

Charlotte & Christophe de Lieven & the management of Baki

Village Social Structure in Baki

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Household economies and communal conflicts on a Russian serf estate, 1800-1817. Journal of Social History, Spring, 1993 by Edgar Melton. Source : http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2005/is_n3_v26/ai_13797257/pg_1

Introduction

In serf Russia, as in other rural societies, the household and the village community were the twin pillars of peasant life. (1) Both the household and the commune in serf Russia have been the focus of considerable research over the last two decades, and a new scholarly literature, based on intensive archival research, has begun to fill the gaps in our knowledge and understanding of Russian serfdom. Thanks primarily to the work of Steven Hoch, we now know that the serf household functioned not only as an economic and family unit, but also, in many cases, as a crucial center of authority, discipline, and social control in the village. (2) As several scholars have shown, moreover, the commune customarily supported inheritance strategies aimed at conserving the household as a unit, even if it came at the expense of individual members of the household. (3) Recent studies of the commune--largely the work of Soviet scholars have emphasized the broad scope of communal governance, and the surprising degree of autonomy the commune enjoyed, despite formal seigniorial control. (4)

One crucial aspect of peasant life, however, remains largely neglected--communal conflict. With the exception of Steven Hoch's recent book, most treatments of rural conflict in the Russian countryside have focused primarily on confrontations between the commune and the higher authorities, whether state or seigniorial. (5) This is in keeping with an interpretive approach taken by many scholars in "peasant studies." James C. Scott, for example, has discovered a "moral economy" in the peasant communities of Southeast Asia. Scott argues that the appeal to a moral economy (which recognized the right of even the poorest villager to a subsistence) provided a basis for collective action in the peasant communities of Southeast Asia. According to Scott, the claims of the state, or the landlord, to a share of the peasants' income lost "legitimacy" (in the eyes of the peasants) to the degree that they "infringed on what was judged to be the minimal culturally defined subsistence level." (6)

Scott does not impose his model wholesale on all peasant societies, and, indeed, he admits the relative weakness of the moral economy (and the corresponding weakness of collective action) in peasant communities with a high level of social stratification and economic differentiation. (7) At the same time, however, his is perhaps the most cogent argument in favor of the view that most rural conflicts pitted the peasant community against the higher authorities, e.g. state or landlord.

The problem with this view is that it tends to smooth over internal conflicts within the peasant community. As David Sabeau writes,

Recent work on resistance in early modern society has concentrated attention on the village community as a solitary organization confronting demands from the outside.... By narrowly defining resistance, by selecting a specific set of documents, and by neglecting to look at the everyday practice of Herrschaft, the new studies fail to examine how people at different levels of society are implicated in the apparatus of domination. (8)

At one level, of course, the commune was an institution that indeed represented, and sometimes protected, the interests of its members against claims and threats from the outside world. As we shall see, however, the commune was also an arena in which individual households or factions clashed and competed over access to communal resources, or, more often, over distribution of collective obligations: taxes, rents, and military conscription.

In serf Russia, as in other "peasant states," the commune functioned as part of the administrative structure of both the state and the seignior. This created and perpetuated many conflicts within the village community. The Russian serf had to function in a dualistic environment in which economic production belonged in the sphere of the household, while obligations (to state and seignior) were the collective responsibility of the commune. Since the wealth and productive capacity of the individual household often depended on how much (or how little) of the aggregate state and seigniorial burdens it had to bear, the community was often shot through with hostility and distrust. In a system where the commune had to render a fixed amount of obligations (regardless of whether each household contributed its share), one household's gain (a reduction in its share of rents and taxes, or having its males spared from conscription) inevitably shifted the burden to another. (10)

While some recent scholars have cited cases of communal conflict, the problem as a whole has not been systematically studied. This neglect may stem, in part, from lack of a conceptual framework for analyzing the evidence that appears in estate records and other sources. In this article, I hope both to establish a conceptual framework, and to illustrate it with a case study of a serf commune in the early nineteenth century.

The Concept of the Peasant State

We start with the peasant state, defined as a state whose existence depends on its peasant population, which provides most of the revenue, labor, and rents that support the ruler and his civil/military elite. Here, peasants are defined as self-sufficient rural producers for whom the household economy is the basic unit of production and consumption. (11)

This definition does not necessarily imply a household economy based solely on agriculture, since many peasants combine subsistence farming with non- agricultural occupations. (12) It should also be noted that the term peasant state does not imply that the peasants hold political power; the contrary is usually the case. (13) At the same time, however, peasant participation in local (communal) government is an essential characteristic of the peasant state. Indeed, the commune and its "officials" (themselves recruited from the local peasantry) play a crucial role as intermediate authorities, without whom the peasant state could not function. These intermediate authorities are usually elected and paid by the peasant community. They have no status, however, in the regular bureaucracy, and function rather as middlemen between the higher authorities (including the bureaucracy and/or the landowning elite), and the village population. (14)

Bureaucratic rule (in the formal Weberian sense) may play some role in the peasant state, but it is not a direct role that extends to the local level. Indeed, bureaucratic control is often impossible in most peasant states simply because the population is too thinly distributed over a relatively large territory where transportation and communication networks are poorly developed. Under such conditions, maintaining a bureaucracy in sufficient numbers to be effective would be prohibitively expensive, especially in view of the low productivity and fiscal capacity of the

peasant population. (15) Moreover, to the extent that bureaucratic methods are based on written communication and abstract norms, they do not mesh easily with the folkways of preliterate populations. (16)

The bureaucracy, for its part, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend, the village world. This is especially true for fiscal matters, one of the primary concerns of bureaucratic rule. The fiscal capacity of the peasant population has often eluded bureaucratic appraisal because of the nature of the household economy, which varies immensely from one household to the next, and which operates only partially in the market economy. (17) Indeed, as A. V. Chayanov pointed out, the peasant household economy has often defied conventional economic analysis. (18)

Historically, intermediate authorities have provided a more effective way of ruling peasant states. Recruited locally, they were familiar with local conditions; they were also relatively cheap because they did not belong to the formal bureaucratic hierarchy and therefore received no salary or upkeep from the state. (19)

he absolutist rulers in pre-industrial Europe also had to depend on a similar system of governance. (20) Indeed, the political and administrative roles assigned to village communities greatly increased with the consolidation of absolutist rule. (21) In part, this was deliberate policy on the part of absolutist rulers, but it also stemmed from the fact that nobles were increasingly drawn into state service, and thus frequently absent from their estates. Thus, both state and seigniors became more dependent on intermediate authorities recruited from the village population. (22)

Thanks primarily to the research and insights of anthropologists, historians have become more aware of the crucial importance of intermediate authorities in the countryside, the "hingemen" and "brokers" who mediate between village and higher authorities. (23) At the same time, however, historians have not fully explored the implications of this "mediated exploitation." (24) In practice, it meant that, despite the formal power vested in bureaucratic officials and/or seigniorial elites, actual control over the local population often rested with the intermediate authorities. The bureaucracy and/or the seignior might have access to a wealth of statistical information in the form of census returns, land surveys, or annual reports, but they had little knowledge of local conditions, and therefore had to leave it to the peasant community, or, to be more exact, the intermediate authorities that governed the community, to assess and collect taxes and rents, select recruits, sort out local disputes, and grant or deny the requests of the local population.

This was not, of course, inconsistent with the monopoly that the higher authorities had in questions of policy. It was not the community, but rather the higher authorities in the peasant state who imposed taxes, rents, conscription levies, road and bridge repairs, and other obligations. The intermediate authorities, however, enjoyed immense power at the local level simply because they decided how the obligations would be distributed within the community. Given the reliance, then, on intermediate authorities recruited from (and interposed between) the peasants and the elite, issues arising "above" were usually decided "below."

This arrangement had a profound influence on the mentality and behavior of the individual peasant, since it largely determined the strategies he employed to secure the survival, or prosperity, of his household. From the peasant's standpoint, a decision by the higher authorities to, say, increase taxes by ten percent, was less important than his relationship to the communal clerk or headman, since it was this relationship that determined, in the final analysis, how much he would pay. (25) The peasant's relationship to the clerk or headman was, in turn, determined by a number of factors like kinship, wealth, patron-client relationships, or membership in a specific faction within the village. (26) Whatever the specific factors, however, the basic principle is the same; the peasants' strategies are normally based not on collective action (say a joint refusal to pay taxes), but on each individual or household competing for favorable treatment from the intermediate authorities. (27)

Unlike bureaucracies, which, in theory at least, stand above the populations they govern, and operate on the basis of abstract, impersonal norms, intermediate authorities were rooted in village life. Impersonal relationships regulated by abstract, written norms of conduct and procedure were less important than kinship and personal loyalties or obligations. (28) Communal officials, whether elected by their fellow peasants, or appointed by the higher authorities, generally favored their own kinsmen and friends, while discriminating against "the little people" of the

village, those who stood outside the kinship network, or those whose poverty and/or lack of influence in the village made them vulnerable. (29)

This inevitably created conflicts, and the commune itself functioned as an "encapsulated political unit" in which individual households or factions competed for control over local affairs. (30) Although this sense of an encapsulated political life is, I believe, essential to any understanding of peasant society, it is largely missing from discussions of the peasant commune in nineteenth-century Russia.

