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The Defining Moment:
Land Charters and the
Post-Emancipation Agrarian
Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863

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Introduction

Although standard works on the Emancipation of 1861, Russian and Western, reveal that the division of land and other resources between erstwhile masters and serfs was to be laid down in land charters (*ustavnye gramoty*) and brokered by newly appointed peace mediators, little attention has been devoted to the texts of the documents and the "negotiating" process that led to their finalization.¹ Soviet scholars have, however, devoted much attention to those terms that served as indicators of the massive expropriation of lands formerly in peasant use through the system of so-called cutoffs (*otrezki*), a notion backed by Lenin's unimpeachable authority.² In 1958, P. A. Zaionchkovskii devoted an entire monograph to the question based not only on his own investigations but also those of his students (2,457 charters from sixteen *uezdy* or provincial districts) and other scholars, most notably B. G. Litvak (with S. S. Phillipov) on the province of Moscow (3,025 charters).³ Litvak published another extensive study in 1972 of 17,987 charters from six Black Earth provinces (Voronezh, Kursk, Orel, Riazan, Tambov, and Tula) representing 95.7 percent of all the charters in those provinces.⁴ Although the statistical base is impressive and could not easily be matched by Western investigators, these studies focus primarily on the quantitative measures of exploitation dictated by Soviet Marxist assumptions. The dynamics of the process and the resulting structure of the settlement have scarcely been explored, and, characteristically, with one small exception, the full texts of the charters themselves have not been published.

To be sure, the Soviets have published excellent documents on the certain aspects of their implementation, such as the biweekly progress reports for 1861-1863 of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in *Otmena krepostnogo prava* (Moscow, 1950) and the rich documentary collection *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1860-1869 gg.*, edited by L. M. Ivanov (Moscow, 1964), consisting primarily of governors' and police reports on peasant unrest. Peasant unrest, of course, looms large in Soviet historiography of the Reform period as evidence of a "revolutionary situation"

prompted by a "crisis in the feudal order," whereas such themes have generally been discounted in Western versions that have relied on liberal Russian historiography before 1917.⁵ A perusal of the Soviet documentation confirms that the implementation process was exceedingly if not universally tumultuous and led to many major and minor confrontations with authority that often had to be settled by military force; hence the Soviet versions appear to have more substance than do most Western ones, although they amount to little more than a catalogue of the instances of unrest. Characteristically in these documents, sullen peasants surrounded by troops were called on to witness exemplary beatings of elders and household heads until they collectively expressed "repentance" for defying authority and swore to abide by the terms of the charters as dictated by the authorities. The massive deployment of force hastened the process of securing peasant "assent" to the charters. By the end of 1862, 77 percent of the proposed charters were confirmed and comprised 68.6 percent of the peasant population subject to charters, and by mid-1863 the process was complete.⁶

On the other hand, repeated confrontations and stubborn, long-lasting peasant resistance often persuaded landowners and peace mediators alike to make considerable adjustments to the terms of the charters, hastening the conversion from *barshchina* (labor obligations) to *obrok* (fixed dues), and from the interim stage (temporary obligation) to redemption. The latter, it will be recalled, was the final "buy out" whereby the landowners were to receive their compensation in government bonds, whereas the peasants were to purchase their lands through a government loan of up to four-fifths of the value, which would be paid off in forty-nine yearly installments. By the end of 1862, Minister of Internal Affairs P. A. Valuev could boast that 7,082 redemption agreements (*vykupnye dogovory*) had been signed, representing 7.4 percent of the total, and by the end of 1865 this had still only reached 18 percent.⁷ The effort proceeded sluggishly through the 1870s, so that the process was brought to a conclusion only with a new law on mandatory conversions in 1881.⁸

If this process arising from the Emancipation legislation can be regarded as a "settlement," imposed or otherwise, then the land charters represent the key documentation, and the period of their implementation represents "the defining moment." First, as Litvak has cogently observed, the charters contain the most exact, comprehensive data on peasant holdings before and after the Emancipation (regrettably not on the total size of estates or on the land under demesne cultivation), and thus they establish a baseline, casting a revealing shaft of light on the past and the future. Of the past, Litvak states that "with all their limitations this source provides information on the size of allotments, obligations, the serf population, on the number and category of households sufficient to withstand strict criteria of accuracy better than any other mass sources known in the literature." And of the future, they "fixed the norms under which a whole generation of peasants played out their lives."⁹ The precision of the latter rests on the fact that the arbitrary value ascribed to peasant allotments (*nadely*) in the redemption agreements was based on an exact mathematical calculation from the amount of the *obrok* entered in the charters (or *barshchina* equivalent, which was always valued in rubles).¹⁰

The terms of the charters were usually worked out between the peace mediators and the landowners (indeed, article 21 of *Pravila* required the latter to submit a text within one year, which the mediator would then bring into conformity with the statutes), and presented to the peasant communities as a fait accompli; it was left to the "discretion" of the landowner whether he wished to involve the peasants in drawing up the charters (article 36, *Pravila*), though the landowners were encouraged to reach "voluntary agreement" if possible (article 37, *Pravila*). Peasant societies enjoyed the privilege, seldom used effectively, to contest the terms (articles 49 to 53 based on a claim that the terms were contrary to law), and there were humane and conscientious mediators who tried to reconcile the parties fairly, but the landholding nobles (hereafter called *pomeshchiki*) had so many effective ways to pressure the agencies of the government on every level that the charters were shaped almost exclusively by their economic interests commensurate with the fiscal concerns of the

government.¹¹ The peasants, therefore, had no recourse but to thwart, actively or passively, the charters' implementation hoping to force a change in terms.

Peasant behavior in this as in many other historical circumstances was not "rational" on the surface; that is, it was often clothed in mythopoeic, Utopian formulas (the new *volia*, the *slushnyi chas'*, a golden charter or letter from the Tsar), but as Daniel Field has maintained, the element of "sly calculation" (*khitrost'*) was ever at work.¹² Peasant rebels--sore backs and heavy fines notwithstanding--often emerged from confrontations in much better circumstances than they would have otherwise, so we can view it as a crude process of "negotiation" that social historians have recently noted in various settings.¹³

One can incorporate the data here into the extensive literature on the forms of resistance of peasants and other oppressed classes, beginning with Hobsbawm and Rudé and ending with James Scott and the Asian school of subaltern studies, but I hope to place it in the context of the broader historical process that is featured by a rhythm of crises and repose.¹⁴ The notion of "settlement" presupposes a preceding period of ferment and contestation of territory in which the "oppressed" must be seen as active agents despite the successful reimposition of "hegemony" by the dominant elites. The "defining moment" should be seen as that period of contestation, where the "oppressed" carry the idea of aspiration as far as the countervailing forces will allow. The ingredient of "utopianism" is transitory, a means of spiritual mobilization for the struggle, but the decisions on concrete goals, the possibility of their attainment, and the selection of the moment when it is prudent to submit is the ingredient of "sly calculation," of the "rationality" of the oppressed, of accommodation to the new rules of the game within which to pursue goals by covert resistance.¹⁵ This study does not overturn the ideas on resistance already in circulation, but it does, perhaps, offer a more sharply focused image than much of the literature on how they are played out in practice at the most critical juncture.

In this study I examine this "defining moment" and "negotiating process" through a collection of archival and published materials that include the texts of land charters, resolutions of peasant assemblies (*prigovory*), petitions (*prosheniia*),

complaints (*zhaloby*), determinations of the peace mediators and conferences of mediators (*s'ezdy*), redemption agreements, official records on landowners' insolvency, reports on peasant unrest, and so forth. The archival materials, derived mainly from the provinces of Saratov and Orel, represent the case files on individual estates and villages deposited in St. Petersburg with the Ministry of the Internal Affairs, although they were generated locally. These include comprehensive materials of the administration of the province of Saratov on peasant unrest, 1861-1863.¹⁶ Together they afford a concise picture of how the settlements were reached in a given region, which cannot be regarded as statistically representative of all European Russia, but they nevertheless highlight many features of the settlement that were characteristic and can be confirmed by other types of evidence. The virtue of such microlevel history is that it can piece together many details and their dynamic interconnectedness in concrete situations that we would miss on a higher level of aggregation.¹⁷ I draw on the mass data of the Soviet studies and documentary collections to complete the image and correct the imbalance of the sample, but regretfully pieces of the puzzle are still missing because documentation is incomplete. As James Scott has rightly observed, the very nature of resistance and oppression is designed to withhold certain things from the public record. But making logical inferences from information contained in the record is fair game.¹⁸

The Legal Framework

To accomplish this, the charters must be understood in the context of the thrust or "legislative intent" of the Emancipation Statutes; that is, as it arises from the text of the law rather than being inferred from the original goals of the framers, which were often emasculated by prudent compromises and stubborn realities.¹⁹ Clearly the legislation in principle envisioned a new alternative social-institutional order in which peasants individually or collectively would be viewed as independent agents, "legal

persons" able to manage their own resources and acquired wealth, juridically free of the personal authority of another "legal person," as was the case under serfdom. Nobles and peasants were therefore regarded as "equal before the law" in their mutual relations, specifically free to engage in legal contracts with each other and other parties accommodating the mutual interests. As expressed in the Implementation Statute (*Pravila*), the peasants were granted the rights, "both individually and as communities, to enter into all contractual relations and obligations with the treasury and with private parties on a par with all free rural estates," which was defined as including the right to engage in trade and skilled occupations, establish businesses, and sue others in the courts on an equal basis with all free estates (the word "citizen" was, to be sure, carefully avoided).²⁰ This vision of the legislation was expressed in the immediate abolition of various marks of personal servitude (obligations in naturalia, the master's selection of recruits and marriage partners, juridical subjection, and household serfdom), in the framework of a mediation process, in the creation of local peasant self-administration and courts, and even in the designation *sobstvenniki* (proprietors) for emancipated peasants, although the reality was far in the future.

Nevertheless, this vaunted legal conception was squarely at odds with other terms and characteristics of the legislation. First, the fiscal interest of the government in peasant contributions was to be preserved intact, which since the time of the Mongols had been a personal tribute assessed on the peasant estate. Responsibility for the collection of the tribute was merely shifted from the serf owner to communal peasant institutions, legally defined as "rural societies" or *selskie obshchestsva*, which might or might not coincide with traditional distributive communes or settlements but often did coincide with villages or clusters of villages on local estates. "Rural societies" were the "legal persons" who signed the charters, and were as small as eight to ten souls and as large as several thousand and might be a fraction of a settlement or several large settlements. (The term "commune" has become ingrained in common usage and in the peasant consciousness, because nearly all decisions were made "communally"; however, there was no legal unit called a "commune," but

rather various assemblies or *skhody* of peasants for different purposes.) Individual peasants and households in the new dispensation were just as restricted in their economic and social autonomy as they had been before, as they were juridically bound collectively for their obligations (taxes, *obrok* [fixed dues], *barshchina* [labor obligations], even rent and labor contracts) to the "rural societies" that were parties to the charters. Village and *volost'* (township) elders (*starosty* and *starshiny*, respectively) became agents of the government to enforce obligations. In effect, "obligated" peasants became serfs of the state as the state peasants had always been.

Of more concern to the present study, however, is that the emancipation from economic bondage was to be effected, not at once, but in defined stages. In the first stage, all former personal economic obligations were to remain in force for a maximum of two years (article 52 and article 4, *Pravila*), except that they could now be enforced only through civil courts and not by the personal authority of the former master.²¹ The land charters, which were to be introduced during this two-year period, continued the state of "temporary obligation," but standardized the obligations by law for defined regions according to certain maximum and minimum amounts in an exact (although not necessarily proportional) relationship to the amount of land conceded, which considerably reduced the element of caprice. In most regions, North and South, the maximum dues or *obrok* was set at 8 to 10 rubles per male soul (article 168; the "soul" was now the universal measure, superseding the *tiaglo* or husband-wife-horse unit used on most *barshchina* estates) and the maximum peasant holding per soul was 2.75 to 6 *desiatinas* (1 *desiatina* = 2.7 acres), depending on the average size of pre-Emancipation obligations and peasant holdings in that region (*Prilozhenie* to article 15). Minimum amounts were set at one-third of the maximum, except that the estate owner was entitled to at least one-third of his former lands, even if it reduced the peasant allotment to less than the minimum, which in fact seldom occurred (articles 16 and 20). *Barshchina* (labor-day obligations) could be retained at the owner's request if it had been the customary practice before the Emancipation, but it was regulated in the same way as *obrok* payments---namely, a maximum of forty labor-days per able-bodied man (ages eighteen to fifty-five years)

and thirty labor-days for women (ages seventeen to fifty years) for the maximum holding (article 189 ff.). Other more complex rules governed estates that formerly had mixed obligations, but the same principles pertained (nevertheless, these were the estates with the reputation for the worst abuses before and after the Emancipation).²²

Two years after the Emancipation (22 February 1861), the peasants were to have the right to demand that *barshchina* be converted to *obrok*; the former could be continued by mutual agreement between noble landowners (*pomeshchiki*) and peasants for three-year periods. In many areas of European Russia, *barshchina* for temporarily obligated peasants continued under the regime of the land charters until terminated by the mandatory redemption law of 1881. The statutes of 1861 did not set a deadline for conversions to redemption, and peasants frequently withheld their assent, as the law empowered them to do, to compel the landowners to forfeit the one-fifth of the redemption price not covered by government loans, which would be the case if the owners forced conversion unilaterally. The deadlock over this issue necessitated a new redemption law in 1881 to end the stage of temporary obligation and universalize (in legal theory) the regime of "property" in civil-contractual relations.²³

Although the liberal bureaucrats Rostovtsev and Miliutin conceived of the structure of land charters as one of even-handed mediation between legally equal partners, somewhat on the order of a government labor relations board, the political and social realities made true mediation, even with good will on the part of the mediator, nearly impossible. First, Tsar Alexander II, in the Emancipation Manifesto, took pains to acknowledge explicitly the full property rights of the nobles over all the land to maintain the fiction of a unilateral act of generosity by the nobles, justifying full compensation for the share conceded to the peasants.²⁴ Nearly all the qualifying provisions in the statutes were aimed at preserving the nobles' economic privileges as spelled out in Catherine II's "Charter of the Nobility" of 1785, specifically all income from the land including forests, mills, bazaars, drinking establishments, fishing rights on bodies of water, hunting, mineral deposits, and unploughed grazing lands; even the location of the lands with reference to markets or transportation networks or even just the fact of commercially oriented activity on garden plots could

trigger a formula that put the compensation value in a higher bracket. Peasants could not lay claim to forest lands or adjacent bodies of water as part of their allotment even if they had previously enjoyed them unless they could show that these resources were integral to the domestic economy of the region in place of agriculture (that is, fishing villages in the North).²⁵ Although the special rule in the Northern industrial provinces granting owners 50 percent of the maximum *obrok* for the first *desiatina* conceded, and 25 percent for the second is well known (violating not only fairness but also the principle that the peasant was redeeming the land, not his person), less well known are the analogous but less disproportionate formula for the Black Earth regions and another for estates that employed *barshchina* that provided for twenty male labor-days and fifteen female labor-days per worker (50 percent of the maximum rather than 25 to 33 percent) for the first *desiatina* conceded (article 169 and 190, *Prilozhenie*). And in addition to the noble's right to claim one-third of his former estate regardless of how it affected peasants holdings, at the last moment the Council of State added a provision, and the Tsar assented, for a "beggars' allotment," which released the peasants from all obligations for an allotment of one-quarter of the maximum.²⁶

