the estates of the inferior clergy should also be transferred to the State. This was done in 1843, so far as the western *gubernie* were concerned.<sup>3</sup> Another important measure of the same period was transference of the obligations of the State peasants from *bartschina* to *obròk*. The State peasants in many *gub.* had been little better off than the landowners' peasants. The greater part of the Government estates were leased, together with the peasants living upon them, the leases being granted to the highest bidder at periodical auctions.<sup>4</sup> This system led to much exploitation of the peasants and to many abuses: *e.g.* lessees of Government estates who possessed adjoining estates of their own compelled the peasants belonging to the State lands to perform work upon the private lands of the lessees; and sometimes the peasants were literally stolen by the lessees, who took them from the State lands and registered them as belonging to their own.<sup>5</sup> Through the influence of Bibikov, and in spite of the opposition of Kisilyev, the Minister of State Domains, *obròk* was substituted for *bartschina* on the State lands in the *gub.* of Western Russia. Kisilyev argued that the peasants were unaccustomed to money payments, and that it would not be possible to fix the amount of *obròk* without a valuation of the land. But Bibikov carried his point, and his action was justified by punctual payment of *obròk* by the peasants and by increased revenue to the Government.

The nature of the discussions upon the peasant question in the "higher spheres" during the earlier part of the period from 1844 to 1857 may further be gathered from two important reports presented

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* from the control of the monasteries, cathedrals, and higher clergy to that of the State.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 493.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Many of the lessees were Poles. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> There were many cases in the higher courts in which the lessees of State lands were accused of inhuman punishments, of beating peasants to death, and of violation of peasant women. *Cf.* Semevsky, *loc. cit.*

to the Tsar, Nicholas I. One of these was presented by the Minister of the Interior, Perovsky, and the other by Prince Vasilchikov. Perovsky was, no doubt, at heart a conservative on the bondage question, but he did not so declare himself, because he knew very well that his master was committed to the principle of the limitation of bondage right. His report is, nevertheless, a very able document. It may worthily be placed with the reports of Speransky and Kisilyev,<sup>1</sup> outlines of which have already been given.<sup>2</sup>

Perovsky begins by admitting that the liberation of the peasants is very desirable as a measure of humanity and Christianity, but he says that the question must be discussed in a logical manner, and not in merely philanthropic speeches. He goes on to ask what is it that the peasants want? Do they want entire absence of government, or do the peasants who belong to the *pomyetschêkê* wish to be like peasants of the State, and free in the same sense in which they are free? He points out that the State peasants, because they have obligations to the State, do not consider themselves free, and that even the Free Grain Cultivators do not consider themselves free so long as they are required to supply recruits to the army. They think, he says, that they should not be called upon to pay any taxes or to perform any duties of any kind. The people of Kostroma, he says, for example, do not consider themselves as under the jurisdiction of the Government, nor do they think that the governor of the *guberni* has any right to go to their villages, or even to pass through them, without their special permission. Relying upon ancient documents, they object to take out passports or to pay commercial licences, or in general to subordinate themselves to State authority in any way.<sup>3</sup> Such, Perovsky says, are the peasants' ideas about the nature of liberty, "without sense and very dreadful." From Perovsky's point of view, immediate liberation would be dangerous; for if it were granted, it might result in a general movement against restraint of every kind. Perovsky goes on to show that though the conditions of the peasantry vary in different places and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii. p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 331 *et seq.* and p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> That some Russian peasants have a conception of liberty which corresponds to the above statements of Perovsky's there can be no doubt. The *Dukhobortsi*, after they migrated to Canada, considered themselves oppressed because they were required to register their births, deaths, and marriages. They wished simply to be let alone.



on the estates of different proprietors, they are not so bad as many people imagine. He says, also, that among the peasants belonging to private proprietors there are many more who distinguish themselves in one way or another than there are among State peasants. Perovsky gives an interesting account of the attitude of the landowners to the bondage question at that time (1845). "Time and new conditions," he says, "have entirely changed the views of educated landowners concerning bondage rights." Formerly they were afraid that liberation meant the loss of their property, now they have no such fear. The reason is that the estate owners who cultivate their land by means of hired labourers find their labour more profitable than the labour of serfs.<sup>1</sup> The serf is unpunctual in the performance of his duties, and the landowner is constantly involved in disagreements with him. When harvests are deficient, the landowner has to provide for his serfs, whereas the hired labourers have no claim upon him under such conditions. For these reasons the landowners have satisfied themselves that serf-owning is ineconomical.<sup>2</sup> Apart from this circumstance, every year some landowners were the victims of peasant vengeance. Altogether it became clear to the more far-seeing estate owners that the really valuable portion of their property was the land, and that the serfs who were attached to it were by their attachment an encumbrance. If the ownership of the land could be secured, the ownership of the peasants might be abandoned. With such an attitude on the part of the landowner, Perovsky is, however, by no means disposed wholly to agree. The peasants' obligations to the landowner may not be very punctually performed, but this circumstance by no means justifies the landowner in dismissing from his mind the obligations he owes to the peasants. The landowner is obliged alike by his own interest and by the regulation of the Government to take care of his peasants. To do so is sometimes very difficult, but the requirement insures in some degree the existence of the peasant. Each newly born child is entitled to have provided for it its portion of land. In no country but Russia, says Perovsky, does such a condition exist. If bondage is abolished, all the contingent conditions

<sup>1</sup> At all events in certain *gub.*, e.g. in Saratovskaya, Tambovskaya, Penzinskaya, and Voronejskaya *gub.*

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky remarks that it is evident that the teachings of the Free Economical Society of St. Petersburg on the bondage question had not been without result. Semevsky, *op cit.*, ii. p. 138.

must fall with it. No one will secure provision for the coming generations. Everyone will act in his own self-interest, and everyone will have to seek his own shelter, and his own work and subsistence. Every landowner will divide his land into a certain number of allotments. Some will have these, and others will not have them. There will thus be a class of proletarian peasants. Perovsky remarks that the existence of such a class hangs heavily upon many other governments ; the agrarian question is not alone one of serfdom or liberation.

To Perovsky it is thus clear that the peasant cannot be liberated without land. But even if he is liberated with land, how are future generations to be provided for ? It is impossible to do this without in some way preventing the peasants from leaving the land. If they were allowed to do so, they would tramp all over Russia, and the collection of taxes and recruiting would alike be impossible. Perovsky thought that the landowners should be permitted to retain police powers over their peasants, who should be granted only limited liberty. To the suggestion that the Government should buy out the landowners, and so convert all landowners' peasants into State peasants, Perovsky interposes the objection that such a measure would not satisfy the peasants. The change of conditions would be too small, and the disappointment of the peasants would lead to disorders.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, what would be done with the landowners ? If a homeless and wandering peasantry might be regarded as forming a dangerous class, how much more dangerous to the State would be a mob of proletarian gentry ? The gentry had been always regarded as the supporters of central authority ; but deprived of their position and of their property, they must necessarily become hostile. In addition to these objections, Perovsky urged the magnitude of the financial operation which would be necessary. He does not seem to have considered the possibility of an operation of credit in which the Government should act, not as principal, but as intermediary between the landowner and the serf, paying the landowner at once, and collecting the redemption amount from the peasant afterwards. This idea, which was carried out in

<sup>1</sup> Perovsky was probably right in this anticipation. Even after Emancipation, as it was eventually carried out, there were disorders owing to the disappointment of the peasants over the meagreness of the change in their conditions.

the Emancipation Act, had already been advanced, but Perovsky seems not to have had it in his mind. A plan had been formed in the reign of Katherine II by Malinovsky, which involved the liberation of all peasants born after a certain date, thus providing for gradual and costless emancipation. This plan was considered and rejected by Perovsky on the ground that the free-born members of a family would have a legal status different from the older members, that family disputes would arise from this circumstance, and that the free-born members would necessarily be landless. Perovsky's practical suggestions were these: reconstruction of the local police system, adjustment of the pecuniary and "natural" obligations of the peasants, and definition of these as well as of their rights and duties.

A secret committee was appointed to examine the report of Perovsky. This committee consisted of the Tsarevich (afterwards the Tsar Alexander II), Prince Vasilchikov, President of the Council of State, Count A. Orlov, chief of gendarmerie, and Perovsky himself. The liberal influences in this committee were those of the Tsarevich and Prince Vasilchikov. Orlov was a strict conservative. The only important outcome of the appointment of the committee was the report of Prince Vasilchikov, which was presented to the Emperor Nicholas in 1845. Prince Vasilchikov considered that even in the smallest *guberni* the liberation of the peasants must be preceded by the reorganization of the local courts and of the administration. In the absence of these preliminary reforms, he thought that anarchy must ensue. From his point of view, while Russia was at that time (1845) not ripe for emancipation, and while the maintenance of the power of the landowners over the peasants was necessary for the maintenance of the power of the Government, the indefiniteness of the power of the landowner was mischievous, and ought not to exist. He thought that it was monstrous that the law should not forbid the landowner to appropriate for his own purposes the property of the peasant, and also that the law should not impose a limit to the extent to which the peasant might be punished by his owner. In order to remedy this state of matters, Prince Vasilchikov proposed as an immediate measure: (1) That the *pomyetschĕk* should be forbidden to punish the peasants to a greater extent than by fifty strokes with a rod. In the event of the peasant meriting, in the opinion of the *pomyetschĕk*, a more severe punish-

ment, the peasant must be sent to the local police, to be dealt with according to law ; (2) that the peasant who had discharged all his obligations to his owner and to the State should have full right to the use of his property, pecuniary and otherwise ; and (3) to impose upon the marshals of nobility certain duties, requiring them to see that the law was exactly observed, and that the abuse of power by *pomyetschĕkĕ* was prevented.

Throughout the discussions of the committee the dangerous word "liberty" was in general avoided. Whatever was to be done towards mitigation of the pressure of bondage must be done in such a way that the peasants would not notice any formal change. At all costs they must be prevented from forming ideas about a coming freedom, whose advent they might anticipate by perhaps violent action.<sup>1</sup>

Eventually the committee agreed upon a measure which afterwards became the ukase of 6th November 1847. This ukase permitted peasants to buy themselves at auction at the price of the highest bidder and would-be purchaser. In the event of the estate to which they belonged being burdened with debt, and in the event of their purchasing themselves together with the land, they were required to assume these obligations in so far as they remained unsatisfied after the payments involved in their bid at the auction had been made. But all the peasants upon an estate must participate in the transaction, and the whole estate must be purchased by them, excepting in cases where the estate was exposed for sale in lots, in which case they might either buy a lot, or alternatively the whole estate. No help was to be given by the Government in the financial arrangements, and the peasants who bought themselves out from private proprietors must enrol themselves in the ranks of State peasants. They would then be required to perform all the duties and to make all the payments exigible from the State peasants excepting *obrŏk*. The peasants who might thus buy themselves out, together with the land, would be vested in the full right of the property, to use, but not to dispose of, excepting by permission of the local courts and the Ministry of State Domains.

The significant point in this ukase is that in it the principle of

<sup>1</sup> That these fears were not altogether groundless became evident during the revolutionary years when illegal cutting of timber and "dismissals" of landowners occurred. Cf. *infra*, ii. Book V chap. vii.

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common ownership was recognized, for obviously no liberation could take place under its provisions without the creation of a new free community out of the previously bonded group of peasants.

On the passing of the ukase of 6th November 1847 there were now four methods of liberation of peasants in actual legal operation : (1) peasants might be liberated without land, although the practice was not approved in the "higher spheres," and by separate families, or even souls ; (2) liberation with land, with rights of separate ownership (Free Grain Cultivators) ; (3) liberation with the right only to use the land (obligatory peasants) ; (4) under the new ukase, liberation with the right of common property.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 143. A subsequent ukase of 15th July 1848 endowed the communities formed under its provisions with the name of State Peasants. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PEASANT QUESTION BEFORE THE MAIN COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEES OF *GUBERNIE*

THE revolutionary wave which passed over Western Europe in 1848, with momentous consequences in France, Italy, Germany, and Hungary, appalled the more timid among the Russian liberals, and gave new strength to the reactionary influences. From that date until the conclusion of peace after the Crimean War, the peasant question fell into the background, and the country passed once more through a period of reaction similar to that which succeeded the movement of the *Dekabristi*. A rude awakening came during the war, but not until the "external enemy" was got rid of by concessions could the "internal enemy" be dealt with. The campaign had been lost chiefly through the absence of that unity for which the Moscow State had always striven. Russian society was divided sharply into two classes—the possessors and those who were possessed. In spite of numerous attempts to limit bondage right, that right still remained, and the abuses which followed in its train were greater than ever when their consequences in general national disintegration and collapse were considered.

To every intelligent mind in Russia it became evident that no regeneration of the Russian people was possible without the cessation of bondage. The general "state of mind" was characterized by readiness for important changes. When Alexander II acceded to his father's throne, the optimism which in Russia always accompanies a change of autocrats inspired everyone with fresh hopes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> These are expressed in Khomyakov's poem, "To Russia," which was widely popular at that time. See Kornilov, "Peasant Reforms, 19th February 1861" in *Peasant Organization* (St. Petersburg, 1905) (by various authors), i. p. 298, and Khomyakov, *Poems* (2nd ed., 1868), p. 123. Expressions of the new state of feeling are to be found in Pogodin's *Political Letters*, edited by Barsukov (St. Petersburg, 1888), &c.; in Samarin, *Materials for the Biography of Prince Cherkassky*, vol. i. pt. i. &c., and in his *Khomyakov and the Peasant Question*.

Shortly after the conclusion of peace, the Tsar delivered a speech in Moscow, in which he said that although he had no intention of abolishing bondage right immediately, "the existing order could not be left unaltered." "It is better," he said, "to abolish bondage right from the top than to wait for the time when the abolition of it will begin from the bottom. Gentlemen, I ask you to think of the way by which this may be accomplished."<sup>1</sup>

Yet opinions about the tendency of the inner mind of the Tsar varied. In the Court circles he was looked upon as the defender of the privileges of the nobility, and as the opponent of Bibikov's plan of instituting *inventories* in the western *gubernias* for the purpose of discovering the precise relations of proprietors and peasants, and of defining these within certain legal limits. The Tsar gave a colour to this view by his dismissal of Bibikov<sup>2</sup> from the Ministry of the Interior in August 1855. On the other hand, outside the Court circles, in the wider circles of Russian publicists, rumours of the liberal tendencies of the Tsar's mind were frequent. To this view also colour was given by his relaxation of the laws against the Press, and by his university legislation.

The successor of Bibikov at the Ministry of the Interior was Lanskoj, who began his career as Minister by a declaration that he was entrusted by the Tsar with the duty of guarding inviolably the rights given by former sovereigns to the nobility, and that from his own sincere conviction he regarded the nobility as "the trustworthy supporter and prop of the Fatherland."<sup>3</sup> When, however, Lanskoj became aware from the lips of the Tsar himself of the purport of the speech at Moscow, in which the Tsar had committed himself at least to a modification of the bondage right, Lanskoj "passed over openly to the side of emancipation,"<sup>4</sup> and from that moment he became its strong advocate. Lanskoj chose as his assistant, A. E. Levshin,<sup>5</sup> who busied himself in collating the material collected

<sup>1</sup> Art. by J. A. Soloviev in *Russkaya Starina* (1881), No. 2, p. 228. See also Kornilov, *loc. cit.*, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> Bibikov had the reputation of being a stern but honest administrator, who, though not a man of high intelligence, was nevertheless opposed to the perpetuation of bondage right. Cf. Kornilov, *op cit.*, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> Kornilov, *op cit.*, p. 300.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. A. E. Levshin, "Remarkable Moments of my Life," *Russhoë Archiv*, (1885), No. 8, p. 480, and Kornilov, *op cit.*, p. 301.

<sup>5</sup> Levshin was a man of timorous character, a sentimentalist without talents for government. Cf. Kornilov, *op cit.*, p. 301.

by the governmental committees of previous reigns, in obtaining opinions about the practice of bondage from the nobility in different localities, and in circulating these widely. This was no unimportant service, for the discussion of the bondage question by the Press and in public had been strictly forbidden. Although all of the opinions collected by Levshin were not favourable to the abolition, or even to the limitation, of bondage right, yet many of them were, and the mere circulation of the memoranda promoted the idea of emancipation by familiarizing the public mind with the difficulties which had to be encountered in carrying it into effect.

The differences in the opinions expressed in the memoranda were due partly, no doubt, to the degree of intelligence or of generosity of the writers, but chiefly to variations in the density of population, in the fertility of soil, in the indebtedness of the landowners, and in the amount of available capital.<sup>1</sup>

In the Central Black Soil regions, especially in the regions round the cities of Tula, Orel, Riazan, Tambov, Voronej, and Kursk, the density of population had increased greatly, and the prices of bread-stuffs in years of deficient harvests were relatively high. This condition embarrassed the landowners, because they had in lean years to purchase supplies for their peasants.<sup>2</sup> In the forties of the nineteenth century, some landowners in Tambovskaya *gub.* liberated their peasants without land for this reason, thus escaping the fulfilment of their obligations to them.<sup>3</sup> One consequence of this state of matters was that land upon which there were no bonded peasants sold at higher prices than land which was populated by serfs, the value of the personalities of the serfs being included.<sup>4</sup>

It became apparent that in the Central Black Soil region, the most fertile in Russia, serfdom, with its incidental obligations, was an ineconomical system for the landowners, and that if the peasant were converted into a labourer, to be hired only when he was wanted, and to be left to shift for himself when he was not wanted, the profits to the landowner would be much greater, provided only that the full ownership of the land remained in his hands. Some of the land-

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op cit.*, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Evidence of this is to be found in Samarin, *Works*, ii, p. 175; in Prince Cherkassky's Memorandum to the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna in *Materials for the Biography of Prince Cherkassky*, i. part i. p. 23, and in Memorandum by Kokorov in Barsukov, *Works*, xv. pp. 488-490. Cf. Kornilov, *loc. cit.*



owners in this region were, however, not indisposed, on the one hand, to give small allotments to bonded peasants on their liberation, for the purpose of keeping them in their villages in order to provide a supply of labour, and, on the other, to exact from them substantial amounts by way of redemption. This was especially the case on those estates which were heavily burdened with debt.<sup>1</sup>

The conditions in the non-Black Soil regions were quite otherwise. There, in the estates which were populated by bonded peasants, the prices of land were higher than they were in the Black Soil *gub.*<sup>2</sup> These prices were high, not because the land was fertile, but because the bonded peasants brought through their industry, exercised largely otherwise than upon the land, large profits to their owners. According to J. A. Soloviev, the average price of estates with bonded peasants was 117 rubles per *dessyatin*, while the average price of land without peasants was only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  rubles per *dessyatin*. The landowners of the non-Black Soil *gub.* were thus in the position of deriving the bulk of their incomes from the labour of their bonded peasants. If these peasants were liberated, the land which might be left to the estate owners could not yield more than a small fraction of their former income. In order to obviate the ruin of such estate owners, it was thus necessary that a substantial payment should be made to them by way of compensation for the deprivation of bondage right. Moreover, in these *gub.* it was not the practice for the estate owners to cultivate their fields by means of their own implements. The implements, such as they were, belonged to the peasants, so that had the peasants been liberated without redemption payment, the estate owners would have been left not only without income, but without the agricultural capital necessary to cultivate their lands by means of hired labourers.

In the prairie lands of Great Russia and in the Little Russian *gub.* the conditions were of another character. There the population was scanty, and it was necessary to adopt measures to secure a sufficient supply of working hands. This had been accomplished

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, V. E., *Peasant Question in Russia in the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century* (St. Petersburg, 1888), ii. p. 617; and Ignatovich, E. E., *Landowners' Peasants on the Eve of Emancipation* (Moscow, 1910), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> According to Koshelyev, about 25 per cent. higher. *Notes*, pp. 135-7. Quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

by means of bondage, and the estate owners feared that periodical scarcity of labour might ensue if the peasants were liberated. Nevertheless, many of the landowners were disposed towards liberation, provided a system were adopted which would tend to keep the peasants upon the land. For this reason they were attracted to the system of *Bauernland*, which involved the allotment of land to peasants for their perpetual use; but the landowners thought that to this there should be attached some form of retention of their jurisdiction over the peasants, so that they might not be free to leave these allotments.

In the south-western *gub.* and in portions of Little Russia the cultivation of beets for the manufacture of sugar had come to be very profitable. This cultivation was found to be most advantageously conducted by means of hired labour. In these districts the idea of landless liberation of peasants was very popular, the more so since in many places it had not been the practice to give perpetual use of land even to bonded peasants.<sup>1</sup>

The opinion of the landowners in different districts thus varied with their economical conditions. The recital of facts has shown also that an uniform method of dealing with the bondage question would not be a just method.

Out of these memoranda there grew numerous projects for the settlement of peasant affairs, the most conspicuous being those of Kavelin,<sup>2</sup> Samarin, Pozen, Prince Cherkassky, Koshelyev, and Unkovsky. The variation in the economical situation in various regions determined for the most part the character of those projects, though they were also determined by the degree of insight into the peasant question which their authors possessed. All of them, however, were ardent advocates of emancipation and all of them were among the most talented publicists of their time. The projects were not drafted simultaneously. This is an important fact, because the peasant situation, as well as the state of the public mind regarding it, developed with great rapidity, and projects which were

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> K. D. Kavelin was Professor of Legal History in the University of Moscow. He had prepared a memorandum for the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna upon the liberation of the peasants upon her estates in Poltavskaya *gub.* Cf. Kovalevsky, M., *Russian Political Institutions* (Chicago, 1902), p. 197. For a sketch of Kavelin, see "K. D. Kavelin," by B. E. Siromatnikov, in *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. pp. 136 *et seq.*

advanced at the moment of their formation speedily became out of date.

The projects of Samarin and of Cherkassky were concerned chiefly with the Black Soil region. Both were based upon the law of 2nd April 1842, on the question of temporarily bound peasants, and both proposed to give greater freedom for the conclusion of voluntary agreements between peasants and landowners. Neither Samarin nor Cherkassky regarded it as possible that bondage right could be abolished at a stroke. The project of Pozen involved the purchase of lots by peasants, but he left the dimensions of the lots and the prices of them to be settled by voluntary agreement. The schemes of Kavelin and of Koshelyev were more radical. They were intended to apply to the non-Black Soil lands, as well as to the Black Soil, although the fundamental difference between these two regions was fully recognized. Admitting that in the non-Black Soil regions, the income of the landowner was derived chiefly from the labours of his bonded peasants otherwise than upon the land, they regarded compensation for the abolition of bondage right as indispensable. Still more radical was Unkovsky, who, referring chiefly to the non-Black Soil *gub.*, objected to all transition measures involving, as these must, the gradual weakening of the power of the landowner, and proposed to buy out at once the whole of the rights of the landowner in his bonded peasants, whether these rights arose from earnings from land or otherwise, and to buy out also the land which the landowner might give to the peasants. The purchase price ought, in his view, to be paid at once by the Government, and afterwards part of the price was to be recovered from the peasants themselves, and part was to be defrayed out of the general revenues of the State. This payment by the Government was to be effected by means of a loan repayable by instalments.<sup>1</sup> Some of these memoranda<sup>2</sup> were published and were followed by "hot discussions."<sup>3</sup> The Minister of the Interior, Lanskoj, and his assistant, Levshin, were opposed to the use of the resources or the credit of the State in any operation for the buying out of the interests of the landowners, partly because the imperial finances were at that time in a bad con-

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Not yet, however, those of Koshelyev or Unkovsky.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Levshin, "Remarkable Moments of my Life," *Russ. Archiv.* (1885), No. 8, p. 496, and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

dition, and partly because "they did not understand the meaning of the proposed credit operations."<sup>1</sup> At that moment the Government seems to have desired to avoid any autocratic action, and to give the landowners an opportunity to offer by some sacrifice on their part to settle the agrarian question on terms not too burdensome for the peasants. At the time of the coronation of Alexander II, in September 1856, Levshin undertook the delicate mission of sounding upon the peasant question the aristocrats assembled at Moscow. Nothing came of this mission excepting that the Lithuanian nobles, who were excited about the "inventories," accepted the invitation of the Government to discuss the question. The other members of the nobility, although they recognized the necessity of bondage reform, distrusted the bureaucracy, and objected to edicts suddenly promulgated by the Government.<sup>2</sup> The Tsar decided to take advantage of the acquiescence of the Lithuanian nobility, even although it seemed to be inspired by inferior motives, and instructions were immediately given to Nazimov, General Governor of Volinskaya *gub.*, in Lithuania, to convene the local chiefs of the nobility, and to invite them to suggest the best means for the improvement of the conditions of the peasants, without regard to existing laws or previous discussions. Contemporaneously with this action, the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna<sup>3</sup> asked to be informed on what terms she ought to liberate the peasants on estates belonging to her in Poltavskaya *gub.* Lanskoy then proposed to form a committee on the old model, and a committee was appointed, with the Tsar Alexander II as president, and Lanskoy, Minister of Interior, Prince Orlov, President of the Council of State, Prince Dolgorukov, Count Bludov, Count Adlerberg, Muraviev, Chevkin, and Broka, Ministers of other State Departments, with Prince Gagarin, Baron Korf, and General Rostovtsev, members of the Council of State, as members of the committee.<sup>4</sup>

In December 1856 Lanskoy presented a report drawn up by Levshin, in which he recommended a gradual liberation of the peasants with allotments, the landowners receiving compensation for

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Samarin, *Works*, ii. p. 137, and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Princess Frederica Charlotte of Wurtemberg, widow of the Grand Duke Mikhail, son of Paul I. She was rebaptized in the Greek Orthodox Church as Elena Pavlovna.

<sup>4</sup> Herein afterwards referred to as the Main Committee.

the allotments, and provisionally also compensation for the deprivation of the right of personal bondage. Rules for the cultivation of the land were to be imposed by local committees consisting of landowners. The compensation was not, however, to be paid by, or with the aid of, the State. The land must remain the property of the landowner, but the subsistence of the peasant would be secured by the use of their allotments in perpetuity. In the Black Soil region the peasants should receive their personal liberty freely; but in the non-Black Soil *gub.*, in order to save the landowners from bankruptcy, the payments for the land, which were to extend over ten or fifteen years, were to be artificially enhanced in order to include a sum which would be in effect a payment for liberation from personal bondage. The committee had not made any material progress by August 1857, and on that date the Tsar appointed his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, as a member of the committee. The Grand Duke had always been regarded as a man of liberal views, and his appointment led to "stormy meetings."<sup>1</sup> On 18th August 1857 the committee decided that improvement in the condition of the landowners' peasants should be introduced gradually by three stages. In the first stage the Minister of the Interior was to collect the necessary facts by means of communication with the local administrations and with experienced landowners, but without publicity. After this process, for which no period was set, an ukase should be issued giving permission to landowners to liberate their peasants by whole villages on varying conditions, independently of the ukase of 1803, concerning Free Grain Cultivators, by means of voluntary agreements and by consent of the Government; and a project should be introduced into the State Council embodying provisions for the limitation of the rights of landowners. Finally, peasants' rights should be made equivalent to those of other classes.<sup>2</sup> The next step of the committee was the drawing up of a series of questions, which were proposed to the members of the committee and to certain other persons. Most of these questions related to palliative measures which had been discussed in the memoranda of U. F. Samarin, Prince Cherkassky, and others. Many of the members of

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Levshin thought that this measure simply meant postponement of the peasant question; but it seemed to meet the views of the Tsar at the time. Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 310, and Levshin, "Remarkable Moments of my Life," *Russ. Archiv.* (1885), No. 8, p. 523.

the committee seemed to flatter themselves with the hope that the troublesome question of the abolition of bondage right had been put to sleep.<sup>1</sup> Such was the condition of affairs in August 1857, but in October of the same year, Nazimov arrived at St. Petersburg with the results of his conferences with the Lithuanian nobility. The proprietors of the estates in three *gubernie* of the region, desirous of avoiding the interference of the Government in the relations between them and their peasants, announced their intention to liberate their peasants without compensation and without land allotments. The committee discussed this announcement for three days without arriving at any conclusion. In spite of the long discussions, the bald facts of life took the committee at unawares. They were on the horns of a dilemma. If they permitted landless liberation in Lithuania, it might spread farther, and create a class of landless, and therefore discontented, peasants; if they prohibited it, they ran the risk of provoking hostility to the Crown on the part of the Lithuanian nobility, already disturbed by what they considered as the arbitrary infringement of their privileges involved in the system of obligatory "inventories."

The Tsar, "enraged at the timidity of the committee,"<sup>2</sup> peremptorily ordered Lanskoj to formulate within three days a draft of a rescript to Nazimov, based upon Lanskoj's own project, which had been formulated early in the summer. The rescript so prepared was signed on the 20th November 1857, and was handed to Nazimov on the same day. This document, which afterwards became celebrated as the precursor of the Act of Emancipation, offered to the Lithuanian nobility the honour of initiating the liberation of the peasantry. The principal conditions upon which this liberation was to be accomplished were as follows: (1) Landowners would retain the right of property in the whole of the land of their estates, but the peasants would retain their allotments, in which they would obtain proprietary rights by purchase, payment to be made by instalments. In addition to the allotments, in order to secure the subsistence of the peasants and the punctual payment of their taxes to the Government and their obligations to the landowners, land should be given to the peasants for their use, for which they should pay *obròk* or *bartschima*. (2) The peasants must be divided into village communities, and the landowners would be charged with

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Levshin, quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

the performance of *votchinal* police functions, with the organization of the future relations between landowners and peasants, and with the security of the payment of taxes to the Government.<sup>1</sup> Reforms were to be effected gradually, but the plan of reform was to be completed within six months by a committee in each of the three *gubernie* and a central committee for the *guberni* as a whole. Immediately the rescript was signed, Lanskoy had it printed, and the same evening copies were despatched to every part of Russia.<sup>2</sup> A similar rescript was also sent to the General Governor of St. Petersburg, Ignatiev, on 6th December 1857.

Vacillation was at last at an end; the Government was committed to emancipation. An immense change came over the discussion of the question. The Secret Committee on Peasant Affairs now became a public body, the Press was permitted to discuss agrarian reform, and a chorus of enthusiastic approval arose from those who had been expatriated for previous discussion of it. Herzen welcomed it from London in his *Kolokol*,<sup>3</sup> and Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky, and I. S. Aksakov in their *Sovremennik*.<sup>4</sup> Herzen's famous article, "You have Conquered, Galilean!" Chernyshevsky's article with the motto "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest unrighteousness! Praise be to God!" and Aksakov's poem, "Let us forget yesterday, and welcome the coming day,"<sup>5</sup> gave a new and generous tone to the public life of Russia. The benefits of the coming emancipation were already making themselves felt. Kavelin, Pogodin, and Katkov, the last the editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, gave a dinner on the 28th December 1857 to celebrate the occasion.<sup>6</sup> Speeches flattering to the Tsar, and optimistic for the newly arisen future of Russia, announced the gratification of the liberal elements.

In the midst of these congratulations the enemies of reform were silent. They bided their time.<sup>7</sup> The landowners of the central

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that Prince Orlov endeavoured to induce the Tsar to withdraw the rescript; whether or not he might have succeeded cannot be known; but he was too late—the document was already in circulation. Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

<sup>3</sup> 15th February 1858.

<sup>4</sup> 1858, No. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>6</sup> See Barsukov, N. P., *Life and Work of M. P. Pogodin* (St. Petersburg, 1888-1896), vol. v.; cited *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. A. Soloviev, "Memoranda," *Russ. Starina* (1881), No. 4, pp. 74<sup>R</sup> *et seq.*; Kornilov, *Russ. Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 2, p. 206; and Kornilov, *Peasant Reform, &c.*, p. 314.

Black Soil *gubernie* were not reconciled to the allotment of land to peasants in perpetuity; and the proprietors in the *gubernie* of the steppes feared the results of too rapid changes in the relations between them and their peasants, which might weaken their control over peasants under *bartschina* economy. Above all, the proprietors of the non-Black Soil *gubernie* disliked the project of allotment, because it involved the sacrifice of the income derived from the labour of their peasants. There is no evidence that in any of these *gubernie* there was any sincere desire on the part of the land and serf-owners to acquiesce with cordiality in the project of emancipation, or to make any sacrifice to facilitate it. Nor, upon reflection, were the more enthusiastic advocates of reform satisfied with the terms of the rescript. Ere long adverse reports from the governors of *gubernie* began to reach St. Petersburg, to the alarm of the Government. One of the boldest criticisms came from Unkovsky, marshal of the nobility of Tver. He said that from the landowners', as well as from the peasants', point of view, the gradual extinction of bondage right through a transition period was "good for nothing," that peasants would be dissatisfied with a half measure of this kind, that landowners would be ruined, and that the security for the payment of taxes to the Government would disappear. Unkovsky insisted that the only right method of liberation was to liberate the peasants everywhere at once, and to compensate the landowners by means of interest-bearing Government stock. "Capital is necessary," he said, "for the adaptation of the landowner's economy to the cultivation of the land by free hired labourers." He thought also that new taxes should be assessed in order to meet the interest upon the obligations undertaken by the Government. That portion of the charge which was due in consequence of peasant allotments might, he argued, fittingly fall upon the peasants, while that portion which was due in consequence of the elimination of personal bondage right should fall upon the whole empire.<sup>1</sup>

The first favourable report was received from Muraviev, General Governor of Nijigorodskaya *gub.*, on 17th December 1857; but even this was controverted by a deputation from the nobility of the same *gub.* Before the deputation reached St. Petersburg, however, the

<sup>1</sup> Djanshiev, *A. M. Unkovsky and the Peasant Movement* (Moscow, 1894), pp. 58-71; Kornilov, *Russ. Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 2, pp. 209-216; and Kornilov, *Peasant Reform*, &c., p. 315.



Government, eager to take advantage of the favourable report of Muraviev, despatched to him a rescript in the same terms as that of 20th November, and simultaneously endeavoured to induce the Moscow nobility to declare themselves in favour of reform. The answer of the Moscow nobles was to the effect that they would be glad to be informed what advantages were supposed to accrue to them from the proposed measure. This cynicism infuriated the Tsar, who sent a sharp rescript to the General Governor, stating that the Moscow nobility must not expect to be treated differently from the nobility of other *gubernie*.<sup>1</sup>

Apart, however, from the likelihood of incurring imperial disapprobation, the landowners of other *gubernie* began to dread the possibility of agrarian disorders, with destruction of their property. Rumours of the imminence of great changes had reached the peasants, and they, at all events, were in no mood to allow questions touching them so nearly to continue indefinitely in the field of academical discussion without bearing fruit. The local committees thus hastened their labours, and by the close of the year 1858 many of them had already sent in their reports.

Meanwhile the Minister of the Interior was apparently reluctant to force the question to a decisive issue with any suggestion of haste. His desire all along was to avoid even the appearance of coercion, and to endeavour to conduct the landowners towards emancipation without running the risk of impairing their loyalty. The absence of cordial acceptance of the proposals of the Government, and the disposition to emphasize the difficulties which must be encountered, which were disclosed in most of the reports of the local committees, rendered some further action necessary. Accordingly the main committee decided to have a more specifically detailed programme of emancipation drawn up for the use of the local committees. This task was entrusted to Levshin, but when his draft programme was presented, Rostovtsev insisted upon a projected programme drawn up by Pozen being accepted in its place.

The programme, or elucidatory circular, of Pozen was a cunningly devised document. The practical outcome of it, if it had been carried into effect, would have been the liberation of the peasants

<sup>1</sup> *Materials for the History of the Abolition of the Bondage Condition in Russia*, i. p. 278; and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 316. The General Governor of Moskovskaya *gub.* at the time was Zakrevsky.

without land ; but this outcome was concealed under a project for a transition period. During this period, which was to last for twelve years, the peasants were to be bound to the land, and were to render *bartschina* to the landowners. At the close of the period the peasants were then to be entitled to enter into voluntary agreements with the landowners for the renting of land, and at the same time were to be endowed with full liberty of movement. Although this programme purported to accept the provisions of the rescript to Nazimov, and merely to elucidate these, the arrangement proposed by it was in direct contravention of these provisions. Moreover, the programme favoured the landowners of the Black Soil region, and placed those of other parts of Russia at a disadvantage. In spite of the discordance between the "explanations" of the programme and the previously declared views of the Tsar in respect to landless liberation, the document of Pozen was approved and issued to the *guberni* committees. The "programme" met with the most strenuous opposition, especially in the non-Black Soil *gub.* Unkovsky, the president of the committee of Tverskaya *gub.*, was its chief opponent and critic. Under his leadership the Tverskaya committee expressed itself strongly against the plan of a transition period involving a temporarily obligatory condition. It demanded complete and simultaneous cessation of bondage relations, and compensation to landowners by means of interest-bearing Government obligations covering both the land allotted to the peasants and compensation for deprivation of bondage rights. Since, however, the Government was disinclined to admit the principle of compensation on account of bondage right, Unkovsky proposed to include in the compensation for the land a certain amount for the working power of the estate. He was supported in this proposal by the majority of the committee ; but the minority, which consisted of extreme conservatives,<sup>1</sup> protested vigorously to the Government. At first the Government refused to accept the project of Unkovsky ; but under the influence of threats of resignation made by the majority of the Tverskaya *gub.* committee, it was decided that the programme of Pozen should not be pressed upon it. This action on the part of the Tverskaya *gub.* committee was followed by the committees of other *gubernie*. Gradually the idea of buying out the landowners' interests by means of a Government credit

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

operation penetrated the "higher spheres," and eventually came to be accepted by them.<sup>1</sup>

The protest of the Tverskaya *gub.* committee was thus instrumental in bringing the peasant question into a fresh phase. During the summer of 1858 Rostovtsev, one of the members of the main committee, had been abroad. During his absence he had indited his four celebrated letters to the Tsar.<sup>2</sup> In these letters Rostovtsev declared his antagonism to landless liberation.<sup>3</sup> His principal anxiety was to effect the abolition of bondage right with a minimum of "social and political shock."<sup>4</sup> Rostovtsev<sup>5</sup> returned to St. Petersburg shortly before Unkovsky appeared with his "ultimatum," and almost at the same moment there also returned, after thirty-two years' exile in Siberia, Prince E. P. Obolensky,<sup>6</sup> who in 1825 had been one of the leaders of the Dekabristi. Notwithstanding the fact that Rostovtsev in 1825, then a comparatively young officer, had been the means of denouncing the conspiracy of the Dekabristi, and thus of securing their condemnation to death or exile, he had been in constant communication with Obolensky, who had even so early as 1825 espoused the cause of emancipation. Lanskoj was also subjected to liberal influences through his friendship with N. A. Mělyutěn<sup>7</sup> at that time Director of the Imperial Household Department.

Under these various influences, Rostovtsev, from 1858 until his

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Materials for the History of the Abolition of Bondage Right in Russia*, i. pp. 380 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> In agreeing to Pozen's programme, Rostovtsev had probably not realised the full effect of it.

<sup>4</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>5</sup> General Jakob Ivanovich Rostovtsev (*d.* 1860) was "a soldier of fortune of the time of Nicholas I." Considerations of the necessity of maintaining public order were always paramount in his mind, although he was led even by these considerations to liberal economic views. He became a strong opponent of landless liberation, because he considered that to liberate peasants without land was to excite them to revolt. For portraits of Rostovtsev and details, see *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. pp. 62 *et seq.*

<sup>6</sup> Prince E. P. Obolensky, cf. *infra*, vol. ii. Book IV. ch. iii. who had been exiled to Siberia in 1826, was permitted, with the other surviving Dekabrist exiles, to return to European Russia in 1858. He immediately began to exercise an influence upon the discussion of the peasant question. For portraits and details, see *The Great Reforms*, cited above, pp. 62 *et seq.*, and *Popular Movements in Russia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (St. Petersburg, 1905), i. pp. 203 *et seq.*

<sup>7</sup> For note on N. A. Mělyutěn, see *The Great Reforms*, v. pp. 68 *et seq.*

death in 1860, assumed the leading rôle in the movement for emancipation. In 1858, however, he was not yet fully convinced of the feasibility of employing the credit of the Government in carrying out the project. He feared the effect of a large credit operation upon the public finances so soon after the exhaustion and disorganization produced by the Crimean War. He thought, notwithstanding the disappointing result of previous legislation, that the purchase of the landowners' rights might be left to voluntary arrangement under the supervision of the Ministry of State Domains, of charitable boards, and of the State Bank, by means of capital belonging to the nobility.<sup>1</sup>

Further stimulus to the discussion of the peasant question came now from the minority of the Simbirskaya *gub.* committee. They proposed that the sale of landowners' rights should be obligatory on the demand of the peasants, and that purchase of them should be optional. Rostovtsev welcomed this idea, which was presented to him in January 1859. In the following month he produced a memorandum upon "The Progress and Settlement of the Peasant Question," in which immediate and obligatory redemption of land and serf-owners' rights was strongly urged. The terms of purchase were recommended to be fixed in relation to the value of the land transferred to the peasants or by the capitalized value of the *obrok* in those districts in which the relations of the peasants and the landowners had already been reduced to a commercial basis. The necessary sums were to be advanced by the Government, to which the peasants were to pay annually six per cent.; five per cent. of this was to be paid to the landowners, and the remaining one per cent. was to be employed in amortization. Rostovtsev also recommended that the landowner should not be permitted to count into the land sold to the peasants the area occupied by peasants' buildings. In a further memorandum, issued in April 1859, Rostovtsev urged either the abandonment of the idea of a temporarily obligatory period, or the reduction of such a period to the shortest possible limits. The reason for his preference for the system of redemption by voluntary agreement seems to have been that he considered a cadastral survey, which would occupy many years, as an indispensable preliminary to an universal obligatory redemption. In this memorandum Ros-

<sup>1</sup> This appears from his fourth letter. See *Materials, &c., i., loc. cit.*

tovtsev also urges the need of a Government guarantee and of material reductions in the duties and payments which should be exacted from the peasants.<sup>1</sup>

It was very unfortunate for the peasant question that this development of the views of Rostovtsev had not occurred before the issue of Pozen's programme to the local committees. The questions which were eventually fully settled in the mind of Rostovtsev, and impressed by him upon the Main Committee, were thus left as a bone of contention in the local committees, and were the occasion of "fearful struggles"<sup>2</sup> between the reactionary and the liberal elements in them. About one-half of the *guberni* committees reported in favour of a temporarily obligatory period. Eighteen of the committees advocated landless liberation, ten of these belonging to the Black Soil region. The effects of this arrangement would have been to throw the most fertile land in Russia into complete ownership by the landowners, the relief of the landowners from all obligations to the peasants, and the practical expropriation of the peasants' rights. A minority of the committees recommended allotments in perpetuity, together with an indefinite period of obligatory relations between the peasants and the landowners. Some of the committees preferred a compensation system; others did not even refer to the subject. Nearly all of the committees whose recommendations involved peasant allotments suggested that these allotments should be smaller than those cultivated by the peasants under the bondage system. Even those committees who recommended that the whole of the land should pass into the hands of the landowners at the close of the period of temporary obligation suggested that the allotments during that period should be less than under bondage conditions. The reason for this appears to have been, that the landowners felt that the Government would never agree to landless liberation, and they thought it well to prepare for this eventuality by diminishing the area of the land in use by peasants to as small proportions as possible.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the Tver committee, the minority of Vladimir, individual members from Ryazan, Kaluga, and Saratov committees agreed that, compensation being granted, the peasants should have the same lots as they had used under

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Skryebëtsky, *Course and End of Peasant Question*, i. pp. 947-9, and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

<sup>2</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 327.

bondage conditions. Of those committees who recommended the return of the land to the landowners after the expiry of the period of temporary obligation, the Smolensk and Mohilev committees also agreed to full allotments being given to peasants during the period of temporary obligation. All the other committees recommended a greater or less diminution of the allotments, conspicuous among these being the committees of the Black Soil *gubernie*.<sup>1</sup>

But the committees realized very well that improvement in the condition of the peasantry could not, even in the interests of the landowners, be altogether evaded. Broadly, two economical measures had been proposed for the amelioration of peasant life. One of these was the increase of the amount of land allotted to peasants; the other was the diminution of their obligations. The majority of the committees objected to the first measure, some of them arguing that an increase of land allotment would ruin the estates.<sup>2</sup> It was therefore necessary at least to appear to diminish the obligations due by the peasants. The majority of the committees suggested that *bartschina* should be diminished from the customary three days to two days per week. On the face of the proposal this was a diminution of one-third, but actually it was not so, because the committees proposed that the distribution of *bartschina* between the summer and the winter months should be fixed at two-thirds in the summer and one-third in the winter, and that the total of *bartschina* days throughout the year should be ninety-four,<sup>3</sup> or, alternatively, the distribution was left to the landowner. At the same time, the majority of the committees recommended the immediate abolition of *bartschina*, and the substitution of *obròk*; but the *obròk* was, of course, to be based upon the readjusted rather than the diminished *bartschina*. From only two quarters came suggestions of moderate *obròk*. These were the minorities of the com-

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 327. See also Kornilov in *Russhoi Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 4, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Pozen insisted that the allotments to be given during the period of temporary obligation should be as small as possible, because the Government would not permit land to be returned from peasant occupancy into the hands of the landowners. See *Documents of N. P. Pozen*, p. 162, quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 327. Cf. also *infra*, on the question of peasant allotments.

<sup>3</sup> That is, two days in every week, less ten holy days.

mittees of Tverskaya and Kalushskaya *gub.*<sup>1</sup> All of the committees otherwise defended *bartschina*, but suggested gradual replacement of it by *obròk* during the period of temporarily obligatory relations. The crux of the question really lay in the terms of the conversion of *bartschina* into *obròk*; for *bartschina* was settled only for the limited time of the period of obligatory relations, while the *obròk* was fixed for an indefinite time, and moreover, upon it must subsequently be based the amount of the purchase money in case of redemption of the *obròk* payment.<sup>2</sup>

In fixing the amount of *obròk*, some of the committees refrained from taking into account the diminution of the allotments which they had suggested, and thus in effect left upon the peasants the burdens which they had carried under bondage, while diminishing their power of bearing them. None of the committees took into account the circumstance that the liberation of the peasant meant also the liberation of the landowner from the obligation of supporting the peasant in case of need.<sup>3</sup>

So far as the Black Soil region was concerned, the proprietors seemed to have aimed at the retention in their own hands of an area larger than that which they were prepared to give in allotments to the peasants, and at securing for themselves *obròk* payments for these allotments at as high a rate as possible.<sup>4</sup> Even in the non-Black Soil regions, where the land was proportionately less valuable to the landowners than their income from the labour of bonded peasants, the landowners also proposed to reserve to themselves the valuable portions of their estates—the forests and meadows. Some of the committees of the non-Black Soil *gub.* adopted a method of valuation of allotments which involved a progressively diminishing value as the lands were more distant from the village. The land

<sup>1</sup> The *obròk* suggested by these minorities was practically that subsequently agreed upon by the Editing Commission (cf. *infra*, pp. 397 *et seq.*). See Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 329. When serfdom was abolished in Prussia, such obligations were taken into account. (Mentioned by Kornilov, *loc. cit.*) The provision is contained in the *Edict for the Regulation of the Relations between Proprietors and their Peasants* (14th September 1811), part i., section on Rights of Peasant Tenants. See e.g. abstract in Sir Robert Morier's account of agrarian legislation in Prussia in *Systems of Land Tenure, &c.*, ed. J. W. Probyn, London, n.d., p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics in support of this conclusion are given by Kornilov in *Russkòe Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 4, p. 83, art. on "The Guberni Committees."

upon which the peasants' buildings were erected was not to be subject to *obròk*; but the first dessiatin beyond was to be subject to a relatively high payment, which was to include the amount decided upon as compensation for abolition of personal bondage, taking into account the loss to the economy of the landowner in being deprived of working strength for his estate. The second dessiatin was to be valued at so much less than the first, and the value was to be placed upon the land exclusively; the third dessiatin at so much less than the second, and so on. It was proposed to take as a norm the amount of *obròk* payable under the bondage system. The committee of Tverskaya *gub.*, for example, proposed that the amount of *obròk* payable should be on the average 8 rubles 70 kopeks per soul upon an allotment of 4 dessiatin per soul. The first dessiatin was to be charged with 5 rubles 10 kopeks, the second 1 ruble 80 kopeks, the third 1 ruble 20 kopeks, and the fourth 60 kopeks. This was based upon the supposition that the average *obròk* under bondage had been 9 rubles per soul.<sup>1</sup>

Under this plan compensation to the landowner for the abolition of personal bondage was concealed in the *obròk* for the first dessiatin, in order to evade the instruction which had been given to the committees, to the effect that bondage right should be abolished without compensation.

So far as the period of temporary obligation affected the incidents of personal bondage, a large number of the local committees (eighteen) proposed that during this period, peasant women should not be permitted to marry out of their native communities without permission of the landowner, or of the *skhod*, or public meeting of the community. Similarly during this period the division of family property was not to be effected, excepting under the same conditions. Some of the committees proposed to reserve in the hands of the landowners the right of selecting a responsible head for a family in the event of the natural head of it being regarded as unfit to secure the punctual rendering of *bartschina* from the members of the family.

It is clear from these details that the local committees were principally concerned with the preservation in the hands of the landowners of as large powers as possible during the transition period, and of as large profits as possible at the close of it. Even the ex-

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 330, and *cf.* Kornilov, *Russkoi Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 4, pp. 73-85.



tremely liberal elements in the Main Committee feared to relax suddenly, or to any material degree, the authority of the landowners over their peasants. For example, although Prince Cherkassky advocated village autonomy and decentralization of power very strongly, he nevertheless urged the continuance of bodily punishment for petty offences, and this while presupposing the strong influence and authority of the landowner.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the more purely economical proposals of the local committees, the recommendations about institutional changes in village life are not very definite or very illuminating. Some of the committees were in favour of village autonomy, but they were not explicit as to the form which it should assume. The reason of this appears to have been that the members of the local committees had not, as a rule, the legal and historical knowledge necessary for the formulation of projects for a fresh series of village institutions with sharply defined duties of an administrative and judicial character. The one point in this connection which the committee had in view was the punctual rendering of the peasants' new obligations, and their only institutional device for the purpose of securing this was the recognition of the peasant groups as communities, and the binding of the peasants in these communities to secure, by means of a "mutual guarantee," the due payment of these obligations. In order that this "mutual guarantee" should be effective, it was apparently necessary to transfer to the community as a whole those powers over the individual peasant formerly exercised by the landowner, or, at all events, a sufficient fraction of those powers to enable the community to secure that each peasant should perform his share of the common duties. But, in addition, nearly all of the committees proposed to subject to the *votchinal* authority of the landowner the communities as a whole; so that, although the power of the landowner over the individual peasant might be brought to a conclusion, his authority over the communities of peasants on his estates should not be impaired.

It cannot be denied that this last provision was a logical outcome of the situation presupposed by the committees. If the peasant was not to receive his allotment in fee simple, but was to hold it in perpetual use, while the land still remained the property of the landowner, subject to the presence of the peasant upon it; and if the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Skryebëtsky, i. pp. 9-130, and Kornilov, p. 332.

peasant was to render certain duties in return for this allotment, including *bartschina*, which was only gradually to be replaced by *obròk*, it is clear that some kind of security must be exacted for the due rendering of the obligations, since a defaulting peasant could not simply be removed from his holding.

Moreover, the Government at this time had evidently no desire to buy out the *votchinal* rights of the landowners,<sup>1</sup> nor to replace their jurisdiction by a new local juridical system. The committees were guided in their action by the programme of Pozen, which laid great stress upon the maintenance of the *votchinal* power. Some of them developed the suggestions of the programme, and recommended the appointment of landowners as chiefs of villages, with extensive rights of interference in peasant affairs, including the right of veto of sentences of the *skhod*, or village assembly, the right of imposing fines and floggings, and the right of banishing peasants from the estate. The recommendations of the committee of Samarskaya *gub.* were in curious contradiction to the general principles which it professed. While deprecating the unnecessary retention of *votchinal* power after the cessation of bondage, this committee suggested that the landowners should be endowed with judicial powers entitling them to hold a court before which unpunctual and disobedient *bartschina* peasants might be brought. For wasting the landowners' property and for similar offences, offending peasants might be sentenced in this court to bodily punishment—twenty stripes with a birch rod for men, and ten stripes for women. This project was afterwards defended in the Editing Commission by U. F. Samarin, who insisted that only by such means could a free peasant be compelled to render his *bartschina* satisfactorily.<sup>2</sup> The population of Samarskaya *gub.* was scanty, the peasants had no means of livelihood excepting the soil, and the landowners' economies were not adapted to the employment of free labour. Such plans were, however, advanced with exclusive regard to the period of obligatory relations. It was evident that the *votchinal* authority could not be permanently exercised in this way after the complete cessation of bondage.