Nineteenth-century Russia was the quintessential peasant state. At the beginning of the century, peasants accounted for over ninety percent of the taxable population. (31) They provided, in addition, virtually all the cash and labor rents that supported the ruling elite, and most of the basic services in Russia, like bridge and road repair, rural mail delivery, and troop quartering, were performed by the peasants as state obligations. (32) The Russian army, which John Bushnell has aptly termed "peasants in uniform," was recruited on the basis of periodic levies to which each commune (rural and urban), had to contribute a specified number of recruits. (33) Other groups, like the townspeople, also had to provide recruits, but the overwhelming majority of soldiers came from the peasantry. In Russia, moreover, bureaucratic control, to the degree that it existed at all, did not normally penetrate to the village level; it ended at the district town, where the land captain (*zemskii ispravnik*), assisted by two subordinates and a small military command of thirty-four men, administered rural districts of forty to sixty thousand inhabitants. (34) As Steven Hoch puts it, "rural Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century was not merely undergoverned, it was largely ungoverned." (35)

In the Russian peasant state, the intermediate authorities, who carried out virtually all tasks of local governance, were peasants, elected and paid by their communities. The commune itself, the basic social and institutional framework within which the intermediate authorities operated, varied considerably in its composition. For state peasants, the *volost'* (subdistrict), consisting of a group of villages, was the basic unit. *Volost'* authorities, elected by the communes within the *volost'*, were formally under the land captain's authority. (36)

Seigniorial peasants, however, were under the formal jurisdiction of their seigniors, although, in most cases, it was indeed a purely formal jurisdiction; the majority of Russian nobles were absentee landlords, many of whom rarely visited their properties. Information for the province of Saratov, for example, in the 1830s reveals that more than two-thirds of the serfs there had absentee landlords. (37) Many absentee seigniors employed estate managers, but in most cases, the managers were expected to work jointly with the communal authorities. (38)

The estate itself was usually the unit of communal organization for seigniorial peasants, even if it included a dozen or more villages; indeed, communal officials often functioned as the estate administration. (39) Other variants also existed; on large estates, for example, each village might have its own commune, which functioned within a larger, central commune. (40)

The personnel in communal governments varied from one estate to the next, but most had a headman (*burmistr*), clerk (*zemskii*), and one or more selectmen (*vybornye*). There were also minor posts, including guards, village constables, and messengers.

The headman was the communal leader and "executive." He heard peasant complaints and requests, judged disputes, and punished offenses. While in theory his decisions were subject to the approval of the communal assembly (*mirskoi skhod*), in practice, there were often few checks on his power other than his short term of office (one to two years). One reason for this is that large communal assemblies, in which all households in the commune were represented, were rare; more typical were meetings at which only the selectmen (*vybornye*) or elders (*starshiny*) of the commune were present. (41) In some cases, only well-to-do and middle households were represented at the assemblies, while the poorer peasants were not permitted to attend. (42) Even large assemblies that, in theory at least, represented the majority of households were often dominated by the "yellers and screamers" (*gorlany i krikuny*), rich peasants who intimidated the assembly and often shifted the tax burdens onto the poorer peasants.⁴³ Conflicts and divisions within the commune were inevitable, but the intensity generated by conflict seems to have varied according

to the degree of seigniorial control, on the one hand, and economic differentiation within the commune, on the other. The tighter the seigniorial control, the less room existed for full expression of communal conflicts. Conversely, conflicts flourished where seigniorial control was weak, especially when there existed significant property differences between households.

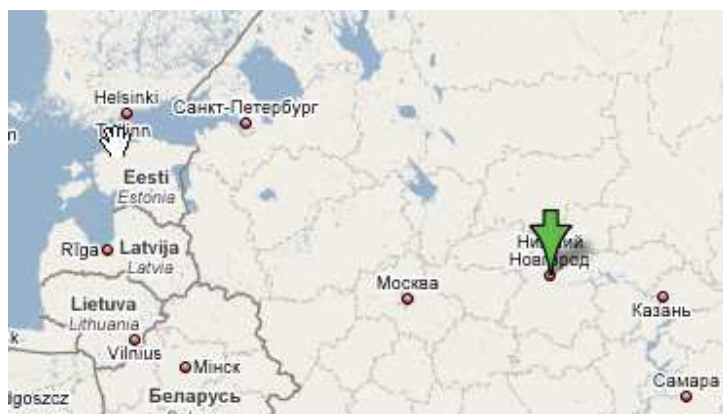
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The relative weight of these factors depended largely on whether the serf estate was organized on the basis of quitrent (obrok), or labor services (barshchina). (44) Seigniorial control was generally stricter on labor service estates, where estate managers had to supervise and orchestrate work on the demesne economy. This required their frequent intervention in many areas of village life: household formation, labor discipline, and care of livestock. (45) Landlords with labor service estates also consciously pursued policies aimed at restricting economic differentiation. (46) At the same time, the desire of the owner to optimize peasant labor inputs on the demesne led in practice to the attempt to "capture" as much as possible of the household's labor capacity during the agricultural season. This left most labor service households with little chance to develop or expand their market production, and thus with few opportunities for capital accumulation. Instead, we see a "remarkably egalitarian distribution of wealth" that probably muted many conflicts within communes on labor service estates. (47)

Seigniorial authority was weaker, however, on quitrent estates, where there was no demesne economy and therefore less need for the manager or owner to actively intervene in village life. Indeed, the seignior and his manager (if he employed one) often had to concede considerable autonomy to obrok peasants, allowing them to leave the estate for long periods in order to earn money. (48) Economic differentiation was also, in many cases, more advanced on quitrent than on labor service estates. Many obrok estates were important centers of trade or rural industry, and had a well-to-do stratum of serf merchants or entrepreneurs who controlled commerce and industry on the estate, and often controlled communal government as well. (49)

The rest of this article deals with one such commune on an obrok estate in the early nineteenth century. (50) It explores the various household economies there, the sources of conflict between households, and the factions that struggled for control of communal government. The primary focus is on conscription, since it played a particularly divisive role in the commune.

Village Social Structure in Baki



The estate of Baki lay in the trans-Volga region (Zavolzh'e), those densely wooded districts north and east of the great commercial center of Nizhny Novgorod (present day Gorky). This region, rich in myth and folklore, is immortalized in the fictionalized chronicle of village life, *In the Woods (V lesakh)*, written by Pavel Mel'nikov in the 1870s. (51) Baki enjoyed an excellent location on the Vetluga river, in the southeastern corner of Kostroma province.

The Vetluga is a navigable tributary of the Volga that rises in the Russian North, in Vologda province, then flows south through the eastern part of Kostroma province before joining the Volga below Nizhnii Novgorod. (52) Baki is only eighty miles upstream from the confluence of these two rivers. (53)

When Countess Charlotte Lieven acquired Baki (the name of both the estate and its main village) as a grant from Paul I in 1799, the property included twelve villages located along the Vetluga or smaller streams that flowed inland through deep forests. Although the estate had nearly 150,000 acres of land, less than ten percent was cultivated; most of it (130,000 acres) was forest, part of the vast wooded massif that covered the entire district. (54)

In 1799, the estate had a population of 2,352 male and female peasants, living in 390 households. Arable land averaged 31 acres per household, and, in addition, the peasants practiced slash-and-burn cultivation on lands cleared in the forests. These clearings (kuligy) were treated as the property of the owner, who bought, sold, or bequeathed them; they were not part of communal arable, and were not, therefore, subject to periodic repartition. (55)

Slash-and-burn cultivation was extremely important to the peasant economy in Baki. The regular arable, cultivated by the three field system, gave yield ratios that averaged only 2.5 to 1. Slash-and-burn clearings, on the other hand, gave yields of 10 to 1 or even better over a three year planting. (56) This enabled villages on the estate to be self-sufficient in grain, despite poor soil and inadequate fertilizer. (57)

