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# Serfdom in Russia and its Abolition

History and Present-  
day Issues

*Proceedings of seminar, conducted in the framework  
of the International Year to Commemorate Struggle  
against Slavery and its Abolition,  
proclaimed by the UN General Assembly,  
and the UNESCO «Slave Route» project  
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The brochure is foreseen for wide audience of readers.

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## Introduction

Abolition of serfdom, declared by manifesto of the Russian emperor on February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1861 was a well-prepared and desired step — and at the same time, a massive, tectonic shift which overturned life on vast territories of Northern Eurasia. Land-owners, dominating in the Russian society at that time, undertook considerable concessions, in order not to face a catastrophe shaped after the Civil war in the USA, which took place approximately at the same time.

The program which was so happily initiated by tsar Alexander II and his retinue, opening way for free market and capitalist enterprises, led at the same to chain of events which tended to be regarded by the Russian society as retarded, if not painful. It would be enough to remind that the so-called redemption money, which was to be paid by peasants to land-owners, remained a considerable burden for them practically until the revolts of 1905. As to the psychological trauma, it tended only to gain momentum until that time, and even after its onset. Those people who initiated the Great Russian revolution of 1917 and who gave every possible effort to its diffusion on planetary scale, were mostly children and/or grand-children of those farmers who gained personal freedom a little more than half a century before that time.

We would not commit a mistake emphasizing that colossal collectivization which was undertaken in the Soviet Union in the end of the 1920<sup>ies</sup> — the beginning of 1930<sup>ies</sup> is seen by quite a few specialists as ‘the second edition of the traditional Russian serfdom’ — somewhat renewed, but basically intact, and this position is regarded by the present-day Russian society as heuristically constructive.

It would be a mistake to regard Russian serfdom in terms of its classical counterpart, which contributed greatly to construction of great empires of the ancient Greco-Roman



*V. Makovsky. January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1905 at the Vassilyevski island. 1905*

world, as well as of slavery which ravaged vast territories of black Africa at the beginning of the modern era. At the same time, some parallels with these well-known phenomena were quite obvious for Russian contemporaries of ‘the Great Reforms’ of tsar Alexander II.

Looking from the position of our time, we feel authorized to regard abolition of serfdom in Russia as part of an inspiring process of liberation, which was initiated by slave revolts which took place on the American continent about two hundred years ago, to gave way to creation of the state of Haiti. As to the latest events, which took place in the framework of decolonization and creation of independent states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, we feel ourselves to be their true witnesses.

The general course of events being thus quite understandable for us, there exists a number of difficult problems, which are not yet fully resolved, and at the same time tend form a focal point of both the societal debate, and the scientific analysis.

- To which extent was abolition of serfdom in Russia a pragmatic undertaking, and to which extent — a ‘reform of idealists’?
- To assume the first one of the cited positions, how well chosen were the time of its initiating, as well as its means,- and, correspondingly, were it the Russian ‘plantators’ or ‘manchesters’ who turned out to be historically true?



*B. Koustodiev. Bolshevik. 1920*

- To assume the second position, what role was played in the abolition process by the Russian classical literature and journalism?
- What place in the debates and processes of the contemporary, rapidly globalizing world could be constructively occupied by the Russian experience of abolition — and in which way could we in Russia gain novel ideas and viewpoints in struggle to reform our post-communist society, still torn by conflicts, from the general framework, created by the International year to commemorate struggle against slavery and its abolition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, together with the materials of the ‘Slave Route’ project, initiated by the UNESCO as early as in 1993?

Working on these problems needs bringing them to the very focus of both public and professional attention. A seminar, gathering all those inspired by this realm of thought and action, from historians and specialists in social sciences, to philosophers and writers, seems to be most timely and constructive.

The seminar has been organized by the UNESCO chair for comparative studies of spiritual traditions, specifics of their cultures and inter-religious dialogue, which functions basing on the facilities of the St. Petersburg branch, Russian Institute for Cultural Research. Organisational assistance for this seminar has been provided by the International Association RUSSIAN CULTURE, and by the Committee for Foreign Relations and Tourism of St.Petersburg. Methodological and financial support of the seminar has been provided by the UNESCO Moscow office. It has been co-sponsored by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, grant 03-06-80217.



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## **Serfdom: Rational Institution, or Unquestionable Harm?**

Judging from the contemporary view-point, serfdom in Russia was undoubtedly evil, similar to slavery. Speaking of serfdom, the majority of historians, publicists, poets and writers have emphasized the obvious idea that it was an anachronism, a phenomenon which impeded society in its development, etc. Being a historian, I have to agree to this. However there is definite presentism in this viewpoint, as it tends to foresee some essential aspects, which are indispensable for providing adequate estimate of this phenomenon: why did it arise, why did it exist for such a long time, why have its remnants remained up till present time. I wish to discuss further some important aspects of this problem.

Primarily, I would like to stress that serfdom was a quite rational institution for its time, an effective response given by Russia to a number of challenges. The state was compelled to recur to it in order to resolve a number of both state and societal problems.

In Soviet times, origins of serfdom were explained by predatory interests of the ruling class. In reality, serfdom arose in the historical context of Russia as a rational institution, because no truly societal institution may be both irrational and ineffective. The very fact that serfdom existed in Russia for 200 years — this period was even longer in quite a few countries, as we know — testifies to its being indispensable for fulfilling a number of state and societal duties. This is the first thing that we have to take into account.

Secondly, speaking of serfdom in Russia, it mostly landlords and peasants that are meant. However all population of the country was involved into serfdom at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century — nobility, clergy, peasants of different ranks (owned by state, church, by landlords, etc.). Nobility which has for a long time been regarded as the dominating class, was also involved into serfdom. This aspect is very impor-

tant: serfdom involved the whole country, every layer of its society. Probably, it were only the patriarch and the tsar who were not serfs. Others were serfs, to a given extent in each case.

Thirdly, serfdom in Russia existed on 3 levels: private serfdom (landlord being the subject of serfage relations); state serfdom (state being the subject); and community serfdom (where community served as the subject). During the imperial period (from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), community had more power over a peasant or a suburb trader than state and landowners. Some illegal activities directed against landlord or state were possible for a person who was sufficiently brave (like fraud, sabotage, escape). In the framework of community all this was absolutely excluded: no one was able to cheat local dwellers.

A peasant could not leave local community to begin hunting or working on irregular basis elsewhere, as he was bound by system of mutual responsibility. There existed mandatory crop rotation in the framework of community, and also communal forms of property. Administrative rights of community and of the communal gathering were also quite vast. This is why a peasant was in addition involved into serfdom on this level as well, and I wish to emphasize this fact. One was thus involved into serfdom on three levels — by community, by landlord, and by state.

When abolition of serfdom came into being, private ownership was the first to be abolished, next came the state one, and only finally, the communal one. Following this line of argument, Stolypin's reform was essentially abolition of the second serfdom, i. e. the communal one. It is possible to speak seriously about abolition of slavery only taking into account each of its three levels.

Another important aspect consists in the fact that serfdom was a manifestation of the authoritarian paradigm, authoritarian mentality, authoritarian consciousness. Lord, master, patron, father provided the framework for *weltanschauung* of a person of that time and the system of his viewpoints. Serfdom was in fact only a part of this general paradigm, which involved absolutism as well. Being a global paradigm, it had every chance to go on for a long time, notwithstanding the fact that some of its details could be subject to deconstruction. My personal impression is that we in Russia have not yet got rid of the authoritarian paradigm, we are still having to do with its manifestations.

Reforms in Russia have always been conducted before the broad masses of people came to conclusion that they were necessary and timely. Thus serfdom was abolished just because the authorities and the learned society came to conclusion that it was no more possible to withhold the existing state of affairs. However it was not at all exhausted from the point of view of economics (P. B. Struwe wrote about it in his well-known book on economics of serfdom).

Serfdom could well go on and on; it was the authorities that abolished it. The general thesis of Soviet literature consisted in emphasizing that serfdom was unprofitable and ineffective; this thesis was not in complete concordance with historical facts. Only a third of landlords were concordant with abolition of slavery; two thirds were against it, just because it was quite profitable for them.

It is well-known that there were two forms of economic relations between landlord and serf in times of serfdom, i. e. *corvée* and *quitrent*. Landlords got from *corvée* approximately double as much profit than from *quitrent*. At the same time we know that serfdom tended to be much more stern at *corvée* estates; serfs were subject to punishment much



*Gavel Work. XIX cent.*

more often than at quitrent estates. This situation is paradoxical: we are accustomed to think that the freer a peasant is, the better he works. Facts, however, are quite opposite to this opinion. Corvée peasants tended to work much more than the quitrent ones; corvée estates had much greater level of crop capacity, and of general productivity than the quitrent ones.

I don't mean here that compulsion is always effective and useful; my position is far from such straightforward conclusions. It is however essential that peasantry wanted to reach only satiation of its physiological needs. A peasant regarded not richness and glory, but salvation of soul, simple following the tradition, reproduction of life forms which already existed as the purport of life. To produce more, to work in a more effective way, a peasant had to be coerced. The authorities had no other way than to compel him; otherwise he just stopped working.

In works of famous economists of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we find the idea that peasants first worked till their small basic needs were satisfied; after that he just left his wooden plough. He stopped working and gave no effort to increase his industry (as it is natural for a capitalist who strives towards maximal profit). In framework of this situation, mentality, production ethics, serfdom formed a plausible instrument for the decision of economic problems.

**M. Sverdlov:**

How do you define serfdom?

**B. M.:**

I regard serfdom as kind of non-economic dependence of one person from another, as mode of relations when there is a master, a subject; and another person, who acts as an

object. Their relations are based not on economic expediency but on economic dependence. This seems to me to be the most essential trait of serfdom.

*S. N. Poltorak*

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*«Klio» and «History of St. Petersburg»*

*Journals:*



## **Humane Aspects of Russian Serfdom**

I'd like to speak as historian, who has been studying historical psychology for quite a long time. I am afraid that I would remain in minority, presenting myself as sort of advocate of serfdom.

What I wish to remind is that serfdom had every aspect of our present-day life, including humanitarian issues. Here are some examples related to peasants and those who owned them.

Primarily, abolition of serfdom was not a momentary event, but a process which took 10–13 years; it was only by the year 1873 that remnants of serfdom were formally abolished in some regions of the country. Strange as it may seem, peasant unrest occurred in some regions, related to abolition of serfdom in the very beginning of this process. Why so? I would suppose that panics experienced by quite a few peasants was the main cause of unrest. A landlord was for them not only the person who took away almost everything produced by them, but also the person who took care of them. I am sorry for the figure of speech that I'm going to use, but many landlords regarded their peasants as the most expensive animals in the household, that had to be looked after. This care went on for decades and centuries, evolving to become not only a tradition, but a lifestyle.

Many peasants were socially incompetent, they could not defend their rights, they could do just nothing without their master. So many came to regard abolition of serfdom as a catastrophe. However, another aspect has to be taken into account, i. e. the humanitarian one. In quite many cases, relation between serf and his master grew into warm and so to say friendly, - taking, of course, into full account social subordination which existed. Here is only one example.

In Ukraine, approximately 60 km from Elizavetgrad (presently Kirovograd), in the town of Kamenka, beginning from the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was country

estate which belonged to the family Stenbock-Fermor. Here is a couple of stories, related to them. When in 1915 a steward of that estate died, a monument of black granite was erected on his tomb, which is still there. It could possibly seem to be an insignificant detail. Here is then another case.

A girl from a poor peasant family fell in love with a rich young man, became pregnant, but could not marry him due to reasons which were quite obvious. Following an order of the landlord, she was provided with a considerable dowry, which allowed her to easily find a husband, so that her life was settled. Such cases of humanism were quite frequent.

Reading books printed before the October revolution, including those of G. A. Dzhan-shiev, which were reprinted many times, we find there lines by Koltsov put as an epigraph: «The darker the night, The brighter the stars», where the poet speaks in an oblique way about bright people who undertook the reform. It seems to me that it would be quite timely not to forget about those persons as well, who were sort of symbolic for serfdom, and still very decent and humane.



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## **Serfdom and Class Politics of Russian Autocracy**

We have been conditioned in our talk by its beginning: we have been in fact telling to one another, in which way did serfdom appear. My speech would not be in line with this argument.

Regarding the thesis promoted by my colleague Professor B. Mironov, that serfdom was a quite rational institution, I wish to point out that not everything which is rational, proves to be constructive and useful.

Now about the touching relationships that have been touched upon by colleague S. Poltorak. There are historical facts that ought not to be foreseen. For instance, we know about the Pugachev uprising, when hatred was just immense. Landlords who were ceased by peasants — 'loved' by them, and 'loving' them truly — were subject to death, together with their wives and children.



*V. Perov. E. Pougachev's Trial. 1875*

The same thing occurred in the course of the 1831 uprising of dwellers of military settlements. Judging by formal reasons, here we've got a different situation. However, here is an example that would demonstrate that disobedience to the authorities essentially had a similar character there.

An eye-witness left an interesting observation. The uprising began as immediate reaction to an epidemic of cholera. When a colonel was captured by the insurgents, one of their leaders, who was quite old, told him frankly: «Cholera is no more than a ground; what's truly important for us is to eradicate the very name of the nobility».

In the 1970<sup>es</sup>, looking through the historical materials that I needed to write a book, I was very impressed by reports presented by the interior minister D. N. Bloudov to Nicholas I. All common kinds of delinquency were subject to detailed structuring. Church burglary tended to occur there quite often, which is strange for a nation having a very specific relation to Orthodox Christianity. Murder of landlords and stewards tended to occur quite often as well, which has a direct impact for the present discussion.

Leaders of the Decembrist uprising were by no means romantics, but rather people who were in full touch with situation. One of the tasks which were regarded by them as absolutely essential, was to at any rate evade a new replica of the Pugachev uprising. There is quite a few of examples of this kind.

In reality, judging from the historical materials and sources, Russian nobility felt like sitting on top a volcano. A. C. Benkendorf wrote in his report to the emperor in 1829 a remarkable sentence: «Serfdom is a powder-magazine under the state, especially because the army consists of peasants».

Another thing which is quite essential consists in the fact that, according to the opinion of some serious specialists in medieval studies, one of the causes of the notorious

'Time of Troubles' in Russia consisted in introduction of serfdom. The first ideas regarding serfdom as an asocial and dangerous institution, appeared as early as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It suffice to remind here of the report of the Frenchman Neville concerning his semi-apocryphal conversation with V. V. Golitsyn, according to which the latter presented in its course his program of state reforms, including a gradual abolition of serfdom — and this was at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century! In a big constitutional project elaborated by duke D. V. Golitsyn in 1730, limitation of absolutism and alleviation of the conditions of peasants were included; here we find a definite movement in the direction of the alleviation of serfdom.

Why did it exist for such a long time? My impression is that not due to economic effectiveness, and not in the Russian peasant being too lazy to enlarge his productivity (I am basing here on data from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Having no interest in one's economic status is direct consequence of serfdom, just because people could not gain from the product of their labor. This conclusion is corroborated by a thesis proposed by M. M. Speransky who was a knowledgeable person; he planned to abolish serfdom step by step in the 1800<sup>ies</sup>. He wrote that serfdom tended to destroy people's energy.

Why did serfdom exist for such a long time? Not because it was productive and rational (there is a lot of arguments against this idea), but because it was too difficult and dangerous to abolish it. In some cases total enslaving was conditioned by political maneuvering, like in the times of Catherine II, who was quite liberal. The more liberties were gained by nobility, the less freedom was gained by peasantry; it turned almost into slaves at plantations. So what we're dealing with was not at all so pleasant as it might seem; the end of this process was too far from happy.



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## Origins of Serfdom and its Abolition

Historical categories like serfdom and slavery have been used extensively in sociopolitical life and in works of art in quite a lot of meanings, including the metaphorical ones. They tend to be synonymic to personal dependence and lack of personal freedom. Taken

in a broader sense, metaphorically, they came to be sort of a Kantian 'ideal type', which has been the reason of using them out of touch with any given time or space. It is along this line that neo-Kantian historians tended to find feudalism in any case where political dissolution happened, beginning from ancient Egypt. In the same way, capitalism was discovered in classical city-states, when the commodity-money relations were introduced. Producing necessary emotional reactions, this practice led to deformation of the historical reality and the politicization of its interpretation. My opinion is that conducting historical research one has to go from the historical facts to generalizations, and not from ideas to the interpretation of historical reality.

Conducting historical research, one has to return to definition of such categories as serfdom and slavery, in order to subject society which is in constant transformation and alteration, to correct scientific description. Thus abolition of serfdom is especially important to be defined in a proper way.

Slaves were an object of law of estate. They were included into the process of material production as instruments of labor. This was the case of slaves in classical times, or of African blacks in America.

Serfs comprised rural population which had been free, before it was fastened in Middle Ages to land or impost. They tended to become the main labor force in the manorial production, where they were subject to imposition of labor rent, natural or pecuniary. It was a quasi-slave form of dependence, especially when serfs or servants were sold without any land.

It was captives who became slaves in Russia in the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and also personally dependent East-Slavic villains. Genetically they continued the category of patriarchal slaves. They were sold to Byzantium, in the Muslim Middle East, and in Central Europe. Inside Russia they formed part of the dependent population, of menials. These people continued to be regarded as slave by law in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Menials were sold and bought, their property belonged to the master. However menials grew into a separate medieval estate. Russians could enter it, or to be redeemed, they could be holders but not owners of instruments of production. Menial state came to be a specific medieval form of personal dependence.

Free peasants lived as members of communities. In the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries they were free to come to settle at the property of a landlord, either secular or clerical, either as old residents or newcomers, who pertained the right to leave. As the Russian state became centralized in times of Ivan III, it was stated in the 1497 Code of Law that taxed peasants had a specific day when they were allowed to leave. From the 1580<sup>ies</sup> to the 1620<sup>ies</sup>, an active state-sponsored process of enslaving of various categories of peasants started, conducted by means of fixed year edicts, the term of investigation comprising from 5 to 15 years. This process was conditioned by acute lack of farm-hands in the state estates.