Some of the committees expressed, at least in general terms, larger views. They anticipated a great moral benefit so far as the landowning class was concerned, and while urging that this class

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

should take a large share in local government, did so partly for the reason that they desired to diminish bureaucratic influence and to render local government more democratic. Unkovsky, for example, desired liberation from bondage not merely for the peasantry, but for the whole people.<sup>1</sup>

All the discussions, the purport of which has just been narrated, were carried on in a highly charged atmosphere, not merely within the walls of the meeting-places of the local committees, but everywhere throughout the country. "All classes of land cultivators engaged in the discussions, even also persons who had no property in land. In rich houses, in the houses of poor landowners, in the houses of the village clergy, in merchants' offices, in the bureaus of functionaries, everywhere were heard discussions of peasant affairs."<sup>2</sup> The journals and reviews discussed the details, and some of them demanded the immediate cessation of bondage relations by means of compensation. These journalistic discussions had their influence, no doubt, but they were rather the indications of the general "state of mind" than the cause of it. Indeed the censorship of the Press had been so stringent that, saving for the Russian reviews published abroad, and introduced into Russia surreptitiously, there was no fundamental discussion of the peasant question or of any other politico-economic subjects. The decision of the Government to tolerate public discussion of bondage right and of the terms of its abolition gave "a mighty stimulus to the development of periodical literature."<sup>3</sup> A grave and interesting series of problems gave ample opportunity for critical writing, and produced an outburst of literary activity which, especially in 1860, reacted energetically upon the solution of these problems. It was not unnatural that the chief among the writers should also have been the chief among the workers in the local committees. Thus, both in the field of these committees and in the wider field of the Press, the same persons exercised a double influence. The men who really made emancipation possible were Samarin, Koshilyev, Cherkassky, Unkovsky, and Golovatchyev.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Djanshiev, *A. M. Unkovsky*, p. 133. and Kornilov, *Russkoe Bogatstvo* (1904), No. 5, pp. 50-65.

<sup>2</sup> *Severnaya Pchela* (Northern Bee), 1st January 1860; *Materials for the History of the Abolition of Bondage Conditions*, ii. p. 336, and Kornilov, *Peasant Reforms, &c.*, p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### EMANCIPATION IN THE "EDITING COMMISSION"

APART from the service to emancipation rendered by those members of the local committees who were also contributors to the journals, the most conspicuous service was rendered by Chernishevsky through his writings in *Sovremennik*. Chernishevsky approached the subject, not from the landowners' point of view, nor from the point of view of an administrator, but from a standpoint purely *a priori*. His influence was exercised chiefly upon the Russian youth in general, and upon the members of the Editing Commission; upon the nobility he exercised no influence whatever.<sup>1</sup> While the fermentation of new ideas went on in various ways throughout Russian society, the Tsar was surrounded with a group of "intriguers," who did their utmost to direct his mind towards reaction. Nevertheless, even within the Court circles, there were several steadfast adherents of reform. The most conspicuous of these were the Empress Marie Aleksandrovna, the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, the Grand Duke Constantine, Lanskoy, the Minister of the Interior, General Rostovtsev, Prince Dolgorukov, chief of the gendarmerie, and Prince Orlov, President of the Council of State. Opposed to this powerful group there were Muraviev, Minister of State Domains, N. E. Butkov, State Secretary, and practically all the other Ministers of State. This last group were exceedingly active in their agitation against the abolition of bondage right. The Tsar found it necessary to attempt to counteract their influence by going into the provinces and delivering a series of speeches urging the completion of the task to which he had set himself. Meanwhile, the views of Rostovtsev had been developing, and N. A. Mēlyutēn, for long an ardent advocate of emancipation, had been acquiring increasing influence at the Ministry of the Interior. Mēlyutēn and Soloviev had been instrumental in organizing, in 1856, the Zemstvo Division of the

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

Statistical Committee, whose function was to deal with the statistical material collected by the Main Committee. In 1858 an important sub-committee of the Main Committee was formed, composed of Prince Gagarin, Lanskoï, Count V. N. Panin, and General Rostovtsev. The Tsar had, moreover, given a special mandate to the last mentioned. The most significant step was, however, taken on 17th February 1859, when the Tsar decided to organize the so-called Editing Commission. This commission was composed of officers of the various departments which had to do with peasant affairs, together with a number of experienced landowners. The commission was placed under the presidency of General Rostovtsev. Simultaneously with this step there occurred a change in the Ministry of the Interior, involving the retirement of Levshin and the appointment in his place of N. A. Mēlyutēn. The antagonists of liberation denounced Mēlyutēn as a red democrat, and even as almost a revolutionary. He received his appointment only through the influence of the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna.<sup>1</sup>

The Editing Commission was composed of officials drawn from several of the departments of the Government. There were appointed from the Ministry of the Interior, Mēlyutēn, J. A. Soloviev, and A. K. Giers; from the Ministry of Justice, M. N. Luboshchinsky and N. P. Semenov; from the Ministry of State Domains, V. E. Bulyeghin and U. N. Pavlov; from the Imperial Chancellery, N. V. Kalachov and A. N. Popov; from the Committees on the Peasant Question, E. P. Arapetov and S. M. Jukovsky. In addition to the bureaucratic members of the committee, representatives of the *guberni* committees were appointed, of whom the most important were Prince V. A. Cherkassky, U. F. Samarin, N. P. Pozen; and also several landowners who were presumed to be experts. Three conspicuous figures in the previous discussions were not invited—A. U. Unkovsky, A. A. Golovachyev, and A. E. Koshelyev.<sup>2</sup>

The proceedings of the commission began with a statement from Rostovtsev, which contained his own plan of reform. The evolution of this plan has already been indicated. Although Rostovtsev was well disposed towards drastic improvement of the conditions of the peasants, he was, nevertheless, concerned chiefly with the maintenance of order and with the security of the Government. This circumstance undoubtedly contributed to the acceptance of

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-40.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 340.

Rostovtsev's views even by customarily reactionary elements. In their eyes he was an eminently safe person, who might be trusted not to do anything which would militate against the interests of the landowning class. During the early stages of his connection with the discussion of the agrarian question, Rostovtsev had laid great stress upon the danger of sudden liberation. He proposed, indeed, to accompany emancipation, gradual though it should be, with the establishment of exceptional police powers, as well as with the maintenance, during the transition period, of *votchinal* right. Gradually he was led to see that he had exaggerated the danger of peasant disorders;<sup>1</sup> but he still continued to believe that it would not be wise to trust the peasants to organize their life individually. If the *votchinal* jurisdiction could not be retained, some other form of jurisdiction must be devised to take its place. He was thus led to the idea that the *votchinal* power should be transferred to the peasants' *mir*. The Main Committee on peasants' affairs<sup>2</sup> had agreed to this suggestion on 4th December 1858, and had decided that "authority over the personality of the peasant in regard to his obligations as a member of the village community (*obshchestvo*) should reside in the *mir*, and those who were elected by it; that the *mir*, through the mutual guarantee (*krugoviya poruka*), should be responsible for every one of its members for the due performance of their duties as State and landowners' peasants, and that the landowner must deal with the *mir* alone, and must not touch the personality of the peasants."<sup>3</sup> Rostovtsev's policy, as finally formulated by Semenov, included the following points: (1) Peasants must be liberated with land; (2) compensation must be paid by peasants for allotments; (3) the process of compensation must be facilitated by a Government guarantee; (4) a temporary period of obligatory relations must be avoided if possible, or if inevitable, must be as short as possible; (5) *bartschina* must be transformed into *obròk* within three years, excepting in cases in which the peasants did not desire this transformation; (6) villages must be endowed with autonomy. Rostovtsev divided the Editing Commission into three committees—juridical, administrative, and economical—and added later a finan-

<sup>1</sup> His fears were, however, not wholly without foundation. Peasant disorders did follow Emancipation.

<sup>2</sup> The predecessor of the Editing Committee.

<sup>3</sup> Skryebetsky, vol. i. p. 60, quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

cial committee, with special reference to compensation, several additional members being appointed to serve upon the last-mentioned committee, most of them from the Ministry of Finance. The chairmen of the committees were : juridical, Jukovsky ; administrative, Bulgakov ; and economic and financial, Mělyutēn.

The task placed before the Editing Commission and its committees was the revision of the projects which had been brought before the *guberni* committees, and to prepare a *précis* on the subject. The Editing Commission was then to prepare a plan of its own. The different sections of Rostovtsev's programme were divided among the committees with the exception of two sections, one dealing with *dvorovie lyudē*, the other concerning the methods of bringing the new legislation into force, which matters were to be dealt with by the Commission as a whole. The committee on administration had to deal with questions concerning the structure of the village community and the relation of the community to the landowners ; the juridical committee had to deal with the definition of the rights of the peasants on their liberation, and of the rights of the landowners during the period of temporary obligation and afterwards ; and the economic committee had to deal with the size, arrangement, and order of allotments, with the valuation of the land, and with the method of performing the " natural " duties, and of meeting the financial obligations. In all, the committees made thirty-five reports, each of these having been fully discussed in the reporting committee, then in the Editing Commission as a whole, afterwards in the reporting committee as amended, then in the Editing Commission as a whole ; and after a second remit to the committee, finally completed in the Editing Commission. When these reports had passed through all these stages they became substantive sections of the Emancipation Act, or *Polojenie*, of 19th February 1861.<sup>1</sup>

These new and elaborate arrangements altered altogether the position of the liberation question and the relations to it of the local or *guberni* committees. Previously these committees had reported to the Main Committee, in the composition and proceedings of which they had, as we have seen, an important influence. Now their projects came up for revision by a body only partially representative and predominantly bureaucratic. After the Editing Commission

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 343. See also Semenov, *Emancipation of the Peasants*, i., Introduction, and Skryebětsky, *New Compositions*, i. pp. lx.-lxxx.

was constituted, representations which had to be made by the local committees had to be made to it. In the summer of 1858, when the Tsar made his provincial tour for the purpose of inducing the landowners to throw themselves heartily into the emancipation movement, he had explicitly promised that representatives from the *guberni* committees should be invited to St. Petersburg to discuss with the Main Committee the reports which they had made. It now became necessary for them to appear before the Editing Committee. Rostovtsev arranged that the provincial representatives should be invited in two groups, corresponding to the two periods of the work of the Editing Commission—the period of study of the projects of the local committees and the period of constructive legislation. After the legislation had been fully decided upon by the Editing Commission, the *projet de loi* was to be sent to the Main Committee of former days, which still retained its existence, although it had been shorn of nearly all of its functions.

Such was the machinery by which the Great Reform was brought into being. The machinery did not, however, work very smoothly. There were heated discussions at every stage, upon every one of the numerous phases of the problem which have now become familiar—the extent of the allotments, the amount of obligations, the continuance of *votchinal* jurisdiction, the definition of personal rights, and compensation for the abolition of bondage right. The brunt of the discussion fell upon Rostovtsev. His attitude on important questions had varied before the Editing Commission came into existence. It continued to vary. At one moment he declared himself in favour of compulsory allotment with compensation, but in deference to the opinion of the Tsar, he abandoned this position, and proposed voluntary agreement between the landowner and the peasant during the period of temporary obligation. He insisted however, upon the proviso that at the end of the period of twelve years of temporary obligation, the Government should consider what measures should be taken for the termination of the obligations due by the peasants in all those estates where voluntary agreements had not been arrived at. One extreme conservative, N. P. Semenov, the Ober-Procurator of the Senate, alone insisted upon obligatory acceptance of compensation for allotments. Count Shuvalov, Marshal of the Nobility of St. Petersburgskaya *gub.*, and Prince Paskevich were opposed to compensation. They were adherents of



the *Bauernland* plan and of the retention of *votchinal* jurisdiction. V. V. Apraksin, Marshal of the Nobility of Orlovskaya *gub.*, also opposed compensation, but on the ground that he objected to allotments to peasants on any terms, and, in accordance with the programme of Pozen, desired that after the termination of the period of temporary obligation, the land should revert to the *pomyetschëk*. He advocated, moreover, that *votchinal* jurisdiction should be retained. In these proposals he was supported by N. P. Pozen, with whose programme they were in entire accordance. The remainder of the Editing Commission accepted Rostovtsev's plan in so far as concerned allotment and compensation. In the course of the discussions upon this question Pozen lost his influence, quarrelled with Rostovtsev, and resigned from the Editing Commission.<sup>1</sup>

The principal influence in the Editing Commission now devolved upon a small and compact group, consisting of Mëlyutën, Soloviev, Prince Cherkassky, and U. F. Samarin. Near them were also Jukovsky, N. P. Semenov, G. P. Galagan, V. V. Tarnovsky, E. P. Arapetov, and A. K. Giers. Although this group as a whole did not agree upon all points, they acted more or less together, and collectively they exercised an important influence at certain junctures upon Rostovtsev. The group found its main sphere in the economic committee, where questions of the organization of peasant life were discussed. In the other committees the group was divided, Samarin, Slavophil and orthodox,<sup>2</sup> disagreed sharply with Mëlyutën and Soloviev, bureaucrats and *Zapadnëkë*, as well as with Cherkassky, who on some questions was an opportunist.<sup>3</sup> So also was Samarin, who desired the retention of *votchinal* jurisdiction in estates where *bartschina* was rendered.<sup>4</sup> Soloviev, on the other hand, was a strong advocate for the recognition of the personal rights of the peasant, and for his independence of the landowner. On the question of size of allotments, the economic committee of the Editing Commission, whose business it was to study this subject, were decidedly more liberal than the *guberni* committees. They recommended that in general the peasants should receive the whole of the land formerly

<sup>1</sup> In 1859. Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> About the date of the Emancipation Samarin changed his mind upon *votchinal* jurisdiction. On 29th July 1861 he wrote: "Bodily punishments have been abolished for ever. The rod was not taken, but fell from their (the landowners') hands." Quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 347.

cultivated by them under bondage conditions. In those cases, however, where the allotment of land to the peasants according to the normal extent determined by the committee left the landowner with less than one-third of the estate in his own hands, the allotments were to be diminished in such a way as to leave one-third in the hands of the landowner. In the Black Soil and in the non-Black Soil regions maximum and minimum allotments were fixed, but in the Steppe region only one quantity of allotment was fixed; but the landowner was entitled to diminish this quantity if the total of the allotted land left him less than one-half of the estate. The maxima and minima varied in different *gubernie* and in different parts of the same *guberni*. In the first period of the work of the Editing Commission it was agreed to divide the non-Black Soil region into seven localities, the maximum lots being  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , 4,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , 5, 6, and 8 *dessyatin* per soul respectively; and the Black Soil region into five localities, the maxima being 3,  $3\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , 4, and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  *dessyatin* respectively. The minima were to be two-fifths of the maxima.<sup>1</sup> In the Steppe regions there were to be four localities, the allotments being fixed at  $6\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $8\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $10\frac{1}{2}$ , and 12 *dessyatin* respectively. In addition to these regions special arrangements were made for the Little Russian *guberni*<sup>2</sup> and for the *gubernie* on the western frontier. The normal allotment, as settled by the Editing Commission, considerably exceeded the normal allotments as proposed by the *guberni* committees; in some cases they were twice as much.<sup>3</sup>

As regards the obligations which were to be rendered by the peasants, the procedure in the first period of the work of the Editing Commission was somewhat different. They divided the Great Russian, White Russian, and New Russian *gubernie* into four regions without subdivision into localities. These regions were non-Black Soil *obròk* region, non-Black Soil *bartschina* region, Black Soil and Steppe regions. In the first the normal *obròk* for the larger allotments was fixed at 9 rubles per soul, excepting in certain localities in the Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yaroslav, Vladimir, and Nijni Novgorod regions, where they adopted the system of gradation which has already been described. In these excepted localities the amount

<sup>1</sup> It was afterwards agreed to make them one-third.

<sup>2</sup> In Little Russia, during bondage times, peasants' lots were not separated from landowners' lands. In the Western *gubernie* each peasant household had its definite lot. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>3</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

of *obròk* for the first *dessyatin* was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 rubles, the second *dessyatin* being valued at a lower sum, and so on ; but where no artificial manure was used, all the *dessyatin* in the allotment after the first were valued at the same rate.<sup>1</sup> On estates throughout Russia where *bartschina* was rendered, this was fixed at forty days' work for men, and thirty days for women.

These normal amounts were altered several times by the Editing Commission, but the system of gradation remained. The general result of the method of calculation was that the amount payable by the peasant in *obròk* or in *bartschina* determined the amount which he was eventually called upon to pay for redemption, so that he really had to pay not merely the value of the land, but also, in most cases, an additional sum for the abolition of bondage right. This burden pressed especially upon the peasants who had small holdings ; but for all it meant the imposition of a charge upon the land which at least contributed to prevent them from accumulating agricultural capital and to produce the condition of insolvency in which the peasants were speedily plunged.

We must now turn to the projects of the Editing Commission regarding the structure of the village community and the organization of village administration. These matters were dealt with in eight reports rendered by the committee on administrative affairs. The first report suggested that village communities—*selskiya obshchestva*—should be formed as administrative units for police purposes, and that in addition the agrarian communities—*pozemelneya obshchëna*—already existing should be retained as economic units, based upon the use of the landowners' land by the *mir*. The *mir* was thus split into two factions to correspond with the two sides of village life—the administrative and the economic.

It was supposed, to begin with, that these two communal bodies should exist side by side, one having cognizance of administrative affairs, and the other having cognizance of economical affairs exclusively, including the "mutual guarantee" for the due fulfilment of obligations by the members of the community. But the proposal to separate the administrative from the economical authority excited the suspicions of those who were opposed to bureaucratic influence. They were afraid that the administrative commune would fall into the hands of officials, and that the result would be an

<sup>1</sup> Ivanikov, *The Fall of Bondage Right*, quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

injurious control by them of the village life.<sup>1</sup> After prolonged and sometimes passionate discussions in the Editing Commission about the functions of these two communal bodies and about their relations to one another, there emerged finally the idea of reconstituting the *volost*,<sup>2</sup> which was to be the village community as at first understood, and of reconstituting the former agrarian community (*pozemel'neya obtschëna*) as the village community (*selskiya obtschestva*). The result of this rearrangement was that the latter, or village community, in the new nomenclature became a subdivision of the *volost*. But in this process the *volost* was deprived of autonomous powers, and was, moreover, charged with matters which had no relation to peasant affairs.<sup>3</sup> The chief of the *volost* (*starshina*) was obliged to obey the lawful demands of the *posrednik*, or chief of the *mir*, as well as those of the local police and other local authorities. So also the village *starosta* or headman, and other functionaries of the village community were required to obey the *volost* chief; and the latter was empowered to impose fines, &c., upon members of the village community. Thus the whole of the peasant population was brought under the direct control of the police system. The *posrednik*, or chief of the *mir*, was authorized to review the proceedings of the chief of the *volost*, to place him under arrest for a limited period, and to fine him for a limited amount.<sup>4</sup> Reports of the meetings of the village community were to be made to the *volost* officers, even although the reports might be concerned exclusively with economical affairs.

Thus, although the Editing Commission began by proposing a considerable measure of local autonomy in respect that the agrarian commune was to be parallel to, and separate from, the administrative commune, the final result of their deliberations was the subjection of the agrarian commune to the administrative, and the paralysis of local self-government by the subordination of both communes to the police. The only concession to local autonomy was the application of the elective principle to the judgeships in the *volost* court, but these elected officials were nevertheless subordinate to the general police administration.

<sup>1</sup> This was even the view of Rostovtsev. Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the *volost* of the sixteenth century, *supra*, p. 50 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup> Seven days and five rubles. Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

These decisions were not concluded without hesitation on the part of the superior minds in the Editing Commission. U. F. Samarin, for example, objected strongly to the imposition of police duties upon either chiefs of the *volost* or chiefs of the *village*, on the grounds that they would become corrupt, and that such duties would militate against their usefulness otherwise. He accused Prince Cherkassky, who was in favour of the projected arrangement,<sup>1</sup> of seeking to strengthen the centralization of governmental power at the expense of local autonomy.

Nor were the landowners satisfied with the projected legislation. They saw in it reinforced bureaucratic authority. For example, A. D. Jultukhin, one of the expert members of the Editing Commission, pointed out that the organization of the *volost* was directed against the landowner in favour of the central government, while the interests of the peasants were relegated to the background. The radical reformers were captured with the idea of diminishing the authority of the landowners, and thus of getting rid of *votchinal* jurisdiction; they did not realize that in doing so by the proposed method, they were increasing the bureaucratic influence, and were thus thrown "out of the frying-pan into the fire."<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding these objections, Report No. 8 of the administrative committee declared against any interference of the landowner in peasant affairs, on the ground that the development of local peasant autonomy would be impeded by it, and decided to abolish *votchinal* jurisdiction altogether, excepting so far as concerned the period of temporary obligation.<sup>3</sup> "Unfortunately, however, they replaced the power and influence of the landowner by the power and influence of the *chinovnik*," or bureaucrat.<sup>4</sup>

So far as concerned the personal rights of the liberated peasants, the Editing Commission adopted the suggestions of the programme of Pozen and those of the *guberni* committees.

The discussions of the Editing Commission were published perio-

<sup>1</sup> Cherkassky seems to have changed his mind upon the subject, for he had published in 1858 (in *Selskie Blagoustroystvo*) articles in which he had expressed himself as opposed to the multiplication of local government bodies, and as strongly in favour of decentralisation of authority. Cf. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

<sup>3</sup> Report No. 8, *Materials of Editing Commission*, 2nd ed., ii. p. 265, and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 354.

<sup>4</sup> Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

dically, and the landowners throughout Russia had thus ample opportunity of knowing what was transpiring. They did not take long to discover that on many important points the recommendations of the *guberni* committees were being disregarded. They began to be dissatisfied, and their dissatisfaction led to intrigues, the object of which was to frighten the Government into a change of attitude with regard to the whole question.<sup>1</sup> Under these circumstances a memorandum was drawn up by Lanskoj, and read at St. Petersburg to the deputies of the *guberni* committees. In this memorandum Lanskoj pointed out explicitly that the *guberni* committees had been asked for information regarding their different localities; they had not been asked to offer any solution of any legislative question, nor to suggest any change in the system of government of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> Although the Tsar approved of this memorandum, the deputies were highly offended, and protested against the "intrigues of the bureaucracy" and the action of the Editing Commission. The Tsar permitted the deputies to offer their criticism in detail through the Main Committee, and these criticisms were afterwards published.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with this process it is proper to notice that those deputies of the *guberni* committees who responded to the first summons to St. Petersburg for the purpose of conference with the Main Committee were generally of liberal views. The majority of these deputies represented *guberni* committees in the non-Black Soil and semi-Black Soil regions, where commercial economy had practically altogether replaced natural economy. They were in general in favour of liberation and of allotment of land to the peasants, but they were averse from the allotment of land in perpetuity in return for duties determined once for all. They thought that the continuance of *bartschina* in the absence of *votchinal* jurisdiction was impracticable, and they objected to the transformation of *bartschina* into *obrok* without an explicit provision that the terms of the transformation should be subject to periodical revision. It is true that they looked upon a provision of this kind as necessary in the interests of the landowners rather than in the interests of

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> In three thick volumes. The deputies were also invited in rotation to the Editing Commission; but no official record has been left of the proceedings on these occasions. Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

the peasants, but a revision on fair terms would probably have been for mutual advantage in the long run; although, owing to the advance in the price of land, the peasants might have been called upon to bear additional burdens. In addition to these points, which came to be used by way of criticism of the project of the Editing Commission, many deputies attacked the proposed maximum and minimum allotment. They pointed out that in small estates of 100 souls, allotment was given to a less extent than in the large estates, and that through this and other causes there would be inequalities in the incidence of taxation. Through these inequalities some estates would be called upon to bear less and others more than their fair share of taxation. But the chief burthen of the criticism of the project of the Editing Commission was concerned with the administrative proposals. Koshelyev, who was the deputy of the committee of Ryazanskaya *guberni*, said picturesquely in his *Recollections*, explaining his attitude at this time, "Certainly not a cry would I raise over the disappearance of *voitchinal* jurisdiction. We were indeed all singing its funeral dirge. This placed upon us the obligation to observe the precept, *de mortuis aut bene aut nihil*. I selected the last, but I was interested in the question of inheritance. Village communities should inherit that part of it which related to economical structure, and initial police and court processes; but the remainder, that part which to this domestic institution also gives life and meaning, into whose hands will this pass? Is it possible that it will go to the *chinovnik*?"<sup>1</sup>

The most drastic criticism came from Unkovsky, who was naturally not more inclined to accept the decisions of the Editing Commission, excluded as he was from participating in its deliberations. Unkovsky regarded as the chief defect of the new system of local administration proposed by the Editing Commission, the fact that in the new *volost* there were included exclusively those who had previously been the bonded peasants of *pomyetschik*. This arrangement segregated the peasants, and thus deprived them of the wholesome influence of organic contact with the other constituent elements of Russian society. Moreover, under such conditions, the *volost* could not in any proper sense become the unit of village self-government. This was the result, Unkovsky argued, of experience of the *volost* composed exclusively of peasants of the State.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

"What is the need, and what is the advantage, of separating the peasants from the enlightened classes, and thus depriving local society of its brains and the capacity of utilizing its rights? This separation of classes must lead to government by *chinovnikē* and to the destruction of all ideas about the autonomy of the community."<sup>1</sup>

Thus roused, Unkovsky went much farther. At a later period he disclosed the nature of his views about the whole system of bureaucratic government at that time. He desired the wholesale abolition of then existing offices and the adoption of a system gradually making for self-governing communities composed of all classes of society. He urged the adoption of the jury system and the amenability of public functionaries to summons to the ordinary courts of law at the suit of individual persons, and without the necessity of permission from the official superiors of the accused.

The majority of the deputies of the first summons to the Main Committee seem to have entertained similar views. On the other hand, a strong minority adhered closely to the principle of *voitchinal* jurisdiction, and even to the continuance of the bondage relation. The majority prepared an address of protest to the Tsar against the conditions of the emancipation project, and this address was presented to the Tsar in a somewhat "hectoring" spirit by Shidlovsky,<sup>2</sup> and additional addresses were presented by Unkovsky and four other deputies. These addresses were discussed by the Main Committee, but the only result was to produce the impression of a nobles' *fronde*, and to earn for their authors severe reprimands through the Governors of their respective *gubernie*. The incident left no pleasant impression in the minds of the members of the nobility who participated in it, and it resulted in a somewhat widespread feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the nobility with the bureaucratic elements. This dissatisfaction was further inflamed by a "special circular" of the Minister of the Interior prohibiting the discussion of peasant affairs at the periodical local meetings of the nobility.<sup>3</sup> The issuing of the circular led to further protests by the nobility, who regarded it as an infringement upon their legal rights,<sup>4</sup> the most conspicuous protest being from the *sobranie*, or assembly of the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Kornilov, *op. cit.*, pp. 357-8.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.    <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Koshilyev, A. E., "Deputies and the Editing Commissions," in *Memoirs*, Appendix VI., p. 187, and Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 359. See also Efimova, E. A., "A. M. Unkovsky" in *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. pp. 118 *et seq.*



nobility, of Tver. The result of this protest was the banishment of Unkovsky, who was marshal of the Tver nobility, and a landowner, Evropius, who sympathized with him, to Viatskaya and Permskaya *gub.*,<sup>1</sup> respectively, on 20th February 1860.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile a great change had taken place in the *personnels* of the Editing Commission. Rostovtsev, the President, overburdened with vexatious and exacting labours, died on the 6th February 1860. Military martinet and strong adherent of order as Rostovtsev was, his instincts were soundly humanitarian, and his mind was gradually progressing towards enlightened views on the peasant question. Moreover, his genial personality diffused a general air of good feeling and personal intimacy among the members. The proceedings were conducted with good humour, and although differences of opinion were frequent and sometimes sharp, Rostovtsev exercised a moderating influence and contributed at once to the despatch and to the intensification of business.<sup>3</sup>

On the 24th February 1860 there came to the building where the meetings of the Editing Commission were held, and where were preserved the voluminous documents which had been accumulated by it, "an enormous awkward being, with arms as long as those of an orang-outang. This being fiercely and seriously glared at everyone over his spectacles, and listened to the names of those whom he met, as they were read out to him by Bulgakov. Some of the representatives were honoured by his shaking hands with them, but the majority had to be satisfied with a slight and even slighting nod."<sup>4</sup>

This strange being, the successor of the genial General Rostovtsev, was the eccentric, pedantic, autocratic, and servile Count Victor N. Panin, Minister of Justice, and now also President of the Editing Commission. Panin was proprietor of 21,000 serfs; his income was 136,000 rubles; his interests were bound up with the maintenance of peasant bondage; his political views were those of a conservative of the conservatives. The appointment of Panin as President of the Editing Commission struck everyone with amazement.

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Efimova, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Djivelegov, A., "Count V. N. Panin," in *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. p. 151; see also V. G. Bogucharsky, "J. J. Rostovtsev," *ibid.*, pp. 62 *et seq.* In both sketches many anecdotes of Rostovtsev illustrate his character and his method of presiding over the Commission.

<sup>4</sup> Djivelegov, art. cited, p. 152.

"What? Panin, Victor Panin! the long and crazy one, who by his formalism destroyed the last vestige of the juridical life of Russia! Ha! Ha! Ha! This is a mystification," exclaimed Herzen in his *Kolokol*, when the first rumour of Panin's appointment became current. When the appointment was announced, Herzen printed within a border of black, "The improbable news of the appointment of Panin is confirmed. The head of the most extreme and the dullest reaction is placed as the chief of the emancipation of the peasants."<sup>1</sup> Herzen considered the cause of emancipation lost for the time, and urged the members of the Editing Commission to resign by way of protest.

There are two possible explanations of the mystery of Panin. One is that the Tsar was influenced by the pressure which was brought to bear upon him by those adherents of bondage right and of *votchinal* jurisdiction to whom every concession to the peasants appeared as a loss to the landowners, and who desired to minimize that loss as much as possible. Panin's known attitude towards the peasant question corresponded closely with theirs. Rostovtsev had, from their point of view, been too complaisant. His providential removal had cleared the way for putting in his place a sound man, who might be calculated upon to keep the Editing Commission from going too far.<sup>2</sup> The other explanation is suggested by the answer of the Tsar Alexander II to the Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna, when she expressed her astonishment at Panin's appointment. "You do not know the character of Count Panin. He is absolutely devoid of any convictions, and his only anxiety will be to satisfy me."<sup>3</sup> The Tsar thus appeared to think that he was conciliating the adherents of "bondage right" in appointing Panin, and that it was possible through Panin's subservience to himself<sup>4</sup> to secure the passing of the emancipation measure without further delay. Colour is lent to this last explanation by the circumstance that the Tsar imposed the condition upon Panin that the direction of the policy of the Editing Commission should not be altered, and that the work of the Commission, so far as it had gone, must be accepted. It is

<sup>1</sup> *Kolokol*, quoted by Djivelegov, art. cited, p. 147.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Djivelegov, art. cited, p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Djivelegov, *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> An extraordinary statement of subserviency made by Panin to the Grand Duke Constantine Mikolaevich is reported by Admiral Greig, and characterized by him as the frankest expression of meanness he had ever listened to. Cf. Djivelegov, *loc. cit.*

obvious, however, that Panin was not a suitable instrument for the purposes of the Great Reform. Compared with the brilliant publicists who had aided in the development of the ideas of Rostovtsev, and who had carried forward the whole subject of agrarian reform near to the point of settlement, Panin was a man deficient in native intelligence and without mental training. He was, however, conceited, obstinate, and autocratic. His first appearance at the Editing Commission produced a kind of panic; but this condition wore off, and the long Panin himself became the victim of fear. He could not meet on equal intellectual terms men like Mēlyutēn, Cherkassky, and Samarin. Familiar with every detail of the intricate series of questions, these able original members of the Editing Commission gave Panin no rest, and simply wore him out with unaccustomed mental strain.<sup>1</sup> This experience led Panin to a strategic manœuvre. In spite of the assistance of his acolytes of the Ministry of Justice who were members of the Editing Commission, but who were under his control, and of the reactionary members of the Commission otherwise, he was unable to effect anything but mere obstruction. He therefore attempted to transfer the discussion to the old Main Committee, where there were no Mēlyutēns, Cherkasskys, or Samarins to trouble him.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the energetic opposition of the superior members of the Editing Commission, the reactionary influences were much reinforced by Panin's appointment. Koshelyev, who was abroad at the time, wrote to the deputies of the *guberni* committees who attended on the second summons to St. Petersburg, and advised them to abandon the notion of landless liberation, as well as of diminished allotments, and to concentrate their attention upon the question of compensation. He also urged them to secure, so far as possible, local autonomy, and to resist bureaucratic interference. But Koshelyev's admonitions fell upon deaf ears. The majority of the deputies of the second summons were from the Black Soil and the western *gubernie* and they had no partiality for the idea of compensation. Many of them even went so far as to desire landless liberation and the retention of *votchnal* jurisdiction. Their position was strengthened by the appointment of Panin, and they took advantage of the situation to oppose the granting of allotments to peasants as well as the creation of the village and agrarian communities as authorities independent of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Djivelevov, art. cited, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

landowners. They attacked the conclusions of the Editing Commission on the ground that they represented a republican and socialist tendency. But the deputies of the second summons had in reality no more influence than those of the first; and Panin's influence notwithstanding, the Editing Commission passed into its third period without radical alteration in its policy. During the third period the Editing Commission set itself to the task of codifying the conclusions at which it had arrived. In this process it capitulated in a certain degree to the *guberni* committees by diminishing the extent of the allotments and by increasing the *obròk* in the Black Soil *gubernie* from 8 to 9 rubles per soul.<sup>1</sup> The Commission also agreed to a readjustment of the *obròk* in twenty years in those estates in which the field land was given in perpetuity to the peasants.<sup>2</sup> Panin had attempted to prevent the giving of allotments to peasants in perpetuity, and to leave the question open to voluntary agreement between the landowners and the peasants at the conclusion of the period of temporary obligatory relations. The system of allotment in perpetuity was ardently defended by Mělyutěn, Cherkassky, and others. Their position was put in a memorandum to the Tsar, signed by nineteen members of the Commission. Panin replied in a special report. The Tsar refused to arbitrate, and the result was a compromise, in which the expression "continual use" was substituted for "use in perpetuity."

This marked the close of the labours of the Editing Commission. On 10th October 1860 the Commission was dissolved. It had sat without intermission for twenty months, and had worked out the drafts of sixteen sections of the future Act of Emancipation.<sup>3</sup>

The task of bringing the Act into its final form now devolved upon the Main Committee, and this task was entered upon on the same day upon which the Commission was dissolved.<sup>4</sup>

It was now clear to the opponents of reform that the great change must inevitably take place, and that all that remained for them to do was to emasculate the Emancipation Act so far as was possible. No long time was available, because the Tsar imperatively demanded that the legislative Act should be completely ready for his signature

<sup>1</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>2</sup> Skryebětsky, i. pp. 892 *et seq.*, and Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Their proceedings were published in eighteen large volumes, with six additional volumes of statistics.

<sup>4</sup> Kornilov, *loc. cit.*

by the 15th February 1861, four months after the conclusion of the work of the Editing Commission. The opposition was represented chiefly by M. N. Muraviev and Prince V. A. Dolgorukov, who obtained the assistance of P. A. Valuyev, of the Department of State Domains, in the elaboration of a counter-scheme of liberation to offer in substitution for the scheme of the Editing Commission. Meanwhile Prince Orlov had retired from the chair of the Main Committee, and the Tsar had appointed in his place the Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich,<sup>1</sup> who threw himself with ardour into the defence of the project of the Editing Commission, with the aid of Mēlyutēn, Cherkassky, Samarin, and N. P. Semenov. The chief point of attack was the extent of normal allotment, Panin urging further diminution. After long discussion concessions were made, the allotments were somewhat reduced in various regions,<sup>2</sup> and finally the project of the law passed the Main Committee without important changes, on the 14th January 1861. The project then passed to the Council of State, which began its consideration on 28th January. Here also the project passed with but one important change. The amendment was introduced by Prince P. P. Gagarin, and was accepted unanimously. By this amendment landowners in the higher or Steppe localities, as defined in the relative section of the Act, were permitted to give gratuitously to the peasants one-fourth of the allotment to which the peasants were entitled, and thereupon to cancel all obligations due by the peasant to the landowner and all obligations due by the landowner to the peasant. By this means the landowner saved for himself three-fourths of the allotment, and discharged himself of all obligations so far as the peasants were concerned.<sup>3</sup> The Council of State met upon the question for the last time on 17th February, and on the 19th of that month the Emancipation Act, with its accompanying documents, was signed, and the long-delayed fall of bondage right was at last accomplished.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting sketch of the Grand Duke Constantine, see Konē, A. T., "Grand Duke Constantine Nikolaevich," in *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. pp. 34 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Kornilov, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> The effect of this provision is considered *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> The reason for haste was that the question of bondage should be settled before the beginning of work in the fields. Had the legislation not taken effect in the middle of February, the whole question would have been delayed for another year.

"The Russian peasant was emancipated by the nobleman and the *chinovnik*. That is the reason he was emancipated so badly. It could not be otherwise. The landowners were influenced by considerations of economical advantage ; the bureaucrats by motives of the advantage and safety of the State. The best of those who participated in the reform based their opinions, not upon any ideal, but upon the recognition of the needs of the landowners or of the State. Samarin, Cherkassky, and Unkovsky were all *pomyetschêkê* ; Mëlyutën and Rostovtsev were bureaucrats. Strange as it may seem, if we wish to find the true cause of peasant reform we must climb the steps of the throne. The Grand Duchess Elena Pavlovna and the Grand Duke Constantine were the two persons to whom the reform was largely due."<sup>1</sup> While this is, no doubt, a true summary of the matter, it must also be recognized that the really important influences towards reform came from the idealists—from Cherneshevsky, from Herzen, and from Turgenev—and from the increase of the Russian population which made land scarce and altered the conditions in which the bondage of cultivators was an economical advantage. But, although the idealists and the economical conditions together rendered the abolition of bondage inevitable, the terms of that abolition had to be settled by discussion in the bureaucratic field. The Emancipation Act, as it was finally passed, had thus inevitably the faults which its origin and its growth suggest. It attempted the task, already recognized as an impossible one, to improve at once the condition of the peasants, and to increase their liberties without involving sacrifice and limitation so far as concerned the condition and the privileges of the landowners.

Nevertheless, the great fact remained, that the relation of master and bondsman was abolished, although the Act did not effect this fully for some years.

In addition to the sections of the Act which applied to the whole of Russia, there were four sections of local application : (1) For Great Russia, White Russia, and New Russia ; (2) for Little Russian *gub.*, Poltavskaya, Chernigovskaya, and part of Kharkovskaya ; (3) for the three south-western *gub.* ; and (4) for the three Lithuanian *gub.*, Minskaya and Lifland district of Vitebskaya *gub.* There were also special sections dealing with (a) peasants of small

<sup>1</sup> Djivelegov, A. K., "N. A. Mëlyutën," in *The Great Reforms* (Moscow, 1911), v. p. 68.

owners, (b) peasants performing obligatory duties in landowners' factories, (c) peasants in mountain factories of private owners, (d) peasants in Donskoy *oblast*, (e) peasants in Stavropolskaya *gub.*, (f) former bonded peasants in Bessarabskoy *oblast*, and (g) peasants in Siberia.

In his speech to the Council of State on 28th January 1861, the Tsar Alexander II said that the final project of emancipation, which was then presented, was in full accordance with the rescript to Nazimov of 28th November 1857. This was substantially the case. The peasants were not liberated without land. The *votchinal* jurisdiction, for which the landowners fought so hardly, was retained only up till the end of the period of temporary obligation, or, alternatively, until payment of the amount of compensation. The power of exacting fines on those estates where *barischina* was rendered was abolished. The due performance of duties to the State and to the local authorities was secured by the "mutual guarantee." The peasants immediately began to organize themselves into village communities, and to establish village communal management. The period of temporary obligation remained, but it was very generally avoided by the acceptance of the "free quarter," and thus, saving in a number of cases, in certain localities it was reduced to a mere form. Even where it was in existence, the landowner was obliged to bring unpunctual peasants before the *volost* court; he could not punish them himself. In respect to the size of the allotments, on the one hand, many landowners declared that they had been robbed of nearly all they had; on the other, the alleged smallness of the allotments give rise to sharp criticism of the terms of emancipation.<sup>1</sup>

The Emancipation was undoubtedly a great step towards liberty, but it did not make the people entirely free. The peasant was subject to the *mir*, and was in danger of suffering from its petty despotism. The *mir* itself was subject to bureaucratic control, and was in danger of despotism from that quarter also. The Emancipation did not grant political liberty either to the peasant or to the landowner; but it made the permanent denial of political freedom for either an impossibility. The narrative of the discussions must have suggested how small a rôle was played overtly by abstract arguments. The stimulating influence of the poets and the idealists

<sup>1</sup> Criticisms in this sense were made by Chernyshevsky, Janson, Ivanyukov, and others.

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cannot be ignored, but the Great Reform was the result rather of the force of circumstances than of the force of persuasion. Those who carried it out were landowners and men of affairs, and only these could have grappled with the detail which must be mastered in effecting organic social changes. The peculiarities of Russian public life rendered the restriction of the discussions to a comparatively small number of persons quite inevitable. Defects in the settlement were inevitable also, and these made their appearance at no distant date.



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BONDAGED PEASANTRY ON THE EVE OF EMANCIPATION

HAVING followed the discussions of the agrarian question in the "higher spheres," and in the committees and commissions down to the moment of Emancipation, we may now describe in a general way the condition of the bonded peasantry during the epoch immediately preceding Emancipation. The notable fact which "springs into the eyes," is that although the total population of Russia was increasing rapidly, the peasant population, both of State lands and of the lands of *pomyetschëkë*, was exhibiting even diminution. This is shown by the following table :<sup>1</sup>

Number and Date of Censuses.	Number of Peasants of <i>pomyetschëkë</i> . (a)	Number of State Peasants. (a)	Total Population. (e)
Column 1.	Column 2.	Column 3.	Column 4.
1st . . . . 1722	3,200,000 (b)	2,200,000	14,000,000
5th . . . . 1796	9,789,680 (c)	7,276,170	36,000,000
6th . . . . 1812	10,416,813 (c)	7,550,814	41,000,000
8th . . . . 1835	10,872,229 (c)	10,550,000	60,000,000
9th . . . . 1851	10,708,856 (c)	12,000,000	69,000,000
10th . . . . 1859	10,696,136 (d)	12,800,000	74,000,000

According to Semevsky,<sup>2</sup> the "serf percentage," or the percentage of serfs to the total population in Great Russia alone, was 53 per

<sup>1</sup> Notes to Table.—(a) The figures in cols. 2 and 3 represent the number of souls of male sex in bondage in European Russia, the Baltic Provinces, and in Siberia. The figures in col. 3 include State, Udelye, and Cloister peasants. Cols. 2 and 3 include peasants working in mills and factories under bondage, as well as those working in the fields. The figures in col. 3 are derived from correspondence with V. E. Semevsky. See Appendix III, *infra*. (b) Semevsky, *ibid.* (c) From 1835 the figures exclude the Baltic Provinces, where towards that year 416,013 souls of male sex were liberated (see Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 570). (d) Semevsky. See Appendix III, *infra*. (e) Brockhaus and Ephron, *Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1900), p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, V. E., *Peasants in the Reign of Katherine II* (St. Petersburg, 1881), p. 16.

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cent. Mělyukov<sup>1</sup> considers that the serf percentage in 1747 was about 45 per cent., and that up till the time of the eighth census (1835) this percentage remained practically unchanged. From that period the percentage declined sharply.<sup>2</sup>

	Per cent.
8th census, 1835 . . . . .	44.93
9th census, 1851 . . . . .	37.90
10th census, 1859 . . . . .	34.39

*Bartschina*, or work for the *barin* or proprietor, was falling into disrepute. It was exacted with difficulty, and when it was exacted it was felt to be excessively burdensome. A landowner of Penzinskaya *gub.*, writing in 1858,<sup>3</sup> says that "*bartschina* deprives the poor of the possibility of emerging from poverty, prevents the well-to-do from becoming rich, prevents the man who possesses special talents from developing them, prevents the merchant from working in his business, and acts upon all peasants like slow poison, killing body and soul." The substitution of *obròk* for *bartschina* was going on rapidly. The substitution was strongly advocated by practical people<sup>4</sup> as an economical measure. But everything depended upon the terms of the transference from one system of payment to the other. It is true that in a sense the substitution of *obròk* meant a certain acquisition of freedom. The servitude of the peasant was not so obvious, yet it was servitude just the same. The peasants were naturally eager to get rid of *bartschina*, and were disposed to agree to pay an amount of *obròk* which was frequently based upon optimistic anticipations of the productivity of their labour.

The following is a chapter from real life in 1848. The manager of an estate reported in one year that everything was in good order, but that the harvest had been bad. He promised to do his best, so that the amount of unpaid *obròk* should be as small as possible. In the following year the manager reported respectfully that every-

<sup>1</sup> Mělyukov, P. N., art. "Peasants" in *Brockhaus and Ephron's Russian Encyclopedia* (St. Petersburg).

<sup>2</sup> Keppen, quoted by Troinitsky, A. A., *The Serf Population in Russia according to the Tenth Census* (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 54. See, however, Appendix III, *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> *Landowners' Journal* (1858), i., quoted by Lyatschenko, *Sketch of Russian Agrarian Evolution* (St. Petersburg, 1908), i. p. 185.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Puzdunin, *Upon Taxed Workers, or an entirely new Way for the Payment of Duties to Landowners* (Moscow, 1845), p. 5; quoted by Lyatschenko, *loc. cit.*

thing was in good order ; but some of the peasants had lost their animals from contagious disease, and other peasants had been drunk or lazy or careless. Some well-to-do peasants declined to pay *obròk*, alleging insolvency. The manager adds that field products are so cheap that he wonders how even those peasants who do pay *obròk* can manage to do so.<sup>1</sup>

The amount of the *obròk* was determined by the landowner, and of course he made it as high as possible. When the peasant could pay, the amount was customarily exacted ; but when he could not pay the amount had to be foregone. It is clear that under *bartschina*, custom determined the number of days which might be exacted, and the law determined the maximum ; but law and custom alike had less control over the *obròk* payments, and thus these were frequently proportionately higher than *bartschina*. Moreover, arrears of *obròk* might pile up from year to year. In the nature of things there could be no arrears of *bartschina*. Even if the *obròk* were fairly adjusted, the advantage of the transference was, on the whole, on the side of the proprietor, at all events in the non-Black Soil regions. There the performance of *bartschina* meant the use of the agricultural capital of the proprietor. If for any reason he had an inadequate amount of agricultural capital, it was more economical to take payment in *obròk* than to take it in work by the peasants, because he could not organize the work to advantage. Moreover, in *bartschina* economy the landowner ran the risk of the season, while in *obròk* economy the peasant ran the risk of it. In substituting *obròk* for *bartschina* also there was always a tendency to take the nominal amount of *bartschina*, rather than the actual amount, as the basis of transference. As in the case noticed above, unpunctual payment of *obròk* occurred just as unpunctual rendering of *bartschina* occurred ; but probably, on the whole, the *obròk* contracts were more punctually fulfilled.<sup>2</sup> Prior to Emancipation many landowners arranged with their peasants that duties should be rendered partly in *bartschina* and partly in *obròk*, so that the two systems might compensate one another. The adoption of this combined system led in some cases to a kind of partnership between the landowner and his peasants, the land being cultivated by the peasants, and the produce of the harvest

<sup>1</sup> Jukov, *Guide to Successful and Profitable Work in Russian Village Economy* (Moscow, 1848), p. 139 ; quoted by Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> For the fulfilment of contracts by peasants, see Karishev, N., *Peasant's Allotted and Rented Land* (Dorpat, 1892), *passim*.

being divided between the landowner and the peasant. There seems to have resulted from the adoption of this method a considerable increase in the productivity of peasant labour. In spite of its immediate economic advantage and the plausibility of its adoption on social grounds, the system tended to have the effects of intensifying the self-contained character of the communities which adopted it and of maintaining intact the large undivided families.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in the absence of organization for the exportation of the produce, or even for the sale of it in not far-distant markets, and in the absence of varied demand in the peasant communities, the *bartschina* economy, where it was successfully managed, as well as the combined *obròk* and *bartschina* economy, resulted even in average harvest years in the production of grain in excess of the local demand. This local overproduction, of course, led in time to the organization of markets, not usually either by the landowners or by the peasants, but by merchants in the towns; and thus led also to dependence of the agricultural population, including landowner and peasant alike, upon the mechanism of the market.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that one of the results of the transference of *bartschina* to *obròk* which favoured the landowner, and at the same time contributed a possible benefit to the community, was the possibility of accumulation on the part of the landowner. Under the *bartschina* system he could accumulate only with difficulty; under the *obròk* system, given punctual payment of the *obròk*, he could accumulate grain. But he could not go on doing so indefinitely. He was obliged to get rid of his surplus. The purely self-contained character of his economic life had made him an indifferent bargainer excepting where his peasants were concerned. He was not accustomed to the employment of money, excepting as counters to gamble with, and he thus, save in rare cases, found himself exacting the greatest possible contributions in kind as *obròk* from his peasants, only to throw these away at unfavourable prices in the nearest

<sup>1</sup> Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> The discussion of the relative advantages of bonded and free labour in connection with this question of local overproduction excited great interest between 1858 and 1860. See, e.g., articles in *The Journal for Library Reading, Agriculturist, Arsenye, Notes of the Fatherland, Village Welfare* (1858-1860). See also *Archiv. of Historical and Practical Information*, i. (1859), and comments by Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, i. p. 189.

market.<sup>1</sup> The estates were thus deprived of agricultural capital which might have been accumulated out of their own revenue, and the excess yields went to swell the commercial and industrial capital of the towns. This process might be counted upon to react towards the agricultural regions in higher prices, in loans, and eventually in purchases of land at enhanced values; but these reactions were remote in point of time, and meanwhile the agricultural population was engaging in exhausting and unremunerative labours, and its exploiters, the *pomyetschëkë*, were not husbanding the resources yielded by these labours to advantage for any one.

The process in question will be made more clear by an account of the statistics of production and consumption during the period of about thirty years prior to Emancipation. (See opposite page.)

These calculations are very approximate and somewhat divergent; but they all point to the conclusion that there was during these years a considerable surplus of grain. It must, of course, be realized that in 1839 the railway system of European Russia did not exist, and in 1859 it was as yet but slenderly developed. The increase of production outran the means of transportation, and in many localities there is no doubt that grain rotted in the granaries.<sup>2</sup> If the surplus of unusable and unsaleable grain be taken at the minimum of 10,000,000 *chetverti* per year, and if the value of that grain be taken at the minimum price of 3 rubles per *chetvert*, the loss to the landowners for each year during the period from about 1830 until about 1859, must be taken at 30,000,000 rubles per year. This can hardly be otherwise regarded than as totally lost, since the means of storing the grain against a deficient harvest were inadequate, and the means of transporting it into a region where there might be scarcity were practically non-existent. It was not an uncommon condition to find grain rotting because there was no market for it in one district, while in another people were dying from starvation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This was the case in 1913 to a certain extent. Incompetent or indifferent proprietors sold the products of their fields, forests, and orchards sometimes for a small fraction of the price which enterprising merchants obtained for them by organizing the sale of them. The proprietors could not with advantage engage in retail trade, but through indolence and ignorance they forfeited a large part of the income which, under skilful management, might have been derived from their estates. The writer met with examples of this kind in Russia in 1910.

<sup>2</sup> This is Lyatschenko's view. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> Lyatschenko, *loc. cit.*

TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBERS OF THE VILLAGE POPULATION IN MALE SOULS IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA, THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF BREAD-STUFFS, THE QUANTITY OF BREAD-STUFFS EXPORTED, AND THE SURPLUS ACCORDING TO VARIOUS AUTHORITIES. 000,000'S OMITTED.