The peasants of Baki combined slash-and-burn cultivation with timber cutting, the latter being the mainstay of the cash economy; the forests, in fact, provided numerous and varied sources of income. During the winter, the peasants lived in the forests in make-shift dugouts or huts, emerging only on Sundays and religious holidays. During this time, they cut timber, hewing it into boards and shingles or rendering it into tar and pitch. Much of the labor-intensive work connected with slash-and-burn cultivation was therefore finished before the agricultural season began. (58)

The timber trade in Baki was dominated by sixteen peasants on the estate, who bought up timber products from their neighbors, advancing money against spring deliveries. Many timber dealers owned their own barges, hiring their poorer neighbors to load and tend their cargoes on yearly trips down the Vetluga and Volga to Kazan, Saratov, and even Astrakhan. (59)

There was also a fair held in the village of Baki every Friday, and this also provided local peasants with opportunities to earn money selling fish and baked goods to the crowds. Many women on the estate sold baked goods not only in Baki, but at regional fairs that were easily accessible by river: the fair at Lapshanga, on the Vetluga north of Baki, and in Uren', on the Ust'e. (60)

Fortunately, the sources permit us to explore the peasant economy in more detail. In 1813, the estate manager, Ivan Kremenetskii, compiled an inventory of households in the village of Baki; he may have intended to list all households on the estate, and simply never made it beyond the main village. In any case, the document lists family members of each household, their ages, their livestock holdings, sources of income other than field and forest, economic status, and recent conscription history. (61)

The first category, the richest households on the estate, was reserved for the two timber dealers living in the village. The second category contained timber dealers who were well off, but apparently had less capital than the two in the first category. The third category listed households that were on firm economic ground, even if they lacked capital, and those listed in the fourth category (lower middle households) seem to have been quite similar to the third category, but with fewer resources. In the fifth category, poor households were of two basic types: those with farms, and those with no land at all.

The inventory listed five economic categories:

1. well-to-do (zazhitochnoe)	2 households	(2%)
2. industrious (ispravnoe)	10 households	(8%)
3. middle (posredstvennoe)	46 households	(37%)
4. lower middle (nebogatoe)	29 households	(23%)
5. poor (bednoe)	34 households	(27%)
Total	121 households	(97%)

In addition, the inventory included four other households, but without sufficient information to place them in one of the categories listed above.

The well-to-do households, although rich in comparison to their neighbors, hardly compared with the richest serf entrepreneurs in Russia, some of whom had fortunes of over a hundred thousand rubles. (62) Andreian Osokin, for example (the richest peasant in Baki), was said to have capital of fifty thousand rubles, and reputedly employed over two hundred peasants from the estate. (63) According to the inventory of 1813, however, he had an annual income of only fifteen hundred rubles. (64) Assuming that the sources refer to assignat (paper) rubles (a logical assumption, since the peasants paid all their taxes and rents in assignats), an income of 1500 rubles would convert to only 108 pounds sterling. (65) It is quite possible, however, that Osokin, as well as others on the list, deliberately under-reported their incomes.

Andreian Osokin might well have served as a model for Patap Maksimych, the patriarchal hero of Mel'nikov's novel. In 1813, he was a sixty-one year old widower, the head of a large household of eight, including his spinster sister, his two sons, plus their wives and children. Like Patap Maksimych, he was an Old Believer. (66) Andreian and his sons dealt in timber and bast mats, which they bought up from local peasants and transported downstream on their own barges to towns on the lower Volga. (67) The family had five storehouses and two grist mills. (68)

Vasili Dmitriev Voronin was the only other well-to-do peasant in the village of Baki. An Old Believer, like Osokin, he was fifty-four years old in 1813, and lived with his wife and three children. Voronin dealt in timber and bast mats, which, according to the the Household List of 1813, brought in a thousand to fifteen hundred rubles per year. (69)

The ten "industrious" households seem to have been less wealthy versions of the two well-to-do households. All dealt in long distance trade in timber or other goods, many were Old Believers. Incomes in this group ranged from five hundred to a thousand rubles per year. Mikhail Petrov was a typical example. He and his wife, both in their mid twenties, were Old Believers. They had two small children. Petrov apparently had a yearly income of a thousand rubles, which he earned by buying up "different goods," and transporting them downriver for sale. (70)
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While the well-to-do and industrious households had little direct participation in farming, the middle and "lower middle" peasants, who made up 60 percent of the Baki households, maintained a very different kind of economy. Almost all of them (73 of 76) worked their own farms. The village of Baki was not, as a whole, self-sufficient in grain, although some middle peasants may have produced a market surplus. Livestock inventories for this group, for example, averaged only 1-2 horses, 2-3 cows, and 2 sheep. (71)

This was not, however, their only source of income; indeed, for middle and lower middle households, the salient characteristic was a diverse household economy that combined subsistence farming, forest exploitation, and at least one additional occupation. For the middle peasants, it was usually a craft or petty trade, while the majority of lower middle peasants hired out for wages, supplying, for example, most of the barge workers.

Such a diversified economy required an adequate supply of household labor, and the middle households were, on average, the largest in the village. The village mean stood at 5.02 members, while middle families averaged 5.6

members. More important, perhaps, was the dependency ratio, the ratio of workers to dependents in a household. (72) This ratio was highly favorable in middle households, averaging 1 (2.8 workers to 2.8 dependents). (73)

While the sources do not always give detailed breakdowns of the division of labor in each household listed in the inventory, there is evidence to suggest that a clear division of labor often existed within the household between those who farmed and those with off-farm occupations. Take, for example, the household of the widower Ivan Leont'ev, who lived with his two grown sons and their families. Ivan was a horse dealer, buying horses in Viatka and selling them around Baki. This brought in 200 rubles per year, which he supplemented with another hundred earned from fishing; his two sons and their wives did the farm work. (74)

Another middle peasant, Fedor Makarov, hired out as a barge worker in the summer, while his married son, age 28, worked the farm. The women in the household brought in money selling baked goods at the local fairs. (75) Makarov was atypical in one way; it was rare for middle peasants to hire out as wage workers. More typical were petty tradesmen like Semen Leont'ev, whose linseed oil press brought in an extra hundred rubles per year, in addition to the income he and his son derived from farm and forest. (76)

The sources do not permit a reliable analysis of household incomes for these two groups, but there are estimates of some income sources. While agriculture was geared largely to subsistence, timber cutting might bring in from 100 to 130 rubles per year. (77) Women could earn between 50 and 100 rubles a year selling baked goods. (78) Unfortunately, there are no estimates on wages earned for barge work, but if a middle or lower middle household had cash income from both timber cutting and the sale of baked goods, it could have earned at least 150 rubles per year, plus the natural income from farming. The evidence, therefore, suggests that a middle or lower middle peasant in Baki enjoyed a reasonably stable economic position. **Countess Lieven, moreover, was a mild estate owner who kept her quitrents relatively low.** Obrok was set at ten assignat rubles per male soul in 1800. (79) It remained almost unchanged until the early 1830s, when it was increased to fifteen rubles per male. (80) Since the value of paper rubles fell in this period, quitrents in Baki (converted into silver rubles) actually declined, from 7.3 per male soul in 1800, to only 4.1 in 1835. (81)

There were, of course, other obligations that had to be rendered in cash, mainly the head tax, and various communal taxes for expenses like the salaries paid to communal officials. **In 1812, for example, the entire commune had cash obligations that totaled 45,331 paper rubles.** (82) These obligations were distributed among two thousand male souls living in over six hundred households on the estate (Countess Lieven had purchased peasants and lands adjoining Baki, greatly increasing the total population of the estate). (83)

There is no breakdown of how much each household paid, so we have no way of knowing the exact distribution, but if we estimate that the commune assessed each household according to the number of taxable male souls, a household with three males would have paid about 68 rubles. A household with a cash income of 150 rubles could have paid this with little difficulty.

At the same time, however, it is clear that income for most households (excluding the timber dealers) depended directly on their labor capacity, which had to be sufficient for working the farm, doing forest work in the winter, and for pursuing a third occupation as well. The inventories of middle and lower middle peasants suggest that households needed at least two, and probably three working age adults (age 17-60). A typical example was the household of Iakov Sabelev, a lower middle peasant. Sabelev's wife and seventeen-year-old son worked the farm, while Iakov himself hired out as a barge worker. (84) This kind of household might normally manage quite well, but was vulnerable if it lost a worker (male or female), since it might then become impossible to maintain the economic diversity that assured it of a sufficient income. A look at the poor households in Baki suggests the consequences of inadequate household labor.