As a result of restoration of the state after the Time of Troubles, basic forms of the system of serfdom were fixed in the 1649 Code of Law, consisting in attaching peasants to land or to impost. It was only Peter the Great who abolished villeinage by his edict, joining villains and serfs into a single serf estate. Industry which is crucially important for a modern state, got labor force from peasants attached to each fabric, as there was no labor market in the country. Thus Russian empire entered the modern epoch with medieval institutions of serfdom, of estate society, and of the autocratic state. However there was no serfdom in the North of the European part of Russia, and in Siberia.

The task of strengthening the Russian empire in times of the reforms of Peter I and Catherine II conditioned intense efforts of all the country. They were enough to allow Russia to struggle against France in 1812–1815, which was quite progressive, and to take part in the concert of the European nations. The situation grew tragic because systemic industrial revolution took place in countries of Western Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, while economics of Russia continued to be based on the medieval system of serfdom, which impeded the progress of capitalism, and consequently of modern structures in economics, society, and the state.

The economic basis of the Russian empire stopped to respond to the challenges of modernity gradually, in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We have only to remind here that serfdom was restricted in the Holy Roman Empire in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Maria-Theresia. It was abolished by Josef II. In Russia, peasants who had been freed by their masters, were allowed to enter the estate of petty bourgeoisie, or that of merchants, by manifesto issued by Catherine II in 1775. An edict of 1801 allowed them to buy land to become their property. The 1803 edict of ‘free ploughmen’ conditioned the liberation with land of about 112 thousand male persons; a 1818 edict allowed them to found factories and plants. Under the pressure of economic needs, an edict appeared in 1842, allowing peasants to enter into agreements with land-owners. An edict of 1848 allowed the serfs to buy land, houses and other kinds of real property.

In Finland and Poland, which were included into the Russian empire, serfdom was not introduced. As to the Baltic provinces, it was abolished there by edicts of 1816 and of 1819.

System of serfdom in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century conditioned the preservation of estate societal organization, which was medieval in origin, and lack of the market of labor



*Emancipation of a Serf. 1840ies*

force. As a consequence, delay in creation of modern industry and communications occurred, which in its turn conditioned deterioration of the defense potential. Lack of developed capitalist relations led to creation of an army of state officials, which was utterly ineffective, instead of democratic self-governing bodies. Preservation of serfdom and of its partial reforming conditioned economic, social, and political lag in development of Russia from the industrialized countries. As a result came its defeat in the Crimean war of 1853–1856, and ratification of the notorious Paris peace treaty.

Necessity of abolition of slavery became an imperative in the collective consciousness. Existence of a specific problem of serfdom in Russia was obvious already for high-ranking officials of the administration of Nicholas I, who took part in the activities of the so-called Secret committees. Count S. P. Roumiantsev, who was quite liberally minded, initiated the edict of ‘free ploughmen’. Basing on this edict, he personally freed from serfdom about 200 men. All directions of the revolutionary movement, from A. N. Radishchev to the Decembrists and further to A. I. Herzen were in favor of abolition of slavery. Russian writers, from A. S. Pushkin to I. S. Tourguenev, nourished the idea of necessity of abolition of the notorious phenomenon which they tended to label as slavery, in the public opinion.

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*St. Peterburg Orthodox Spiritual Academy*



## **The Second Serfdom of Communists**

In thinking about the formulation of our topic, I have especially marked the term ‘modernity’. That’s why I wish to briefly speak about the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and after that to pass on to present-time issues. It’s interesting that serfdom was abolished in the beginning of the 1860<sup>ies</sup>, just when the war between the North and the South broke out in America. Abolition of serfdom in Russia could probably contribute to that war as an impetus. It could present an interesting topic for historical research — Russian events giving an impetus for the American war.

Another remark concerning the serfdom which was at the same time actual for both peasants and landlords. Thus A. S. Pushkin was a famous writer and poet, and at the same time he was master of serfs. In «Eugene Onegin» he wrote with full expertise on the replacement of «old corvée» by «light quitrent», which was done by his progressive hero, Eugene Onegin.

At the same time, being a famous writer and poet, Pushkin was not allowed to go abroad. This means that he was in fact subject to the same system of serfdom, together with other nobles and aristocrats, because one of its principles was not to be allowed to leave the country.

After the abolition of serfdom, the number of Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land increased greatly. It was about a thousand of pilgrims who used to go there every year from this country. The government had nothing against their trips. Muslims were allowed to go to Maccah. Special services were created for them. Thus a special train went from Tashkent to Odessa, there they were put aboard the same ship as the Russian Orthodox pilgrims. The latter were later put ashore in Haifa, the former were shipped farther, to Jeddah. The ship went farther to Bombay, got unloaded, loaded again, and took the same persons on the way back. It was in this way that the authorities contributed to the religious customs of their subjects.

Strange things tended to occur now and then. Peasants for instance could go abroad for seasonal work, later returned and payed quitrent to their landlord, let's say, somewhere in the Yaroslavl province not in Russian roubles, but in currency, which led to the steward's dismay.

The second serfdom arose in Russia as a result of the revolution of 1917 — the Bolshevik serfdom, halting every trip abroad. As to the peasants, they got their agro-GULAG due to official denial to provide them with identification cards. Only in 1987 it again became possible to go abroad on private basis, not more than once a year. Prior to 1987 one's passport had to be stamped, with the date of leaving which was mandatory. So people had to take care not to miss the appointed date; the authorities were not prepared to take into account any arguments, even those quite serious. That meant that serfdom was in fact still there, the state regarding its citizens as serfs.

This system was formally abolished in 1991, still the old one dwelt for 2 more years. Trips abroad were sanctioned by Visa and Foreign Registration Departments. This system was abolished in 1993. When someone wished to acquire a foreign passport, one had to submit an application. It was thoroughly processed by the 9<sup>th</sup> department of the KGB, and only if one «did not have..., was not brought to..., and was not a member of...», he was granted his passport — but only for a given term, let's say, 5 years.

It was only in 1993 that Russia began to implement what was written in the 1948 'declaration of human rights', where it stood that any person is free to leave his country and to return to it. In 1993 we were finally rid of the ban on traveling, still some structures continued to demonstrate definite psychological dependence, which reminded of Soviet times. In Brezhnev times there was a proverb: «If everyone would travel there and back again, we wouldn't be able to construct Communism». It was regarded in this way that there was a laboratory experiment being conducted, which needed sterility for the sake of its correctness.

I am able and willing to tell what happened at that time in the church. There was some embarrassment by high clergy, linked to their being deprived of privileges, that had been obtained by hard policy of concessions and compromises. Any hypodeacon was able to go anywhere he wished without having any problems. If representatives of lowest ranks could go anywhere on their own, then all the system of life, which had been carefully constructed for years, just went astray.

About the year 1994 there was sent a letter to clergy of our eparchy. According to it, going abroad was allowed only via obtaining a benediction for that, which meant that the KGB puppeteers continued to draw their strings.

Here's a funny story which happened to me in 1993, when it was possible to go abroad, provided a corresponding entrance visa had been obtained. Having no official invitations, I got such a visa at the Indian consulate and went there together with Russian small traders for a month and a half. When I was back, I was asked a question at the rector's office of my Academy, that I remember quite well. The question was, where in winter time could I get so sunburnt. My answer sounded quite naïve, I said that I had been in India. The answer was retold to the rector, the rector in his turn retold it to the metropolitan bishop.

One day I strolled along the Academy's corridor. One of the tutors approached me and said that he couldn't understand why, being summoned to the metropolitan bishop, he was severely reprimanded for having gone to India without a proper benediction. The tutor was quite unhappy in his private life, and as a result he developed a drinking habit. All of us we took pity of him, and tried to conceal his problems. So he said to the bishop: «I am sorry, Your Grace, but I don't have any health left, I have sold almost everything from my home. There is no way for me to go to India». The bishop got quite upset and shouted angrily: «I know for sure that you had been in India. Never do that again without consulting me. Leave me at once».

Barely having heard this, I was invited to visit the metropolitan bishop. When I entered, he looked at me with concern, and measuring every word, said: «I've learned that you come to give lectures in a drunken state». Having understood what was going on, I said: «Your Grace, it seems to me that I understand what's happening. A similar story occurred to a priest after the war. Being recruited to become an intelligencer, he answered that having a splinter in his head, he would mix all the names».

The bishop realized then that there occurred some kind of 'systemic mistake' in his own case and said nothing more, save «You may go». Thus my recollections of the metropolitan bishop Ioann might be labeled as quite serendipitous. We happened to meet only one time, and at such a bizarre occasion.

After this a special interpretation was issued, saying that someone who wished to go, let's say, to Karlovy Vary to drink mineral water (which was the limit of fantasy of the authorities) is not liable to obtaining a benediction. But going abroad to a conference, and not in a humble way, but to give a talk, especially if it treated contemporary problems of the Orthodox church, then such a trip became possible only by means of obtaining a bishop's benediction.

**D. Spivak:**

Are there any documents concerning official position of the Russian Orthodox church concerning serfdom?

**Archimandrite Augustine:**

I haven't studied this problem in detail, but I know that metropolitan bishop Philaret (Drozdov) gave definite effort directed towards abolition of serfdom.



*V. V. Kavtorin*

*Member of the St. Petersburg Writers' Guild*

## **Communal Ownership of Land in the Framework of Serfdom**

Serfdom is a quite actual topic, as it has been proved by our discussion, preceding the talk given by Father Augustine. Being a cleric, he managed to bring peace and tranquility to our souls. He has even provided for us a possibility to laugh, which is good.

One of the ideas expressed by B. Mironov seems to be particularly fruitful, and I wish to develop it further. I mean the thesis that community also was a subject of serfdom. The point of the matter is that there is a number of mystified notions in Russian history and culture, community being one of them.

A lot of authors wrote about community, basing not on documents and historical facts, but mainly upon wishful ideas. For instance, I've read in book recently published by well-known economist, professor D. S. Lvov, that land became object of private property in Russia as a result of privatization of community lands, and that community lands were reduced in 1861 in favor of the nobility. Everything was of course vice versa, but the very manner of writing without having previously consulted the facts, is common not only for writers, but also for scientists in this country.

Community and serfdom formed a couple of interpenetrating, interdependent and mutually supporting social institutions. At the same time it couldn't be quite correct to label community as the subject of serfdom. Of course the community as a socioeconomic mechanism contributed to peaceful introduction of landlord system of management, primarily because the landlord was initially regarded as sort of additional burden on the community.

Any community, whether it was a part of Russian peasant world, or a German urban guild, or a Jewish kahal, or a Cossack army, - all of them were based on the same principles: community obtained in its disposal, on some conditions, some natural or social re-

source to manage. Community never came to be land-owner in Russia. Land-owner was a duke, a boyar, while the community was granted a given resource: land, forest, fishing waters, and it had to manage this resource under condition of some impost, natural duties, taxes, etc.

Equal solvency was ensured for members of a community by equal access to resources that had been gained by it. This fact suppressed any economic competition inside the community.

Compulsion, *corvée* were more productive than quitrent precisely because compulsion conditioned the labor to be more productive, while without *corvée* competition was suppressed by community. This was proper not for the Russians, but for community anywhere.

Morgen (that is, Morning) was the popular name of a unit of land in Germany. It was the territory that could be ploughed in the course of a morning, hence its name. It was morning and not day because peasants did not regard it as desirable to plough for days. One has to provide for oneself the amount that was to be acquired according to laws of the community. As to the rest, it grew senseless because it would be confiscated in any case.

This suppression of inner economic competition, the inability to ensure economic growth in the framework of a community ensured the fact that both serfdom and community were abolished around Europe in all their modifications. There were countries like Germany where first disappeared community, and next serfdom. Those were institutions which supported each other. If we'd speak about serfdom being rational, it was rational from the point of view of the state in one aspect: acting together with the community, serfdom led to drastic inflation of value of personality. The thing is that community had access to resource which was stable. If there was growth of population, the resource grew smaller, which deteriorated the level of its existence. Consequently every new man was regarded as damage to common good, which led to lower value of personality. This was the cause that the introduction of army recruitment system was taken by community so easily. Recruits were mourned over as dead, because a soldier was just that for the com-



*K. Savitsky. Conscription to War. 1880–1887*

munity. He could no more claim any community land, because he became from now on 'the king's man'.

Lost cost of the people allowed the state to build military force which was incomparable to economic level of the society. Military strength which was disproportionate to economics formed the basis of the existence of the empire and of its growth; this strength was created at the expense of suppression of people, and it became finally the cause of downfall of the empire. Serfdom was a historical trap which was entered by the society in an easy and imperceptible way; it was too late when the society realized that this form is historically unpromising. This is the reason why criticism of the 1861 reform was indeterminate and undecided: it was based upon insufficient knowledge of the subject.

**M. Sverdlov:**

I have some questions would probably could have been put forth by the late Dr. A. I. Kopunev, who was a formidable historian, — and a North Russian peasant by birth. Being in full command of his subject, he used to reiterate: «There is no life for a peasant without community». A. I. Kopunev subjected to minute analysis the state of North Russian peasantry, contracts of land sale subject to private law, which testified to land being an object of private property. How would you comment such data, which are contained in a 2-volume monograph, published by the Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences?

My second question concerns the state of small rural communities ('volost'), which were not all included into the system of serfdom. Rural community in the Russian North did not become part of serfdom. How would you comment on this fact?

**V. K.:**

N. Ya. Danilevsky who studied ...

**M. S.:**

That he did not know...

**V. K.:**

Let me continue. He was sent on official journey trip by the Ministry of State Properties to study the state of peasants in Northern Russia, especially to detect why there was not enough food there. His report is not really known, although it was published at the Journal of that Ministry.

N. Ya. Danilevsky came in his report to some recommendations. By the way, some time before that he studied community economics in the South, by the Yaik Cossacs. As you know he was a partisan of community. He regarded community as a pure example of community, which had not been affected by serfdom. Before reading an extract from his report, I'd like to remind the opinion of Dr. Pivovarov who knew only Danilevsky's book «Russia and Europe», and basing on its text contended that Danilevsky regarded disintegration of the community as inconceivable.

Here is what was written by N. Ya. Danilevsky himself in his report: «Here, as everywhere where a Russian man had possibility to organize his labor on his own, according to his inclinations, and his opinion concerning one's right to gain from the natural resources, he did it basing on the communal conscience, not the individual one, and this in its turn formed the basis for duties assumed by him». There was no serfdom in the North, still there was land resource provided by the state.

**B. Mironov:**

Then there was state serfdom.

**V. K.:**

There was a land resource, exploited by the community, which ensured equal access not only to ploughing, but also to raw materials for tar-works.

**M. Sverdlov:**

Were there any real transactions?

**V. K.:**

Yes there were. Clearings were subject to sale. Having cleared a lot, peasant was allowed to sell it himself. By the way, this right was denied after the year 1861. These clearings began to be used after their redistribution. As a result, clearing stopped, as it was written by N. Ya. Danilevsky in the aforementioned report. It was not profitable to clear the territories, if the result would be redistributed. So he proposed to the government to grant those individuals who cleared a given lot the right to own them for life. In this way community would be in fact ruined.

**B. M.:**

The first question concerned A. I. Kopunov. However there exist two more viewpoints concerning transactions which were practiced in Northern villages in the 16–17<sup>th</sup> centuries, I mean A. I. Shapiro and others. Regarding them as private property is a marginal position, there are not many who would be on your side. I have been very enthused by the fact that being not a historian, but a writer, you felt intuitively that community and serfdom form two sides of a single phenomenon. This is absolutely true. Another of interesting thoughts proposed by you has been that community was included by the state into the system of state administration. The Russian state was very weak. Bureaucracy was very weak and not numerous at all. The state could ensure its functioning by means of recurring to self-government. The state managed to include community into the system of state self-government.



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## **A Cycle of Russian History: from Emancipation of Peasants to Yeltsin's Leave**

After the reform of 1861 social system of Russia was formed, which has been regarded in everyday mythology of broad masses of population of the USSR-Russia of the latest decades as standard. This standard is characterized by following properties:

- maximal territorial size of the empire, legally fixed, with high economic growth and international authority, maximal growth of population, comprehensive modernization and inclusion into processes of globalization;
- image of Russia as an agricultural country;
- presence of distinct social stratification, with patterns of everyday life proper for every social group;
- orientation of children at reproduction of not only social status of parents (allowing some modification aimed at its advancement), but of the system of such statuses as well (with some modernization).

Following history has been the history of disappearance (abolishment) of these social groups.

The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century proved to be the time when landlord nobility was ruined and ousted from favorable positions, newly rich peasants rose to power (the problem of Chekhov's 'cherry gardens').

Nobility, merchants, clergy were ruined in the 1920–1930<sup>ies</sup>; the very existence of peasantry became endangered (in a very radical way at the end of the 1910<sup>ies</sup> — the beginning of 1920<sup>ies</sup>).

Destruction of peasants as of a specific social group became most intensive in the course of the 1950<sup>ies</sup> — the 1960<sup>ies</sup> (as a result of general liberalization, granting of identity cards to the peasants, creation of a bus networks in the country, development of TV networks etc. ), all of which led to continuation of peasants' leaving the countryside in the course of industrialization and hostilities of the end of the 1930<sup>ies</sup> — the 1940<sup>ies</sup>. The process of destruction was finished by the program of abolishment of 'villages having no prospect', and the beginning of mass movement of amateur seasonal gardeners. This process still forms object of acute nostalgia by various groups of urban dwellers, serving in its turn as starting point for creative production of 'village writers' (from V. A. Soloukhin — to F. A. Abramov).