Period.	POPULATION. (Male Souls.)			Yield of Bread-stuffs.	INTERIOR CONSUMPTION.						Exports.	Total.	Surplus.	Authority.
	Village.	City and Factory.	Total.		Village (including Food for Cattle).	City and Factory.	Army.	Rural Districts not producing Bread-stuffs.	Seed.	Distillation.				
Years prior to				Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	Chetverti.	
	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	Average.	
1839	...	...	55	250	143.0	42		...	60	10	2.5	237.5	12.5	Protopopov <sup>1</sup>
1849	...	...	...	250	131.3	13.6	4	...	60	10	5.5	224.4	25.6	Ministry of State Domains <sup>2</sup>
1857	48	...	...	250	144.0	28.5		...	60	5	2.5	240.0	10.0	Tengoborsky <sup>3</sup>
1859	...	7	...	...	...	17.5	14		...	8	4.5	...	...	Semenov <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Protopopov, "On the Commerce of Food-stuffs in Russia," in the *Journal of the Ministry of State Domains* (St. Petersburg), 1842, vol. v. p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Text of Economical Statistical Atlas of European Russia. Department of Village Economy. Ministry of State Domains*, 1st issue (St. Petersburg, 1851).

<sup>3</sup> Tengoborsky, *About the Productive Powers of Russia* (Moscow, 1857), p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> Semenov, *Study of the Historical Information about Russian Interior Commerce from the Middle of the Seventeenth Century till 1858* (St. Petersburg, 1889), pt. iii. p. 300.

*Note.*—The data of this table are quoted from Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 *et seq.*

The local overproduction of grain under the conditions described led in the first quarter of the nineteenth century to a grain crisis. The prices of grain throughout the eighteenth century had been high. They became inflated early in the nineteenth century. In 1804 the price of grain became so high as to create universal anxiety.<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Free Economical Society offered a gold medal for a discussion of the problem of high prices of food-stuffs. The prize was awarded to Schwëtkov.<sup>2</sup> His answer to the problem was to the effect that the class which suffered chiefly from the high price of provisions was the "peasant liberated from the *sokha*"—that is, the landless peasant who does not plough, and therefore does not grow grain for his food. The causes of the high prices were the growth of this class and the growth of other non-cultivating classes in the cities.<sup>3</sup>

In 1826 a problem exactly the reverse was offered for solution by the Academy of Science of St. Petersburg. "It is known that the currency prices of agricultural products in Russia have constantly increased from the middle of the seventeenth century, and that during recent years these prices have diminished. The problem is to define at what date the change in prices of each of the important products began, to explain what are the causes of this phenomenon, and what is the extent of this fall in price in both interior and exterior commerce. Is it possible that this fall will continue, and, finally, what compensation for the loss occasioned by this to the public interest might be gained by Russia in the productiveness of land and in commerce?" The prize was awarded to A. Fomën, who found the solution chiefly in the diminution of demand for interior requirements. These diminished so much in 1817 that bread-stuffs were exported from Russia to the value of 145,000,000 rubles, while in 1824 the exports of these were valued at only 12,000,000 rubles. But this circumstance did not, in his opinion,

<sup>1</sup> This was just after the "dear years" in England. In March 1801 wheat there reached its highest recorded point, viz. 159s. 3d. per imperial quarter. In 1804 it had fallen to 57s. 7d. The price rose again until in May 1812 it reached 157s. 7d. It fell sharply until in January 1816 it was 54s. 6d. It rose in 1817 to 116s. 3d. and fell in 1822 to 40s. 7d. The abundant harvest of 1835 brought it down to 36s. 5d. Cf. Jevons, W. Stanley, *Investigations in Currency and Finance* (London, 1884), chart at end of volume.

<sup>2</sup> Khodnev, A. E., *History of the Imperial Free Economical Society, 1765-1865* (St. Petersburg, 1865), p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

account for the whole of the fall. He finds a further cause in the diminishing population of the cities. "The number of merchants and the amount of commercial capital are both suffering reduction as well as the numbers of the 'small people' in towns." The author of the essay points out that measures which might be taken to stimulate commerce must be fruitless, because the peasants, being in bondage, can neither leave the estates to which they belong nor exercise any choice in their occupation. He inclines to the opinion that the crisis of grain prices is due to bondage. Nor does he think that any increase in the prices of agricultural produce could be expected under existing interior conditions. So far as concerns relief through exportation of surplus products, he points out that the customs duties of other countries would act as an impediment.<sup>1</sup> Fomēn concluded by expressing a doubt as to whether high prices of bread-stuffs were advantageous to the consumers. For some years after 1826 Russian economic literature is filled with discussions about prices of food-stuffs. All points of view were represented. Some, like Fomēn, leaned to the interest of the consumer, and regarded low prices as, on the whole, an advantage; others, as, for example, Count Rumyanstev,<sup>2</sup> thought that Russia would be rich when the *chetvert* of bread-stuffs was worth 25 rubles. N. A. Muraviev found the explanation of the phenomenon of low prices in the overproduction of grain by the landowners.<sup>3</sup>

Lyatschenko points out, however, that the course of prices at this period did not so much exhibit a tendency to diminish as a tendency to fluctuate violently, especially in those regions where there was customarily an excess of bread-stuffs. In those regions where there was no production of grain, or where the production was insufficient for the needs of the population, the course of prices was more stable. Instability of prices is also most noticeable in the old *jetnētsa*, or regions where the cultivation of rye predominates. In the Central Black Soil *gub.*, which were far from ports and from markets, the excess of grain and the instability of prices were both greatest.

<sup>1</sup> "On the Lowness of Prices of Agricultural Products in Russia." Essay by A. Fomēn in *Transactions of the Imperial Academy of Science*, 29th December 1826 (St. Petersburg, 1829). See also Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 194 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> In Preface to Tzer's *Establishment of Rational Village Economy*, p. 13. See also *Notes of the Fatherland* (1842-1843), pp. 21-6, and Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 196.



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TABLE SHOWING THE RATIOS OF MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM PRICES OF BREAD-STUFFS IN CERTAIN GUBERNI IN EUROPEAN RUSSIA, 1836-1840.<sup>1</sup>

	Minimum.	Maximum.
St. Petersburg . . . . .	10	22
Novgorod . . . . .	10	23
Yaroslav . . . . .	10	26
Vladimir . . . . .	10	38
Moscow . . . . .	10	42
Simbirsk . . . . .	10	48
Penza . . . . .	10	57
Ryazan . . . . .	10	65
Tambov . . . . .	10	67
Saratov . . . . .	10	67
Kursk . . . . .	10	82
Tula . . . . .	10	100
Stavropol . . . . .	10	111

Under these circumstances it is clear that a bad harvest in a certain locality would cause prices to rise to a great height, while an abundant harvest would reduce the price to next to nothing, because there was no market for the grain and no facilities for storing it. The periodicity of good and bad harvests was also very irregular. For example, in Vitebskaya *gub.* there was a complete failure of harvests for twelve years in succession, from 1814 till 1825. From 1828 up till 1846 there were good harvests, and then from 1847 there were three very bad harvests. In Penzinskaya *gub.* there was complete failure of harvests for four years. From 1830 up till 1845 there were for all Russia eight years of deficient harvests, and only in four years (1833 and 1834, and 1839 and 1840) were there good harvests. During that period the Government had to spend more than 75,000,000 rubles in relief. There was a complete failure of harvest in 1843 in Smolenskaya *gub.*, yet in the neighbouring region of White Russia there was plenty. These violent fluctuations in production, accompanied as they were by violent fluctuations in prices, produced enormous inconvenience and distress, occurring as they did at a period when the self-contained economy to which the people had been accustomed was being replaced by a pecuniary economy. The peasants could not understand these movements,

<sup>1</sup> Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 197; quoted from Protopopov, "On the Bread-stuff Trade in Russia," in *Journal of Ministry of State Domains* (1842), part v., pp. 85 *et seq.*

and naturally blamed the persons who refused to pay high prices when bread-stuffs were plentiful, and demanded high prices when bread-stuffs were scarce. Numerous projects, having for their aim the elimination of the merchants and the raising of prices to the cultivator, were brought forward during this period.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Reichel, *Security of Provision for the People--The Method of Maltsov* (St. Petersburg, 1881), and Jukov, *Guide to Successful and Profitable Work in Russian Village Economy* (Moscow, 1848), p. 81. Cf. Lyatschenko, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

BOOK III

THE FALL OF BONDAGE—  
INDUSTRY UNDER BONDAGE

## INTRODUCTION

THE self-contained character of the estates populated by bonded peasants hindered the growth of towns, because the proprietors purchased little and the peasants almost nothing. The richer proprietors patronized the town merchants, but almost exclusively for goods imported from abroad. The development of miscellaneous manufacture for consumption within the country is thus in Russia a comparatively modern affair. Yet in the manufacture of certain commodities there was a considerable development. This development took two directions. In the first place, there was the antique village industrial system, by means of which metals, flax, wool, and silk were produced as raw materials, and worked into consumable goods by the same persons or by near neighbours. The commodities so produced were in part used on the spot of production and in part sold to merchants for transportation elsewhere. In the second place, there began in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the exploitation of minerals, and especially of iron, by enterprising foreigners, who rented lands, and who secured from the Government permission to ascribe to the works established upon these lands, peasants of the class known as Tsar's Peasants, an account of which has been given in a preceding chapter. The military policy of Peter the Great, which has also already been described, led to a great expansion of iron manufacture, and to the wider adoption of the system of ascription of bonded peasants, involving not only peasants of the State, but also peasants belonging to private proprietors and to ecclesiastical estates. So also the reorganization of the army, involving the formation of regiments and the adoption of uniforms, led to the erection of clothing factories, and the ascrip-

tion to these of bonded peasants. The development of the great industry in Russia thus began very early, and began under conditions of forced labour. The reason for this is obvious. There was no important class of free hireable labourers, and the agricultural peasants could with difficulty be drawn into industry, partly because of their own reluctance, and partly because they belonged to estates where their labour was required for agriculture. The course of this development and the consequences of it to Russia are described in detail in the following chapters. The industrial revolution left some scars in Western Europe, where it encountered conditions in which free hired labour was plentiful ; but these scars were as nothing compared to the deep wounds which the establishment of the great industry left in Russian life. There the peasantry fought against the great industry from the beginning. For them it meant to be torn from their villages and often from their families, and to be compelled to work, under the lash, at labour distasteful to them, and to do so with inadequate or no remuneration. Their protests and appeals were continuous from the middle of the seventeenth century until the Emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Indeed, the dislocation of village life, caused by ascription to "possessional factories," had much to do not only with the revolutionary movement of the third quarter of the eighteenth century, but with the state of mind which in the nineteenth rendered Emancipation inevitable. Perusal of the evidence will show that, longsuffering as the ascribed peasants were, they were never acquiescent in the perversion of the bondage system which their ascription to factories implied.

Throughout the period of two hundred years during which the system of ascription to factories endured, the Government pursued a vacillating policy. Whenever superior agents of the Government came closely into contact with the actualities of the system, they were inclined to remedy it drastically, or to abolish it ; but project after project came to nothing. As an inevitable outcome of the bondage relation, ascription could only fall with bondage itself. Eventually the fundamentally ineconomical character of forced factory labour became apparent, and towards the end of the period few defenders of it were to be found.

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For long after Emancipation, and even, to some extent, until the present time, the incidents of ascription perpetuated themselves in the attitude of the now free hired labourers towards their employers and towards the Government, and contributed to the revolutionary state of mind of the proletariat during the rising of 1905-1906. The present Book deals, however, exclusively with the period prior to 1861.

## CHAPTER I

### THE INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES OF THE STATE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

#### (a) STATE PEASANTS AT THE MOUNTAIN WORKS

AN account has already been given of the agricultural peasants of the State.<sup>1</sup> The State peasants ascribed to the enterprises of the State in the mountains, and to private enterprises there, were distinguished from the agricultural State peasants in respect to their relations to the fiscal system. While the agricultural State peasants paid their poll tax and *obròk* in money, the State peasants ascribed to the mountain works paid their obligations in the earlier period altogether in labour, and after 1769 a portion of them in money and a portion still in labour.<sup>2</sup> While the important development of the ascription of State peasants to private enterprises dates from the time of Peter the Great, there were instances of this practice early in the seventeenth century. In 1632 Andrew Venius, a Dutch merchant, received permission to establish ironworks near Tula, about 120 miles south of Moscow. Together with his partners, Peter Marselis and Philemon Akema, he built the works of Goroditshevsky, on the Great Tulitsa River, upon rented land. His mining force consisted of fifty Dedilovsky Cossacks and Streltsi. In 1633 there were ascribed to these works a *volost* in Kashirsky district, with 347 souls of Tsar's peasants. For this *volost* the company paid to the Treasury 286 rubles *obròk*, and in addition a specified quantity of wheat, hemp, and millet.<sup>3</sup> Another *volost*, not quite so large as the first, was afterwards also granted. The total number of households in both *volosts* was 420, and the number of male souls about 580. The peasants were required to cut for the use of the works

<sup>1</sup> See *supra*, pp. 267 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *Peasants in the Time of Katherine II* (St. Petersburg, 1901), ii. p. xviii.

<sup>3</sup> Gamel, *Description of the Ironworks at Tula* (Moscow, 1826), pp. 7, 9, 12, and 13; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 296.

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1000 *sajens* of fuel and to perform other labour; but the number of peasants which might be employed in spring, summer, and autumn was limited to 48; while in the winter everyone capable of working was bound to labour at the works. For this labour the company had to pay to the Treasury—not to the workers—in iron on a basis of 45 *kopeks* per *puđ*.<sup>1</sup> In 1667 these works were given to Peter Marselis “for his many services,”<sup>2</sup> gratuitously for twenty years;<sup>3</sup> that is to say he was exempted from *obrók* and all other obligations to the State for that period. The works at Tula in the seventeenth century were the forerunners of the Treasury ironworks at the same place in 1712, which grew into a large establishment, with 3562 male souls ascribed to it in 1816.<sup>4</sup>

The great and rapid expansion of iron manufacture during the reign of Peter the Great has already been noticed. Prior to the Treasury enterprise at Tula, works had been established at Olonets on a small scale in 1700. In 1703 three *voitchini* belonging to monasteries were ascribed to these works, which then became greatly enlarged, having altogether ascribed to them 1433 peasant households.<sup>5</sup>

In 1714 there were ascribed to the Petrovsky ironworks numerous *volosts*, in which there were altogether 4892 peasant households. In 1703 there had been established on the river Lopskoy, an affluent of Lake Onega, the Povenetsky ironworks, to which, in 1705, *raskolniki* (members of dissenting sects) were ascribed to the number of 911 souls, for the purpose of prospecting and extracting iron ore.

Up till the year of the death of Peter the Great (1725) 48,818 male souls had been ascribed to the two great ironworks of Petrov and Olonets. In the few years immediately preceding that date some of the furnaces had ceased to be in operation. Upon resumption of these, in 1725, orders were given to ascribe an additional number of 15,833 souls, mostly from the Court peasantry, with a few Synodal peasants.<sup>6</sup>

In the year 1700 a beginning was made with the construction of the ironworks at Nevyansk, in the Ural Mountains. In 1702 the

<sup>1</sup> Hermann, Benedict, *Mineralogische Reisen in Siberien* (1798), ii. pp. 24-25; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of Academy of History*, p. 401, No. 77, iv.; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 296.

<sup>3</sup> Gamel, *op. cit.*, p. 25; cited, *ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*



Verkhoturksy Ironworks, on the river Neva, were granted to Nikita Demidov, of Tula, on condition that he supplied to the Treasury, at fixed prices, cannon, mortars, bombs, grenades, and other munitions of war. Demidov was required to purchase from the peasants, at fixed prices, supplies of fuel; only if the peasants refused to render these supplies were they to be compelled to do so, in order that the works might not be brought to a standstill. Demidov was to submit himself to the Siberian *Prekáz*, but under it he was to have magisterial authority, saving in cases of "murder, brigandage," and the like.<sup>1</sup> In 1702 the Admiralty built the ironworks Ustoujna Jeleznopolskaya, on the river Ijina. For the service of these works State peasants were not available, and therefore the peasants of neighbouring *pomyetschékē* and *votchinēkē* were purchased to the number of 1118 households for 53,177 rubles.<sup>2</sup> In 1724 General Gennin, who was in charge of the administration of the Ural Ironworks, asked that large villages should be ascribed to them, "because otherwise the work cannot be performed, and that poll tax should not be taken from the villages. The peasants should be required to work out their poll tax at the works, and when they have done so, wages should be paid to them."<sup>3</sup>

In 1734 Tatishev announced that to any person or company who undertook to establish ironworks, there should be given from 100 to 150 peasant households for every blast-furnace, and up to 30 households for every hammer.<sup>4</sup> Taxes for these peasants were to be paid by the enterpriser, and he was obliged to pay wages to the workers at the rates specified in the ukase of 13th January 1724. The enterpriser had also to undertake to produce a certain amount of cast-iron for each blast-furnace which he put in operation. The peasants to be ascribed to the works were to be taken "without choice" from the nearest villages.<sup>5</sup>

In the same year any person who wished to establish brassworks was entitled to have ascribed to his works peasants at the rate of

<sup>1</sup> Shishonko, *Annals of Perm*, part iii. pp. 26-31; Count Spassky, *Life of N. Demidov* (St. Petersburg, 1877), pp. 73-74; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 299.

<sup>2</sup> *Materials for the History of the Russian Fleet*, cited by Semevsky, p. 300.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, vii., No. 4518.

<sup>4</sup> Mechanical hammer for forging.

<sup>5</sup> Hermann, *History of Mountain Works* (Ekaterinburg, 1810), pp. 140-1; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 301.

50 households, or 200 male souls, for every thousand *puds* of pure brass produced.<sup>1</sup>

In 1736, works to which villages were not ascribed were permitted to take separate households and to transfer them to settlements at the works, but they were not permitted to take whole *volosts*. Count P. I. Shuvalov was granted, by ukase of the Senate in 1753, for his ironworks in Orenburgskaya *gub.*, 1920 souls of State peasants. In the following year the same proprietor also received 640 souls of Black Ploughing peasants, between the ages of fifteen and sixty years, for working the blast-furnace and two hammers. One-third of these peasants were to be employed at the works, and the remainder were to remain in their villages and in agriculture.<sup>2</sup> Other transfers of peasants in large numbers were made to the ironworks of Count Shuvalov. When his enterprises were taken over by the Government in 1763, there were ascribed to them 25,000 peasants.<sup>3</sup> When certain villages were ascribed in 1760 to the works of Count Chernyshev, the grantee was reminded that "to private works, villages are ascribed for a time, and not for ever."<sup>4</sup> In 1760, 9105 souls were ascribed to the Ekaterinburg gold mines.<sup>5</sup>

At this period, although the term for which the peasants were ascribed to private works was not always stated, a period of ten years was sometimes defined. After the close of such a period the proprietor was obliged to acquire peasants on his own account, the State peasants being, as it were, leased to him for ten years.<sup>6</sup>

The nature of the obligations of the peasants employed in the mountain works administered by the State, and granted by it to private enterprisers, and the life of the peasants, is vividly disclosed in a statement made in 1708 by the peasants at the great village of Nevyansk, in the Ural Mountains. "We cut wood for charcoal, we drive it, and we put it in piles. We burn the charcoal, and we drive it to the blast-furnaces. We drive various kinds of timber to the works, and from them we drive all over the district of Verkhotursk; and we drive iron and other military supplies to the river

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xiii., No. 10,131; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Firsov, *Russian Commercial Trading Companies* (Kazan, 1896), pp. 124-126; and *F.C.L.*, xiv., No. 10,192; cited, *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> *F.C.L.*, xv., No. 11,087; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *F.C.L.*, xv., No. 11,077. *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 303.

Chusovaya, where we build rafts and float them to the great Tsar at Moscow. And this we do without any pay, although for the voyage we have to send about twenty men, whom we have to hire at a very expensive rate. . . . And Akinfey Nikitch (the manager of the works), holds us at the works for driving and for cutting (timber) four weeks and more, and we suffer from him great misfortunes and hunger, because the cutting of timber is done in the winter-time, when snow covers everything.”<sup>1</sup>

General Gennin gives a somewhat similar description, from the point of view of the administration, saying that some of the peasants cut timber, some extract the ore, some transport it, and so on ; and that the work is divided amongst them in such a way that there is no undue burden upon any. He says, however, that a peasant can work out his tax within the four months during which field labour is impossible, and that he has thus eight months in which to work for himself.<sup>2</sup> But General Gennin does not mention all the work which the peasants were obliged to perform. They had to build houses, mow hay, &c.<sup>3</sup> In some of the works peasants were compelled to remain not four months, but eleven, being released for only one month for harvesting their own crops.<sup>4</sup>

The ukase of Peter the Great of 13th January 1724 was the first legislative act fixing a general rate of wages. This ukase prescribes an equal and universal rate “for the labour of men and horses” over all Russia. In summer a peasant with a horse was to be paid at the rate of 10 *kopeks* per day, and without a horse 5 *kopeks* ; and in winter, 6 and 4 *kopeks* respectively. Summer extended from April till October ; winter from October till April. In addition to this regulation, there was one respecting the rate of piecework wages, a rate which, no doubt, was based upon the daily wage. For example, a peasant who cut timber was to be remunerated at the rate of 20 *kopeks* per *sajen* ; for piling the wood, 1 ruble per pile of 20 *sajen* ; for turfing, 1 *ruble* ; for burning, 60 *kopeks* , for cutting in pieces, 80 *kopeks*—in all 3 *rubles* 40 *kopeks* per pile.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Memories of Siberian Life*, i. p. 317 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> A tax of at least 30 per cent. of income is undoubtedly a very high tax.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann, *Miner. Reisen in Sibirien*, ii. p. 26 : cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 307.

<sup>4</sup> *Soc. for Hist. of Ancient Russia* (1866), iv. Potanin, *Materials for the History of Siberia*, p. 48 ; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Archives of Mountain Dept. : Affairs of Mountain Collegium*, No. 1973, Aff. No. 11, pp. 14-15.

Sometimes the villages were at considerable distances from the works to which they were ascribed. For example, Nevyansk was at a distance of 100 *versts* from the Alapaevsky works; Annensky works had villages at a distance of 500 *versts*; and Avzyano-Petrovsky works, belonging to the Demidovs, had villages 625 *versts* distant.<sup>1</sup> It appears that when the distances were great, travelling allowances were made, especially during periods when it was difficult on any terms to get working hands. The normal amount of such travelling allowances was 6 *kopeks* per 50 *versts*.<sup>2</sup> This seems, however, to have been a one-way payment.

Peasants ascribed to the mountain works were not exempt from recruit obligation; but their recruits were not drafted into the army; they were required to go into the works, whether these belonged to the State or to private persons.<sup>3</sup>

The taxes actually payable by the State peasants, although they were levied at an uniform rate, nevertheless varied considerably, for they were obliged to pay taxes for absentees and for recruits. The division of tax obligations among the contributing peasants was carried out by a body elected from among themselves, generally three from each village.<sup>4</sup> Complaints began to be made by the State peasants almost immediately after the State industrial enterprises began to be transferred to private owners. Demidov's peasant workmen, for example, complained in 1708 that he did not pay them the wages due to them, and that in consequence they were reduced to extreme poverty.<sup>5</sup> There were complaints by the peasants of ill-treatment, of being beaten because they refused to work at the ironworks in harvest-time, and the like. There were also tales, impossible of verification, of workmen being thrown into the blast-furnaces, of workmen compelled by the owners to coin false money, confined in underground chambers, and deliberately drowned there by water which was allowed to

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 26; and *Arch. of Mountain Dept.*, No. cited. Cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 309.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, x., No. 7548; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 317.

<sup>4</sup> According to the *Ekaterinburgsky Instruction*, 1723-1724. "Approved in 1739." See Semevsky, ii. p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> *Memor. Siberian Hist. of the Eighteenth Century*, i. pp. 317-18; and cf. *Mountain Journal*, 1884, No. 7, p. 110; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 309-10.

flow in upon them in order to conceal the fact.<sup>1</sup> It was not safe for the peasants to complain, because the mountain works were distant from governmental centres, and because the owners had in general magisterial powers, which they might readily use to their own advantage. Thus petitioners were frequently beaten. Some Court peasants, who had been ascribed to Demidov's works, asked to be taken back into Court peasantry, and promised if this were done that they would pay, in addition to the customary tax of 1 ruble 10 kopeks, an *obròk* or sur-tax of 40 kopeks per soul.<sup>2</sup>

Dissatisfaction with their conditions led to frequent disturbances among the peasants ascribed to the mountain works. In the first ironworks which were established in Russia, those of Marselis,<sup>3</sup> there were disturbances in 1678. In 1700 and 1701, a prospector for minerals, called Kalitin, was attacked by armed peasants numbering a few thousands, and forced to leave the field of his operations. In 1722, at Ekaterinburg, which was then in course of erection, peasants who had escaped from the works, together with a military detachment and a number of artisans, made a disturbance.<sup>2</sup> In 1726 a band of 1500 armed peasants, who had escaped from ascription, attempted to pass over into Bashkiria. In 1743 Demidov's peasants engaged in a strike and ceased to work. They were beaten with rods and otherwise punished.<sup>4</sup>

The numbers of peasants ascribed to the mountain works in the hands of the State and in private hands increased considerably, although not uniformly, during the eighteenth century. In the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, owing to enormous grants of State establishments to private persons, the number of peasants ascribed to the Treasury diminished seriously in the works in the Ural Mountains, so that at this time, for a short period, the number of peasants ascribed to privately conducted factories was much greater than the number ascribed to the Treasury; the respective numbers for the Ural Mountain works were 100,000 and 15,000 souls of male sex. In

<sup>1</sup> Sigov, I., "The People and the Possessional Ownership in the Urals," in *Russkoë Bogatstvo*, 1899, No. 3, p. 207; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 312-13.

<sup>2</sup> Sokolovsky, J., "Towards the Question of the Conditions of Industry in Russia," in *Scientific Notes of the University of Kazan* (1890), iii. pp. 56-7; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Firsov, *op. cit.*; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 321.

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the reign of Katherine II so many estates which had been granted were resumed, that the number of peasants ascribed to the Treasury works increased greatly.<sup>1</sup>

The administration of the mountain works was subject to great variations. A bureau of mines was established in Moscow in 1700. This bureau was abolished in 1711, and the administration of the mountain works was transferred to the local authorities in the *guberni* in which they were situated. In 1715 the bureau of mines was re-established, this time in St. Petersburg. The bureau of mines was superseded in 1719 by the Mountain Collegium, acting as a part of the Manufacture Collegium. In 1722 the Mountain Collegium became a separate department until 1731, when the two *collegia* were again associated. In 1733 both *collegia* were abolished and their functions transferred to the Commerce Collegium. In 1736 a General Mountain Directorium was founded, with General Shemberg at the head of it. In 1742 this office was abolished, and the Mountain Collegium was re-established. The affairs of the mountain works remained under its care until 1783.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to these many changes in the central control, there were also changes in local administration. For example, during some years after 1722, Tobolsk was the administrative centre for Siberia

<sup>1</sup> Table showing numbers of male souls ascribed to Treasury and Private Mountain Works in the eighteenth century:

Period.	Treasury Works.	Private Works.	Treasury and Private Works together.
1719	...	...	31,383
1741-1743	63,054 (a)	24,199	87,253
1762	99,330	43,187	142,517
[1782	104,184 (b)	44,402	148,586] (c)
1781-1783	209,554	54,345	263,899 (d)
1794-1796	241,253	70,965	312,218

(a) There were in addition 87,253 souls ascribed to the Treasury potash works. *Jour. of Min. of Interior*, 1839, iii. pp. 250-1.

(b) Exclusive of the peasants in the Siberian works of the Treasury, numbering 40,000 souls.

(c) According to the *Report of Min. of Justice: Aff. of Senate*, Nos. 105-3676.

(d) According to the fourth census. See Semevsky, ii. pp. 303-4.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann, J., *Historical Remarks*, pp. 10, 20-4, 129, 134, 173-8; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 318.

and the Urals ; but on the building of the new city of Ekaterinburg, the administration was transferred to it.<sup>1</sup>

The large number of mountain works belonging to the State which were transferred into private ownership during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth (1741-1761) has already been remarked. The principal beneficiaries of the bounty of the Empress were Count P. I. Shuvalov, Count Chernyshev, the Counts Vorontsev, Major Guriev, Turchaninov, and S. Yagudjensky. For trifling amounts large works with all their appurtenances, including villages of ascribed peasants, were handed over to these favourites of the Court. The effect of this wholesale transference of peasants from the lands of the State administration into private hands may be surmised. The practice of compelling the peasants to pay their obligations to the State in work instead of in money opened up the way to much confusion even when the works were governed by State functionaries, in spite of numerous ukases, in which the payments which might legally be exacted were set forth. When the works passed into the hands of managers for private persons, the confusion came to be greater, because the fiscal relations of the peasant and the State became not merely anomalous, but indirect. The factory owner was not merely their taskmaster, he was also their tax-collector, and the taxes were collected by him in the manner which was above all most likely to produce friction. The peasant was required to work for many months, even in the most favourable case, without receiving into his hands any visible return whatever.

It is thus not surprising that almost immediately after these wholesale transferences took place, disturbances broke out among the ascribed peasants. Disturbance led to repression, repression to reprisal, and together with the agitation from somewhat similar causes in other classes of the peasantry, these led eventually to adhesion to the rebellion of Pugachev.<sup>2</sup>

Minor disturbances had occurred from time to time since the eighteenth century, and of these brief notice has already been taken ; the earliest of the new disturbances took place in 1754. In that year the workers at the Avzyano-Petrovsky works of Count P. I. Shuvalov and Kosma Matveyev, and those at the Voznesensky works of Sivers, refused to work, and force was required to reduce

<sup>1</sup> Hermann, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 42, 45, 126 ; cited, *ibid.*, pp. 318-19.

<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, vol. ii. book iv. chap. ii.

them to submission. The first-mentioned works were in the interior of Bashkiria, but the peasants who were ascribed to them lived at a distance of 600 versts, in a group of villages near the river Vyatka. Soon after the ascription the disturbances began at this place. The ukase of the Senate which ascribed the peasants to the works was declared by them to be false, and they refused to obey. A military command was sent to the villages, accompanied by the legal representative of Count Shuvalov—a lawyer named Jakovlev. The peasants succeeded in capturing Jakovlev, and in disappearing with him without leaving a trace. A regiment of dragoons was then sent from Kazan, Jakovlev was rescued, and the peasants were compelled, after a large number of them had been flogged, to go to the works. Such a measure meant for them really banishment with hard labour.<sup>1</sup>

One half of the ascribed peasants were required to labour at the works, the other half being left behind to attend to the village cultivation. This proportion seemed to the peasants to be unfair, and in four years they again revolted. On this occasion the peasants succeeded in reducing the proportion of workers to one-third.

In August 1760 the works were sold to E. Demidov, the ascribed peasants included. This transference was the occasion of fresh disturbances. Meetings were held by the peasants, and the situation became dangerous. Some of the peasants fled. Rumours, which were said to have been originated by the clerks employed by the former owner, led to the belief among the ascribed peasants that they had not been sold along with the works, but that the peasants which had been sold had been merely those who were personally bonded to the previous proprietor. Immediately after the sale of the works the peasants sent one of their number to St. Petersburg to ask the Senate to permit them to leave the works altogether. This man found there a printed copy of an ukase of 12th October 1760, referring to the addition of 60 *kopeks* to the poll tax, and stating that no imposts should be made without the authority of an ukase. He hurried back to the works with this document, which the peasants at once regarded as a kind of charter of liberties, for by their interpretation it meant that no work could be demanded without an ukase explicitly ordering it to be performed. The peasant agitators

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 324.



were able to draw off from the works even those who had remained loyal to the management.

Colonel Levashov was sent "to pacify" the peasants. He read to them the ukase of the Senate of 31st March 1761, which announced that the Governor of Kazan had been ordered to send as many dragoons as might be necessary to reduce them to submission, and that these should be quartered upon the peasants during the whole of the ensuing winter. Notwithstanding this formidable threat, the meaning of which the peasants knew well, they would not submit. But Levashov seized nine of the principal agitators, had them beaten with "cats," and sent in irons to Kazan. The disturbance was at an end, but only for a time. In August of the same year an officer was sent to the villages to collect the peasants who were to go to the works; but on the admission of the officer that he had no ukase explicitly ordering them to go, they refused. Then troops were sent, sixty peasants were flogged, one of whom died, and then the peasants were marched to the works, "leaving behind them," as they said, "their houses, cattle, and seed in their fields."

But there was to be another act in this peasant tragedy. Seven elected petitioners had been sent to St. Petersburg to present a petition to the Senate praying that they be protected from the manager of the works, Kulaleev, that the "murders, oppressions, and yearly transplantings" should be investigated, and that they be allowed to leave the works. In September the prisoners in Kazan wrote to the petitioners in St. Petersburg, "about our affair no end is to be seen, only we are troubled about it greatly and wait for a merciful decision." In January 1762 the petitioners in St. Petersburg wrote:

"To the village Kotlovka, to the people of the *mir*, aldermen, and elected, and to other villages. In this we write to you that a decision is reached upon our affair, that we should be permitted to leave the works, according to the ukase of His Imperial Highness, and you should pray about it to the Most Merciful God, and expect us to be with you, because our affair is decided; we only expect the merciful ukase."

Unfortunately there was no such decision, nor any such ukase. Either the petitioners were deceived or they themselves deceived. This letter was sent by the hands of a retired soldier to the villages;

before it arrived at its destination the petitioners wrote another letter.<sup>1</sup>

"Sirs, of the village Kotlovka and of other villages who with us are ascribed to the Avzyano-Petrovsky Works, to the elected and aldermen and to all the people of the *mir*, our wish is that you should remain in long-lasting good health! To notify you, I, your advocate, Afanasi Gulyatshev, and companions, declare to you: After the presenting by us of the petition to the Governing Senate, about permitting us, *peasants of the State*, to leave the Works, it has been decided that all of us ascribed to the Works shall be permitted to leave them, and we shall not be required to go again. A severe inquiry will be held about our ruin, for which inquiry a special messenger will be sent out. And we pray, all you people of the *mir*, in case there should come before our arrival an investigator, tell him about the offences and oppressions which we suffer from the *pomyetschëk*, everyone of you without fear. And to those of us who are now transplanted to the Works with their families, you had better send a messenger to bring them back, but without making disturbance or offending the Works people, and the money earned do not allow to be left; but if the Works people will not let it go, pay no attention to them. . . . And now the Kazanskaya *guberni* chancellery reports to the Governing Senate that some of the ascribed, our brothers, signed (a paper to the effect that they agreed) to be eternally under the Works, altogether twenty-seven of them, who signed in the presence of the commander (Levashov) and accepted the regulations; and such people, by the force of these regulations, are ordered to be sent to Works at Nerchinsk (in Eastern Siberia) into perpetual service. And we beg you to take from these people, who signed of their own will to be under the Works, a written obligation, and after that to send them to the Kazanskaya *guberni* chancellery, stating that they first deceived us and now they deceive the chancellery, and on their account we have suffered great ruin and oppression."

Here again the petitioners were either erroneously informed or they were misleading their fellow-peasants. It was quite impossible that the peasants who had agreed to return to the works should be

<sup>1</sup> These letters are given in full by Semevsky because such documents are very rare; and they are reproduced here for the same reason, and because they throw light upon peasant psychology. They are expressed in archaic language, and are very difficult to render into English. The writer is indebted to Zinoviy Peshkov for the sympathetic translations.

banished to Eastern Siberia. The letters, however, had so great an influence over the peasants that the next draft from the villages for the works did not go, and more than half of those who were at the works returned to the villages, while others simply ceased to work. Thus, at the works of Avzyavo-Petrovsk disturbances were almost continuous from 1754 to 1763.<sup>1</sup>

Disturbances of an even more serious character occurred also in 1754 in the works at Voznesensk, 100 versts from Avzyavo-Petrovsk. In that year 1000 souls of tributary peasants, occupying seven villages in the district of Kazan, were ascribed to the works. The proceedings which followed the ascription are described by the peasants themselves in a petition which they sent to Prince Vyazemsky when, at the instance of Katherine II, he made his investigations.

"In June 1755," the peasants said, "there came to us from the mountain authorities at Kazan, Captain Tomilov, and with him three agents of Sivers; and they called us, the people of the *mir*, to a meeting, and they announced an ukase of Her Imperial Highness,<sup>2</sup> about sending us over to the brass-melting works of Voznesensk. And we, the people of the *mir*, obeyed this ukase; but the captains and the agents, seizing our hundred man,<sup>3</sup> put him in irons, and sent him to the works. While driving him for over 25 versts from the village, they punished him cruelly with sticks; and we, the people of the *mir*, know of no offence whatever that has been committed."<sup>4</sup>

In 1760 agitation began in the south-eastern part of what is now Permskaya *gub.*, on the European side of the Ural Mountains. In the villages of this region there were, in 1756, 5582 souls ascribed to the Kaslënsky and Kyshtymsky Works of Nikita Demidov. There were two centres of the settlements of the ascribed peasants—one near the site of the present town of Kamyshlov, and the other round the stockaded village of Maslensk and its outskirt, Barnevsk. In 1760, on the establishment of new works of the Demidovs' at Azyash-Ufëmsk, the management of the works at Kyshtymsk sent an order to the peasants ascribed to the latter works to send workmen to the newly established works at Azyash-Ufëmsk. The peasants seem to

<sup>1</sup> The details are taken from Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 323-31.

<sup>2</sup> The Empress Elizabeth.

<sup>3</sup> The peasants were, for village administrative purposes, divided into *sotni*, or groups of one hundred, and *desyatki*, or groups of ten, the chiefs of these groups being known respectively as *sotsky* and *desyatky*.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 330.

have obeyed at once, but when they had gone about 18 versts from Maslensk they repented, decided to refuse to go, and returned to their villages, taking with them by force a reluctant minority, and beating severely the messenger who had been sent with the order. They said to him, "Do not come to us again, to send us to the Works. We were ascribed to Demidov only for three years, and we have already worked these out. Let the other settlements do their share."

The peasants then lodged a complaint with the local government office at Kyshtymensk, to the effect that already twelve of their number had died owing to the "tortures" of Demidov's people, and asking that they be liberated from the works. The Kyshtymensk authorities replied that they were ascribed to Demidov's works according to an ukase of the Senate, that there was no three years' limit, and that it was impossible to meet their demand for liberation. At the same time the local chancellery of the Ural works administration, "besieged by demands" from the management of Demidov's works, urged the peasants to obey orders, and threatened that if they did not do so, every tenth man would be flogged with whips, and all the others would be beaten with sticks. In order to enforce this order, a sub-officer and a few soldiers were sent to Maslensk. They arrived there on 18th June, and found at the stockade a meeting of 900 people. To begin with, the peasants refused to allow the officer to enter the stockade, but eventually they permitted the whole party of soldiers to go to the House of the *Mir*, which was also surrounded by defences. There the peasants went also, armed with guns, spears, bows, and sticks. The officer read his orders, drawn up by Demidov's people, and urged the peasants to abandon their "evil and unreasoning inventions." They answered, "We do not want to go to work for Demidov, and we will not listen to the ukase; they may send ten ukases, and any orders they like, we shall not go to the works of Demidov until there is an ukase from the Senate signed personally by the Empress."

They then turned the soldiers out of the stockade, saying to the officer: "If you have to remain here with your command, then remain in the field outside of the stockade, and not in the houses inside; and if you talk too much, we will kill you and all your command."

The peasants of the Barnevsk outskirt adopted a similar course.

In the end of September a captain and six soldiers were sent, along with a clerk of Demidov's, to make another attempt to induce the peasants to go to the works. Aware of their coming, the peasants strengthened the defences of their little fortress and gathered within its walls. On this occasion the small body of troops was not permitted to enter. A few peasants went out and had a parley with the commander. The latter promised that if they agreed to go to work, Demidov's clerk would make a contract with them about how much they should be paid in addition to the poll tax, that they should neither be beaten nor fined, and that their affairs should be managed through their *sotsky* and *desyatsky*, and that in case any of them were accused of any offences, the accused would be brought before the ordinary courts. But the peasants were unmoved by these promises; they probably did not believe in their being implemented.

"We are ready to die," they said, "all of us, but we will not go to work."

The Senate now took cognizance of the affair and ordered a report. On 31st October 1760 an ukase was issued requiring that accounts should be drawn up showing how much money the peasants received, and requiring also an investigation into the charges of beating; but requiring the peasants to go to the works. In pursuance of the second part of this ukase, an officer named Simonov was sent in February 1761 to inquire into the complaints and to call upon the peasants to go to work. Meanwhile, however, the chancellor of the Orenburgskaya *gub.*, which had charge of the administration of the mountain works within its jurisdiction, found that Demidov had no right to send to the Azyash-Ufëmsky Works peasants who were ascribed to the works at Kyshtym and at Kaslënsk. This was a point in favour of the peasants, but it did not relieve them from the burden of working at those works to which they were ascribed.

Simonov had been instructed that in case of resistance by the peasants, he would be reinforced to any necessary extent. The peasants still refused obedience, and Simonov ordered up a detachment of sixty Cossacks from Chelyabinsk. When the peasants learned of this, they said: "The Captain Simonov gathers Cossacks so as to send us to the works; but we shall not give ourselves up alive into their hands; if they fire against us, we shall act in the same

way : we also have plenty of firearms, spears, and sticks, and the captain will hardly get out alive from this affair." Others said, "The Cossacks tell us that they are forbidden to fire upon us." "The Orenburgskaya *gub.* chancellery," said one of them, "did not act with us according to the ukase of Her Highness of 16th August 1760 about justice. We suffered greatly from Demidov and his clerks ; we asked that we should be protected against them, and the *Gubernsky* Chancellery put heavy chains upon us, and horns upon our necks, and sent us to Treasury works—and the malefactor from whom we have suffered so much, the clerk of Demidov, Jakov Shirokov, was at that very time in Orenburg, and was allowed to walk about."

When they were asked why they remained shut up in their stockade, the peasants answered : "We have heard that commands are marching towards us to send us to the works ; in Shadrinsk guns are ready, and the clerks of Demidov have brought with them, instead of money, seven barrels of irons."

The next phase of the disturbances was marked by the appearance on the scene of a detachment of 500 Cossacks of the Don, commanded by Colonel Dulémov. This detachment had not been sent specifically to deal with the agitation, but was being moved in any case, and it was convenient that it should stop at the Maslensk stockade, where it might be quartered with the peasants, and thus might be influential in checking the disturbance. The roads were bad in spring, and the Cossacks had to remain for some weeks quartered in Maslensk and in the villages surrounding it. They had been there only a few days when quarrels arose between the peasants and the Cossacks over forage for the horses. The peasants refused to supply it, on the ground that the Cossacks had been sent for by Demidov, which was not the fact.

In March Simonov, accompanied by two superior civil officials, went to Maslensk to conduct his investigation. They went to the House of the *Mir* ; in and around it there stood armed peasants, who answered the demand that they should go to the works.

"Accomplish first the inquiry into our affair and into the accounts at the works, then there shall be another talk," shouted the peasants in the rear ranks.

"Do not talk nonsense to us," said two of the leaders ; "as before the inquiry, so also after it—we shall not work at Demidov's."

The civil official who had conducted the negotiations, seeing the impervious stubbornness of the peasants, drove away. In the end of the same month (March) forty-five dragoons were sent to be quartered in the village Polevskoë, and to be at the disposition of Simonov in case of need. The peasants took this step very quietly, because they had now arrived at the firm conviction that an ukase, freeing them from the obligation to work at Demidov's, was bound to be issued. They were, indeed, ready to believe any rumour favourable to their interests. Such a rumour about an ukase, actually either totally non-existent or quite irrelevant, reached them at this time and had a wide circulation.

"God has given to us now an ukase," they said, "that we should not go to the labours at the works; now let them bring three regiments; we shall not be frightened."

In the beginning of May an ukase, dated 31st March 1761, did indeed arrive from the Senate; but its terms were not what the peasants had anticipated. It ordered that the 500 Don Cossacks who were already at Maslensk should remain there, and should be reinforced by 200 troops from Orenburg, and even more should the Governor of Orenburgskaya *gub.* so direct. When Simonov went again to Maslensk, the force in the neighbourhood had been brought up to about 800 Cossacks, dragoons, and other troops. When the ukase of the Senate was read to them, they said:

"Why is nothing mentioned in the ukase about how many of our peasants have been beaten to death by Demidov, and what injuries we have suffered from him and his clerks? Our opposition only has been denounced."

And as stubbornly as before the peasants refused to go to the works. The officials tried to deal with the peasants in detail, but without success, excepting in a few individual cases.

"Why do you drive all over the villages?" said the peasants of Maslensk, "only to ruin us, perhaps. Give all the necessary ukases to the office (of the *mir*); and you have no business to drive all over the villages, perhaps only to frighten the people. . . . We have heard these ukases many times, and there is written in them always the same thing."

The commission of inquiry then told the peasants to hand in their complaints. The inquiry dragged on without definite result. About 700 Cossacks and dragoons occupied Maslensk and the villages,

and the peasants sullenly refused to go to work. Towards the end of October it appeared as though this state of matters might last throughout another winter. The Orenburgskaya *gub.* chancellery therefore decided to bring matters to an issue. They sent down to Maslensk a field-gun with artillery and twenty-four grenadiers; the expenses of this contingent, as well as those of the rest of the troops, were to be paid by Demidov.<sup>1</sup> The ukase of 31st March was read once more on 30th October 1761.

"But that is the old ukase!" the peasants shouted; "we do not want to go to work as before; and the hay" (for the horses of the Cossacks) "must be furnished by Demidov, and not by us."

The troops were now drawn in a circle round the peasants, and the field-gun was put into position. A few of the men were arrested and whipped. The peasants fell on their knees and cried:

"Though you cut off every one of our heads, we will not go to work for Demidov; and we will not give hay for the command."

Of the peasants who heard the ukase read a second time, twenty-five submitted and sixty-four refused to submit. The latter were sent under arrest to the neighbouring town of Shadrinsk. All the rest of the peasants grouped themselves about the House of the *Mir* to protect their stores of salt and other provisions.

Complaints were then made to the commission of inquiry about the losses to which the peasants had been subjected through the quartering upon them for eight months of so large a body of troops. The Cossacks and other soldiers have taken, they said, 1528 ricks of hay and 100 *sajens* of fuel, and they have destroyed the vegetable gardens. Yet the peasants "had not rioted at all, and had only demanded inquiry. We see," they added, "that you have led us into the last extreme of poverty and ruin." These representations were answered by the arrival of more troops—two companies of dragoons, under Captain Vorontsev. The forage for their horses involved an additional charge upon the community of 2000 *puks* of hay per month.

In the beginning of December 1761 there came a new ukase from the Senate, ordering the immediate "pacification" of the peasants and their despatch to the works without delay. The peasants at that time were in three parties—one within the Maslensk stockade, in the fenced yard of the House of the *Mir*, another in the outskirt

<sup>1</sup> It does not appear that they were paid by Demidov.



of Barnevsik, and the third in the village Vodevikovo. All the other usual places of abode were deserted. On 8th December the troops advanced to the attack of the defended position at the House of the *Mir*. The peasants fired upon them, and a "hot battle" occurred. The defence was so stubborn that the Cossacks were obliged to retire. The field-gun was then brought, and a breach was made in the wall. Grenades were thrown into the yard, but without effect. The place was eventually carried by assault by the dragoons, the volley-firing of the soldiers being more destructive than the irregular firing of the peasants. Many of the combatant peasants escaped, but three hundred were captured and sent to prison at Shadrinsk. The losses otherwise of the peasants is unknown. The troops lost fifty-two wounded.

The party of peasants at the village of Vodevikovo fled; the other party eventually capitulated without bloodshed. Early in January 1762, after a struggle lasting for a year and three-quarters, three hundred peasants, on foot and mounted, were marched under an escort of sixty Cossacks to the works at Kyshtymensk and at Kaslensk, not to the new works at Azyash-Ufensk, for which they were originally destined. The troubles of Demidov and the Commission were however, not yet ended. In consequence of a rumour, circulated intentionally or otherwise, that they had been liberated from the works, and that the commissioners who had sent them there had been sent to Moscow in irons, they left the works after having been there about a month, and they seem to have made good their escape. The peasants who had been in prison in Shadrinsk were sent to the works to take their places, and altogether about one thousand were sent there from the villages, and about two thousand were reduced to obedience by the beginning of March 1762.

During almost the whole of the period of two years of struggle preceding 1762, petitioners from Demidov's peasants had been waiting patiently in St. Petersburg for an answer to their complaints. They were not alone. Numerous petitioners from the peasants of other proprietors of mountain works were then at the capital, and the Senate was bombarded with petitions.<sup>1</sup> "Probably by the

<sup>1</sup> Among these were petitions from the peasants ascribed to the works of Chernishev, of Evdokim Demidov, and of the merchant Pokhodyashin. See generally Semevsky, ii. pp. 330-42; for the latter, see Soloviev, xxv. p. 23.

order of the Tsar,"<sup>1</sup> the Senate examined all of the complaints. On 9th March 1762 the Senate issued an ukase, appointing as commissioners for the investigation of all the cases, Major-General Kokoshkin and Colonel Daniel Lopatin. The commissioners were instructed to inquire into the causes of the disturbances, into the rates of wages paid at the works, and all other relevant matters, and to report within two months. Meanwhile the peasants were to remain at the works, but none were to be sent to the works by force; and arms were not to be used to "pacify" them. If, after inquiry, the commissioners had the least suspicion of wrong-doing, the peasants who were the victims of it were to be liberated by the commissioners on their own initiative. The previously appointed commissioners, Simonov and others, at once ceased to act.

When the petitioners of the peasants returned from St. Petersburg with a copy of this ukase, the peasants immediately petitioned for the release of about twenty of their comrades who had been kept in prison at Shadrinsk, and the request was granted at once.<sup>2</sup>

Simultaneously with the appointment in March 1762 of Kokoshkin and Lopatin by the Senate as commissioners to inquire into the peasant disturbances, Court-Councillor Shamshev was also appointed as commissioner to represent the Mountain Collegium. In May 1762 the Government transferred Kokoshkin to other functions, and the investigation was thenceforward conducted by Lopatin and Shamshev. Six months afterwards the Empress Katherine II gave greater importance to the Commission by appointing as its President, Prince Vyazemsky. The investigation took a much longer time than had been anticipated, and although the first appointed commissioners appear to have worked steadily prior to the appointment of Prince Vyazemsky, the work was by no means completed; indeed, up till the end of December they had been occupied exclusively in investigating the cases of the two Demidovs. The reason for the appointment of Prince Vyazemsky appears to have been that in the "pacification" of the peasants on the Dolgoruki estates, in his own district of Vyazemsky, he had exhibited great decision of character. He had indeed ordered twenty peasants to be shot.<sup>3</sup> The instructions of Katherine II to Prince Vyazemsky were in keeping with this indica-

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice*, Nos. 3557-1074, pp. 965 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 343.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 351.

tion. The major point was that the peasants should be compelled to work. In order to effect this object, the peasants must "be brought into the usual slavish obedience,"<sup>1</sup> and then, afterwards, the causes of the disturbances were to be investigated. The peasants were not to be punished indiscriminately. Those who were led into error by the owners or by their agents were to be separately dealt with. In those cases where disturbances still continued, Vyazemsky, accompanied by a sufficient military force, was to go at once, read the manifesto prepared for the purpose, and then put down the disturbances. Obedience to the requirements of the manifesto was to be demanded, because "nobody has the right, upon his own authority, to act on account of offences against him; but even though he suffers from oppression, he must obey the authority which is appointed according to the will of the Most High. . . . Resistance, even though the cause is just, is an unpardonable sin against God's commandments. . . . Those who oppose our authority resist God." To these expressions in the manifesto requiring absolute obedience, there was added the sentence: "Our just and merciful intention is to correct the simple and those who have fallen into error, to defend those against whom offences have been committed, and to avoid direct aggression against the peasants by administering the works to their advantage, paying them according to their labour, or allowing them to go from the works as may be found more advantageous for their own welfare and for the safety of the works."<sup>2</sup>

The instructions of Katherine II to Prince Vyazemsky required him not merely to punish the peasants for insubordination, but to inquire into their grievances, "because as the insolence of the peasants is very injurious in its way, so our humanity cannot endure that the enslaving of the peasants should reach beyond the limit of endurance, nor that it should be accomplished by torture." Those who tyrannized over the peasants were to be punished by order of the Commission if of low rank; if of high rank, the case had to be reported to the Empress, and the offenders had to be kept under guard until she decided what was to be done. Yet such punishment of owners of works, or of their managers or clerks, was not to be

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. of Hist. Soc.*, vii. pp. 188-95. The manifesto from which this quotation and those that follow are taken was written by Teplov and revised by N. Panin. Cf. Semevsky, ii. pp. 351-2.