The poor accounted for more than a fourth of the households in Baki. Although the peasants in this group included both the "working poor" and the completely destitute, most shared several characteristics that set them apart from their more prosperous neighbors. Take, for example, the size of their households. Poor households had, on average,

only 3.6 members, while the mean household had 5.02; the dependency ratio was also unfavorable, with only one worker for every 1.8 dependents. This low labor capacity seems to have precluded, in most cases, the kind of economic diversity noted for the middle stratum. Only a third of the poor households (11 of 34) maintained a combination of farm, forest, and off-farm occupations, while nearly half of them (15 of 34) had no plowland at all.

Lack of economic diversity was a second characteristic. Almost all the poor households earned money in off-farm occupations, but in most cases (19 of 34), it was their only livelihood. Also, most of their off-farm jobs were relatively menial; none of the poor, for example, hired out as barge workers. Most worked as agricultural laborers on their neighbors' farms, or worked as domestics for the richer peasants. None of the poor lived solely on charity, but six families supplemented their incomes by begging. It was, after all, one way to utilize small children in an economically pinched family. Pavel Stepanov and his wife Maria, for example, had four small children ages 2 to 11; the family was too poor to work their farm, and used hired hands. Cash income came from Pavel's job as a guard at one of the village grain mills, plus the alms begged by his wife and children. (85)

If, as seems clear from the inventory, the odds of life for peasants in Baki depended directly on maintaining a large household, why were there so many small, and vulnerable families in Baki? Large households were, after all, typical in large areas of the serf countryside. In his study of Petrovskoe, for example, a large barshchina (labor service) estate in the central black soil region (Tambov province), Steven Hoch found that the "multiple family, three generation household" was the primary domestic type on the estate he studied. (86) This type of household was typical throughout the central black soil provinces, where the average household numbered 10.2 members at the middle of the nineteenth century. (87)

Although such households should have worked well in Baki, they were, in fact, quite rare. Taking as basic criteria a minimum of four adult workers (two married brothers, or a married couple and their married sons, or some similar combination), we find that only 14 of 125 households in Baki (11%) qualified. Predictably, nearly all (13 of 14) belonged to middle or well-to-do peasants.

Baki was not atypical of the non-black soil region, where households were, on average, much smaller than in areas like the central agrarian region. In 1858, the average household in the non-black soil center had only seven members, compared to ten in the central agrarian region. (88) This may reflect the predominance of obrok estates, where peasant households generally enjoyed more economic autonomy and less regimentation. While this may have enabled young couples to set up their own households free from their parents' control, it also made them, in many cases, painfully vulnerable to the loss of a worker. Conscription, therefore, which posed precisely that threat, was a major issue in the Baki commune.

Conscription as a Source of Communal Conflict

Next to death, conscription was probably the worst calamity to threaten the peasant and his family. Military service was for 25 years, and we need not dwell on its privations and hazards, which others have described in detail. (89) What concerns us here is the impact of conscription on the peasant household.

Conscription deprived the household of a male worker in his physical prime. This was almost always a serious loss, and, if the recruit was the only male in his family, the latter faced poverty and ruin. **The household right to an allotment of land, for example, depended on its having taxable males in the family.** (90) The commune felt no obligation to give land to a household with no males, and even took back allotments once a male was conscripted. In 1812, for example, the commune took back the allotment held by the conscript Ivan Leont'ev, leaving his wife and three young daughters with no land. The estate manager asked the commune to reconsider, but they refused, agreeing only to give the stricken family some hay. (91)

Conscription, then, was a disaster to those it touched, and many estate owners tried to establish procedures for recruit selection aimed at softening its impact, or at least ensuring equitable distribution of its burdens. (92) **Countess Lieven's directives on recruit selection were typical of those issued by many large estate owners. She ordered her**

commune to call an assembly every September to select eligible families, which would then draw lots to determine their place on the conscription list. Drunks and other social undesireables were put at the top of the list. (93) Like many other seigniors, Lieven also tried to spare the smaller households, which were likely to suffer total ruin if the only adult male were taken. She forbade the Baki commune to conscript from smaller households, warning however, that this exemption would not apply to families that had split up intentionally in order to avoid recruitment. (94) In some cases, seigniorial directives regulating conscription were quite successful, and the commune was able to work out recruit selection in a more or less equitable fashion. (95) In many other cases, however, seigniorial directives had little influence on communal practice.⁹⁶ Control over conscription was, in fact, a way in which intermediate authorities exercised power in a peasant state; recruit selection in Baki provides a case in point.

The Baki commune was controlled by the richest timber dealers on the estate. (97) In the period 1800-1819, two factions apparently dominated. One faction, led by Vasili Voronin, seems to have enjoyed the upper hand from 1800 to 1813, although the other faction, led by Andreian Osokin, also played a prominent role. From 1813 to 1819, Osokin and his followers had the ascendancy, although, they had to contend with a vigorous estate manager, Ivan Kremenetskii, who seems to have drawn support from the poorer peasants.

Both Andreian Osokin and Vasili Voronin had earlier served as headman (burmistr) of the Baki commune, but this was not the basis of their power. Headmen enjoyed power while in office, but they generally served short terms of one or two years, and were reluctant to exercise their power too flagrantly, since they feared retaliation after they stepped down. (98) Real power belonged to the clerk, the quintessential middleman whose ability to read and write well enabled him to mediate between the literate, Europeanized world of state and seignior, on the one hand, and the preliterate culture of his fellow villagers, on the other. Responsible for all written communication to and from the commune, he read and interpreted directives and orders from above, while communicating information (or disinformation) on local conditions to the higher authorities. The clerk, in short, was an information broker, using his literacy to maintain control over information and communication and thus increase his own power. As one observer of the pre-reform countryside noted, "In that milieu, where no one knows how to read and write, the clerk considers himself the peasants' ruler." (99)

The clerks' power was also enhanced greatly by their longevity of tenure. In Baki, and throughout rural Russia, there were few suitable candidates for the post. Clerks, therefore, might remain in office for long periods, even after their corrupt dealings had come to light. Reporting on the communal officials of Baki in 1836, the gendarmes officer Averkiev advised Prince Lieven to hang on to his clerk even though he had been embezzling money from the communal treasury. There was no alternative, wrote Averkiev, "since he writes very well ... a rare thing in these parts." (100) Thus, while other communal officials changed frequently, the clerk often remained, accruing more power, clients, and wealth with every year.

Petr Ponomarev was clerk of Baki in 1800 (and probably for some time prior to this), and served until 1812, when he was replaced under circumstances that will be discussed later on. Ponomarev's father had been a household serf under the previous owner, Princess Elena Dolgorukova, and the latter had stipulated in her will that her household serfs should be freed after her death. The Ponomarev household (and several other household serfs) were not, however, freed, due to a legal technicality. (101)

Although he remained a serf, Ponomarev was able to use his skills to good advantage. Not only did he serve as clerk, he also married the daughter of Vasili Voronin, one of the richest timber dealers in Baki. (102) This later enabled him to go into business for himself as a timber dealer after stepping down as clerk. It also enabled his father-in-law, Vasili Voronin, to dominate communal affairs in the first decade of the nineteenth century. (103)

Many peasants in Baki no doubt resented the communal oligarchy led by Voronin and his son-in-law. Later, in 1817, when neither Voronin nor Ponomarev was still in power (and both were thus vulnerable to attack), a report to the Countess "from all the peasants" charged that while Ponomarev was clerk, he "robbed us of many thousands, building a house for his brother costing thousands of rubles, and buying one for himself as well; and now he has

barges, and does business with the money he stole from us." (104) They also attacked Voronin, portraying him as arrogant and overbearing. (105)

In the period 1800-1812, however, there were no complaints about Voronin and his son-in-law. Many peasants may have resented them, but there was little they could do, since Ivan Oberuchev, the estate manager from 1803 to 1813, had apparently decided early on that it was in his best interests to cooperate with the communal oligarchy. He even helped strengthen their position by recommending the removal of a village priest, and securing as his replacement one who proved a clear supporter of the Voronin family. (106)

Oberuchev also cooperated in other ways that proved helpful to Voronin and Ponomarev. In 1804, Countess Lieven ordered Oberuchev to pick a suitable peasant to send to St. Petersburg as valet to her son, Khristoff Lieven. Oberuchev sent **Vasili Ponomarev**, the clerk's brother. Like his brother, Vasili could read and write, and was thus well-positioned to keep the clerk abreast of the Lievens' intentions toward the estate; as we shall see, Vasili was also able to influence the Lievens on his brother's behalf.