Second, the liberal framers of the legislation were, without exception, members of the noble estate who were keen to preserve the corporate economic rights of their confreres, however well disposed they were toward peasants; furthermore, they had to calculate their chances within an institutional setting where the influence of the retrograde nobility was still very strong and the Tsar's orientation was vacillating. Although standard accounts cover this aspect very well (A. A. Kornilov, P. A. Zaionchkovskii, and Daniel Field, for example), the same ambiguities permeated the structure down to the primary level.²⁷

The Charters: A Sample Study

Although the Ministry of Internal Affairs initially sought to select peace mediators who were well disposed toward the goals of the legislation, they were chosen from lists supplied by local marshals of the nobility who often treated the office as another corporate prerogative. Not only were the lists often packed by safe conservatives, but nobles individually and through their marshals often vociferously protested the appointment of mediators thought to be too sympathetic to peasant interests. Because governors recommended candidates to the Minister of Internal Affairs (by 1862 in the hands of the conservative P. A. Valuev), liberal governors could and often did influence the choices, but others amenable to the influence of powerful local magnates leaned in the opposite direction. As often as not, given the dearth of qualified and willing candidates, the choice often fell to malleable local squires or even zealous opponents of the settlement.²⁸ And because charters drafted by the mediators had to be reviewed by the district conferences of mediators, which noble petitioners frequently attended to state their case and peasants did not, and again by the provincial boards for peasant affairs (*prisutstviia po krest'ianskym delam*, or peasant boards), mediators were frequently overruled or intimidated. Furthermore, powerful magnates and local cliques of nobles determined to counteract decisions of conscientious officials or threaten their job security frequently got their own way. If they could not succeed in intimidating peace mediators, their complaints could be easily directed to higher levels---all the way to the Senate, which heard appeals from the provincial peasant boards, or through court or guard connections to the Tsar himself. All these avenues emerge even in our small sampling, which, if not representative of the entire empire, nevertheless exemplify the structural parameters of the settlement period.

What stands out in the twenty or so texts of land charters that I examined is their straightforward simplicity and uniformity in entering the information prescribed by the implementation statute (article 33, *Pravila*) in orderly paragraphs: the names of the estate owner and of the "rural society" who are parties to the document; the

soul count from the census of 1858 divided into field and household serfs (sometimes listing females, more often not), the number of former serfs renouncing their share, the number of household serfs claiming a share, resulting in a firm soul count of those entitled to an allotment; the amount of land used by peasants before the Emancipation; the exact size of the allotment area in toto and per soul and how it was calculated within the guidelines for the given region (always specified); the amount of any "cut-off" or "add-on" (*prirezoek*) from the pre-Emancipation holdings; the types of land the holding comprised (ploughland, pasture, or waste); a meticulous valuation of the *usadba* (garden plot), or alternatively the *osedlost'* ("settled area" inclusive of the *usadba*), and designation of the commercial category of which there were four; and finally, the exact amount of *obrok* or *barshchina* due in toto and per soul, the latter always expressed in male and female souls and in summer and winter work days and the ruble equivalent if converted into fixed dues. Further paragraphs covered access rights to ponds, woodlands, and pasture; fishing rights; and ownership of mills, bazaars, and so forth (for the rules, see Main Statute, articles 98-108); the problem of the interspersal of lands (*cherespolositsa*) and location of residence; and whether the former lord claimed his right to a future consolidation and exchange of lands (*razverstka* and *obmen ugodii*) or a resettlement of the village if it were too close to the manor or blocked his access to his lands (rights he enjoyed but the peasants did not). These provisions tried to disentangle the "feudal" holdovers, such as joint use of resources, the *barin's* residual property rights over peasant holdings (right to construct mills and dams and to open drinking establishments), and his monopoly of key resources. They afforded the owners the most flagrant opportunities to seize petty economic advantages, but they also touch in the highlights and shades of Soviet statistical compilations.²⁹

The most detailed stipulations covered the garden plot, which often included orchards, hemp and sunflower patches, and space allotted to bazaars and shops, because whatever use was regarded as enhancing the value of the garden plot to the peasant entered into the computation of its deemed redemption value, which was always specified in rubles. The law created four categories, the first for those without

commercial benefit valued at 1.50 rubles per soul and the second for those with some commercial use valued at 2.50 rubles per soul; there was no case in my sample for the two higher categories, but they reflect proximity to major metropolitan markets or key transportation networks. Because the value of the garden plot was reckoned as a constituent part of the maximum allotment, the amount of the *obrok* was not affected if the peasants were granted the maximum. But if they received a diminished or minimum allotment, they were nevertheless obliged to redeem the full value of the garden plot, so instead of paying the precise fraction of the maximum *obrok*, they paid the full value of the garden plot plus the corresponding fraction of the value of the remaining lands after subtracting the amount for the garden plot. For example, in regions where the maximum *obrok* was 9 rubles and peasants were allotted the minimum holding, and their garden plots were in the 1.50 ruble category, they would pay 4 rubles instead of 3 (1.50 plus one-third of 7.50 or 2.50) and if in the second category, they would pay 4.67 rubles (2.50 plus 1/3 of 6.50). It was one more way to skewer the settlement in the noble's favor, capitalizing on the personal skills and entrepreneurial activity of his former serfs.³⁰

Otherwise, the calculations of the amount of *obrok* in relation to the amount of land conceded left little room for caprice; in my sample, with one exception, the statutory stipulations were followed precisely. The fact that Soviet investigators have generated volumes of statistics based on them is a tribute to their well-nigh universal application. In my sample from Saratov, six of sixteen peasant settlements received maximum allotments; in the sample from Orel, five of six received maximum allotments in all but one after a reduction or cut-off from the pre-Emancipation holding. In Litvak's sample from 233 estates from six provincial districts (*uezds*) in Voronezh, approximately one-half (48.5 percent) received maximum allotments, 70 percent of which entailed cutoffs; the same percentages obtained in three of six districts in Kursk (in one, the percentage was greater; in two others, it was less).³¹ Although in general, large cutoffs were more likely to occur on *obrok* estates where demesne cultivation was not practiced, in the more densely populated provinces of the central Black Earth region where *barshchina* was more common and maximum

allotments were only 3 to 3.5 *desiatinas*, cutoffs of a moderate size were also widespread. The greater percentage of diminished allotments in the Saratov sample seems to have been affected by the proximity of several to the city of Saratov and the bazaar town of Karabak (the more intense the use of land, particularly of the garden plot, in response to the urban market, the less critical was the allotment size). Even if not entirely typical, they allow us to examine the characteristic features of diminished allotments and to posit possible explanations: the avarice of the gentry owners, the composition of pre-Emancipation holdings, or the peasants' desire to minimize their obligations. The Orel sample can be regarded as more representative of the purely agricultural *barshchina* estates.

In several cases diminished allotments were calculated with the peasants' consent within the prescribed limits. On A. S. Seliukova's estate, the seventy-one souls of the village of Adoevshchina were entitled to a maximum of 284 *desiatinas*, but the entire estate consisted of only 258 *desiatinas*, and after she claimed her one-third (86 *desiatinas*) only 172 remained. Although they had worked only 165 *desiatinas* before the Emancipation, she offered them the full 172; nevertheless, the peasants requested that it be reduced to 135, which the owner accepted, and this amount was duly registered in the land charter. We might wonder at the willingness of the peasants to sacrifice valuable land, but the *obrok* of 6.36 rubles per soul may have appeared too burdensome, which was now reduced to 5.10 rubles; they were in the second garden plot category, reflecting significant income from marketing, but the owner generously recalculated it as in the first category, possibly because the sacrificed parcel was commercially valuable woodland that the owner now retained. They may also have tacitly reckoned on a second *tsarskaia volia* in two years, as did many peasants in their region (explained in later sections), but if so, they miscalculated and remained on temporary obligation under the prescribed terms until 1884, when mandatory conversion to redemption occurred. Then they complained that their allotment was too small and requested the maximum 4 *desiatinas* per soul, but the request was denied.³²

A. F. Rulev awarded the peasants of the village of Mergichev-Buerak (thirty-two souls) their pre-Emancipation holding of 76 *desiatinas* (60 percent of the maximum), although they paid nearly a ruble more than the proportional amount on their *obrok* (6.28 instead of 5.40 rubles) because they were also truck gardeners in the second category. Nevertheless, the charter was signed amicably and they remained on temporary obligation until 1883.³³ V. M. Gotovinskii was entitled to a small cut-off (36 *desiatinas*) from the pre-Emancipation peasant holding on his estate of 260 *desiatinas* for fifty-six peasant souls (maximum of 4 *desiatinas* per soul), but by mutual agreement this was reduced by 20 percent more to 186 *desiatinas*, decreasing the *obrok* from the 9 ruble maximum to 7.29. The Bykovka peasants were apparently persuaded they had a good bargain, because they requested immediate redemption and assumed the burden of directly paying the owner 240 silver rubles per year, or 4.28 per soul for the one-fifth not covered by the government loan. We must surmise that these former *barshchina* peasants had some secure form of monetary income to compensate for their modest allotment, which may have been from a forest parcel of 80 *desiatinas*, but it was not (legally) from fishing along the Volga tributary on which they were located, because this was reserved for the owner (they did, however, rent a large parcel of land on a fertile flood plain).³⁴

Such examples were in stark contrast to others where the estate owners obviously imposed an unfavorable settlement. One such case was that of the widow magnate E. D. Bibikova, who brazenly defrauded the trading peasants of the bazaar town of Bazarno-Korbulak (469 souls). Although located favorably and classified in the second category for garden plots, their holdings were interspersed with the owner's *demesne* and those of other villages and nonpeasant owners (not unusual for a bazaar town). Before the Emancipation, they held only 435 *desiatinas*, much less than the legally prescribed minimum (1 *desiatina*; 800 *sazhens* per soul or 625 *desiatinas*); but this occurred because the estate itself comprised only a small area, and for the peasants garden plots were sufficient to augment income from urban crafts and trade. However, the peasants claimed that they had purchased while under

serfdom 135 *desiatinas* for cash of the lands now incorporated into their allotment, and that the case was currently being adjudicated in the courts. The peace mediator explained to the peasants that a court case could not delay the finalizing of the land charter, and thus they were obliged to pay the full 1,744-ruble dues (3.70 rubles per soul, 2.50 of which was assessed on the garden plot).

Although an obvious abuse and windfall to the proprietor, it was approved by both the conference of mediators and the provincial peasant board. When the owner requested conversion to redemption in 1868, the court case was still pending and the peasants withheld their approval as was their legal right until it was resolved in their favor. The provincial peasant board decided the matter had to be referred to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which apparently persuaded the owner to be more forthcoming. The redeemed parcel was to be reduced by the 135 *desiatinas* claimed by the peasants and the owner consented to allow the peasants to purchase the remaining 258 *desiatinas* of the estate. Because the latter could not be covered by the redemption loan, the terms are not recorded. The issue was also complicated by the snarled legal questions arising from the interspersal of lands of other owners, and therefore the Ministry decided an imperial decree was necessary to override conflicting statutory requirements. The owner probably did not come out badly, as in addition to bonds from the redemption loan she received the remaining one-fifth by direct pay over six years plus an undetermined amount for the 258 *desiatinas*, and in the meantime she had pocketed 10,464 rubles in *obrok* money on lands she probably had not legally owned. These trading peasants were apparently affluent enough to handle the payments and had now greatly enhanced their holdings to take advantage of the opportunities for truck gardening, flax, or cash crops. (By 1883 they owned 1,029 *desiatinas*, 548 in ploughland and 470 of forest.)³⁵

In all these cases the peasants were less concerned with the size of the allotment than with the burden of the *obrok*. In the only case in which the peasants contested an imposed land charter, that between P. Kh. Burkova and the village of Kurdiium (ninety-six souls), the dispute was also over the amount of the *obrok*. After Burkova demanded her one-third of the estate, the peasants still received 14 *desiatinas* more

than their pre-Emancipation holding of 250 *desiatinas* or 2.75 per soul. The *obrok* of 6.90 rubles, which was increased by seventy-one kopecks over the proportional amount because of the second-category garden plot. This was more than the peasants wished to carry, particularly eighteen of them who had been on *barshchina*, and thus they requested the minimum allotment. The peace mediator ruled that the charter was nevertheless legally constructed and therefore valid, although the peasants' dissent is recorded. The latter was important because the owner requested immediate redemption, and the peasants withheld their assent, as was their legal prerogative, until she allowed them to take the minimum allotment in addition to renouncing the legal one-fifth of the redemption price. It appears that the owner, badly in need of government compensation, consented.³⁶

That the magnitude of the *obrok* was more at issue than the size of the peasant allotment is even more obvious in the eight cases in which the peasants were offered the maximum. In six of them, large cutoffs were extracted, although no peasant protest is recorded. On the estate of M. P. Legran, where 183 *desiatinas* (28 percent of the total) were cut off from the pre-Emancipation peasant holding of 659 *desiatinas*, leaving 476 *desiatinas* for 119 souls (the maximum amount of 4 *desiatinas* per soul), the peasants of Kontevka requested a diminished allotment of only 2 *desiatinas* per soul (238 *desiatinas*). The charter was revised to 248 *desiatinas*, and a fixed dues was assessed of 5.66 rubles per soul (one ruble higher than the proportional reduction from 9 rubles because of the second-category garden plot).³⁷ On the vast estate of I. A. Romeiko, where peasants of Lipovka were offered nearly the maximum amount (2,607 *desiatinas* for 745 souls instead of 2,930), they requested the beggars' allotment---they were also industrial rather than agricultural peasants and regarded the land as a burden. In fact, the peasants in a *mirskii prigovor* (resolution of the commune) claimed they were tricked into signing their charters and requested to have their signatures removed. Although the mediator appended their request to the document, he recommended approval because he found it "in accord with the statutes." When the owner requested redemption in 1868, these peasants

also forced his agreement to a minimum allotment and the sacrifice of the supplementary one-fifth payment.³⁸

In the six examples from the province of Orel, where the maximum allotment was only 3 *desiatinas* per soul in many areas and *barshchina* had been the rule before the Emancipation, we might expect the peasants to be very concerned over the paltry allotment. In five of them, the peasants were granted the maximum, after cutoffs of various sizes were imposed. Peasant protests were recorded in only one case, by the village of Vysokii on the estate of N. G. Ardulova in Karachevskii district: Forty-seven *desiatinas* of the pre-Emancipation peasant holding were cut off, which was about one-third of the total; at issue, however, was not the 9-ruble *obrok* for only 3 *desiatinas* of land but rather the flagrant gerrymandering of their holdings, which required the peasants to travel some distance through *pomeshchik* fields to work their own fields or to pasture their cattle (which always involved the risk of fines for trampling). Although only twelve souls were involved, a serious confrontation ensued. The wording of the charter on the complicated interspersal of lands is condescending, almost apologetic:

For the proper arrangement of husbandry interspersed lands must be eliminated; and it is proposed that there be an exchange of different types of land between peasants and *pomeshchiki*, likewise the transfer of the location of household plots, subject to a later determination of the *pomeshchik*.