Destruction of workers as a social group was characteristic of the 1970<sup>ies</sup> and 1980<sup>ies</sup>, including the spread of operator activities (beginning from work of operators of programmed lathes, which combined traits proper for lifestyle and work of both workers and engineers. This process gained additional momentum from aspiration of workers to send their children to high school, from the appearance of elements of life-long education, from spreading of the 'rationalizer movement' in industry and of the mass gardening movement.

Stagnation of the 1980<sup>ies</sup>, as well as the following revolutionary reforms, conditioned people who had technical college training or spent some time at the universities as the most socially active, dynamic, and the most demanded.

As a result of collapse of the USSR, the rest of peasants, and workers as well, were left undemanded (peasants gave way to farmers primarily).

Beside that, disintegration of intellectuals (that is, Soviet engineers and technical employees and scientific researchers), as well as the intelligentsia (the last social group of post-reform Russia) which had been its predecessor, took place in the 1990<sup>ies</sup>.

As a result, not only all social groups of post-reform Russia disappeared by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it happened that what was left in Russia instead of society presented kind of non-organized and dispersed social mass, being sort of 'blank sheet', which could possibly serve as starting point for a new cycle of social development in future.

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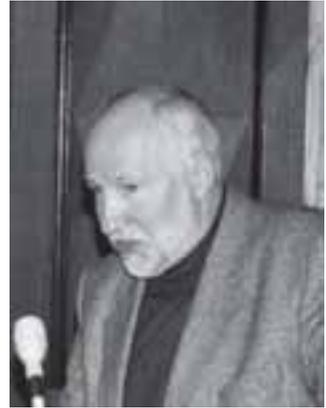
## **Serfdom: Civil Rights or their Absence?**

I am not feeling comfortable with the direction that our seminar has taken way. As it was formulated by professor M. Sverdlov, historians should not study ideology, politics, and similar issues.

Primarily, what we are doing now is sort of political escapism. Secondly, all of us have received a document, a concept of a seminar. This is an ideological document. It proposes to fit the phenomenon that we are discussing today, that is, serfdom, into the framework of a definite historical process. To cite this document, «...we feel authorized to regard abolition of serfdom in Russia as part of an inspiring process of liberation, which was initiated by slave revolts which took place on the American continent about two hundred years ago, to give way to creation of the state of Haiti». My opinion is that our task is not to discuss serfdom — this is a position which is too comfortable for an historian who is prepared to discuss a lot of topics, beginning with the uprising of Spartacus and ending with serfdom — I see out task here as discussing a definite document. At least I have come here to do this.

Is it correct to fit serfdom into the process which was delineated in this document? My answer is no. Serfdom is system of rights, not condition without rights. Abolition of serfdom is a legal reform, a great legal reform. Abolishment came as a result of the state losing its positions in world politics, as military and political defeat in the Crimean war. This is why abolition of slavery from my point of view is not to be regarded as a correlate of slave uprising in Haiti.

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## **Mythologeme of Serfdom in Contemporary Consciousness**

I would like to dwell upon two words in the title of our seminar, that is, Serfdom and Present-day Issues. There is no doubt that historians feel very interested in tracing back specific details, introducing unknown archive materials into the cultural context. All this is significant, without any doubt. But I would like to pay specific attention to the UNESCO project entitled Slave Routes.

My impression is that it is not only definite routes that are to be studied, but also routes as schemes. What I mean is there is a certain scheme of slavery which is fairly common, and which is every time packed into specific historical context. Two positions that have been presented till now delineate not so much of the truth, as simply a problem.

Historical experience is really more than important. I remember how professor V. F. Asmus used to tell to students of philosophy at the State University of Moscow: «If you have discovered something, take a closer look at the history of philosophy; if you wouldn't find anything there, then what you discovered was silly». On the one hand, serfdom conditioned appearance of a mythologeme which is still valid. On the other hand, not everything may be explained from history. There is an ironical statement which says that there is only one lesson that can be drawn from history, and it consists in the fact that there is nothing that can be taught by history. Consequently everything that we are speaking about is being told about ourselves. There exists only the present time, as it was well formulated by St. Augustine. Past and future are interesting for us just to the extent to which they are experienced as present.

A typology of means to apply to such a complex phenomenon could be determined here. I remember how I was surprised by a remark of the American sociologists that Southern officers had better relations with their Black soldiers, that the Northern officers to their Black ones. Everything should have been of course quite opposite. Still there were fundamental regularities that had to be taken into account in this case, as well as in any cultural context as well.

I also wouldn't regard the enumeration of positions concerning to who saved whom as productive (although the problem of Pushkin's 'hare-fur coat' is quite attractive). Of course

sheer donation, sort of a sacrifice is valid in this case. Still application of statistics would not be too fruitful here. What I propose is to introduce these relations, all kinds of data, whether big or small ones, to fit into a general descriptive context. Relations of peasants and landlords were included into a single sacred unity. Thus both were united in feeling awe, to a given extent, although they were quite different in many other respects, in the framework of socio-cultural context.

The notion of serfdom is too much imbued by ideological connotations. Still there are aspects that may become really essential in context of present-day geopolitics. Are some of the notions which managed to gain fundamental momentum, still working today?

Once I read a paper written by a contemporary author which was entitled «Russia as Subconsciousness of the West». It is right that Russia may be regarded in the framework of psychoanalysis. But if we'd do so, quite a few important aspects would have to be removed. Thus my proposal is to include singularity of serfdom into our schedule, that is, to single out the archetypal core which tends to appear each type under the guise of specific peculiarities.

Serfdom in Lifland and Estland was abolished about 50 years before than in Russia. It would be interesting to compare how did another mentality condition a similar trend of the socio-cultural situation?

To put it once more, slave routes are specific ways, they are impossible to tread on again. Of course reconstruction may be conducted, but it is systematics which is the most constructive thing here. It is a probable way to gain access to some aspects of contemporary geopolitics.

**B. Mironov:**

Could you speak more about the sacred unity of landlords and peasants who professed the same religion.

**A. G.:**

Do you remember the passage from Bulgakov's novel where Ieshua is having a talk with Pontius Pilatus. Pilatus asks: «What is truth?». Ieshua retorts that truth consists in the fact that your head is aching. Citation tends to stop at this point. Still there is a continuation: «...and it is aching so badly that you begin thinking of suicide». Thus here he showed that spirituality is determined by body. The storm would pass, your head would stop aching, and your spirit is fixed to nothing.

I would say that in this sacred, or, rather, sacralized relationship, peasants were playing the role of body. Nobility played the role of psyche, and these two different positions came to join each other in the sacred entity. I would regard such relations as important.

**Ya. Gordin:**

Don't you think that this sacred entity tended to be destructed by crucial difference which existed between Russian nobility and Russian peasants with their own culture, specific relation to Christianity, utopian layer of consciousness? One might speak of body and soul. Still peasants were not just body, they belonged to a different culture.

**A. G.:**

Of course it was different. Still the notion of the Other would be incorrect to be used only in relation to a given entity. The Other does not exist without the One, and there exists their mutual «Us-relation», which is more important than the positions that come into interplay. The reason is that they come together, in spite of their being different.

We should pay tribute to the existence of this basic Unity, and, of course, of basic differences existing inside it. Then we'd have a problematic realm that would allow the discourse about these things. For instance, just pay attention to how such writers as B. Pilniak, or A. Serafimovich, focus our attention upon mass consciousness: «Heated goods van», «Night», «Iron stream». Our attention is fixed on the mass consciousness which does not realize what is it in process of doing. That is, mass ideology, as opposite to ideology of nobility, is being elaborated in such cases.

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## **On Axiology of Status of those employed in Services in Contemporary Russia**

Axiological analysis of statements of Russians concerning prestige of different social statuses in contemporary Russia reflects general trend of changes which have occurred as a result of not only reforms of the post-Yeltsin's time, but also of far more old events.

Opinions of quite a few Russians, concerning their assessment of the level of prestige of work in the sphere of 'services in culture and education' come close to that of not really slavery (because slaves were not in full control of their own bodies), but serfdom (serfs being fixed to land which was owned by landlord). In other words there is a tendency to assess the status of employees working in services as quite low. One has to mention in this respect that we would regard in this paper 'prestige' as 'its assessment by the contemporary Russians'.

One of my colleagues, professor of the St. Petersburg State University, has recently acknowledged in a private talk with me: «My daughter who is accountant at a private company, is ashamed of me. My salary is currently about barely \$200, so she tries never to say what is her father at present». Another professor of the same university has recently shown me a newspaper advertisement, where it stood that loaders were invited to work, «...payed not less than 7,000 roubles».

Last year I witnessed a paradoxical situation: two students of a St. Petersburg high school who were obviously gifted, being proposed to undertake post-graduate studies at

the chair of sociology of a big high school in St. Petersburg, retorted with surprise: «Why should we?».

The list of similar facts could easily be prolonged, revealing a paradoxical peculiarity of social history of Russia. The status of an employee in the spheres of culture, of science, of education tended to be rather high in Russia before 1917: it suffice to remind about the status of a professor of the St. Petersburg University, researcher, physician, professor at the high grade secondary schools (*gymnasia*).

Looking for fundamentals conditioning popular assessment of status of employees in the spheres of 'services in culture, education, health care, science' in contemporary Russia (which is shared by officials on different levels), we could remind about the revolutionary Bolshevik ideas in 1917, e. g. about the Bolshevik concept that «every cook would be able to manage state affairs»; or of the concept of «socially close» to proletariat groups ('lumpen-proletarians'), and those «socially remote» ('*intelligentsia*'). However this does not elucidate much.

As it was proved by our sociological inquiries, conducted by means of content- and intent-analysis of statements uttered by students, mass media, city dwellers, TV interviews, bu contemporary Russians in their evaluations, as well as in present-day manuals of service activities:

- the sphere of services has split into two parts in the societal consciousness in the course of the latest decade, the first one being presented by employees in trade, restaurant business, tourism, housing services, security etc., the second one by those employed in culture, education, health care. This split has been fixed theoretically and methodologically in education schedules, methodical literature, manuals and study materials of high school institutions, including such specialized educational institutions as the Academy of Tourism, Institute of services and economics (in St. Petersburg), St. Petersburg Institute of Engineering and Economics, etc.;
- prestige of employees belonging to the former sphere of services and the latter one is assessed in mass consciousness in different ways. Thus working in the former sphere is regarded as much better due to higher income, living on tips which has grown to be morally acceptable. Those employed in the second sphere (teachers, doctors, researchers, librarians) ought not to have additional incomes due to tips or to bribes, which is a result of high standards imposed upon them by the society.

A person employed in the spheres of culture, education, and science, is regarded by the contemporary Russians as having to be higher than the 'filthy lucre', differing in this respect from a waiter or a farmer. As it was said by the majority of respondents, such economic notions as profit, surplus value, and also notions like money, material wealth, linked to them, do not stay in harmony with his historical mission — to create cultural values and to convey them.

Notwithstanding high moral status, which has been attached in the mass consciousness, as well as in consciousness of ruling official elite, probably from pre-revolutionary (1917) years, prestige of the status of an employee in the sphere of services in culture is defined in contemporary Russia by such notions as 'service', '[humble] service', etc.

Methodical materials, manuals and study programs of the contemporary high school institutions apply the notion of 'services' in titles of a series of courses included into the

State Standard as basic («Economics of activities in services», «Service activities»), or special («service activities in the sphere of tourism», «History of service activities»).

The notion «services» was borrowed from the thesaurus of Latin terminology. Consulting a Latin dictionary we'd see that «services». «service activities» were derived from Latin words «*serva*» (slave maid), «*servitio oris*» (easy to save), «*servilis*» (proper for slaves), «*servio*» (to serve).

It would be interesting to regard causes and consequences of using a Latin term, linked to slavery, in the context of contemporary Russia. Three causes for that could be cited:

- irresponsible following foreign (English language) literature, which was translated not properly, in preparation by professors and lectors new courses for managers, economists, market analysts, social workers, tourist operators. Necessary attention was not paid initially to proper translation of basic terminology into Russian;
- intentional leaving apart the indigenous term ('usluga'), which is accurate and clear for the Russians, as instrument of description of activities in the secondary, i. e. everyday sphere of human activity. The majority of Russian population happens to be either sporadically (like a working housewife), or on full-time basis be included into the sphere of services;
- «service activities» is a new sphere of historical knowledge, whose terminology and conceptual notions have not yet been properly defined. History of Russia, as that of any other European state, is full of wars, royal dynasties, and church issues. Historians have recurred to history of everyday life (where the services fully belong) quite recently (the French 'Ecole des Annales' in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

Consequences from these causes were following:

- a shift concerning social stratification of contemporary Russian society occurred in the societal consciousness. This shift, which has reflected division of socioeconomic life into the 'budget sphere' and the 'non-budget' one, has influenced value statements of Russians concerning the educated, but not ruling, elite, in a negative way. In the contemporary Russia the status of a person employed in the services, including not only waitresses, office-cleaners, salesmen, but also people ascribed by the common opinion and by urban oral lore to the sphere of culture (librarian, museum attendant, researcher), education (teacher), health care (physician) is extremely low;
- the term «servis» (Russian equivalent of English «service») was introduced into mass consciousness, instead of its Russian synonym 'usluga'. In this way, foreign term came to be used as an euphemism, describing humble state of a person, used to work in low-budget state-sponsored sector, reminding either of slavery, or of serfdom. On the other hand, a person whose status is rendered by means of such terms as «*serva*», «*servio*» cannot have high, that is, prestigious status. A slave was no more than «a speaking instrument» in the classical Greek tradition, with all consequences related to this. Technological development quite promptly demonstrated that slavery was ineffective as an economical institute.

One of the problems listed in the information letter of our Round Table, related to the UNESCO project «Slave routes», was having to do with Russian experience of abolition of slavery in the swiftly globalizing world. I'd like to share my hypothesis in this respect. Origins of the idea of low status of work in the services, especially those related to education, science and culture, are determined by not only socioeconomic institutes of pre-revolutionary Russia and the legacy of Bolshevik ideas (and, as a consequence, low salaries, which are being paid according to the «residual principle»). Low status in the «sphere of cultural and educational services» has been determined in our country historically.

Roots of this prejudice go much deeper, into the epoch of creation of the Russian state organization. History of the Russian state has been alternating and contradictory. Splinters of various Slavonic tribes, incorporated into Russia, were held together by the Asian tradition, borrowed from heirs of Turkic kahanates of Khazars and Pechenegs all the way till formation of the Moscow Rus.

Attempting to extrapolate historical script of the formation of Russian mentality into the future brings us to pessimistic prognosis. Nomadic imperial formations tended to present impasses on the way of historical evolution. Coming into contact with agricultural civilizations (in the New World it was presented by clash of the Atapask and the agricultural civilization of the South-West of the present-day USA; in the Old one — clash of the nomadic empires of the Great Steppe and agricultural civilization, e. g. of Byzantium), nomads tended to swiftly lose the ability to compete with new technologies. Fabrics and manufactures, gunpowder and guns swiftly won over their mobility, anti-Urbanism, militarized sociality. Re-orienting themselves to outer market, nomads came to be included into the sphere of influence of their agricultural neighbors on the territory of Eurasia. As a result, their economic and cultural type began to transform, their mentality.

Russian experience demonstrates in this respect that:

- being situated between Asia and Europe, influenced by its geopolitical position, Russia used to be subject to globalizing influence from the Great Steppe, and from Europe;
- Russian mentality was formed on the level of everyday consciousness (folk culture) under the influence of values of the nomadic cultural type; values of Christianity, associated with European globalizing influence, were assumed first by the elite (from the 9<sup>th</sup> till the 14<sup>th</sup> century), they came to be regarded as absolutely Russian only by the 17<sup>th</sup> century;
- Genesis of the nomadic type of culture slowed down when its clash with the agricultural (European cultural type for Eurasia) cultural type occurred, and entered its transformational phase (in economics it led from exopolitarian, nomadic to endopolitarian, based on serfdom type).

Russian historical experience of abolition of serfdom lead us to an assumption that it would be more constructive for Russia in future to be reoriented from basic values of the nomadic cultural type (Golden Orda, Great Tartaria) to values of the European cultural type. We hope that as a result common opinion would be subject to reorientation as well. The next stage would inevitably consist in alteration of ratings of status of those employed in educational, scientific, and cultural services in Russia. We also hope that studies

in history, cultural anthropology, social history of everyday life would come to occupy their place in fundamental research.

What we now call services would inevitably come to form a vast realm for these studies. Experience of industrially developed countries has shown that intensive fundamental studies, supported by the state, cannot but condition transformational influence upon all spheres of life of the country, including mass consciousness, presently dominated by idea of low status of intellectual work.

*I. N. Protasenko*  
*Associate Professor,*  
*State Technical University of St. Petersburg*



## «Slave Routes» in Contemporary Mentality

I would like to focus on the second part of the title of our seminar, that is, «...present-day issues», taking into account what has been said by my colleagues. The reform of 1861 in Russia came as result of pertinent struggle of the progressive part of the Russian society against stagnation, inertness, ineffective organization of the societal system.

This struggle was conducted under the auspices of lofty principles of liberty and justice, professed by the best minds of Russia, romantics, from the Decembrists, A. Pushkin, A. Griboyedov to N. Nekrasov, N. Chernyshevsky, N. Dobrolyubov etc. As to the Russian authorities, the royal will, it was rather a pragmatic step, response of pragmatics to challenge of romantics.

One has to admit that it was the mixture of romantics and pragmatics which has tended to be typical for any social reforms in Russia. It was the romanticism of the Russian reform which radicalized and greatly widened the scope of pragmatic reforms in North America, related to abolition of slavery, which had been initially regarded as a successful tactical move which conditioned victory in the American civil war. One could possibly formulate the Russian romanticism and the American pragmatism to form two mutually complementary, and sometimes mutually opposing principles, which determined in many ways emancipation of nations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Consenting to the thesis that the epoch of downfall of the colonial system is finished, I would suppose that Slave routes are now being led into the future. The gap between rich

and poor nations is growing wider, development of ones is being implemented at the cost of the others, slavery is mastering new forms and technologies of realization. Some general definitions have been proposed today; I would however allow myself to do some emendations. Slavery comprised use of labor of a human being, turned into an instrument, a machine, by means of compulsion or direct coercion.