During this period, there were plenty of opportunities for the clerk to enrich himself and expand his (and his father-in-law's) power. The main "business" of the communal authorities was assessing and collecting from the peasants the money for rents and taxes; another major responsibility was picking recruits. The Baki estate records document many of the communal assemblies held in 1804-1805, and 1814-1815. (107) Sixty percent of the issues discussed at these assemblies dealt with rents, taxes, or recruitment. Most other issues discussed, matters pertaining to local officials or parish churches, also dealt with communal assessments and collections for church repairs, or bribes to local officials.

Collections were complicated because the peasants themselves often had no clear idea of what they owed to the landlord and to the state. Communal officials did not, apparently, stipulate the reasons why they were collecting money, and the peasants therefore were not always clear about what they were paying for. In January, 1800, for example, the commune levied and collected four rubles, eighty kopecks from each tiaglo (assessment unit); the money went for a variety of expenses, including upkeep of horses, expenses of the estate manager, and for commuting labor services owed the priests in Baki. (108) Again, in 1804, money was collected on six different occasions, for a total of 14,000 rubles. One collection, in February, went for taxes, salaries of communal officials, the expenses of sending recruits to Kostroma, and upkeep of horses. (109)

The individual household, then, often had no idea of what it owed, let alone for what purposes. Not only did this enable the clerk (who kept the accounts) to overcharge the peasants, it also made it easier for him to dispense patronage by permitting some households to escape altogether. This came out when the gendarmes officer, Lt. Averkiev, investigated the communal administration there in 1836. In a letter to Prince Lieven, Averkiev noted that,

Under the present [communal] administration, not one of the peasants knows how much money he must pay in taxes, quitrents, and communal expenses. And the communal officials wish it thus, since they can hereby collect unlimited amounts from the peasants. (110)

The clerk also controlled access to forests. Countess Lieven had tried to restrict the amount of wood the peasants could take from her forests. (111) State foresters also guarded access to timber on adjoining appanage lands, and peasants caught poaching faced heavy fines or imprisonment. The peasants, however, had several dodges: sometimes they simply bribed the state forester. (112) Another expedient, however, required the cooperation of the communal clerk. Peasants could legally purchase tickets from the state forester that permitted them to take a specified quantity of wood. Apparently, a peasant would cut two or three times the specified amount, presenting to the forester a note from the clerk stating that the additional wood came from nearby estate lands. (113) This practice was apparently quite common, but it required the peasant to be on good terms with the estate clerk, since the latter had to issue the note. Access to timber was crucial for most households in Baki, and it seems likely that the clerk's ability to control this access greatly enhanced his power.

The most important source of power and patronage on the estate, however, was control of recruit selection. As we have seen, most households in Baki were small enough that loss of an adult male would have brought significant economic harm, if not impoverishment or total ruin. There were, however, ways to evade conscription. It was legal, for example, to purchase an exemption for two thousand (assignat) rubles, and Baki peasants who could afford it were always ready to purchase an exemption as a last resort. (114) One could also purchase a surrogate, which was cheaper, but the surrogate had to be purchased well in advance and guarded closely to prevent him from fleeing. (115)

There were other ways, however, to avoid conscription, and recruit selection in Baki between 1800 and 1813 suggests that specific groups were targeted, while others were spared. The household inventory of 1813 included, as already noted, recent conscription histories of each household. The groups hardest hit by conscription were, first the poor, then the lower middle peasants. Out of 20 households hit by conscription, 11 were poor, 8 were from lower middle households, and only one was from a middle household. (116) Timber dealers and their families escaped conscription either by purchasing exemptions or through personal influence; middle households were also spared, with one exception.

It is interesting that households with members employed as barge workers for local timber dealers living on the estate also escaped conscription. In the village of Baki, 32 households had members thus employed, and none of them was touched. (117) It is impossible to determine exactly how they escaped conscription, but it is surely not coincidental that a relatively large occupational group that was essential to the business interests of the timber dealers was spared. The latter, in any case, had obvious interests in protecting their workers. Skilled bargeworkers, as already noted, were crucial for the successful transport of cargoes to the lower Volga. By shielding their workers from conscription, timber dealers not only protected a valuable work force, they also assured themselves of their workers' loyalty. One barge worker did lose his son to conscription, but it may be significant that he was the only barge worker in Baki working for a timber dealer outside the estate; it is also worth noting that this was also the only middle household hit by conscription. (118)

Steven Hoch has suggested that poor households were frequently targeted for conscription because they (presumably) paid a smaller share of taxes and rents than their more prosperous neighbors. (119) This may be correct, but in Baki, we do not know how the tax and rent burdens were distributed and it is quite possible that they were distributed as unfairly as conscription. It also seems quite likely that, in Baki at least, the poor and lower-middle households were singled out because they lacked the money to bribe, or the power to influence, the communal authorities.

In any case, the recruitment issue heated up when Ivan Kremenetskii replaced Obruchev as estate manager in 1813. Obruchev had run afoul of the communal authorities in 1812, and this had set the stage for his dismissal the following year. Obruchev had cooperated with the communal authorities, but he had apparently decided at some point that the timber dealers, or at least Voronin, had too much power, and he had tried to curtail their influence by withholding passports from those wishing to hire out as barge workers. (120) This brought a protest from the timber dealers, in the form of a petition sent to Countess Lieven. (121)

At the same time the clerk, Ponomarev, either resigned or was dismissed by the commune. The ostensible reason, recorded in the estate journal, was the commune's refusal to give him a raise. (122) It seems more likely, however, that his brother in St. Petersburg had warned him that Countess Lieven had sent her cousin, Knorring, on a surprise inspection. Whatever the circumstances, Ponomarev was no longer communal clerk, and was conveniently away "on business" when Knorring arrived in Baki in March.

Countess Lieven had apparently grown suspicious of her estate manager after receiving the timber dealers' petition (which she readily granted). If so, then Knorring's report would have confirmed her suspicions. Estate records were in disarray, the grain storehouse had been pilfered, and Obruchev had opened a tavern in Baki without his employer's permission. These circumstances brought his immediate dismissal. (123)

The new estate manager took a more rigorous approach to his duties than his predecessor. Ivan Kremenetskii had held a number of responsible positions in state service, culminating in the post of **private secretary to General Barclay de Tolly**, Minister of War from 1810 to 1812. (124) Barclay had commanded the First Army at the Battle of Borodino (Sept. 1812), but then (in an episode made famous by Tolstoy in War and Peace) fell temporarily out of favor with Tsar Alexander I, and resigned his command. (125) The fall from favor was temporary, but when Barclay went to Germany in 1813 as Commander of the Third Army, he no longer employed Kremenetskii as his Private Secretary. (126) Whatever the reasons for this, Kremenetskii was probably glad to find employment with the Lievens, even though it meant managing an estate in a remote corner of European Russia.

Meanwhile, power relations in the commune had changed; the new clerk, Petr Kozmin, was the nephew of another powerful timber dealer, Kalina Antonov, who had formerly served as headman, and was now an elder (starshina). Antonov was also a kinsman of Andreian Osokin, the wealthiest timber dealer on the estate. (127) We do not know whether there was sharp rivalry between Osokin and Voronin, who had dominated the commune until 1813, but the fact that his son-in-law, Ponomarev, was no longer clerk must have greatly diminished his power.