The final paragraph notes that the charter was written without peasant participation, and an attached memorandum of the peace mediator noted that the peasants refused to affix their signatures until the household heads had surveyed the proposed cut-off parcels, but also that he found "no legal grounds" for the peasants' objections, and thus he recommended approval in its present form by the conference of peace mediators. The conference also concluded that "all stipulations of the law have been followed," that the peasants had resolutely refused to accept a copy of the

charter, refused to observe its terms, and "loudly and crudely" (*gromko i grubo*) demanded that "the *pomeshchik* take the far fields in exchange for lands nearer by."³⁹

Conclusions from these examples can only be tentative given the limited sampling, but they do point in a different direction from the Soviet investigations, which focus very little on the problem of monetary burdens; rather they emphasize what they portray as a massive transfer of land to the nobility through the system of "cut-offs" and diminished allotments. In the long run, the effect of the niggardly land settlement was momentous because population increases and rising rents, despite revisionary literature of recent times, put great pressure on the fixed fund of allotment land, threatening the subsistence of large categories of peasants who lacked other resources. This confirms, however, that in the given context peasants' fears for the future were riveted primarily on monetary obligations, as they were compelled immediately to think about the limited availability of cash earnings. Those who had been on *barshchina* or mixed obligations had relatively little experience with the marketplace and migratory labor, whereas *obrok* peasants, although more accustomed to it, could only see the inflated *obroks* as a deduction from their legitimate and modest income. Land, paradoxically, except for the question of interspersal and consolidation, was not yet a major preoccupation.

Although 3 or 4 *desiatinas* per soul was modest enough, nevertheless this standard did not yet threaten peasant subsistence; if it had, the peasants would not have so frequently requested diminished allotments.⁴⁰ The descriptions of the assigned land parcels in the charters show that by far not all of the land was cultivated for cereal, but rather that land set aside for pasture, haying, flax, and other side uses often exceeded the ploughland. The documents supply no information on the previous use of the cutoff lands, but it seems probable that they consisted primarily of woodlands, pasture, and waste, as the law explicitly stated they should (articles 54-56); had the peasants cultivated them, surely they would have made it more of an issue. Rather, the vast tracts often ascribed in the charters on *obrok* estates to pre-Emancipation peasant use only meant that these owners had concerned themselves little with unused lands; indeed, as Litvak has noted, they were often unaware of

their extent. Those on pure *barshchina*, such as that of N. I. Bukhovskii in Saratov, doubtless had extensive demesne cultivation, which they sought to augment with cutoffs, but still the peasant-held lands reflect multiple use. In this case, Bukhovskii extracted a huge cut-off from the 694 *desiatinas* (32 percent of the total) said to be in "peasant use" before the Emancipation and still provided his 108 souls with the maximum 432 *desiatinas*, of which 27 were orchard, 47 were woodlands, and 135 were pasture (in joint use, but to be transferred to the peasants), leaving 223 *desiatinas* for cultivation (52 percent of the holding). Because the owner chose to retain *barshchina* for all his peasants on temporary obligation, the amount of demesne cultivation previously must have been considerable. (However, the peasants, after the two-year period expired, exercised their right to convert to *obrok*.) These figures and a settlement said to be amicable suggest that shortage or poor quality of land was not an issue even for these peasants.⁴¹ Another estate owner, B. I. Bermanskii, after a cutoff of 28 of 160 *desiatinas* (15 percent), granted his forty-four souls the maximum 3 *desiatinas* apiece or 128 *desiatinas*, of which 17 were for pasture and 9 for flax; only 68 *desiatinas* (53 percent of the holding) were devoted to cereal cultivation. Thus they were saddled with the maximum forty days of *barshchina* for a mere 1.5 *desiatinas* per soul of ploughland.⁴² The peasant allotment on the estate of S. V. Blokhin (189 souls) consisted of 567 *desiatinas*, of which 63 comprised the garden plot, 44 flax, 15 pasture, and 120 hayfields, leaving 325 *desiatinas* or 57 percent of the total for cultivation.⁴³ Others in the sample reveal similar proportions. That so many *barshchina* peasants continued on that regimen until the forced conversion of the 1880s despite their statutory right to convert to *obrok* every three years illustrates their preference to minimize monetary obligations.⁴⁴

The *Pomeshchiki's* Compensation

If preoccupation with monetary obligations was characteristic of the peasants in the settlement period, it was even more so of most owners. Many of the estates documented in this study were heavily in debt, some of them already under the guardianship of lending institutions. This was true of both the petty squires and the magnates with latifundia of tens of thousands of *desiatinas* on dozens of separate estates. Because the settlement process subjected the estate owners to a thorough scrutiny of their financial affairs---something they had seldom experienced as serf owners---they were often desperate to secure the maximum cash advantage from the terms of the charters and from the redemption settlement.⁴⁵ Inasmuch as the land charters permanently established the capital worth of their holdings, even magnanimous owners, many of whom were widows or minors, were obliged to exploit the money-making opportunities afforded by the legislation. The actions the owners took in desperation were sometimes extraordinary, several of them made false depositions that they were free of debt only to be found out; negative rulings were sometimes appealed all the way to the Senate or even the Tsar himself, and a surprising number emerged from the redemption process with little or no liquid assets. It is no wonder that some of them postponed the evil day until the law of 1881 on mandatory redemption, whereas others were pressed into the process by lending institutions to forestall foreclosure. The need for cash explains the generosity of owners in granting maximum allotments to the peasants and their refusal to grant diminished holdings when their peasants urgently requested it. Prince I. D. L'vov successfully persuaded his peasants of the village of Ozerki (seventy-four souls) to go on early redemption at the maximum of 9 rubles per soul, and even to pay directly the supplementary one-fifth over six years. His deposition, which is in the file, claimed that he was free of debt, whereas in fact he had mortgaged the serfs on all his properties to the maximum since 1834 for 103,700 rubles! Foreclosure proceedings by the Moscow Openkunsii Soviet, a guardianship agency, were under way. He wrote a desperate letter to his son in St. Petersburg to use his connections

in the Imperial Guards to get relief, but without effect. (The son's formal request to *the Chief Redemption Administration* for the immediate delivery of the redemption money is also in the file.) Only 8,800 rubles were credited to him from the redemption settlement on Ozerki to cover 10,700 rubles of debt, and consequently the direct payment of 2,220 rubles from the peasants for the remaining one-fifth was consigned to cover the balance.⁴⁶ V. M. Gotovinskii received only 1,048 rubles in bonds out of the assessed value of his estate of 7,322 rubles---4,524 rubles of debt had been deducted, although the peasants' one-fifth on direct pay in installments netted him 1,465 rubles. N. I. Bukovskii had 8,708 rubles of debt deducted from his settlement of 12,960, and so on.⁴⁷

The most heroic measures to maintain solvency, however, were taken by General Adjutant Prince V. D. Golitsyn. He owned several estates throughout Russia, of which the sixty-four souls of the village of Buki were only a small part; nevertheless, this file contains extensive documentation of his tangled financial affairs on all his estates. Not only did he sign a false deposition to the effect that this particular estate was free of debt but he had also apparently played a shell game with his serfs, moving them from estate to estate to secure new loans on the same serfs. In reality, all his properties had been fully mortgaged and were under the care of the St. Petersburg Office of Public Supervision, another guardianship agency that had the authority to impose mandatory redemption on all his holdings for the collection of debts.

How well-connected grandees handled such problems finds eloquent documentation in an 18 July 1867 letter to Golitsyn's business agent Karl Ludwig Gervais. Listing the eight estates he had inherited from his father---seven in Orel, two in Kaluga, one each in Moscow and Riazan---Golitsyn instructed that they all be put under redemption and that all forests, distilleries, potash works, open lands, farmsteads, various types of productive land, and industrial and business establishments on them be sold or leased, determining whether there were any patents or other revenue-producing items to be squeezed from them. All proceeds, remittances, deposits in banking institutions, tariffs, and credit notes were to be

forwarded to his personal office in St. Petersburg, verifying each item. All lands cut off from peasant holdings were to be rented immediately to peasants or outside parties at the highest going rate. Properties interspersed with peasant holdings were to be consolidated immediately to make them marketable. In summary,

Obtain wherever necessary certification on the disposability of my properties and borrow on them to the maximum, collecting whatever payments or excises are due me for wine [concessions], and wherever possible take out new mortgages from credit institutions, banks or societies as old ones are paid off, and where new loans can be raised without security, use them to replace loans where security is required.

Golitsyn's agent was authorized to undertake any and all transactions in his name, to collect all *obroks* and rents from his peasants, and "in case of their delinquency to turn immediately to the proper authorities to extract [*vzyskat*] the money I have coming." If *volost'* and village elders showed any slackness in collections, he was to invoke articles 152 and 153 of the statutes to have peace mediators replace them with more pliable types. Illegal woodcutting was to be stopped, guards posted, and fines imposed, and local police authorities were to be cultivated for the purpose. On lands adjacent to peasant villages, he was to erect trading and drinking establishments, leasing them where profitable to his own peasants, who required his permission under articles 139, 141, and 157 of the statutes. The agent was to cast Golitsyn's vote by proxy on the various bodies where he sat, including one provincial peasant board and in the Chief Redemption Administration, where he was to see that the Prince's redemption contracts were expeditiously approved and that appeals were filed when decisions were not favorable. Moreover, he was to use Golitsyn's name to gain access to all required government bodies and persons to make declarations, react to decisions, sign documents, write memoranda, seal contracts, and file protests, up to and including the governing Senate. In all matters, he was to "act authoritatively

and without hesitation as I would act, not shying away from any obstacles or possible misunderstandings."⁴⁸

Prince Golitsyn seems to be without peer in pursuing his caste and mercenary interests, yet many lesser nobles acted similarly. For example, Collegiate Registrar N. V. Arsenev, unable to prove his ownership of several small estates bequeathed to him by Guards Rotmister N. V. Kireevskii (including one in Orel of seven souls), sent a letter of empowerment to his agent much like Golitsyn's to pursue all appeals up to the governing Senate. The properties were in the care of the Moscow Guardianship Council, probably because the inheritance was in doubt. Arsenev himself seems to have been an ordinary middle-level bureaucrat, and he may have been an adopted or legitimized son of the Kireevskii clan; in any event, connections of the Kireevskii family to the Imperial Guards were effective, because the matter was resolved in his favor by an *ukaz* of the Tsar.⁴⁹

The materials I examined suggest that neither the peasants nor their former masters based their judgments on sound knowledge of the true value of their resources. Both were products of the serf system, which on different levels guaranteed subsistence but did not inspire rational management or entrepreneurship. *Barshchina* estates in particular were feudal operations in which things were measured in kind, in work days, and in seasons, a symbiotic and unchallenging balance of nature. And absentee owners of *obrok* estates simply enjoyed their fixed incomes without the cares of daily management. *Obrok* peasants, particularly those in the industrial North and those adjacent to regional urban markets such as Saratov and Orel, were perhaps best prepared with skills and trading acumen to cope with the new situation. But the Emancipation forced all the unwary parties to calculate their interests in terms of money---the "real" value of their assets and the "real" amount of their income and obligations. Therefore their fixation with money matters is understandable, but it was often at the expense of their long-term economic interests. Thus the peasants unwittingly mortgaged their future by requesting diminished or beggars' allotments to ease heavy monetary payments, while the squires and magnates sought the shortest route to turn their legislative advantages into hard cash, mindful

of their looming debts, and were enticed or coerced into redemption settlements that may have cleared their debts and dumped into their laps a bale of promissory bonds but in the long term forced them to sell the latter at a discount and to liquidate their holdings---first forests, then pastures, then whole estates---just to maintain their incomes.⁵⁰ In fact, it seems obvious that many persons of noble families, particularly widows and junior heirs, first became aware of the vast encumbrances on their fortunes in connection with the redemption operations. It was indeed a moment of truth.

Peasant Ferment, 1861-1863

These documents, however revealing, offer a far-from-complete picture of the implementation process. The realities of confrontation are concealed behind legalistic formulas and passing references to peasant dissent, which nevertheless seem never to have held up the relentless flow of paperwork toward an ineluctable conclusion. Even the biweekly tally sheets of the Ministry of Interior Affairs optimistically stressed the mounting number of approved agreements reported from the provinces, noting only in passing the instances and causes of unrest. The official figures on voluntary agreements signed by the peasants, always tabulated separately, should be regarded with considerable caution (by 1 January 1863, registered at 36,413 or 42 percent of those approved), because there is no way to determine how many signatures were extracted by the quartering of troops, beatings, and confiscations of cattle and household goods, or fear of their occurrence.⁵¹ Although the 1,872 instances of unrest (*volneniia*) claimed in Soviet scholarship are problematic (due to the lack of clear uniform criteria), the 854 cases of deployed military force can be regarded as a reasonable indicator of the magnitude of resistance. The entire documentary collection *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii 1861-1869 gg.* consists of

governors' and police reports on instances of military repression, some ninety in number for the years in question, and an appendix lists many more.⁵²

Whereas in 1861 the occasions were frequently the refusal to continue the old obligations after learning of the Tsar's Manifesto (including the famous one in Bezdna, Kazan), in 1862 and 1863 virtually all were precipitated by resistance to the imposition of land charters. These incidents seldom took the form of violence against officials or landowners, but rather they were more frequently directed against their own elders for collaboration with officials; more typically they involved obstruction of surveyors, mediators, and police officials who implemented procedures in connection with the charters or simply refusals to play their assigned part. As pressures mounted for compliance with the terms of the imposed charters, peasant resistance became more systematic, taking the form of illegal assemblies, secret oaths, gatherings of spectators to the confrontations, deputations to neighboring localities, and petitions to governors, high officials in St. Petersburg, or to the Tsar himself. Peasants, because of suspicion or ignorance, seldom availed themselves of their right of complaint defined in the legislation (articles 50 and 70), and thus their every other act of protest, including petitioning, was characterized as "illegal" and punished as such. Assembled in large numbers when officials were present, peasants could be vociferous, defiant, sarcastic, and "impudent." Attempts to identify and seize the "instigators" or to inventory property for confiscation by local police officers (*pristavy*) and district constables (*ispravniki*) only escalated the collective resistance until the only recourse was military force.