<sup>2</sup> Added by Panin. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 352.

inflicted save in extreme cases, otherwise the peasants might become "too proud," and might think that they need not perform even necessary work. Therefore punishment was to be inflicted only in cases of "grave inhumanity." In cases of minor offences, such as demanding more work than was justifiable, secret punishment was to be imposed, so that the "simple people might not be given a motive to step out of servility." Vyazemsky was also ordered to collect information about whether *it would not be better to carry on the mountain works by means of the employment of free hired working men.*<sup>1</sup>

In putting down existing disturbances, Vyazemsky was instructed to act with severity, "with fire and sword"; but only in case of "extreme necessity," leaving the determination of that to his "wisdom and moderation." He was also instructed to report directly to the Empress. It appears that Katherine examined the detailed reports and based decisions upon them.<sup>2</sup>

Vyazemsky entered upon his duties with great activity. He went from place to place, traversing vast distances, settling affairs diplomatically when he could, but distributing floggings liberally. Sometimes he had scarcely begun operations in a new quarter when disturbances reappeared in the just "pacified" places. By December 1763 we find him at Kazan, with his troops exhausted by incessant marches and unable to send even small reinforcements to his subordinates. These subordinates, after forced marches through forests and unpopulated regions, where they could hardly obtain forage for their horses, arrived sometimes at their destination only to find the villages deserted, and the peasants disappearing in the distance, fleetly traversing the snow on snow-shoes. Excepting on the roads, and there only with difficulty, pursuit was impossible. When, as often happened, the force was insignificant, and the peasants were numerous, the latter stood their ground, and nothing could be done. Vyazemsky did not disguise, either from himself or from the Empress, the real causes of the disturbances. Soon after he entered upon his duties Katherine wrote to Vyazemsky on 3rd July 1763, "Your last report of 3rd June I have read thoroughly. The regulations which you have drawn up for all the works which have

<sup>1</sup> *Coll. Hist. Soc.*, vii. pp. 188-95 It does not appear that he grappled with this question.

<sup>2</sup> *Coll. of Hist. Soc.*, ii. p. 276; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 352.

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been visited by you . . . I approve. . . . Your remarks about the oppression at the works, the distance between the works and the villages of the ascribed peasants, and about the rest, pleased me. They shall serve for the general examination of all the mountain affairs." <sup>1</sup>

Later Vyazemsky appeared to arrive at the conclusion that the disturbances must be checked whenever they began, otherwise they soon grew to such magnitude that "even the most useful measures might not succeed." Notwithstanding the difficulties of the situation, Vyazemsky had succeeded by the end of the year 1763 in "pacifying" all the ascribed peasants in the regions of Kazan, Orenburg, and in the portion of Western Siberia included in his operations, and by that time all the ascribed peasants were at the various works.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Vyazemsky was undoubtedly severe upon the peasant agitators ;<sup>3</sup> but his reports constitute the gravest indictment upon the whole system of bondage and forced labour. These reports disclose an amazing system of violation of regulations, of petty bribery, of requisitions in kind, and of chronic corruption on the part of officials, underlying the discontent of the peasants. The more severe the regulations, the more easily could the functionaries of the works extort bribes. Even a workman who earned only 5 kopeks per day would pay something to escape a flogging. Bribes were given amounting to from 5 kopeks to 2 rubles. One peasant gave 10 kopeks to a carpenter employed at the works in order to escape a flogging. One official exacted ten pounds of fish, another a horse, another four loads of hay, another a sledge, another required the peasants to shoe his horses, &c. &c. Although these bribes were relatively small, they fell heavily upon people who were always at the margin of subsistence. To them a few *kopeks* meant the difference between living and not living. Some of the officials against whom charges of corruption were made, confessed,<sup>4</sup> others

<sup>1</sup> *State Archives of Min. of Foreign Affairs*, x. No. 170, p. 147. (From the papers of G. N. Teplov.) Cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 353.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. of Min. of Justice*, Nos. 3556—1073, pp. 983—1077; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 358.

<sup>3</sup> On the number of his punishments, and the nature of them, see *infra*, p. 465.

<sup>4</sup> One of those who confessed that he had received numerous bribes was Kulaleev, Demidov's agent in the "ascribed" villages. See Semevsky, ii, p. 380. For other cases, see *ibid.*, p. 388.

refused to admit that they took anything illegitimately from the peasants.

An almost universal complaint by the peasants was to the effect that they were compelled to work at the works during harvest, when, in order to support their families in the villages to which they belonged, they were obliged to be in the fields. This practice was against the regulations of the Mountain Collegium ; but its existence was admitted in some works, and Vyazemsky ordered additional payment to be made to the peasants on this account.<sup>1</sup> A complaint made to Prince Vyazemsky by the peasants of the works of Nikita Demidov states the effects of this practice vividly.

" We were sent away from our houses to the heaviest labours at the Works, and in our homes there were left only our wives and children, with the old and invalid people who cannot work, who not only could not plough or seed in the spring and autumn, but the seeded crops they could not gather from the fields, and these, on account of neglect or of other causes, were damaged by the beasts. And many, not only the poor, but also the middle and other peasants, not being able to work out their taxes, did not leave the works because they are so far away. They leave their houses, and these fall into neglect." <sup>2</sup>

One of the most important affairs with which Prince Vyazemsky had to deal was the affair of the attempted transference of the Maslensk State peasants to the new works at Azyash-Ufēmsk belonging to Evdokim Demidov, whose brother possessed the works at Khyshtymensk and Kaslensk, to which they were ascribed. In reply to the complaint of the peasants, Kulaleev, the agent of Demidov, who resided in the ascribed villages, and whose business it was to send the required number of peasants to the works, stated that some of the peasants were transferred to the works by the previous owner in accordance with Article XII of the Regulations of the Mountain Collegium,<sup>3</sup> and that the same peasants who had meanwhile escaped from the works were retransferred after the sale of the works to E. Demidov by Colonel Levashov, and not by Kulaleev himself. When they ran away a second time, however, Kulaleev had sent about two-thirds of the original number back again. The question was whether State peasants could be sold

<sup>1</sup> At the Kamsky Works, *e.g.* Semevsky, ii. p. 367.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, x., No. 7766, sec. 12 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 316 and 376.

along with works to which they were ascribed. The previous investigators, Shamshev and Lopatin, had evaded the question, but Vyazemsky grappled with it boldly. His decision was that the former owner of the works, Matveyev, had no right to transfer the State peasants to the purchaser of the works, E. Demidov, without the permission of the Mountain Collegium. The attempt to transfer peasants to the works of Nikita Demidov who were not legally ascribed to them nor to the works of Evdokim Demidov, was therefore, it may be presumed, *a fortiori*, illegal. It appeared, however, to Vyazemsky, that he could not adopt the logical course consequent upon his decision, and return to their villages the peasants illegally transferred. To do so seemed likely to affect the continuity of production at the works. He therefore referred the affair, with his decision, to the Empress. On 3rd July 1763 Katherine wrote to Prince Vyazemsky :

“ About the transferred peasants, I cannot just now issue an ukase requiring that they should be returned to their former settlements (although their transference was carried out by the owners against the ukase on the subject) fearing that, in remedying this evil, I might produce another. Many of the peasants have been trained to various trades. This has to be considered. But from henceforward the works owners must be severely forbidden to transfer the ascribed peasants to their works.”<sup>1</sup>

The unfortunate peasants were thus obliged to remain. It appears from the reports of Vyazemsky that there were many special features in connection with the works at Avzyano-Petrovsk. The nearest villages from which the ascribed peasants were obliged to go to the works were situated at a distance of 400 *versts*, and the farthest villages were at a distance of 688 *versts*. Each journey (one way) occupied from four to five weeks. In the winter the route was even dangerous. The peasants said that four of them had been frozen to death, and five of them had been lost. It was necessary for the peasants who were ordered to go to the works to provide themselves with horses. They were not allowed to take indifferent horses, but were obliged sometimes to exchange two poor horses for one good one in order that they might go

<sup>1</sup> *State Arch. Min. of Foreign Aff.*, x., No. 170, p. 147 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 377.

altogether, and go quickly. Peasants who were not ready with good horses at the appointed time were beaten.<sup>1</sup>

Again, there was a difference at these works, in the methods of payment, between those who were ascribed, but who were not transferred to the works with their families, and of those of the latter group. The former received all their remuneration, including poll-tax money, in cash, and paid their poll tax themselves, through the villages in which they were domiciled, while the latter only received wages after their poll tax was worked out.

But the payment of wages due was sometimes largely in arrear. Occasionally this condition occurred through embezzlement by subordinates ;<sup>2</sup> but at other times the retention of wages and the refusal of payment for works was official.

The situation of the ascribed peasants who retained connection with their villages was, as we have seen, bad enough. They might be marched off at short notice at any time to the works—travelling hundreds of miles—and there perhaps they might be detained while they knew that their crops were rotting in their unharvested fields, to the ruin of themselves and their families. The situation of those who were transferred by families to the works, and who were therefore obliged to sever their connection with the land, was even worse. For example, the Syesertsky Works, which had been built by the order of the Treasury in the reign of the Empress Anna, were granted to Turchaninov in 1759, with several villages. The peasants in these villages had been ascribed to the works ; and when they worked there they received the amount they earned above their poll tax in money, and in some years they were not required to work at all, in which case they paid their poll tax in cash themselves, remaining in their villages, engaging in cultivation, and, in so far as they were State peasants, leading a free life. When the works were handed over to Turchaninov, all this was changed. He proceeded to distribute the peasants among the different works belonging to him, removing them from their villages, enrolling them as permanent workshop employees, and paying them only 3 *kopeks* per day in wages. They were apparently obliged to work

<sup>1</sup> According to the statement of Kulaleev, agent of Demidov, by whom the departure of the peasants was organized. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 380.

<sup>2</sup> As in the case of Kulaleev, who seems to have embezzled some 700 rubles, or to have retained it in his hands instead of paying it to the peasants to whom it belonged. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 382.



on Sundays and holy days without payment. The peasants sent a petition to Vyazemsky, and he righted this wrong. He decided that Turchaninov had no right to act as he did, that the peasants must be regarded as ascribed, and not as permanent workshop employees, and that the established wage of 5 *kopeks* must be paid to them, as well as arrears of deficiently paid wages.<sup>1</sup>

The system of "mutual responsibility" seems to have been utilized to a certain extent. Instead of drawing a large number of peasants from an ascribed village, only a few might be drawn, and these would be required to work without any payment excepting their food and housing; while those who were left, and were thus exempted from work, were expected to compensate the workers. At the works of Count Chernyshev there were sixteen peasants on conditions of this kind. Prince Vyazemsky ordered them to be returned to their villages, and forbade the continuance of the system. So also he ordered some watchmen who were on the same terms at the Jagoshikhinsky Works to be remunerated at the rate of 5 *kopeks* a day for all the time that they had been employed there.<sup>2</sup>

There are some indications in Vyazemsky's reports of the excessive poverty of some of the peasants whose labour was being exploited for the mountain works. For example, the peasants of a village in Cherdynsky district were obliged to send ten men and ten horses to the works of Count Chernyshev. They petitioned to be allowed to send twenty men and no horses,<sup>3</sup> evidently because to send probably all the horses they had meant to cripple the working force of the community beyond repair. It was more economical to spare the men.

In one establishment only, namely, in that of Guriev, Prince Vyazemsky found old men and children belonging to the ascribed peasantry. Since no ukase permitted their employment, he ordered the children to be sent back to their villages, and he ordered also that the difference between the wages they received and the wages of adults should be paid to them with all arrears.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice*, No. 3558—1075, pp. 144, 147, 197, 209 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386; quoted from *Arch. Min. Justice*, No. 3555—1072, p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. Min. of Just.*, No. 3559—1076, pp. 1001 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 386.

Prince Vyazemsky punished the peasants<sup>1</sup> severely; but he also fined the management, as we have seen, and he punished the managers and clerks, although he seems to have been reluctant to punish superior works officials. In the mountain works, as a whole, the following is a list of the punishments inflicted by his order upon those managers and clerks who were found guilty of various offences against the peasants: two beaten with rods thrice; sixty flogged with lashes once; seventeen beaten with rods once; three dismissed from service (one of these being deprived of his status and sent to work out poll tax); four put upon bread and water for two weeks; eight for one week; one reprimanded for taking bribes. All those who took money illegally from the peasants on their own account were obliged to return the money to the persons from whom they had taken it.

As might be expected, the number of complaints forwarded to him by the peasants which led to decisions in their favour and to the punishment of the accused was very small compared to the total number. He seems to have been extremely reluctant to fix the blame for the deaths of peasants after flogging. Such deaths occurred frequently, according to the complaints. He investigated many cases, and unless the victims actually died under the lash, he refused to convict. One case which he investigated, but in which the decision was given by the chancellery of the Chief Department of Mountain Works, may be cited because of the naïveté of the judgment. A peasant called Zapin complained to the local government office at Perm that an overseer had cruelly beaten his brother, who, being sent afterwards to carry ore, had died on the way. The affair came before the chancellery, which decided that, "From the circumstances of the case, it is apparent that the said peasant, Zapin, came to his death by nothing else than the will of God, through which many people die even without the slightest beating, but because of the ending of their life."<sup>2</sup>

The peasants' accounts of the "pacifications" of Vyazemsky, and also of those prior to his time, throw much light upon their subsequent attitude to the Government. For example, in 1756 the peasants of one of the villages ascribed to the works of Sivers at Voznesensk had quartered upon them six companies of soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 465.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 395.

In order to support these unwelcome guests they had to sacrifice all their small animals. To propitiate the commander of the detachment, a certain Major Ostalf, they proposed to give him a present.

"We orphans," they said afterwards, "went to the gentleman Major Osip Markych and bowed to him. Our representative said to him, to our gentleman, that the people of the *mir* bow to his high birth, with a *pud* of honey; and this major struck our representative in the face, and said to us, to the people of the *mir*, 'I am not a *ruble* guest. You'll give to my steward five rubles; and besides you'll bring to me to Khmelevka (an adjoining village) thirty rubles; and fetch a pair of horses,' and he went from us to Khmelevka, and he ordered us, the people of the *mir*, to be at his orders, and we, the people of the *mir*, went after him to Khmelevka, and we found the interpreter Mosogutka" (who was in Ostalf's service), "and we began to ask grace from him, that he should report to the gentleman about our need, and he said to us, the people of the *mir*, 'Give me one ruble, and to the major's steward two,' and we gave them the three rubles he demanded, and this steward and the interpreter ordered us to go to the Major, and the Major took from us eight rubles, and to his aide-de-camp we gave one ruble."

Afterwards Ostalf seems to have taken from the peasants thirty sheepskins, a head of sugar, a quantity of cloth, and six sheep, while his officers took thirty *puds* of honey, and the soldiers plundered the women's stores of linen. This plunder was collected after twenty of the men had been punished with "cats."

Worse remains to be told. Upon the villages of Nijni-Toima, Taveli, Sekenesy and Kosteneyeva, in the district of Kazan, which were ascribed to the works of Shuvalov, there was quartered in 1761-1762 the Revalsky regiment of dragoons under the command of Colonel Levashov. The villages had already been "pacified"; but this did not prevent the most shameless conduct on the part of officers and men alike. Women and children were violated in the streets, and the honour of no woman was saved without a heavy bribe. This affair was investigated by Vyazemsky, who said that so grave a breach of the military regulations could not be left without punishment; but the punishments were not in accordance with

the offences. The officers were merely kept under arrest for two weeks or were sent to other commands.<sup>1</sup>

There were no doubt many similar if less gross cases, but the fear of reprisals seems to have shut the peasants' mouths about them.

The proprietors of the works in which these disturbances occurred were sometimes noblemen, like Count Shuvalov or Count Chernyshev, but sometimes they were men who had risen from the ranks. All of them must have known, at all events in a general way, of the proceedings at their works. Not one of them appears in any way to have exhibited any sense of responsibility. They were wealthy and influential persons, whose support of the throne was of consequence, and thus when blame was thrown upon the management, it was thrown, not upon them, but upon their agents. Those of them to whom the peasants appealed turned a deaf ear to them, like Nikita Demidov, or had their petitioners flogged, like Turchaninov. Among the proprietors who had risen from the ranks, one of the most characteristic was Pokhodyashin, who possessed two works at Voskresensk and at Petropavlovsk. In his youth this man had been a carpenter and a carrier; then he became a merchant, and afterwards a grantee of mountain works. He founded the works of Petropavlovsk in 1758. In his wooden house at Verkhoturys he had thirty decorated and luxuriously furnished chambers. There he entertained high dignitaries of the State, and gave rich presents in suitable quarters. "He built and decorated churches, and gave charity on Saturdays." Although he was ignorant, he was a man of original character, and his dealings with his peasants (of whom he had ascribed to Petropavlovsk alone, 4200) were very astute.<sup>2</sup> He transferred the peasants to his works, gave them all they required in food, clothing, &c., and kept them in absolute debt dependence upon himself. The peasants had been ascribed for the limited period of ten years; but by the end of that period he had long recruited most of them as permanent workmen. Pokhodyashin was not fastidious about whom he em-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Min. Justice*, No. 322—2805, pp. 1-17; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> On Pokhodyashin, see Soloviev, xxv. c. i. and xxvii. c. ii.; Longinov, *Novikov and the Martinists*, pp. 233-6; Chupin, N., "On the Origin and Development of Mountain Works in the Bogoslovsky Urals," in *The Mountain Journal* (1873), Nos. 5-6, p. 318; cited by Semevsky, ii. pp. 391-3.

ployed at his works. There came to him many fugitives and others without passports, who were willing to work all winter for mere subsistence and shelter; and who, when they were paid, were not in a position to be strict about wages accounts.<sup>1</sup> The conditions under which they worked and lived are described as having been very bad, and the mortality among his workmen high, yet, saving at an early period (in the reign of Peter III), there were no serious complaints excepting from some ascribed peasants who had a long distance to go to the works. It is evident that Pokhodyashin kept a shrewd eye upon his managers, and did not allow them to plunder either the peasants or himself; and that he found it better to give his peasants plenty to eat and drink than to have them starving and discontented. The exploitation of them under good conditions was really much more effective.

By an ukase of 31st March 1761, the Senate ordered that the military expenses of the "pacification" at Maslensk should be charged to Demidov. Should they not be paid by him—though why payment should not be enforced does not appear—they should be collected from the local administration, which should have the right to recover from Demidov. Prince Vyazemsky, in the spirit of this ukase, ordered that compensation should be paid to the Maslensk peasants for the hay which they had supplied to the Cossacks while they were quartered upon them. This, however, was not done; and the affair ends in confusion, the Senate issuing an ukase charging the expenses of "pacification upon the guilty," but as the guilty were already punished and ruined, nothing seems to have been collected from any one. The peasants had already really paid the expenses in maintaining the troops quartered upon them, and in the heavy losses from their extortions.

Generally, the investigation and "pacification" of the peasants by Prince Vyazemsky, in spite of his obvious ability and conscientiousness, seems to have produced an effect upon the peasant mind other than he intended. They appear to have thought that at last there was a real ukase, signed by Her Imperial Highness herself, and a real dignitary, specially sent by her, had come to do justice to everybody. What justice had been done? They were still tied to the hated works, more firmly than before; they had still to deal with many of the same managers as formerly, and

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 511.

they were still exposed to the same oppressions. The last word of authority had been said, and this was the result.<sup>1</sup> Something else must happen. They must eventually take the righting of their wrongs into their own hands whenever the opportunity offered.

Prince Vyazemsky was recalled in the end of 1763 by the Empress, by whom he had been appointed Procurator-General. His successor, A. I. Bibikov, afterwards celebrated as Marshal of the Legislative Commission of Katherine, arrived at Kazan on 4th January 1764,<sup>2</sup> and he remained in the mountain region until October of the same year. The biography of Bibikov was written by his son, who says of his father that he was more humane than Vyazemsky, that he "moderated as much as possible the severity of the punishments, and by kind behaviour tried to enter into the confidence of the peasants."<sup>3</sup> Statistics of the punishments of Vyazemsky and Bibikov, although they cannot be held to prove the contrary quite decisively, suggest that this statement is due to filial partiality. Bibikov was master of the mountain region for a period of about nine months. During that time he "pacified" five works, and punished 196 people. Of these latter, 18 were flogged with the knùt, 49 were lashed thrice, 49 twice, 44 once, and 36 were beaten with sticks.

Vyazemsky was master for almost thirteen months. He "pacified" ten works, punished 235 people, 38 with the knùt, 88 thrice with lashes, 83 once, and 26 were beaten with rods.<sup>4</sup> On the face of the statistics, Vyazemsky seems to have been the more clement, especially as he had the harder task, arriving as he did when disturbances had been going on for several years; while Bibikov arrived after the back of the resistance had been broken, and after the peasants in the more important centres had been pacified for the time.

Up till the end of this period the peasant movements were sporadic and detached. Indeed the peasants were not without jealousy of their neighbours who appeared to be favoured in some way. "Let the other settlements do their share; we have done ours," said, for example, the Maslensk peasants. The authorities

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 383.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs of Bibikov* (Moscow, 1865), pp. 22-3; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 360.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

were thus able to defeat the peasants in detail, and in some measure to nip germinating disturbances before they broke out. The means of communication were deficient, the mountain region was scantily populated, and the movement of troops was exceedingly difficult, yet the peasants were inadequately armed; they were collected in undisciplined mobs, hampered by their women and children, and almost destitute of leaders. What they did possess was a stubborn character which enabled them to endure defeat, flogging, imprisonment, and the death before their eyes of their comrades, without the subjugation of their indomitable spirit. Their resistance was altogether unreasonable; it was transparently useless to stand up to be shot by the volleys of the troops, and yet they did so. They were vanquished continuously, and yet the survivors continued the struggle. What the peasants of the Mountain Works did in the fifties and sixties of the eighteenth century is simply what the Slav peoples have been doing always. They may only be finally conquered by extermination, and they are too fecund to be exterminated.

The mere numbers of the peasants, their distribution over an immense area, and the very characteristic of stubbornness, rendered leadership among them difficult. Leaders rarely emerged, and when they did so, they were mistrusted whenever they proposed to compromise with the enemy. However trifling were the occasions of the peasants' disturbances, the real causes undoubtedly were the compulsory labour at distasteful work,<sup>1</sup> the conditions under which that work was performed, the low scale of wages, and the uncertain and arbitrary method of remuneration, for which the fiscal arrangements of the Treasury were much to blame. But even had the administration been quite unexceptionable, there must have been grave difficulties in conducting, by force or otherwise, a people accustomed to agriculture and possessing a passionate devotion to the soil, from their customary occupation to another which to them was invincibly repugnant. Not only were they unused to mechanical employment on a large scale, and to

<sup>1</sup> Among some of the Russian peasantry there is still a strong prejudice against the use of metals, because their exploitation is indissociably connected in the peasant mind with forced labour and violence. See, e.g., *Materials towards the History of the Russian Sects*, vol. i., *Letters of Peter Veregín* (in Russian) (Christchurch, Hants, 1901).

underground working,<sup>1</sup> but the iron ore which they mined was smelted and manufactured into cannon in the works to which they were ascribed, and then this cannon was used to shoot them down when they asked for the wages which were due to them, or when they wanted to go home to their fields in the villages in which they were born and for which they pined. Such was the point of view of the peasant.

From the point of view of the administration, it was necessary for Russia to obtain iron. Her frontiers must be protected, and her position as a great nation must be established. The existence of bondage right had prevented the growth of free labour which might have been exploited for the purpose, therefore bondage right must be used to secure the manufacture of what the Government urgently needed. Under free labour the conditions might have been little better than they were under bondage; but freedom counts for something, and it is possible that the transition from agriculture to industry might have been effected in Russia with no greater friction than it was effected in Western Europe. Bondage right was thus the primary cause, if not of the disturbances, at all events of the character which they assumed, an important contributory cause being the industrial revolution. But the disturbances at the Mountain Works were not the only evidences of friction. The possessional peasants in factories other than metalliferous, and the agricultural peasants, were all in a state of unrest. They were all feeling the tightening of the knot of bondage, and they were all, voluntarily or involuntarily, struggling to release themselves. Thus the general cause of the disturbances in the eighteenth century was undoubtedly the existence of bondage right.

It should also be remarked that progressively throughout the eighteenth century, town residents, peasants "separated" from their villages and paying *obròk*, and other categories of "free" persons went voluntarily to the works where also "ascribed" peasants were employed and worked for wages. In 1734 it appears, for example, that the Demidovs had in their works equal numbers of "free hired" workers and "ascribed" peasants. According to the reports of that time, Demidov turned out from his

<sup>1</sup> The mines were largely run in level cuttings from the faces of the hills, in which the minerals occurred.



works twice as much iron as the output of the Treasury works, and produced his iron at a lower cost. This circumstance was attributed to the fact that so large a proportion of his working hands was freely hired.<sup>1</sup>

The question of employing voluntary labour at the Treasury works in the Urals and in Bashkiria had come before the Senate so early as 1725 ; but owing to the fear that the announcement of voluntary employment for large numbers of men would result in attracting fugitives into Siberia and Bashkiria from the estates of European Russia, the idea was at that time abandoned. Indeed Gennin was instructed on 14th June 1725 to try *not* to employ voluntary labour, and not to take into the works "free hired working men with passports" ; but he was to carry on the works exclusively by means of the labour of the defined settlements.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the effect upon the estates of European Russia in encouraging "separations" and even flights, the effect of mingling "free hired workmen," working voluntarily for wages, with ascribed peasants working obligatorily for taxes, must have been to excite discontent among the latter.

The inefficiency of the forced labour at the Treasury works, even before the disturbances in the mountain region assumed any considerable proportions, led the Senate, in 1730, to ask Gennin to consider how the works might be carried on without the labour of ascribed peasants.<sup>3</sup> In 1734 Tatischev was instructed to try, in some of the works in the regions of Tobolsk and Verkhoturk, to introduce "free hired" workmen, but in such a way that they should not be permitted to settle or to marry in the villages ascribed to the works, Treasury or private.<sup>4</sup>

Ostermann, who was a native of the Baltic provinces, and who was, therefore, inclined to approve of free labour for industrial enterprises, urged in 1739, in his *Meditations about promoting Mountain Works in Russia*, that the labour of ascribed peasants should be avoided as much as possible. "Experience shows," he says, "that ascription of villages does not lead to the benefit of the Treasury, but, on the contrary, to the injury of it, as well as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> *The Mountain Journal* (1826), No. 5, p. 144 ; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann, *Hist. Sketch*, p. 124 ; cited by Semevsky, ii, p. 399.

<sup>4</sup> F.C.L., ix., No. 6559, p. 14 ; cited, *ibid.*, p. 400.

to the ruin of the peasants and of the villages, although it does lead to the benefit of the administrators. The rich and well-to-do among the ascribed peasants buy themselves off, and the poor work so indolently that an ascribed peasant will take three days to do what might be done in one day. For that reason his labour is expensive. . . . Therefore it is better to try to carry on the required work by means of free hired people."

Ostermann recognized the difficulty of securing, under the contemporary conditions of Russia, a sufficient number of hired labourers. He therefore proposed to form settlements near the works of people who might be permanently employed there. He proposed also to give them sufficient land for their needs. The children of these people would be brought up to the mountain trades, and thus eventually there would be no lack of skilled labour. He suggested that inducements should be offered to foreign miners to settle at the mountain works.<sup>1</sup> Ostermann's project did not meet with the approval of Shemberg,<sup>2</sup> whose co-operation was necessary, and it fell into oblivion.

But there were some who found the voluntary employment of free hired labour in technically difficult industries more economically advantageous than the obligatory employment of ascribed peasants, who were sometimes not very efficient, and who were always grumbling that they were kept away from their villages, and from their wives and families. Among these enterprising persons were Tverdyshev and Myasnikov, the pioneers in the exploitation of the mineral deposits of the interior of Bashkiria. Tverdyshev, who was himself a peasant paying poll-tax, in spite of the difficulties which he encountered from the attacks of the warlike and turbulent *Bashkiri*, succeeded in establishing himself in the country. He built forts, garrisoned them, stocked them with arms and ammunition, smelted large quantities of copper and iron, and paid annually a large sum to the State, without *even asking* for the ascription to his works of any peasants. As a reward for this, the Senate transferred him from the peasantry, and made him a collector of taxes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Semevsky, ii. pp. 400-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Min. Interior: Aff. of Mountain Trades and Works*, art. 8; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 401.

<sup>3</sup> Soloviev, xxiv. p. 247; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 401.

In the higher spheres, the continuous complaints of the ascribed peasants were regarded as being very troublesome, and even dangerous. The State peasants were in general fairly contented, but disturbances were contagious; the State peasants in general might be influenced by them, and if the peasants of the *pomyet-schékē* joined forces with them, the contagion might spread widely. In 1756 the Senate ordered the Mountain Collegium to inquire into the whole subject of ascription of the State peasants, to consider how the sending of peasants for immense distances from their villages to the works could be avoided, and to invent some useful means for preventing the peasants from being exhausted and ruined. On the other hand, the measures which might be recommended were to be consistent with the continuity of the works.<sup>1</sup> Nothing seems to have come of this inquiry; but the question came up again in 1761, when the Demidov case was brought before the Senate. General Kosturin, who was sick and unable to be present when the affair was discussed, sent his written opinion, to the effect that it was a question whether the State peasants should be used for ascription to works, and that Demidov should be required to hire free people, to use his own peasants, or to purchase peasants for himself, and that all owners of works should be obliged to do likewise.<sup>2</sup> In this year (1761) the Mountain Collegium reported to the Senate that it had decided to impose the following regulations upon the owners of works where ascribed peasants were employed: "(1) That each year rolls should be drawn up with an exact statement of the taxes which had to be worked out, and what work had to be done, and that these rolls should be sent to the villages; (2) on receipt of these rolls, the peasants themselves should allot the works, through the 'elected' under oath; (3) during agricultural work the peasants should not be sent to the works; (4) transference of ascribed peasants with their families to the works was to be forbidden, on the grounds that should the peasants leave their villages, they would sacrifice all their buildings, plough-lands, and meadows, and that they would require to clear new plough-lands at the works, even if there were sufficient land at the works—which was not always the case. The works owners

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. of Mountain Dept.: Aff. of Mountain Collegium. No. 1973. Aff. No. 11, p. 13; cited, ibid., p. 402.*

<sup>2</sup> *Soc. of Hist. of Ancient Russia* (1863), ii. pp. 41-4; cited, *ibid.*

would have to permit exemptions from work for years, and would have to advance money to the peasants to enable them to settle." The Collegium proposed to recommend the owners of works not to employ ascribed State peasants, but to purchase peasants in the same way as the owners of private factories were doing. In order to enable the owners to carry out this recommendation, the Collegium proposed to leave the ascribed peasants in their then position for five years, and then to liberate them from ascription, unless they desired to remain.<sup>1</sup>

On 9th August 1762, the Empress Katherine II, in approving of a proposal of the Senate to impose a royalty of 10 per cent. upon all the products of the metallurgical works, payable in these products, added the remark, "and to consider about the Treasury works which had been granted, with ascribed peasants."<sup>2</sup>

The Senate then drew up a plan proposing to offer all the remaining Treasury works to be given as grants to any persons or companies who would undertake to carry them on, but without any ascribed peasants. The grants were to include the necessary artisans; but these were to remain in that position for not more than ten years; additional workmen were to be freely hired, and after the lapse of the period mentioned all workmen were to be freely hired. Peasants required for the works were to be purchased. All peasants who had been ascribed for a long period, since 1734, were to be liberated at once, and the remainder were to be left under ascription "until further inquiry." Reports were to be made to the Senate about all disputes arising between the ascribed peasants and the owners of the works.<sup>3</sup>

The commission of Prince Vyazemsky supervised, and these plans were laid aside. The ukase of 9th April 1763, altered the relations of the owners of works to the ascribed peasants very considerably. It removed the anomalous working out of taxes, by obliging the owners to pay the peasants for their work in cash, leaving them to pay their taxes to the State themselves, as they had been doing prior to their ascription.<sup>4</sup> The judicial relations of the ascribed peasants to their owners were also altered at the same

<sup>1</sup> No ukase was issued in accordance with these recommendations. Semevsky, ii. p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Arch. Min. Foreign Affairs: Relations with the General Procurators*, No. 4; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 404.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 405.

time, although gradually, as Vyazemsky proceeded with his work. Formerly the managers and clerks at the works punished the peasants for infringement of the regulations; now a different system was to be adopted. The *mir* came to play an important rôle. The hundred men (elected representatives of a hundred peasants) together with elected aldermen (two or three from each village), and two clerks of the *mir*, formed an assembly for the discussion of all relations with the works. By it were appointed the peasants who were to go to the works, and upon it was laid the responsibility of seeing that such peasants did the work assigned to them. The assembly was also a court before whom offenders might be brought. Guilty persons might be sentenced by it to be whipped in presence of the meeting of the *mir*, unless the offence was a grave one. In the latter case, the offender was to be sent to the works office, where he might be whipped unless the offence was a very grave one, in which case he was to be sent to the local court of justice. If the "elected" were not agreed, the case was to be referred to the whole *mir*; if the *mir* could not arrive at an unanimous decision, the case was to be submitted to a special court consisting of the administrator of the works and two neutral persons.

The confused accounting between the owners of works and the peasants has already been noticed. This also was remedied by Vyazemsky, who provided for proper accounting being made on behalf of the peasants by the two clerks or peasants representing them. Clear accounts were to be rendered to each peasant. If any of the peasants felt himself wronged, he could complain to the "elected," and if a petition was sent about the affair, the petitioner was not to be molested. Throughout these regulations the principle of mutual responsibility was fully recognized.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately the regulations of Prince Vyazemsky were not widely applied. It is evident, moreover, that, in spite of his broad views, he was oppressed by details, and the apparent variation in the conditions in different regions caused him to make frequent compromises, and even to give contradictory decisions in different places. The fact was that he had too little time to deal with the complicated series of questions in a really masterful way, and he therefore omitted some cardinal matters. Among the latter was

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xvi., No. 11,790; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 408.

the fact that for nearly half a century the wages of the peasants had not been changed. The value of money had altered greatly during that period, and yet the price of labour had not altered at all. This fact was probably the underlying cause of the discontent of the peasants, and yet neither Vyazemsky nor Bibikov recognized it.<sup>1</sup> The consequence of this oversight was that no sooner had they left the mountain region, than complaints and petitions began again to pour into the departments of the State. For example, the peasants of a village ascribed to the Avzyano-Petrovsky works collected six kopeks per soul among themselves for the purpose of sending a petition asking that they might be liberated from the works; and they subjected their priest to a beating because he tried to dissuade them from sending the petition. The result was the punishment of the "elected" with sticks, and the return of the money to the peasants.<sup>2</sup> The peasants were undoubtedly dissatisfied that the Government had neither put a stop to ascription nor raised their wages.<sup>3</sup>

Quite naturally and inevitably the whole question of the mountain works entered upon a new phase. The mismanagement of the relations between the peasants and the owners of the works which had been granted by the Treasury was not the only mismanagement. The management as a whole was incompetent, and this became evident to the Government in the heavy arrears of the payments due to the Treasury by the owners. Postponed as they might be through influence at court, and even perhaps through direct bribery, these arrears ere long amounted to enormous sums. Thus when Count Shuvalov died, the arrears upon his Kamsky and Goroblahodatsky works amounted to 600,000 rubles.<sup>4</sup> The total value of the works was insufficient to meet this obligation, and other property of Shuvalov was required to cover it. Under the vigorous hands of Katherine II, the whole was taken over, and the same course was adopted in the case of Sivers, Vorontsev, and Chernyshev, who had been the recipients of grants of Treasury works on condition of the payments of certain sums which had not been paid.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>5</sup> *Coll. Hist. Soc.*, vii. pp. 324-5; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 413. See also *Russian Archives* (1885), pp. 477-8, and Chupin, "The Granting of Treasury Works into Private Hands," *Mountain Journal* (1861), No. 6, p. 570.

When the above-mentioned works were taken over by the Treasury, the conditions of the peasants were not immediately improved to any material extent, although the wages were increased by a trifling amount. After the works in question had been resumed by the Treasury, Katherine appointed a commission, which was intended to be absolutely secret, with instructions to inquire into the whole subject of ascription, and to report. The resumption of the works, together with rumours of discussions about peasant affairs in the higher spheres, contributed to the excitement which became manifest in 1764 among those of the State peasants who remained ascribed to works in private hands, and even among the bonded peasants. In November of that year there were disturbances among the ascribed peasants in the district of Kazan. They declared that they had heard of an ukase limiting the period during which they might be employed at the works to thirty-six days. There was no such ukase; but the rumour was sufficient to cause more than three hundred of the ascribed peasants to leave the works. They armed themselves with crowbars and sticks in order that they might not be detained. In January 1765 new disturbances had made their appearance throughout Orenburgskaya *gub.* A local inquiry was instituted, and was conducted for about two years. A significant feature of the fresh disorders was the emergence of leaders from the inarticulate peasant mass. One of these was Daniel Dekhtyarev, a transferred peasant of the Avzyano-Petrovsky works. Dekhtyarev appears first as an agitator in 1758, not merely among the ascribed, but also among the bonded peasants. In 1762 he played the same rôle, and received as reward a flogging with sticks. In 1765 Dekhtyarev, with other elected delegates, made their way to St. Petersburg to present a petition on behalf of the peasants. On their arrival in St. Petersburg, they were seen by the son of Evdokim Demidov, who had no doubt been apprised of their coming by his father's agents. The petitioners were captured, and were sent under escort to the Chancellery of the Main Department of the Mountain Works at Ekaterinburg. One of them, however, escaped, returned to St. Petersburg, and succeeded in introducing himself into the palace, and in presenting a petition to the Empress. He was arrested, kept in confinement in the palace for a week, flogged, sent for two months' labour at the Mint, and then sent to join his

comrades at Ekaterinburg. The petition was handed to the Secret Commission, together with a complaint which the peasants had forwarded about the treatment to which the petitioners had been subjected. Notwithstanding the fact that one of the regulations of Prince Vyazemsky had provided that petitioners should not be punished, the Commission delivered the extraordinary opinion that the petitioners in question had been rightly punished because they had presented a petition to the Governor of Kazan, "who was not in a position to examine into the right or wrong of their complaints." The Commission also reported that, in view of the new "unpleasant happenings, the establishment of a new system for the mountain works is necessary, because of the considerable advance in prices of all food-stuffs, and the absence of correspondence between these prices and previously fixed wages; but that time was necessary to deal with these matters." Meanwhile the peasants must be kept in a state of "quiet obedience."<sup>1</sup>

An ukase of 27th May 1769 announced to the ascribed peasants an increase of their wages to the extent of about 20 per cent., together with an increase of travelling allowances through the reduction of the rate of travelling from 40 *versts* a day to 25 *versts*. These concessions were, however, accompanied by an increase of taxes to the extent of 1 ruble per year. This additional ruble was not to be worked out, it was authorized to be paid in money. In the scantily populated districts of the mountains, however, there was little ready money, and thus the practice of working out taxes was continued in respect to the former imposts, and was applied also to the new tax.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence upon the condition of the ascribed peasants during the period which followed the contemporaneous increase of wages and of taxation is to be derived from the traveller Lepekkin, who reached in 1771, the settlement of Turinsk, near the town of Turinsk on the River Tura in Siberia.

"From my first entrance into this place," Lepekkin says, "I remarked a great difference between the peasants here and those elsewhere. Everyone had a gloomy face, everyone was very servile, and all their village economy was in disorder. The care of fields, which might be seen in other villages, was absent here, many of the plough-lands were deserted, and the houses were falling into

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 450-3.



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ruin from age and neglect. The peasants were brought to this condition through having been compelled to perform labour at the workshops, and the distance of these from their villages led them into greater poverty than those peasants who lived in less distant places.”<sup>1</sup> Lepekhn then went on to another settlement, where he found the same conditions.

“Badly built houses, gloomy and impoverished inhabitants, sufficiently indicate the difference between these people and their neighbours. These enjoyed freedom; they were industrious in their fields, whereas those were occupied at the Kushvinsky Works.”<sup>2</sup>

So also at the village of Selitschē, in the district of Cherdynsk in Permskaya *gub.*, inhabited by Permyaki,<sup>3</sup> Lepekhn found “one crippled old man, all the rest of the people were at obligatory labour at the works of Pokhodyashin.” Because of the long distance (325 *verst*s), these “taciturn lambs” spent almost their whole time at the Works. “Poverty has brought them to such a pass, that in the villages the women and children are, during a great part of their lives, obliged to satisfy themselves with the bark of the fir, which they grind down, and mixing it with a little rye flour, bake cakes of it.”<sup>4</sup>

The travellers Rychkov,<sup>5</sup> and Pallas,<sup>6</sup> the latter a Member of the Academy of Sciences, who visited these regions at the same period, give substantially the same account of the conditions to which the peasants had been reduced by about half a century of obligatory labour at the Works.

Perhaps the most significant of such contemporary accounts by impartial hands is the description, written in 1776–1777 by Prince M. M. Sh’cherbatov, of the general condition of the ascribed peasantry in Orenburgskaya *gub.*

“All the *volosts*,” he observes, “were composed of State Peasants, who after the establishment of the works were ascribed

<sup>1</sup> Lepekhn, *Diary Notes* (St. Petersburg, 1795), i. (2nd ed.), p. 120; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1780, iii. pp. 45, 46, and 59; *ibid.*, p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix II, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> Lepekhn, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 197–8; cited, *ibid.*, p. 455.

<sup>5</sup> *Continuation of the Journal or Notes from the Diary of the Travels of Captain Rychkov* (St. Petersburg, 1772); cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 454.

<sup>6</sup> Pallas, P. S., *Travels in the Different Provinces of the Russian Empire, 1768–1770* (St. Petersburg, 1773–1788); and German Translation, *Reise* (St. Petersburg, 1776), e.g. ii. pp. 144 and 246, and iii. p. 498; the latter cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 454.

to different shops according to the number of blast furnaces and mechanical hammers ; but this ascription was not made according to the proximity and capacity of the *volosts*, but those were ascribed who were unable to buy themselves off, or for whom the owners of the works were unwilling to pay, or those who were desired by the administrators of the works. Under these circumstances, the workers had often to walk 700 *versts* from their villages to the works. It is useless to speak of regulations which limit the powers of the owners. These are made more for the benefit of these owners than for the benefit of the peasants. The abundance of minerals and the opportunity of becoming rich quickly induced the owners of the works to ascribe to them a larger number of peasants than they needed. Thus the peasants are brought into utter poverty, agriculture is neglected, so that the fertile land of this locality is unutilised." <sup>1</sup>

Although the inexpediency of obligatory labour was thus well recognised in the higher spheres, even when opportunity presented itself to put an end to it in detail, the Government did not avail itself of the opportunity. Thus Pokhodyashin's "lease" of ascribed peasants ran out in 1769, yet Katherine II, "in consequence of the industry of Pokhodyashin in caring for the interests of the Treasury," renewed the "lease" for five years.<sup>2</sup>

The abuses of ascription brought the Governmental administration of the Mountain Works region into confusion. The Chancelleries and Departmental offices were littered with documents concerning proceedings which had been going on for years, while the prisons were occupied by the unfortunate peasants who were concerned in them, either as petitioners or as accused. The peasant village administration fell into equally evil conditions. The corrupt management of the works which is described by Prince Sh'cherbatov had its counterpart in corruption in the villages. There the bulk of the peasants were held in subjection by a few of their own number, *kulaki* (fists)—who exploited their labour and lent them money at usurious rates of interest. These rich peasants had their own bondmen upon whom they piled obligations after the manner of their superiors ; they succeeded by means of

<sup>1</sup> *Works of Prince M. M. Sh'cherbatov* (St. Petersburg, 1896), i. pp. 500-503 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 456.

<sup>2</sup> *Coll. of Hist. Soc.*, x. p. 380 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 457.

manipulating the village elections in dividing the taxes unequally and in imposing supplementary village taxes, the proceeds of which they sometimes shared with the authorities of the works.

Moreover, in addition to the burdens of the peasants through the agencies already described, the State peasants had imposed upon them burdens by the direct authority of the Government. For example, when the Isaac Cathedral was being built by Katherine II,<sup>1</sup> the marble used in its construction was quarried by peasants specially ascribed to this work, and detached for this purpose from the works at Olonets.<sup>2</sup> Complaints of excessive labour at the quarries were made by the peasants, almost immediately after they were sent to them.<sup>3</sup>

Thus in 1775 the ascribed peasants at the Mountain Works were ready, after many years of almost futile struggle, to join in any general movement which might promise them freedom. They had been in a chronically disturbed condition for about twenty years, and they were easily excited by rumours and by agitation in their neighbourhood. The rebellion of Pugachev thus easily drew into its ranks the discontented elements from the ascribed peasants at the Mountain Works and from the bonded peasantry on the Volga. The coincident revolt of the Yaëtsky Cossacks of the Urals, of the *raskolnĭkĭ* who were being taxed on account of their religious beliefs, and of foreigners<sup>4</sup> who had little reverence for the Russian administration, brought these separate elements together into what became a great popular movement, uniting the previously smouldering masses of discontent. Pugachev offered the peasants opportunity for reprisals against those who had formerly lorded it over them with a high hand. The rebellion of Pugachev as a revolutionary movement embracing many different orders of peasants is more appropriately dealt with elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

Even after the Pugachev affair rebellion was extinguished, sporadic disturbances occurred among the ascribed peasants. The impossibility of reconciling ascription and peasant well-being was

<sup>1</sup> Not the present cathedral, the building of which was commenced in 1819 and finished in 1858; but its predecessor (the second on the same site) which was finished in 1801.

<sup>2</sup> MSS., *Hist. Remarks on the Antiquities of the Region of Olonets* (St. Petersburg Public Library), iv., F. 269; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 463.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 503.

<sup>5</sup> See *infra*, vol. ii. Book IV, chap. ii.

fully recognised by conscientious officials like Colonel Maslov, for example, who brought the arbitrary action of the owners of works before the Senate, first in 1775. His reports were not dealt with by the Senate for several years ; but they formed the basis of discussion in 1778, and again in 1781. In the latter year the owners of works were forbidden to punish peasants ascribed to the works by the State, and to leave such punishment, as a rule, to the "elected" of the peasants themselves. Meanwhile, however, increases of taxes increased the burdens of the peasants ; and the payments by the Treasury for work done in works under its management remained stationary. The latter were sometimes so inadequate that the peasants contracted with others to do the work for them at rates much higher than the Treasury rates.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the number of free-hired men towards the close of the eighteenth century rendered such a proceeding practicable.

#### (b) STATE PEASANTS IN THE FORESTS

When Peter the Great began to build his navy in 1718, it was necessary to procure timber for his ships, and in the absence of sufficient or suitable free labourers willing to work for wages, it was necessary to ascribe for the task peasants of the State. Since the forests in the Upper Volga region from which he desired to draw his timber were occupied chiefly by non-Russian groups, it was from the Mordva, the Chuvashi, the Murzi, and the Tartars of Kazan, who proudly called themselves "serving Tartars," that Peter had to procure his lumbermen and log-drivers. By way of compensation for this service, Peter relieved those who were ascribed to it from the 70 kopek household tax, for the payment of which they had previously been liable. When the poll tax was introduced, they were, as military serfs, expressly exempted. After the death of Peter, the Senate imposed upon these peasants not only the poll tax, but also the 40 kopek *obrok*.<sup>2</sup>

In Peter's time the sole payment for the labour of the Ship-Forest peasants had been the tax exemption ; and the service of the forest and of the preparation of the timber for shipbuilding at

<sup>1</sup> The peasants sometimes paid these contractors three or four times as much as they received from the Treasury for work which they were obliged to perform. Cf. Semevsky, ii. p. 513.

<sup>2</sup> F.C.L., xiii., No. 9861 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 579.

Peterhof was placed upon all the State peasants of the different racial groups mentioned within the Kazanskaya, Astrakhanskaya, Nijgorodskaya, and Voronejskaya *gubernie*. Should the distance from the scene of operations be inconveniently great, substitutes were to be provided at the cost of the "dissidents." Of such "dissidents" there were in 1718-9, 56,113 souls.<sup>1</sup> In their petitions against the imposition of taxes, the "dissidents" stated that their ancestors performed regimental cavalry service, and that they served in the war with Sweden. At other times instead of rendering military service, they paid for every man between the ages of fifteen and sixty, 1 ruble, while no taxes were exacted from children or from old people. Instead of military service they also worked three months in each year at Peterhof (or provided substitutes), for that they received wages in money and in bread, and they wanted for nothing. But since 1718, their mollahs and themselves were working in the Ship-Forests six months in the year, this work costing each of them more than 5 rubles.

The Chancellery of the Ship-Forests replied to these petitions, stating that those among the Ship-Forest peasants who were capable of working were required to furnish, for the six months of winter and autumn, by lot from every nine men one foot and one mounted workman; and for the whole year, from every twenty-five men, one mounted and two foot workmen. In 1718 and 1719, for example, there were at the docks on the Volga and Sura Rivers 2796 mounted and 2250 foot workmen, drawn for six months from 22,715 men; and of those drawn for one year, 25 and 30 respectively. The numbers of men drawn varied according to the requirements of the Navy Department. These "serving dissidents" prepared ship timber at least until the autumn of 1727, without any payment. Those who did not make their appearance, in spite of having been drawn, were obliged to work during the summer at the docks at Kazan, or to pay at the rate of 3 kopeks for foot and 7½ kopeks for mounted men per day for substitutes. Those who wished to leave the work were obliged to pay, unless they were incapable of working, 2 rubles in money and half an *osmina* of grain. Thus in 1727 this charge fell upon 9183 men. In 1719 the monthly wages of peasants who offered themselves voluntarily for work at the

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., v., No. 3149. *Coll. of Hist. Soc.*, xciv. pp. 178-9; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 579.

docks, &c., were 1 ruble 60 kopeks for men on foot, and 2 rubles 50 kopeks for mounted men.<sup>1</sup>

In 1727 the Admiralty Collegium ordered that the Ship-forest peasants should be paid according to the rate of wages fixed by the ukase of 1724.<sup>2</sup> Those who did more than work out the taxes which had been imposed upon them were to be paid in cash.

In subsequent years the Ship-forest peasants complained that they had to cross the Volga in the spring when the river was in flood, that men and horses were drowned, that they had to drive the timber over soft ground in sledges, and that men and horses were beaten mercilessly. The Chancellery denied these statements.<sup>3</sup>

In 1724 the Ship-forest peasants supplied 5000 men to build the fortresses of Baku, of Kura, and of St. Peter. These were drawn at the rate of one man from every nine and a half capable of working, in the *gub.* of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Nijigorod, and at the rate of one man from every two and a quarter souls in the *gub.* of Voronej.

The numerous complaints from the Ship-forest peasants led Prince D. M. Golétsin to the belief that the Tartars should be liberated from the obligation of forest service, and should be used for military service as formerly, their places being taken by the Tributary peasants, *i.e.* those paying tribute in furs. About 1728 the Government made an attempt to procure ship timber by means of voluntary labour by contract; but the contractors asked a high price, and the experiment was not carried out.<sup>4</sup> In 1740 Count Ostermann, whose opinions about the expediency of employing voluntary labour in the mountain works have already been noticed,<sup>5</sup> urged on the Empress Anna similar views with regard to the Ship-forests. "Compulsory work," he wrote, "even without mentioning the tricks to which it gives rise, is always performed with greater laxity than voluntary work. I have always been of the opinion that if work can be done by free hired labour, there is no use in disturbing villages and peasants. These are ruined by that means, and the work proceeds more slowly and more expensively. This can be seen clearly, if . . . you will order a true and detailed

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 580-1.   <sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 438.   <sup>3</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 581.