A slave loses in fact his human essence, possibility to be object of free development, and turns into wordless object of exploitation limited by nothing. Danger of human being subject to transformation into a slave, a zombie does exist and becomes even more real. Control over body gives more and more way to control over spirit. Brutal coercion, still being used, gradually gives way to psychotechniques and political technologies. New slave routes start to go through human consciousness.

Several forms of contemporary slavery may be singled out, although borders between them are fairly conventional. Traditional economic slavery was directed towards minimization of production costs, creation of spheres of economic activity, bringing maximal profit, including criminal business (drug production and trading, prostitution, children trafficking, etc.), along with business using female, labor of children, migrants, and illegal immigrant workers ('Gastarbeitern').

The second form, which is ideological and political slavery, is directed at realization of social utopias and imperial ambitions. This is the case of Stalinist communism, German national-socialism, Japanese militarism, Islamist radicalism, and the global project for humanity.

Spiritual and moral slavery is directed towards justification and support of objectives and values, which are declared to be universal. Examples are presented by the society of universal consumption, racial, national, religious intolerance.

The last form that I wish to mention, may be labeled as information slavery, which is directed at neutralization of critical assessment of social, economic, political contradictions in the society, towards conservation of the status quo.

I would suppose that discussion of these directions could be most constructive for discussion.

**S. Chebanov:**

How would you regard slavery of political technologists, who are both not voiceless, and quite creative, but still absolutely enslaved?

**V. Semenov:**

Why enslaved?

**S. C.:**

Because they are determined by states where they must...

**A. Griakalov:**

They chose their position quite consciously.

**V. S.:**

They are hired. This is another category.

**I. P.:**

I regard it as free choice of a free man.

**S. C.:**

I think that it's very interesting.

**B. Mironov:**

The thesis of new serfdom, new slavery coming to appear is very biased. How big does this danger seem to you, how and how strongly is struggling against it?

**I. P.:**

Having read concept of our seminar, I have entered the sites of the UNO and UNESCO, and studied the «Slave routes» project. A couple of years ago when I went to England to get acquainted with universities there, I was taken by local colleagues the Museum of Slaves in Liverpool.

Prior to this I had only knowledge, taken exclusively from literature and cinema. However having visited that museum, where the atmosphere of events was reproduced in a fairly accurate way (hold of a ship, maps, routes «Liverpool — black Africa», or America, capitals coming back to England), I acquired a strong argument against my colleague who used to say as a joke: «It's us who have civilized the world».

When I was proposed at the end of my visit to enter the visitors' book, I wrote only one sentence: «Thank you for your memory», that is, for reminding in which way did your exquisite, compared to the rest of the world, existence come into being.

My impression that the UNESCO project is directed towards fixation of cultural memory of the past. But I am personally much more moved by the events that are taking place right now. I would not like to start now a detailed analysis of the theme of globalization. However, basing on works of authors like Immanuel Wallerstein, one should take into account that capitalism came into being first as a local system, which gradually took over other parts of the globe, so that the general trend of development has been quite systemic. Every country which reaches some given level of development, should take into account that countries which are at the head don't stop, they keep moving ahead. The dangerous tendencies that I have delineated today, are intimately linked to possibilities provided by contemporary psychological knowledge to reshape human consciousness so that one would remain happy while being in a state of dependence, subversion, and implementation of alien will.

**D. Spivak:**

I. Protasenko was right in entering the site of the UNO. What was presented by her corresponded to concept of the year dedicated to slavery and its abolition, which is cross-methodological. Being aware of difficulties which exist even between forms of serfdom in various parts of the world, not to mention the difference between slavery and serfdom, the authors are striving towards singling out one constant. This constant should be labeled as historical and technological description of human trafficking, that is, dragging human bodies through various layers of the society, through geographical borders, which in its turn tends to produce influence upon consciousness of these people, and of the society in general. It is not known if this approach is fully justified in methodological terms. It is our task to study the borders of its effective implementation.



*D. Ya. Travin*  
*Deputy Editor, «Delo» Newspaper*

## Reform of Serfdom and the Global Economic Crisis

My realm is economic reforms in foreign countries, primarily European, and I'd like to talk here mostly as an economist. But first allow me to briefly take part in the very interesting discussion which has taken place here between two historians that have taught me practically everything that I know about the science of history. I mean B. Mironov and Ya. Gordin. I have to admit that it would be quite difficult for me to take any of the positions put forward by them.

At the same time I don't see really implacable contradictions between them. Why so? Let me first ask you, do parents suppress freedom of a child while it is still growing? The best parents would do this, there is no other way. Do children love their parents notwithstanding this suppression? Yes, they do, as a rule. Contacts between them tend to appear, reaching the level of cordiality. Still no one would deny that having become adult, children have to be emancipated and to leave the family. I realize how conditional is my analogy. Still we could apply its framework to regard the situation of serfdom.

Even my modest experience of studies of this realm has shown that both in Russian serfdom, and in the American slavery, there was place for patriarchal, cordial, paternalist relations. But studying the social side of this problem we have to admit that at some stage of development these relations are to be torn asunder, national economics being able to move on only these relations being stopped. Moreover, as an economist I have to say that the main problem here does not consist in land property. It seems to be obvious that normal development of agriculture has to imply free labor. However both the agricultural reform and the abolition of serfdom are primarily global structural shifts in economics, shift from the agricultural society to the industrial one, and after that to the post-industrial society.

Both industrial and post-industrial sectors need free labour force, as it was labeled in the Marxist tradition; currently we label it as free labour market, which is impossible in the system of serfdom. Thus I would link the dynamic development of Russia which came into being at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> — the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a large extent to the preceding abolition of serfdom. Such a development becomes possible only after the abolition of serfdom.

Now let us return to the problem which has been formulated in the normative documents that we got before this seminar. If I am not mistaken the main problem which was the cause of gathering us in this wonderful building, sounded approximately as: «What was this reform for Russia, pragmatic action, or romantic, idealist one, based not upon pragmatic concerns but rather ideas being in vogue?».

I am used that being an economist, the audience would wait me to say that material basis is primary, while the ideas are secondary. I have to admit that the reform of 1861 has been probably the less interesting for me out of a number of topics that were subject to my analysis; however reforms tend to come not when a group of bureaucrats has realized that given reforms are expedient, has counted their cost and defined that a result gross national product would increase by a given percent, inflation and unemployment would come down by a given percent, etc., but when general mental ambience for reforms would be ready.

These changes in mentality take origin from different sources. All the reforms in Europe that I've studied by this time, those in France, Germany, Austro-Hungary, were conditioned primarily not by inner influence, but by cultural influence from abroad, which, to follow Parsons, started in Europe beginning from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and went from its North-Western corner, from England, Germany, northern France, and which gradually reached Russia as well. This is also my answer to some arguments concerning the roles of Europe and Asia, that I've heard in the course of the seminar. As a result of my studies I would contend that it was in Europe that the tendency originated.

**B. Mironov:**

I have been enthused by your metaphor of comparison to a child, who is first enslaved and later emancipated. I would also add that children first like this enslavement, but later, in the course of growing, realize their condition and begin to struggle against it.

**V. Cherva:**

You've told that economic growth in Russia which occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century conditioned following development of the country. You also said that it became possible only due to destruction of earlier economic ties. Is it correct to speak about such destruction occurring as a result of the reform of 1861? I remember that compensatory payments were not abolished until 1905. After the revolution the country returned in fact to the same serfdom, but on a different level.

**D. T.:**

It is a remarkable question. I did not mean that this growth conditioned all the following development of the country, but only that it turned possible only as a result of the preceding reforms. Changes that happened after the year 1917 — or, rather, at the end of the 1920<sup>ies</sup>, were conditioned by insufficient implementation of the reforms, by too weak transformation of mentality of the Russian people. I would say that reforms that started to be outlined in the 1960<sup>ies</sup> and really started in the 1990<sup>ies</sup>, have not been directly related to economic growth in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> — the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These reforms were conditioned by different factors.

*A. G. Shchelkin*  
*Editor-in-Chief,*  
*«Russian Europe» newspaper*



## Phenomenon of Russian Paternalism

Dear colleagues, I've really got cultural shock having heard previous statements. It has always been my impression that having read statements of witnesses of serfdom of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after reforms conducted by P. A. Stolypin on the national level, there was no doubt left that if we got delayed on the way of reforms, it cannot justify looking for some virtues of paternalism in the past, with certain nostalgia, cultural enthusiasm, and even historical fundamentalism.

I would be reluctant even to name serfdom, because there can exist no choices in the interpretation of this phenomenon. What I am speaking about is paternalism, and we've got to regard it in a responsible way. Russian idealism (whether you call it spiritual, religious, or anything else) is quite a tricky phenomenon. It has several times impeded us on our way.

Let us speak fully taking into account historical and other ontological facts. Any historical state, any civilization begins with the state of freedom, anarchic but self-regulating, primeval freedom, primeval democracy, as it was formulated by classics, not only of Marxism.

It is only later that limitation and enslavement of various kinds tend to appear. The Russian — or, rather to say, Moscovian — state did everything to fix its population to the land and to link it to definite instruments, in order to be able to launch into struggle against its opponents in the West and the East. The result is well-known.

In some time it turned out that it was impossible to compete with free labor applied at the English factories, and we began to lose. Why should we look at other causes instead of taking a responsible position?

The paradox of the Russian situation consisted in the fact that if the state enslaved us, it has got to abolish serfdom as well. This forms the essence of a short sentence which was left by A. S. Suvorin in his diary in 1893: «Democracy has to be organized in the country by the government». This task has deplorably not fully implemented up to this time, which may be seen if we'd regard state of the civic society, level and pluralism of private property in Russia, which are still scanty and meager.

The last thing I wish to say is that one has to be responsible when dealing with economics. We have to implement modernization, following the same way which was taken

by the so-called civilized world. We may remain Russians in the cultural domain, with our Russian way of life, culture and traditions. Things went the same route everywhere, primarily in Japan and in South-East Asia. They subjected to modernization everything that was necessary for state management, without any nostalgia, any return to the traditions of Samurai.

To end with, a good analogy with the child was emphasized by B. Mironov. I am afraid that it looks like violation of not only pedagogy, but facts. Children are born to be free, and they are provided full freedom until the age of 3-4 years old in countries where this fact is duly respected; after that children are being taken into blinders, so to say, but not vice versa.

**B. Mironov:**

Primitive men in the primeval societies, devoid of written culture, are regarded by anthropologists as having the least freedom, even less than slaves or serfs.

**A. S.:**

I didn't mean they enjoyed maximal freedom.

**B. M.:**

Your idea was that first came free man, then came serfdom, striving to reduce freedom ...

**A. S.:**

I didn't mean that. There was a lot of restrictions of anthropological and sexual kinds. Competition between males was really tough, as well as in other spheres. What I meant was freedom that was still there, and which gradually started to be reduced by social institutes like the state and its substitutes.

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St. Petersburg Institute of History,  
Russian Academy of Sciences*



## Lack of Alternative as Basic Property of Russian Serfdom

As it has been shown by previous speakers, serfdom in Russia may be presented in two different ways. Both causes of such positions, as well as arguments of their partisans seem to have been revealed by now.



*Ch. Heissler. Stocks. 1805*

As an historian specializing in reforms in Russia of the 1860<sup>ies</sup>, I am a partisan of traditional views, tending to regard abolition of serfdom in 1861 as too late. Let me briefly present my arguments. What did Russia acquire as a result of this belated abolition?

Serfdom was an institution which had no alternative. When its beneficial aspects are cited, this is quite right: numerous examples of quite positive relations with peasants who had already been emancipated may be found in memoirs of representatives of the nobility. These facts were of course real; still it would be too simplified to represent Russian peasant as a single character, single life-style. What was bad about serfdom in Russia consisted in its not having included a reasonable alternative (Russian life keeps lacking such an alternative up to this day). Serfdom and community were good for one people. For the others, they were intolerable.

What supported serfdom in Russia? It was abhorring violence, especially in the 18<sup>th</sup> century: people were flogged without mercy, so that there was no serendipity at that time. Law was violated in most horrible ways. When the immortal M. Ye. Saltykov-Shchedrin said that Russian people exist only due to an oversight of the authorities, he was absolutely right. There was a second layer in the aforecited statement, consisting in striving for liberty being deeply imbued in human nature. This striving is always present; if not everyone seems to reveal it, it may come to surface even by humblest peasants.

Striving for liberty revealed itself in attempts to go beyond the 30-mile border that was delineated by any identification card issued by the authorities of the Russian empire.

Nobody could trespass this border, not even the nobles, who were in this way enslaved as well. This doesn't mean that the government kept watching every noble. However when it was regarded as timely to punish a disobedient person, if 'mother Catherine II' grew discontented with someone, she was not going to begin legal process, although she regarded herself as protector of law. She simply ordered to banish a noble, even a duke, to his estate. He had to remain there without leaving, as it was the case of I. S. Tourgenyev. He had to remain in his estate because tsar Nicholas I did not like an article written by him. All that was huge violation of law.

All of our reforms have always tended to take place in presence of a gap between the state which felt comfortable with the state of affairs, and the citizens, who did not at all feel happy about it. S. Yu. Witte could present here a good example, when he reviewed his ideas of serfdom and community providing a good instrument for the government to rule people, just in the way a herd is led by a shepherd. It was serfdom which provided an instrument of this kind of administration, with the help of landlords.

Even the most exemplary Russian sovereign, who was Nicholas I, really thinking about his country for days and nights, could not stop the escapes, which were a reaction of peasants to the system of serfdom. By the way, he ordered to pay 10 roubles in banknotes — that is, 3 roubles in silver, after the reform of Ye. F. Kankrin — for every captured peasant, and still he did not manage to revert the situation. Peasants continued to run away and to hide. This formed the gap between the society and the authorities who had tasks of their own and did not mean to make any good for the peasants. Cases when cruel landlords were punished (like in the case of the notorious 'Saltychikha') remained not numerous and could not alter the situation.

What did we gain from serfdom? As a result of serfdom, the third estate never came to appear in Russia. It was quite possible to move on the road towards abolition, beginning from the times of Alexander I. What really happened was that rich merchants started to redeem themselves, those who became famous in hundred years. It was the famous Morozov family who bought its freedom at that time. If I am not mistaken they payed ransom of about 20,000 roubles. Which peasant at that time had such huge money? That was why only families like Morozovs or Mamontovs were emancipated. Total amount of such cases was less than a dozen, while an estate which keeps evolving, losing its members, get bankrupt, etc. needs to be numerous. This was not the case of Russia, that's why we never got a real third estate in this country.

An interesting detail was that landlords were obliged, by the way, by edicts issued by tsarina Elisabeth, to take care of their peasants, to feed them. However we find an interesting statement in Pushkin's diary, about the year 1834. It was a year of bad harvest, the government tried to help landlords, sending them subsidies to support their peasants. Pushkin described how a local marshal of the nobility together with some other persons obtained quite considerable money envisaged for this purpose. Commenting on that, he wrote: «What would happen? An exquisite ball». Those who need help, would not obtain it, but there would be another great ball in St. Petersburg.

Authorities took every effort to remind landlords that they were supposed to care not only for themselves. To prove it, one has to recur to a book published by Ministry of State Properties, concerning years of bad harvest and state assistance, it made landlords to organize reserve store-houses. What was the reaction of peasants to these measures? As

soon as it was emancipated, it took all the grain from these store-houses. Thus the intention was good, as it tends to always occur in this country, while the result proved to be poor as usual.

Speaking of how the reform was prepared, planned and conducted, this was the rare case when both specialists and independent experts were invited to take part, representing in this way the will of the society, which has been utterly unusual for our authorities, which have always tended to be self-sufficient.

*S. T. Makhlina*  
*Professor, St. Petersburg State University*  
*of Culture and Arts*



## **Serfdom and Contemporary Artistic Culture in Russia**

Strange as it might seem, my report would be dedicated to contemporary artistic life. My initial reaction to the topic of our seminar consisted in regarding relevant aspects of the relations of serfdom and modern artistic life. However my colleagues when asked about it, used to answer that there was no relation between these two phenomena.

I am still really grateful to previous speakers for making me feel that such a relation is quite real, both for the authorities, and those who create artistic values. Serfdom gave birth to servile psychology which is still present in us.

This peculiarity of our mentality has been again proved by a recent meeting of our government, with the report of the minister of culture as its focal point. My impression is that our intelligentsia has always felt this servile dependence of people, hence the compassionate sympathy to it.

When I taught Marxist-Leninist aesthetics in Soviet times, it was obligatory to present a number of items, one of which tended always to disappear from my courses. It was class spirit, party principle in art, as well as its national roots, because appellation to the people as to something positive, beautiful and lofty was present in Soviet times as well. It is still present nowadays, having taken guise of appellation to mass culture, which is regarded by some authors as both good and useful (there is quite a lot of such publications at present).

Mass culture being presented by some critics as good and useful, it should still be regarded as a phenomenon of rather plebiscite, than folk spirit. Wide presence of this

debased mass art is just a phenomenon of servile psychology, which has been preserved until present time. This kind of art tends to be present already at quite high levels of culture, including both the Hermitage, and the Russian Museum. Collection of Fabergé and general enthusiasm about it, including specialists, presents a recent example of this. The collection was presented as part of Russian national legacy. It is nevertheless not national legacy, but private property, and, what is even more important, it is not an example of good taste. Wide presence of mass culture, including its most debased forms in our country is a result of delay (compared to European countries) of abolition of serfdom.

Forms of marketing of our contemporary culture are also due to a large extent to servile psychology, present in all of us. People who are not always really creative, but able to market their production in a correct way, come to the first places in our contemporary culture, - people who are in fact producers and managers of their creative production, which is nowadays more actual than creative potential.