Military action signified far more than the ultimate recourse applied only in extreme situations. Expeditions to the countryside were accompanied by much fanfare and rolling of drums to attract the attention of villages along the way and set in motion the rumors that were counted on to inspire awe and submission. It did not disturb the authorities that many spectators were viewing the exemplary beatings or running the gauntlet from a distance. Quartering was an object lesson peasants were unlikely to forget, as soldiers demanded vodka, plundered personal possessions, and took liberties with the women. The authorities, although usually claiming complete

success for their repressive actions, consorted with each other and with local landowners to determine what concessions might avert future unrest. Often this took the form of altered terms in the land charters or decisions to convert immediately to redemption on terms more favorable to the peasants. Each party was testing the other, seeking the limits achievable through bold actions and drawing back when those limits were reached. In other words, these were ritualized occasions when the symbolic acts were understood by both parties and from which future behavior could be governed. This pulling and hauling can be viewed as the mode of "negotiation," the necessary prelude to workable accommodation. Afterward, peasants invariably expressed contrition and blamed their defiance on their own "darkness," or on rumors picked up from itinerant former soldiers or pilgrims passing through the region, the kinds of subterfuges that James Scott finds common in all repressed groups. They disavowed any intent to disobey the law, which often was recorded in the reports at face value, with recommendations for leniency.⁵³

Elaborate military deployments were undertaken in the provinces to forestall unrest in the days and weeks leading to the emancipation announcement. Alexander II in particular was obsessed with the fear of disorder and was deaf to reassurances that such deployments were unnecessary. Zaionchkovskii identified in General Staff sources 64 infantry and 16 of cavalry regiments plus 7 detached battalions operating in the countryside at this time, of which 47 battalions, 187 companies, and 38 cavalry squadrons engaged in repressive actions, figures he claims are incomplete.⁵⁴ Although there were a few major disturbances on the order of the famous one in Bezdna (for example, in Chenbar district in Penza, others in Vilna, Chernigov, and Smolensk), they do not suggest the "revolutionary situation" claimed in Soviet historiography.⁵⁵ In most cases, the clashes were momentary, highly localized, and precipitated merely by refusals to render *obrok* or *barshchina* rather than mesmerized crowds flocking to self-appointed prophets such as Anton Petrov.⁵⁶ At the end of May, Minister of Internal Affairs Valuev was reporting that "to reestablish order, besides measures of admonishment, it has occasionally been necessary for the moral [sic] reinforcement of authority to quarter troops on estates, and in a few cases to

administer punishments or arrest the most guilty parties." Although many estates were listed as the scenes of disorders, the underlying cause was ascribed by Valuev to "a lack of understanding by the temporarily obligated peasants of their relationship to their former owners and false interpretations of the Statutes [that is, the laws of 19 February 1861], sometimes inspired by ill-intended persons, and in a few cases to the heavy burdens of mixed obligations."⁵⁷ A lull during the summer was attributed in the governors' reports to the success in introducing peace mediators and the new organs of peasant self-administration and justice. Governors had been instructed to tour their districts to ensure the orderly implementation of the new procedures, and by and large they seemed anxious to report encouraging news. Many of them gave glowing accounts of the successful, universal introduction of *volost'* institutions, and of the peaceful resolution of misunderstandings through the newly appointed peace mediators, whose work was highly praised.⁵⁸

A noticeable increase in the number of incidents in the fall of 1861 was occasioned by the first efforts to introduce land charters, although some reports merely linked them to the refusal to perform *barshchina* or to accept elders appointed by mediators or the *pomeshchiki*.⁵⁹ By late September, signed land charters were reported for Vladimir (ninety-five), Moscow (twenty-two), Simbirsk (eight), and Podolsk (only one). The sluggishness in the latter province was attributed to the "entrenched misconception of the peasants that after two years they will receive some sort of new advantages."⁶⁰ This was the first swallow of what was to occur in the next year and a half all over Russia. Peasants seized on the two-year term proclaimed by the Tsar's "Manifesto" to continue the old obligations, insisting that there would then be a second proclamation of the Tsar's true *volia*, and they stubbornly refused to grasp that the law prescribed that this stage would be superseded by land charters, which they rather ascribed to the connivance of the *pomeshchiki* and the authorities to nullify the Tsar's will. They repeatedly expressed the fear that if they signed the charters they would be delivering themselves back into serfdom and would forfeit the privileges the Tsar intended to grant them after two years. One commander of a military expedition in Tambov complained of "the new cottage industry of so-called

'readers' who distort the meaning of the *Polozhenie* (Emancipation statute), adding their own perverse interpretations or [claiming] that aside from the present *Polozhenie* there is a real one concealed by the *pomeshchiki* and the local authorities."⁶¹ The governor of Kharkov in a report to the Ministry of Interior Affairs of 7 December 1861 remarked:

Even with the most conciliatory approach, many [peasants] refuse to elect deputies [*upolnomochnye*] according to para. 48 of the Statutes to certify the *ustavnye gramoty* by affixing their signatures, even though they voice no specific complaints or objections. . . . Others declare their intention to remain on their present status until the appointed time [*slushnyi chas*] which in their conception coincides with the expiration of the two-year term . . . after which all obligatory relations with the *pomeshchiki* will cease and they will receive the land gratis.

He complained that, as a result of these silly rumors, many landowners were obliged to make considerable concessions to the detriment of their own interests, and he requested to be authorized to use force in such cases.⁶²

One of the early major incidents precipitated by attempts to force the acceptance of land charters, soon to become quite common, occurred in the villages of Blagoveshchenskoe, Avdot'ina, Aleksandrovka, and Anna-Uspenskoe, all on the estates of Prince V. I. Vasil'chikov in Atkarsk district of Saratov in early November 1861. Typically the peace mediator arrived in the village of Blagoveshchenskoe on 10 November for the ceremonial "validation" (*poverka*) of the land charter, which, as prescribed by law, was to be effected by the election of six deputies (*upolnomochnye*), to whom the text was to be carefully explained and who were expected to sign on behalf of the villagers. Before the signing, household heads, accompanied by the peace mediator, the local police captain (*pristav*), and a representative of the estate owner would tour the lands marked off for the peasants. (All this is stipulated in articles 43 to 63, *Pravila*.) The election of deputies proceeded smoothly, but when the household heads were summoned for the tour they

refused to appear. Because the law provided for implementation apart from peasant consent by forwarding the text to the conference of peace mediators, no immediate crisis occurred, but the peasants' posture of complete boycott and open declaration that they would observe only the old obligations, not those of the charter, was interpreted as an act of open rebellion against the law. Moreover, other villages nearby refused even to elect deputies, one of them appealing to a resolution (*prigovor*) of their assembly (*skhod*) that they would await Tsar's new *polozhenie* (that is, to supersede that of 19 February 1861) after two years had ended. When the local authorities discovered that these villages were sending messengers to surrounding estates urging them to join in, they decided it was time to appeal to the provincial authorities. The provincial police chief authorized the district *ispravnik* (an officer of the police court or constable in criminal proceedings), the marshal of the nobility, and Major Globa of the Corps of Gendarmes to investigate the matter on the spot and put at their disposal a company of gendarme troops. They arrived in Blagoveshchenskoe on 28 November, assembled the peasants, and, after hearing their complaints, instructed them in the error of their ways, in particular that they were obliged to obey the instructions of the peace mediator on the procedure to receive their allotments. At first the Blagoveshchenskoe peasants stubbornly refused, but when threatened with beatings and fines, they relented and asked for forgiveness, blaming their behavior on ignorance of the law. The other villages, however, persisted in defiance until troops were brought in and six selected "instigators" were subjected to twenty-five strokes of the birch rod. This incident greatly accelerated the signing of charters in the surrounding villages according to Major Globa's report. He recommended that the peasants deserved leniency, because they sincerely believed that "they would again be binding themselves to serfdom if they signed anything prior to the [expiration of] the two-year term," which they claimed to have been told by the local police captain.⁶³

This was only a typical early instance, by no means the greatest or longest lasting. Of the several dozen well-documented instances in Soviet collections, several are notable for the peasants' remarkable stubbornness and inventiveness in resisting

authorities. For example, on the estate of S. D. Mukhanov in Vladimir, the villagers of Berezina refused to perform *barshchina* after a land charter was proposed to them in March 1862. They explained to the *pomeshchik* that they refused because a certain forest meadow, fondly called "Luza," was not included in their allotment, which they were prepared to exchange for less desirable lands. The *pomeshchik* declared that he might have rented it to them, but he now refused because of their impertinence. The peace mediator's persuasions had no effect, so the district constable was called in, who arrived with a military force on 23 June. One peasant was beaten, seven household heads were put in chains and sent to prison, and the entire village was threatened with exile to Siberia, all to no effect. On 9 July, the peace mediator tried to hand over a copy of the charter to the village elder, but the household heads warned him menacingly to reject it. The elder (apparently a wealthy peasant) volunteered to rent the meadow on behalf of the commune, but his fellow villagers forbade him to do so. The peace mediator then drew up a list of deficit work days transposed into rubles and turned the matter over to the courts for collection. Eventually confiscation proceedings deprived the villagers of most of their cows, sheep, and grain stores.⁶⁴

In the meantime, the peasants drew up a petition to Minister Valuev and deputized five peasants to carry it to St. Petersburg. They got as far as Moscow and were apprehended while viewing the Kremlin. The text of the petition is an interesting example of peasant reasoning and sly calculation. They claimed that they were ignorant of the charges against them and that they were willing to pay money in lieu of *barshchina*, but they only wanted the matter of the meadow settled first. They ascribed the affair to the intrigue and callousness of their *pomeshchik*, who had all the local officials in his pocket and called on his "good friend" the police chief of the province for help. Their economies were ruined and their children were without a crust of bread, but they were sure "the most esteemed dignitary of the merciful monarch" would give them protection and see the justice of their cause.⁶⁵ The measures were suspended, because the arrears could not be collected, and the matter was appealed all the way to the Senate, which finally, in 1864 and with the

peasants still adamant, decreed that seven household heads were to be imprisoned for two years, seven other men would be held for eight months, and seven more would be imprisoned for two months. Only on 8 July 1865 did the village assembly pass a resolution of submission, the terms of which are not recorded.

The Vladimir affair involved only seventeen households and sixty-one male souls, but two similar confrontations in Voronezh occurred on latifundia of a thousand or more souls. On that of S. V. Apraksin (1,116 souls), the reading of the land charters to the large settlement of Krasnaia Sloboda drew a huge crowd of spectators from surrounding settlements equally large. The constable was summoned with three companies of soldiers because of the threatening numbers and recalcitrant mood. The peace mediator again explained the terms of the charter and the peasants appeared to be nearly persuaded. They humbly stated that they would follow the advice of their priest, Father Aleksandr Bedin, who, instead of counseling Christian obedience to authority, plunged into the crowd and announced that the proffered charter violated the Tsar's Statute, which, of course, "he expounded in the most perverse fashion." Father Bedin took refuge in his church and then fled to a neighboring village to further propagate his views. Now eight companies had to surround three thousand peasants from several large settlements, while beatings were administered to the stubborn residents of Krasnaia Sloboda.⁶⁶

Another affair occurred on the even larger estate of Count G. A. Chertkov at Ol'khovatka, which consisted of 3,000 souls but 9,000 souls with adjacent estates of the same owner. On this occasion the peasants had refused to prepare the fields of their assigned allotment for winter crops because they feared this would signify a recognition of the legal force of their imposed land charter (the presumption seemed to be that an allotment granted by the Tsar was legitimate, but one conceded by the local *pomeshchik* was not). Eleven companies of troops were commanded by the governor himself, who happened to be another member of the Chertkov family and Major General of His Majesty's Imperial Suite. After three days of vain persuasion, the governor had his troops surround the vast crowd and administer corporal punishment until the peasants, first individually and then as a body, expressed their

submission (sixty-eight were beaten). Major General Chertkov claimed that a tour of surrounding districts established complete tranquillity, as settlement after settlement sought him out to sign their land charters. In his version, the peasants' behavior was rooted in the steppe traditions of the region (where Cossacks and fugitives once roamed) and in the particularly stubborn character of "Little Russians" (as right-bank Ukrainians were called, who had apparently been resettled in this area). He also reported that two peasants, who had been commissioned to carry a petition to St. Petersburg, returned spreading new rumors of the Tsar's will "favorable to their longings."⁶⁷

The same features emerge in incident after incident in the course of 1862---the expectation of a new outpouring of the Tsar's *volia* in two years, the fear of being entrapped again in serfdom, rocklike indifference to argument and persuasion, receptiveness to absurd rumors and keen interest in events elsewhere, and sudden, tearful repentance when the crushing weight of punitive measures came to bear.⁶⁸ In one such incident in Kazan that ended in a military court and prison sentences for thirty-six persons, the *mir* (sic) had taken a secret oath to hold out for the beggars' allotment; they also feared a new serfdom and expected untold benefits after two years if they held out.⁶⁹ In two villages in Kiev province of 600 and 1,600 souls, to which troops were called, the peasants had subjected their *volost'* elder (the *starshina*) to torture for appointing witnesses (*dobrovol'nye* or "volunteers") to the reading of their charter (the required procedure when elected deputies were not forthcoming). "Runners" (*khodiaki*) were sent to Poltava, where it was rumored certain villagers had refused to sign charters and had some "paper" with the Tsar's true will written on it. A retired soldier and a *meshchanin* (a lower townsman by estate) were suspected of spreading the rumors. The tortures applied were depriving the *starshina* and his *pisar'* (clerk) of sleep and forcing them to kneel for hours on crumbled bricks, threatening them with drowning and applying a hot frying pan to their feet; accusing the *starshina's* sister of being a witch, dressing her up appropriately, dragging her through the village streets with her hair tied to a wagon; and tying his teenage son to a post and forcing him to eat dung.⁷⁰

Petitions to the Tsar and other high officials were fairly common, such as those made by the villagers of Poliana on the estate of Prince P. N. Trubetskoi in Kostroma. According to the petition's version, when the peasants rejected the personal entreaty of the Prince to accept his proposed charter, the offended Prince turned them over to the tender mercies of his German bailiff, Rosenberg, who confiscated the *mir* capital in cash, wood, and grain and began to sell off a forest where they had traditionally cut wood and that they hoped one day would be theirs. When troops were called in, the village elder and several household heads, it is said, were so severely beaten that the elder died as a result of his wounds and another peasant had an eye knocked out. Rosenberg was accused of hiring a gang of armed thugs and of constantly threatening to kill them. The idea of a petition had been inspired by a certain Stepan Malyshev, who volunteered to carry it to St. Petersburg. Just as the commander of the punitive expedition thought he had the rebellious peasants under control, an emissary of Malyshev returned from the capital, and that night another oath was taken at another secret meeting on a threshing floor. Severe beatings finally brought the peasants to obedience, and each peasant was required to enter the *volost'* administration building separately and sign (or make his mark on) a pledge to observe all the terms of the law and obey all officials. The same procedure was imposed on the 3,000 souls of the other villages of the estate.⁷¹

Readers familiar with the literature on premodern unrest will recognize here many characteristic features---the mythologizing of the monarch's benevolent will, the secret oaths on the threshing floor (or other sanctified spot), the abhorrence of signing legally binding documents, the clever techniques of resistance and lateral mobilization, the crude methods of internal discipline, and the calculation of the prudent limits.⁷² Although these documents are vivid, they fall short as evidence. Most of them are reports by governors and police officials, augmented by a handful of peasant petitions. Daniel Field's study of the Bezdna affair, on which he had rich and varied documentation, shows how such documents could be deceptive, either by omitting vital information or stylizing their own and the peasants' behavior (adhering, as James Scott says, to the "official transcript").⁷³ Moreover, most incidents are

covered by one document or several of the same progeny, and seldom are there more than one or two cases per province, which makes it difficult to discern regional patterns. Valuev's biweekly reports are too scanty and slanted toward the government's concerns to add much depth.