<sup>4</sup> *Coll. of Hist. Soc.*, ci. pp. 169-77; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 583.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 468.

report upon all the villages and *votchini* taken for public works, and find out in what state they were previously and to what conditions they are brought now."<sup>1</sup>

While A. J. Bibikov was making his inquiries into the state of the mountain works, he became aware of the complaints of the Ship-forest peasants. In 1764 he wrote from Kazan to the Empress Katherine II, "Against the local Admiralty Department . . . I hear great complaints about the serving Tartars ascribed to the Admiralty. There are not only no regulations about sending them to the works, but bribes are taken to a great extent. Those who are rich are not taken; but the poor who have nothing to give remain continually at the works, and they are wholly ruined. They deliver petition after petition to Colonel Svechin, the overseer of the Forests, appointed by the Senate."<sup>2</sup> Svechin himself reported the same conditions, and added that the system was equally disadvantageous to the Treasury and to the peasants.<sup>3</sup> The Empress Katherine ordered the Commission on the Navy and Admiralty Departments to report whether or not the peasants might be liberated from the Ship-forests and replaced by free hired labour; but nothing came of the inquiry.

When the Legislative Commission of Katherine II was appointed, the peasants of the village of Mojarovsky-Maidan in Alatyrsky province, sent an "instruction" to their representative for the election of a deputy to the Commission. In this instruction the peasants wrote:

"We, the lowest orphans of the Majorovsky-Maidan, and the peasants of the saw-mills, work for the Kazansky Admiralty at ship-building, and in the forests, and at cutting of oars, and everywhere the Admiralty office requires us, and according to the rate, we, the orphans, receive during four months, 4 kopeks per day, and during two months 5 kopeks, and this rate, to us, the lowest orphans, is not enough for bread alone."<sup>4</sup>

The Commission on the Navy reported on 20th December 1766, that it could not propose the complete liberation of the peasants

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Semevsky, ii. p. 584.

<sup>2</sup> *State Arch. Min. of For. Aff.*, x., No. 170, p. 55; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 586.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Arch. of Council of State*, code 98. *The Instructions of Nijigorodskaya Gub.*, Aff. No. 351, pp. 21-3; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 587.

from the Admiralty works, because no volunteers presented themselves in 1764, and in general such attempts from 1713 onwards had been unsuccessful. It proposed, however, to double the wages of the peasants at a stroke, while not remitting efforts to replace their labour with that of hired workmen. The Empress did not, however, sanction this project, probably on the ground that the state of the finances did not permit of the practical doubling of Admiralty expenditure. Instead of amelioration, the next step was to increase, in 1768, the taxes imposed upon the Ship-forest peasants by equalizing them with the taxes imposed upon other State peasants.<sup>1</sup> This meant an increase of 1 ruble 60 kopeks per soul. Against this additional impost the peasants petitioned in 1772, asking to be relieved either of the additional tax or of the ship-work obligation.

In 1774 the wages were doubled in accordance with the recommendation of the Navy Commission in 1766, and the Admiralty was directed to try to find volunteer workmen to take the places of the Tartars.<sup>2</sup> These measures were probably dictated, partly by fear of a rising among the Tartars, and partly by the desire to show a good example to private owners. They were followed in 1782 by new and improved regulations<sup>3</sup> about the conduct of the timber-cutting and other operations, with a view to interfere as little as possible with the cultivation of their fields by the peasants.

At the Fourth Census (1782) there were ascribed to the Admiralty 99,337 souls of male sex, and at the Fifth Census (1796), 112,357 souls. The numbers actually employed were from 2000 to 4000. In the year 1795, however, nearly 7000 were employed. The average monthly wages in that year were 5 rubles 11 kopeks for foot workmen, and 8 rubles 49 kopeks for mounted. Their total taxes were 4 rubles 8 kopeks per soul per year.<sup>4</sup> In 1797, by order of the Senate, confirmed by the Emperor Paul, the wages of the Ship-forest peasants were again doubled.

The consequence of these various measures with regard to the Tartars was the loss to them of their previously dignified position

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxi., No. 15,494; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 590.

<sup>2</sup> Following upon a report of the Senate dated 11th July 1774, an ukase was issued. *F.C.L.*, xix. No. 14,166; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 589.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, ii. pp. 589-90, from *F.C.L.*, xxi. No. 15,494 and No. 15,886.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 590.



as military serfs, and the definite enrolment of them in the ranks of the State peasantry, in which they remained.

(c) STATE PEASANTS AT THE SILK WORKS

The introduction of silk culture into Southern Russia dates from the time of the Tsar Alexis, who ordered, in 1650, the *voyevoda* of Astrakhan to establish "a silk business," and to provide the necessary means from Treasury funds. In the year 1700, Peter the Great ordered an inventory to be made of the mulberry-trees in the gardens of the Tsar at Astrakhan, and in those of private citizens. He also ordered that suitable places should be sought in which large mulberry gardens might be established at the cost of the Treasury, "free hired" people being employed, and that the cutting down of mulberry-trees should be forbidden on pain of capital punishment.<sup>1</sup> In 1720 the Government ordered a silk factory to be established on the Akhtuba, one of the arms of the Volga.<sup>2</sup> In 1756 the Empress Katherine II sent an order to the Chancellery at Astrakhan in the following terms :

"This is her Majesty's will. Silk factories must be established in Astrakhan and in the vicinity, to which must be sent those who were found at the previous census to be idlers and those who do not remember their origin. These are to be appointed to the service of the Treasury gardens at Astrakhan."

The management of the silk factories was to be in the hands of the Garden Chancellery. In the following year an officer, Parobich, was instructed to establish a silk factory at Akhtuba, the factory which had been established there in 1720 having passed out of existence. This factory, according to the ukase of 10th March 1757, was to be furnished with "lands and people." These lands were to be selected by Parobich from lands explored by him and situated on the Volga, "from the mouth of the river Akhtuba, and even up to Tsarev Pad, where mulberry-trees are to be found, and at Gnēloy Erēk, places which are not used by anyone and which have been given to no one, with the trees and forests growing in these lands." Such lands as Parobich might select were to be given and ascribed to the Treasury gardens at Astrakhan, from

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, iv., No. 1792, sec. 38; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxiv. p. 793, cited, *ibid.*

which they were to be " forever inseparable ; and these lands are to be populated by people who are in (*i. e.* ascribed to) the Chancellery of the Garden at Astrakhan." In accordance with this ukase, two Treasury settlements were founded—Bezrodnoë (from *bezrodny*—those who do not remember their origin) and Verkhne Akhtubënskoë.

There was also established afterwards another settlement, Nijne Akhtubënskoë.<sup>1</sup> Silkworms' eggs were sent from Astrakhan, and operations began. The quantity of silk produced at this factory was for many years quite unimportant. There were, in 1766, attached to the factory about 400 souls, but they were regarded as non-tax-paying Treasury factory workmen, not as ascribed peasants. They were paid a yearly salary of 15 rubles, and they received a house and other allowances.<sup>2</sup> They were obliged to do the work required of them in connection with the factory. The collection of the mulberry leaves was a difficult operation, because the trees grew in low-lying lands, and the collection had to be made at the very time when the Volga and the Akhtuba were in flood. The leaves had thus to be collected in boats.<sup>3</sup> Obligatory work for the silk factories was not agreeable to the inhabitants of the ascribed villages, because fishing was a more remunerative occupation, and they eventually protested against their obligatory relations to the factory. In March 1771 Katherine II sent Colonel Guriev to inquire into their grievances, and to bring them to obedience ; but he was unsuccessful in doing so, and the workers ceased to work at the factory. In 1772 a number of them were flogged by order of the Senate, some of them were banished to Nerchinsk, in Eastern Siberia, and some were sent into the army.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, those who remained now appeared in the documents as " peasants ascribed to the Akhtubinsky silk works," but their position was otherwise changed. They were no longer required to work in the factory, but were

<sup>1</sup> Gmelin, *Reise durch Russland*, ii. p. 71 ; Leopoldov, " The Silk Garden at Akhtuba and the Production of Silk," in *Jour. of Min. of Interior* (1837), xxv. p. 339, and his *Historical Sketch of Saratov* (Moscow, 1847), p. 72 ; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 563.

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished description of Saratovskaya gub., cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 564, and Falk, J. P., *Beiträge zur topograph. Kenntniss des Russ. Reichs* (St. Petersburg, 1785), i. p. 118 ; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Lepekhin, *Diaries of Travel*, i. p. 436 ; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Unpublished description, &c. ; cited, *ibid.*

permitted to work in their own houses; they were no longer exempted from taxation, but were required to pay in silk the equivalent of 2 rubles 74 kopeks per soul of State taxes. Each household was allotted a certain amount of plough-land, meadows, and forests, including mulberry-trees. They were permitted to catch fish for their own use and for sale upon payment to the Treasury of a fixed *obrök*. Lots upon which the peasants had themselves planted mulberry-trees were given to them "for ever," but they had no right of alienation. The peasants were permitted to sell to the Treasury, silk over and above their taxes, or to sell to anyone.<sup>1</sup> The settlements were transferred from the administration of the chancellery of the *guberni* to that of the Governor of Astrakhan personally, and a young captain, Nikolai Rychkov, son of the economic and topographic writer, was appointed superintendent. Rychkov was told when he entered upon his duties that the Akhtuba silk enterprise had not succeeded, partly because of the incompetence of previous superintendents, and partly because of the "laziness of the ascribed peasants, who, instead of the benefits expected from their work, produced only difficulties."<sup>2</sup>

There was now no difference between the ascribed silk workers and the ascribed peasants of the mountain works, excepting that in the former case, the quantity of silk which they had to supply in payment of their taxes was not defined—a condition which was inseparable from the exigencies of the silk trade.<sup>3</sup>

Rychkov appeared to justify his appointment. Within twelve months he boasted that the works had produced nearly as much silk as they had produced during the previous six years. It soon appeared, however, that a fraud had been committed, and that the silk had not been produced wholly at the works, but had been largely purchased in Kislyar.<sup>4</sup> Before this fraud was discovered, the Government, deceived by the appearance of success, transferred in 1773 to the settlements at Akhtuba, 1300 families from the Economical villages.<sup>5</sup> The families were not to be transferred compulsorily, but were to be permitted to decline. They were to be settled under the auspices of the Economical Collegium, and

<sup>1</sup> Ukase of 24th February 1772; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 565.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 566.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 567.

<sup>5</sup> *F.C.L.*, xix. No. 14,050: cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 568.

were to be exempt from the payment of State taxes for two years. Rychkov was, however, expected to make good the amount represented by this exemption out of the yield of silk by these peasants, so that the tax-income from the Economical peasantry should not be diminished.<sup>1</sup> Lands in the region suitable for silk-culture were to be reserved for future settlements of the same kind, and were not to be granted for any other purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Under these instructions, Rychkov surveyed 300,000 *dessyatin* of land between the Volga and the steppe of the Urals, almost all of it low-lying land. He did not cross the Volga, and thus did not include the high lands of the western bank. The lands which he included were subject to periodical inundation<sup>3</sup>—the high waters lasting usually until July in each year. A large part of the country was covered with forests containing elm, willow, poplar, oak, and some mulberry-trees, with intervals of fertile meadows; the remainder consisted of bare steppe upon which there was not even a blade of grass. In the lower regions there were numerous lakes. The really economical occupation of the region was fishing, in which a large proportion of the population was employed. The possible plough-lands were few and far between, and were sometimes at a distance of 70 versts from the settlements of the peasants by whom they were cultivated. Rychkov seems to have thought that it would be possible to convert the region into a vast mulberry forest. With skill and abundant capital, this might possibly have been done, but between the Treasury on the one hand, and the obligatory, inefficient, and discontented labour of the peasants on the other, Rychkov was, as it were, in a cleft-stick.

Altogether up till 1784 there were settled in Akhtuba 3600 souls, representing a population of about 7200, in six settlements. Rychkov called the original groups of Treasury artisans "old ascribed," and the new-comers "new-settled." In 1782 there were of the former 426 souls. The total income of the Akhtuba enterprise at this time seems to have been about 16,600 rubles, paid by the peasants partly in money and partly in silk, which was sold by the works or credited to them by the Treasury. The price credited

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xix. No. 14,052; cited Semevsky, ii. p. 568.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xix. No. 14,050; see also Jakushkin, *Sketches of Russian Agricultural Policy* (Moscow, 1890), pp. 98, 122-3; cited, *ibid.*, p. 569.

<sup>3</sup> The lands north of the Caspian at the mouths of the Volga constitute the largest area of low-lying lands in the world. Cf. Appendix I.

to the peasants was 120 rubles per *puđ*, and the price realized either from the Government or from sales to the public was from 180 rubles to 230 rubles per *puđ*.<sup>1</sup>

Although the peasants were under the direct control of an official of the Treasury, and although the enterprise was a pet scheme of the Empress Katherine, they were not contented. At the time of the rebellion of Pugachev there was a riot at Akhtuba.<sup>2</sup> Pallas refers to the "invincible dislike" of the peasants to silk-culture. He says that they even sprinkled the silk-worms with salt water in order to kill them; and that they set fire to the grass in the mulberry plantations in order to destroy the trees. Some of them were punished for these proceedings, but eventually obligatory labour in silk-culture was abolished in 1785. The cultivation of the mulberry and the rearing of silk-worms was left open to anyone, but the peasants did not adopt silk-culture voluntarily, and gradually the mulberry-trees were destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Rychkov was transferred to another appointment when the change in the condition of the peasants was made in 1785, and another superintendent took his place, hired labour being employed. The works did not even now succeed. The silk-worms died of cold, and it became evident that in the absence of skilful artificial arrangements the natural conditions of the region were not favourable to silk-culture. Prince Sh'cherbatov said wittily, "The peasants made silk because they were compelled to make it, and the works were founded by an ukase, and maintained by an ukase; but silk-worms cannot very easily be multiplied by an ukase."<sup>4</sup>

The Treasury silk works at Akhtuba were abandoned in 1800, and the lands were divided among private persons and merchants on certain conditions. The peasants formerly engaged as silk workers became cattle-breeders, fishermen, and salt-drivers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, ii. p. 570.

<sup>2</sup> Anuchin, Count D., "The Pacification of the Movement of Pugachev," *Russian Messenger* (1869), lxxx. p. 648; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 569.

<sup>3</sup> Pallas, *Reise*, &c. (Leipzig, 1799), i. p. 156; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 572.

<sup>4</sup> Sh'cherbatov, Prince M. M., *Works* (St. Petersburg, 1896), i. p. 493; cited by Semevsky, ii. p. 573.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Semevsky, pp. 575-8.

## CHAPTER II

### THE POSSESSIONAL FACTORIES

AN account has been given in previous pages of the State peasants and of the Black Ploughing peasants who had been ascribed to factories, by Peter the Great and by his successors. These ascribed peasants, together with those who had been purchased by noble factory-owners who had the right to possess peasants, or by merchants who had been permitted to acquire them, came, in the time of Peter III, to be called Possessional peasants. Those peasants who worked in the factories of noble owners, and who belonged to the *votchini* of these, were known as *votchinal* peasants. Both classes of peasantry existed for about a century before they came to be distinguished by these names.

After the death of Peter the Great, the factory owners no longer enjoyed the immunities and privileges with which, in his enthusiasm for industrial enterprise, Peter had endowed them. Under an ukase of the Empress Anna in 1740, the factory-owners were forbidden to buy peasants with land,<sup>1</sup> although they were permitted to buy peasants without land, while factories which were "not properly managed" were ordered to be closed, and the peasants ascribed to them to be transferred to the Empress, the artisans being given to those factories which might require them.<sup>2</sup> In 1744 the leading factory-owners protested against the withdrawal of the privileges they had formerly enjoyed, and they were again permitted to acquire peasants with land.<sup>3</sup>

The contest between the land and serf-owning nobles and the factory-owners, of which the vacillating policy of the Government

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *The Russian Factory in the Past and Present*, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 30. See also German translation of the 1st edition by Dr. B. Minzes (Berlin, 1900).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

was the visible sign, was prolonged throughout the eighteenth century. In 1752, by a decree of the Senate, the maximum number of bondmen which a factory-owner might possess was limited;<sup>1</sup> and in 1762, under Peter III, the purchase of peasant villages for factories, whether with or without land, was forbidden.<sup>2</sup> When Katherine II acceded to the throne later in the same year, this prohibition was confirmed.<sup>3</sup>

The effect of these measures was to throw the ownership of the factories into the hands of those who possessed bondage right, *i.e.* into the hands of the nobility.<sup>4</sup> This process went on at an accelerating rate in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the social result being the practical elimination of the bourgeoisie from Russian society.<sup>5</sup>

The hostility of the nobility to the factory-owners is readily intelligible. The drafts of peasants from the villages to the factories, and the demands of the factory-owners, rendered effective for a time during the reign of Peter the Great, to retain possession of peasants who had escaped from their villages, tended to the demoralization of agricultural production, deprived the landowners of working hands, and diminished their revenues. In the hands of the nobles who were large landowners, the proportions of peasants allotted to factory industry and to agriculture respectively might be adjusted in such a way as to suit the management of the estates as a whole, and the divergence of interest between industry and agriculture prevented. The noble factory-owners were thus by no means so eager for high or prohibitory customs duties as the bourgeois factory-owners had been. Under the latter, the higher the prices of goods could be forced by the exercise of monopolistic powers, the easier it became to obtain, by some means, working hands for their industries, and the stronger became the inducements to do so. At the same time, prohibitory customs

<sup>1</sup> The limitation was according to the character and size of the factory. For example, in weaving factories, the limit varied from 12 to 42 souls per loom. Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> By ukase of 29th March 1762. Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 459.

<sup>3</sup> By ukase of 8th August 1762. *Full Code of Laws*, xv. 11,490; xvi. 11,638; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Out of 328 factories in the year 1773, 66 of the largest belonged to nobles, and 46 to foreigners. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> Upon the ulterior results of this movement, see *infra*, vol. ii. (Book VII, chap. xiv.), "The *Intelligentsia* and the Revolution."

duties were not profitable for the Treasury, and thus on two sides—the influence of the nobility and the pressure of an expanding public expenditure—there came a tendency to convert the prohibitive tariff to a tariff constructed with a view to revenue rather than to protection.<sup>1</sup>

These tendencies promoted on the whole the interests of the small peasant craftsmen, although a large part of their gains undoubtedly found their way into the pockets of their owners. Apart from this, there was a certain mitigation of oppression. The policy of granting monopolies and privileges to the factory-owners was abandoned. In 1769 anyone who paid a small tax was entitled to have a loom in his own house, and the competition of the individual weavers appeared to result in improvement in the quality of the goods so that importation was, to some extent, checked,<sup>2</sup> although no positive measures were taken to develop small artisan production.<sup>3</sup>

The encouragement of factory industry by the Government had been accompanied by so many restrictions, and the monopolies and special privileges which had been granted had so far militated against wide industrial development, that the practical liberation of industry from intimate governmental supervision turned out to be a great advantage to the factory-owners themselves.<sup>4</sup> “When Katherine II came to the throne, there were 984 factories and workshops (exclusive of mountain ironworks); in the year of her death there were 3161. In 1773 the value of the products of the Russian factories was about three and a half million rubles.”<sup>5</sup>

The growth of the factory system was facilitated by causes other than the relaxation of State control. There had gradually grown up under the monopolistic system, skilled groups of working men, and these had been able to demand wages for their labour, this having become of increasing value. There thus arose once more a class of free hired workers. The struggle for working hands became less severe when the previously indispensable condition of bondage began to disappear.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Chulkov, *Historical Description of Russian Commerce*, vol. vi. bk. iii.; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 45.



The increase of the population of the towns<sup>1</sup> was at once a result of the growth of the factory system and a cause of its further growth; and this increase became very manifest as the eighteenth century drew to a close. Importance must also be attached to the practice of *obrok* payments in lieu of husbandry service, and to the consequent migration, either temporarily or permanently, of peasants from the villages.<sup>2</sup> Such peasants speedily replaced the convicts and beggars who had previously been working in the factories, as well as the bonded peasants, because their labour was more efficient than any of these. But the process by which these changes were worked out was a long one, and reactions frequently occurred owing to the reluctance of factory-owners and noble landowners alike to release either the artisan or the peasant from the yoke of bondage.

The appointment of the Legislative Commission<sup>3</sup> led to the discussion of the whole question of the extension of bondage right which had been involved in allowing merchants to possess artisans and peasants. Prince Sh'cherbatov insisted upon prohibiting the purchase of people for the factories, and proposed that those who were already in bondage in them should be gradually transferred to the nobility. This view was strongly supported both in the Commission and elsewhere. On the other hand, the merchantry petitioned for the maintenance of the possessional system as it had existed before the recent legislation. The manufacturers of the city of Kostroma protested that without possessional peasants it would be impossible for them to increase their factories and workshops.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the protests of the merchant-manufacturers, the prohibition of the purchase of peasants by them remained in force throughout the reign of Katherine II. An exception was,

<sup>1</sup> The urban population, which was only 328,000 in 1724, rose in 1796 to 1,301,000. Melyukov. *Sketch of the History of Russian Culture* (St. Petersburg, 1896), i. p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Under the *obrochnyë* system, which replaced the system of *bartschina*, peasants could go to the towns and hire themselves as free men, because their obligations had ceased to be indefinite, and because personal service was no longer necessary. Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 46. We have seen, however, that the emergence of purely *obrochnyë* relations was very gradual. *Obrok* and *bartschina* were concurrent for a long period. Towards the end of the eighteenth century *obrochnyë* peasants numbered 55 per cent. of the total population of bonded peasants. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 461.

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however, made in 1763, so far as concerned foreign factory-owners who, at their own cost, established factories in Russia. They were empowered to purchase "the necessary number of bonded people and peasants."<sup>1</sup>

In 1743, at the time of the second census, there were 16,027 artisans and labourers and 14,432 peasants and people in villages ascribed to the private factories and workshops, making a total of 30,459 souls of male sex.<sup>2</sup>

In 1762, at the time of the third census, there were 16,526 peasants and people in the villages ascribed to factories; and in addition, according to a separate report, 1423, together with 29,901 artisans and labourers at the private factories and workshops, making a total of 47,850 souls of male sex.<sup>3</sup>

In 1780, according to the incomplete report of the Manufactures Collegium, there were in the factories and workshops, exclusive of the mountain workshops (chiefly iron foundries), 23,911 souls of male sex, and in the mountain workshops 51,000 souls. There were therefore at this time at least 75,000 possessional peasants.

In 1794-96, at the fifth census, there were altogether 80,000 possessional peasants, exclusive of females.

These figures suggest that in addition to the natural increase in the number of possessional peasants, and in addition to those purchased by foreigners, there must have been some violation of the statute of Katherine II, which forbade purchase of peasants by the factory-owners.

The possessional peasants enjoyed certain advantages. By a statute of the year 1719, they were declared to be exempt from the payment of any taxes provided they were engaged in active work.<sup>4</sup> In 1723 it was provided that they should be counted in the census, but that they should not be taxed.<sup>5</sup> In 1736 those who paid poll tax were ordered to be liberated.<sup>6</sup> In 1747 the pos-

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xvi. 11,880; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> These were for the most part in the following *gubernie* as then defined: Moskovskaya *gub.*, 16,320 souls; Kazanskaya *gub.*, 5807 souls; and in Siberia, 5375 souls. *Journal of the Ministry of Interior*, xxxiii. (1839), No. 8, pp. 250-3; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 473.

<sup>3</sup> The larger numbers were again in the same *gubernie*. *Archives of the Ministry of Justice*, No. 105, 3676, p. 772 *et seq.* Report of 1766, cited by Semevsky, i. p. 473.

<sup>4</sup> *F.C.L.*, v. 3464, p. 10; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 475.

<sup>5</sup> *F.C.L.*, vii. 4145, p. 4; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *F.C.L.*, viii. 6858, p. 7; cited, *ibid.*

sessional peasants were required to pay the 70-kopek tax, but, unlike the State peasants ascribed to the State workshops, they were not called upon to pay the 40-kopek tax.<sup>1</sup> The artisans belonging to private factories appear to have usually paid for themselves the poll tax, so that we may suppose that by that means they were at least nominally free, and it is certain that they so regarded themselves. All possessional peasants were, to begin with, exempt from the obligation of providing recruits for the army, both by the so-called mountain privilege and by regulation of the Manufactures Collegium.<sup>2</sup> The last-mentioned exemption was, however, qualified in 1754, when the factory-owners were required to send recruits from their purchased villages, or to pay 100 rubles for every recruit whom they were required to send. They were permitted to purchase recruits if they elected to do so. In 1766 the provision was further modified by the increase in the fine for failing to send recruits to 120 rubles per man, and by the prohibition of the purchase of recruits. In 1783 the fine was raised to 500 rubles.<sup>3</sup>

When the ironworks of Lipetsk, Kozmēnsk, and Borensk, in the Azov region, were founded by Peter the Great, the workmen were drawn from the class of town residents and from the *odnovoritsi*, some of them having been transferred from the works at Olonets. The administration of the works was in the hands of the Admiralty Department.<sup>4</sup> In 1754 Prince Repnin applied for a grant of these works, and in the following year, on the recommendation of the Mountain Collegium, the works, together with the workmen and their children, were handed over to him. Repnin was obliged to pay poll tax for the workmen, and he was forbidden to remove them from the works. In case of more workmen being required, Repnin was entitled to introduce into the works bonded peasants from his own estates or to introduce free workmen. The number of souls transferred from the State to Repnin was 928.<sup>5</sup>

The manager and staff at the works, whenever the transference was accomplished, at once proceeded to treat the workmen as if they were no longer peasants of the State, but as if they were

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xi. 8620, 8836, p. 5, and xii. 9409; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, v. 3464, p. 10; vii. 4378, p. 13; cited, *ibid.*, p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, xiv. 10,326; xvii. 12,748, chap. i. p. 1; xxi. 15,847; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 476.

<sup>4</sup> *Materials for the History of the Fleet*, iv. pp. 396, 555-6, 569-70, 574-5; v. p. 413; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 487.

<sup>5</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice*, No. 903-3386, pp. 622-35; cited, *ibid.*

bonded peasants of Prince Repnin. Their wages under the State had been 5 kopeks per day in summer and 4 kopeks in winter. In addition they received a kind of bonus on production; for every *pud* of iron they received 50 kopeks. Under the new régime these wages were reduced to from 2 to 3 kopeks per day, and the bonus was reduced to 20½ kopeks per *pud*.<sup>1</sup> Under the management of the State, the *odnodvortsî* alone had been occupied in mining iron ore and in burning charcoal; now the artisans as well were sent to these tasks, for which they were not paid money wages, but were paid in iron. Under the former system the artisans were permitted in their spare time to work at their own forges; and when there was nothing for them to do at the works, they were permitted to work elsewhere. Altogether new regulations were introduced. The artisans were forbidden to work at their own forges and to earn money otherwise for the payment of taxes. In cases of non-obedience the workmen were to be punished with whips. Sentry duty was to be performed without extra payment by drafts of 30 men each week. Previously the sentries had received the ordinary rate of wages in payment for the exercise of their duties.<sup>2</sup> The workmen were also required to cultivate melons and cucumbers for the owner. Formerly they were permitted to marry their daughters without hindrance; now they were required to pay "*vyvodnye* money," on pain of being flogged. In spite of the provision in the grant, that the workmen were not to be removed from the works, Repnin's managers transferred a number of them to estates of Repnin's situated at a distance of 170 *versts*, where they were required to work in other workshops than those to which they had been ascribed.<sup>3</sup> Allegations of fraud were not wanting; the clerks were charged with embezzlement of the amounts deducted for taxes from the wages of the workmen during a year and a half, and when a detachment of soldiers was sent for the purpose of collecting the amount, the manager compelled the workmen to pay a second time.<sup>4</sup> The powers with which the grantee of the ironworks was entrusted in 1754, to send the workmen into the army as recruits, enabled the management to deal sharply with

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 488.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>3</sup> They were paid wages, but they received no allowance for expenses on the journey, which was probably accomplished on foot in about five days.

<sup>4</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 489.

any recalcitrants. Protests were nevertheless made, both to the local chancellery and to the Mountain Collegium, without result, excepting that a detachment of troops was sent down, and many of the protesting workmen were beaten. Disturbances continued at these works for several years.<sup>1</sup>

There were other instances of the deterioration of status of workmen who were handed over with the factories which had been founded by the State and then granted to private persons. For example, the paper-mill at Krasnoselsk, established by Peter the Great, was granted, in 1753, to Count Sivers in "perpetual and hereditary possession" on condition that he increased the production of paper and reduced the price by 10 kopeks per ream.<sup>2</sup> Count Sivers died in 1775, and the paper-mill, together with the workmen, was sold by his widow, by permission of the Mountain Collegium, to General Klyebnĕkov. Count Sivers seems to have conducted the business without distressing or irritating the workmen; but after the change of ownership there were continuous disturbances. In February 1777, 130 of the workmen sent a petition to the Manufactures Collegium, complaining that their families had insufficient food, and asking that they should not be compelled to work on Saturday afternoons; that their girls should not be compelled to work against their will, and that, should they wish to work, they should receive wages. Sivers seems not to have compelled the girls to work, and indeed work was only legally obligatory upon those who were sent to the factories by the police. In the end of 1778 the widow of Klyebnĕkov petitioned the same authority, and complained that the workmen would not work on Saturday afternoons, and that they sent their daughters to the mill when they were very young, but whenever they were old enough to work they were taken away for housework at home or were sent to service in the towns.<sup>3</sup> Collisions occurred frequently between the managers and the men. Refusals to do work, excepting in the trade to which they belonged, led to the flogging of the men, and to their being put in chains. When threats were made that the masters should be informed of the disobedience of the men, the latter answered:

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. pp. 489 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chulkov, *Historical Description of Russian Commerce*, vi., part iii., pp. 449-53; cited, *ibid.*, p. 496.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 498.

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"They are not masters, and we are not bonded," and they quoted an ukase to show that they could not legally be punished excepting "in the presence of the rest of their brothers."<sup>1</sup>

The workmen sent a petition to the Senate to the effect that they were not legally bonded, and that the proprietors subsequent to Sivers had exceeded their powers. After a long interval the Senate issued its decision in 1785. The artisans were considered to have been transferred "perpetually and hereditarily" into the private ownership of the grantee and his successors, and that therefore they could no longer be regarded as State peasants. The Senate, however, ordered that they should receive the same wages which they had been receiving in 1775.

The Krasnoselsk affair was suddenly reopened in 1796 by the Empress Katherine II, who ordered in an ukase that the workmen should be returned into their original condition, and that those concerned should be made aware that the artisans should be guarded from all offences and oppressions, and that they should be given satisfaction in money and in all that belongs to them. Recruits taken from them were to be returned and replaced by recruits from the bonded peasants of Klyebnëkov. This ukase was followed by prolonged legal proceedings in connection with the peasants' claims for compensation. The affair was finally settled in 1802.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, after a long struggle, the State peasants who were transferred with the factories were declared to be still State peasants, notwithstanding the transference; but during about half a century they were nevertheless actually in bondage to the private proprietors of the factories to which they were ascribed. As State peasants they were nominally free; but they nevertheless could not leave the factories; they were in fact bound to them, though in form they were not bound to their masters.

The position of those peasants who had not been drawn from the State peasantry was, however, quite otherwise. When factories were granted or sold by the State to private persons, it was frequently necessary to procure more workmen than had been previously employed under State management. Count Cherynshev, owner of the works at Yugovsk, was permitted to enlist

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, ix. No. 6858, p. 5; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 499.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 502.

224 workmen from the Black Ploughing peasantry ascribed to his works on the condition that they should not necessarily remain at those works *for ever*, and that while they were employed there, taxes, to be deducted from their wages, should be paid for them.<sup>1</sup> At that time the number of ascribed peasants was 6328; "something like an enlistment of recruits" was performed, and 230 workpeople were drawn.<sup>2</sup> These peasants, with their families, were transferred to the works, and the taxes were deducted from their wages, yet the peasant community from which they had been taken continued to pay taxes for them as if they still remained within its borders, or as if the men had been recruited into the army, leaving their wives and children behind them. This double exaction of taxes went on for three years, when it was not only stopped but the amount overpaid was recovered by the peasants at the instance of Prince Vyazemsky.<sup>3</sup> The workmen at the Yugovsky works complained in their "instructions" to the delegate to the Legislative Commission of Katherine II that their piece-work wages were insufficient for "food, clothing, and shoes," and that they could not pay their taxes of 1 ruble 72½ kopeks per soul, "because they had no houses, that they had been deprived of their last property and their last field, and were irredeemably in debt to the Yugovsky works office."<sup>4</sup> They pointed out that they were really artisans, and as such were therefore exempt from the poll tax. Yet they were subjected to it without the means of paying it which the peasants enjoyed. Therefore they requested, since they were not permanently ascribed to the works, that they might be permitted to return into peasantry.<sup>5</sup>

The artisans of Yagoshkhinsk and Motovlikhinsk complained to the Commission of Katherine II that when the works were under the administration of the Treasury, if the artisans were injured during the discharge of their duty, they were sent to the hospital, and during the period of their sickness, they received half-pay as well as their food, while after the transference of the works to

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, xv. 11,087. Ukase of 27th July 1760; cited Semevsky, i. p. 510.

<sup>2</sup> *Archives of Min. of Justice*, Nos. 903-3386, pp. 622 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 510.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1077-3560, pp. 413 *et seq.*; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 510. They also complained that no allowances were made to them during sickness. *Ibid.*, p. 511.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 510.

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private owners there was no hospital and no allowances during sickness.<sup>1</sup>

The possessional peasants who had previously been peasants of the Treasury thus found their position seriously deteriorated. Those who had previously been peasants of *pomyetschëkë* were already so low that further depression seemed an impossibility. Yet the physical conditions in which they found themselves under the new system were probably worse than those which they had experienced in their villages. Huddled in barracks provided by the factory-owners, in groups of 200 or 300, they not improbably lived generally under conditions even less sanitary than those of their former *žbas*. Otherwise their situation was not materially changed. The alteration in their fiscal position was rather an administrative change than one personal to themselves. The factory-owners deducted the poll tax from their wages, and the amount so deducted was sent by order of the Senate to the provinces from which they came, in those cases in which the origin of the people could be discovered. Strangers and those who could not remember their relations were ordered to be sent to Treasury works and there to be entered on the poll-tax rolls.<sup>2</sup>

In Siberia the skilled workmen ascribed to factories found themselves in a somewhat better position than the workmen of European Russia. In the works of a member of the Demidov family, for example, recruits were not called for from the skilled workmen, in case recruiting might induce flights of workmen to the Bashkir and Kalmuk Tartars in the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> By a decree of the Empress of 12th November 1736, the clergy and State peasants who were found at the Demidov works, and who were skilled in various trades, were ordered "to remain at the works for ever," and were to be "ascribed to the Treasury settlements which were granted to the works." The conditions were that Demidov should pay for them the 70-kopek poll tax and the 40-kopek *obròk*, and that they should be excluded from tax-responsibility at their previous places. When Demidov took the peasants

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 511.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, vii. No. 4699. Ukase of 20th April 1725; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 516.

<sup>3</sup> Hermann, J., *Historical Description of the Mountain Works Affairs* (Ekaterinburg, 1810), part i. pp. 179-80; and *F.C.L.*, x. 7548, pp. 7 and 8; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 517.



of other *pomyetschĕkĕ* into employment at the works, he was obliged to give in exchange for them peasants from his own *votchini*; should any fugitives present themselves, they should be returned to their owners.

The latter provision does not seem to have been carried out, for by ukase of 15th May 1754, all peasants who were found at the works without the explicit sanction of the law or the orders of the Government were ordered to be returned to the places to which they belonged. This requirement produced confusion, for it appeared that the Treasury mountain works, as well as the private establishments in Permskaya *gub.* and in Siberia, were equally offenders, and that in the category of persons liable to deportation there were in all upwards of 7000 souls, or probably about 14,000 persons. Apparently at this time nothing was done to carry out the law, for nine years later, in 1763, the number of such persons had nearly doubled.<sup>1</sup>

In the works in the Ural Mountains belonging to private owners, there were at the fifth census in 1796, 10,267 perpetual bondmen (*vyechno-otdannikh*, for ever given-up people).<sup>2</sup> It is clear from this relatively small number that the practice of "giving up for ever" had been diminishing during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Indeed after the manifesto of Katherine II in 1762, prohibiting the purchase of peasants, this practice was carried on only by evasion of the law.<sup>3</sup> For example, the Privy Councillor Vsevolojky bought in 1773, from Princess Beloselskoy, the Pojevsky furnaces and brass foundry in Permskaya *gub.*, and asked for permission to add to these works a forge, and to employ in it and ascribe to it peasants from his own villages, and also peasants purchased from different persons, to the number of 5228 souls. In spite of the general prohibition of the purchase of peasants, the Mountain Collegium permitted Vsevolojky to do what he asked. Vsevolojky's influence was evidently very powerful, because he was able immediately afterwards to obtain sanction for

<sup>1</sup> The precise figures were, in 1754, 6852, and in 1763, 12,183 souls of male sex. *Ministry of Justice*, No. 903-3386, pp. 622-35; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 517.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated by Semevsky (*ibid.*) from data in Hermann, J., *Description of the Works under the Administration of the Ekaterinburg Mountain Superiors*, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 521.

other two illegal acts, one to sell again the peasants he had just bought, and the other to sell a portion of the works and to keep the remainder.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the purchaser, finding it convenient to do so, committed still another illegal act in transferring the peasants of the Pojevsky works to other works elsewhere, although they were "indefeasibly and for ever" bound to the former, and could not legally be removed from them.<sup>2</sup>

These illegal proceedings were explicitly sanctioned by the department whose business it was to see that the law was observed. The peasants had either to submit to the violation of the laws upon which they leaned for protection against arbitrary actions, or to fight for what were undoubtedly their legally recognized rights. They did not at once adopt the alternative. Their first proceeding was to send a complaint to Prince Metschersky, Governor of Kazan. They told him that they were being transferred with their families from their villages before they could by any possibility reap the crops they had sown. His answer was that they must obey their *pomyetschëk*. This they refused to do. Armed with guns, bows, and boar-spears, about five hundred peasants prepared to resist the proposed compulsory migration. A detachment of thirty soldiers was sent to them, but the peasants firmly refused to give way unless an ukase signed by the Empress herself was produced. Prince Metschersky was about to send a stronger body of troops, but the Senate interposed and prevented any action until the affair could be investigated. The Senate then demanded an explanation from the Mountain Collegium of its action in sanctioning the transference of peasants in face of the law prohibiting it. The Collegium succeeded in postponing any decisive answer for twelve years, and only after the demise of the Collegium in 1789 did the Senate finally decide that the action had been illegal.<sup>3</sup>

Information about the working hours of bonded and free workmen in the factories and workshops in the eighteenth century is rather indefinite, excepting so far as concerns the establishments administered by the State.<sup>4</sup> The regulations of the Admiralty for works under its charge prescribed a working day of 12½ to 13½ hours between 10th March and 10th September. During the remainder

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 535.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.

<sup>4</sup> For account of these, see *supra*, p. 434 *et seq.*

of the year, work was required to begin an hour before sunrise and to cease an hour after sunset, with one hour for rest during the day.<sup>1</sup> The regulations of the mountain works, issued in 1725, provided for signals to begin work at four o'clock in the morning, to cease for rest at eleven o'clock, to resume work at noon, and to cease at four o'clock in the afternoon.<sup>2</sup> Eleven hours net working time seem to have been normal.<sup>3</sup> The Mountain Collegium ordered in 1745, that the workmen should cease work on Saturday afternoons "three hours before evening."<sup>4</sup> Of private establishments in this connection little is known, but complaints were made by the workmen at Yagoshikhinsk and Motovilikhinsk works belonging to Prince Vorontsev, that they were compelled to work on Sundays and holy days. Night work is known to have existed in the mountain works.<sup>5</sup>

During the latter half of the eighteenth century the factories and workshops were "technical schools" <sup>6</sup> for the workmen. Out of peasants drawn from the plough, skilled mechanics and other craftsmen were slowly developed. These men had profited by the instruction of foreign foremen and managers, or had acquired unaided a knowledge of their respective trades. Foreign workmen had been brought into Russia in considerable numbers in the time of Peter the Great; but to retain them was difficult, because they could not readily accommodate themselves to Russian customs. The necessity of replacing these foreign skilled workmen by native skilled workmen, together with the increasing requirements of growing industry, led to the employment of an increasing number of Russian free labourers working for wages.<sup>7</sup>

At the works of Prince Vorontsev, alluded to above, the artisans received in 1766-1767 from 30 to 40 rubles per year, founders 27 rubles, carters 16 rubles, and labourers and lads of fifteen years of age and upwards, generally 12 rubles per year.

<sup>1</sup> *Admiralty Regulations*, chap. xii. sect. 32; and *F.C.L.*, vi. 3937, p. 569; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 537.

<sup>2</sup> Hermann, *History of the Beginning of the Mountain Works* (1810), part i. pp. 89-90; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 537.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Hermann, *Siberian Mines and Works* (St. Petersburg, 1798), ii. p. 34; cited, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Archives of Council of State: Affairs of the Legislative Commission of Katherine II*, Aff. No. 249, No. 4, and Semevsky, i. p. 537.

<sup>6</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

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The average wage of all classes of workmen at these works in 1766 was rather less than 20 rubles per year. In Ufimskaya *gub.*, at the possessional mountain works, the artisans and founders received from 24 to 48 rubles per year, and other workmen 7 to 10 kopeks per day. Women received at one of the Demidov works 6 kopeks per day, and boys and girls from 3 to 6 kopeks per day. Piece-work wages were often paid. Towards the end of the eighteenth century at the Yugovsky works the head brassfounder received 60 rubles, the second 30 rubles, per year, and the ordinary workmen, 9 kopeks per day.<sup>1</sup>

These free hired workmen were recruited partly from the residents in the towns, but more largely from peasants released from personal bondage by the payment of *obrók*. Such peasants left their villages in considerable numbers, and made their living as well as their *obrók* by working in the factories and workshops.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the eighteenth century, 20 per cent. of the men registered in the census of 1796 had left their villages and had gone to work either on a small scale as individual craftsmen in the towns or as factory workers.<sup>3</sup>

An unsuccessful attempt was made in the eighteenth century to introduce compulsory education among the children of possessional peasants. This attempt was opposed by the workers as well as by the proprietors of the factories. For example, the artisans of the Yugovsky works complained to Prince Vyazemsky that the managers of the works compelled their children to be educated. The reply of the managers was to the effect that, in order to avoid the loss of time which might be employed in immediately productive labour, the children received while they were at school a stipend of one kopek per day. Prince Vyazemsky ordered that the children should remain at school, remarking that while the children are small they should not be idle, and that after

<sup>1</sup> Hermann, *op. cit.*, i. p. 119; ii. pp. 19-24, 39; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the movement from Yaroslavskaya *gub.* in the following years was in thousands: 1778, 53.6; 1788, 70.1; 1798, 73.6; 1802, 69.6, as shown by the number of passports issued. The total male population was 385,000. *A Topographical Description of Yaroslavskaya gub. in 1802*, MSS. No. 407, Library of the Free Economical Society; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 47. In Moskovskaya *gub.*, owing to the more slender development of industry there, the numbers were less.

they had been taught they might be sent into different trades. He ordered also that in cases where young men of eighteen to twenty years of age were at school, wages should be paid to them at a rate equal to the amount they would have earned had they been at work.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout Russia the peasants had been in the habit of spinning and weaving wool and flax into cloth for their own use. So long as the army was composed of levies, the clothing of the soldiers did not differ from their customary habit; but when a regular army was established, different regiments were necessarily clad in different uniforms, and the manufacture of these uniforms in great numbers could not be a peasant affair. Army clothing might clearly be made of more constant quality and in a more unvarying manner in a factory than could be the case if it were made even under more or less costly inspection in numerous villages. A Treasury factory for weaving woollen cloth was thus established at Moscow. In 1720 Peter the Great ordered that a commercial company should be formed to take over this factory, together with the artisans and a subsidy of 30,000 rubles for three years.<sup>2</sup>

Permission to purchase villages in order to supply working hands was not granted to the factories until 1721, so that the Moscow cloth factory at its beginning was entitled to recruit only from free people, should it desire a larger number of artisans than the number handed over to it by the Government. The company was, however, entitled to enter free people as apprentices for seven years, and if they ran away from the works they might be dealt with as fugitives, and persons sheltering them might be fined 100 rubles. The question of wages was left to mutual agreement.<sup>3</sup> So also in 1724 the cloth factory belonging to the Treasury at Kazan was handed over to a local merchant named Miklyaev and "Companions";<sup>4</sup> and in 1726 the Tavrovsky factory in Voronejskaya *gub.* was also transferred into the "perpetual possession" of a company composed of local nobles and merchants. They were required to increase the capacity of the factory from twenty to fifty looms, and to supply cloth to the Military Col-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Min. of Justice*, No. 1077-3560, p. 584; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 539.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. infra*, p. 512.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, vi. 3526; cited by Semevsky, i. 540.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf. infra*, p. 509.

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legium.<sup>1</sup> Since a factory of twenty looms was described as a "great" factory, and since there were, after all, but few factories great or small, it is evident that the textile industry, in spite of the efforts of Peter the Great, had not developed with any great rapidity. In 1734 the Empress Anna called upon people of "all ranks," excluding peasantry, to form companies for the purpose of establishing cloth factories, either with or without the aid of the Government. Yet this appeal seems to have been almost without result. The reason appears to lie, not so much in the absence of capital in Russia, as in the absence of industrial capital. The merchants found more advantageous employment for their capital in commerce, and the landowners found that they might use their capital more advantageously in agriculture than in industry. There appeared also to be more directly and obviously profitable employment for industrial capital in the exploitation of minerals and in metal manufacture, than in the manufacture of cloth. The greater profits of the former may be accounted for by the fact that there was only the most slender competition in certain minor branches of metallurgical industry from the small craftsmen, whereas in cloth manufacture every peasant household was a competitor, and thus there was no general demand for factory-made cloth. The peasants did not use it, and the townspeople and gentry preferred the superior cloths of Germany to the indifferent products of the Russian factories. The Government contracts for army clothing were, no doubt, important, but it is possible either that they were so profitable that they rendered, in the individual case, the improvement of the production in order to secure a wider market unattractive, or that sometimes they were not profitable enough to induce enterprise exclusively on their account.

Further inducements appeared, therefore, to be necessary. These inducements took the form of granting to the factories the right to exploit the labour of bonded peasants. The ukase of 7th January 1736 not only bound to the factories the artisans who were employed there at that time, but on payment by the

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Department of Manufactures and Commerce: Affairs of the Manufactures Collegium*, bundle 420, Affair Nos. 11-13, pp. 48 *et seq.*; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 541. Such factories came to be known as "obligative factories," because they were obliged to supply the Government. The cloth "possessional" factories remained in this position until 1816. Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

factory owners of a certain amount determined by the ukase, they were entitled to possess workmen, and were therefore entitled to purchase them. Transference of cloth factories from the State then went on somewhat more rapidly. For example, the Treasury factory of Putilov was transferred "to the Moscow merchant, Kozma Matveyev 'into perpetual hereditary ownership,' together with the artisans, working people, and all appurtenances, villages, people, and peasants, lands, premises, buildings, and mills, and without exception everything which is now to be found at the factory."<sup>1</sup>

Matveyev was thus placed in the position of *votchinal* owner of all the property, and in this capacity he received from the peasants the dues and obligations payable to him as *pomyetschëk*. The income derived from these sources was required to be paid into the Treasury in cloth for uniforms and in *karazea*, a rough woollen material used for linings, at the "established price." The new owner was obliged to increase the production and to supply to the Treasury not less than 30,000 *arshin* of cloth per year during the first three years, and afterwards to supply 50,000 *arshin* per year.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that, notwithstanding these formal transfereces of factories and villages into "perpetual possession," the subjects of these transfereces were still regarded as State property, and that if the conditions of the transference were not observed, the whole property might be resumed by the State.<sup>3</sup> This was made clear by an ukase to the Senate by Katherine II in 1790. She ordered that inquiries be made into the conduct of the owners of cloth factories, in order to ascertain whether the quantity of cloth which they produced corresponded to the number of peasant souls ascribed to them. If it should be found that the ascribed peasants were employed at other work than the manufacture of cloth, the factories might then, after the lapse of a certain time, be transferred to other owners.<sup>4</sup> This ukase was followed by an order which required from those factories where the workmen had no

<sup>1</sup> Semevsky, i. pp. 542-3.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xiii. No. 9986. Ukase of 22nd May 1752; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> On the cases and arguments for resumption of Crown grants in England up till the end of the seventeenth century, see the well-known *Discourse upon Grants and Resumptions, &c.*, by Dr. Davenant (London, 1700).

<sup>4</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxiii. No. 16,924, 25th November 1790; cited by Semevsky, *ibid.*, p. 544.

land, twice as much cloth as from those where the workmen had land. For every landless workman there had to be supplied 105 *arshin* of cloth annually.<sup>1</sup> Should these conditions not be observed, the factory was to be transferred to someone else;<sup>2</sup> that is, it was to be confiscated, the perpetual grant notwithstanding.

Still, the factory owners supplied to the Treasury insufficient quantities of cloth, and under the Emperor Paul, in 1797, an ukase was issued ordering those to whom factories had been granted to implement their obligations under penalty of resumption by the Treasury of the estates which had been granted to them.<sup>3</sup> Action was taken upon this ukase in the same year, in the case of Kuznetsov, whose factory at Ryazan was confiscated. This factory possessed 571 peasants with lands. The usual obligations to the Treasury had not been performed, and the factory had, moreover, from 1793 been engaged in the production of linen instead of woollen cloth,<sup>4</sup> as required by the deed of gift.

The workmen at the cloth factories were drawn from many different sources. Those who had been granted originally to the factories when they were transferred to private ownership were State peasants, but later there were added peasants from the estates of the monasteries and from private estates, children of the clergy, foreigners, people belonging to the merchantry, and the children of soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the year 1747, the possessional artisans, unlike the State peasants at the mountain works, paid no taxes; in that year, however, all artisans, including the cloth-makers, were required to pay the 70-kopek poll tax, although they were not required to pay the 40-kopek *obròk*. The question was raised in 1798, why they did not pay *obròk*, but the Manufactures Collegium explained that, being constantly employed at factory

<sup>1</sup> For this cloth the factory owners received, for white cloth 54 kopeks, and for coloured 60 kopeks in 1758; for white, 60 kopeks, and coloured 70 kopeks, in 1788 till 1792; and from 1792, 72 kopeks and 84 kopeks respectively. Semevsky, i. p. 544.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxiii. 16,998. Ukase of 20th November 1791; cited, *ibid.*, pp. 544-5.

<sup>3</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxiv. 18,087; cited, *ibid.*, p. 545.

<sup>4</sup> *Archives of the Department of Manufactures and Commerce: Affairs of the Main Administration of Manufactures*, bundle 23, Affair No. 29, p. 1; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 545.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf.* Semevsky, i. p. 542.



work, they were not in the same position as the State peasants at the mountain works, and therefore could not be expected to pay *obrök*; indeed, the quantity of cloth which they were required by law to weave was so great that they were hardly able to accomplish it.<sup>1</sup>

The cloth-makers or weavers were required to furnish recruits in the same way as the artisans of other factories. The weavers in the towns were obliged also to perform civic duties. They had to act as police or to pay for substitutes to do so, one man for every fifteen houses. In Kazan the weavers were also liable to the obligation of providing fuel for soldiers who were quartered upon them.<sup>2</sup>

The conditions of labour of the weavers in the factories of the eighteenth century were extremely bad. The majority of the buildings in which weaving was carried on were so badly constructed that "the weavers had hardly enough light to see what they are weaving."<sup>3</sup> Owing to complaints of the inferior quality of the cloth woven under these conditions, a Commission was appointed in 1741 to inquire into the conditions of the cloth industry and to formulate regulations concerning it. Like many other regulations on various subjects in Russia, these had not the least effect. The investigation made by the Committee is, however, of much importance owing to the light which it throws upon the life of the Russian weavers of the eighteenth century. From the report of this Commission, it appears that the work is done very slowly, and that the workmen "come when they wish, and go away when they like." The factory managers are recommended to have sand hour-glasses. Should workmen arrive late, they should be reprimanded for the first offence; for subsequent offences they should be fined. Should a workman fail to make his appearance, he should be required to pay a day's wages for a substitute for the first offence; for subsequent offences he should pay twice

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Dept. Man. and Com. : Aff. Man. Coll.*, bundle 420, Aff. Nos. 11-13, pp. 48-55; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 546.