There are still some positive elements, linked to the phenomenon depicted in J.-P. Sartre's «The recluses of Altona», when those defeated gain victory. Negative elements tend to quite often give impetus to development of progressive principles and trends in the arts. This was, by the way, the case of the first, revolutionary years of the Soviet power. Russian artistic advance-guard became template for many focal phenomena in the world artistic culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Speaking of predominance of marketing strategies, of mass culture, of the prevalence of criticism regarding it as a positive phenomenon, I am inclined to think that our country would reveal templates of high culture in this time of transition, which would become attractive for the world artistic culture as well.

\* \* \*

It should seem that the modern artistic life and the abolition of serfdom are apart so far that no connection can be traced back between them. However actually this distance is not so large. The great-grandsons of those who were liberated from serfdom are still alive. Practically three or four generations separate us from the year 1861. Besides that, historical dynamics influences following events and predetermines much in their course. Belated abolition of serfdom, which became a signal of liberation of the majority of population of the country from slavery, had important consequences that determined the features of society development for a long time ahead.

Intelligentsia suffering from this injustice felt guilty in front of the people. This feeling of guilt was reflected in literature, music, and fine arts. In the opinion of the intelligentsia, people as the bearer of truly essential ideas about reality can give the most correct evaluation of phenomena; it is the expression of the most true criteria. This is why the movement known as '*khozhdenie v narod*' («going to the people») arose when it was considered necessary to give education to masses devoid of education.

Such a democratic aim concerned not only social phenomena. First of all, it concerned arts. The movement of the *Peredvizhniki* («Wanderers») became one of the manifestations of such a vision of arts. It appeared not only in the pre-revolutionary period. Appealing to the people after the October revolution was an inheritance of delayed liberation of the majority of population of the country from slavery.

In fact, the program of struggle against illiteracy was successfully implemented after the revolution. Education became available just to those who were unable to obtain it

before the revolution. Many new institutions of higher education were open. This tendency took sometimes rather numerous and not always successful shapes. Thus aspiration to develop everywhere aesthetic education resulted in opening so called 'Popupar universities of culture', 'Houses of creativity', and the like. They were not always successful. As one can now see, at the first opportunity that appeared as a result of the *perestroika* («restructuring») 'the most literate people in the world' turned out to be usual consumers of mass art, kitschy articles and that inevitable rubbish occurring in a free society that surrounds the real works of art. When the necessity to saturate the market with them revealed itself, it turned out that the number of undemanding consumers of those articles was sufficiently large to allow market production to bring a fair income to its creators. It became clear that aesthetic education of the Soviet people failed.

In our days it happens quite often that 'voice of the people' is appealed to as judge in artistic matters. This is not always right and fair, since it does not always correspond to the real criteria. It is known that Jean Jacques Rousseau preaching such a democratic aesthetics was just murdered by the representatives of lower classes, i. e. by those who were considered by him as bearers of the «true tastes». Such concept gives rise to propaganda of mass culture and its justification. Many scientific theories have appeared by now, considering mass art not as a by-product, or secondary product, but as an important and regular factor, which stimulates general cultural development.

Indeed, mass culture in many respects feeds on the real art and cannot exist without it. On the other hand, there are situations when high art absorbs elements of *kitsch*, the debased manifestation of mass culture, not infrequently playing with its elements and making fun of it. Tendency leading towards domination of mass culture can finally destroy and undermine true adherence to the ideals, marginalizing responsible artists and bringing about the situation when the resuscitation of culture is necessary. Since mass culture is gaining momentum, it finally comes to foster the taste of the masses, who come to be consumers of this artistic 'chewing gum'. Consumption of such 'art' becomes manifestation of servile psychology and its further education and stimulation.

Servile psychology remained deeply imbued into world-view of people who were emancipated from slavery only recently in comparison to the West. A man who is not free depends in many respects on those who hold control of him. However on the other hand he must not take care of his living, even of his life in general terms. Therefore such lack of freedom turns out to be convenient to a certain extent. It gives rise to lack of independence, initiative, to passivity with respect to social ambience. This is why it turned out to be possible in the Soviet period to practically re-introduce serfdom for peasants, attaching them to the land and leaving them without IDs, which prevented them to move around the country.

The heritage of servile psychology exists even now. It manifested itself in the phenomenon was labeled by Leonid Nevler in his old article written in 1968 and published only in 1987, as «boorish culture». «To destroy with the help of a bulldozer a district built long ago, a landscape, in order to build a block of concrete apartment buildings. To build on a high bank a standard primitive house» (Leonid Nevler. Culture of boorishness. *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR* (Decorative Art of the USSR), 1987, No. 9. P. 26).

This culture of boorishness manifested itself in the notorious «two stupid houses» which were placed alongside the dainty Goritsky cloister in Pereslavl. Nevler wrote at that time:

«Now the whole composition looks as 'what used to be and what has come to being'... that is, what used to be beautiful and came to be wild» (Leonid Nevler. Culture of boorishness. *Dekorativnoe iskusstvo SSSR* (Decorative Art of the USSR), 1987, No. 9. P. 25).

At present this 'culture of boorishness' led to the fire of the majestic *Manège* in Moscow and the destruction of the 'Moscow' hotel, which was a significant monument of the Stalin's epoch. The building of the former department store «Voentorg» in Moscow presents now one of the few conserved monuments of constructivism.

'Culture of boorishness' manifests itself in the arts as inability to find one's own way, in following set ideas, in inability to welcome anything extraordinary, bright, and new. This is why as a rule a gifted person tends to acknowledged only 'post mortem'.

There are nevertheless opposite tendencies, which are connected with the positive impetus provided by the delayed abolition of serfdom. A man who was beaten comes to win, as it was formulated by Jean-Paul Sartre in his «The Recluses of Altona». «Freud proved that childhood which up to that time had been considered as the happiest time in human life, actually is the most hard, emotionally loaded, and unfortunate time of life». (V. P. Rudnev. *The divine Ludwig Wittgenstein: Forms of Life*. Moscow: Fund of Research Activities «Pragmatika Kultury», 2002. P. 37).

Nevertheless, having grown up, we use to regard childhood as the happiest period of our life. Marguerite Duras, a clever and outstanding writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, considered that the perception of happy childhood did not depend on what it really had happened to be. Even the most unfortunate man perceives his childhood as a successful one. However in contrast to childhood that passed in comfortable and favorable conditions, severe childhood tends to teach us to nurture vital energy, to adapt oneself to hardships of life, i. e. stimulates active position in one's life.

Delayed emancipation gave rise to strong striving for the new and independent creative production. This is where world fame of Russian literature and artistic vanguard of the late 19<sup>th</sup> — early 20<sup>th</sup> century came from. In the first place it was connected to only literature being able to undertake demonstration of social ideas in full scope. On the other hand, creative activity, which had been restrained for a long time, revealed itself in the revolutionary years in all realms of the art: in painting, architecture, music, and so on.

Exhibition «Moscow-Paris» happened to become the first outstanding proof letting Soviet people know how important was Russian vanguard of the frontier of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It became very visibly apparent in the course of that exhibition that Paris, which had been for a long time the capital of arts, gave way to Moscow then. After all, the Soviet people were isolated from everything that took place in the West and it seemed that the space for innovation and creative freedom was just there. The exhibition vividly demonstrated significance of the Russian vanguard art. The influence of that art was ubiquitous in the whole world.

In 1993, I was lucky to go for the first time to an international conference in Valenciennes. We were taken on a bus trip to Bruges. We were just astonished to clearly see at the municipal museum of fine arts that after canvases by Brueghel, Bosch, Memling the art gradually became less and less creative, till it finally came to a poor state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Production of Russian artistic vanguard formed truly the focal point of exposition.

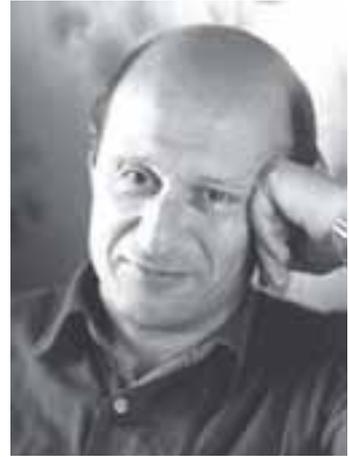
One has to take into account that contemporaries perceived culture of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a manifestation of crisis, decadence and heralded the arrival of the «forthcoming Boor». We tend to speak nowadays of the art of the Russian 'Silver Age' with admiration. Its representatives themselves saw negative aspects of their time and complained about 'ignoble manifestations' in arts. Similar phenomena are quite typical for the present-day situation as well.

Artistic culture of our time is also ambivalent. On the one hand, it demonstrates the amplitude of widespread mass falsifications of art. We often speak now about the coming of time of decadence and of crisis in arts. We may have an impression that all great works of art were created in the past. Mammoths are extinct — and, similarly, there is nothing equal in strength to what was created by the giants of the past.

On the other hand, our culture being relieved from the ideological pressure, it has gained momentum, comparable to that of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This situation is typical for basically all branches of arts. Many remarkable literary works have been created; there are many interesting artists and musicians, not to mention performing arts, in which we often are «in advance of the whole planet». Outstanding international musicians are, as a rule, connected to our musical education, they tend to regard it as the source of inspiration.

It should be emphasized that the dictate of ideology in the Soviet period was possible not only due to terrible repressions. It was partly a consequence of insufficient striving towards freedom, of tendency to appoint someone who would be in charge of life in general. Here the regularity, introduced by A. Akhiezer, tends to manifest itself. He described seven stages of transition from authoritarianism to democratic reforms as archetypal for this country (A. S. Akhiezer. 'Russia: The Critics of Historical Experience'. Moscow, 1991. Vol. 1). However Russia has moved downward, back to authoritarianism, following recent democratic reforms. It is arts which are able to help us to get away from this vicious circle.

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## Uncle Anton's Cabin

Abraham Lincoln is said to tell upon receiving Harriet Beecher-Stowe at the White House in 1862: «Here comes the little lady who's brought about a big war!». There was more truth in this joke than it was probably intended by the president. Serious politicians, serious analytics, serious historians regard history far too often as history of struggle for the material resources. They don't pay due attention to the fact that it is to a large extent history of conception, nurturing, struggle and decay of collective phantoms, collective illusions, collective daydreams. The invisible influence of fiction upon the way of thinking, way of feeling of the society, at least of the educated layer, tends to remain not always visible at the background of visible political struggle for visible, palpable objects.

Rumors, gossips, one-day and long-term myths play an important part in the struggle for hearts and minds. It is still fairly difficult to trace them back. Very often they disappear without leaving any trace, or at best leave trace in the form of other rumors and legends. Contemporaries tend to perceive the role of literature as creator of collective illusions much better than the historians. It may be discussed why have both geniuses of the Russian literature — Pushkin and Tolstoy — foreseen in their most mature texts the so-called horrors of serfdom. Possibly both regarded the world as being harmonious in its own way, so that it is easy to be destructed but difficult to be improved. Still their opponents were not interested in such details, they wished to discredit conciliatory masterpieces of art. Can there be an 'encyclopedia of Russian art' without serfdom, — D. I. Pisarev wrote indignantly about 'Eugene Onegin'. «The Slavs lived in a humble way then, Every merchants' wife kept the fast, While flogging peasants, putting in jail, atrocities of 'Saltychikha', All that was no more than a day-dream», — rhymed D. D. Minayev in his parody to «War and peace».

All that was no more than shooting back, at the defeated enemy. As to «Uncle Tom's Cabin», it was a shot against an enemy who had staggered but was still fairly strong. Russian translation of the «Cabin» was sent to subscribers of the «Sovremennik» journal, heavily influenced by N. A. Nekrasov and N. G. Chernyshevsky, in 1858, as a supple-

ment. Literature tends to be regarded from the utilitarian point of view — ‘pro or contra’ — in times of acute political battles. Depicting the Russian peasant as an unlucky and helpless ‘ill-starred Anton’ was regarded as being a simple and strong argument in a most complicated situation.

It was most complicated — and still resolved by the Russian intelligentsia even before its practical disentanglement started. To our regret (or, probably, luckily? — because otherwise all the tragic historical problems would have remained intact), common opinion is too often led by people who are unselfish although irresponsible, disposed towards in terms not of real consequences but of ethical principles, inclined to replace knowledge by conscience, being enthralled by illusion that nothing especially wicked could arise out of good intentions, although modern history is full of opposite examples.

The main societal illusion was most probably not that serfdom was to be abolished the sooner the better, but that the problem was quite simple and not subject to deliberation and preventive measures. It seemed to radical intellectuals that what’s doomed in an uncompromising way by the moral sentiment, has to be abolished without lengthy discussions.

Even A. I. Herzen, being a truly skeptical thinker, proudly recollected that the only thing that he used to emphasize with absolute confidence was abolition of serfdom. I don’t remember I’ve ever read any of his serious deliberations concerning what would come next.

General L. V. Dubelt wrote in his diary short after appearance of the manifesto: Now the proletariat would appear in this country, and revolutions would come, in a way similar to France (he did not however realize that the revolution which would come approximately in a generation would far exceed France as the classical state of social unrest). I would not like to regard Dubelt as being a cleverer person than Herzen, or more concerned about the fate of the country. My guess is that he was more used to think about consequences than principles, contrary to what was usual for writers dwelling in the realms of day-dreaming. The latter thing is normal and fine, if day-dreams are not taken as literal guidelines for action.

Taken into account this background, one feels quite surprised to find in the novel written by the simple-hearted Miss Beecher-Stowe some meditations concerning the difficulties of emancipating the Blacks from slavery, apart from moral sentences. Alfred the ‘inveterate tyrant’ assured — not quite without cause — that «his slaves have better life than the majority of population of Britain, — God knows what’s better: to witness your children being sold, or to see them die at your eyes of hunger».

The noble Saint-Claire recurred to a gentle line of argument: «But if we emancipate our slaves, who would take care of them to teach them to use their newly acquired freedom for their own welfare? We are too lazy and unpractical to form by our former slaves love to labor, without which they wouldn’t be able to truly become people. They would have to move to the North, but tell me sincerely: are there many people in the Northern states who would be willing to undertake the role of their tutors? You don’t spare money for missionaries, but what would you say when Blacks would inundate your cities and towns? That’s what I am interested in! Would the North undertake the task of formation if the South would emancipate its slaves?».

What we are dealing with here is not a paragon of profoundness, still, there are no such passages in Russian literature of that time. What was the cause of such situation, censorship, or generic superficiality of our literary radicals? When we were young, we were all highly enthused by the image of Russia which was depicted by the 'ardent Vissarion' in his famous letter to N. V. Gogol: «This country presents a horrible view of a state where people trade in people, not being able to recur to the common excuse put forward by the planters in America, saying that a Black is not human at all». «The most actual national problems in the contemporary Russia are currently: abolition of serfdom, abolition of corporal punishment, introduction of strict compliance to those laws which we have already got. This situation is obvious even for the government... what's proved by its bashful and fruitless advances directed at the benefit of the 'white Blacks', and abolition of whip in favor of lash».

The fact that Carthage — that is, serfdom — was to be ruined, was obvious to all noble minds, and there is no doubt that they were right. Still it seems that not many people were bothered about the consequences, just because people were reluctant to be reputed for reactionaries. N. V. Gogol did not dare to send his reply to V. G. Belinsky. It was later reconstructed from fragments: «What is more profitable for peasants, the rule of a landlord, who is already quite well educated, probably university-trained, who is consequently quite sensible, — or under the rule of many officials, less educated, self-interested, and interested only in gaining their own profit? There is a lot of topics that each of us should think through beforehand, before beginning to speak of abolition with the zeal of an ardent knight or a youngster, so that abolition would not prove to be worse than slavery itself».

Alas, too many topics had not been subject to study beforehand...

It would be important to understand what proved to be the cause of the emancipation not having been prepared in a proper way, to which extent this was due to objective conditions (the problem itself being too complicated, interests of some forces being too strong, some resources lacking), and to which extent it was conditioned by collective phantoms, collective illusions, common for both the authorities and the lower classes.

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## **Serfdom in History of the «Emergency State» in Russia**

I have to acknowledge that I have learned a lot of things that are both interesting and novel for me, which is pleasant. Still some questions remain, both concrete and more general, which provide sort of mystical dimension to the problem of abolition of serfdom.

First of all we have to emphasize that Russia has been very bold in launching into experiments. That is, experimenting proved to be sort of a continual national job, at least from the time when tsar Alexei Mikhailovich left, and Peter I appeared, with his regiments of boy-soldiers. Further on this latter this latter type of sovereign power has tended to prevail in this country.

A lot of experiments were undertaken, beginning with the construction of the Ice Palace which cost about one third of the national budget, not to mention about the endless reforms of Peter I, total regulation introduced by tsar Pavel, the attempt to directly implement the ideas of utopian socialism, promoted in this country by members of the 'Narodnaya Volya' organization. I haven't mentioned the Russian revolution as yet, or the idea of world revolution. There has been plenty of experiments.

Against this background, definite hesitation about serfdom seems to have been particularly surprising. What was so special about it, that abolition of personal dependence, which was not directly linked to economic interests (the main contents of abolition was linked to economics rather loosely), would have so much impeded this process? Everyone beginning from the times of Catherine II, who formed in 1768 the first commission, the first committee dedicated to abolition of serfdom, was sure that serfdom was to be absolutely abolished. Nevertheless due to some mysterious causes a hundred more years proved to be necessary to implement this general desire.

What's interesting is that members of these committees used to start their work being sure that peasants have to be emancipated at any rate; getting to know the problem closer, they gradually changed their opinion, realizing that possibly one should not proceed too quickly.