Furthermore, only rarely do published reports account for instances when the process had gone smoothly, although the Kazan governor, in reporting incidents in one provincial district (which he blamed on the mishandling by local officials), referred also to Kazan district as exemplary, where he claims all but two of forty land charters had been implemented without incident and credited the skill and good judgment of the peace mediators.⁷⁴ In contrast, the chief of the Corps of Gendarmes in Poltava reported on 18 May a series of incidents that had brought the entire process to a halt in two provincial districts. He concluded that "the introduction of land charters in Poltava is proceeding slowly and frequently requires the application of force because of the peasants' stubborn conviction of some sort of new definitive *volia*," which they would not receive if they signed the charter or even performed the prescribed obligations.⁷⁵ Some reports attribute great significance to the peasants' universal hatred of *barshchina*, which owners often wanted to continue, whereas others stress the peasants' fear of heavy monetary obligations and preference for *barshchina*; on the other hand, some exclusively fault the rumors, whereas others see only mundane grievances, so that making general conclusions concerning the causes becomes difficult. But the worst failing is that no single area or region is sufficiently illuminated to establish patterns and relationships that would give us a sense of the movement as a whole.

The Implementation Process in Saratov

What I can offer here is a closer examination of a collection of documents covering with reasonable comprehensiveness the implementation process and

accompanying unrest in the province of Saratov. Although not a "typical" province (no region ever is)---Saratov had the highest incidence of unrest of all provinces, except Podolsk, with Chernigov as a near rival---it nevertheless reveals on a magnified scale the depth of peasants' negative reaction to the land charters nationwide, complementing the otherwise muted indicators in the land charter files.⁷⁶

The incident on the estates of Prince Vasil'chikov was a harbinger of others in the early spring that seemed routine. In early March, four other villages in Atkarsk district---Andreevka, Albovka, Kransovidovka, and Skuratovka---refused to participate in the verification process (*poverka*) for the charters, although they perpetrated no disorders, and only in Skuratovka did it amount to overt resistance: When outside witnesses were brought in because the peasants refused to choose deputies, the peasants urged them not to sign the *protokol* of the verification process, and they gathered in threatening numbers when the peace mediators tried to arrest three of them who were regarded as "instigators." As was almost universally the case, the peasant obduracy was predicated on the expectation of a "new *polozhenie*" in two years.⁷⁷ Similar incidents had also occurred earlier in the year on the estates of a certain Count Gorlikh (no location given) and of Staff Captain Stolypin in Lesnaia-Neelovka in Saratov district.⁷⁸ Governor E. I. Baranovskii initially expressed no particular alarm in his report to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of 11 March 1862, stating only that the Skuratovka incident had been referred to the constable of Atkarsk for criminal investigation and that troops were being held on standby. Baranovskii was anxious to convey the impression that incidents were being handled in routine fashion, and that peace mediators and constables had been instructed to "avoid any occasion for disorders," because elsewhere the new peasant institutions were working smoothly. He was sure the peasants' misconceptions of the Statute were temporary, and the peasant board had decided in such cases to suspend the process until they received further instructions from the Ministry.⁷⁹ Baranovskii had optimistically instructed the peace mediators to complete the process of approving charters before spring plowing, which he was reluctant to admit was now in doubt.

In fact, the local nobility in Atkarsk was already acutely alarmed about these incidents and had several times sent urgent requests to the provincial police chief to dispatch troops, but all to no avail.⁸⁰ The proprietor of the village of Andreevka, a certain Garmont---who also happened to be the local peace mediator---had an unpleasant confrontation with his peasants in February in which they made clear their intent not to abide by the terms of the proposed charter because they believed the rumors of the Tsar's new *volia*, which could be traced to emissaries from the Vasil'chikov estate. Not only had he received no reply to his request for troops but a deputation of his peasants had trekked to Saratov to give their own version to the Chief of Police, and Garmont was obliged to follow. The police chief's report to the Ministry states that he had carefully explained to the peasants the terms of the Statute and they seemed satisfied. He informed Garmont, who had appealed for troops, not as a peace mediator but rather as a landowner, that the incident was not serious enough to send troops. The peasant emissaries from the Vasil'chikov estate were known to the police chief, since they had departed for St. Petersburg where arrest orders awaited them. Garmont's version was that the peasants had clearly announced their criminal intentions, that they were incorrigibly convinced that "all the land will become their property," and that the infection of their example was spreading every day. He felt that only a "firm display of administrative authority" (meaning, of course, troops) would put an end to the "ferment of peasant minds."⁸¹

A certain Fokht, the proprietor of Skuratovka, where the defiance had been most serious, was also the district chairman of the conference of mediators, revealing the tight linkages between local officialdom and landowners. He was an unreconstructed vocal advocate of the nobles' proprietary interests and did not hesitate to voice his dissatisfaction with the entire emancipation settlement. He had also vainly requested military help from the police chief, but in the meantime he mobilized the local nobility by calling an assembly of the conference of mediators on 5 March 1862, attended by the marshal of the nobility and other interested nobles. The conference addressed a resolution (*otnoshenie*) to the police chief to the effect that the emissaries from Prince Vasil'chikov's estate were claiming that "they had

received directly from the Sovereign Emperor a command not to agree to any land charters, otherwise they would be deprived of the future beneficence of His Highness." Peasants who had already signed charters were demanding their signatures be revoked, and the affair threatened, it was averred, to escalate into open rebellion.

In view of this the conference of peace mediators concludes that landlords of the area cannot vouch for the safety of their families and inheritances in a region where peasants' memories have vividly preserved the traditions of the brigands [*razboiniki*] of history.⁸²

The appeal to the specter of Pugachev and Stenka Razin, of course, was designed to alarm the provincial authorities and doubtless succeeded. Fokht appended his own remarks, complaining that he had apprised the peasant board of the mounting danger as early as January but to no effect. He did not hesitate to denounce the Emancipation legislation itself as being the fruit of "abstract theory," as it made no provisions for the exercise of firm authority, nor did it clearly state that the land to be conceded was the private property of the nobles (on the contrary, the Statute was quite explicit regarding the nobles' proprietary rights), which had led to grave misconceptions among the common people. "One word from a personage close to the Tsar," he argued, "will have more influence on the *narod* than all the arguments and entreaties of local people living in their midst." He excoriated the provincial authorities for "not wanting to take any responsibility for carrying out their program, and in the case of failure to blame the peace mediators and local landowners."⁸³

Although the provincial police chief reported to his superiors in the Ministry of Internal Affairs on 11 March 1862 (the same date as Baranovskii's report) that complete calm prevailed on most estates as a result of the conscientious efforts of peace mediators and the local police, and on 13 March, he explicitly discounted the Atkarsk nobles' appeal, he appraised the situation completely differently on 25 March, by which time he had authorized the deployment of troops in the province.⁸⁴

His report of this date notes that there had been major disturbances in Serdobsk district in the villages of Dmitrevka and Urusov. In Dmitrevka, the peasants had forcibly interfered with a land survey connected with the verification of a charter and they stated that they intended to await a new word from the Tsar. The Urusov affair was much more serious, as Urusov was a large village of 552 souls surrounded by other populous estates of a Countess Borkh, whose inhabitants were following the proceedings carefully. The peace mediator had suspended the implementation of charters in the entire area to give the police chief time to move in units of the Seventeenth Infantry Division.

In Kvalynsk district, the peasants of the large parish village (*selo*) Osinovka were stirring up the entire area with a campaign for the quarter allotment, whereas another village of fifty-nine souls sent a deputation to the district peasant board with the same request, because their assigned allotment was worthless. Told their "importunities" were illegal, the villagers began to spread rumors about a "new *volia* according to which they would receive the land gratis." The peace mediator Prince Obolenskii tried to reason with an assembled peasant crowd and, failing that, ordered the arrest of a soldier agitator in their midst and the removal of their elder. At 10:00 in the evening, a crowd of three hundred gathered around the hut where the elder was staying and forced him to revoke his actions. A peace mediator from Tsaritsyn district reported that "the peasants absolutely reject the land charter and are deaf to all arguments in their favor, though they are willing to work on the old basis for two years until the *oslushnyi chas*' " (an intentional orthographic corruption of *slushnyi chas*' to suggest disobedience). The police chief's report concluded that "given the peasants' mood, the introduction of land charters has become absolutely impossible, as the peasants, with the advent of field work, decisively reject all obligatory relations with the *pomeshchiki*."⁸⁵ He appended a list of deployed companies in the province, eight companies each in Serdobsk, Atkarsk, and Balashev; six in Petrovsk; and fewer in the remaining district.

The rapid deployment of troops seemed to have quieted the unrest quickly, because on 30 March the police chief boasted of the desirable results.⁸⁶ Although not

highlighted in the report, it is clear that beatings were liberally administered. In each district, the chief peace mediator, the marshal of the nobility, the constable, and a *gendarme* officer were instructed to tour their regions, and everywhere they reported to have encountered peasants eager to acknowledge their errors and sign the charters; they claimed to have been influenced by rumors heard at bazaars from unknown persons.⁸⁷ The provincial authorities clearly wanted to convince St. Petersburg that matters were under control and that no further cause for alarm was warranted.

Although the military deployment may have succeeded temporarily in subduing the peasants, the process of implementing the charters in fact came to an abrupt halt. The numbers reported to the Ministry belie the claim that the peasants flocked to sign up for the charters. Only 126 had actually been officially approved and only two were said to be in process as of 1 May, and this number did not increase throughout the summer. By the same date, ten other provinces had registered more than a thousand charters in process, and Saratov ranked thirty-second of forty-four provinces in the number of charters approved (the provinces of Kiev, Chernigov, Poltava, and Kharkov in Black Earth Ukraine fared worse). By 1 August, only 9.27 percent of the peasant population of Saratov on temporary obligation were now covered by approved land charters, whereas the average for all provinces was 27.53 percent. This was doubtless due in part to a delay in reporting, because the tally for 1 September was 794 charters approved (or nearly one-half the total), and Saratov now ranked eighteenth nationwide, but was also due to the many irregularities uncovered in the texts of the charters already approved by peace-mediator assemblies (which I discuss in later sections).⁸⁸

It seems clear that the Ministry of Internal Affairs now required provinces to report every instance of unrest, because the balance of the file that is the basis of my account consists of such reports.⁸⁹ Although the incidents are scattered in time and location, collectively they confirm that the aftershocks of the spring movement continued throughout the summer and tapered off only in the fall after the harvest (and the due date for *obroks*). Military intervention was by then routinized, even for relatively modest affairs, so it was perhaps as significant for discouraging new

outbursts as for settling them after they occurred. Only a dozen incidents were as extensive as the spring events in Serdobsk and Khvalynsk (which were composed of large, populous villages and the surrounding area), but some were on sprawling estates dominating entire districts such as the Chertynskii estates in Kamyshin and those of several Popovs in Tsaritsyn. We can fairly safely surmise that many villages not directly involved in confrontations delayed signing charters until they could see which way the wind was blowing; when it became apparent that further resistance was futile, they cut the best deal possible. Otherwise it is difficult to explain why, given the marked decrease of recorded confrontations, the number of registered charters increased dramatically. Because 44 percent of the charters were in any event approved without the signature of the peasants (the national average was 57 percent), and an undetermined number of the signatures were extracted by military intervention, it seems clear that there was no spontaneous movement toward voluntary compliance.⁹⁰

The characteristics and occasions of incidents shifted somewhat with the work cycle, although the premises remained the same. In the late spring, the peasants were no longer overtly resisting the signing of charters or impairing the proceedings, but rather they were refusing to perform *barshchina* on the new terms, to plow the assigned allotments, or to pay installments on *obroks*. By midsummer, incidents were connected with *barshchina* for haying; by August and early September, with harvesting, carting, threshing, and preparing the soil for winter planting. Fairly frequently now troops were called because "instigators" resisted arrest or because conflicts ensued over the selections of village and *volost* elders. Because villagers regarded the village elders as "theirs" and expected them to follow the *prigovory* (resolutions) of their assemblies, they resisted vigorously when peace mediators tried to replace them. (Battles erupted frequently over possession of the *znak*, or medallion worn by the village elder and his *pechat'* to stamp documents.) Peasants, not without reason, were very suspicious of *volost'* institutions and of *volost'* elders (*starshiny*) in particular, because these were novel arrangements obviously designed to make the peasants perform obligations. Finally, false prophets or self-appointed spokesmen for

the Tsar's "new will" or "evil-minded persons spreading rumors" were as prominent as ever, and in midsummer, on instructions from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a futile campaign was launched to identify and apprehend such culprits. Because most of the reports are brief and contain few details, I will use the more substantial reports for illustration, assuming that many others had similar, if not identical, features. By my computation, an explicit reference to a feature eight or more times (of approximately thirty-six surveyed) qualifies it as "typical" or "common," although any pretense to exactitude would be unwarranted.

The peasants' reluctance to render *barshchina* according to the old terms was widespread the previous year as an immediate reaction to the Tsar's Manifesto, so it is not surprising that it continued as a form of rejecting the obligations stipulated in the land charter. The refusal to perform *barshchina* or doing so with intentional slackness figures in fully one-half of my sample. On the Dubasov estate in Kuznetz district, the peasants defaulted on work days, quit after four hours when they did appear, failed to haul wood in the winter, and surreptitiously substituted hay for oats in the feed of the *barin's* horses. The village elder refused to impose penalties, claiming that heavy snows were to blame. They also claimed that they felt no obligation to meet the terms of a charter on which they had not been consulted.⁹¹ In Balashev district on the estates of Lobanov-Rostovskii, they refused to perform *barshchina* because they rejected their charter at the behest of an agitator at an illegal peasant assembly.⁹² This resulted in a major incident ending with troops and beatings.

Sometimes failure to perform *barshchina*, even by only six peasants, was the sole pretext for summoning troops.⁹³ In most other cases, *barshchina* was linked to other issues, such as resentment at being forced to take the maximum allotment,⁹⁴ as leverage to force acceptance of the quarter allotment,⁹⁵ the anticipation of a second *volia*,⁹⁶ and in one case a demand to remove the *volost'* elder,⁹⁷ but underlying them all was an intractable rejection of the terms of imposed land charters. The same general pattern applies to defaults on *obroks* for the same reasons, although they are mentioned less frequently, because collections were due only twice each year.