<sup>2</sup> In Voronej, in 1799, thirty-five soldiers were quartered in twenty-seven weavers' houses. See *Arch. Dept. of Man. and Comm.*, bundle 347, Aff. No. 534, pp. 1, 5-6; bundle 334, Aff. No. 22, pp. 121-9; bundle 315, Aff. No. 11,732, pp. 21-35; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 547.

<sup>3</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 547. The writer has observed in small native shops in Chinese cities, similar conditions, in which, weaving almost in the dark, weavers were making fine silk fabrics.

as much by way of fine, and, in addition, he should be flogged. Should a workman presume to strike the chief of the factory, he should be punished with the "cat" in presence of all the other men of the factory, and for six months he should receive only bread and water. During the eighteenth century women were not usually employed in the Russian cloth factories.<sup>1</sup> The Commission recommended that they might be employed, but only should they so desire; if they were employed, they should be paid at the same rate of wages as the men; but if the factory owner had "his own bonded artisans and working people," he could send them to work as he might determine. These regulations were not brought into force, but they illustrate the attitude of workmen and factory-owners alike during this period.

Some details concerning two of the principal cloth factories further disclose the conditions of labour. The cloth factory at Kazan had been handed over in 1724 by the Treasury to Myklyaev, a merchant of Kazan. After his death it was conducted by his widow, and afterwards by her brother Dryablov. In 1737 Dryablov reduced the wages of the weavers. A petition was sent by 140 of his employes to the Commerce Collegium, stating that before the transference of the factory from the Treasury, the weavers received 6 kopeks per *arshin* of cloth; under Miklyaev they had 6½ kopeks, and the spinners 3 kopeks, per pound of wool, and that Dryablov had reduced the wages so that they now received only 5 kopeks and 2 kopeks respectively. The Commerce Collegium decided against the men, and told them that while the punishment for insubordinate factory workers, according to the ukase of 1736, was banishment to distant towns or to Kamchatka, this penalty would not be enforced; but that they must obey Dryablov, that the agitators would be punished in the presence of all the factory workers, and that no other petition would be received from them. The workers appealed to the Cabinet against this decision, demanding that Dryablov be deprived of the factory, and that it be granted to someone else, who should be instructed to accede to their demand that the rate of wages should remain as it had been in the time of Miklyaev. The case came before the Senate, which reversed the decision of the Commerce Collegium and reprimanded Dryablov. The latter was told that he had no right to reduce

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, p. 515.

wages without an "order," therefore he was obliged to compensate the workmen by paying an amount equal to five years' arrears of unpaid wages. He was obliged also to keep his work-people "decently," and was forbidden to make them work for him otherwise than in the factory. Any workers who had been banished in consequence of the disturbances were to be brought back. If, however, these or others should take part in renewed agitation, they should be dealt with as the ukases directed.

The amount payable by Dryablov to the workers for arrears of unpaid wages was 10,000 rubles; he paid actually about 1300 rubles, and appealed in 1742, and again in 1743. In 1744 the workers again petitioned the Senate for relief against Dryablov. They complained that he had compelled them "to sell their last belongings."<sup>1</sup> Two petitioners carried the petition to St. Petersburg, where, in accordance with the regulations, they were obliged to remain until the case was decided. The affair passed into pigeon-holes of the Manufactures Chancellery, there to remain for years. Meanwhile the patient petitioners waited in St. Petersburg. One of them died in 1755, after waiting for eleven years; the other was still waiting in 1769, twenty-five years after he had arrived with the petition.<sup>2</sup> How many years longer he had to wait before death overtook him, fixed as he was in the slowly moving mechanism of Russian justice, is not known.

Meanwhile the factory at Kazan had passed into other hands. Dryablov had been succeeded by Osokin. In October 1796, while the census was being taken in Kazan by Senator Mavrin, the cloth-workers complained to him that from the time of the establishment of the factory in the early years of the eighteenth century, the prices of food had increased by 400 per cent., and that from the wages they received they had insufficient to pay taxes and to obtain food for their families. The old people and the children had therefore to go about begging, although not only the men, but their wives and daughters, worked in the factory. The artisans asked that their wages should be increased, and that female labour should be abolished. Mavrin reported that he had learned from the manager of the factory that the best of the workmen received

<sup>1</sup> *State Archives*, xvi. No. 168, p. 8; xix. No. 387; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 553, and see Semevsky, pp. 549-53.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 553.

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only 5 rubles per month, and that the wages of some of them were not more than 90 kopeks per month. "On such wages," Mavrin said, "at the high prices which are now prevalent, not one of the artisans can support himself, especially when he has a wife and little children." Mavrin's report was sent to the Senate by order of the Emperor, and was by it passed on to the Manufactures Collegium. Osokin was frightened by this report, and by the attention paid to it, and was constrained to pay, of his own motion, the poll tax for the workers. He said that it was impossible to increase the wages of his work-people because of the low price of the finished material, and he proposed that the Treasury should acquire his factory. Should his offer be rejected, he would, however hard it might be for him, increase the wages of his hands from the 1st May 1797. The case was referred to Karinsky, Governor of Kazan, who made a number of drastic recommendations. He proposed (1) to relieve the artisans of the burden of quartering soldiers upon them; (2) to extinguish the obligations of tax payments and of recruit duty under which the workers lay; (3) to extinguish the obligation of town service; (4) to permit them to cut wood for fuel in the Treasury estates; (5) to change the quantity of cloth required by the Government from 105 *arshin* per soul of male sex to a quantity to be produced by the able-bodied workmen. Two years afterwards, in 1800, the Manufactures Collegium decided that it could not undertake to remove the taxes and other obligations from the Kazan cloth-workers; but it authorized the diminution of the quantity of cloth required to be produced. The quantity was diminished to 80 *arshin* of cloth and 40 *arshin* of *karazea*.<sup>1</sup>

While the case of the Kazan factory workers was still before the higher spheres, the Emperor Paul visited Kazan in 1798. The workers, in spite of the increase of wages which they had obtained, made a complaint to him of the harshness of their master and of the inadequacy of their wages; but the complaint was regarded as without foundation. In the same year forty-five of the factory hands at Kazan applied to the Manufactures Collegium to be permitted to enter the ranks of the merchantry or of the town

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Ministry of Justice*, Nos. 1138-4709, pp. 227, 259, &c. *Arch. of the Dept. of Man. and Com.*: *Aff. of the Manufactures Collegium*, bundle 334, *Aff. No. 22*, pp. 78-96, 124-9; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 556.

residents, but the Collegium rejected this application on the ground that the factory had to supply the Government with cloth obligatorily, and that, therefore, they could not sanction the release from it of any of the workmen.<sup>1</sup>

The "Great Cloth Court," or Treasury cloth factory in Moscow, was transferred in 1720 to Shegolin, a merchant of Moscow. After the death of Shegolin, in 1735, the factory came into the possession of his partners, Bolotin and others. The wages paid to the workmen up till this period had been the same as those paid in Kazan. In 1737 Bolotin, pursuing the same policy as Dryablov, and probably in alliance with him, determined to reduce the wages of his work-people. He tried, however, to obtain their consent to this step. He called them together and attempted to compel them "by threats" to sign a document to the effect that they were willing to accept the reduced wages; but the workers would not consent, and several of them were beaten with rods. The result seems to have been a kind of lock-out, for work at the factory was interrupted between 22nd March and 14th May 1737, and many of the workers fell into poverty and "insoluble debts." They petitioned both the Manufactures Collegium and the Senate without result, and for the time they were obliged to abandon the struggle. Their petitioners were indeed sent in chains to the Military Collegium, where they were detained for two years. In 1741 General Baron Mengden was sent to Moscow to investigate the case. According to the statements of the workers, he was bribed by the factory owners; at all events, nothing came of his investigation. The workers then sent a petition to the Empress, and on 15th April 1742, ceased work—in other words, they engaged in a strike.

The Senate then investigated the affair thoroughly, and on 29th September 1742 announced in an ukase that they had arrived at a decision similar to that at which they had arrived in the Kazan case, namely, that the reduction of wages was arbitrary and unjust. Bolotin was, therefore, ordered to pay the workmen wages as defined in the ukase of 1723. The Manufactures Collegium was instructed to find out how much was due to the workers in unpaid wages, and to report to the Senate. "The principal agi-

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Dept. of Man. and Com.: Aff. of Man. Coll.*, bundle 343, Aff. No. 405, pp. 19-24; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 556.

tators," "who caused the wilful suspension of the works," were to be punished "with lashes" in the presence of all the working men. Complaints of the weavers to the effect that they were served with inferior wool were to be investigated by the Manufactures Collegium. That Collegium, together with the Military Collegium, had to decide, after consultation with "worthy and expert merchants," to what samples the cloth should be made, and at what price. The whole was to be reported to the Senate.

The Manufactures Collegium proceeded with their tasks, but in 1746 no decision had been reached, and in that year the workers again revolted. Further cause of discontent was found in the practice which had grown up of allowing workers to go away from the factory on *obròk*, the factory management requiring from them *obròk* of from 6 to 12 rubles. In 1749, in spite of the disturbed state of this factory, the Manufactures Collegium permitted Bolotin to take into factory work the daughters, wives, and widows "who live idly at the factory." The working men objected to this, and pointed out in a petition to the Senate that this proceeding was in contravention of the law.<sup>1</sup> The petition yielded nothing, and the workers then sent one to the Empress. The bearer of the petition, a workman called Bykov, was sent to the Senate, which ordered him to be flogged, and sent him back to the factory. In June of the same year, undeterred by this proceeding, the workers sent another petition to the Empress, stating that on Bykov's return Bolotin and his partners had put Bykov into large foot-irons and had put upon his neck a large chain. They had then put him in a room with only one window, which was barred, and had there left him to starve, allowing no one to go near him. Bolotin, being furious at the workers for sending these petitions, had increased his severity in general, flogging every day twenty to fifty people for minor offences—for being late, and the like.

This petition being without result, the workers began to desert the factory. Bolotin complained in the middle of June 1749 that these flights had almost denuded his factory of working people. Out of a former thousand, there remained only one hundred and twenty. He demanded that search should be made for the fugitives, and that when they were captured they should be punished. Only 32 were caught; 308 gave themselves up. In the end of

<sup>1</sup> They referred to the Ukase of 1736.

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June, 286 workmen began to work ; but 127 refused to do so. The Senate then ordered that of these 127, every tenth man should be beaten with the knüt, and together with five others who were also beaten, should be banished to Rogervik and sent there to hard labour. The remainder of the 127 were to be flogged and to be forced to work. Of fugitives who never returned and who were not captured, there were nearly 600. In order to compensate for this loss of working hands, the Military Collegium granted from the garrison schools 400 scholars "incapable of study."

In the end of the reign of Katherine II, this Great Cloth Court had fallen into the hands of Prince J. Dolgoruki, who leased it in 1796 to a Greek named Ardalionov. At this date, according to the Fifth Census, there were at the factory only 276 souls. In 1797 the workers complained to the Manufactures Collegium against the lessee of the works, first early in the year and again later, complaining of the merciless beating of the previous petitioners. Again in the nineteenth century they twice petitioned the Emperor Nicolas I. Always they insisted that they were free people, and that there was no legal justification for treating them as bondmen of private persons. At last, after a struggle enduring for one hundred and thirteen years, and extending over nearly four generations, the workers of the Great Cloth Factory were recognized in 1849 as free city residents ;<sup>1</sup> but by that time the works, which belonged now to Prince Saltykov, had stopped altogether.

The Manufactures Collegium collected, in 1803, some information about the conditions of the workers in the possessional factories. According to their inquiry, there were 130 of these factories at that time. This number comprised linen, woollen, paper, glass, silk, leather, and chintz factories. About one-fourth of these were in Moscow. In 107 of these factories there were, in 1796, at the Fifth Census, 29,665 souls. There is no information about the remaining 23 ; but approximately there were 32,000 souls in all the possessional factories.<sup>2</sup> In 1813 there were 35,581 souls,<sup>3</sup> of these 14,679 were at the woollen cloth factories, 7522 at the linen factories, 6610 at the cast-iron, steel, and other ironworks, 2107 at

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 557-66. See also Posadsky, *The First Step*, Provincial Collection (Kazan, 1876), pp. 421-2.

<sup>2</sup> Semevsky, i. p. 568.

<sup>3</sup> *Report on the Manufactures in Russia, 1813-1814* (St. Petersburg, 1816) ; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 114.

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the paper mills, and 1908 at the silk mills.<sup>1</sup> Some of these factories were very large. For example, at the cloth factory at Glushkovsk,<sup>2</sup> belonging to the Countess Potyemkin, there were in 1796, 9121 people; at the linen and paper factory of Yakovlev, in Yaroslavl, there were, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, 1625 men and 2250 women, mostly ascribed to the factory; at the similar factory of Goncharov, in Medynsky district, there were 962 workers.<sup>3</sup>

In some of the possessional factories the peasant-artisans were allowed to leave the factory for a month or two in each year to till their fields. The artisans were paid sometimes by the piece, sometimes by time—by the day, week, or month. The normal number of working days per month was 23, and per year 260. The normal wage in the cloth (woollen) and paper factories, where wages were lower than in others, was 4 rubles per month. In addition to their wages, 82½ per cent. of the workers at the cloth factories had land which formed a supplementary source of income. In the linen factories the normal monthly wage was 4½ rubles. At one linen factory (that of Ashashtin, in Kostroma), the possessional peasants worked one half of the year in the factory, and the other half in their own fields. In the silk factories the wages were fixed by the Manufactures Collegium in 1798, at “such a payment per piece that a man shall receive 50 to 80 rubles and a woman 18 to 22 rubles per year.”<sup>4</sup>

Females were more largely employed at the linen factories (in which employment for them was frequently obligatory), less so in the cloth (woollen) factories, universally in the silk factories, and not at all in the glass works. The average monthly wages of women were 2½ rubles; at cloth and chintz factories they were a little above the average—3 rubles; and at the silk, paper, and linen factories lower than the average—1 ruble 55 kopeks to 1 ruble 88 kopeks.

The labour of children was not usual in the cloth factories, where it existed in four cases only. In the linen factories large numbers of children were employed between the ages of nine and twelve years. Children under nine years do not appear to have

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, i. p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> In Kurskaya *gub.*

<sup>3</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxvii. No. 21,076, p. 5; cited by Semevsky, i. p. 571.



been employed in any of the possessional factories. The average monthly wage of children was 1 ruble 80 kopeks.

In addition to these wage payments, there were allowances varying in different localities.

At the factory of Popov, in Uglich, for example, houses kept in repair, together with fuel and light, were given to the work-people, and all taxes were paid for them. At the linen factory of Yakovlev, in Yaroslavl, in the year 1802, the factory management purchased rye flour and wheat at the high prices of that year, and sold them to their work-people under deduction of about 40 per cent. of the price. They pensioned the aged, and gave allowances for young children and for widows. They also lent considerable sums to their work-people—a practice which led to the latter being heavily involved in debt to the factory-owners. In other factories also, pensions were given and medical attendance and hospitals were provided.

One anomalous case makes its appearance in the early years of the nineteenth century. "Many" of the workers at the factory of Prince Baryatinsky at Moscow hired others to work for them and made their own living elsewhere. It does not appear whether or not they exploited their substitutes.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of *votchinal* factories in the eighteenth century has already been remarked. These establishments were distinguished from the possessional factories strictly so-called by the circumstances that they were situated upon and belonged to the owners of *votchini* on heritable estates, and that the workers in them belonged also to the noble owners as bonded peasantry. Work in the factory was therefore rendered on precisely the same basis as was *bartschina* in the fields. In some of the *votchinal* factories the system of labour was that of "brother for brother"—that is, the members of a family were divided into two reliefs. One section worked out *bartschina* in the factory, while the other worked it out in the fields, the members of the family taking each kind of labour by turns. This was, for example, the system in vogue at the cloth factory of Prince Baryatinsky in Ryazanskaya gub. In

<sup>1</sup> Most of the details of the condition of the possessional workers in the first years of the nineteenth century are derived from Semevsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 567-74. They were taken by him from a large bundle of documents in the *Archives of the Dept. of Manufactures and Commerce*, namely, bundle 422, Affair Nos. 44-1513-1 (1803).

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this factory there worked 292 men and 264 women. The men were allowed to leave the factory during the two months of harvest-time.<sup>1</sup> This system was also adopted at Okulov's factory in the district of Skopinsk,<sup>2</sup> and at other factories. One case has been recorded in which a *pomyetschêk* of Nijigorodsky *gub.* managed his factory by compelling his peasants to work by monthly contingents without any payment. It is not surprising that the same *pomyetschêk* deprived his peasants of their plough-land and that his peasant workers were beaten if they did not perform properly the factory work. Nor is it surprising that the people looked as if they had just come out of prison and that many of them took to flight.<sup>3</sup>

The system usually in vogue in the *votchinal* factories involved, however, the payment of wages to the bonded workers, but at a lower rate than was current for contemporary free labour.<sup>4</sup>

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the relations of the Government to the factory industry underwent certain alterations. In 1790 and 1791 two ukases were promulgated which regulated the manufacture of cloth. All factories were placed in one or other of two classes: (1) those which had received on their foundation subsidies from the Treasury and the right to purchase peasants; and (2) those which had received no subsidy, and which had not the right to buy peasants. The first group of factories were called *obyazannyeya* (or obligative) factories. Among them were distributed all the orders for cloth required by the Government for the army and otherwise, and such factories were confined to the execution of these orders. The second group of factories were alone entitled to sell goods to private persons.<sup>5</sup> But the factories of the first group appear not to have obeyed this injunction, for deliveries of cloth were made to the Government very irregularly. In 1797, not only the "obligative" factories, but also the free factories

<sup>1</sup> On *votchinal* factories in general, see A. Pogogev, *Votchinal Factories and their Working Men*, in *Vestnik Evropy*, 1889, July; and Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 104 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Arch. Dept. of Trade and Commerce*, 1803. Reports of the numbers of men and their wages, employed in factories having ascribed and purchased peasants; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Zablotsky-Desyatovsky, *Count Kiselyev and his Time* (St. Petersburg, 1882), iv. p. 294; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 107-8.

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>5</sup> Ukases of 25th November 1790 and of 20th November 1791.

were forbidden to sell any cloth for uniforms otherwise than to the Government ; and in 1798 the importation of foreign manufactured goods was prohibited.

The frequency of disturbances in the possessional factories throughout the eighteenth century arising immediately out of the survival of the bondage relations and the arbitrary conduct of the *pomyetschĕk*-employers, suggest the existence of some deeper cause than that which appears on the surface. This cause seems to lie in the discordance between the new system of factory industry on the large scale, and the structure of Russian social life. Russian industry had been domestic in the most literal sense. Each household of peasant and *pomyetschĕk* alike had been self-contained. The purchase of things manufactured elsewhere than in the home, was looked upon as wasteful, and therefore as verging upon immorality.<sup>1</sup> The making of things on a large scale for wide distribution meant, on the one hand, the destruction of the special characteristics of local costume, and on the other, waste and idleness. Factory-made cloth, for example, was not nearly so durable as home spun, and purchased clothing, considering the wear and tear of hard peasant life, although cheaper, quantity for quantity, was really more expensive, besides being less characteristic of the locality and of the station, and much more commonplace. In the long evenings of winter or in the short days when farm work was impossible, the loom or the last were standing invitations to wholesome and not too arduous labour. The factory goods, which were made, not for the frugal peasant, but for the spendthrift gentry, were no doubt smarter than the domestic product ; but to buy them meant breaking with old habits, imitation of the despised upper classes, and eventually the tearing up of the most sacred traditions of peasant life by the roots.

It is thus intelligible, when whole villages were ascribed to factories, and when the peasants, whose affections were really centred in the soil and whose lives had been spent in the open-air, were suddenly condemned to obligatory labour within closed doors,

<sup>1</sup> This attitude of mind is an universal trait of peasant character even at the present time. Instances of its survival are to be found in the author's *My Windows on the Street of the World* (London, 1923), vol. ii. cc. xxvii and xxxiii.

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in ill-constructed and badly-ventilated workshops, that they should reflect upon the meaning of it all, and should come to the conclusion that their lives were being exploited to mischievous ends by insatiably greedy *pomyetschëkë*. This attitude of mind accounts for the reluctance with which peasants entered the factories voluntarily,<sup>1</sup> as well as for the facts of the long continuance in them of obligatory labour, of harsh treatment of recalcitrant workers, of chronic disturbances, and of the stubborn habit of petition, which have been recounted in preceding pages.

The factories in the eighteenth century produced predominantly for the gentry and to a very small extent for the peasantry. They thus entered little into competition with peasant manufacture for household use; but they did enter into competition in the local market with individual or group domestic production for sale. The great factories, when they had satisfied the demands of the Government, sold their surplus products to the merchants, and to these also the small craftsman had to look to take off his hands, immediately they were finished, the goods which he made. Since many of his neighbours were making the same thing, no local market, strictly speaking, existed for him. The small craftsman was thus driven either to go into the factory, as he did in Western Continental Europe and in England, or to meet the competition either by improving his product or by lowering his price. In Russia he began by doing the first. The reaction of the factory system upon the small craftsman was thus at this time<sup>2</sup> on the whole favourable to production in terms of quality at all events. There was, moreover, a certain political tendency in the third quarter of the eighteenth century which made for the rehabilitation of the small craftsman. The course of events after the death of Peter the Great had brought the nobility into the first ranks in the political field, and their wealth and influence had thrown the

<sup>1</sup> "The artificially created factories did not find workers. . . . The new form of industry was decidedly in contrast with all the customs of the people and with all their forms of life." Korsak, *On the Forms of Industry* (Moscow, 1861), pp. 129; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> When in 1769, freedom was given to everybody to weave in their own houses, the ukase mentioned with "the highest pleasure," that "many in the cities and towns begin to weave in their houses such stuffs as before were imported from foreign countries." *F.C.L.*, xviii. 13,374; xx. 14,275; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 44.

larger factories into their hands. These factories were sustained principally by obligatory work for the Government. The smaller factories only were in the hands of owners from the merchantry. The spasmodically energetic legislation the course of which we have followed was directed, under the influence of the nobles, against the smaller factories. The bearing of the merchants towards their workmen, and the somewhat meticulous care for profit which they and their managers exercised, did not harmonise with peasant traditions, irritated the peasants, and gave these factories a bad reputation. Thus the merchants' commercial methods and their deficient tact, together with the political manœuvres of the nobility against the rising bourgeoisie, contributed to the advantage of the peasant craftsmen. The development of a widespread peasant industry in the hands of small craftsmen rather than of a concentrated industry in the hands of a small number of rich bourgeois, who might through their increasing wealth and importance acquire political power, was in the interests of the nobility.<sup>1</sup>

Yet no positive measures were taken at this time to develop the small handicrafts,<sup>2</sup> although the Manufactures Collegium was abolished,<sup>3</sup> and the support which we have seen that institution frequently gave to the merchant-manufacturers in their disputes with their workmen was suddenly withdrawn. Thus towards the close of the eighteenth century, industry was stimulated from many different directions, industrial establishments of moderate size grew up everywhere, and domestic industry in small towns and villages increased also. In the first years of the nineteenth century this movement was very manifest. "In some parts of Russia, the whole male population leave agriculture to the women, and go away to different occupations. In the summer-time, the peasants collect in the towns to carry on small trades, as carpentering, mason work, &c."<sup>4</sup> All this meant, of course, the increase of the practice of paying *obrôk* and of thus securing relative freedom of movement; but the mobility of the peasant, and consequently

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 43. On this question compare the chapter on the Intelligentsia and the Revolution in vol. ii. of the present work.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> It was abolished in 1779.

<sup>4</sup> Saltau, D. W., *Briefe über Russland und dessen Bewohner* (Berlin, 1811), p. 23; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, i. p. 47.

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the extent to which industrial development was possible, were hampered by the bondage relation, the "undivided family," the "mutual guarantee," and other incidents of peasant life, all which remained as formidable deterrent forces until past the middle of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER III

### THE FACTORY SYSTEM IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE rise and development of the Possessional and Votchinal Factories have been described in the preceding chapter. Although the Possessional Factory originated in the eighteenth century, the term Possessional did not come into use in official documents until the beginning of the nineteenth.<sup>1</sup> The course of development of the factory system during the nineteenth century is characterised by transformation of the factory from a place of bondage to a place where voluntary workers are employed and are paid wages according to a contract at least hypothetically free. This transformation proceeded very slowly prior to the Emancipation of the Peasants in 1861, when it received its final impetus. Only as it was accomplished did the Russian factory system assume the capitalistic form in vogue in Western Europe and in America.

The reluctance of the Russian peasant to engage in factory labour has become very manifest from the details which have been given in the two preceding chapters. This reluctance does not seem to have arisen solely from the conditions of the work, from the low scale of remuneration, or even from the obligatoriness of it *per se*, but rather from the circumstances that they liked to work in their own way and on their own account, and that factory labour took them from the fields and from the open air. It is more than likely that the inevitable confinement of the factory affected both their health and their temper, the latter being also specially taxed by constant supervision to which they were not accustomed. To enter a factory meant also the keeping of definite times and the learning of wholly new kinds of work, both of which were out of keeping with the normal activities of the peasant. That the work was inefficient, largely because it was done without interest, and

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 105 n.

that the peasant workmen were sometimes very exasperating to the management, there can be no doubt.<sup>1</sup> So long as bondage endured, such conditions must have endured also; industrial enterprise, on a large scale by the methods in vogue in the countries which Russia was imitating, was not compatible with the bondage relation. Whatever elements of exploitation may be held to exist in modern capitalistic industry, these can hardly be held to be comparable to the exploitation of labour under the system of ascription.

We now turn to an examination of the condition of labour at the *voitchinal* and *possessional* factories during the period extending from the beginning of the nineteenth century up to the emancipation.

A typical *voitchinal* factory of the period was that of Volkov, at the village of Gorenki. Volkov bought, for factory purposes, a huge palace of the Razumovsky family, and transferred to it peasants belonging to him, from his estates in seven different districts. Some of these peasants were housed in the palace and some of them were given small lots of land near the factory.<sup>2</sup> In this case may be seen the phenomenon, noticed in general by Professor Erisman,<sup>3</sup> of the creation of a factory proletariat; for these peasants were taken—men, women, and children—from agricultural labour in their widely-scattered villages and concentrated, almost without land, in one factory. So also more than 1000 peasants were brought, about 1825, from about fifteen villages, to a cotton factory in Mojaisky district.<sup>4</sup> Twenty years later, in the same district, a woollen factory with 1000 peasant-workmen, also almost without land, was organised by Count Uvarov. The factory of Voyeykova was established by a lady who placed in it 300 peasants, and who behaved so tyrannically that for slight offences she sometimes had from ten to fifteen men flogged in a day.<sup>5</sup>

In order to prevent such practices, Prince Golëtsin, Governor-General of Moskovskaya *gub.*, proposed, in the thirties of the

<sup>1</sup> The dislike of factory labour still exists in Russia and affects the relations between employers and their workmen.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, i. p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Collection of Stat. Information on Moskovskaya Gub., Sanitary Section*, No. iv. (Moscow, 1882), p. 106; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 108-9.

<sup>5</sup> Pogogev, in *Collection of Stat. Information on Moskovskaya Gub., Sanitary Section* (Moscow, 1882), iii. No. vi. p. 11; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 109.



nineteenth century, to regulate the relations of the owners of *votchinal* factories and their peasants. His attention was specially drawn to the subject in consequence of a strike at the works of Gruzdev within his jurisdiction. Prince Golëtsin's proposed regulations were opposed by the Ministers of Finance and Interior and by the Moscow Marshal of Nobility, on the ground that the loyalty of the *pomyetschëkë* might be impaired if the Government were to interfere between them and their peasants. "So long," they said, "as the *pomyetschëkë* have the right to use their serfs at any kind of work, such an open and direct interference in their rights and responsibilities must bring many out of the limits of obedience."<sup>1</sup> Thus, so far as the *votchinal* factories were concerned, the Government feared to extend any control in case worse consequences might ensue.<sup>2</sup>

So far as concerned the "possessional factories," the case was otherwise. In these the Government had always reserved the right of interference, and had frequently exercised it, even to the point of resumption. The *votchinal* factories, with the peasants in them, were the heritable property of their owners; while the "possessional factories" were granted by the State and they might be resumed by the State, hence *a fortiori* they might be regulated by it.

Vague and varying as was the practice, the juridical position of the "possessional factories" clearly depended upon the terms of the original grant. These terms were in general, to the effect that the grantee should maintain the factory with its ascribed peasants as one and indivisible, that the production should be neither changed nor diminished, that the wages paid to ascribed peasants should be a certain amount, and that the peasants should not be transferred from the factory to which they were ascribed. In other words, the owner of a "possessional factory" held a lease from the Crown, and the peasants as well as the factory remained the property of the Crown, though the possession of them passed into the hands of the lessee. Although, as we have seen, many owners of "possessional factories" proceeded to treat the peasants

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> It should be realised that at this time the Government was still reeling from the shock of the Dekabristi (cf. *infra*, vol. ii, Book IV, chap. iii.). There was, on the whole, less risk in offending the peasants in the *votchinal* factories than there was in offending the *votchinal* owners.

ascribed to the factory as if they were their own personally bonded peasants, they were not legally entitled to do so, because the former were not ascribed to them personally. The ascribed peasants had the right of petition, although in practice it was not always acknowledged, and the Government had in the ukase of 1724, and in subsequent ukases, regulated the rate of wages which must be paid to the ascribed peasants. The case for regulation, so far as concerned the "possessional factories," did not admit of doubt, although the Government might on occasion have hesitated or delayed to act. When the factories were situated in scantily-populated regions or at a distance from judicial and administrative centres, the factory owners were expressly endowed with magisterial powers. They could punish for offences within certain limits of gravity by flogging, by sending the offenders into the army, and, by permission of the Governmental authorities, by banishment to Siberia. At nearly all the factories, the workmen received payment; but at three cloth factories, seven linen, one paper, one leather, and one metallurgical, the workmen received no payment. The normal number of working hours was twelve per day. The periods of working time were subject to regulation by the Government.

Such was the juridical position of the "possessional factory" worker in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Little as he thought so, he nevertheless gained something by passing from the field into the workshop; he was even in some senses in a better position than the free-hired labourer. He was not an isolated individual; he was a member of a social group. Low as his status was, it was nevertheless a definite status. His wages did not vary with the demand for labour in the market, nor with his skill nor with anything excepting the somewhat fluctuating policy and practice of the Government. He could not be thrown out of employment, or rather he could not be deprived of his wages by the mere fact of there being nothing for him to do at the factory. He, at all events, was in permanent employment, while the hired factory hands in the same factory might be dismissed during a period of dullness in trade. Such were the regulations: practice did not always correspond to them.

In 1802 the right of buying peasants for the factories was limited; and again in 1808, fresh regulations for the purchase of

peasants were issued; but the fiscal interests seemed to require the retention of the bonded peasants at the factories. The factory owners who did not enjoy the privilege of purchasing peasants complained that they could not compete with the *votchinal* factories of the nobles. This plea was accepted by Kozodavlev, Minister of the Interior in 1808, who desired to permit non-nobles to buy peasants; but at the same time to limit the number of peasants who could be drawn from agriculture to factory labour to one-third of the village population. He also proposed to restrict the hours of labour to twelve on week days and to six on Saturdays, work on Sundays and holy days being forbidden; and to forbid also the exercise of compulsion upon women and children, causing them to engage in factory labour.<sup>1</sup> The proposals of Kozodavlov were not adopted, but they indicate the contemporary drift of opinion in "higher spheres." In 1816 the purchase of peasants by the factories was prohibited.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, the practice arose of promulgating "statutes" which had received Imperial sanction, applicable to particular "possessional factories." For example, on the transfer, in 1803, of a factory at Kunavinsk which had belonged to Prince Usupov, to another owner, a Statute was issued prescribing the rate of wages with a provision for increments of wages every ten years, in correspondence with the increase in the price of grain and of other things necessary for the subsistence of the workpeople. The owner was not permitted to diminish the production of the factory or to stop it, and definite payment was to be made to every bonded workman should he not be required at the factory. To those who were under age or beyond the working age, "a decent alms-house support" was to be given by the owner.<sup>2</sup>

In 1818 a commission was instructed to visit certain factories and to draw up statutes for them, prescribing wages for each variety of labour, &c. These commissioners also regulated the hours of labour and the number of holidays in the year—the latter were fixed at 110. At one factory, the owners were obliged to furnish a hospital and medical attendance, at another the workmen were permitted to elect "aldermen," whose function was to

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxvii. 21,076; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 121.

be the observation of the wages due and paid by the factory owners.

The Ministry of the Interior proposed to extend such regulations gradually over all factories ; but in 1819 its functions in respect to factories were transferred to the Ministry of Finance in one of those oscillations of administrative policy which we have found to be characteristic of the Russian Government.

The practice of specific legislation was not approved by the new administration. Referring to a particular case, the Ministry of Finance reported : " This Statute is not only useless, but it is injurious to the manufacturers, because it gives the working men occasion to think that, apart from this Statute, they have no obligations to the manufacturer, and therefore the authority of the latter is diminished, and it loses all weight in the eyes of the working men. All the advantage is on the side of the men, and the factory-owner is alone injured." <sup>1</sup>

But the factory-owners were injured, not so much by the specific labour legislation to which they were subject, as by the restrictive action of the general laws by which they were prevented from managing their factories and changing their production to correspond with changing economic conditions. During the eighteenth century such restrictions had not been felt as a material burden, because the demand for the commodities they produced did not fluctuate seriously ; but in the early years of the nineteenth century, various causes, domestic and foreign, affected all branches of factory industry to such an extent that many of the " possessional factories " were in a state of insolvency.<sup>2</sup> It was, therefore, necessary for the Government to adopt some measure of relief for the factories. Several concurrent causes which will presently be examined contributed to produce a rapid growth of the factory industry in Russia, especially in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century.

The restrictions upon the sale of uniform cloth by the woollen factories which had been imposed in the eighteenth century continued to be in force during the early years of the nineteenth. In 1808 the Government imposed fines upon certain factories for

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Department of Trade and Commerce: Affair of Statute for the Factory of Osokin at Kazan*, part iii. ; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky*, p. 125. This was especially the case in 1812.

selling cloth in contravention of the law. It also fined the purchaser and confiscated the cloth.<sup>1</sup> In the following year, 1809, these burdensome restrictions were removed, and, within certain limits, the cloth manufacturers were permitted to sell to private persons.<sup>2</sup> In 1816 the "obligative" factories were wholly released from the requirement that they should supply the Government to the exclusion of the public. These factories were, by these means, assimilated to the open factories, and the cloth trade began to grow rapidly.<sup>3</sup> While in the eighteenth century, under the "obligative" system the Government found great difficulty in securing the fulfilment of its orders, in the nineteenth century, under the open system, it obtained all the cloth it required, while the factories produced three times as much more for sale to the public.<sup>4</sup>

Apart from the influence of the relaxation of Governmental control over a certain number of the factories, there was another and even more important cause for the great development of Russian factory industry which manifested itself conspicuously in the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century. According to Professor Tugan-Baranovsky, the most important cause of the growth of industry was the decline of agricultural prices. This decline began in the beginning of the twenties; <sup>5</sup> by the beginning of the thirties it had produced an agricultural crisis.<sup>6</sup> The occurrence of this crisis rendered it possible at once to increase the number of factories and to employ in them hired labourers who were driven from the land by the fall of prices. It is obvious that, in proportion as hired labour became more common in the factories, the condition of the bonded workmen must have been placed in stronger relief. While, no doubt, there may have been a disposition on the part of the *pomyetschëkë* factory-owners to reduce the free workman to the level of the bonded, the struggle for hands which was incidental to the growth of factory industry rendered the accomplishment of this somewhat difficult. When bonded and free workmen were working side by side, the effect

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> Report on permission to sell "soldiers' cloth," 21st October 1809. *Arch. of Min. of Interior*, cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Report, &c., cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> In England the decline began in 1818. *Cf.* Tooke and Newmarch and Jevons, *Investigations*.

<sup>6</sup> On the causes of this crisis in Russia, see Fomën, A., *On the Fall of Prices of Agricultural Products* (St. Petersburg, 1829), and *supra*, p. 425.

upon the bonded workman must have been such as to induce him to make every effort to rid himself of his yoke.

The peasant who could undertake to pay his *pomyetschĕk* an *obròk* was not usually, even at a moment of agricultural depression, under economical compulsion to go into factory labour. If he had the necessary skill he could engage in isolated industry. While peasant manufactures were crude, and while they did not compete in point of attractiveness, although they did so in point of durability, against the factory product, the peasant artisan had the immense market offered by the peasant folk. After all, the factory produced either for the Government or for the gentry, although also in some measure for export. The market for factory products was large, but the market for peasant products, though wholly a domestic market, was, owing to the numbers of the peasant population, still larger. Thus in the timber regions, wood-working industries were developed, as also the making of shoes, baskets, &c., from the bark of birch and other trees. Where iron was readily found and reduced, or where it could readily be obtained in workable forms, as, for instance, at Nijni Novgorod or elsewhere on the Volga, there were whole villages of blacksmiths. In some villages everyone devoted himself to wire-drawing, in others to the manufacture of knives, scissors, swords, guns, padlocks, axes, &c. The products of one large village, Pavlovo, were celebrated; they were sold all over Russia, and were even exported to Persia.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all the nails used in Russia were produced in the villages on the Volga. In some of the villages, notably Sidorovka, in Nerekhotsky district, the peasants devoted themselves to working in the precious metals, and their embossed and enamelled jewellery was famous. Peasant industry was exercised chiefly upon raw materials produced by the peasants themselves. The weaving of linen from flax grown on the peasants' allotments has long been, for example, an important industry. The practice was to weave linen in narrow strips, partly because the peasant looms were small, and partly because one of the chief uses to which linen was put was for leg wrappings.<sup>2</sup> The competition of the peasant linen with the factory

<sup>1</sup> The knives of Kauhava, in Finland, the minute iron castings of Zlatusk, in the Urals, and the silver filigree work of the Caucasus are familiar to every traveller in these regions.

<sup>2</sup> *Portyanki*, little trousers.

product was so keen that, in consequence of the representations of the factory-owners, Peter the Great forbade the peasants to weave any but narrow linen. Many peasants were ruined by this prohibition, but when, after the death of Peter, the restriction was removed, the peasant linen industry revived.<sup>1</sup> Villagers on the navigable rivers engaged in shipbuilding. The products of these village artisans were intended for sale. Specialization of village production rendered this course necessary, and the wide market, with facilities for trading, rendered it possible. The conditions of Russian life in the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth—the prevalence of the “undivided family,” the rarity of “separations,” and the “mutual guarantee”—impeded, and the system by which peasants obtained limited passports from their villages, and the practice of periodical migration from village to town and back to village promoted the spreading of technical knowledge and the diffusion of industry throughout the country. Yet peasant industry was crude and traditional, and the advancing luxury of the upper classes involved demands which the peasant artisan could not supply. So long, however, as he had his own wide market, he could sustain himself against the competition of the factory.<sup>2</sup> Factory industry and *kustarni* or peasant industry thus flourished side by side and mutually reacted upon one another, and the decline of agricultural earnings contributed to the growth of both of them, although peasant industry was affected through the limitation of peasant resources resulting from the agricultural crisis.

The next period exhibits the growth of a new industry which, in a large measure, altered the relation between the two industrial forms. This new industry was the manufacture of cotton. The new manufacture found at first competition only in other textiles which were the subjects of peasant industry—linen, woollens, and silk; but the raw material of cotton was at the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> According to Storch, *op. cit.*, quoted by Tugan-Baranovsky (p. 53), the best linen was woven in the village of Lyskovo, in Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, in Nijigorodskaya *gub.*, and in the Mennonite colonies in Vishenka. It is interesting to notice that in the Mennonite and Dukhobor colonies in Manitoba and Saskatchewan the women beat the flax grown in their own fields and weave linen from it.

<sup>2</sup> In the forties of the nineteenth century, the *kustarni* competed with the factory industry on its own ground. For details of the *kustarni* system, see *infra*, chap. iv.

manufacture wholly imported, and was at the same time much cheaper than the raw material of other textiles. Thus cotton speedily replaced these in the consumption of all classes of the people, and thus the former division between the two systems of production began to be broken down.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century the cotton manufacture was already in existence, but only in an incipient stage. The average importation of raw cotton in the years 1812-1820 was only 50,000 *puds*, and of cotton yarns only 160,000 *puds*. The quantity of raw cotton imported began in 1837 to increase enormously, and the quantity of imported yarns began to decline. This increase in the cotton manufacture is attributed by Professor Tugan-Baranovsky,<sup>1</sup> not to the encouragement given by the Government to the cotton industry, nor to the protective tariff, but to the fall in the price of raw cotton,<sup>2</sup> which brought calicoes into more and more effective competition with other textiles and enlarged the area of demand alike in respect to regions<sup>3</sup> and to classes of the population. The fall in the price of cotton and of cotton yarn in Russia was due to international causes,<sup>4</sup> and was so considerable that, in spite of the protective duty under the tariff of 1822,<sup>5</sup> calicoes, plain and printed, became so cheap that demand was greatly stimulated, and the production to satisfy it increased rapidly. But the operation which would be known in modern phrase as "dumping" of cotton yarn from England and also from Bukhara was disastrous to the Russian cotton spinners. The interior market, largely owing to the inadequate resources of the bulk of the people, could not be expanded rapidly enough to absorb the imports as well as the domestic products; and the consequence

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.*, e.g., diagram facing p. 150 (2) in Jevons' *Investigations in Currency and Finance* (London, 1884). See also Tooke and Newmarch's *History of Prices, 1793-1837* (London, 1838), ii. p. 401, and *ibid.*, "1839 to 1847," p. 427. The fall in the price of cotton began in 1815, became acute in 1819-1821, and again in 1828. The price rose slightly in 1835, and dropped again to its former level in 1838. The price of "Bowed Georgia" cotton in Manchester in 1814 was 2s. 2d. per lb., and in 1838 was 5½d. per lb.

<sup>3</sup> For example, cotton velvets were sent from Russia to China, through Siberia and by Kiakhtha across Mongolia to Kalgan. *Cf.* Ure, A., *The Cotton Manufacture* (London, 1861), ii. pp. 485 and 487.

<sup>4</sup> The causes of the fluctuations of prices at this period are discussed by Tooke, *op. cit.*, ii. "1793-1837," vol. "1838-1839," and vol. "1839-1847."

<sup>5</sup> For an account of Russian tariffs, see *infra*, pp. 55 *et seq.*, and vol. ii. Book vi. chap. i.



was the closing of eighteen cotton factories in the Moscow regions and elsewhere, together with the bankruptcy of their owners.<sup>1</sup> The factories which suffered most from this crisis (which occurred in 1837) were the smaller factories in which there were no reserves of capital. The larger factories survived and, benefiting by the reduced price of raw cotton, succeeded in laying the foundation of the great development of the industry which took place in the succeeding decade. One important consequence of these events was the concentration of cotton manufacture in the hands of very large concerns; and another was that Russia was drawn into the circle of the capitalistic development of Lancashire and was a sharer in the technical improvements in manufacture which at that time were taking place in the centre of the cotton industry.<sup>2</sup> While the important development of textile manufacture in Russia was thus due to causes external to Russia, it must be allowed that even the larger factories there could hardly have survived the crisis, or, having survived it, could not have survived the subsequent competition of the Lancashire cotton spinners and manufacturers without the aid of a protective duty.<sup>3</sup>

The weaving of calico from imported yarns preceded the establishment in Russia of cotton-spinning mills. From about 1840 the importation of English spinning machinery began, and the Russian manufacturers developed the spinning of cotton yarn with great activity.

The growth of the cotton industry had a serious effect upon the manufacture of other textiles. This was specially the case with regard to linen which had been manufactured for domestic consumption and for export,<sup>4</sup> from the fact that cotton fabrics

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *loc. cit.* For the improvements in question, see Baines, E., *Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture in Great Britain* (London, 1835; Montgomery's *Theory and Practice of Cotton-spinning* (Glasgow, 1836); and, by way of comparison, Guest, R., *Compendious Hist. of the Cotton Manufacture* (Manchester, 1823).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 66.

<sup>4</sup> About one-third of the linen woven in Russia was made for export. In 1804 there were 285 factories working for export exclusively; in 1861 there were only 100. *Historico-Statistical Review of Russian Industry* (St. Petersburg, 1886), vol. ii. p. 12; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Cf. Warden, A. J., *The Linen Trade, Ancient and Modern* (London, 1867), pp. 373-4. See also *ibid.*, pp. 319 *et seq.*, for interesting account of the Russian linen trade by two Scottish merchants resident in Russia.

came to be substituted for linen for many purposes.<sup>1</sup> The small fine linen factories of the *pomyetschëkë* suffered severely. The economists of the sixties of Slavophilic and those of free-trade tendencies alike condemned the "artificial" promotion of the cotton industry and regretted the decadence of the "natural" linen manufacture by means of which the cultivation of flax, for which Russia was favourably situated, had been encouraged and by which a considerable export trade had been built up.<sup>2</sup>

Exploitation of iron has been developed in four regions in Russia: the Moscow region, the Ural Mountains, Poland, and Southern Russia. Already in the time of Peter the Great, the development of the iron industry in the Urals had attained considerable dimensions. The iron ore was singularly free from refractory impurities, and it could readily be smelted by means of charcoal and lime, which were available from the forests in the midst of which the iron ore was found. In 1718 the production of pig iron amounted to 6,641,000 *puds*, in 1767 to 9,622,000 *puds*, and in 1806 to 12,212,000 *puds*. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the quantity exported amounted to 2,581,000 *puds*, but the competition of Swedish iron began at that period to affect the export trade. In the beginning of the nineteenth century English iron, though of inferior quality to Russian and Swedish, was much cheaper owing to the proximity of coal to the iron fields. Later technical improvements in the manufacture of iron in England enabled inferior ores to be employed without inferiority in the product, and the external market for Russian iron dwindled.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Up to the invention of the spinning frame in 1770, flax yarn was universally used for warp, cotton spun by spindle and distaff being used for weft. The linen manufacture was thus immediately affected in 1770 and was progressively affected with the cheapening of all cotton fabrics. Cf. Warden, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> The following statistics show the production of iron in Russia during the first half of the nineteenth century:

In 1800	10,300,000 <i>puds</i> .	1841-1850	11,754,000 <i>puds</i> .
1823-1830	10,124,000 ..	1851-1860	16,352,000 ..
1831-1840	10,709,000 ..		

The figures represent annual averages. See Brockhaus and Ephron, *Russia in the Past and Present* (St. Petersburg, 1900), p. 304. Professor Tugan-Baranovsky (*op. cit.*, p. 78) says that the production of 1830 amounted to 12½ per cent. of the world's production of pig iron; but the doubtful reliability of the statistics of some of the other countries renders it difficult to confirm this figure.

The competition of Swedish iron in neutral markets had injured the Russian export trade, but probably this competition might have been met by the Russian iron-smelters had the conditions of the industry been other than they were. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the iron mines and smelting works were manned exclusively by forced labour. There were, moreover, protective duties and Government subventions to diminish the incentive to technical improvements which might have enabled the Russian ironmasters to meet external competition in neutral markets.

Work was carried on by means of the system of forced labour both in the "possessional factories" belonging to private employers<sup>1</sup> and in the ironworks belonging to the State, in which both peasants and convicts were employed. According to many Russian economists,<sup>2</sup> the system of forced labour, together with the intimate control of the Government, led to stagnation in the iron trade as the same conditions had led to stagnation in the cloth trade.<sup>3</sup>

So long as the conditions of industry were such that labour was the chief factor in production, and so long as the major proportion of the demand was for products in whose manufacture only rudimentary skill was necessary, the Russian system of forced labour was within certain limits economically advantageous. The rigorous discipline, the great number of labourers, the low scale of remuneration, and the low level of subsistence contributed to a relatively low cost of production—that is to say, relatively low when compared with the cost of production under a system of free hired labour, where there is a choice of employment. The number of forced labourers may be much more numerous than that of free labourers, and their labour may be much less efficient, yet the net advantage may be considerable. When, however, machinery multiplies the efficiency of the free labourers while, owing to absence of industrial capital or otherwise, forced labour is not supplemented by machinery, it is obvious that this net

<sup>1</sup> There were thirty-seven establishments in the Urals in 1844 and these possessed 175,000 serfs. Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Zablotsky-Desyatovsky in *Count P. D. Kisilyev and His Time* (St. Petersburg, 1882), vol. ii. p. 245; Besobrazov, *Report on the All-Russian Art-Industrial Exhibition* (St. Petersburg, 1882), p. 211; and Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>3</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

advantage must diminish, and in certain industries it must finally disappear.

Throughout the eighteenth century the great industries in Russia were carried on primarily for the benefit of the State, and for a time they scarcely sufficed to supply its demands. In the nineteenth century the production of these factories greatly exceeded the demands of the State, and the surplus of production was even greater than the general public demand of the nation could at the time absorb. Exportation of this surplus was thus necessary, but exportation depends upon comparative costs. When the comparative costs in Western Europe fell owing to the wide introduction of machinery and to incessant technical improvements, the Russian factory-owners were unable to meet the competition in neutral markets. Russian exports thus diminished, yet domestic demand, sustained by protective tariffs, provided an increasing outlet for the factory products, although these no longer exhibited the expansion of former days.

When mechanical development did take place in Russia, it was practically impossible to adapt the system of forced labour to the exigencies created by it. Thus on the side of industry as on the side of agriculture, the system of bondage right began to be recognized as an anachronism.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it was on the side of industry that bondage right first exhibited its unmistakably ineconomical character. This was definitely recognized by the Government in the ukase of 20th December 1824<sup>2</sup> which readjusted considerably, although not fundamentally, the relations of the bonded peasants to the factories.

Under this law, on the request of the manufacturers and by permission of the Committee of Ministers, the factory peasants might be transferred into other classes. The effect of the law was that the peasants were no longer inseparably attached to the factories, and therefore the right of exacting obligatory labour stood no longer upon its previous foundation.<sup>3</sup> This legislation was followed, in 1831, by permission to enter former factory peasants in the class of merchants or in that of small householders

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the instructive remarks on this topic by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, xxxix. 30, 166, cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, *loc. cit.*

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(*meshyanē*),<sup>1</sup> and, in 1835, by permission to the manufacturers to give passports to their factory workers.<sup>2</sup> These successive measures were introduced at the instance of the manufacturers, who found obligatory labour, with the contingent obligations which rested upon themselves, increasingly burdensome. It became evident to them that it was more profitable to hire free workmen than to use obligatory and discontented peasants. Gradually the idea seems to have formulated itself in the minds of the "higher spheres" that possessional ownership of peasants ought to be wholly abolished.

A measure to this end was drawn up by the Council of State, and was sanctioned by the Emperor, Nicholas I, in July 1840; but, although it was brought into force, it was not published, probably on account of the disturbances which were then affecting the "possessional factory" hands.<sup>3</sup> The plan adopted in this ukase involved compensation to the factory-owners by the Government, to the amount of 36 rubles for every census soul of those peasants who had been bought from the Treasury by the factory-owners. In the event of the peasants having been ascribed without payment, no compensation was payable. In either case the factory-owners were permitted, but were not obliged, to liberate their "possessional" peasants, and to those who were liberated the right was given to choose whether they should become State peasants or town residents. The owners of "possessional factories" largely took advantage of this permissive law, and at least 15,000 male souls were liberated under its conditions.<sup>4</sup> The compensation mentioned was paid only in the event of the continuance of the factory. The number of factories in this category was forty-two at least; in addition, sixteen factories liberated their peasants and ceased operations, and twenty-six factories liberated their own peasants on the ground that hired labour was more advantageous for them. Discharges from "possessional" peasantry went on for six years, and during that time probably one-half of the "possessional" peasants were either transferred to State peasantry or became

<sup>1</sup> *F.C.L.*, 2nd series, vi. 4687; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, x. 7816; cited *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky (p. 133) says that he knows of forty-two factories which availed themselves of the law. The exact number of peasants liberated under it cannot be ascertained.

labourers offering themselves voluntarily for hire. In their petitions the factory-owners sometimes referred to the ineconomical character of obligatory labour in comparison with voluntary, and sometimes to the refractoriness of the obligatory peasants.<sup>1</sup> A significant indication of the completeness of the change in the situation is afforded by the fact that it appears to have been impossible in the forties to sell a factory where the workmen were predominantly obligatory peasants.