Nicholas I began from regarding the abolition of serfdom as his life's task. He ended with leaving this task to Alexander II. Only when due several deplorable events (one of



*I. Repin. Arresting a Propagandist. 1880–1892*

which was the Crimean war, the second one which could easily be regarded as the primary one, that European mentality tended to regard preservation of serfdom as not entirely 'comme il faut'), when Russian state was at its low-tide, the reform was started.

The autocrats, as well as the journalists, regarded the state as being in an abnormal situation. Just remember the way in which texts of the Pietraszewsky group used to begin: «For how long would serfdom be conserved at the eyes of enlightened Europe?». This factor was very important at that time, which finally led to the notorious abolition of serfdom.

Still, as we know, peasants having been emancipated from the previous dependence, entered a new one, this time of the community. A law was approved simultaneously, forbidding to take so-called freshly developed lots into private property. Full abolition of serfdom, according to European criteria, was conducted only in the epoch of P. A. Stolypin, when the state was strategically in a weakest position. However everything was reversed by the Soviet authorities quite soon.

Serfdom has been preserved in this country for ever, against the framework of constant experimenting. Its atavistic traits are still present, whether in the form of registration (giving the right of permanent residence), social parasitism, or in other forms.

What is the case here? Most possibly we're having to do here with a specific concept of the state, different from regarding it as a mechanism in service of the civic society. This concept, having been introduced by the Anglo-Saxon, Protestant mentality, was disseminated around the world, basing on a conclusion that everyone subject to this regime, would automatically become civilized. Russian state has always been promoted by emergency, so that the concept of civic, 'service state' never came to really work.

This emergency character of the state presupposes any level of self-sacrifice and fusion — but only while the whole process is taking place in the framework of imperial self-consciousness, imperial feeling. This framework is good for the purposes of building an «Ice Palace», committing a world revolution; outside of it, nothing of that kind is possible. Every attempt directed at renouncing solidarity, including hierarchical solidarity, were finished by nothing. Dependence of peasants on the community could be a good example of group solidarity at a low level; higher would come dependence of intellectuals upon public opinion, which worked harder than any censorship. Russia was lucky in its endeavors in the framework of this type of state organization. Outside of this frame destabilization could take place, appearance of revolted provinces, destruction of an empire, whether visible or invisible, — but finally the regressive tide came, returning the usual imperial status, or its idea at least, which formed sort of vicious circle.

Fortress is a tough notion. Think about protectors of fortress in Pushkin's «Captain's Daughter»: there was total decay, corruption, it seemed that if enemy would appear everything would fall down. But every time the enemy really appears, the invisible empire gains back its visible status, and it is again able and willing to start on a world revolution, or conquer the space.

However only something really imposing is able to serve as a trigger. The Russian state has never been lured by small-scale tasks. The reason is that our worldviews have been based upon radically different foundations. The Anglo-Saxon model supposes that one may be summoned to give an account to God: self-dependence as the principle of being chosen by God. Another model, existing only in the emergency framework, could be labeled as 'God-dependence'. It keeps appealing to men not directly but through a given hierarchy, a social structure. As a result, certain elements of serfdom tend to keep hold of self-consciousness.

Today when the idea of 'service state' has come to its logical end, when it has been imbued by alien elements, by a different genetic code, it is conservation of the regime of 'emergency state' which might present the only constructive answer of the Christian civilization to decay and obsolescence of all social structures.

**M. Sverdlov:**

How would you in context of your lofty mediations imbued to a certain extent with mysticism, regard edicts of the emperors, beginning with edict issued by Catherine II in 1775, then the edict of 'free ploughmen', next the emancipation of peasants in Finland, and, I would add, Baltic provinces, as forms of gradual movement towards abolition, against the background of serfdom becoming more and more obsolete, both in economic and social terms? How would you fit that into your mystical system?

**A. S.:**

Russia had been in constant process of trying to abolish serfdom, however without it, it just could not do. Certainly there occurred some exceptions from the rule, it suffice to remind of Cossacks, of peasants in Northern Russia, of ransoms. Some part of population happened to gain something of it as a result. But the majority of peasants were neither willing nor able, nor knowledgeable about any other way of self-identification than preservation of these metapersonal fields of gravitation.

This dependence could be not obligatory dependence on landlord. It could be dependence on the community, on common opinion, as it was in the case of the intelligentsia.

Thus serfdom continued to exist in spite of all edicts and good intentions. It was a result not of economic causes and principles, but of existential causes which comprised the very spiritual form of the existence of Russia.

**M. S.:**

Another question in this case. According to the edict of 'free ploughmen' not more than a hundred thousand peasants gained freedom, this is one thing. Another thing is that they tended not to stay as members of any rural community, but just enlisted themselves as members of other estates. They became merchants, or urban petty bourgeois, or even continued to function as personally free people in various spheres of economic activity.

**A. S.:**

You're absolutely right, this was the form of outflow which had been in every respect promoted by the authorities, just because such kind of archaic existence former rather a heavy burden, from the point of view of enlightened Europe. Still there was no mass emancipation of peasants for ransom from those estates that were subject to mortgage or trusteeship, which was allowed sine the times of Nicholas I. There was no mass outflow, although individual possibility to gain freedom tended to always be there. We have already been presented examples of how this possibility used to be implemented.

**V. Kavtorin:**

Why do you think the emergency state to be particularly effective? Is it several bloody unrests that Russia has got in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a couple of destructions which have left its economics in a marginal state? Why do you think it has been so effective?

**A. S.:**

My impression is that everything depends on the scale. Historical period of existence of democracies based upon right of free people, having the right to keep and bear arms, has now come to an end. What we see nowadays is that the states are being occupied, I mean their formal structures are not being able to withstand the new forces. Moreover, there is always some kind of resource which might become necessary unexpectedly, whether it be gold, or oil, or something else. Some time it could come to a situation when the clear air of Nepal would become a more valuable factor than, let's say, joint economic infrastructure of Europe. That's hard to foresee.

The emergency state forms in the same way sort of being advanced from the future. Some time we could need it, not because there'd be nothing better, but just because nothing else would be left.

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## Serfdom and Russian Literature

My intent is to briefly present the role of literature in the aforementioned processes. My impression is that literature was successful in promoting its function, or even its mission.

There is no way for me to consent with the theses that Russian writers used to be generically light-minded, dwelling in the realm of day-dreams, or that knowledge gave way to conscience. History of Russian literature of the second half and the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and of the 19<sup>th</sup> century testifies to the Russian writers being aware of the fact that quite contradictory problems, which have formed the centre of our discussion, presupposed manifold approaches and at the same time were subject to theoretical discussion.

A. I. Herzen who has been already mentioned here, was also author of such work as «Letters to an old Friend», which belongs to some of his latest texts. There he speaks about peculiarities of the historical process, which forms the cause why I would recommend it to modern leaders for study. He did not call there for direct action in favor of any societal change. Quite contrary to that: speaking about an old friend of his, M. A. Bakunin, he used a peculiar metaphorical sentence, saying that Bakunin took the second month of pregnancy for its ninth month. He emphasized that history was not to be accelerated in this way. Thus writers were much keener observers than it might seem.

As to abolition of serfdom and the role of classical Russian literature, two items should be pointed out here. Firstly, I would say that Russian writers played a huge role in preparation of this process, — not only directly, e. g. by promoting the necessity of reform in their works, but also by means of carrying out its own mission, that is, by preparing in a latent way common opinion and societal consciousness to the change having to take place.

One should be reminded in this respect about the works of N. M. Karamzin, or A. S. Pushkin, where relation to another person as a person was being formed, notwithstanding the social layer where he belonged. «He, the other one, could probably stand on a lower step, still, he is the same as me», — this was what Dostoyevsky's hero said about one of Pushkin's protagonists, called Samson Vyrin, from his «Postmaster». He could be little — still a count, striding along Nevsky avenue, could come to be in a similar situation.

This was a new vision of another person, who had the same right of access to cultural and historical values, as an educated man. This vision was formed by literature, changing the societal perspective, which was no more able to do without liberty.

The second task of the Russian literature seems to be even more important. It met challenge which neither social leader, nor politician, nor philosopher was fully able to meet in the framework of Russian culture of that time. Russian literature conducted sort of a trial of concepts and ideals, which had been elaborated by the best minds, being enthused by the loftiest ideals. Literature brought them to trial by means of applying aesthetical categories, which are really different from thegnoseological ones. That is why we would really find different approaches to such notions as freedom or abolition of serfdom in texts written by Russian writers.

No contradiction is present in this statement, although there might seem to be one. Every notion which was important for social life was regarded by Russian writers beginning with Pushkin, who had predecessors in this respect as well, from the exclusively one point of view, which was freedom. What is freedom, how is it related to enlightenment, what is its price, where could freedom lead one? Is it possible that lofty idea of freedom could be subject to profanation? That was why Pushkin wrote in the 1830<sup>es</sup> his famous article dedicated to Radishchev, where he shocked the contemporaries by his seemingly negative attitude to Radishchev. He did not really appreciate much in his works. Still, there is something else which forms the essence of the aforementioned paper — Pushkin's ideas of enlightenment and quasi-enlightenment, of inexpediency to regard the past in a haughty or condescending way.

Gogol wrote a paper about social estates, where he expressed some ideas which proved to be unacceptable for his contemporaries. What he meant was not that the idea of autocracy was to be resuscitated, but that it was necessary to regard any form of societal organization with due criticism. Time to idealize monarchy, or republic, or democracy, were gone. Time had come, Gogol said, when form of government was to be grown from the people's spirit, from grassroots. This ability to have a critical, or, rather, analytical look at some ideas, to make readers to regard them in a different vein, has always been characteristic of Russian writers.

My impression is that it is because of these tendencies such a mighty potential of dialectical interpretation of the historical phenomena which turned to appear in such a dramatic way in the political realm, was accumulated in the framework of Russian literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**D. Spivak:**

We have time left for short concluding remarks. All the participants of the seminar are welcome to present them.

## Concluding Remarks

*Ya. Gordin:*

### Products of «Unproductive Bondage»

What has been discussed by us consisted in fact of freedom either being fruitful or not. There are two points of view. The first one is that lack of freedom may be fruitful in some framework, the second is that lack of freedom may never be fruitful. My position is the latter of these viewpoints.

It would be enough to remind here of what was told by V. Chernukha, as well of realities of Russian history per se. It is quite possible for us to speak about the mystical properties of this process. However one must take into account that beginning from times of Catherine II, Russia kept proceeding from one atrocious financial crisis to another one of that kind. The country was ruined in fact, in the 1850<sup>ies</sup>. External debt, as well as the internal one, became exquisitely high.

It suffice to read letters of government leaders of that time: they were in panic and foresaw a catastrophe. Look for example into the diary of P. A. Valuyev. Thus there were no options different from the one which took place. I am forced to admit that although we are friends with A. Melikhov, truth is more valuable for me, as a well-known proverb says. Following his line, we would have to admit that there were no serious grounds to abolish serfdom, except for fantasies of the writers. No, there was no other way.

Another aspect is related to Russian peasant. He was probably feeling quite well. We have in general given too little thought to psychological aspects. It was understandable that following the appearance of the manifesto of February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1762, where liberties for nobility were proclaimed, serfdom became illegal, just because Russian peasants started waiting for emancipation, on quite understandable reasons.

We would be able to realize how much Russian peasants wished to become free, if we turn to beautiful works on Russian peasant utopia, which were radically opposed to serfdom, expressing in this way the deepest aspirations of Russian peasants. Those peasants who escaped in times of tsarina Elisabeth (about 250 thousand, judging by official reports), run on the one side to Prussia, and on the other one, to Turkey. They were heading neither to the community, nor to some new kind of oppression.

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## State Policy after Abolition of Serfdom

I have never studied serfdom or its abolition; still, here are a few words in favor of the authorities. It's easy for us to discuss what could have happened if the reform would have been different. However Russia would have been flooded with blood without that reform. Considerable part of nobility was against the reform, and almost all the officials.

Government started to pay due time to the reform beginning from the year 1858. My impression is that every measure that was necessary, were well-grounded and thoroughly elaborated. A tight net of commissions was created, destined to resolve about every disputable problem. Local specialists were gathered without delay, able and willing to resolve any controversy. That was the first thing.

Secondly, I am fully concordant with both V. Chernukha, and B. Mironov in that special thought was constantly given by the government, beginning from year 1858, concerning job placements for the part of population which had been emancipated. Decision concerning foundation of the Agricultural academy in Moscow was taken in 1858. This Academy had been founded especially in order to provide agricultural training for those that would come there after the year 1861, as a result of the abolition.

It would not be timely to discuss now what proved to be the result of these efforts. A man called Nikolai Ivanovich Zheleznov (1816-1876) became the rector of the academy; his name has been undeservedly forgotten. He graduated from the Institute of Mines, continued education at the Hohenheim Royal Institute and at the Sorbonne, graduated from Paris Conservatoire of arts and crafts, and further dedicated his efforts and time to study of agriculture in practically all European states.

Having returned to Russia, he became professor at the Agrarian academy. He took part in the work of commissions from 1858 till 1861, after which he became rector of the Agrarian academy. This was the best institute in Russia. Nevertheless what followed was quite dramatic, demonstrating in this way level of willingness of our people, and its so-called mentality.

1,111 persons were enlisted in the academy in the course of the first decade of its existence; only 34 of them came to be certified. Students formed a group called «People's



*V. Makovsky. Convict. 1879*

Reprisal»; illegal activities were constantly practiced. N. I. Zheleznov finally had to practically take to flight from the academy. This person with European training did not quite understand who was he having to deal with. Thus in 1869, soon after creation of the notorious «People's Reprisal», he had to leave the academy. In fact he refused to work there.

What was being done by people who stopped to plough and came to colleges? The majority of those who joined revolutionary organizations were state-sponsored. Names of all these groups are well-known. It is a separate story, an interesting and a strange one.

To sum up, here is the March issue of the «Sovremennik» journal, where an extract was published from the edict. Having read it, I have become even more sure that everything which concerned actions of the government, was in fact flawless.

An interesting observations that I've got — I hope to be granted pardon for it by our writers — is that N. A. Nekrasov turned to be one of those who were dissatisfied by this document, just because Nekrasov lost his main topic due to its appearance. As to A. I. Herzen who belonged to the greatest Russian thinkers, I would regard «Letters to an Old Friend» as his unfinished political testament. He wrote there something quite brilliant, both simple and figurative: «We don't need advance-guard officers, we need preachers. We need not tear eyes out, we need to open them». Our legislators aren't accustomed to learning, we are neither accustomed to that, and all our calamities are going on, and there seems no end to them. I have to draw this 'optimistic conclusion' from what I've said.

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## Apparition: Fragments of a Political and Artistic Chronicle

Turning peasants into the serfs tends to be regarded as system of unpopular measures. At the same time, abolition of serfdom, to judge from its social resonance, proved to be quite unpopular too. Pushkin's words of «wild gentry and meager serfdom», seem to be very interesting in this respect, giving a classical formula of serfdom in Russia. «Wild gentry» is emphasized far more often than «meager serfdom». My impression is that Pushkin's formula is quite ambivalent, just because 'being meager' of serfdom defines the other part being 'wild'. This meaning is absent from the Dictionary of Pushkin's Language. Still, it turns out to be very actual for means of ideological analysis of Russian enlightenment, and of ideas of liberalism, providing guise for quite different faces.

Speaking of the unpopular decisions and the 'vertical of power', which has been so much discussed in this country, I would remind that it is not by chance that we Russians have lexemes for courtier, noble, and house-serf (*pridvornyj*, *dvoryanin*. and *dvorovyj*, respectively), containing the same root. This forms by the way, the essence of the «Firs's enigma», - probably not from text written by Chekhov, but from the role played by Igor Ilyinsky.

\* \* \*

Alexander Ivanov was perceived by contemporaries as author of a single painting. Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, he was granted continuation of training in Italy. In 1830 he left Russia and was back by summer 1858, that is, a month and a half before dying.

He had special position in the multinational colony of artists in Rome, not too interested in having guests from Russia. He was neither disposed to pay attention to contemporary events, including those occurring in his own country. His wish to «serve his country by means <...> of both sketches and paintings» (from a letter to Grand Duchess Maria Nikolaevna, 1838) seems to be too idealistic. Idea of a «big painting» came to Ivanov by the year 1837, when he was driven towards «profound inner life».

After the term of his study trip was finished, his material situation became difficult. Four years of sketching made him feel that «the end of the work is getting farther in the process of working». At the same time, in March 1841 he wrote to V. Zhukovsky from

Rome that he was «planning to finish the painting of the Messiah by the end of the year». Being sure that the painting would soon be finished, he kept applying for financial aid ... for 16 more years. When it would be exposed to public, the painter would still not regard his painting as finished.

«We have begun collecting money for Ivanov», — A. Smirnova (Rosset) wrote to Gogol in May 1846, — «It would be good to collect 6,000, which would provide for his two years' life <...>. I was surprised to learn that the tsar has not helped him; probably he had forgotten about the hardships of travel and nobody reminded him. Why don't I have means? I love Ivanov so much and I treasure his painting». Ivanov would obtain via Zhukovsky about 3,000 roubles donated by the Crown Prince. The painter saw in this donation something exceeding normal human feelings: «What is important for me is that He redeemed me from the pressures of time and human fancies».

In 10 years, Ivanov's painting would be bought by Alexander II for the Hermitage at 15,000 roubles, and would be exposed according to his will in one of its halls. The first presentation to public became sort of official in this way.

The Russian society kept anticipating reforms since the coronation of Alexander II, which was postponed till the end of the Crimean war. In November-December 1857 re-scripts were directed by the tsar to governors of Wilno (Nazimov), St. Petersburg (Ignatyev), Nizhni-Novgorod (Muraviev). The government initiated in this way wide discussion of peasant reform. We find a response in a memo written by future members of Editorial Commissions A. I. Koshelev and count V. A. Cherkassky. They hoped that inner reforms would compensate failures in international affairs, linked to the Paris treaty: «The Ceasar has crossed Rubicon...». Society wished the reforms to prove long-term.