Unlike his predecessor, the new estate manager did not align himself with the communal oligarchy; on the contrary, he maintained a strict supervision over the new clerk, and began preparations for a "reform" of communal government. Early on, Kremenetskii realized that recruit selection was the most divisive and corrupting force in the commune. In 1814, for example, he wrote **to his employer in St. Petersburg that:**

Countess, it is impossible to elaborate on the barbarous custom that I am trying to uproot [recruit selection]... With conscription, the family is robbed of its last son [while] the wife and children are deprived of the only thing they possess [husband and father]. [Yet] in many peasants' hearts [there] is neither a conscience nor [the fear of] God. (128)

As the estate manager added in a later report (1816), recruit selection had fallen hardest on small, poor families: "I found that they [communal officials] not only conscripted the father, but after him the son, leaving only widows and small children, while large families continue to prosper." (129) Kremenetskii also found that peasants related to former communal officials had been spared, thus "not feeling the sorrow that must come to those who must part with their own sons as they prepare them for the Tsar's [military] service and piteously give their last money for their journey [to the induction center]." (130)

In order to eliminate the favoritism and divisiveness generated during recruit selection, the estate manager suggested a new plan, aimed at ensuring that no peasant from the estate would be conscripted. **According to this plan (which Countess Lieven approved), each household would be assessed a conscription fee that varied according to the household's wealth. Money collected annually from this assessment (the amount would naturally depend on the number of recruits called for) would go to purchase exemption certificates in lieu of conscripts. This would be expensive, but there would be no households ruined or impoverished by loss of male workers to the army.** (131)

The levy for 1817 was quite heavy, obligating the commune to supply thirty two recruits; this meant raising a total of sixty four thousand ruble assignats. Kremenetskii's first step was to call a communal assembly to assess households that had escaped in the past because of influence or kinship with influential peasants. Although it is not clear how much influence the estate manager exerted in the assessments, the evidence suggests that the communal assembly used the assessment process as a way of settling old scores with their more prosperous neighbors, or with former communal officials. Eight peasants were assessed two thousand rubles each, another twenty paid a thousand each, and eight more paid five hundred each. At the other end of the scale, seventy-one households paid fifty rubles or less. (132)

The sources carefully pass over the actual deliberations that accompanied these assessments, but they must have been rancorous, especially for Vasili Voronin, who had only recently dominated communal affairs, and had in fact served on the recruit selection committee. (133) The assembly singled out Voronin for a high assessment; initially, it assessed him only seven hundred rubles, but then added an extra three hundred because, as the report put it, "this

same Vasili Voronin, with capital of twenty five thousand, was at one time our headman (burmistr), and [then] conscripted from small households while sparing his own." (134) It must have been doubly humiliating for Voronin that the commune levied no assessment at all on Andreian Osokin, even though he was, by all accounts, the richest peasant on the estate. The peasants, however, were acting out of prudent self-interest; Osokin and his kinsmen now had the whip hand, while Voronin's faction was out, and therefore fair game for settling old scores.

If Voronin had good reason to resent the new estate manager, the communal "oligarchy" as a whole had good reason to fear the long term implications of his recruit-assessment plan, which was, in effect, a progressive tax that "soaked the rich." The plan also undercut the power of communal officials, depriving them of what had long been a potent source of patronage. Henceforth, peasants on the estate need no longer curry favor with communal officials in order to avoid conscription; instead, they could look to Kremenetskii, whose continued presence was essential to keep his plan going.

Whatever their fears and resentments, however, timber dealers, as well as communal officials, tried to appear aloof from the gathering conflict between Vasili Voronin, and the estate manager, Ivan Kremenetskii. The commune, in fact, saw the conflict as a power struggle between Voronin and his son-in-law, Ponomarev, on the one hand, and Kremenetskii, on the other. In 1817, a report to Countess Lieven "from all the peasants" listed the offenses committed by Voronin, then added that:

He, Vasili Voronin, did all this only because he did not want to be under Ivan Pavlovich [Kremenetskii], but wanted [instead] to be in charge himself, in order to injure and ruin the weak, which he had done without restraint prior to [the arrival of] Ivan Pavlovich, and especially when his son-in-law Peer Ponomarev was clerk. [Italics mine] (135)

Later, after he had lost out in the power struggle with Voronin and Ponomarev, Kremenetskii himself would write bitterly to Countess Lieven that he had been the victim of Voronin's intrigues. (136) These "intrigues" probably began in late 1816 when **Vasili Ponomarev, valet to Count Lieven in St. Petersburg**, and brother of the former clerk, visited his mother and brothers in Baki. Assessments for purchasing exemption certificates had already been completed. According to Kremenetskii, the valet had demanded that his travel expenses back to St. Petersburg be paid from the communal treasury "as in previous years under the former estate manager." He also, according to Kremenetskii, demanded that his brothers be freed from any conscription obligation. (137) Kremenetskii apparently refused, and later believed that it was these refusals that triggered the "plot" hatched by the Voronin faction. But this was only in hindsight, after his enemies had come out of the shadows.

The importunate valet, Vasili Ponomarev, left Baki to return to St. Petersburg in late 1816 or early 1817, and stopped off in Kostroma during his journey. While there, he obtained a letter from **Olga Zakharova, apparently a noblewoman living there, addressed to Countess Lieven**. The letter, apparently intended as "evidence" to frame Kremenetskii, in fact proved nothing; it simply stated that Olga Zakharova had received twenty two hundred rubles. (138) When he returned to St. Petersburg, the valet gave the letter to Countess Lieven as "proof" that Kremenetskii had swindled his brother, but the Countess seems to have paid no attention to it.

The Lievens did take seriously, however, the valet's innuendos suggesting that Kremenetskii had bribed an official. In a letter to his mother in Baki, the valet described his conversation with the Countess:

I thought the Countess would be angry at me, or scold me, but instead she began to speak tenderly of the estate ... and I said, "Your Highness, I have received an injury, as has my brother." And then I told her what I had heard, while in Baki, that Kremenetskii had bribed an official.... (139)

Soon after the valet's return to St. Petersburg, Vasili Voronin also left Baki, without permission of the estate manager or the communal authorities. He appeared in St. Petersburg, where, in a personal audience with Countess Lieven, he accused the estate manager of extorting money from him, beating and imprisoning him, and finally boasting that he would "take everything but the shirt off his [Voronin's] back" (Ia tebia dovedu do poslednego kaftanu). (140)

Meanwhile, back in Baki, Voronin's son-in-law, the former clerk Petr Ponomarev (brother of the valet) began deluging the Countess with letters accusing the estate manager of swindling him, beating his wife, and trying to turn the peasants against him and his kinsmen. (141) Ponomarev also accused Kremenetskii of "tyranny" (tiranstvo). The estate manager had [he claimed] so intimidated the elders of the commune, that communal decisions that appeared to be the result of legitimate deliberations were, in reality, simply rubber stamps of the manager's arbitrary will. In addition, continued Ponomarev, the manager had gone so far as to enlist the support of many poorer peasants by forcing the richer households to pay the taxes and obrok of families with only one male. (142)

The new faction in power, namely Andreian Osokin and his kinsman, the clerk Petr Kozmin, clearly had a hand in inciting Ponomarev against the estate manager. Both Osokin and Kozmin had spread rumors that the estate manager had refused to issue Ponomarev a passport to transport his cargoes to the lower Volga; they also spread the rumor that the estate manager was planning to arrest Ponomarev and have him tried in district court. (143)

Neither allegation seems to have been true, but they were among the many accusations leveled at the estate manager by Ponomarev in his letters to the Countess. Faced with growing complaints against the estate manager, and not knowing what or whom to believe, the Countess sent an official, Aleksandr Gove, to investigate. At the same time, she sent a letter to Kremenetskii that she ordered him to read to the communal assembly. The letter warned the estate manager not to punish Voronin or Ponomarev, but rather to let Gove conduct his investigation. She also warned the peasants to remain obedient to the estate manager while the investigation proceeded, but the letter conveys a suspicion and lack of confidence in her estate manager; regardless of his guilt or innocence, he no longer enjoyed an authority backed by the seignior's trust. (144)

Gove, moreover, seems to have arrived on the estate predisposed to believe the estate manager guilty, and he conducted his investigation in that spirit. In the end, however, he concluded that all accusations against Kremenetskii were false, and conceded that the latter had in fact maintained the estate in good order. (145) At the same time, however, it must have been clear that the estate manager could no longer run things effectively; in any case, he encouraged the estate manager to resign, and Kremenetskii did indeed leave the Countess' service. (146)

Conclusion

Conscription was a divisive issue in Baki, and the commune's response to this obligation may offer some basic insights into communal behavior in a peasant state. There is little evidence, for example, that a "moral economy" operated in Baki; the peasants, or at least those who dominated the commune, apparently made no attempt to distribute the conscription burden equally among all households. Instead, it conscripted primarily from small, poor households, despite the disastrous consequences for such households. Middle households, which were larger and less vulnerable, were left almost untouched. Some may have purchased exemption certificates, but many others, according to the estate manager Ivan Kremenetskii, had been spared because they were kinsmen of former communal officials. There is also convincing evidence that many avoided conscription because they worked for the timber dealers. The Baki commune, in short, made no attempt at an equitable distribution of conscription burden, and there is no reason to assume that rents and taxes were distributed any more equitably. There is no evidence here of the "moral solidarity" that James Scott discovered in the villages of Southeast Asia. (147)

It is also interesting that notions of a moral economy, to the degree that it existed at all, came not from the peasants, but from estate owners or their managers. Take, for example, the response of the famous General, Aleksander Suvorov, to a petition from his obrok commune in Penza province. The petition claimed that the peasants were unable to purchase recruit surrogates because the harvest had been poor. They therefore asked permission to conscript a poor, landless peasant (boby'l) who lived in the village but paid no taxes. Suvorov responded by ordering the commune to find the landless peasant a wife, and to set him up with an allotment of land, a house, a plow, and cattle. If all this were not done by Christmas, Suvorov threatened to marry the boby'l to a rich peasant's daughter. (148)

Baki, then, was not an isolated case. In a peasant state, where the fate of the individual (and his household) was largely in the hands of intermediate authorities, we can hardly blame the peasant for using any means available to influence the authorities on his behalf. In practice, however, this meant that obligations like conscription were often shifted to the poor and powerless of the village. This has little in common with notions of moral economy, but it was, nevertheless, an adaptive strategy for coping with problems that the peasant faced in his struggle for existence in a peasant state.