The transition from obligatory to voluntary service was not accomplished without friction. For example, the possessional workmen of Prince Gagarin were liberated in 1842, in accordance with the provisions of the ukase of 1840. The liberated workmen refused to enter the State peasantry, in which, of course, they would have had their land allotment for the customary *obròk* and taxes, on the grounds that they were unaccustomed for many years to agriculture, and that they did not want to leave the villages in which they lived, nor did they want to be entered in the class of *meshyanē*, because this also would involve their removal. The local authorities tried to induce them to accept the latter alternative, pointing out, no doubt, that it gave them the right to work for wages voluntarily; but the workmen would not acquiesce. The Committee of Ministers, in 1844, instructed that, with or without their consent, they should be enrolled in the *meshyanē* of Bogorodsk, giving them time to transfer themselves; but they would not accept. Then a detachment of Cossacks were sent to convince them. This they did by tearing down their houses above their heads and punishing them. Then even the most obdurate became convinced that further resistance was useless, and they consented to settle where they were told.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the factory workers obtained "small households" in or near the places where they had been employed; but perhaps in a majority of cases liberty meant for them complete ruin; their houses fetched too little at public auction for them to settle in any comfort elsewhere, and many of them remained houseless. After all, the factory-owners

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky quotes a case of this kind where the heirs to a factory, after vainly trying to dispose of it with its possessional workmen, were obliged to liberate these without compensation. *Arch. of Dept. of Trade and Commerce: Affair of Babkin's Factory at Kunavinsk*, 14th January 1847. See Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 140.

benefited more by the liberation of the "possessional" peasants than the possessional peasants did themselves.<sup>1</sup>

While the "possessional" peasantry was thus, as a distinct class, gradually passing out of existence, a class new to Russian society was as gradually making its appearance. Already in the beginning of the nineteenth century the number of free-hired workmen formed about one-half of the total number employed in the factories. In 1811 the Government determined, by way of assisting the manufacturers, to constitute a specific class of factory workers. With this in view, a project of a statute was elaborated, under the title "Statute about a separate estate of free artisans." This new social class was to be composed of free people who had learned a trade. Common labourers were not to be admitted to it. The free artisans were endowed with the privilege of exemption from town obligations (police duties and the like), and their houses were exempted from taxation; but they had to carry passports attesting as to their skill and their conduct. The project did not become law, and the free artisans remained in an indefinite position.

Many of the workmen who worked for wages at the factories were really bonded peasants who were permitted by their *pomyetschëk* and the local authorities, including the "elected" of their villages, to leave their homes and to go into the factories for a certain period. The manufacturers grumbled that before the termination of their contracts, peasants left the works, saying that their *pomyetschëk* had recalled them. The workmen, on the other hand, complained of errors in making up their wages accounts and the like. Thus in the thirties, in Moscow, for example, the local authorities received numerous and continuous cross-accusations of workmen against factory-owners and of factory-owners against workmen.<sup>2</sup> In order to deal with the conditions revealed in these complaints, Prince Golëtsin proposed regulations by which the workmen were required to stay out the full term for which they had voluntarily contracted, while the employers were required to keep and to produce properly-kept books and wages sheets, showing what was due to each man. When workmen were accused by their employer, the evidence of the former should be taken, and

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Arch. Ministry of Trade and Commerce*, vol. i.; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 169.

upon this evidence they might be discharged. The project was brought before the Council of Manufacturers, the majority of which belonged to the merchantry. The Council "energetically" protested against all the provisions of the project excepting the first. Seriously modified in accordance with the criticisms of the manufacturers, the project of Prince Golëtsin ultimately appeared as "*Statutes upon the relations between owners of factory shops and the working people who are hired by them.*" This, the first Russian factory law, received the imperial sanction on 24th May 1835.

Disturbances occurred at the Voznesensk cotton mills near Moscow in 1844. The disturbances were put down by military force, and were followed by a Governmental inquiry into the conditions of labour at the factory. It was found that the labour of children was largely employed. It was further found that the practice was not confined to these works, 23 others were shown to employ 2100 children under the gravest conditions. Work was carried on day and night continuously, and children were found to be employed by night as well as by day. The disclosure of these facts led to the issue of a statute prepared by the Committee of Ministers and sanctioned by the Emperor, 7th August 1845,<sup>1</sup> forbidding the employment of children under twelve years of age. This law was, however, ineffectual, owing to the fact that no penalty for violation was prescribed. On the other hand, there were certain clauses in the Penal Code of 1845 which increased the penalty for labour disturbances.

Meanwhile the rapid growth of the factory industry, especially in Moscow, had resulted in the concentration in that city and in the neighbourhood of a large working population finding daily employment in the factories. Under the influence of alarm caused by the revolutionary movement in France, Germany, and Austria in 1848, the Russian Government became anxious about the consequences of this concentration of the proletariat. The Governor-General of Moscow, Count Zakrevsky, presented at this time a long memorandum to the Emperor upon the subject. He reported that in addition to 36,000 permanently employed factory operatives, there were in Moscow 37,000 temporarily employed artisans, liberated peasants, and *dvorovie lyudë*, "all of the latter having close connection with the factory workers." Most of the factories

<sup>1</sup> F.C.L., xx. 19,262 ; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 175-6.



in which the people were employed had been established voluntarily and without the sanction of the Government. "In order to preserve the peace which is now enjoyed by Russia, the Government must not allow the amassing of homeless and immoral people who are always inclined to pass over to any movement which disturbs social or private peace." In view of this, Count Zakrevsky recommended the revival of an archaic regulation "forbidding the establishment of new factories or workshops in Moscow, and of the extension of those existing there by the increase of looms, furnaces, or workmen." The Emperor Nicholas I endorsed this memorandum "Very important," and approved the suggestion.<sup>1</sup> The proposal of Zakrevsky created a panic among the Moscow manufacturers, who enlisted on their side the Ministry of Finance. Although the law of 28th June 1849 embodied the proposal, and placed legal barriers in the way of factory development, the practical effect was not important.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Tugan-Baranovsky observes that factory legislation in Russia had an origin and character quite different from those of the factory legislation of Western European countries, on account of the rôle which was played in it by political and police considerations, yet in both cases the Governments concerned met with opposition from the manufacturing interests. The manufacturers everywhere resented governmental interference in the management and customs of the factories.<sup>3</sup>

Although Zakrevsky failed in having his ideas fully carried out in general administration, it was still open to him as Governor-General of Moscow to formulate rules for factory discipline within his own jurisdiction. This he did in the most minute manner, regulating in many details the life of the workmen. On holidays the workmen, if they were lodged in factory houses, were obliged to be at home by a certain hour; they were forbidden to entertain even their relations excepting for short visits; they were forbidden to smoke even in the factory yard, or in the dining-rooms at the factory; they were forbidden to play cards, to swear (under sharp pecuniary penalties); they were obliged to go to church on Sundays, and informers upon them were to receive a reward. The

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *F.C.L.*, 2nd ed., xxiv. 23,358; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 179-80.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

manufacturers were not forgotten. They were forbidden to employ any workman, even for a day, unless the workman had a passport; they were forbidden to advance more than 10 rubles to the workmen; they were required to supply the workmen with "fresh food of good quality" under penalty of punishment at the hands of the police; and they were forbidden to pay wages in any way excepting in money.<sup>1</sup>

Zakrevsky endeavoured to have these regulations universally applied. They were passed from department to department, protested against by the manufacturers, and finally fell aside in the administrative confusion consequent upon the Crimean War.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Commission Sanctioned to Examine the Statutes concerning Factories and Workshops* (St. Petersburg, 1863), part ii. App. VIII.; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 182-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

## CHAPTER IV

### *KUSTARNAYA ĖZBA, OR HOME WORK*

ALTHOUGH probably in Western Europe purely natural economy began to be complicated by the development of exchange relations of a pecuniary character about a thousand years ago,<sup>1</sup> natural economy of a more or less pure order was very general throughout Europe during the past century, and it still exists in villages remote from modern means of communication.<sup>2</sup> Under natural economy, the house of the peasant was built by himself, or with the aid of his neighbours to whom he rendered, on similar occasion, similar services. If opportunity offered, he might obtain the assistance of an itinerant carpenter or glazier, whose services were probably paid in butter, eggs, fish, or some portable commodity, which he in turn might readily exchange. The scanty furniture of the peasant's house was made wholly by the members of the family, often in their spare moments in the winter.<sup>3</sup> Clothing under such a system was wholly made at home. The sheep were shorn, the wool was prepared, spun by the women, woven by the men or the women, and made into clothes by the women. If the cloth was woven by the village weaver, who was also a farmer, it was often paid for otherwise than in money. In the first half of the nineteenth century, natural economy was still prevalent in Russia. The following is an account of a *pomyetschĕk* household in Ryazanskaya *gub.* at that time: "The labouring forces of the bonded inhabitants were divided into two parts, the field peasants and the *dvorovie lyudĕ*. The task of the peasants

<sup>1</sup> As suggested by V. V. (Vasili Vorontsev) in *The Destiny of Capitalistic Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Forty years ago there were many villages in the north of Scotland where there was very little exchange of any kind, and where tea, sugar, and other imported commodities were paid for to the "merchant" periodically by a "stirk" (a yearling bullock or heifer) or by a pig. In many villages the actual amount of coin in circulation was very small. Cf. The author's *My Windows, &c.*, vol. i. ch. i.

<sup>3</sup> As, for example, chairs are still made in the province of Quebec.

was to produce the raw materials, that of the *dvorovie* to work these up into objects which served for the use of the gentleman's family. In the economics of the *pomyetschëk*, not only food was so prepared, but also furniture, linen, carts (but not carriages), agricultural implements and sometimes candles. . . . For money there were bought wines, tea, sugar, soap, salt, iron, besides special material for dresses, and a small number of other commodities, the cost of which did not amount to much. The peasants certainly spent less money because they were dressed in stuff of their own production."<sup>1</sup>

In the peasant villages, outside of the ménage of the *pomyetschëk*, the scheme of life was simpler and the consumption of luxuries from any exterior market very small or even non-existent. Among the peasants, however, there inevitably existed a variety of skill in working up the materials they had at their hands. Some were more competent than others in dressing skins, in making bark shoes, and the like, and thus exchange in products grew up.<sup>2</sup> The village artisan soon makes his appearance, working upon the land, and at the same time working at his trade, making the whole or parts of things, and thus forming a supplementary arm, as it were, to the social life of the village.<sup>3</sup> But the advent of the village artisan is the sign of approaching change in "natural" relations. So long as a peasant makes by his own hands or by the hands of his own household what he requires, his economy is purely "natural"; when he buys services from a "strange" man, his economy changes, and with it change gradually many of the activities of his life, if not the whole of them. The village artisan also changes; if his aptitude is such that the raw materials upon which he works are readily obtained locally, and if he can find in his own neighbourhood demand for his products, he remains in his accustomed place; but if he cannot do so, and if he is of a wandering disposition, he wanders off, provided there are no invincible legal or other impediments to his doing so, and becomes

<sup>1</sup> V. V., *op. cit.*, p. 8. This condition endured even after the period indicated, and in some places still endures. Cf. also Sombart, art. *Hausindustrie* in Konrad, *Handwörterbuch*, iv., and Bücher, Carl, *Industrial Evolution*, translated by S. M. Wickett (New York, 1901).

<sup>2</sup> In a modern village, e.g., the writer found a peasant who was an expert in making wooden clocks, and who had made such a clock for every house in the village.

<sup>3</sup> Such village artisans have, e.g., been common in the Little Russian villages. Cf. "V. V.," *op. cit.*, p. 9.

a wandering carpenter or mason, as the case may be.<sup>1</sup> If, however, he remains in his village and is able to produce some commodity for which there is a general demand, he may be able not only to supply the relatively small local requirements, but to make for a wider market. Out of the former of these conditions there arises itinerancy (in German *Stör*), and out of the latter, *Kustarnaya ėzba*, or home industry. Both forms of industrial employment have been common in Russia; but probably owing to the legal impediments to the mobility of the peasant imposed both by the police authorities and through the "mutual guarantee" by the village population itself, the latter has had a much larger development. "The *Kustarny* industry of Russia," remarks "V. V.," "has grown from a home industry of the village inhabitants, through all the phases of transformation of the home industry into *Kustarny*, the chief industrials being the peasants themselves."<sup>2</sup>

So long as the village artisan works for the market in his immediate neighbourhood only, he comes directly in contact with the consumer of his product; but whenever he begins to work for the wider market, the merchant comes as middleman between them.

We have already seen that, so far back as the sixteenth century, the merchants were carrying on an extensive commerce, and that they did not care to employ artisans or to organize production so long as they were able to keep down the prices they paid to individual producers by the importation of foreign goods.<sup>3</sup> Thus from a very early period, probably antedating the sixteenth century, the *kustarny* production was in the grasp of commercial capitalists who controlled it. "Already before Peter's time it was a home system of capitalistic production."<sup>4</sup> The growth thus spoken of by "V. V." must be considered as having taken place at a very early period. The question is now, has the modern *kustarny* industry, which developed rapidly in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, any real connection with the home industry of primitive times. In some branches it clearly has not. For example, in the linen and also in the cotton industry, the *kustarny* grew out

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Bucher, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> "V. V." (Vasili Vorontsev), *Sketch of the Kustarny Industry* (St. Petersburg, 1886), p. 49; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>4</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 212.

of the factory, and not out of any primordial home manufacture. In the end of the eighteenth century, large factories were established by foreign capitalists, and round these there "sprang up like mushrooms after rain," numerous small *kustarny* shops in which the printing of linen was carried on. These little shops not only succeeded as against the factory, but the factory succumbed before them. When cotton-weaving factories were established in the eighteenth century, the weaving was in the first instance carried on in the factory; but the manufacturers soon began to distribute cotton yarn to the peasants, who wove it in their own homes. In the nineteenth century factory-weaving was "squeezed out" by the *kustarny*. Thus the factory did not grow out of the *kustarny*, but the *kustarny* grew out of the factory. The *kustarny* weavers often became skilful. They began to buy yarns from the merchants, and not from the factory. Many of them became independent, and some of them afterwards became great cotton manufacturers. The system by which the *kustarny* worker worked for wages, which he received from the factory for weaving the yarn supplied to him by it, thus became transformed into a system in which the *kustarny* weaver bought his own yarn and became independent of the factory, obtaining his market through the merchants who bought indifferently from one or other.

By way of illustrating this process, Professor Tugan-Baranovsky quotes the history of the village of Ivanovo-Voznesensk in Moskovskaya gub. In that village a large factory was established in 1720 by the French manufacturer Tamès, for the manufacture and printing of linen. In the village there had also been some linen printing which was done in the peasants' houses by *gorshechněkhē*,<sup>1</sup> or *kustarny* printers, on their own account. In 1776 the factory administration introduced to these printers the then new method of printing linen in oil colours, and from thenceforward a great development of the *kustarny* linen printing began.<sup>2</sup> Early in the eighteenth century, a certain peasant named Sokov, belonging to Ivanovo, had been employed as a workman in the linen-printing works in Schlüsselburg, and had there learned through the chemist

<sup>1</sup> A local name for *kustar*. The word *gorshechněkhē* means *pottery*; it had come to be applied locally to all household workers of *kustarny* character.

<sup>2</sup> Garelin, *The Town of Ivanovo-Voznesensk*, pp. 139, 143; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 216.

at the works the secret of mixing the colours for linen-printing. He returned to his native village and established *kustarny* printing there apart altogether from the local factory, so that there grew up side by side with it an independent group of *kustarny* workshops.<sup>1</sup> The financial difficulties in which the Moscow factories found themselves involved in the early part of the century, and their practical destruction in the war of 1812, gave a great impetus to the *kustarny* system, and especially affected Ivanovo.<sup>2</sup> Linen and chintz printing flourished, and *kustarny* methods were applied to the weaving of cotton. "The industries of the village of Ivanovo were developed in an original manner and many circumstances developed there which enabled every industrious and shrewd man with capital or even without capital to take part in and to profit by the industrial movement."<sup>3</sup>

It is easy to understand why the Ivanovo printing industry in linen and chintz succeeded in competing against the factory during the last years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Textile printing required much skill and a very small amount of capital. The wooden blocks cut by the printers themselves, the tools with which the traditional designs were cut, the tables upon which the blocks were placed—pressure being applied by hand—colour tubs and a moderate supply of colour—these represented the total of their equipment. The possession of skill was the chief asset of the *kustarny* workman. If he did not possess skill and aptitude for knowledge about his trade, he could not be a *kustar*. If he possessed these, he did not care to be a hired employee for any longer period than was required to acquire the necessary knowledge or to add to his knowledge when a new process came into the field. The "possessional factory" hands could not compete against him in the exercise of his particular industry. Thus the "possessional factories," and others which were dependent upon uninstructed and largely uninstrutable peasant labour, found in the *kustarny* workshops round about them the most formidable competition, especially in the linen and calico-printing trades. In these trades the first twenty years of the nineteenth century witnessed the decomposition of the large factory

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Vlashev, "The Village of Ivanovo," in *Messenger of Industry* (1859), iii. p. 16; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 218.

either into individual *kustarny* workshops or into numerous small groups of such workshops, while the subsequent period witnessed to a certain extent the coalescence of some of these into factories again.<sup>1</sup> This latter was especially the case among the chintz-printing factories. The important development of cotton manufacture at Ivanovo led to the growth in the sales of calico in the market there—so that it became a kind of Cotton Exchange. In that market the small producer could bring his few pieces and the small calico printer could buy there his grey cotton.<sup>2</sup> The *kustar* was thus also a small merchant, and in this way from the ranks of the *kustars* there came eventually many of the great manufacturers of a later period. But the factory, in which skilled workmen of native or foreign origin were employed to teach and to superintend the possessional and hired workmen, instructed the *kustars* while they were in the employment of the factory, and thus the factory performed the function of a technical school for the *kustarny* workmen.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of the *kustarny* industry formed the subject of complaints by the manufacturers from about 1823 onwards for several years. In that year the Moscow merchants protested to the Minister of Finance, Guryev, that the competition of the industry with commerce was injuring them and producing depression in the trade of Moscow. In 1825 the Treasury bureau of Vladimir reported to the Department of the Interior that "some peasants who had neither factories nor certificates entitling them to carry on commerce have nevertheless machinery for working chintz and calico for others, and that they receive for that service quite an important payment." The Department of the Interior replied that it was opposed to any restraint upon the industry of the peasants, but that it proposed to impose upon peasants who have machinery worked by horse-power the same taxes as were imposed upon the second merchant guild.<sup>4</sup>

In 1845 a merchant of Gjatsk named Jukov presented a Memorandum to the Emperor Nicholas I "about the evil course of commerce in the town of Gjatsk and in other places in the Empire." Jukov drew attention to the competition of the *kustarny* and proposed that the width, length, weight, colour of linen,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 220.      <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.      <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>4</sup> *Archives of Department of Trade and Commerce*, 1st August 1825; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 223.



chintz, grey calico, &c., should be regulated by law. As the peasants produced only goods of inferior quality, this measure could have had no other effect than the death of the *kustarny* industry. The Ministry of Finance, to which the Memorandum was referred, protested energetically against its proposals on this ground.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846 Garelin, the author of works upon the industries of Ivanovo, and one of the most important manufacturers in Vladimirskaya *gub.*, prepared a Memorandum in which he proposed that peasants who have no right to enter into commerce should be altogether prohibited from selling cotton yarn or manufactured cotton, and to forbid peasants to have more than four looms in one family. These propositions were also rejected by the Department of Manufactures.<sup>2</sup>

From about 1830 up till 1850 the development of the cotton manufacture in Russia is to be found chiefly in weaving in small shops with a few looms. The two main centres in the beginning of the period were the Moscow and Shuya districts. From these centres weaving spread rapidly to the surrounding regions. In the beginning of the forties cotton weaving appears as the dominant peasant industry in the central *gubernie* of European Russia—Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Ryazan, Kaluga, and others.<sup>3</sup> The dispersion of the industry was brought about in two ways—peasants who had been working in factories returned home to their villages and began to weave there on their own account, or the introduction of weaving was induced by the establishment in a new locality of a spinning or weaving factory in which the peasants learned the business.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of the growth of the small industry may be gathered from the fact that while the numbers of hands in the cotton factories diminished by 20 per cent., the total production of cotton increased by 300 per cent.<sup>5</sup> The technique of weaving was not importantly improved during this period, so that nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of the Department of Trade and Commerce*, 10th February 1845; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 4th November 1846; cited *ibid.*, p. 225. There are many articles in the *Journal of Manufactures and Commerce* (an official organ) upon the competition of the *kustarny* with the factory industry. Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

the whole of this increase in production is due to the increase of *kustarny* industry.<sup>1</sup>

The linen industry pursued a similar course. According to the *Diary of Yaroslavskaya Gub. of 1862*, "the flax industry, which was, to begin with, concentrated in the hands of large merchants, afterwards was gradually transferred to the hands of peasants."<sup>2</sup>

The custom of distributing linen yarn at the houses of the *kustarny* weavers increased considerably also in Vladimirskaya *gub.* during the period from 1831-1840;<sup>3</sup> and the *kustarny* weavers began at that time to weave fine linens from suitable yarns.<sup>4</sup> The linen factory, like the cotton factory, was decomposing. In 1852 in all the linen factories in this *guberni* there were working not quite 3000 workmen, while in the villages there were working in linen manufacture 8579 *kustarny* workmen.<sup>5</sup> They were, however, not working so independently as the cotton weavers, for they worked for, though not in, the factories, probably because of the less efficient organization of the linen than of the cotton market. The weaving of heavy woollen cloth for soldiers' uniforms, which, as we have seen, was accomplished throughout the eighteenth century chiefly by forced factory labour and exclusively in large factories, as well as the weaving of thin woollen stuffs, fell in the beginning of the nineteenth century largely into *kustarny* hands. In the Moscow region such weaving became diffused, partly given out by the factories and partly done on their own account by the *kustars*. The latter, indeed, are found in 1809 to be supplying the Treasury with their products directly, both in Moscow and in Vladimir.<sup>6</sup>

So also the silk *kustarny* weaving had its origin in the factories.

In 1813, in the village of Grebenkovo, 30 *versts* from Moscow, about one thousand peasants were weaving silk and cotton; in the Vakhonskaya *volost*, 80 *versts* from Moscow, there were five thousand inhabitants and two thousand looms. Between 1821 and 1840

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Collection of Materials on Kustarny Industry in Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1874), p. 358; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Nesytov, *Sketch of the Development of Manufacturing Industry in Vladimirskaya Gub.*, p. 46; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 237.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

there were many small silk-weaving factories which grew under the stimulus of expanding trade into great ones.<sup>1</sup>

So also in hemp, after the collapse of the factories in Kalujskaya *gub.*, which were engaged in the manufacture of linen sails, there grew up a thriving *kustarny* trade in spinning and weaving hemp for sails, sacks, and tarpaulins; and in the town of Rjev, in Tverskaya *gub.*, the people were engaged in their own houseyards in spinning rope yarn to the order of the local rope merchants.<sup>2</sup>

Thus in the textile industries there is observable a certain reaction between the factory and the *kustarny* industry. We have seen how the peasants of the eighteenth century were forced reluctantly into industrial employment; and we have seen how many of them changed their attitude towards it in the end of that century and in the beginning of the nineteenth, to such an extent that they actually beat the factory on its own ground. It is impossible not to recognize here the influence of the gradual decadence of compulsory factory labour. At the same time it should be noticed that peasants who for any reason, and under any conditions, have been withdrawn from agriculture, return to it with reluctance, and it is therefore not surprising that as the "possessional" peasants were shed by the factory-owners, or were purchased by the Government, some of them should continue in their own houses the trade they had learned in the factory, or that others should go into the factories voluntarily in order that they also might have a trade to make their living by. The extensive organization of petty commerce which we have found to have existed in Russia from early times, must be credited with a large share in the rapid development of the *kustarny* industries wherever they found a foothold.

We must now turn to those industries other than the textile industries, in which the *kustarny* system also developed, but in which the reaction between it and the factory system was not so apparent. The existence in the seventeenth century of *kustarny* industry in Pavlovo has already been noticed.<sup>3</sup> This industry was, however, greatly stimulated by the existence near it of the ironworks of Count Sheremetev, from which the *kustars* were able to procure their iron, and in which some of them learned their trade. Even after

<sup>1</sup> *Collection of Statistical Reports of Moscow Gub.*, vii. iii. pp. 27-28; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *supra*.

the closing of the ironworks in 1770, the *pomyetschëkë* of Pavlovo brought over English mechanics to instruct the *kustarny* workmen.<sup>1</sup>

Another example of the influence of the factory upon *kustarny* is the case of the blacksmiths of the village of Burmakino, in Yaroslavskaya *gub.* According to Isaev,<sup>2</sup> in the thirties of the nineteenth century, the work of the *kustars* of Burmakino was rough and simple; but from that time improvement in its technical qualities began. This improvement resulted from the fact that Varentsov, the *pomyetschëk* of the village, organized a knife factory. He brought skilful smiths and mechanics from Germany, and selected from the village families the most capable boys. To these he gave in the factory a regular training in the trade. When the factory was closed the workmen returned to their homes, and took with them the technical knowledge they had acquired.

The metallurgical works in the Ural Mountains created round about them a flourishing and various *kustarny* industry, which obtained its raw material from the factory and worked it up.<sup>3</sup> In the district of Krasnouïfmsk the brass *kustarny* industry had its origin in the extinct factory of Sukunsky. Similarly the nail industry in Bisertsk sprang up in consequence of the existence for a time of a factory in the district.<sup>4</sup>

The total numbers of *kustarny* workers throughout Russia at any period have not been ascertained. Only in Moskovskaya *gub.* and in a few others are the numbers known. In the forties of the nineteenth century there were 141,000. Professor Tugan-Baranovsky estimates that of these there were about 59 per cent. who were occupied in industries which were directly created by the factory. According to him also, the remaining 41 per cent. consisted to a very small extent of the antique or purely "popular" *kustarny* workers.<sup>5</sup>

In the development of the wide *kustarny* industries the *pomyetschëkë* in some cases played a considerable rôle, intentionally or unintentionally. Sometimes they established factories which came to grief, and the dispersed workmen carried their skill to their villages to exercise it on their own account. Sometimes they deliberately encouraged the growth of industries among their peasants. Of the latter were large landowners, like the Sheremetevs, the Saltykovs,

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247 and 250.

and the Tolstoys. They sometimes transferred trained artisans to the poorer villages and stimulated the peasants into activity.<sup>1</sup>

There remains to be described the complicated commercial mechanism by means of which the *kustarny* workmen were able to play so great a rôle in Russian economic life during the reign of Nicholas I, "the golden age of the *kustarnaya èzba*."<sup>2</sup>

The peasants did not usually weave in their own dwelling-houses. Having no chimneys, these were, as a rule, too smoky for the operation of weaving. From five to twenty looms were customarily placed in a house built for the purpose and having chimneys. The owner of the yarn gave it out to a contractor, who sometimes had warp-beams of his own. If he had no warping shop, he received the yarn already warped. The contractor then gave both warp and wool to the *masterok*, or little artisan, who distributed the yarn to the separate houses in the villages. The owner of the weaving house, or *svetelka*, often hired weavers who, together with himself, wove the calico. Sometimes the owner of the house rented places in it to weavers; in such cases the weavers received their yarn directly from the *masterok* and accounted for it to him separately. When the pieces were woven, they were handed to the *masterok*, who in turn passed them to the contractor, and the contractor to the "manufacturer." The yarn was charged by weight at each stage, and the pieces were credited by weight, with an allowance for loss of yarn in weaving. The contractor and the *masterok* each received a definite commission for their services, and the balance of the payment made by the manufacturer was received by the owner of the weaving-house or by the individual weavers with whom the *masterok* dealt.<sup>3</sup> The same methods obtained in silk and linen-weaving between 1831 and 1850. The absence of direct contact between the manufacturers and the weavers led to friction between them. The manufacturers frequently complained about defective cloth, and the weavers about inferior yarn. Towards 1860, when industry was brisk, and when

<sup>1</sup> Plotnikov, *Nijigorodskaya Gub.*, ii. p. 31; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> The "golden age" of the hand-loom weaver in England was about 1800. See, e.g., Gaskell, P., *The Manufacturing Population of England* (London, 1833); and for several contemporary accounts, Taylor, R. W. C., *The Modern Factory System* (London, 1891), pp. 90-2.

<sup>3</sup> These details are from Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 253-4.

there was a great demand for weavers, the latter endeavoured to raise their prices for weaving. This led to an outcry by the manufacturers. "The scoundrels of weavers," one of them said, dared to profit by the state of the market.<sup>1</sup>

But the "golden age of the *kustarnaya ězba*" was fast approaching its close. We have seen that some of the *kustarny* weavers had power-looms actuated by horse-power; but in general the looms were actuated by hand and foot. The advent of the steam-power loom changed the whole system, and gave the factory its day again. The first steam-power looms were introduced into the district of Shuya in 1846; and before 1855 many similar looms were introduced into Moscow. The change in technical conditions affected chintz-printing earlier than it affected the cotton-weaving trade. According to Nesytov, the chintz-printing industry in Ivanovo may be divided into three periods: *first*, up till 1812, during its early development; *second*, from 1812 till 1822, when the printers made fortunes during the "golden age" of the printing trade; and *third*, from 1822 till 1836, when the numbers in the trade increased enormously, Ivanovo alone having seven thousand. Under the influence of this great influx of working hands, wages fell, although hand-printing was still universal up till the close of the period. In 1835 the first cylinder printing machines made their appearance in Ivanovo, and the direction of the industry of the village came rapidly to be altered. Between 1836 and 1855 hand-work was gradually squeezed out of existence by the machine. Each machine could print, by the aid of two men, as much as thirty or forty hand-printers could do. In 1840, at the factory of Zubkov, 250 printers were employed at hand-work; in 1854, with an increased output, only sixty were employed with machines.<sup>2</sup>

Yet the *kustarny* industry was not absolutely killed by the advent of steam-power. Some industries remained, the peculiar conditions of which enabled them to resist for a time or for altogether absorption into the factory. Among these were the sheepskin industry of the district of Shuya and the nail-making

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 258. "The prices for working hands have been raised enormously; yet it has recently been impossible to find working men even for a good price in the village of Ivanovo or in Voznesensky Passad." *Moskovsky Vĕdomosti* (1859), No. 203; cited *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 260.

industry of Pavlovo. Even in these industries, however, the *kustarny* workmen became more or less completely dependent upon the merchants.<sup>1</sup>

On the whole, it appears that the period of the prosperity of the *kustarny* industry was also a period of prosperity for those regions of European Russia in which it had taken root. It grew because it was able not only to compete with the factory system, but even largely to take its place. With such a growth, however, the antique and amateur *kustarny* was incompatible. The development of the system was only accomplished through interior changes in the system itself. It became professionalized. The *kustars* came to be predominantly trained workmen, and the antique methods dwindled. Under the antique system the *kustar* was also a farmer; under the new *kustarny* system, this became less and less the case, especially in the towns. Yet large numbers of the *kustars* remained attached to the land. They had always agriculture to fall back upon. This accounts, in a large measure, for their ability to compete with the factory-owners, because the latter found great difficulty, excepting during periods of depression in agricultural prices, in inducing a sufficient number of suitable workers to enter the factories. Unlike the factory operatives of Lancashire, the Russian factory hand was not landless.

The exportation of machinery from England was forbidden by law;<sup>2</sup> there was nowhere else from which it might be procured, and the manufacture of it at that time in Russia was not possible, therefore in large factory and in small *kustarny* workshop alike, the hand-loom was used. When the importation of machinery came to be possible, and the use of it to be extensive, in the same way as the technically improved *kustars* had conquered the untrained workmen, both outside the factory and inside of it, the *kustars* themselves were vanquished by improved technical conditions within the factory. The change was very gradual, and thus *kustarny* methods lingered in Russia even in important branches of manufac-

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> The exportation of machinery was prohibited by proclamation 15 Jan. 1666, and confirmed by statute 7 and 8 Will. III, c. 20, § 8. This section of the Act, with others, was repealed by 30 and 31 Vict. c. 59 (S.L.R.).

ture.<sup>1</sup> In 1866 there were throughout Russia only forty-two cotton factories in which power was employed, and in 1876 only ninety-two. In 1866 the number of registered home-workers was still 70 per cent. of the total of factory and home-workers; in 1894 this number had dwindled to 8 per cent. The "decomposition" of the *kustarny* industry thus began in the sixties of the nineteenth century and went on progressively for thirty years until the *kustarny* was almost extinguished.<sup>2</sup> During recent years *kustarny* industry has been somewhat revived by artistic and philanthropic propaganda assisted by some of the *Zemstvo* authorities, notably those of Moscow and Kiev.

<sup>1</sup> It is worthy of notice that even under modern industrial conditions in Western Europe and in America, new industries rarely spring into existence as fully organized factory industries. When they do so, they are rarely successful. When the bicycle industry was introduced in the United States and in Canada, the parts were made almost entirely in separate factories—steel tubes in one, ball-bearings in another, tyres in a third, and so on; then these parts, supplemented by others, were assembled, and the finished article produced sometimes in very small shops. These shops were often possessed by small masters who themselves worked with a few workmen. Having little or no capital, these small masters were obliged to borrow upon the parts as they procured or made them, giving the banks a lien over them. This condition continued to exist until about 1900, when "mergers" absorbed these small shops and almost all the small factories, coincidentally with the collapse of the bicycle trade.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 454.



## CHAPTER V

### GOVERNMENTAL POLICY AND ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS PRIOR TO EMANCIPATION

THE development of intensive industry was retarded, as was also the development of intensive agriculture in Russia, by the scantiness of the population in relation to the natural resources and the area of the country, and by the absence of concentration of population in great centres. In the first half of the nineteenth century the population increased rapidly, and the reactions of this increase brought progressively into relief many problems which had previously been lightly regarded. The exhaustion of available resources by the crude methods of exploitation which were in vogue led eventually to the need for technical improvements, but intermediately to demands for governmental assistance to keep down costs of manufacture or to sustain prices.

The most obvious feature of the discussions in official spheres in the early part of the nineteenth century is the influence of Adam Smith. The official organ of the Government at that time was *The St. Petersburg Journal*. Writers in that newspaper referred to Adam Smith as "a great man, who had seized an important truth." "The duty of the Government," they said, "is a very easy one. It should not act—it is only necessary for it to refrain from interfering. It should only encourage the natural freedom of industry." . . . "Let the Government drop all systems of prohibition and control, let it not bind industry by its regulations, and it shall not have to reinforce it by its rewards."<sup>1</sup>

Kochubey, the Minister of Interior, apparently impressed with

<sup>1</sup> "Account of the Teachings of Adam Smith" in *The St. Petersburg Journal* (August, 1804), pp. 133-6; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

the physiocratic side of Adam Smith's doctrines, in his report for 1803 speaks of the advisability of "leaving private industry free, but of obtaining full information about its progress and of furnishing it when necessary with the aid it requires." He further observes that "Russia, by nature and by other circumstances, is called upon to prefer agriculture. The space of the country is disproportionate to the number of its inhabitants; and this forbids us to think of preferring factories over other branches of the labour of the people."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Count Rumyanstev, the State Chancellor, who was himself a large manufacturer, was opposed to the abolition of the prohibitive system, as was also Kochubey's successor at the Ministry of the Interior, Kozodavlev. Although there was thus no agreement in the higher spheres upon the question, one of the early acts of Alexander I was to repeal the ukase of 1798, in the reign of Paul, by which relatively high protection had been established, and that of 1804, by which the importation of English manufactured goods was prohibited.<sup>2</sup>

The chief protagonist of protection during this period was Mordvinov, the celebrated liberal statesman. His argument<sup>3</sup> was to the effect that the increase of factory industry would create a market for agricultural products, which at that time, in 1815, could not find an outlet, therefore the cultivators are also interested in the growth of industry. If a city is to flourish, it must have cultivators, artisans, manufacturers, and merchants; but if the relative advantage of the classes is compared, it must be allowed that the manufacturer is more important for the cultivator than the merchant. A people who have only agriculturists and merchants remain in poverty, and most importantly they are not free because they are dependent upon other countries for the satisfaction of their first necessities. Such people cannot enjoy the political freedom which is necessary in order that they may be independent upon their own land. In a word, such people can neither be rich nor cultured.<sup>4</sup>

The most formidable antagonist of protection at that time was

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the Minister of Interior for the Year 1803* (St. Petersburg, 1804), p. 61; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *supra*, pp. 517-18. The embargo upon English goods was not completely observed.

<sup>3</sup> Mordvinov, N. S., *Reflections on Manufactures in Russia and on the Tariff* (St. Petersburg, 1833), published first in 1815.

<sup>4</sup> Mordvinov, *op. cit.*, 1815 ed., pp. 8, 22, 24, 36, &c.; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, pp. 269-70.

the economist Storch,<sup>1</sup> who had been tutor to the Grand Dukes Constantine and Nicholas, and who had written for them, in 1815, his *Cours d'Economie politique*, in which he demonstrates the advantages of agriculture over factory industry. A similar attitude is observable in the publications in 1812 of the Imperial Free Economical Society, in which the separation of cultivators from factory workers on the estates of *pomyetschëkë* is urged. Between the years 1815 and 1820 the free traders had an organ—*The Spirit of the Journals* (*Dukh Jurnalov*)—in which they conducted an energetic propaganda for the abolition of protection, translating extracts from the writings of J. B. Say, Bentham, Sismondi, and other Western European writers,<sup>2</sup> and publishing original articles upon economical subjects. The effect of this propaganda upon a sympathetic public and upon the Government was found in the issue of 31st March 1816 of a new tariff, in which although some prohibitions were preserved, many were withdrawn, and a moderate tariff of about 15 per cent. instituted.<sup>3</sup>

The free-trade propagandists had carried their point, and they wrote triumphantly in their journal, "*The Spirit of the Journals* has not spent its time in vain. Long live the wise and benevolent Government!" The free-traders were not, however, thorough-going disciples of Adam Smith. They were ardently desirous of liberating industry from State control, and they looked with a benevolent eye upon the cultivators, whom they wished also might be induced to practise *kustarny* industry in their spare moments,<sup>4</sup> and they advocated political freedom; but they did not advocate the abolition of bondage right. On the contrary, they defended it, and in many of their articles they undertook to show that the bonded peasant of Russia was incomparably better off than the proletarian factory operatives of Western Europe, and better off than the German peasants.<sup>5</sup>

The Russian free-traders were thus in a large sense belated Physiocrats, in so far as concerned their enthusiasm for agriculture

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Storch (born at Riga, 1766, *d.* 1835), author of *Cours d'Economie politique* (St. Petersburg (6 vols), 1815); published also in Paris (4 vols), 1823; and *Considérations sur la Nature du Revenu National* (Paris, 1824), and in German (Halle, 1825).

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 276-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277; citing *The Spirit of the Journals*, No. 19, 1816, p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279.

as the sole source of national wealth ; but they went farther than the Physiocrats in their loyalty to such national traditions as bondage right and natural economy.<sup>1</sup> Professor Tugan-Baranovsky observes that while the English free-traders and their allies in France were ideologists of capitalism and of a bourgeois society, the Russian free-traders were ideologists of the landed nobility and of bondage right. But, he remarks also, not all of the latter stood at that point of view. Storch and Turgenev, for example, were equally opponents of bondage right and of protection. Yet they did not represent, as the writers in *The Spirit of the Journals* evidently did, the main current of Russian opinion in the higher classes at that time. Even the great proprietors, like the Sheremetevs, for example, who treated their "baptized property" well, and under whom some of their bondmen thrived amazingly—some of them in Ivanovo becoming millionaires through industry and trade—were not willing to release them from bondage. The possession of prosperous bondmen was not merely a source of great revenue to these proprietors, but it greatly increased the capitalized value of their property.<sup>2</sup>

Following upon the tariff of 1816, there came a further success of the free-trade propaganda in 1819, when the list of prohibited commodities was entirely cancelled and the duties upon imports considerably reduced. We have seen that, largely from interior causes, the great factory was passing through a crisis at this time ; it could hardly sustain the shock which the throwing down of barriers against external goods produced. The measure was, after all, in the interests of the merchants more than of any other class, because these were now able, by threats of imports, to check the rise of prices on the part of *kustarny* and factory alike, and even perhaps to depress them. The immediate effects of the measures of 1816 and of 1819 were the increase of the importation of manufactured goods, principally from England, and the awakening of the great proprietors to the fact that their factory and *kustarny* industries were both likely to suffer seriously if this inundation continued. Some of the landed interests were thus in the position of losing more than they gained by the fall of prices, and they joined with the manufacturing interests in the endeavour to bring about a change of policy. Thus in 1822 the Government reverted to the protective system as it was under the tariff of 1816, and

<sup>1</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 280.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 282.

up till the present time there has been no departure from a protective policy. The change in policy is not, however, wholly referable to the play of interior interests. When after the Peace of 1815, the prohibitive and protective policy was suspended, hopes had been excited by the Congress at Vienna that tariffs "should be prepared in such a manner as to encourage commerce";<sup>1</sup> but these hopes were not realized, both France and Prussia adopting a scale of duties adverse to the interests of the Russian export trade.<sup>2</sup> Thus from two sides, from the point of view of the import and from the point of view of the export trade, there were strong influences making for reversion to protection. The change in policy was carried out by Count Kankrin, who conceived the idea of isolating Russia from the economic system of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The effects of the tariff policy of 1822 upon Russian industry were immediately observed with satisfaction by the advocates of factory enterprise. Aksakov, for example, found that "no governmental measure in Russia had caused so great a transformation in the industrial sphere as the tariff of 1822." "The Moscow, Vladimir, and Kostroma regions," he says enthusiastically, "have become a great factory district. The whole population has received an impetus towards the factory; hundreds of hands have come into motion, and hundreds of factories daily throw their products into the market."<sup>4</sup>

During the earlier years of the reign of Nicholas I,<sup>5</sup> the factory system did increase, and from various causes, the number of labourers available for hire increased also; yet the bureaucratic elements of that period did not look upon the factory with favour. They feared the concentration of landless factory hands in cities and anticipated the breaking up of the bondage system. Count Kankrin,<sup>6</sup> for example, regarded it as of importance that the

<sup>1</sup> The provision really only applied to river commerce. See art. cxi., General Treaty, Vienna Congress, 9th June 1815. Hertlet's *Treaties* (ed. London, 1820), i. p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Russian exports were especially affected by the French sliding scale duties upon wheat.

<sup>3</sup> Count Kankrin was of Hessian descent. His policy caused him to be known as "the Russian Colbert."

<sup>4</sup> Aksakov, E., *Inquiry about Commerce in the Markets of the Ukraine* (St. Petersburg, 1858), p. 13; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 283.

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas I reigned from 1825 till 1855.

<sup>6</sup> In his *Die Oekonomie der menschlichen Gesellschaften* (Stuttgart, 1845); cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 299.

Russian factory hands should continue to live, to a large extent, in the villages, and that thus the growth of a large factory class in the cities, which in times of depression must fall into poverty, should in some measure be avoided. Kankrin also thought that railways should not be built, because they "only encourage frequent and unnecessary travelling, and in this way increase the instability of the spirit of our epoch."<sup>1</sup> While the bureaucracy looked askance at the factory, and frequently overburdened the factory operatives with excessive regulations, nothing was done to promote *kustarny* industries by the development of technical education or otherwise.

The nervousness of the bureaucracy about the growth of a proletariat similar to that of Western Europe was, no doubt, real; but the bureaucracy found itself in the grasp of circumstance. Fiscal interests demanded the growth of industry, for how otherwise could the increasing expenditure of the State be met. The large industry must be kept under control if possible, and especially the factory hands must be kept under control, for in their concentration lay the real danger to public order; but capitalistic enterprise must by all means be encouraged. The real interests were those of the Treasury, the class interests of the capitalists were secondary, and if they benefited, they did so only incidentally. Therefore, notwithstanding the antipathy of the ruling spheres in the epoch of Nicholas I, the factory industry was the object of the most assiduous protection.<sup>2</sup>

There were, however, other currents of Russian thought which did not run in this direction. In 1845 the journal *Moskovityanën*, edited by J. Kireyevsky, a member of the Slavophil group, contained an article "On the Manufacturing Industry of Russia," in which the thesis was developed, that while the advantage of factory industry was not denied, it was important to ascertain whether this development was "serving to improve the condition of the lower classes."<sup>3</sup> "Not every form of industry," says the author of the article, "equally serves the interests of the people. The most desirable is the small village industry which is the peculiarity of Russia." Yet the Slavophiles recognized the advantage of factory industry for the *cities*; and for these only.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 300.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> *Moskovityanën* (1845), p. 60; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 285.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Professor Tugan-Baranovsky attaches great importance to the influence upon contemporary Russian thought of the publication in 1847 of the work of Baron August von Haxthausen. Von Haxthausen had emphasized what he considered the unique characteristic of Russian society—its self-containedness and its idyllic village life. "In all other countries of Europe," he says, "the partizans of social revolution have taken up arms against wealth and property. The abolition of hereditary rights and the equal distribution of land—these are the war-cries of the revolutionaries. In Russia such a revolution is impossible, because the Utopia of the European revolutionaries has, in that country, arrived at full existence."<sup>1</sup> Professor Tugan-Baranovsky observes sarcastically: "The bonded Russia of Nicholas I appears to this West European conservative as the incarnation of the dreams of the French revolutionists—a truly surprising incarnation!"<sup>2</sup> The impression made upon Von Haxthausen's mind of the growth of the factory in Russia was not favourable. He thought that through the introduction of the factory, bondage right lost its human character. The estates of nobles passed into the hands of parvenus, and the "ancient bonds of mutual love and faithfulness which had been preserved from age to age were broken. The new owners saw in the serfs only means of bringing them money."<sup>3</sup>

According to von Haxthausen also, factory industry impeded the mitigation of bondage obligations, because, in consequence of the growth of factories, the wages of labour had risen so high in Russia, that the estate-owner who farmed his property could not employ hired labour, and needed the work of serfs.<sup>4</sup> Von Haxthausen's opinions about the *mir* harmonized with those of the Slavophiles, and his opinions about factory industry harmonized with those of the Russian conservative circles in the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century. For example, Gorlov, professor in the University of St. Petersburg, expresses himself almost in the same way. "Divisional (i.e. *kustarni*) industry only exists largely (in Russia), and is importantly implanted among the people. From

<sup>1</sup> Von Haxthausen, sen., *Studien über die innern Zustände Russlands*, (Hanover, 1847), i. XII; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup> Haxthausen, *op. cit.*, i. 117, cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 293.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, i. XII.

the real factory system we are still very far, and we do not suppose that this system could bring well-being to the people."<sup>1</sup> Of the same opinion also was the economist and statesman Tengoborsky, member of the Council of State and one of the authors of the liberal tariff of 1857. "The *kustarny* industry has acquired a national character; it is adapted to the customs and habits of our people."<sup>2</sup> It must be realized that criticisms of the factory system of England were not altogether undeservedly harsh. Russian readers cannot be supposed to have been unfamiliar with such writers as Buret<sup>3</sup> or Engels,<sup>4</sup> although they may not have read the reports and documents upon which their writings were based. At all events, many in Russia looked with horror upon the factory system of Western Europe, not merely as it was before the factory legislation came into operation, but even afterwards, and certainly not wholly without justice.

Different views were, however, entertained by the Western or *Zapadnik* group. In the thirties there were enthusiasts like Ogarev, a *pomyetschëk* who had built on one of his estates a paper-mill, and who wrote to a friend, "How I like these people! How I wish that they would consider me as a friend who wishes them well, and who shall make it well for them! Maybe, when my own factory is organized, I shall try to form a committee for the encouragement of factories and workshops. Here is a new project. I do not know if you will like it. I look at it through a prism of enthusiasm."<sup>5</sup> In *Sovremennik*, the liberal review, there was published in 1851 a long article on "The Historical Meaning of Capitalism." The author of this article sought to prove from the example of England that culture and capitalism are not mutually exclusive. "Mere suppositions," he says, "fall before the naked

<sup>1</sup> Gorlov, *Sketch of the Economical Statistics of Russia* (St. Petersburg, 1849), p. 201; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> Tengoborsky, *Études sur les Forces productives de la Russie* (Paris, 1852); cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 295.

<sup>3</sup> Buret, E., *La Misère des Classes laborieuses en Angleterre et en France* (Paris, 1840).

<sup>4</sup> Engels, Friedrich, *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England*, 1845. Engels appears to have been deeply indebted to Buret. Cf. Tcherkesoff, W., *Précurseurs de l'Internationale* (Bruxelles, 1899). Engels himself acknowledges his indebtedness in chief to Gaskell, whose *Manufacturing Population of England* was published in 1833.

<sup>5</sup> Annenkov, P., "The Idealists of the Thirties," *Vestnik Evropy* (April 1883), p. 512; cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 297.



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truth, that the progress of enlightenment and of science bring joy not only to a few."<sup>1</sup>

The general character of the tariff of 1822 has already been noticed. Under it the importation of textiles, certain kinds of paper, copper wares, glass, fine earthenware, and refined sugar was prohibited. A duty of 90 kopeks per *pud* was levied on cast iron and of 1 ruble 20 kopeks per *pud* on assorted iron if imported by land.<sup>2</sup> The customs revenue from this prohibitive and protective tariff was relatively small, imports being effectively checked. The duty upon iron, which amounted to 0.625*d.* per lb. was very burdensome to the peasantry. Successive tariffs in 1824, 1826, 1830, 1831, 1836, 1838, 1841, 1845, and 1846 converted the prohibitory part of the tariff of 1822 into a system of highly protective duties. The principal author of these changes was Tengoborsky.

One of the incidents of this period was the abolition in 1822 of the customs line between Russia and Poland; although there still remained an import duty levied in each country upon the manufactures of the other, in order to mitigate the shock to Polish manufactures which would have been occasioned by a complete and sudden assimilation.

The following table<sup>3</sup> shows how the gradual modifications in the "prohibited list" which were made "for the sake of quickening the home trade and of affording models for home manufacturers" resulted in increased revenue, the tariffs of 1830 and 1831 being important in this respect. At the same time export duties were diminished with consequent increase in the volume of exports.

## AVERAGES.

Decennial Periods.	Millions of Rubles.		
	Exports.	Imports.	Customs Revenue.
1824-1833—10 years .	56.4	48.2	16.3
1834-1843—10 years .	70.8	60.9	26.7
1844-1849—6 years .	92.6	71.5	30.2

<sup>1</sup> *Sovremennik* (1851); cited by Tugan-Baranovsky, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> Timiryazev, W. T., Vice-director Dept. of Trade and Manufactures, "Review of the Russian Tariff Systems" in *The Industries of Russia* (in English) (St Petersburg, 1893), ii. p. 405.

<sup>3</sup> Timiryazev, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-8.

During this period there was a considerable growth of Russian manufacturing industry. Thus :<sup>1</sup>

	1825.	1850.
Number of cotton factories . . .	484	536
Number of hands employed . . .	47,000	110,000

At the earlier date the factories used exclusively imported yarn ; in 1847-1849 the average annual importation of raw cotton reached 1,200,000 *puds*. This increase was due chiefly to the energy of Ludwig Knoop, a native of Bremen, trained in the cotton trade at Manchester, who introduced Lancashire spinning machinery into Russia, and by this means established the cotton-spinning factory industry there.<sup>2</sup> Cloth and silk-weaving factories were increased in number during the same period. The total number of persons employed in all the above-mentioned factories and in paper-mills was 129,000 in 1825 and 240,000 in 1850.