In nine cases of confrontation, the authority of the *starshina* or *volost'* elder was at issue, because his orders were defied, the peasants demanded his replacement, or he refused to perform his duties for fear of reprisals; village elders were more likely to feature as instigators or collaborators or as dragging their feet at fulfilling the orders of peace mediators. On the Ustinov and Kurtkin estates in Atkarsk, complaints against the *starshina* were the focus of major disturbances in June in five villages of 1,713 souls. The *starshina* had imposed fines in March at the behest of the peace mediator and was removed and replaced at an "illegal" mass assembly of several villages. The villagers even set up a rival *volost'* administration in another village and dumped the old *starshina* out of his carriage, threatening his life.⁹⁸ When three companies of troops were brought in, a "drunken mob" charged them and held the constable hostage. When additional troops were summoned, the villagers sent a deputation to the governor in Saratov with a bill of indictment against the *starshina*: He had of course plundered communal funds and stocks of wood and, a clever touch, failed to remove his hat during the ceremonial reading of the *Polozhenie*. Liberal beatings ended the incident.⁹⁹ In a similar incident in Balashev that involved two estates, the *starshina* and the village elder became targets when they tried to enforce labor requirements to lay in grain in the landowner's barns. In the presence of the peace mediator, they tried to tear off the medallions of both the *starshina* and the village elder.¹⁰⁰ In another important incident, the *volost'* and village elders of almost the entire district of Kamyshin were party to a mass movement to force authorities to grant them the beggars' allotment. The elders had been obliged, willingly or not, to convoke illegal assemblies, draw up defiant resolutions, put them to a vote, and affix their seals.¹⁰¹ It was logical to the peasants to involve their elders in acts of resistance, as they were persuaded that they were executing the Tsar's true *volia*, and therefore the solemnity of proper procedure was mandatory (a parody and an inversion of the rituals of officials and *pomeshchiki*). Whenever elders tried to enforce official directives in these incidents, peasants were especially resentful and wreaked the kind of vengeance reserved for their own kind (imaginative cruelties combined with demeaning mockeries such as dumping and dunking).

The peasant movement until this time had been fueled primarily by the notion of the Tsar's "new will," or *volia*, either as embodied in secret documents or to be revealed at the expiration of the two-year period. The movement reached a climax in the spring of 1862 in the peasants' massive resistance to the signing of charters and the observation of their terms, but the documents I examined show that the deployment of military force scarcely dampened the movement, and scattered incidents continued throughout the summer, tapering off only in the late fall and winter. Although the number of documents on Saratov decreases thereafter for reasons unknown, the materials in Soviet publications suggest that the expectation of a new outpouring of the Tsar's will on 19 February 1863 elicited another substantial upsurge of peasant unrest in the Ukrainian, White Russian, Volga, and Black Earth provinces.¹⁰² My sample for the summer and fall of 1862 contains no fewer than seventeen instances of unrest in Saratov in which the Tsar's true *volia* was invoked, either coupled to the two-year period or various secret documents known through itinerant messengers (a new *polozhenie*, letters from the Tsar or high personages, and so forth). The constable of Khvalynsk district reported on 16 April that among six apprehended instigators of a disturbance was a former village elder who spread a rumor of "a new *volia* on the free distribution of land."¹⁰³ Two other instigators arrested in Kamyshin in May 1863 persuaded their fellows not to plow and sow their assigned allotment because a retired soldier from Saratov claimed to have a "letter" granting *volia* to their two villages. In a similar incident in the district of Saratov, two soldiers passing through claimed that "soon the *Gosudar Imperator* will declare a new *Polozhenie*," and therefore they should obey no other demands of the authorities.¹⁰⁴ On the estate of a Prince Golitsyn at Sokur, also in the district of Saratov, the peasants were told by a merchant at the bazaar that the Grand Duke Constantine would give them an allotment free for the asking.¹⁰⁵ In Atkarsk district, the peasants of Kupenskaia and Aleksandrovskaia *volosti* refused to divide their fields for spring planting because "the Tsar will be angry if we take *gospodskii* land [that is, from former lord] before 1863." The peace mediator feared the beginning of a new brigandage inspired by resettlers from the Don Cossack territories.¹⁰⁶ Other

rumormongers were identified as a priest, two wood contractors, a mentally ill person dressed as a soldier, a passing wagoner, and a self-appointed "ataman."¹⁰⁷ Although local instigators were easily apprehended and punished, the elusive, itinerant rumor bearers were seldom apprehended despite an intense midsummer campaign.¹⁰⁸ The authorities were seriously in error if they thought that rumor bearers were primarily responsible for perverse interpretations of the Statute. The peasant imagination did not require much prompting to conceive of the Tsar's true *volia*--it was merely convenient under duress to deflect the blame to real or imagined outsiders.

How close was Saratov to a new *pugachevshchina* or "revolutionary situation" in the summer of 1862? Certainly in March the danger of a breakdown in control was far greater than the provincial authorities had assumed, and the sudden shift to military intervention was prudent, but no serious danger seemed imminent thereafter. Raising the specter of Pugachev was an artful scare tactic by conservative landowners to tip the scales against the peasants when framing the land charters, but the ingredients of a true revolutionary situation or any sustained revolt were hardly present.¹⁰⁹ There was no urgency for the landowners to secure charters, because it was advantageous to hold the process in abeyance while the lessons of military repression set in; once the spirit of peasant resistance was broken, processing of charters could resume on terms more favorable to the landowners. The provincial and local authorities had no choice but to agree (if they were not alter egos). Still, in the summer and fall nearly a dozen serious instances occurred of sustained action that were more than mere noncompliance and involved mobilization of localities rather than single estates or villages. The most threatening incidents occurred in the summer on large conglomerations of latifundia in Atkarsk, Kamyshin, and Tsaritsyn, such as that noted previously on the estates of Ustinov and Kurtina in Golitsynskaia *volost'* that involved five villages and 1,713 souls. Huge crowds had forced the constable to release their arrested comrades despite the presence of troops. Had a much larger force not been called in promptly, the disorders might have spread significantly, because other villages were following the situation closely.¹¹⁰ The largest cluster of

incidents occurred in Atkarsk: the peasants' mass refusals to plow and sow allotment lands in the Kupenskaia and Aleksandrovskaia *volosti* in July, which had all the earmarks of a coordinated campaign with messengers back and forth.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, all these situations were controlled promptly by military force.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs was sufficiently alarmed by the reports on Atkarsk and Kamyshin to pointedly ask the governor why he had not toured these districts to reestablish order. Baranovskii replied that Atkarsk was under control and that he had toured Kamyshin and Tsaritsyn instead, where the danger of a breakdown in authority was far more serious. The sprawling Chertynskii estates in Kamyshin were in an uproar over the peasants' insistent demands for the quarter allotment. Because the estates were under receivership for a debt of 1,600,000 rubles, the only feasible solution was to force the peasants into immediate redemption for the maximum allotment. The deadlock and spread of the disorders ended the process of formalizing land charters in the entire district. The governor blamed the dereliction of the peace mediators and the constable for the situation, the former for not adequately explaining the terms of the statute to the peasants and the latter for not applying timely measures to terminate the disorders, which allowed the disorders to spread. Akhmatovskaia *volost'* was the scene of a massive assembly to which representatives of other *volosts* were invited. The district marshal of the nobility boldly addressed the crowds, patiently explaining why their actions were illegal and the consequences should they persist. Surprisingly the peasants agreed to resume fulfilling *barshchina* and *obrok* obligations but still they adamantly refused to sign charters.

An investigation by the provincial peasant board found many irregularities in the texts of charters submitted thus far, such as inaccurate counts of souls and calculations of the size of allotments. This led to a personnel shake-up and the convocation of a special conference in Saratov of the peace mediators of Kamyshin and Tsaritsyn districts, whose task was to teach the peace mediators to draw up charters properly. The logjam of peasant resistance apparently was broken by offering the peasants immediate conversion to redemption with payment on the one-

fifth not covered by the government loan deferred for ten years, and in other cases by granting the beggars' allotment.¹¹² It seems fair to conclude from this that the local nobility, in collusion with pliant peace mediators, had systematically skewed the terms of the charters to their advantage in violation of legal limits, and thus were guilty of provoking the impasse. The provincial authorities had acted to overcome such obstructionism in Atkarsk in March but apparently had not yet sent as clear a message to local authorities in Kamyshin and Tsaritsyn.

In any event, both peasant resistance and obstruction by local cliques were brought under control by the end of September, and charters continued to be formalized without major interruption until their completion by mid-1863. The peasants had tested the limits of the government's ability to maintain control and bowed to the inevitable. Thereafter appeals to the Tsar's new *volia* were scarcely heard.

Conclusions

This detailed examination of the land charter episode in Saratov on the basis of two different orders of documentation is useful for understanding the post-Emancipation agrarian settlement, regardless of whether it was typical in all respects. First, it confirms that the process was not smooth, that the interests and concerns of landowners and peasants were sharply at odds and contested all the way through, and that the final result was largely a compromise imposed by government authorities. The unvarnished greed of the most reactionary landowners was mitigated only by considerable resistance by the peasants, which required belated intervention by bureaucratic and police authorities to keep the social peace and to impose rational limits and consistency to the settlement terms. Despite the veneer of patronizing liberalism and sentimental solicitude for the well-being of both estates, the government's interest was primarily fiscal. The peasant estate had to remain the tax-

paying corporation par excellence, and thus minimum resources for it to sustain that role had to be guaranteed. The system of maximum and minimum norms was calculated precisely to bring bureaucratic consistency and predictability to the calculation of future state income. At the same time, the government had to be concerned with the solvency of the noble estate because of the enormous debts the latter had accrued toward the government. A study by Stephen Hoch confirms that fiscal debt management was a primary concern in framing the details of the redemption operation.¹¹³ My materials greatly reinforce that picture at the microlevel. The government and the landowners leaned heavily toward the maximum norms, not out of generosity toward the peasants but because of the need to maximize the monetary income of estate owners, so that redemption settlements had good prospects of clearing indebtedness. Conversely, the peasants resisted such terms precisely because they were determined to escape such burdens and regarded them as patently contradictory to their interpretation of Tsar's true *volia*.

The surprise I found in my research is that peasants, when constrained to settle, preferred the minimum amounts or even the beggars' allotments, even though they would have far less land at their disposal. Because they viewed the Tsar's beneficence precisely in terms of land, they simply refused to regard the proffered land settlement as final, because it emanated from the *pomeshchiki* and not the Tsar. In their minds, to accept the enormous obligations in *obrok* or *barshchina* was tantamount to agreeing to a new serfdom and forfeiting the *volia* the Tsar intended to declare after two years. Thus they could be persuaded under duress to perform "temporary" obligations, but they mounted far more serious resistance to actually signing the charters. My evidence suggests that peasants usually signed charters only after actual or threatened severe beatings and penalties, but that they were able through their collective resistance to secure some of their proximate goals. This modifies our understanding of much of the conventional historiography of the Emancipation, which views the state and the noble corporation as the sole determinants of the outcome (Soviet versions, despite the emphasis on revolutionary unrest, do not ascribe agency to peasants, because their energies were wasted

irrationally) and brings it into line with more recent views of the peasants as an active force, as within limits to use "the weapons of the weak" to create more space for themselves than the holders of social and political power intended. A dynamic picture has been presented on a regional level of the peasant mode of self-mobilization through naive monarchism, or visionary Utopianism; as Field has admirably demonstrated, this was not just a naive belief but rather a "device" to oblige their adversaries to accommodate them on issues that concerned them--- lowered dues, beggars' allotments, early conversion without paying the extra one-fifth, in some cases the coveted patches of woodland or meadows, that otherwise would have been forfeited. No matter that these goals were parochial or shortsighted from the perspective of the omniscient, they had visceral meaning for its votaries, for which it was worthwhile to take risks and endure punishments. Many of these issues deserve more extensive treatment and statistical verification than I have offered here, but I hope I have identified the process and the characteristics of the "moment."

The date 19 February 1863 came and passed, but the conviction of a new *volia* in the future, when the peasants would be generously provided land free of obligations, was secretly cherished by peasants of two more generations and fed into their behavior in two revolutions. Doubtless future studies will identify regional variations to the patterns discerned here, but it would be surprising indeed were they not to confirm the concept of a settlement rooted in the tumultuous period of creating the land charters, whereby the peasants "negotiated" their aims through massive resistance.

Notes

1. I have in mind above all the accounts of Geroid Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), chapter 5; Daniel Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-61* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976); Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, 3 vols. (London, 1893-96), 1: vii, chapters 2 and 3; A. A. Kornilov, *Krest'ianskaia reforma* (St. Petersburg, 1905); and P. A. Zainochkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'noekonomicheskoi Literatury, 1968), chapter 3.
2. Lenin's early writings on the peasantry stress cutoffs as a crucial index of the continuation of "feudal exploitation" after the Emancipation. Convinced, to some extent correctly, that they were firmly embedded in peasant consciousness and could be exploited for agitational purposes, he insisted on including a paragraph on the issue in the "Platform" presented by Iskra to the Second Congress of the Party in 1902 at the expense of his good relations with George Plekhanov. See his arguments in "Raboचाia partiia i krest'ianstvo," *Iskra* 3 (April 1902) in *V. I. Lenin Sochineniia*, 3d ed. (Moscow, 1927), vol. 4:100-106.
3. See P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Provedenie v zhizn' krest'ianskoi reformy 1861 g.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Sotsial'noekonomicheskoi Literatury, 1958), 4. (*Provedenie* is an earlier version of *Otmena*, virtually the same book, but the introduction differs.) Zaionchkovskii's and other cited works contain detailed lists of the other local studies of that period, mainly unpublished doctoral dissertations.
4. Litvak, *Ruskaia derevnia v reforme 1861 goda* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1972), 37. Other studies have extended and refined this methodology, without, however, significantly altering the underlying assumptions or achieving new results. The best of these, because it matches Zaionchkovskii's versatility in using sources, is D. I. Budaev, *Krest'ianskaia reforma 1861 goda v Smolenskoii gubernii* (Smolensk, 1967). Two recent studies of Novgorod and St. Petersburg provinces are distinguished by efforts to refine the statistical categories and to process the data electronically, tabulating them district by district, but they do not reach new conclusions. See A. Ia. Degtarev, S. G. Kashchenko, and D. I. Raskin, *Novgorodskaia*

derevnia v reforme 1861 goda (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1989) and S. G. Kashchenko, *Reforma 19 fevralia, 1861 goda v Sankt-Peterburgskoi gubernii* (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1990).

5. The standard Soviet interpretation repeated in many texts is developed systematically by V. A. Fedorov in two contributions to the collective volumes, *Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859-61 gg.*, edited by M. V. Nechkina (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1960-1963) and entitled "Trebovaniia krest'ianskogo dvizheniia v nachale revoliutsionnoi situatsii" (do 19 fevralia 1861 g.) (1: 133-148) and "Lozungy krest'ianskoi bor'by v 1861-1863 gg". (2: 237-258). A survey of sources and investigations on peasant unrest is found in Litvak, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1775-1904* (Moscow: "Nauka," 1989). (References to the 1860s are scattered throughout the volume, because divisions are thematic rather than chronological.) A useful monograph on peasant unrest in the Ukraine is by N. N. Leshchenko, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine v sviazi s provedeniem reforma 1861 g.* (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Ukrainskoi SSR, 1959). The only Western historian to address this subject systematically is Robert P. Donnorummo, *The Peasants of Central Russia: Reactions to Emancipation and the Market, 1850-1900* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), especially chapter 2. Donnorummo considers comprehensively the Soviet data on unrest, but like other Western historians, he dissents from the notion of a "revolutionary situation." Rather he sees peasant unrest as localized and spontaneous and rightly links it to the terms of the Emancipation and land charters in particular (see pp. 73-74), albeit without further analysis.