*A. Ivanov. Epiphany. 1837–1857*

The balance of powers was at the same time too fragile and could easily be shattered. Tourgeniev wrote in 1858 a letter to Herzen, asking him «not to be too critical of Alexander Nikolaevich — he is too much criticized here by the reactionaries; getting blows from both sides he could easily be disoriented...».

Ivanov's canvas «Appearance of Christ to the people» arrived to St. Petersburg in this situation. Correspondence concerning its exposition came from Ministry of the Court. Its general spirit was restrained, which testified to peculiarities of big politics of that time: «To Head of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Hermitage Councilor of State Bruni. The Minister of the Imperial Court lets you know that the Emperor has ordered to expose Ivanov's painting, which has recently been brought from Rome, in one of the halls, at his choice, for exposure to the public...».

A. Ivanov returned to Russia at the time of a breakthrough. The time was full of projects, new winds were there. His 'historical painting' corresponded in an indirect way to feelings of the society, anticipating reforms.

«People have more or less agreed to label the time as transitory», — Gogol wrote in his «Author's Confession», — «Everyone feels that the world is on move <...>. People are looking for something outside, not inside themselves. Moral problems have one over those political, scientific, and all others».

Ivanov's creative production has been never regarded against the back ground of the Russian liberalism. However his 'huge work' consisted not so much in looking for means to express an idea, but rather to present his interpretation of that idea. The main figures in the front are a patrician and a slave, being baptized together. «There is mirth appearing through traditional suffering», — A. Ivanov told about the key figure, the image of which cost him so much time. In 1858 he finally found the shape of the painting which for two decades had been defined by him as «situation on a crossroad between the physical and the spiritual». From the point of view of historical psychology, it represented a move to different social foundation of Christian culture. A. Khomiakov regarded the painting as being «so lofty that it upgraded our notions and needs as well». In this way he foreboded the idea of «sacred unity» — the «divine sociality», which keeps forming the foundation of any society, to follow a formulation coined by E. Dürkheim.

This forms the cause why the painter was so eager to come back to St. Petersburg. One of the latest letters written by Ivanov may be found in the archives of countess E. A. Cherkasskaya. «You wanted me to let you know when my painting would be ready. Your question would be, is it ready? My answer is, not yet. <...> I wouldn't write more about the course of my work, not to disturb you». The letter is not too clear; however the main idea is there, pointing at «bright future, founded upon pure morality». This had to do very much with societal debate, which tended to actively include people from the milieu of countess Cherkasskaya.

Slavophiles were the first to fully estimate the purport of Ivanov's work. «The moment when the Old Testament gave way to the new one, has appeared in this country at this time not by chance. Foundations of practical Christianity are to be introduced into practical life right now. <...> History of its creation presents a lesson for us».

Khomiakov wrote that on behalf of a circle of people, «starting a great social reform». «We waited for many years that his painting, his one painting would be finished. We came to idea that he would create nothing more, and this is the case. His canvas would remain

solitary. And he was so full of forces, so fresh and tough. What a pity!», — Khomiakov wrote in his «Russian Talk».

This publication proved to be important both for the author's fate, and the fate of the biggest Slavophile journal, which published it. Not being able to express views of all Slavophiles, this publication testified that the creative production of Ivanov was subject for serious inner discussions. Private collections of Slavophiles contained a wealth of sketches for the «Appearance of Christ».

A representative delegation from the Russian Museum of Alexander III was officially directed to Moscow in order to buy sketches for that painting. In his unpublished memoirs, P. I. Neradovsky wrote that Khomiakov's daughter «received us sitting in a room with a sketch of Christ by Ivanov. We were received in a restrained manner, directed primarily at the Grand Duke (Georgi Mikhailovich — *L. L.*) and [count D. I.] Tolstoy. Enmity of a Moscovite towards people from St. Petersburg was very visible».

Thus the age-old dispute between two Russian capitals was linked to discussion on the reform. A. Ivanov managed to insert his artistic utterance into both.

«I met Ivanov on a July morning — I don't remember whether it was cold or hot — near the Winter palace in St. Petersburg, amid whirls of dust which are too characteristic of that city. He answered my greetings in a distracted way. He had just got out from the Hermitage; sea wind turned the tails of his coat; he screwed up his eyes and held his head by two fingers. The painting was already in St. Petersburg and began to arise unfavourable reaction», — I. S. Tourgenyev wrote.

Anna Tioutcheva, who was maid of honor at the court, wrote in her diary on July 10, 1858: «Death of painter Ivanov is being ascribed to his painting having so little success». Khomiakov in his letter to A. Koshelev wrote: «Strong intrigues and possibly disillusionment contributed to his illness. Isn't this St. Petersburg a fine place to live».

In this way Slavophiles initiated to speculate on a painter not being appreciated and understood by the society. At the same time they proposed an interesting aesthetical approach to his artistic production. In any way, this was the first critical approach which was present.

Societal purport of A. Ivanov's painting was thus not appreciated in its integrity by the Russian criticism. It was neither the 'party', nor the artistic principle which was decisive for the positioning of opinions. Looking at the painting, nobody could stay objective, whether it was N. V. Gogol, or F. Chizhov, Herzen and Chernyshevsky, V. Stasov or V. Rozanov, although the painter had wished to be as objective as possible.

As it was formulated by art historian P. P. Gnedich, «Ivanov's talent, directed deplorably to biblical subjects, failed to produce any national work». Tolstoy's protagonists expressed his own critical position: «This is a false direction. This is the same approach to Christ according to Ivanov, Strauss, and Renan. What is this painting? — Anna asked. — Christ in front of Pilatus <...> I don't know why are they so terribly mistaken <...> If they want to depict not a god, but a revolutionary or a sage, let them take as a subject not Christ, but Socrates, Frankline, Charlotte Cordé». A phototypic reproduction of the famous canvas would be present on the wall of the house in Trekhprudny lane, «with a still unresolved mystery of Christ who is very little and too near».

These meditations proved to be possible only not taking into account the tragedy that Ivanov could not cope with, having returned to his native country. In trying to adequately

present the sum total of his contemplations, the right formulation should be not «how?», but «what about?».

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## Slavery and Gentry: Friends or Antipodes?

I found a remarkable mistake in the text of the concept of our seminar. To recur to its last page, we read: «International year to commemorate struggle against slavery and its abolition...». Our meeting is just characterized by the fact that some of the participants are decisively opposed to slavery, others to its abolition.

Being adversary of serfdom myself, I have been confronted in the course of my life with some of its manifestations. Director of the plant where I was assigned after having graduated from the institute, forbid by an informal order to let workers leave the assemblage. Only the best metalworkers worked at that time at the final operations. Their wages were quite high, judging on our standards (of the 1970<sup>ies</sup>). However they felt unhappy about constant overtime work. In order to fix them on their places, they were declared that one would have to leave the plant in case one would like to leave the assemblage. I would suppose that many people would not have been stopped by this if not for an informal agreement, taken by all the directors of plants situated on the territory of the Kirov district of the city: one who would leave his plant would not get a job at neighboring plants. This meant that if those who would like to improve the conditions of their work would have to spend an hour and a half every day to get to his work. There were no official documents fixing this order, but all workers said that it was so without any hesitation.

It has not been enough to issue one decree in 1861 to force the worker to stay at his place, because it is much easier to organize work in this way. Superiors feel it is easier to order than to convince people. Commanding as the main way to organize work was not invented by Communists. It has been a consequence of serfdom.

Whenever we to speak of serfdom, we tend to speak about peasants. However we are reminded that nobles took part in the social processes, too. My colleague Griakalov mentioned the sacred unity of landlord and peasant. Well, the notions — slavery and haughtiness — are similar in Russia ('rabstvo' and 'barstvo', respectively).

«Save yourselves from the system of serfdom...», — preached A. I. Herzen to his fellow countrymen, meaning primarily possible peasant unrest, but also lethargy where nobility tended to plunge deeper and deeper.

Leo Tolstoy depicted in his «Anna Karenina» the selling of forest by Oblonsky. He gave his consent to the first price proposed by the buyer. Levin became indignant, but Steva just shrugged his shoulders — haggling is none of my business, he said. Yes, — shouted his friend and relative, — it's none of your business, but he would bargain! His children would have means to pay for their education, not yours... Oblonsky had no serfs left, but his habitual haughtiness was still there.

Tolstoy was knowledgeable about serfdom, for sure. My colleague A. Melikhov has somewhat laid it on thick. But serfdom was essential for count Tolstoy in one respect only. Arguing against criticism of his «War and Peace», he wrote that neither peasants nor merchants were interesting for him. He was a noble by birth, an aristocrat. This was the ambience where he spent his entire life, so he undertook the task related about it, as well...

What keeps interfering with our life is the haughty custom to drive people to work. We are unable to organize production, which forms the main trouble for this country. It is always easier to order — and we keep counting losses. Dostoyevsky cited an interesting example in his «Memoirs from the Dead House». A group of convicts was busy unloading a barge. The work went bad, tools fell on the ground, planking was broken. The chief warder finally set to the convicts a task. Their work would be measured not by time, but by the production: do it from this place till that place, and you would be free to go to dinner. People cheered up, the work went on smoothly. The task was quite big, convicts gained as a result not more than half an hour, - but they understood what was to be done, and what for.

It is a pity that there were not many leaders of this kind at that time; they are not numerous now, as well. A century and a half has passed, but the system is quite intact. Times d change, people don't. Managers still prefer to apply whip, rather than lure by a cake, even at private enterprises.

Let us take as an example the book written by the same protagonists of Tolstoy's. In wintertime Levin kept writing a book about national peculiarities of Russian workers. He thought that it was premature to adopt methods of European management. At the same time, he did not describe our peasants as hopelessly done.

It is a pity that our managers would apply one word, which is laziness, instead of the whole book written by Levin. All their management methods are limited to kicks and shoves. Being unable to think themselves, they tend to justify themselves by the employees' unwillingness to work. They deserve no quitrent! They are to be driven to the corvée!.. We have come here to discuss abolition of serfdom. I am afraid that in some years we'd have to speak of its reintroduction.

Continuing the discussion of collective illusions, which topic has been introduced here by my colleague A. Melikhov, I think that the role of collective illusions tends to be quite large in any social process; I am not sure that fiction might be responsible for them. Those who read 'Ill-starred Anton' comprised a small part of the society at that time. Generals P. D. Kiselev and Ya. I. Rostovtsev who were in charge of the 'peasant problem', used to read books that were more serious. It was only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that writer and novelist

became synonyms. Ideological phantoms do exist, without any doubt, and influence societal life strongly, but they are created not by fiction writers. Where they come from is the topic for a serious inquiry. Probably, topic for the next seminar.

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## Notion of Freedom in Life of Russian Peasants

Speaking of slavery, one has to remark that in Russian societal thought the emphasis has always been laid not on the notion of slavery, but upon its opposite, that is, liberty. This word was in use by the enlightened strata of Russian society. As for the peasants, the purport of this notion remained rather fuzzy for them. Abolition of serfdom was regarded by the intelligentsia as freedom for people.

It was A. S. Kaisarov who was the first in the Russian socio-political thought of the 19<sup>th</sup> century presented detailed substantiation of abolition of serfdom in his doctoral thesis «On abolition of serfs in Russia», which was defended at the University of Göttingen in 1806. The war of 1812 gave birth to hope and to justifies expectation that people who won war against Napoleon should not belong to anyone but itself. These ideas belonged however to the enlightened elite of the Russian society (Decembrists, primarily), who thought about the people, planned reforms for its sake, but not with its participation. That was why they were not supported by people. As distinct from them, democrats of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who did not belong to gentry, thought that it was impossible to gain freedom for the people without its participation (cf. programs of involving peasants into economic and political struggle elaborated by M. A. Bakunin, P. L. Lavrov, et al. ).

What is liberty? What could be regarded as liberty for Russian peasants? Speaking of personal liberty, the law of 1803 on ‘free ploughmen’ might be cited, according to which landlords were granted the right to emancipate peasants by whole estates, having allotted them land. Abolition of serfdom started on the territory of the contemporary Latvia and Estonia (that is, in the outlying districts of the Russian empire) in 1804–1805. Peasants could gain personal freedom there, but without land, which was to be taken on lease from the landlord for quitrent or corvée. Peasants themselves were not much attracted by freedom because they had little idea of what it was. Thus only 0.3 percent of all serfs were

emancipated in the course of 20 years following the edict, which comprised about 47 thousand people.

Later, in 1828-1829, peasants of Moldavia and Valachia were proclaimed to be free by emperor Nicholas I, their duties towards landlords having been scrupulously determined. This was the first attempt taken by state to define legal norms related to peasants. Although this act did not alter anything essential in the relations between landlords and peasants, it was interpreted by peasants as care of 'father-tsar' for his subjects, as his attempt to protect them against landlords.

Power of landlord over the personality of peasants was abolished by the manifesto of February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1861. Peasants became juridical persons. In order to get his identification card — that is, to become free from his landlord — a peasant was to first obtain from the village headman certificate that he did not have any arrears. Only after that he could get his ID card, issued by the district administration. It was not everyone who could pay a substantial sum of money. Peasants came to be dependent in this way of landlords, even having gained formal right to personal freedom. Thus we may say that Russian peasants gained full-blown personal emancipation, which remained only on paper.

The problem of collective land property was directly linked to the interpretation of personal freedom. Russian people had always lived in communities, which owned land and determined the entire rural lifestyle. Was freedom necessary for peasants? Could one say that community was outdated, being a remnant of feudalism?

In 1856–1859, that is, on the threshold of the reform, discussion concerning the fate of the rural community was conducted, which was widely reflected in press. A lot of revolutionary democrats of the 1860–1870<sup>es</sup> acknowledged importance of the community, sometimes even defining its presence as the key factor for safeguarding 'bright future'. For instance, in the opinion of M. A. Bakunin, the an ideal of land belonging to all the people, which was present in mass consciousness of peasants. Consequently, one had to follow this ideal in order to stay in contact with peasants. N. G. Chernyshevsky was also an advocate of the community, regarding it as a germ of the socialist society of the future.

Community was in this way regarded as an instrument for obtaining freedom. However land ownership was indispensable for both peasants and communities to gain freedom.

The reform of 1861 was not successful in this respect. Landlords retained their lands. Peasants were authorized to redeem it, but had to rent it from landlords for *corvée* or *quitrent*. The state helped peasants to redeem themselves from slavery: peasants had to pay themselves only about 20 percent of the sum total of ransom, the rest (80%) was paid by the state, under condition that a peasant would pay his debt back to the state in the course of 49 years, at 6 percent per year. It was dubious that Russian peasants fully appreciated this act: they were not well acquainted with bank credits. Still they understood that they got no land, although gained personal freedom from a landlord.

The reform which had been anticipated and discussed for such a long time, was conducted too late, and inflicted a trauma on the Russian society. Prior to it, it was possible to say that only the authorities took care of the people; after it, peasants revolted, being indignant about conditions of abolition.

There occurred 1340 mass disturbances in the first half of 1861; they numbered 1859 in the course of that year. The scope of the unrest proved to be greatest in provinces of the central 'black earth' belt, in the Volga district, and in the Ukraine. About half of them



*A. Venetsianov. Barn. 1821–1823*

were put down by the armed forces. Economic freedom was not gained in this way; ransom payments were abolished as late as in 1906.

Political freedom formed another kind of liberty which was necessary for peasants, as well as other layers of the Russian society. One perceives pessimistic notes when tracing back in which way it has been perceived in the Russian socio-political thought.

My impression is that G. P. Fedorov was right when he wrote: «The entire dramatism of Russian political situation may be expressed in a nutshell: political freedom in Russia may be a privilege only of gentry and of the Westernized strata (the intelligentsia). People don't need it, people are even afraid of it, regarding autocracy as the best protection against the oppressions of the masters. Emancipation of peasants could resolve the problem on its own, because millions of illiterate people, clinging to medieval forms of life and of consciousness, were unable to take part in the construction of a new, Westernized Russia» («Russia and Freedom», 1945).

There was obviously something more which was necessary, apart from ensuring political freedom for peasants, i. e. to prepare them for that freedom. People had to become enough 'conscientious', so that peasants themselves would start to feel how necessary political freedom was for themselves, to start fighting for its freedom. It was necessary to prepare grounds for these processes, which was taken by democrats not belonging to gentry, as their task.

A famous expression coined by Bakunin, «going to the people» (in Russian, 'khozhdenie v narod'), presents a good expression of in which way did the entire generation of Russian democrats regarded guidelines of their activities. Land was the first thing they started to speak, because there was no liberty for a peasant without the land.

Due to this tendency a lot of underground revolutionary organizations named themselves by words which were intelligible to the people: «Land and Freedom» appeared at the end of 1861, «People's Reprisal» in 1869, «People's Will» and «Black Re-allotment» in late 1870<sup>ies</sup>.

Secondly, freedom was regarded by peasants as freedom from landlords, not from the tsar. That is why revolutionaries thought it was necessary just to channel popular discontent along the proper, the revolutionary lines, trying to stir up or to nurture in the people the yearning for liberty.

Russian peasants, as it already has been noted, had difficulty in grasping the purport of the word «liberty» ('svoboda' in Russian, stemming from the French «liberté», according to the opinion of Fedotov). Will (Russian 'volia') is closer to his mind, because the notion of will comprised for a Russian not only personal, economic, or political liberties, but the right to behave according to one's own will. Most probably, it is because of this tendency that peasants have tended to easily pass from absolute passiveness — a sentence by P. N. Tkackev should be reminded in this respect: «He got accustomed to endurance and to wordless obedience by epochs of slavery and oppression; they have developed his slave instincts, so that most horrible acts of violence are unable to stir his dull nerves» — to inconceivable atrocities, when not only cruel landlords, but also people who feeling compassion to the people get heavily affected.