<sup>1</sup> Timiryazev, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *infra*. vol. ii. p. 378.

# APPENDICES

## I

### SKETCH OF THE OROGRAPHY, HYDROGRAPHY, AND CLIMATOGRAPHY OF RUSSIA

*Orography.*—No complete orographical map of Russia can as yet be compiled owing to the absence of surveys of large portions of European and of Asiatic Russia. An orographical map of European Russia south of 60° N. lat. and from the western frontier to the Ural Mountains, on a scale of 60 *versts* (40 miles) to the inch, was published in 1889 by Lieut.-General Tillo. A hypsometrical map was also published by him in 1895, on the scale of 40 *versts* to the inch, including the river Volga on the east and extending beyond the western frontier to Berlin and Vienna.

These maps by General Tillo show that Russia may be divided into three parts as follows :

1. A low plain comprising all European Russia from the western frontier and the Caucasus northwards to the Ural Mountains, together with the similar plain of Turkestan and Western Siberia to the river Yenesev. This vast plain, the largest low plain in the world, is divided into two parts by the Urals, which separate the European from the Asiatic portion. Apart from the Ural and Crimean Mountains, no part of this plain rises in European Russia above 1750 ft.

2. A hilly but scarcely mountainous region, consisting of series of foothills occupying all of Siberia east of the Yenesev River and

<sup>1</sup> Most of the details of this sketch are derived from Brockhaus, *Russia in the Past and Present* (St. Petersburg, 1900), pp. 5-17, and from General Tillo's maps. Brockhaus contains a good bibliography. On the physical geography of Finland, see the excellent *Atlas de Finlande*, with its accompanying volume of text, published by the Geographical Society of Finland (Helsingfors, 1899), folio and 8vo.

reaching almost to the Arctic Ocean. No point in these hills has been found of a greater altitude than 3150 ft. East of the river Lena the chains are higher, the highest peak being probably in the Syansky chain (about 8000 ft.). Plains at low levels are met with only where the rivers form deltas.

3. The third or mountainous region is composed of a series of high chains which surround the Great Plain on the south—the Caucasus and Kopet Dag in Western Asia, and the lofty plateaus and chains of the Pamirs, Tian-Shan and Altai. These mountains stretch almost continuously from the Amudarya River to Lake Baikal, and thence as the Stanovoy chain to the Sea of Okhotsk, and further as the mountains of Kamchatka to the peninsula of that name. In these chains there are the towering peaks of Elborus (18,470 ft.) and Khan Tengri (24,000 ft.). On the south-west of the Great Plain of European Russia there are the Avratinskya Highlands in Bessarabia, not exceeding 1340 ft.; and in the south of Poland, the Little Polish Highlands (near Olkush, 1600 ft.) and near Keltsi (about 1900 ft.). Between these two high regions there lies the south-western lowland (lower than about 500 ft.), which stretches along the Dnieper to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

Separating these south-western lowlands from the greater plains to the east, the Middle Russian Highlands stretch northwards from the Caspian for about 1000 miles almost to Lake Ladoga. The axes of these highlands have a height of about 700 ft., but there are separate points in the main chain and in its spurs which rise to a height of over 1000 ft. The Middle Russian Highlands are the watershed of the basins of the Volga and the Don to the east and the Dnieper to the west.

To the west of the Middle Russian Highlands are the Ad-Baltic and south-western lowlands, and to the east the central Moscow basin and the valleys of the rivers Okà, Don, and Donyets. Farther to the east there rise the Ad-Volga Highlands, beginning at Nijni Novgorod at the confluence of the Volga and the Okà, and forming the high right bank of the Volga, overlooking the wide-stretching plains to the north and east and the low flat lands of the Caspian shore on the south-east. The highest points in the Ad-Volga Highlands are about 1430 ft.

On the left bank of the lower reaches of the Volga and round the

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Caspian Sea (84 ft. below the level of the ocean) there lie the immense flat and low lands which form the largest known area of occupied lands below the ocean level.

*Hydrography.*—The three great river systems of European Russia, those of the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga, all have a southerly trend. They drain the three lowland systems, the south-western lowlands, the Central Moscow basin, and the eastern Ad-Volga lowlands. The rivers flowing northwards emerge on the low-lying coasts of the Baltic Sea and the Arctic Ocean. These rivers all correspond to one or other of two types. They either receive their waters from the melting of the mountain snow, as in the Caucasus and Turkestan, or the melting of the snow and ice in the lakes and swamps from which many rivers take their rise produces spring floods. The greater part of the water of the rivers is afforded by precipitation of rain and snow, and the consequent drainage of the regions through which they pass. The rivers of European Russia rise as a rule at no great elevation above sea-level; their course is, therefore, sluggish, although there are occasional rapids where the lowlands succeed highlands abruptly, as near Sula, where there are the rapids of the Dnieper. The comparatively slight elevation of the river sources<sup>1</sup> results also in the formation of numerous streams in the same region. In many cases even large rivers approach one another.

The hydrographical system thus forms a network by means of which the penetration of the country was easily accomplished by the most primitive means. The numbers of races moving about upon a large part of this network of waterways are very great even when they are noticed by the earliest writers; their existence during a period long antecedent to the beginning of history cannot therefore be doubted. The wide plains, the numerous rivers, their easily navigable character, the richness of a great part of the soil in the river valleys and on the plains, the varying aptitudes and wants of its races, have combined to promote, from the earliest times, a vast internal commerce in Russia, resting in later times upon widely extended agriculture and a rapidly increasing population. The notion, which is somewhat prevalent, that the geographical con-

<sup>1</sup> The Volga, the Dnieper, and the Western Dvina all have their sources at a height not exceeding 1000 ft. above sea-level, which involves a fall of from 6 to 12 inches per mile.

ditions of Russia have retarded its development, is thus, so far as the hydrographical system is concerned, a mere illusion.

*Climatography.*—An isothermal chart of European Russia shows that the isotherms for the year run in the south almost due east and west, in the centre with a south-easterly trend over about half the region, and with an easterly trend over the remainder, and in the north with a gradual trend towards the south-east. The summer isotherms run very gradually north-eastwards excepting in the north, where their general direction is almost due east and west. The winter isotherms run in the south nearly due east and west, in the central south running from the north to the south-east over about half the region and then due eastwards. In the north their general direction is south-east. The explanation of the phenomena which these isothermal lines suggest is that owing to the comparative uniformity of the Great Russian Plain the climatic changes are very gradual. There are no important mountain chains to produce serious climatic differences between the regions on their slopes. "The winds go to and fro upon the whole plain,"<sup>1</sup> preventing the air from stagnating, and at the same time equalizing the temperature in regions widely separated by intervening spaces. In Asiatic Russia the same phenomena are observable on a larger scale, the isothermal lines trending almost due east and west in all seasons, excepting in north central Siberia, where there is a large low-temperature area in winter, exhibiting temperatures lower than the regions on either side. The climate of the Russian Empire, if we except the extreme eastern coast of Behring's Sea, is more equable, and the changes are more gradual, than in Western Europe.

The Great Russian Plain may be divided into four climatic zones—the Arctic zone, beyond the polar circle; the northern or cold zone, from  $66\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  to  $57^{\circ}$  N. lat.; the middle or temperate zone, from  $57^{\circ}$  to  $50^{\circ}$  N. lat.; and the southern or warm zone, comprising the steppes, between  $50^{\circ}$  and  $44^{\circ}$  N. lat.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the whole of European Russia, the temperature depends in the summer more upon latitude, and in the winter more upon longitude. In the summer, warm westerly winds prevail, and in the winter easterly winds from Asia; and the more southerly the region the greater the prevalence of easterly winds in winter. While the climate of the greater part of the Russian Empire is thus subject to very gradual seasonal change, so great

<sup>1</sup> Kluchevsky, i. p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

is the area that very great extremes are observable. For example, in valleys in the extreme north-east of Siberia the lowest observed temperature in winter is  $68^{\circ}$  R.,<sup>1</sup> while in the Transcaspien region the highest observed temperature in summer is  $45^{\circ}$  R.<sup>2</sup> So also the highest recorded barometric pressure in winter has been found in Russia, viz. 780 mm.,<sup>3</sup> and one of the lowest average barometric pressures has also been found, viz. 750 mm.<sup>4</sup> The heaviest rainfall occurs on the eastern shores of the Black Sea (*e.g.* at Batum, 94.8 inches have been observed). The smallest rainfall is in the Ural-Caspian steppes, where the rainfall is less than 4 inches per year. The extreme north of Siberia is also deficient in moisture. The general character of the climate of the central part of European Russia is as follows: During the winter, while the temperature is below freezing-point, there is little difference between the southern and the northern parts of the region. The winter is continuous. The spring is late, and there are frequently recurring cold days. In winter and spring the changes of temperature are frequent; but in the summer the air is warm and the temperature fairly constant between June and October, excepting in the east and south, where changes are more frequent. In the eastern part of the region the winters are colder than in the west. In the Black Soil Zone the summer is moderately cool, and there is much moisture owing to the great swamps. In the southern steppes towards Asia, dry cold easterly winds prevail in the winter, and the same winds in summer are dry and warm. Westerly winds from Europe find an entrance into the region with difficulty owing to the mountain barriers.<sup>5</sup>

In some parts of Southern Russia and in Nijigorodskaya *gub.* in the north, it appears that large areas formerly under lakes and marshes have become dry within historical times. In the

<sup>1</sup>  $121^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit, a temperature lower than that recorded in balloons at a height of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile. Cf. A. Voëkhov in Brockhaus' *Russia*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>  $133^{\circ}$  F.

<sup>3</sup> In the interior of Eastern Siberia.

<sup>4</sup> On the Muhrmann coast and also in the south of Russia. Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Voëkhov, *loc. cit.*, p. 25. See also Kluchevsky i, p. 50. The latter author picturesquely remarks upon the prevalence of the dry cold and dry hot easterly winds from Asia in winter and summer respectively and the low frequency of westerly winds from Europe, "This airy struggle of Asia with Europe upon the Russian Plain reminds us involuntarily of remote historical times when Russia was the arena of the struggle of Asiatic with European peoples, and when in the southern steppes the Europeans were overwhelmed, and of more recent times in the northern region, when there began the moral struggle between eastern and western currents."

region of Novgorod, for example, the land seems to have been uplifted by some 16 ft., and the improved drainage brought about by this uplifting seems to account for the local desiccation. In the south similar or other less local causes seem to have produced desiccation on a still more extensive scale.<sup>1</sup> There are now marshes where formerly there were lakes, and dry regions where formerly there were marshes. How far these great changes are due to minor and local causes, and how far they are due to geological causes of a general character, is a question upon which research has not yet said the final word; nor can it be stated with confidence to what extent these processes of desiccation have caused or have contributed to the migrations of nomadic peoples on the Great Asiatic-European Plain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As in the marshes of the Polyésie on the Pripyat and the Berezina, covering 22,000,000 acres. For this and other data on desiccation, see Prince Kropotkin, "The Desiccation of Eur.-Asia" in *The Geographical Journal* (London, June 1904).

<sup>2</sup> Cf., however the suggestive article by Dr. Peisker, "The Asiatic Background," in *The Cambridge Medieval History* (Cambridge, 1911), vol. i. p. 323 *et seq.*



## II

### SKETCH OF THE ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE PEOPLE OF RUSSIA

FROM an ethnographical point of view, Russia as a whole presents a high degree of complexity and of non-assimilation. The most considerable racial element, the Slavic, has, however, possessed an unusual capacity for absorbing the blood of other races, and its own great fecundity has resulted in a very large and well-assimilated nuclear group which may in general terms be regarded as the Russian people, in distinction from the non-Russian inhabitants of the Empire. This group of so-called Great Russians cannot be regarded as purely Slavic. It consists of people of mingled Slavic, Scandinavian, Finnish, and other origins, but it has been thoroughly compacted, and, especially during the past two centuries, it has in a very real sense represented Russia. Yet the governing class is perhaps less Slavic than the mass, the higher aristocracy priding itself upon its relatively unmixed Scandinavian descent, while the later Romanov dynasty, properly called that of Holstein-Gottorp, was of German origin. Round the fringes of the Great Russian population, and even intruding among them, there are numerous non-Russian groups, and this fact has had so important an influence upon the political structure and upon the political situation at successive periods, that a systematic outline of Russian ethnography is indispensable.

The following ethnical groups are discriminated by the authorities on the subject.<sup>1</sup> The division into groups is based partly upon general anthropological and partly upon linguistic and historical grounds.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A bibliography of Russian anthropology and ethnography is given in Brockhaus' *Russia, Its Past and Present* (St. Petersburg, 1900), pp. 139 and 152.

<sup>2</sup> The classification which follows is that of Brockhaus' *Russia* in art. on Ethnography by A. Anuchin. It follows the accepted system of grouping. The details of the groups are derived partly from M. Anuchin's article (pp. 139-152) and partly from other sources.

## I. THE SLAVIC GROUPS

The Slavic groups as now existing may be divided as follows :

A. *People speaking the Russian Languages :*

i. *Great Russians.*—The Great Russian language is spoken as a native tongue by about one-half of the population of Russia, or by about seventy-five millions of people. These may be regarded as descended from the Eastern Slavs,<sup>1</sup> with, however, much infusion of the blood of other races. The Great Russian group may be subdivided into—

i. The Northern Division, consisting of—

(a) The people of Novgorod, and

(b) The Eastern people (or Suzdalskōye).

ii. The Southern or Ryazanskōye division, consisting of—

(a) The Eastern people, and

(b) The Western people. These latter speak the Moscow dialect, which has become the language of the educated class all over Russia.

2. *Little Russians.*—The Little Russian language is spoken by about twenty million people. The origin of the differentiation of the Little from the Great Russians is obscure. The current tentative view is that in the twelfth century, owing to the attacks of the Tartars, many of the Russ<sup>2</sup> abandoned their homes on the river Dnieper and went into the region now known as Galicia. In the fifteenth century their descendants returned to the Dnieper, where they united with the scattered remnants of the earlier Russ population which had remained and had mingled their blood with the conquering Tartars.<sup>3</sup> The Little Russian Group is subdivided into—

i. Ukraïnskōye.

ii. Polesskōye.

iii. Rusinskōye or Podolsko-Galitskōye.

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the early history of the Eastern Slavs, see historical sketch in text. See *supra*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> For meaning of the word "Russ," see *supra*, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kluchevsky, *Course of Russian History* (Moscow, 1906-1908), i. p. 351. Professor Kluchevsky neither accepts nor rejects this explanation. Little Russia had been under the sway of Poland, when in 1654, while Bogdan Hmelnitsky was *hetman* of the Little Russians, the country was annexed to Russia by decision of the Rada, or National Assembly. See Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iii. p. 115.

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3. *White or Blonde Russians*.—The White Russian language is spoken by about 17,000,000. Although the purely Slavic type, traditionally characterized by yellow hair and blue eyes, is now rare,<sup>1</sup> the White Russians are probably of more purely Slavic type than are the Great Russians.

B. *People speaking the Polish Language*.—This group comprises about 7,500,000. The origin of the Poles is obscure. They are supposed to be descended from the Liakhi,<sup>2</sup> one of the tribes of Eastern Slavs.

C. *People speaking the Bulgarian Language*.—Of these there are about 125,000.<sup>3</sup>

D. *Servians*.—There are colonies of Servians in Russia, but they speak Little Russian, not their own language.

E. *Czechs or Chekhi*.—Some colonies of Czechs in the Caucasus retain their own language.

### II. LETTO-LITOVSKY OR LETTISH-LITHUANIAN GROUP

A. *Litovsky or Lithuanians*.—Of these there are about 1,800,000, divided into—

1. Litovsky properly so called, and
2. Jmud.

B. *Lattishi or Letts*, of whom there are about 1,350,000.

### III. GERMANIC GROUP

A. (a) Germans, of whom there are about 1,500,000 throughout Russia, speaking German. In the Baltic Provinces they form about 10 per cent. of the population.

(b) English. The English number about 3000. They reside chiefly in the two capitals; some are engaged in commerce and manufacture in the industrial centres.

B. *Swedes*, of whom there are about 350,000. About 9500 belong to the nobility of Finland and live in Finland, the Åland Islands, and Estland.

<sup>1</sup> These features are found sporadically in every part of Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Until the time of the Tsar Alexis, father of Peter the Great, *Liakhi* was the official name of the Poles.

<sup>3</sup> On the history of the Bulgarians, see the excellent sketch by J. B. Bury in *History of the Later Roman Empire* (London, 1889), ii.

## IV. LATIN GROUP

A. *Roumanians*, of whom there are about 900,000, living in Bessarabskaya and Khersonskaya *gubernie*. These are of Greek orthodox faith.

B. To this general group belong :

i. French.

ii. *Italians*. Both of the latter live in the large cities and in the capitals and speak their respective languages.

## V. GREEK GROUP

The Greeks in the Russian Empire number about 100,000 and live in the Tavrecheskaya and Tifiskaya *gub.* and in Karsskaya oblost.

## VI. IRANIAN GROUP

To this numerous group of languages belong the following :

A. *Tadjiksky*, the language of the permanent population of Turkestan in cities and in villages among the mountains.

B. *Persian*.—About 13,000 Persians are scattered over the Caucasus.

C. *Tatsky*.—This language is spoken by the Tatian agricultural people, of whom there are 125,000 in Bakinskaya *gub.* and in South Daghestan. This language is also spoken by Highland Jews in the Caucasus, of whom there are about 22,000 ; and by the Talyetshintsi, of whom there are about 50,000 in Lenkoranskoë district of Bakinskaya *gub.*

D. *Kurdsky*.—This language is spoken by the Kurds, of whom there are about 100,000 in Erivanskaya *gub.*, Karsskaya oblost, and Elizavetpolskaya *gub.*

E. *Ossetinsky*.—This is the language of the Caucasian Ossetini, numbering about 70,000, and inhabiting the Central Caucasian plateau. They are probably descendants of the ancient Alani and Sarmati. During the Byzantine period they became Christians ; some of them afterwards became Mohammedans.

F. *Armenian*.—This language is now usually related to the Thracia-Phrygian. It is spoken by Armenians, who, to the number of 1,200,000, are mostly in Erivanskaya *gub.*, in which they form about

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50 per cent. of the population. In Elizavetpolskaya *gub.* they form 35 per cent., and in Tifliskaya *gub.*, 25 per cent. of the population. They are also found in Astrakhan. Most of the Armenians in Russia are shopkeepers or shop salesmen.

### VII. INDIAN GROUP

This group is represented by *Tsyegani*, or Gypsies, whose language, *Rom* (*anglicé* Romany), is supposed to have been one of the languages of India, probably that of Scinde. The Gypsies, who formerly wandered over Russia, are now prevented from practising their nomad habits, and are to be found for the most part in Bessarabia. To this group also belong the itinerant vendors of Hindu race who travel periodically in Turkestan.

### MINOR LINGUISTIC GROUPS

The above are the main groups of languages. A complete catalogue of races is neither possible, nor is one necessary for the purposes of the present. The following minor groups of languages have special interest because of the people by whom they are spoken.

*Semitic Languages.*—A few colonies of Arabs live in Middle Asia and in Daghestan ; but they have practically lost their own language, which is now used by them only as the language of the Koran and for official correspondence. Among the Semites are the Jews, who have also practically lost their language, which has been preserved only in their sacred books and in literature. The Jews in Russia speak a corrupted dialect of German known as Yiddish, which they print in Hebrew characters. The Jews throughout Russia number about 4,000,000. Though Jews were active and influential in Russian regions in very early times—there were some who migrated probably through Syria and Asia Minor by the Caucasus, to ancient Kiev, where they induced the Khakhan of the Khozari, the great commercial empire of the eighth and ninth centuries, to accept Judaism—the great migration has taken place from Germany into Poland since the fifteenth century. In some cities of the western district the Jews comprise 25 per cent. to 55 per cent. of the whole population. There are two Jewish “capitals,” where, excepting officials, troops, and police, the whole population is Jewish. These

are Berdětchev in Kievskaya *gub.*, with a population of over 54,000, and Shklov, in Mohilevskaya *gub.*, with a population of about 11,000.

The Russian Jews are usually bi-lingual, speaking Yiddish as well as the language of the people among whom they live—Great Russian among those who speak that language, Little Russian in the Little Russian regions, &c. The greater number are Talmudists; but there are about 4500 non-Talmudists, or Karaïm, who live chiefly in Simferopol and in Tavrêcheskaya *gub.* They speak the Crimean and Tartar languages. They are not subjected to the disabilities which are imposed upon the Talmudist Jews.

*Caucasian Languages and Peoples.*—The ethnography of the Caucasus is at once more interesting and more complex than that of any other similar region. The great drift of peoples to and fro between Asia and Europe has passed through the Caucasus as through a sieve, and has deposited from time to time large and small groups of very diverse racial characters. Russian ethnologists discriminate altogether about two hundred races.

These are usually divided into two main groups :

A. *The North Group*, consisting of—

(a) The Eastern (*Lesghini*) of whom there are about 600,000 in Daghestan. The principal tribe of this people is the Avartsi.

(b) The Middle Group (*Chechentsi*), of whom there are about 200,000, including the tribe of Ingushi. Members of this tribe have recently been employed by landowners in various parts of Russia as guards upon estates to protect them from peasant attacks.<sup>1</sup> There is also the small and interesting tribe of Tushini, whose origin is somewhat obscure.

(c) Western Group (*Cherkesi* and *Abhastsi*). This group numbered formerly 500,000, but after the conquest of the Western Caucasus most of them migrated to Turkey.

The remaining people of this group consist of *Cherkesi*, or *Adëga*, numbering about 170,000 in Tyerskoë oblost. The personal guard of the Tsar (100 troopers) is composed of conscripts of the *Cherkesi* and of the *Kabardintsi*, a sub-tribe of the *Cherkesi*.

<sup>1</sup> See *Transactions of the Imperial Free Economical Society* (St. Petersburg), Nos. 4 and 5, 1908. Mounted Ingushi were employed to suppress disorderly bands in the Ural Mountains in 1907. See *Znamya Truda* (Paris, December 1907).

The Abhastsi (local name, Asēga) number about 60,000. They live between the Black Sea and the foothills of the main Caucasian mountain chain.

B. *The Southern Group*.—The people of this group speak the Georgian or Kartvelli language. It is spoken by (a) Georgians, of whom there are about 400,000, mostly in Tiflisskaya *gub.*, and in Kartellenü and Kahetü; (b) Imyeryetini and Kuriëtsi in Kutaïskaya *gub.*, about 500,000; (c) Adjartsi, in Batümskoë district, about 60,000; (d) Mingreltsi, in Kutaïskaya *gub.*; and (e) Laasi, in Batümskoë district, numbering both together about 220,000. Altogether the Georgian language is spoken by about 1,300,000 people.

## URAL-ALTAIC LANGUAGES

### I. URALIAN

1. *Finnish*.—This language is divided into

A. *Western or Ad-Baltic Finnish*, consisting of—

(a) *Loparian*, spoken by the Lopari, who seem to have been the ancient inhabitants of Finland, and at one time to have been spread over the region round Lakes Ladoga and Onega. From this region they appear to have been pushed northwards by the Finns. The Lopari called themselves Samë, and their country Samëyednam. From the latter word there was probably derived the Finnish name of Finland, Suomi (in ancient Russian Süm). The Norwegians call the Lopari, Finns; and the Finns they call Kvens. At the present time the Lopari inhabit the extreme north of Finland, and they are also to be found in Kolskoë district of Arkhangelskaya *gub.* Their number is about 3500. The Lopari have preserved many songs and epics in which their conflicts with the Koreli (one of the Finnish tribes) are described, and in which many indications of Shamanism are to be found.

(b) *Finns or Suomalysel.*—These are divided into (i.) Tavasti or Hemelýset, and (ii.) Koreli or Kariälysel. A straight line drawn from Viborg to the north-west of the Gulf of Bothnia may be regarded as an approximate frontier between these two groups of descendants of ancient Finnish tribes. To the east are the Koreli, to the west the Tavasti. Both together number 2,200,000, and both

are Lutherans. To the Koreli are related the Vedē or Vadialyset and the Ijori or Ingré, in Petersburgskaya *gub.* Both the latter belong to the Greek orthodox faith. There are also orthodox Koreli living in the western portion of Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, in Kemskoë district to the number of about 22,000; and in colonies in Tverskaya *gub.* (about 135,000), and in Novgorodskaya *gub.* (about 33,000). There are also colonies in Olonetskaya, Petersburgskaya, and Yaroslavskaya *gub.* Altogether, outside of Finland, the number is over 200,000. All of these belong to the Greek orthodox faith, and through lapse of time since their separation from the general mass of people of their own race, they have become completely Russianized.<sup>1</sup>

The current literary language of Finland, which at present is in a very vigorous condition, is the language of the Tavasti; that of the Koreli remains as a spoken language, but it does not appear to be written.

(c) *The Ests.*—These people now live in Estland, in the north of Livonia, in the island of Oesil, in the Gdovsky district of Petersburgskaya *gub.*, and in the district of Pskov. They have also colonies in Toropetskoë district of Pskovskaya *gub.* and in Ostashkovskoë district of Tverskaya *gub.*, in the Caucasus and in Siberia. Their total number is about 900,000. The Ests call themselves "Wirolaiset." They are usually called Chudi by the Russians. The Ests are supposed to have migrated from the interior of Russia to the Baltic coast before the Tavasti and Koreli. They appear to have struggled successfully against the Russians, but they were subjugated by the Germans, by whom they were converted to Lutheranism and reduced to serfdom. They live in small villages and have some developed agriculture.

(d) *The Livs.*—These people call themselves Lib, and they are called Livē by the Russians. They give their name to Livonia or Lifland. A small group of them now survives, living to the number of 2000 in Courland, on the Gulf of Riga. They are tall people, with auburn hair and brown eyes, suggesting a transition group between Ests and Koreli. The majority of the Livs have come to be indistinguishable from the Lettish, and the remainder seem likely

<sup>1</sup> Although in some places they still retain the use of their ancient language, e.g. in Novgorodskaya *gub.* In the Korelian villages in this *gub.* the peasants speak both their own language and Russian.



to be classed also with these people, as the Lettish language is taught in the schools attended by their children.

B. *Ad-Volgian Finns*.—This group occupied a great part of the Volga region, almost from the very source of that river as well as the basin of the River Oká and its tributaries. The group consisted of many tribes, of which the only survivors are the Cheremissi and the Mordva.

(a) *The Cheremissi*.—Of the Cheremissi there are now from 300,000 to 400,000. Their centres are in Urjumskoë and Yaranskoë districts of Viatkaskaya *gub.*, and in some districts in Kazanskaya *gub.* The great majority of them live on the left bank of the Volga, and for that reason are known as the Cheremissi of the Plains; those on the mountainous right bank are known as Highland Cheremissi. The former group has been absorbed by the Chuvashi; while the latter group, numbering about 25,000, has been almost altogether Russianized. The Cheremissi have in former times been celebrated for their fighting qualities. They fought in defence of the Tsardom of Kazan in 1552, and later gave much trouble to the Government in the Cheremissi riots. Throughout the seventeenth century the Russians found it necessary to keep a military force in their neighbourhood in order to hold them in check. The Cheremissi preserve their traditional dress and their characteristic houses. Although they are ranked as Christians, they have retained some of their former beliefs and customs. These, however, vary in different places, owing to their habit of widely scattered settlement. For the same reason there are some six dialects of their language.

(b) *The Mordva*.—This group has two divisions—the Erzya and the Moksha. The Erzya live in five districts in Nijigorodskaya *gub.*, and in the *guberni* of Penza, Simbirsk, and Saratov. In Nijigorodskaya *gub.* there live in forty villages “a special variety” of the Mordva—the Terinkhanie, now for the most part Russianized, and in the *gub.* of Simbirsk the Tartarized Karatyi. The total number of the Mordva is probably about 1,000,000. The group was “violently” baptized and reduced to serfdom by Russia. In the seventeenth century there were frequent Mordva riots. The people still preserve their peculiarities of dress as well as some of their pagan beliefs.

C. *Ad-Kama Finns*.—These consist of three tribes—the Votyaki,

the Permyaki, and the Ziryaney or Ziranes. The Votyaki appear to have occupied the region to the west and to the south of that presently inhabited by them, and to have been pushed northwards by the Cheremissi and eastwards by the Russians. At the present time the Votyaki live chiefly in Glazovskiye, where they form about one quarter of the population, in Yelabushskoë, Sarapulskoë, and Slabotskoë districts of Viatskaya *gub.* numbering altogether about 300,000. Another 100,000 are found in the *guberni* of Perm, Kazan, and Samara. The Votyaki have been influenced by the Tartars and by the Bulgarian-Chudi as well as by the Russians. Although the subject is obscure, they are said to continue the practice of pagan rites, notwithstanding the fact that they are generally regarded as Christians.<sup>1</sup>

The Permyaki are an enfeebled Finnish group, living chiefly in Solikamskoë and Cherdyinskoë districts of Permskaya *gub.* and in Orlovskoë and Glazovskiye districts of Viatkaskaya *gub.* They number about 90,000. In former times they had their own princes, and they seem to have been literate and cultivated people. They were crushed by Ivan III, baptized, and Russianized. They live in small villages, retain their marriage customs and their peculiarities in dress, and some of their former religious beliefs. The habit of association is strongly developed among them.

*The Zyryanye or Ziranes.*—The Ziranes speak the same language as the Permyaki. Formerly also they had their own princes. They number altogether about 170,000, living in Vologodskaya *gub.* and in Myezyenskoë district of Arkhanghelskaya *gub.* They live on the river-banks sometimes in huge villages. They dress in the Russian manner, but, unlike the Russian peasant, they have, not seldom, furniture in their houses. They are in general intelligent people and successful traders. Their children

<sup>1</sup> In 1894 the Votyaki as a community were charged with the murder of a man in a religious ceremonial. They were found guilty in the court of first instance; but on appeal in 1896 they were acquitted. In the *Qualla*, or summer hut made of branches which is in the courtyard of every *ésba* (or dwelling) the religious symbol of the family is kept. This is a cedar or fir branch. There are also holy places in the woods where prayers are offered and sacrifices are made. The Votyaki believe in good and bad spirits—in water-men, wood-men, house-men, &c. They have priests who perform the sacrifices, and wizards who practise magic. Their women retain their peculiar dress; and their marriage customs are of ancient tradition. (These details are derived from a correspondent.)

are apt scholars. The Ziranés extend themselves all over the north and along the river Ob, controlling in that region the whole business of deer-keeping,<sup>1</sup> the Samoyedes acting as their herdsmen. They are formidable competitors of the Russians in the exploitative trade carried on with the Samoyedes and other native tribes. The Ziranés are indeed known as the "Jews of the North."<sup>2</sup>

[*The Cossacks*.—Although the Cossacks form a definite group living in definite localities, principally in the so-called Donskoë oblost, or military district of the Don, holding their land under obligation of military service, they do not form either an ethnical or a national group. They are of diverse racial origin, and they have no national history. "In the sixteenth century the hired labourers who were working on the farms of peasants, people without definite occupation or permanent place of abode, were called *cossacks*. Such was the original and general meaning of the word *cossack*. Later in Moscow Russ they were given the name of Free Tramps."<sup>3</sup>]

2. *Ugorian-Finns*.—The Ugro-Finns lived formerly in the north of European Russia, where they came into conflict within historical times with the Novgorodians. They were finally partly absorbed by the Finns and Russianized, and partly they withdrew towards the Ural Mountains, where they now live under the name of Voguli (about 7000) and Ostiaki in Bereozovskoë and Tobolskoë districts of Tobolskaya *gub.* and in Narimskoë region, in the territory of Tomsk (about 25,000). The two groups call themselves by the common name of Manzee. The Voguli have partly preserved their language, peculiarities of life, and belief. They still practise, for instance, the adoration of the bear. The Ostiaki have been baptized, and economically they are more prosperous than the Voguli. They carry on cattle-ranching as well as agriculture. The Surgutski, a sub-group of the Ostiaki, have preserved a purer dialect than the other sub-groups. The Ostiaki have preserved epic stories telling of the warfare of their giants against the Samoyedes, who

<sup>1</sup> The deer they keep is the *cervus laplandus*.

<sup>2</sup> For a graphic description of Zirané life and character, see Shukin, P., "With the Ziranés," in *Russkoë Bogatstvo*, No. 8, August 1905, pp. 17 *et seq.* See also an interesting account of their economical condition by A. P. Engelhardt, Governor of the Arkhangelskaya *gub.*, in *A Russian Province of the North*, English translation (London, 1899), p. 254.

<sup>3</sup> Kluchevsky, *op. cit.*, iii. p. 131. See also *infra*, vol. ii, Book IV, chap. ii.

were gradually pushed northwards by them. The characteristic winter habitation of the Ostiaki is a "dug-out" house roofed with birch or other bark. In summer they live in birch-bark tents. Their principal occupation is fishing in summer and hunting in winter. They sometimes let their fisheries to Russians. Their dress is of deer or chamois skin, but the customary dress of the Russian peasant is common among them. They have preserved some of their ancient beliefs, shown, for example, in their adoration of some birds. Shamans have now almost, but not altogether, disappeared. The Bashkirs are probably kinsmen of the Ugro-Finns. They embraced Islamism and adopted the language of the Tartars, so that they now form part of the Tartar or Teurki group.

3. *Samoyedes*.—These people are now regarded as having an origin distinct from that of the Finns. They seem to have come from the region of the Liansky plateau, while the Finns seem to have been natives of European Russia. The Samoyedes number only 2000. They are the most northerly people in European Russia and Siberia. Their language is divided into four dialects. They preserve many pagan beliefs.

II. THE ALTAIC GROUP.—This group consists of three sub-groups: (a) Teurks, (b) Mongolians, (c) Tungus.

(a) *Teurks*.—The group makes its first appearance in the mountains of Asia in Altai and Mongolia, where people known to the Chinese as Guns or Huns lived several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Intermingling between the Huns and some "red-haired and bright-eyed" people of uncertain origin is noticed by the Chinese in the first century B.C. In the second century Chinese evidence about the Huns ceases. In the sixth and eighth centuries A.D. the Teurks, who are regarded as the descendants of the earlier Huns, form in Central Asia a series of states and tribes, of which the most civilized were the Teguri. Those of the Teurkish tribes which remained in Mongolia were gradually reduced to subjection by Genghis Khan, who employed them, along with other Mongolians, in further conquests. The Teurkish tribes thus became Mongolianized and, spreading over Western Asia and Eastern Europe, formed hordes (*orda* in Russian) and later Teurko-Tartar States. At the present time Teurkish blood is predominant in the Balkan Peninsula and in Asia Minor, and Teurkish dynasties rule in Persia, Bukhara, and Khiva. Within

the Russian Empire about 11,000,000 speak the various Teurkish dialects. With the exception of the Yakùts, a few Altaic tribes who passed directly from Shamanism to Christianity, and some baptized people of Tartar origin, the Teurkish people are Moham-medans. The principal tribes are :

1. *Yakuti*.—Of these there are about 230,000 in the basin of the river Lena, eastward to the Sea of Okhotsk, and westward nearly to Yenessey. The Yakuti call themselves Sakha, which is supposed to suggest association with the Teurkish tribe Sagai. The Yakuti speak the ancient Teurkish language, which in respect to its influence is in some measure comparable with Sanskrit. The Yakuti are cattle-keepers, farmers, and traders. Their local divisions are *ulusi*, corresponding to the Russian *volost*, or group of villages, but larger, and *naslegi*, or village. Although officially belonging to Greek orthodoxy, they still practise Shamanism to some extent. The Yakuti are usually small in stature, but they possess as a rule great physical strength. Their trading capacities have earned them the nickname of "The Jews of Eastern Siberia."

2. *Altaics or White Kalmuki, Teleuti, and Telengeti*.—These tribes are the remnants of the ancient Gaogyoëtsi. They number about 25,000. They speak pure Teurkish, live partly as nomads and partly as primitive farmers. Some have been baptized, and some have remained Shamanists.

3. *Tartarized Yeneseiti and the Samoyedes of the Upper Ob*.—These number about 100,000 ; most of them are nomads and Shamanists.

4. *West Siberian Tartars or Tartari (settled) and Barabintsi (nomadic)*, together about 43,000, of mixed Teurkish and of Ugorian descent, lived in Tobolskaya *gub*. They are Mohammedans.

5. *Kirghiz Kaisaki, usually called simply Kirghiz*.—This is the most numerous of the Teurkish peoples, with the exception of the Osmanli Turks. They number in the Russian Empire over 3,000,000. Nomadism and patriarchal family life are preserved among them almost completely. These people were formed by the coalescence of various Teurkish tribes in the fifteenth century. They now occupy the vast steppe region from the basin of Lake Balkhash and the Tianshan Mountains to the Caspian Sea and the lower reaches of the river Volga. For two centuries the Kirghiz have been divided into three *ordi* or hordes—the Great, Middle, or Small horde. The

Great Ordà wanders between the rivers Karatal, Ili, and Sardarya. This horde possesses about 110,000 *kēbētki*, or prairie wagons, conveying more than 500,000 persons. The Middle Ordà occupies the north-eastern part of Syemēryēchyenskoë (Seven Rivers), Syemipalatinsky, and Akmolinsky oblasts. The Small Ordà, which is the most numerous, is of mixed descent, wanders more towards the west than the others, along the rivers Kuvan and Yalidarya by the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, partly also by the rivers Tobol and Sirdarya, and in Orenburgskaya *gub.* In 1801 a minor horde separated from the small horde. There are also related to it the group of Kūrama or mingled group of about 80,000 agricultural people in the Valley of Angryena.

6. *Kara Kirghiz (Black Kirghiz).*—This group lives in Western Tianshan, in the Valley of Alaya, and on the Pamirs. They number over 300,000. They originated from a Teurkish tribe, part of which became absorbed in the Great Ordà and part of which remained independent. They are nomads and at least nominally Mohammedans.

7. *Uzbyeki.*—This group derives its name from the Khan Uzbyek (1312–1342), who reigned in Turkestan and introduced Mohammedanism among the Kirghizi. In the fifteenth century some separated Teurkish families came to be called Kasaki, or free people (tramps); those who remained faithful to the successors of Uzbyek took his name. Under the influence of Iranians, by whom they were conquered, they gradually abandoned nomadism and became settled cultivators. In Russia proper they number about 600,000; but including the Uzbyeki of Bukhara, Khiva, and Russian Afghanistan (round the fortress of Kushka), their total number is over 2,000,000. Their language is known as *Chagataïsky*.

8. *Sarts.*—These people are composed of settled Teurks and of Tajeeks who have adopted the Teurkish language. Within the Russian Empire proper there are about 600,000, and including Bukhara, Khiva, and Russian Afghanistan, upwards of 1,500,000.

9. *Taranchi.*—Originating in Eastern Turkestan, these people passed within the Russian boundaries when Kuldja was transferred to China. They are Mohammedans, and they number about 50,000.

10. *Turkmyenni (Turcomans).*—These are probably descended from Teurkish Kangli, which had absorbed Iranian blood from

Persia, through slaves and women captured in forays across the Persian border. They are divided into tribes, and they number about 550,000 persons.

11. *Aderbyeédjansky Tatars*.—This group is descended from Seldjuk and Mongolian Teurki of the army of Gulagu Khan (thirteenth century), but is composed to a considerable extent also of Teurkicized Iranians. Within the Russian limits they number about 1,200,000 persons, in Elizavetpolskaya, Bakinskaya, Erivan-skaya, and Tiflisskaya *gub.*, and in Zakatalskoë district and South Daghestan. The Osmanli Turks who were within the Russian Empire (about 100,000), being also descendants of Seldjuk Teurki, may be included in this group.

12. *Kara Kalpaki*.—This group has been related sometimes to the Kirghizi and sometimes to the Teurks. Their name is similar to that of the ancient Black Klobùki (Black Hats), who were kindred to the Pyechenyeghi (or Pechenegs). They number 90,000, and they live in the delta of the river Amu-darē, occupying themselves with cattle-keeping, agriculture, and fishing.

13. *Noghaïtsi*.—These people derive their name from the Khan Noghaï, who in the end of the thirteenth century united under his power several strong Teurkish families in the east of what is now European Russia. The Western Noghaïtsi became part of the population of the Khanate of the Crimea ; but the north-eastern portion remained in the Ad-Ural region for a long time independent. They subjugated the surrounding Kirghizi ; but in the seventeenth century they were themselves conquered by the Kalmuki, although part of the tribe escaped southwards towards the Crimea and the Caucasus. In 1783, when the Crimea was annexed by Russia, the Noghaïtsi, together with the Crimean Tartars, emigrated to Turkey (altogether 300,000). After the Crimean War further emigration of these elements (about 200,000) took place. The Noghaïtsi who remain in the Russian Empire (about 100,000), live principally in Stavropolskaya *gub.*

14. *Kumiki*.—These people seem to be of Noghaïtsi descent, though they are thought by some to represent a remnant of the Khozari, whose commercial empire extended over a great part of European Russia from the second century A.D. till the ninth. The Kumiki number about 100,000 in Daghestan and in Tyerskoë oblost. They are settled husbandmen.

15. *Krimsky Tatars*,<sup>1</sup> or *Crimean Tartars*.—Of these there are about 150,000 in Russia. They are divisible into: (a) Steppe Tartars (nomads), (b) City Tartars (in Simferopol, Theodosia, Bakhchusara (Garden City), and Yefpatoria (Eupatoria)), and (c) Highlanders and South-Coast Tartars. These are descendants of the ancient Teurkish immigrants and of Teurkicized early Crimean races—Greeks, Goths, &c. They speak Osmanli, which had been spreading during Turkish domination. The Highland Tartars are handsome people in the Oriental sense. Owing to their having been employed as guides to tourists in the Crimea during recent years, the defects of their character have been developed. The only labour in which the Tartar families engage is grape-growing, which is left almost wholly to the women. The men are usually lazy and proud. They speak contemptuously of other Tartars, e.g. of the Kazan Tartars, who are industrious people.

16. *Volga Tartars*.—This group number altogether in Russia about 1,300,000; about one-half of this number are found in Kazanskaya *gub.* They are in a great many *guberni* of European Russia proper, and a considerable number are engaged in field labour in Poland. In the cities they work as waiters, caretakers, pedlars, &c.; in Moscow they have monopolized the old-clothes trade. The Volga Tartars are of mixed descent, partly Teurkish, partly Teurkicized Finnish, and partly derived from tribes which inhabited the ancient Bulgarian and Kazan Tsardoms. At an early period the Tartars abandoned their nomad habits and their patriarchal family order. A few of the Tartars are Christians, but the majority are Mohammedans. They are usually more orthodox than the nomadic tribes, and for that reason they, as well as the tribes of Turkestan, supply the nomads with Mullahs.

17. *Bashkiri*.—These people are generally regarded as of mingled Teurkish and Ugro-Finnish origin, although some suppose that they are of purely Teurkish descent. In 1556 they were annexed by the Moscow State, and their lands were subsequently seized. The seizure of the lands led to reprisals on the part of the Bashkiri, and to sanguinary suppression of the revolts on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> In Russian the noun in the singular is Tatarin, in the plural Tatars. Tartar is the German form, which has been adopted into English. The people call themselves Būrgarlik.



Moscow Government. In the rebellion of Pugachev<sup>1</sup> in 1773 there were many Bashkiri; one of them was chief of staff in Pugachev's army.<sup>2</sup> In 1798 the Bashkiri were subjected to a military system, similar to that employed in the case of the Cossacks; and irregular troops were organized from among them. The system was abandoned in 1861, and the tribesmen became peasants.<sup>3</sup> The seizures of Bashkirian lands continued after this period,<sup>4</sup> and contributed to the ruin which seems to have overtaken the people. The number of the Bashkiri is about 1,300,000, of whom about one-half are in Ufimskaya *gub.*

18. *Chuvashi*.—These people are probably due to an ancient mixture of Teurkish with Cheremissëan blood. They speak the Teurkish language modified by Finnish. Like the Tartars, they use horse-meat for food, do not use pork, and shave the head, and on account of this similarity of customs they were often confused with the Tartar peoples by the Russians. The Chuvashi were baptized in the middle of the eighteenth century, but they have not been Russianized to any material extent. They number about 650,000, and they live principally in the Kazanskaya *gub.*

(b) *Mongolians*.—This group is mentioned by Chinese as living in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the north-east of Mongolia. In the thirteenth century Genghis Khan, himself a Mongolian, united the Mongolians and extinguished the predominance of the Teurkish tribes. The Mongolians in the Russian Empire may be divided into two important groups, (1) the Eastern, and (2) the Western.

In the sixteenth century the Eastern Mongols forced the western tribes to the west until they crossed the Volga. In January 1771 there began the celebrated flight of the Kalmuk Mongols, with 33,000 *kébētks*, towards the Chinese frontier. This flight occurred immediately after the punishments of the Kalmuks which were inflicted by Count Panin and others during the suppression of the rebellion of Pugachev. During the march the Kirghizi hung on the flanks of the flying tribes, and repeated assaults reduced their ranks by one-half. The spring floods of the Volga had prevented

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *infra*, vol. ii, Book IV, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> See Pushkin, *History of Pugachev's Rebellion*, and *infra* vol. ii, Book IV, chap. ii.

<sup>3</sup> The Tsar Paul I had determined to attack India and therefore thought of employing Bashkiri and Cossack troops.

<sup>4</sup> Some are even alleged to have occurred recently.

those Kalmuks who were on the western bank of that river from joining in the flight, and they were obliged to remain. The descendants of these tribes now number about 120,000. They occupy themselves in cattle-ranching and to a small extent in agriculture and fishing.

The most considerable tribe of Mongols within the limits of the Russian Empire<sup>1</sup> are the Buryats, who live in Irkutskaya *gub.* and in Trans-Baikalia, numbering about 230,000. They also engage in cattle-ranching, and, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, in agriculture.<sup>2</sup> The blood of the Buryats has become mingled with other Siberian groups. The Buryats are adherents of Llamaism. Other groups are the Tungus, consisting of the Tungus proper, nomadic tribes between the Yenisey and the Northern Tundra; and the Manchurs on the left bank of the Amur near Blagovestchensk. The latter are partly Buddhists and partly Shamanists.

In addition to the groups enumerated, there are the Yenesean Ostiaks, now Russianized, and Sians. The latter appear to be dying out. It appears that at one time the Sians played an important rôle in South Siberia. There are supposed to have been in ancient times coppersmiths among these people in Minosinskoë district near Tomsk.

The Kamchadals (about 5000), the Tchukchi (about 12,000), partly nomadic and partly settled, and Eskimos who have migrated from the opposite shores of Behring Sea, are the principal groups of the Russian Far East. During and since the Russian occupation of Manchuria, large numbers of Chinese have entered into trade on the Amur, and Koreans have also migrated into Primorskoëoblast and Vladivostok.

Such, in outline, is the complicated ethnography of the Russian Empire.

<sup>1</sup> The expression "Russian Empire" is employed in a geographical rather than in a political sense. It includes the area formerly within the Imperial Russian system.

<sup>2</sup> Buryat horsemen are employed by the Russian Government to carry the mails by the post route across the Mongolian steppe from Urga to Kalgan on the Great Wall of China, the present terminus in that direction of the Chinese railways. An excellent account of the Buryats is to be found in the article upon them by Demetrius Klementz, in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Hastings, ed. Edinburgh, 1910, vol. iii. p. 1.

### III

#### STATISTICS OF PEASANT POPULATION

*Memorandum by V. E. Semevsky upon the Statistical Tables,  
pp. 418 and 419 in the text*

THE number of peasants of *pomyetschékē* as at the First Census (1722) cannot be considered as more than 3,200,000 male souls. This is clear from the fact that at the Second Census (1747) the number was 3,440,000 (*Journal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 1889, xxxiii. p. 253; cf. my book, *Peasantry in the Reign of Katherine II*, i., second edition, p. 17). Concerning the third column of the table, it is evident that all classes of the male rural population must be included. This population was very complicated, as may be seen from my account of the peasantry in the reign of Katherine II, a portion of which has been utilized in Mělyukov's article on the peasantry in Brockhaus and Ephron's *Encyclopedia*, xvi. p. 693. In this number there must be included the State peasants, properly so called, the peasants of the Udelynye, possessional peasants, and others.

The figure 2,200,000 (1722) includes the Tsar's peasants (afterwards called Udelynye peasants), Church peasants strictly so-called (some of these being peasants of the monasteries), State or Black peasants, and male peasants of other categories. This figure, which is very approximate in the First Census, was calculated from the data in my book, *Peasantry in the Reign of Katherine II*. [In reference to the figure for the Second Census (not given in the table), see by way of comparison Kluchevsky, V. O., *Essay in Research* (Moscow, 1912), p. 332.] The Baltic Provinces and Little Russia are not included, as the three first Censuses did not include them. [Cf. also Mělyukov, *Economical State of Russia in the First Quarter of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 640.]

The total number of the population at the First Census is given

by K. Hermann (*Statistical Researches* (St. Petersburg, 1819), i. p. 31) as 13,223,000. Several authors give the round figure 14,000,000.

The Church peasants (in the broad sense, including peasants of monasteries) were in Great Russia at the Fourth Census included in the category of State peasants. (See my *Peasants during the Reign of Katherine II*, ii.)

The figures of the Fifth Census are taken from Hermann's book (*Statistical Researches*, i. pp. 35 and 147); Schnitzler (*L'Empire des Tsars*, ii. p. 77) follows Hermann.

The total number of the population at the Sixth Census is stated by Hermann at 44,000,000, not 41,000,000, as in the table. (See *Statistical Researches*, i. p. 24.)

The figure of the *pomyetschĕkĕ* peasants, according to the Eighth Census, is taken from Keppen's book, *The Ninth Revision*, p. 200. At the Eighth Census the number of the different State peasants, together with the Udelnye and possessional peasants, was, according to my calculation, about 10,550,000 male souls. (The aboriginal population of the Caucasus and Siberia, together with a few other numerically unimportant groups, are excluded.) (*Journal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 1838, xxv. pp. lxxxii., &c., and Schnitzler, *L'Empire des Tsars*, ii. pp. 87-88. The latter puts the number at 10,634,649.) The figure of the *pomyetschĕkĕ* peasants at the Ninth Census (1851) is taken from Keppen, *op. cit.*, p. 200. According to the Ninth Census, 12,000,000 souls was the number of appanage, *odnodvortsi*, and "free people," possessional and other non-serfs, as compiled by myself from Keppen's statistics (*The Ninth Census*, pp. 215-16).

At the Tenth Census the number of *pomyetschĕkĕ* peasants (including Transcaucasia) were rather more than is shown in the table, viz. 10,858,357 male souls. (See Troinitsky, *Serf Population of Russia according to the Tenth Census*, p. 50.) The numbers of the non-serf rural population, according to the tenth revision (with exclusion of Siberian aborigines, artisans in Crown factories, &c., were, according to my calculation, 12,800,000. (See Official Report in the *Journal of the Minister of Public Instruction*, May 1860.)

The percentages of the serf population given in the text (p. 419) refer not to the whole population of Russia. The total number upon which the percentages are based exclude Poland and Finland, as well as the army and the navy. Should the real total be given as

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it is given in the table (on p. 419) the percentage of serfs to the whole population would be as follows :

First Census . . . . .	49 per cent.
Fifth „ . . . . .	54 „

In the eighteenth century there were many grants of populated estates to private owners :

Sixth Census . . . . .	47 per cent.
Eighth „ . . . . .	37 „
Ninth „ . . . . .	31 „
Tenth „ . . . . .	29 „

It should be observed, however, that the total numbers of the population at the various censuses have never been determined with sufficient accuracy, and therefore it is better to state the percentage of serfs in respect to all *peasants* rather than to the whole population. If this is done the percentages would be as follows :

First Census . . . . .	55 per cent.
Fifth „ . . . . .	57 „
Sixth „ . . . . .	58 „
Eighth „ . . . . .	51 „
Ninth „ . . . . .	47 „
Tenth „ . . . . .	46 „

Owing to the imperfection of our statistics in the past, these data cannot lay claim to great precision ; but they help to give an idea of the elements of which our rural population was composed and of the numerical importance of serfdom.

V. SEMEVSKY.

ST. PETERSBURG,  
November 9/22, 1913.

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