6. See data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in *Otmena krepostnogo prava* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950), 285-286 (hereafter, *Otmena* [1950]) and P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena*, 204. See also A. Z. Baraboi, et al. (eds.), *Otmena krepostnogo prava na Ukraine. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Kiev: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk Ukrainskoi SSR, 1961), which has extensive documentation on official directives and reports.

7. See *Otmena* (1950), 85-86 and P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Provedenie*, 314. Litvak's figures for the central Black Earth provinces are much higher: 53 percent for Voronezh, 36 percent for Kursk, and 38.5 percent for Tambov (*Russkaia derevnia*, 328-329).

8. See figures in Litvak, *Russkaia derevnia*, 327-329. In 1881, 20.2 percent of the peasant population in Voronezh *guberniia* was still on temporary obligation, whereas in Kursk it was 25.6 percent, and in Tambov it was 18.3 percent. For the circumstances leading to the passage of the law on mandatory conversions, see P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *The Russian Autocracy in Crisis, 1878-1882* (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1979), 218 ff.

9. Litvak, *Russkaia derevnia*, 36.

10. The dues amount was "capitalized" at 6 percent; that is, it was treated as if it represented 6 percent of the capital worth of the holding. The redemption agreements (*vykupnye dogovory*) used this figure as the basis for a "loan" to the peasants of four-fifths of the capital worth of their lands of a given peasant community, to be repaid in forty-nine yearly installments with double that amount reckoned as interest. The resulting payments equaled exactly four-fifths of the former dues with interest, because covering the capital amount would require 16.33 years (6 percent per year) and payment of the interest would require 32.66 years. The formula is carefully explained in P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena*, 138-141. Although these terms are spelled out in a separate statute on redemption, all other provisions that I discuss are embodied in the "local" statute for the Great Russian, New Russian, and White Russian provinces ("Mestnoe Polozhenie o pozemel'nom ustroistve krest'ian, vodvorennykh na pomeshchich'ikh zemliakh v guberniakh: Velikorossiiskikh, Novorossiiskikh i Belorusskikh," in *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 2d series, XXXVI [St. Petersburg, 1863], 231 ff., hereafter *PSZ*). There were, of course, other "local statutes" covering the Baltic provinces, Right Bank Ukraine, Poland, the Caucasus, and Siberia, but I will follow my sources and common usage by applying the term *Polozhenie*, "Statute" or "Main Statute" to designate the above-mentioned main "Local Statute." There was, in addition, a separate "Implementation Statute" that embodied the procedure and forms to be followed, "Pravila o poriadke privedeniia v deistvie Polozhenii o krest'ianakh, vyshedshikh iz krepostnoi zavisimosti," *ibid.*, 218 ff. To simplify citation, articles by number will be given in the text (articles 7 and 8) where it is obvious the main local statute is meant and followed by *Pravila* (Implementation Statute) where that is meant (article 9, *Pravila*).

11. These points emerge frequently in the documents I examined and in several examples cited by Litvak, *Ruskaia derevnia*, 196 ff. The peasants' right to contest the terms and its tortured interpretation in practice is discussed in A. A. Kornilov, *Krest'ianskaia reforma v Kaluzhskoi gubernii pri V.A. Artsimoviche* (St. Petersburg, 1904), 254. Zaionchkovskii's excellent exposition of the Statute only covers the size and character of the peasants' obligations, and as far as I know there is no discussion in the literature of the terms and modes of implementation, and therefore the information presented here is a first attempt.

A *pomeshchik* is a holder of a land grant from the Tsar, hence a noble who holds land together with the serfs residing on it. It continued as a legal and social category after the Emancipation for owners of estates in their legal relations with peasants. I use the Russian term here because neither "noble" nor "landowner" captures the full meaning. To the peasant, his former lord was always the *pomeshchik* and it is also the official term used in legal documents.

12. See Field's *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 210 and *passim*. Field's work remains the classic on the subject of naive monarchism. James Scott bases his own discussion of naive monarchism and the question of peasant rationality on Field's paradigm, with which I have little to argue. See also Scott's *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 96-103 and *passim*.

Volia and *slushnyi chas'* are evocative terms in Russian not subject to exact translation. *Volia*, literally "will" or "freedom," signified to the peasants the Tsar's bestowal of emancipation and is invoked throughout this period in the expectation of a "new" or "second" *volia* promised in the first one; that is, the Manifesto of 19 February 1861. They also grasped at the term *Polozhenie* (Statute) as more or less an equivalent. *Slushnyi chas'*, "the hearkened hour," was a similar talisman, an almost secret code word between the Tsar and his people. Thus we will use these Russian terms as they appear in the sources.

13. The idea of "negotiation," although doubtless appearing in other studies, was recently advanced by Sheila Fitzpatrick in *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 7 ff., and by Andrew Verner in "Discursive Strategies in the 1905 Revolution: Peasant Petitions

from Vladimir Province," *The Russian Review* 54:1 (January 1994), 65-90. James Scott approaches the concept with his notion of "space" protected by the oppressed but sees it as either covert or extracted by force. See *Domination*, chapter 5. For a study that applies the concept, but not the term, see William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1979): "Most of the protective adjustments of surviving villages [of the period of Conquest] took place in Old Regime terms--protesting abuses rather than the legitimacy of a remote colonial sovereign, and accommodating, often uneasily, within the colonial system in ways that were perceived to be mutually advantageous by the colonial lords and the peasant villagers" (p. 24).

14. See Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1968); Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Norton, 1959); and Scott's *The Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985). Scott's *Domination* contains an extensive bibliography.

15. The classical account of medieval peasant utopianism is by Norman Cohn in *The Pursuit of the Millenium*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970). The question of the connection between the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation and the German "Peasant Wars" of 1525 is apparently still being hotly debated, but see James M. Strayer, *The German Peasants' War and the Anabaptist Community of Goods* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), especially chapter 1, "Current Historiography." I am persuaded that there is a connection, despite the current revisionist views to the contrary.

16. See Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv (hereafter *TsGIA*), f. 577, op. 34 (Saratov) and op. 26 (Orel).

17. My argument for the merits of regional and local history are developed in a contribution to a collective volume on the history of Saratov. See "Reflections," in Rex A. Wade and Scott J. Seregny (eds.), *Politics and Society in Provincial Russia: Saratov, 1590-1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989), 326-341.

18. See Scott, *Domination*, 89, where he speaks of a "joint conspiracy [of the oppressors and oppressed] to keep conflict out of the public record."

19. The absence of a major study of the Emancipation Statutes of 1861 from a legal perspective is unfortunate. There is a brief exposition in the general work on peasant law by A. A. Leontiev in *Krest'ianskoe pravo: sistematicheskoe izlozhenie* (Moscow, 1909). My version is based on the text of the Statutes and on the information and practices that emerge in the documentation.

20. *PSZ*, 36: 219. The Main Statute scrupulously holds to particular rules rather than legal concepts, yet it upholds the pretense that "the size of the peasants' nadel . . . shall be determined by voluntary agreement between the *pomeshchiki* and the peasants" which it goes on to qualify in countless ways (*ibid.*, 233 and ff.).

21. Because the two-year provision was of such cardinal importance in the peasant understanding of the Emancipation, it is important to know that it was first stated in Alexander II's "Manifesto" (*PSZ*, 36: 130-133), giving it the force of a solemn promise from the crown. For an English language version, see James Cracraft (ed.), *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1994), 342, which unfortunately mistranslates this paragraph to make it appear that the charters were already in force rather than that they were to be drawn up within the two-year period.

22. See Litvak, *Russkaia derevnia*, 127-146, especially 134; and A. A. Kornilov, *Krest'ianskaia reforma v Kaluzhskoi Gubernii*, 11 and *passim*. The distinction between *obrok* or dues-paying peasants and those rendering *barshchina* or labor dues (equivalent of the French *corvée*) are categories in law and practice carried over from serfdom. They are treated as separate categories in the Emancipation Statute and all our resources, and consequently I preserve the terms here untranslated. *Barshchina* peasants are those who exclusively perform *barshchina* and *obrok* peasants are those who pay *obrok*, and so on.

23. See Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena*, chapter 3 for a lucid exposition of this conflict. For the special points on labor obligations, see 134-135.

24. See Cracraft, *Major Problems*, 341-343.

25. Article 33 of Catherine's Charter guaranteed the rights of nobles to ownership "not only [what is] on the surface of the land, but also in all the hidden minerals and vegetation both in the bowels of that land and in the waters belonging to him, and in all the metals produced therefrom." Other articles cover forests, the handicraft production of serfs, factories and mills on their property, and the right to organize trade and annual fairs. For the text, see Cracraft, *Major Problems*, 205-212. For the articles in the Main Statute, see *PSZ*, 37: 231 ff., articles 93-95, 173, and *passim*.

26. See article 122 and Field, *The End of Serfdom*, 353-354. Zaionchkovskii brilliantly dissects the terms of the 1861 Statute to illustrate many of these points in *Provedenie*, 142-147 and *passim*. I have seen no evidence that the computation for fixed dues for the Black Earth region noted (4 rubles for the first *desiatina*) was ever followed in practice. Perhaps a circular or instruction superseded it.

27. For the saga of the liberal governor of Kaluga, V. A. Artimovich, see Kornilov, *Krest'ianskaia reforma v Kaluzhskoi Gubernii*, in entirety. For the similar struggle of a liberal member of a Provincial Board of Peasant Affairs, see S. I. Nosovich, *Krest'ianskaia reforma v Novgorodskoi Gubernii. Zapiski S. I. Nosovicha, 1961-1963 gg.* (St. Petersburg, 1899). My materials supply other examples.

28. For the Soviet characterization, see Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena*, 183-189. Leroy-Beaulieu follows the liberal historiography of A. A. Kornilov, G. A. Dzhanshiev, and others, whereas Geroid Robinson fails to treat the question. For an interesting recent monographic treatment that takes the optimistic view, see N. F. Ust'iantseva, "Institut mirovykh posrednikov v krest'ianskoi reforme," in L. G. Zakharova, B. Eklof, and Dzh. Bushnell (eds.), *Velikie reformy v Rossii 1856-1874* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1992), 166-183. Although she convincingly describes the process whereby the Ministry of Interior Affairs influenced the selection of nominees, nevertheless only 112 from their confidential list were actually appointed, and there were 1,700 peace mediators (see pp. 166, 170, and 179). With the appointment of Valuev to replace the liberal Lanskoï as Minister of Interior Affairs, the

official favoritism of the government ceased to operate, and in one year there was a 45 percent turnover in personnel, a process well described in Nosovich and Kornilov's *Artsimovich*. The presence of mediators well-disposed toward peasants is not at all registered in the materials I examined, but I did find many examples of the opposite kind.

29. Although the characterizations here are based on my documents, the format is briefly (and incompletely) summarized in Zaionchkovskii, *Provedenie*, 28. Two major sections of the Main Statute are devoted to these complex problems. See *PSZ*, 36: 243-247.

30. Zaionchkovskii covers these rules incompletely (*Provedenie*, 149-150), such as by failing to note that the formula for incorporating the redemption price of the garden plot was triggered only if the peasants took less than the maximum allotment. For the terms, see Main Statute, articles 243-244.

31. See Litvak, *Russkaia derevnia*, 235 and 239-241. In the Black Earth provinces of Litvak's database, the maximum allotment was 2.75 to 3.5 *desiatinas*, whereas in Saratov 4 to 4.5 *desiatinas* was the rule. In *Provedenie*, Zaionchkovskii includes a large fold-out map that identifies the zones of maximum allotments using various colors, providing an instant picture of the entire country.

32. *TsGIA*, f. 577, op. 34, d. 135, ll. 13-18.

33. *Ibid.*, d. 147, ll. 6-7.

34. *Ibid.*, d. 22, ll. 5-7. On the rented land, see the table in Saratovskoe Gubernskoe Zemstvo, *Sbornik statisticheskikh svedenii po Saratovskoi gunbernii*, vol. I, *Saratovskii uezd* (Saratov, 1883), Otdel IV, 86. This source contains comprehensive data on every settlement in the region based on a household census. Such serial publications were published by *zemstvos*, the provincial elective organs of self-administration, on many provinces in European Russia in the 1880s and sometimes can be used to cross-check and supplement my data.

35. *Ibid.*, d. 114, ll. 19-20 and *Sbornik po Saratovskoi gubernii*, vol. I, iv: 19. For two other examples of landowners who included land already purchased by peasants in the allotment, see D. I. Budaev, *Krest'ianskaia reforma 1861 goda v Smolenskoii gubernii*, 164. Another example of flagrant gouging was in the settlement between D. I. Bystrinka and the small village of Krivkova (twelve souls): They retained their pre-Emancipation holding of 18 *desiatinas* (two more than the minimum) but paid dues of 4.90 rubles per soul because the redemption price of the garden plot was added directly to the proportional amount instead of first being subtracted from the maximum, prorating the balance, and then adding it back as the rules prescribed, which would have amounted to 4 rubles and a few kopecks. This inflated dues payment was carried into the redemption settlement in 1885, although the estate had reverted to the government for settlement of debt (*ibid.*, d. 54, ll. 11-12).
36. See *ibid.*, d. 114, ll. 19-20 (text of charter and statement of the peace mediator); ll. 2-6 (journal of the Saratov Board of Peasant Affairs, 7 February 1871); and ll. 30-33 (two documents called "Dokladnaia zapis' " and "Bukhgalterskii otchet," which incorporated the calculations of the settlement, including the owners' debt to the government).
37. *Ibid.*, d. 87, ll. 23-24 (charter) and 34 (peasant requests for revision).
38. *Ibid.*, d. 98, ll. 14-15 (charter and appended documents), 16 (*Bukhgalterskii otchet*, or accounting summary), 11-12 (commune resolution of 23 June 1868), and 5-10 (redemption agreement).
39. *Ibid.*, op. 34, d. 69, ed. khr., 1062, ll. 25-26 (charter) and 28 (resolution of assembly of peace mediators). Other Orel files are in ed. khr. 499, 1107, 1065, 1072, and 1083.
40. Stephen Hoch includes a good discussion of what was regarded as the subsistence norm by serf owners in *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambov* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 2327 (two *desiatinas* per *tiaglo* in each of three fields or slightly more than two *desiatinas* per soul---a *tiaglo* on the average contained slightly less than three souls--- which accords with our evidence of what peasants regarded as the minimum acceptable allotment). There is a large Russian literature on the "subsistence

norm," mainly of Populist orientation, but so many factors enter into "subsistence" other than grain production that it is far too complicated to consider here. Suffice it to say that I agree with Hoch that there was some elasticity even in the low norm of 6 *desiatinas per tiaglo*, but it is still a good benchmark. The allotment norms for peasant holdings by this standard were adequate for subsistence at the time of the Emancipation, provided they were measured in reasonably productive plowland and included some of the other vital resources, such a water, pasture, and wood or brush for cooking and heat.