ENDNOTES

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- (1.) This is not to omit the parish church, which was an essential part of the village community.
- (2.) Steven Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambov* (Chicago, 1986).
- (3.) V. A. Aleksandrov, *Obychnoe pravo krepostnoi derevni xvii-nachalo xix v.* (Moscow, 1984), pp. 156-283; Rodney Bohac, *Peasant Inheritance Strategies in Russia*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 16 (1985): 23-42.
- (4.) The following works document in detail the scope of communal activity: for the early 18th century, L. N. Vdovina, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina i monastyr' v tsentral'noi Rossii v pervoi polovine xviii v.* (Moscow, 1988); for the late 18th and early 19th centuries, V. A. Aleksandrov, *Sel'skaia obshchina v Rossii xviii-nachalo xix v.* (Moscow, 1976), and L. S. Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine xviii-pervoi polovine xix veka* (Leningrad, 1981), pp. 127-163.
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- (5.) The literature, and published sources, on peasant resistance in the serf period is quite large. The best starting point is Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA, 1987), pp. 241-250, 257-265, 269-284, 296-313, 320-343.
- (6.) James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, 1976) especially pp. 1-55.
- (7.) *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.
- (8.) David Sabeian, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 25.
- (9.) Aleksandrov, *Sel'skaia obshchina*, p. 178; Stephen E Frank, "Popular Justice, Community, and Culture among the Russian Peasantry, 1870-1900," *The World of the Russian Peasant. Post-Emancipation Culture among the Russian Peasantry, 1870-1900*, eds. Ben Eklof and Stephen P. Frank (Boston, 1990), pp. 147-150.
- (10.) Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 188.
- (11.) Gerd Spittler, *Verwaltung in einem afrikanischen Bauernstaat: Das koloniale Französisch-Westafrika, 1919-1939* (Wiesbaden, 1981), p. 13.

(12.) Edgar Melton, Proto-Industrialization, Serf Agriculture, and Agrarian Social Structure: Two Estates in Nineteenth Century Russia," *Past & Present* 115 (1987): 73.

(13.) Spittler, *Verwaltung*, p. 14.

(14.) *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

(15.) *Ibid.*, pp. 14-19.

(16.) This is not to say that peasants do not understand the aims and intents of the bureaucracies outside the village on the contrary, they are often able to adapt these aims to their own needs. A recent study, for example, of village schools in late imperial Russia argues that peasants "had an adaptive strategy of education ... that did produce results." Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 482.

(17.) Spittler, *Verwaltung*, pp. 15-16.

(18.) A. V. Chayanov, *A. V. Chayanov and the Theory of Peasant Economy*, ed. and trans. D. Thorner, R. E. F. Smith, B. Kerblay (Homewood, IL, 1966).

(19.) French West Africa provides a class c case. In the early 20th century, the colonial administration (the official bureaucracy) of French West Africa numbered less than 7,000 individuals, who were responsible for ruling a population of roughly fifteen million (1936) living in a territory nine times the size of France. Obviously, there were too few officials for such a large and dispersed population, and in practice, the tasks of daily governance were carried out by the 50 thousand village and cantonal chiefs responsible for collecting taxes, organizing labor for corvee, and picking recruits for conscription. These intermediate authorities had no status in the regular bureaucracy, and could be replaced at the whim of the district prefect. Their salaries, paid by the villagers themselves, amounted to only two percent of the tax revenue they collected. Spittler, *Verwaltung*, pp. 37-52, 74-81.

(20.) Indeed, a recent article has demonstrated convincingly the relevance of a "peasant state model (based on French West Africa) to the absolutist state in eighteenth-century Prussia. See Gerd Spittler, "Abstraktes Wissen als Herrschaftsbasis: Zur Entstehungs-Geschichte burokratisches Herrschaft im Bauernstaat Preussen," *Kolner Zeitschrift fur Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 32 (1980): 574-604.

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(21.) David Sabeau, *Power in the Blood. Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge 1984), p. 14; Hilton Root, *Peasants and King in Burgundy. Agrarian Foundations of French Absolutism* (Berkeley, 1987), p. 2 Edgar Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism and its Dilemmas in Serf Russia, 1750-1830," *Journal of Modern History* 62 (1990): 680.

(22.) This is not to suggest that the nobility played no direct role in ruling their peasants. Some, of course, lived on their estates and exercised personal authority. In many other cases, they periodically practiced what Gerd Spittler has called "arbitrary intervention." This was effective when there was a real or perceived breakdown in order, and the seignior (or a local detachment of troops) showed up on the scene to mete Out rough justice and show the peasants that "someone is in control." This was not, however, effective for daily governance because it required the physical presence of the higher authority. See Gerd Spittler, "Abstraktes Wissen als

Herrschaftsbasis: Zur Entstehungs-Geschichte burokratisches Herrschaft im Bauernstaat Preussen," *Kolner Zeitschrift fur Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 32 (1980): 580-581.

(23.) See the anthropological literature cited by Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, p. 496, n.49.

- (24.) I have borrowed this term from Jan Peters, who uses it in a slightly different context in his "Ostelbische Landarmut: sozialökonomisches über landarme und landlose Agrarproduzenten im Spatfeudalismus," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 3 (1967): 285.
- 25.) Gerd Spittler, "Staat und Klientelstruktur in Entwicklungslandern. Zum Problem der politischen Organization von Bauern," *Europaisches Archiv für Soziologie* 18 (1977): 80.
- (26.) *Ibid.*, pp. 57-83 (with extensive bibliography).
- (27.) *Ibid.*, pp. 73-83.
- (28.) See, for example, Josef Mooser, "Gleichheit und Ungleichheit in der landlichen Gemeinde: Sozialstruktur und Kommunalverfassung im ostlichen Westtalen vom späten 18. bis in die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 19 (1979): 243.
- (29.) *Ibid.*, p. 244.
- (30.) F. G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils. A Social Anthropology of Politics* (Oxford, 1969), p. 12.
- (31.) Bernhard Schalhorn, *Lokalverwaltung und Standrecht in Russland zu Beginn der Herrschaft Nikolaus I* (*Forschungen zur osteuropaischen Geschichte* v. 26) 1979, p. 77.
- (32.) *Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.
- (33.) John Bushnell, "Peasants in Uniform: the Tsarist Army as a Peasant Society," *Journal of Social History* 13 (1980): 565-576. On conscription, Dietrich Beyrau, *Militar und Gesellschaft im vorrevolutionären Russland* (Cologne, 1984), pp. 16-24.
- (34.) Schalhorn, *Lokalverwaltung*, pp. 16-32; LeDonne, *Ruling Russia*, pp. 91-92
- (35.) Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 1.
- (36.) Schalhorn, *Lokalverwaltung*, pp. 54-56.
- (37.) Kolchin, *Unfree Labor. American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, p. 59.
- (38.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism," pp. 684-685.
- (39.) Aleksandrov, *Selskaia obshchina*, pp. 69-116.
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- (40.) Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, pp. 135-136.
- (41.) See the numerous examples of representation at communal assemblies cited by Aleksandrov, *Sel'skaia obshchina*, pp. 125-180; also, Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 134.
- (42.) Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, p. 134.
- (43.) Z. A. Ogrizko, "Kto takie sil'nye gorlany i iabedniki v chernososhnoi derevne xvii v.," *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy za 1966 ggoda* (Tallinn, 197t), p. 94 also, Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, pp. 133-138.

(44.) By the late eighteenth century, roughly forty-five percent of Russian serfs paid quitrent, while the majority, fifty-five percent, performed labor services. Jerome Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1961), p. 394. Many estate owners employed a combination of quitrent and labor services, but even on such "mixed estates," one form played the dominant role. See, for example, the evidence in V. A. Fedorov, *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane tsentral'no-promyshlennogo raion Rossii kontsa xviii-pervoi poloviny xix v.* (Moscow, 1974), pp. 246-249.