In fact the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century in Russia went under the auspices of struggle for freedom of the people. Next came the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it turned that the reform which had been originally designed as the way that would lead us towards the long-awaited freedom, led to the revolution of 1917. Peasants who took part in it did not foresee that they would soon be returned into bondage, this time not to the landlords, but to the collective farms, created by the new authorities.

It is really plausible to contend that serfdom was reresored to life in Stalin's times, because peasants lost personal freedom. They were not authorized to leave the collective farms whenever they wanted, because they had no ID cards. Even nowadays liberty, economic independence of peasant is still very much on the agenda: one continues to be confronted with the same difficulties, the same latent opposition of the society when in trying to buy land. Abolition of serfdom and struggle against it are still very much on the agenda of the Russian people.

*V. Kavtorin:*

## **Russian Reforms Yesterday and Today**

I am sorry that the text written by Alexander Melikhov has been presented too late. Collective phantoms have played a huge role in the history of mankind. Sometimes, although not always, they tend to be stronger than the political or economic factors.

My viewpoint is that what we are dealing with are not quite phantoms, because they come to being under the action of circumstances that are quite real.

As it has been contended here, there existed some kind of sacred community between landlord and peasant. That is right, it really did exist, and it was not radicals who conducted the reform. It was people conducting the reform who proceeded from that sacred community. On the level of peasants it found expression in the famous formula: «We belong to you, but land belongs to us» (although land had been in private property of the landlords for a long period by that time, which was fixed in legislation). As to the authors of the reform, they began to proceed basing on another kind of that collective phantom.

They tried to regard an estate as condominium of landlord and peasants. This viewpoint was expressed by Yu. F. Samarin, V. A. Cherkassky, N. A. Milyutin, P. P. Semenov-Tian-Shansky, but it was ruined by the reality. The majority of the committees of gentry did not give consent to transmission of land. Thus the reform which came to be implemented, turned out to be a compromise which was almost ideal. I am absolutely concordant with F. Lurie in this point.

However even in this variant, being quite soft, saying farewell to sacred phantoms seems to have always been quite painful. This painful parting with age-old phantoms conditioned in fact what later took place (I mean upsurge of the revolutionary movement). Although preserving community was regarded by authors of the reform as a provisional measure, and the commission in 1881 advocated in fact abolition of the community, in favor of introduction of police rule, having nothing to do with the estates, it was still conserved, preserving servile traits of our consciousness.

The thing is that although being well planned and thoroughly elaborated, reforms in Russia use to be implemented in an indecisive way. Our tradition of the 'emergency state' almost momentarily conditions recoil. This is the case of present-day situation in this country as well, so I am grateful to those participants who have expressed the opinion that we are still likely to witness renaissance of serfdom.

*S. Chebanov*

## **Serfdom: History or Phantome?**

The topic of our discussion being events that took place a century and a half ago, what we are feeling is that they are having directly to do with us. The reason is that events of the 1860<sup>ies</sup>, 1870<sup>ies</sup>, 1880<sup>ies</sup> have formed those social phantoms which are still there. Different social groups have been eliminated out of the society in the course of the historical process. Landowners were subject to elimination in this way. Next came the turn of clergy and merchants, next workers. It was in the 1990<sup>ies</sup> that the noble estate of intelligentsia was eliminated. This is why one is not able to play present-time games by cards which were handed out at that time.

*M. Sverdlov:*

## **History of Serfdom between Historical Materialism and Ideology**

Our meeting has been tremendously interesting and useful, I am absolutely sincere about it. A variety of opinions and approaches has been presented. At the same time I have to admit that I am somewhat confused. The reason is that we've had professional historians, on the hand; literary critics, mostly interested in spiritual processes, on the other hand; and writers who dwell in a different reality, created by them. What would all that look like, when being published as collected essays?

What should our starting position be, that of historical materialism, or the ideologemes that have been presented? As for me, I would not take ideologemes as my starting point. Let me cite a constructive example. M. P. Pogodin, who was a city dweller, not belonging to gentry, once wrote a letter to a friend of his, who was a landlord. His advice was to go to peasants when they would be working on the *corvée*, to show himself up there, so that peasants would feel that they were together with the landowner. Was this the case of «sacred unity»?

A landlord was a landlord, a serf was a serf who had his duties, who was subject to *corvée* and had to pay quitrent. He dwelt in a different world, a real world.

What are we to analyze, then? It seems to be most constructive to study development of serfdom as a definite form of slavery, to study the real purport of serfdom and its abolition.

*D. Spivak:*

## Conclusion

I am really grateful for all the participants for having taken part in our discussion. It has revealed a variety of viewpoints concerning historical roots of serfdom in Russia, effectiveness of measures directed at its abolition, historical and psychological remnants of age-old existence of serfdom on a considerable part of territory of this country, expediency of taking into account experience of the «great reforms» in conducting reforms of the present-day Russian society. At the same time I am glad to emphasize that our discussion has been conducted along transdisciplinary and constructive lines, withholding due respect for the viewpoints of our colleagues and opponents, and taking into account in every possible manner problems of human rights.

Definite contributions, as well as the general course of discussion, have corresponded to both traditions of Russian intelligentsia, as well the general spirit of international bodies which have given decisive impetus to our seminar. Let me remind you that it has been conducted as one of the latest events in a long row of discussions, presentations, and societal forums, which have been organized in many countries around the world in the framework of the International year to commemorate struggle against slavery and its abolition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, as well as the 'Slave Route' project, initiated by the UNESCO. Let me express in conclusion most sincere gratitude for comprehensive support to Ms. L. M. Moreva, National Officer for Culture, UNESCO Moscow Office, and also to Ms. N. V. Strougova, Leading Specialist, Committee for External Relations and Tourism of St. Petersburg.

Having stated this, I have the honor to announce that our seminar is finished.

## Appendix 1

### Radioserial ‘Serfdom in Russia and its abolition: history and present-day issues’

Radioserial ‘Serfdom in Russia and its abolition: history and present-day issues’ was held under the auspices of UNESCO in December 2004 — January 2005, basing on the facilities of Radio Petersburg, which holds the leading position on the municipal level. The serial presented radioversion of one-day seminar ‘Serfdom in Russia and its abolition: history and present-day issues’, which was conducted on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in St. Petersburg, Russia, in the framework of the International year to commemorate struggle against slavery and its abolition, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, against the background of the ‘Slave Routes’ project, initiated by the UNESCO in 1993, basing on the methodical and logistical support of the UNESCO Moscow Office.

A. L. Vasojević, professor of the State University of St. Petersburg, the Russian State Pedagogical University, and the Russian Orthodox Spiritual Academy of St. Petersburg, has consented to serve as moderator of the radioserial. The serial comprised three 53-minute long parts. It has evoked vivid interest by both the members of academia, as well as wide circles of general audience. In the process of elaboration of the concept of the seminar, it was decided to invite each time two main speakers, one representing the academic world, another belonging to the artistic circles.



*Participants of the Radioserial V. V. Kavtorin, B. N. Mironov,  
A. L. Vasojević, D. L. Spivak (from left to right)*

The first 53-minute program, broadcasted less than ten days after the seminar, comprised presence of the following participants: D. L. Spivak, Director, St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Institute of Cultural Research, Professor, UNESCO chair for comparative studies of spiritual traditions, their respective cultures and interreligious dialogue; B. N. Mironov, Professor, Faculty of History, State University of St. Petersburg; V. V. Kavtorin, writer, member of the St. Petersburg Writers' Guild; and E. V. Lunyaev, research associate, St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Institute of Cultural Research.

D. Spivak briefly presented ideals which guided the UN General Assembly in proclaiming the year 2004 as the International year to commemorate struggle against slavery and its abolition. He also gave an overview of events which formed focal points of this International year around the globe. Special attention was dedicated to the 'Slave Routes' project, initiated by the UNESCO in 1993, which has developed quite a few contact points with events of the International Year. Professor B. Mironov gave a wide overview of both the present-day 'state of the art', that is main historical regularities of serfdom and its abolition, as well as specific issues still subject to vivid discussion.

Writer V. Kavtorin put an emphasis upon profound influence of serfdom upon mass psychology of the contemporary Russians. Philosopher E. Lunyaev positively assessed transdisciplinary contacts between representatives of various specialities and scientific schools in study of this unique phenomenon. Professor A. Vasojević kept most actively moderating the discussion, paying special attention to links between historical events and problems of the Russian contemporary post-communist society, which are of special importance for the mass audience in Russia.

The main place in the next was dedicated to the discussion between A. M. Melikhov, member of the Writers' Guild of St. Petersburg, and deputy editor-in-chief of the 'Neva' magazine; and M. B. Sverdlov, principal research fellow, St. Petersburg affiliation, Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences; Professor, Chair of Russian History, Herzen Russian State Pedagogical University. The former of disputants spoke in favor of presence of certain elements of historical constructiveness in serfdom, as well as of influence of «collective phantoms» upon its dynamics and structure; the latter defended the these of serfdom having been historically regressive, and primarily defined by socioeconomic processes, which is basic for academia.

The concluding 53-minute program of the radioserial comprised presence of following participants: D. L. Spivak; V. G. Chernoukha, principal research fellow, Institute of History, Russian Academy of Sciences; F. M. Lurie, member of the St. Petersburg Writers' Guild; and N. V. Strougova, leading specialist, Committee for external relations and tourism, Administration of St. Petersburg.

The basis of discussion was provided, as well as in other parts of the serial, by dialogue held by two outstanding personalities, leading in their respective fields, one representing the academy, another creative circles. Historian V. Chernoukha emphasized the fact that the 1862 reform was undertaken in a pragmatic, operative and radical style, which was linked both to lack of means, and to experience of comparable steps taken earlier in the Baltic provinces. Writer F. Lurie noticed that this hasty reform was in fact quite well prepared, both in terms of legal background, and organizational measures and structures.

D. Spivak reminded of a wider socio-cultural context of abolition of serfdom in Russia, primarily taking into account similar steps, taken half a century earlier in Prussia under

the guidance of Stern and Hardenberg. Historian and political psychologist A. Vasojević provided a brief comparative analysis of the reflection of two major reforms in Russian history (1862 and 1991–1993) in mass consciousness.

The broadcast was finished by greeting, worded by N. Strougova on behalf of the Administration of St. Petersburg. Having emphasized how important it is for the city to withhold ties of systematic cooperation with the UN, UNESCO, and other international organisations, she cited another program, entitled 'European Routes in St. Petersburg', which had been implemented under the auspices of the Delegation of the European Commission in Russia, as positive and constructive example.

## Appendix 2

### Basic information concerning UNESCO project «Slave Routes» (1994–2004)\*

The General Conference of UNESCO approved at its 27th session in 1993, with the support expressed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its 56th ordinary session in Dakar, implementation of The Slave Route project (27 C./Resolution 3. 13).

Officially launched in Ouidah, Benin in 1994 at the First Session of the International Scientific Committee, The Slave Route Project identified the following three main objectives:

- to break the silence surrounding the slave trade today, which constitutes an aspect of the history of humanity that cannot be ignored;
- to highlight, in the most objective manner, its consequences, that is to say, the transformation of the world and the interactions between the peoples of Europe, Africa, the Americas and the regions of the Caribbean and Indian Ocean;
- to contribute to the establishment of a culture of tolerance and peaceful co-existence among peoples.

Over the past ten years, the project has engendered numerous activities throughout the world, with a focus on the establishment of scientific networks; the creation of a program on oral tradition; the promotion of commemorative cultural tourism; conducting feasibility studies on the creation of slavery museums; and highlighting living cultural, artistic and technological contributions deriving from the interactions of the slave trade. Additionally, the project has endeavored to pursue and expand cooperation among scientific networks and to set up a program for the study on new forms of slavery; cultural interactions in the linguistic, artistic and religious spheres linked to the slave trade in the regions in question; and support for artistic creation relating to the slave route.

The impact of the Slave Route Project has been broad ranging, involving inter-sectoral programming at the local, national, regional and international levels. Major accomplishments include:

- The UNESCO General Conference, at its 29<sup>th</sup> session, proclaimed the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August of every year as the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, commemorated in most of the members states of UNESCO;
- The establishment, operation, and promotion of the Slave Route Scientific Research Networks (over 15) some which are operational today:
  - The slave trade in the Nigerian Hinterland (1650-1900);
  - The ideological and legal basis of slavery and the slave trade;
  - Sites, places of memory and intangible heritage, Lusophone regions & Caribbean;
  - The diaspora: languages and forms artistic expression;

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\* Official documents on this project are to be found at site 'The Slave Route', UNESCO portal 'Culture' (<http://portal.unesco.org/culture>).

- Slavery and Afro-American religions;
- Slavery, economy and labor;
- Maroonage and forms of resistance;
- Impact of the slave trade on Senegambia;
- Slavery in the Mediterranean;
- Bantu cultures in the Americas and the Caribbean: languages, religions and society;
- Documentary sources: archives, oral traditions;
- Iconography;
- Slavery and society;
- Slavery and interculturality;
- Archaeological research (land & underwater): slavery and archaeology;
- Religions and slavery, women and slavery, UNESCO Chairs;
- Mobilization of over 7,500 schools in 170 countries through the UNESCO Associates School Project Network on the teaching of the transatlantic slave trade entitled «Breaking the Silence»;
- Revisions of school text books and promotion of intercultural learning;
- Expanded archival resources and accessibility, and increased interest and support for the implementation of Slavery Archives;
- Safeguarding of oral traditions related to slave trade and slavery through collection, compilation and publication;
- Identification and inventory of sites of memory and the creation of museums on slave trade and slavery;
- Joint UNESCO-WTO declaration on cultural tourism related to the slave trade route;
- Increased media coverage on slave trade and slavery;
- Rehabilitation and enhancement of artistic expressions and festivals commemorating the slave trade and slavery;
- Dialogue and debate generated among the general public on slave trade and slavery;
- Increased awareness among communities of Afro descent.

The most significant achievement of the Slave Route Project is the recognition of slavery and the slave trade as «a crime against humanity» by the 2001 World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Tolerance in Durban. Subsequently, the Durban declaration led to the proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly of the year 2004 as the «International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition», in an effort to commemorate both the bicentenary of the first Black Republic in Haiti and the 10th anniversary of the Slave Route Project.

While the Slave Route Project has accomplished significant achievements over the past ten years as briefly outlined above, due to the scope and magnitude of the slave trade and slavery, the project objectives have been progressively expanded to include additional regions and thematic areas previously overlooked. As a result, it has been decided that the Slave Route Project should be evaluated in order to assess its effectiveness and impact. Ultimately, the evaluation will provide guidance for the planning — identifying new

priorities, new areas of intervention and new partnerships — and execution of the project through 2007.

While the program currently finds its self at a crossroads, it is imperative to build on the momentum and increased awareness achieved as a result of the Slave Route Project activities over the past 10 years, and most recently from the 2004 International Year to Commemorate the Struggle Against Slavery and its Abolition. Whereas, the 2004 International Slavery Abolition year has just concluded, the opportunity to assess and further leverage the work of the past 12 months is ripe. Our expectations for 2005 and beyond include:

- Increased mobilization by Member States for the national commemorative activities to mark the International Year and the celebration of the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition on 23 August;
- Reinforce the Slave Route project and expansion of the research on slavery and abolition to other regions (Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, trans-Saharan regions, etc. );
- Conduct a study on the links between the slave trade, slavery and contemporary racism;
- Research on contemporary manifestations of slavery, in cooperation with ILO and UNICEF and the establishment of a relevant database. Make the results of this research public through the media and different forums that will also highlight the contemporary relevance of the commemoration, in view of the various forms of discriminations that still prevail today, such as sex trafficking, sex slavery and forced labour for children;
- Conduct a study on the relation between slavery and cultural diversity (e. g. cross-breeding, multilingualism, Creole, culinary and clothing arts, etc. ), the specificities of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and the transfer and impact of knowledge and skills from Africa to the New World;
- Compile a biographical dictionary of enslaved Africans, with a view to digitalizing all materials on the individuals who suffered enslavement, expanding upon a database being compiled at the Tubman Centre, York University;
- Establish documentary sources on the «Middle Passage», including all documents on slaving voyages, which would assist in identifying where people came from in Africa and where they went in the Americas;
- Study images and representations of enslaved populations, documenting the ways in which Africans and other non-European populations have been depicted in art and popular culture;
- Organize regional conferences and seminars on the history of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery, as well as on forms of internal exile which replicate losses of ancestral cultures, triggered by slave trade, in order to increase international consciousness on these issues;
- Establish a research project on the influence of slavery on the cultures of the sending and hosting countries;
- Conduct a study on the impact of slavery on the shaping of attitudes and behavior of the descendants of the enslaved, and on indigenous people;

- Carry out a comparative study between the transatlantic slave trade and slavery and contemporary forms of slavery, servitude and exploitation;
- Provide support for the training of graduate students from countries of the African diaspora, and exchanges among the countries of the African diaspora, involving professors and advanced graduate students from countries outside of Europe and North America;
- Establish programmes of historical, genealogical, archaeological and linguistic research, with a view to elaborate curricula and textbooks for all levels of education;
- Create a networking of scholars to carry out studies on the philosophical, political, legal, cultural and social dimensions of the abolition process of slavery;
- Publish monographs to commemorate great figures of abolitionism;
- Organize teacher-training courses that will monitor and interpret facts that can help understand the slave trade and the abolition of slavery as well as understand the nature of the new forms of slavery;

Promote the inscription on the World Heritage List of groups of sites and places of memory, based on the «outstanding value» criterion. A series of museums and of tourism itineraries should be promoted respecting the memory and looking towards the future at the same time.

Design of the cover includes painting by A. Kivshenko «Emancipated Peasants present the Tsar-Liberator with Offering of Address, Bread and Salt. 1861» (1880), and print by Dalsten «Russian Peasant in the 18th Century» (18th century).

Photos of all the participants of the seminar and radioserial for the present edition have been done by E. V. Lunyaev.