41. *Ibid.*, op. 34, d. 69, ll. 11-12.

42. *Ibid.*, op. 26, ed. khr. 1079, ll. 15-17.

43. *Ibid.*, ed. khr. 1083.

44. See Litvak, *Russkaia derevnia*, 296 for data on his six Black Earth provinces that show that only 23.4 percent of those formerly on *barshchina* converted to fixed dues in the years 1861 to 1863; a further 25.2 percent (for a total of 48.6 percent) from 1864 to 1866; 17 percent from 1876 to 1869; and 19.4 percent in the decade 1870 to 1880. In 1880, a full 15 percent of these peasants still remained on *barshchina*.

45. Even Litvak feels obliged on these grounds to exculpate the famous author I. S. Turgenev (*ibid.*, 222-223).

46. *TsGIA*, f. 577, op. 34, d. 58, ll. 11-12 (redemption agreement), 15 (deposition), and 17 (letter).

47. *Ibid.*, d. 22, l. 34; and d. 64, l. 32.

48. *Ibid.*, op. 26, ed. khr. 1107, ll. 6-9 (deposition on debts) and 10-11 (letter to Gervais).

49. *Ibid.*, ed. khr. 1072, ll. 19 (letter) and 21-23 (imperial decree).

50. On the decline of the Russian nobility, see Geroid Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), chapter 8; George Pavlovsky, *Agricultural Russia on the Eve of Revolution* (London, 1930), 108-111; and G. M. Hamburg, *Politics of the Russian Nobility 1881-1905* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1984), chapter 2. That the indebtedness of the nobility at the time of the Emancipation amounted to 300 million rubles of the 750 million rubles they received in compensation for their serfs (40 percent of their value), see *ibid.*, 26.

51. *Otmena* (1950), 227.

52. See appendices in "Tablista" in L. M. Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie Russii v 1860-1869 gg.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1964), 798-800; and "Khronika," 599-637.

53. The authorities had much experience in dealing with peasant unrest and were well aware of how quickly rumor and peasant inventiveness could mobilize large numbers. On several occasions in the decades before the emancipation, such as the proclamation of the law of 1842 on obligated peasants, and especially during the "volunteer" phenomenon during the Crimean War, rumors and false interpretations of official pronouncements had launched mass movements, and the government was obliged to curtail them with military force. For a fascinating study of this question, see David Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: Interaction between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825-1855* (London: Macmillan, 1992). The classic study of rumor in peasant mobilization is, of course, Georges Lefebvre's *The Great Fear of 1798: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France* (New York: Pantheon, 1973). James Scott discusses rumor in *Domination*, 144-147. My work on the Russian Army during the Revolution of 1917 deals extensively with the role of rumor at the front, stressing both its capacity to mobilize and the tendency toward "inverse mythology." During the great retreat of July 1917, rumor took the following form: "The soldiers and many lower officers perceived events from their own, entirely different angle of vision, registered a different set of facts, and worked them into a distinct set of attitudes and conclusions that were quite the inverse of the official mythology. . . . The conviction took shape . . . that they were being deliberately slandered, that they had bravely sought to withstand the Germans, that

they had been ordered to retreat against their will, and that the high command had intentionally betrayed them to the enemy" (Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Road to Soviet Power and Peace* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987], (123).

54. See Zaionchkoskii, *Provedenie*, 40-43 and 63-64. As early as 1858, governor-generals were appointed from His Majesty's Imperial Suite as a precautionary measure. See Larissa Zakharova, *Samoderzhavie i otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii 1856-61* (Moscow, 1984), pp. 101-102.

55. This is mentioned in *Otmena* (1950), 89-98. Those in Smolensk are discussed in detail in D. I. Budaev, *Krest'ianskaia reforma 1861 goda v Smolenskoii gubernii*, chapter 2. His descriptions and characterizations seem to dissent from the idea of a "revolutionary situation," although he loyally cites Lenin.

56. This episode is, of course, frequently referred to in the literature; for an exhaustive treatment of the evidence, see Field, *Rebels*, chapter 2. For the other incidents, see Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg.*, 35-118.

57. *Otmena* (1950), 37.

58. See the Ministry's survey for 29 June to 6 July, *ibid.*, 46-47 and others. Much of the information in the following sections is gleaned from these surveys. A *volost'* was a new local administrative unit consisting entirely of peasants to administer their own affairs, which endured until the Revolution in 1917. They primarily maintained records on taxes and contracts and enforced government decisions, but there were *volost'* courts attached to them consisting of elected peasants. Each *volost'* was staffed by an "elder" (*starshchina*) and a clerk (*pisar'*). Each *volost'* consisted of ten to twelve villages, sometimes more. "Township" is not an exact equivalent because it was strictly a class organ for peasant affairs, and other residents of the area did not come under its jurisdiction.

59. The first ratified charters are reported in the survey for 24 to 31 August 1861 for *Tver guberniia* (thirty, of which twenty-seven were consented to by peasant communities) and Perm (only two). The meager results were explained as follows: "The *pomeshchiki* want to draw up *gramoty* with the peasants' consent, but the latter refuse to affix their signatures." Concessions seemed only to aggravate their distrust (*ibid.*, 67).
60. *Ibid.*, 73.
61. Report of V. A. Dolgorukii of 3 August 1861 on the village of Chernaia Sloboda, in Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 105.
62. *Ibid.*, 112-13.
63. *Ibid.*, 100-103.
64. Based on the report of the deputy governor P. V. Safronov to Interior Minister P. A. Valuev of 13 December 1862, in *ibid.*, 125-134.
65. *Ibid.*, 123-124.
66. Report of the Governor General M. I. Chertkov to Valuev of 6 August 1862, *ibid.*, 134-137.
67. Chertkov-Valuev, 12 October 1862, *ibid.*, 137-139. The explanation of why a member of His Majesty's Imperial Suite occupied this dual role is found in footnote 39.
68. James Scott begins to outline the structure of protest movements in a section appropriately entitled "Testing the Limits" (*Domination*, 192-197), but he is more concerned with the language and symbolism of protest than with action and outcome. William B. Taylor's study of the periodic local revolts of the eighteenth-century Indians of Central Mexico and Oaxaca replicates many of the features observed here, almost to an astonishing extent (*Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion*, chapter 4, especially 115-124).

69. See Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 156 for details and 146-165 for extensive documentation.
70. Details in *ibid.*, 167 and 169.
71. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-181 (petition) and 181-189 (series of governor's reports).
72. One has in mind not only the many classical studies of Christopher Hill, E. P. Thompson, Eric Hobsbawm, Georges Lefebvre, and George Rudé but also monographic studies such as that by R. C. Cobb, *The Police and the People: French Popular Protest, 1798-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970).
73. See his *Rebels*, chapter 2, especially 47-49 and 52-57. James Scott's concept on the necessity to uphold the "public transcript" is useful here.
74. Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 157.
75. See Leshchenko, *Otmena krepostnogo prava na Ukraine. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, 231.
76. A "Tablitsa" in Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 798-800, records the number of incidents (*volneniia*) that required suppression by military force: Saratov, 43; Podolsk, 64; Chernigov, 37; Kharkov, 22; Kiev, 21; Voronezh, 20; Poltava, Kursk, and Simbirsk, 16; Tambov, 12; and Orel, 8. See footnote 17 on "regional history" and "typicality."
77. See report of the governor E. I. Baranovskii to Valuev of 11 March 1862 in Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 231-232 and of the chief (*nachalnik*) of the provincial administration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (anonymous) of the same date, *TsGIA*, f. 1291, op. 52, ed. khr. 42, ll. 6-7.
78. Telegram, Baranovskii-Valuev, 7 April, *ibid.*, l. 8, and an unidentified report, l. 3-4.

79. Ivanov (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 231.
80. This and following are all from *TsGIA*, f. 1292, op. 52, ed. khr. 104, ll. 7-40.
81. *Ibid.*, l. 27.
82. *Ibid.*, l. 25. The legends of *razboiniki* had some basis in fact, although rather remotely. Old-timers born in the eighteenth century had vague recollections from their youth of "bold fellows" (*udal'tsy*) who hid in the woods and ravines, preyed on travelers, and were regarded as heroes by local villagers, with all the classical traits of Hobsbawm's "primitive rebels." They were said to have buried treasures in secret places and could make themselves invisible. Still these bands had long disappeared and only a handful of outlawed thieves remained. See the interesting account of A. N. Minkh, "Kolenskaia Volost'" in *Saratovskii sbornik: Materialy dlia izucheniia Saratovskoi gubernii*, vol. I (Saratov: Izdanie Saratovskago Statisticheskago Komiteta, 1881), 79. The author, a peace mediator after the Emancipation, was an avid gatherer of local lore and very proud to have personally apprehended the last of the breed, a bold thief called "Petrushka" who mixed with villagers wearing a red shirt bragging of his exploits but skillfully avoided capture by sleeping in a different location every night. It is the stuff of legends, not rebellions. Minkh also alludes to the incident in the village of Krasnovidovka, mentioned previously, that characterizes its inhabitants as a "steppe breed, hence headstrong" (*ibid.*, 138; the term used is *svoevol'nyi*, which was a standard official characterization of rebels who disregarded the law).
83. *Ibid.*, ll. 26 and 40. (Two different excerpts from Fokht's addendum are cited in two different reports of the police chief.)
84. *Ibid.*, ed. khr. 42, ll. 11-19.
85. *Ibid.*, l. 18. Various orders on the quartering of troops are in the file. That Valuev closely followed these events is clear from his summary of events for 3 to 10 April, *Otmena* (1950), 133-134. They are also recorded in the "Khronika krest'ianskogo dizheniia" for the

same date in Litvak, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 658, where they are given a valence of ten disturbances.

86. *TsGIA*, f. 1291, op. 52, ed. khr. 42, l. 50. Nevertheless, Baranovskii reported to Valuev on 7 April that he thought that peace mediators were "exaggerating the seriousness of the disturbances" (*ibid.*, l. 8).

87. James Scott discusses the technique of rumor and feigned belief to protect anonymity while expressing contrition in *Domination*, 144-152.

88. See *Otmena* (1950), 148, 206-207, and 225.

89. *TsGIA*, 1291, op. 52, ed. khr. 42, ll. 55-191. The author took notes on twenty-eight incidents, in twenty-four of which military force was employed (omitted were minor affairs where details are lacking; by late in the year they had become so routine that the records are sparse). The "Khronika" in Ivanov's *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 657-711 records thirty-five disturbances for the same period, but the list does not entirely coincide with mine. The figures in the "Tablitsa" for 1862 of eighty-one disturbances in forty-three of which military force was used is reasonably accurate.

90. See *Otmena* (1950), 256.

91. *TsGIA* f. 1291, op. 52, ed. khr. 42, l. 73.

92. *Ibid.*, l. 73. Other examples are found in l. 112 (deliberate sloppy plowing) and ll. 158 (refusal to store winter grain).

93. *Ibid.*, l. 90 (Beketovy estate in Volsk district).

94. *Ibid.*, l. 66.

95. *Ibid.*, l. 99.

96. *Ibid.*, 1. 103.

97. *Ibid.*, II. 158-165.

98. The "theater of inversion" as a common phenomenon in resistance of the oppressed is discussed by James Scott in his *Domination*, 172-182. Carnival is one often-discussed form, but the most famous Russian example is Pugachev's masquerading as Peter III, complete with a mock court and his own favorites named after Panin and Vorontsov. See Paul Avrich, *Russian Rebels 1600-1800* (New York: Norton, 1972), 183-189 and 204-205. Ceremonial dumping from a cart and other such rituals were still common in the Revolution of 1917.

99. *Ibid.*, II. 106-109.

100. *Ibid.*, II. 156-157.

101. *Ibid.*, II. 158-165.

102. See documents in Ivanov's *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1861-1869*, 258-336, which cover major incidents in Ekaterinoslav, Poltava, Chernigov, Kovensk, Podolsk, Novgorod, Nizhnyi-Novgorod, and Perm. The "Khronika" records others for Voronezh, Simbirsk, and Orenburg (*ibid.*, 714-722). In all, sixty incidents are recorded, and in twenty either 19 February or some form of a *slushnyi chas'* is listed as the main pretext. Saratov, curiously, figures in only two, perhaps because the strength of the movement had already been spent but perhaps also because local authorities were no longer anxious to report them.

103. *Ibid.*, 1. 54.

104. *Ibid.*, II. 88-89 and 96-97. The latter was a major affair involving secret oaths at night and a stubborn refusal to surrender "instigators." Two companies of troops were required. For another soldier-prophet of the new *volia* on the Gagarin estate in Khvalynsk in July, see *ibid.*, II. 123-124.

105. *Ibid.*, 1. 114.

106. *Ibid.*, 1. 115.

107. *Ibid.*, ll. 136, 147 (twice), 152 and 158, respectively.

108. For reference to the police chief's frustrated efforts to identify purveyors of rumors in Serdobsk, see his report of 28 August, *ibid.*, ll. 150-152. This and other references indicate that orders had come from higher authorities to specify measures to identify and apprehend such persons.

109. I concur with James Scott that large-scale revolts of peasants or any repressed group are rare and are likely to occur only when there is some other major threat to the state, as an armed Cossack horde, a disastrous war, urban revolt, or floods or earthquakes that are perceived as omens. And there must be some ideologically mobilized agency, usually from the outside by charismatic leaders or millenarian movements. See Scott's arguments in *Weapons of the Weak*, chapter 2. And even when millenarian tendencies are present, as in this case, the achievable practical goals still weigh heavily in their calculations.

110. *Ibid.*, ll. 106-109.

111. *Ibid.*, ll. 155-117 and 130. Other major incidents in Atkarsk were on the estates of Sleptsov and Martynov in July (l. 129), and of L'vov, Ivanov, and Nemarkova in August (ll. 180-181).

112. All taken from the report of the police chief of 11 September, *ibid.*, ll. 158-165. Because beggars' allotments were far more extensive in Saratov than in any other province, it bears separate study, which to my knowledge has not been done. But it is evident here that it was primarily a peasant demand to which the owners submitted to very unwillingly rather than the owners' greed for more land. I intend to explore this question in the future. I have already determined that most of these peasants survived as well as did other categories of persons with rented or purchased land and outside occupations, and only a very few became

impoverished in the short term. The chief reason was the absence of the burden of redemption payments. My study is based on materials in the *zemstvo* volumes *Statisticheskie svedenii po Saratovskoi gubernii* (1881-86).

113. Stephen Hoch, "The Banking Crisis, Peasant Reform, and Economic Development in Russia, 1857-1861," *American Historical Review* 96:3 (June 1991), 795-820.