(45.) Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 118.

(46.) See, for example, the interesting study by G. T. Riabkov, "Tormoziashechee vlianie kreposmogo pmva na rassloenie krest'ian v Smolenskikh votchinakh Batyshnikovykh v pervoi polovine xix v.," *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy*, 1960 (Kiev, 1962), pp. 354-362.

(47.) The quotation is from Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 127.

(48.) V.A. Fedorov, *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane tsentral'no-promyshlennogo raiona Rossii kontsa xviii-pervoi poloviny xix v.* (Moscow, 1974), p. 205.

(49.) This stratum already existed in the late 17th century. See B. P. Tarlovskaiia, *Torgovlia Rossii perioda pozdnego feodalizma* (Moscow, 1988) especially pp 31-46 and Josef Kulischer, *Die kapitalistische Unternehmer in Russland (insbesonderer die Bauern als Unternehmer) in den Anfangsstadien der Kapitalismus*, *Archiv fur Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 65 (1931): 309-355. For the late 18th and early 19th century, Fedorov, *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*, pp. 82-171.

(50.) This case study is based on the estate records for Baki, an estate owned by the Lieven family, Baltic German nobles from Courland who rose to prominence in Russian service in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The Baki estate records are part of the large collection of Lieven Papers now in the Manuscripts Section of the British Library. The estate records comprise Additional Manuscripts 47421-47432, and are cited here in the notes as Add. MSS.

(51.) Unfortunately there is not an English translation of this important novel. I have used the Academia edition of 1936, P. I. Mel'nikov (Andrei Pecherskii), *V lesakh: Roman v chetyrekh chastakh* (Leningrad, 1936). Included in this edition is an excellent essay on the folklore and mythology of the trans-Volga region, G. Vinogradov, "Fol'klornye istochniki romana Mel'nikova-Pecherskogo V lesakh," pp. viii-lxvii.

(52.) Ia. Krzhivoblotskii, *Materialy dliia geografi i statistiki Rossii, sobrannye ofitserami General'nogo shtaba. Kostromskaia gubernia* (St. Petersburg, 1861), p. 70.
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(53.) Add. MSS 47432: 304.

(54.) Add. MSS 47421: 208; for Varnavin district as a whole, ninety percent of which was also covered with forest, see Krzhivoblotskii, *Materialy*, p. 249.

(55.) Add. MSS 47432: 308-310.

(56.) Fedorov, *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*, p. 53.

(57.) Add. MSS 47428: 28.

(58.) *Ibid.*: 27.

(59.) Ibid.

(60.) Ibid.: 305.

(61.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #1-125.

(62.) Henry Rosovsky "The Serf Entrepreneur in Russia," *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 6 (1954): 207-233; also, Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, p. 167.

(63.) Add. MSS 47429: 170; 47430: 206.

(64.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #88.

(65.) The conversion rate for paper rubles into pounds sterling for 1812 is in A. N. Pypin, *Religiznye dvizheniia pri Aleksandre I* (Petrograd, 1916), p. 29.

(66.) Osokin and his family appear on a list of forty-nine Baki peasants (counting their wives and children) who were registered in 1812 either as Old Believers, or as "wishing to join the Old Belief." It is interesting that all the adult males on the list were well-to-do or "industrious timber dealers. Add. MSS 47428: 253-255. Since the middle of the seventeenth century, the trans-Volga, and especially the Vetluga region, was a haven for schismatics and sectarians, and it is not at all surprising to find them in Baki, especially since there were a number of Old Believer religious communities close by. It is difficult, however, to know the religious experience Old Believers and Baki, or the implications of this experience for the community as a whole. We do know that Andreian Osokin and Vasili Voronin, both Old Believers, maintained good relations with at least three priests in the village, since these priests wrote letters on their behalf to Countess Lieven in 1818. Add. MSS 47430: 200-201. On Old Believers in Varnavin district, see P. Kititsyn, "Starobriadcheskie skity v Varnavinskom uezde Kostromskoi gubernii," *Drevnaia i novaia Rossiia* 1 (1879): 74-175; also, by Kititsyn, "Iz proshlago dopol'neniia k zametke o raskol'nich'ikh chasovniakh v Varnavinskom uezde," in the same journal, 2 (1879). Also, [A. E. Shashin], "Vtoraia poezdka missionera-slentsa Alekseia Egorovicha Shashina po raskol'nicheskim seleniiam Kostromskoi eprakhii," *Kostromskiiia eparkhial'nye vedomosti* 24 (1894): part 2, 555-561.

(67.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #88.

(68.) Add. MSS 47430: 243; Add. MSS 47431: 34.

(69.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #65.

(70.) Ibid., #70.

(71.) Ibid.: 28.

(72.) Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, p. 75.

(73.) The average household in the lower middle group was somewhat smaller (5"2 members), and the dependency ratio was less favorable (1 worker per 1.26 dependents).

(74.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #56.

(75.) Ibid.: #6.

(76.) Ibid.: #86.

(77.) Add. MSS 47428: 27.

(78.) Women in at least twenty households earned from one to two rubles per week selling baked goods at the weekly fair. Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #7, 20, 23, 24, 26, 29, 31, 45, 46, 51, 52, 59, 62, 87, 103, 105, 110, 117, 120, 124.

(79.) Ibid.: 56.

(80.) Add. MSS 47432: 30.

(81.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism," p. 678.
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(82.) Add. MSS 47424: 160.

(83.) Countess Lieven purchased the estate of Ilynsk from a noblewoman, Elizaveta Siniavina. According to the Fifth Revision, of 1795, the estate included thirteen villages, with 605 males, and 694 females. Add. MSS 47428: 19.

(84.) Ibid.: 133-144, #36.

(85.) Ibid.: #122.

(86.) The average household there had 8 to 9 members, which gave it the labor capacity it needed to work both its own allotment of land and perform its share of labor services on the seigniorial demesne. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control*, pp. 85-90.

(87.) Aleksandrov, *Obychnoe pravo*, p. 57, table 3.

(88.) Aleksandrov, *Obychnoe pravo*, p. 57.

(89.) Beyrau, *Militar und Gesellschaft*, pp. 143-182.

(90.) Vdovina, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, p. 76.

(91.) Add. MSS 47428: 271.

(92.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism," pp. 699-702.

(93.) Add. MSS 47428:21-22- On the general evolution of communal conscription practices, Aleksandrov, *Sel'skaia obshchina*, pp. 242-272.

(94.) Melton, *Enlightened Seigniorialism*, p. 700.

(95.) Rodney D. Bohac, "The Mir and the Military Draft," *Slavic Review* 47 (1988): 652-666.

(96.) Prokof'eva, *Krest'ianskaia obshchina*, p. 156.

(97.) Add. MSS 47428:27

(98.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism," p. 695.

- (99.) N. Aristov, "Zemetki o sel'skom upravlenii v Rossii," Biblioteka dlia chteniia (August, 1864): 13-14, cited in Prokof'eva, Krest'ianskaia obshchina, p. 193.
- (100.) Add. MSS 47432: 157.
- (101.) Add. MSS 47428: 124-129.
- (102.) Add. MSS 47430: 274-275.
- (103.) Add. MSS 47429:117.
- (104.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism, p. 688, footnote 67.
- (105.) Ibid.: p. 689, fn. 68.
- (106.) Add. MSS 47428: 4; Add. MSS 47430: 200-203.
- (107.) Add. MSS 47422: 132-149; Add. MSS 47423: 53-72; Add. MSS 47424: 171-206; Add. MSS 47427: 57-121.
- (108.) Add. MSS 47422: 2.
- (109.) Ibid.: 133-178.
- (110.) Add. MSS 47432: 157.
- (111.) Add. MSS 47428: 61.
- (112.) Add. MSS 47423: 7, 10.
- (113.) Add. MSS 47432: 131.
- (114.) Ibid.: 328.
- (115.) Melton, "Enlightened Seigniorialism," p. 697.
- (116.) Add. MSS 47424: 133-144, #7, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 25, 28, 34, 40, 55, 87, 92, 97, 101, 105, 106, 108, 110, 113.
- (117.) Ibid.: #1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16, 23, 24, 33, 36, 39, 42, 47, 49, 50, 56, 60, 64, 76, 77, 79, 94, 98, 100, 104, 107, 111, 114, 119, 123, 125.
- (118.) Ibid.: #97.
- (119.) Hoch, Serfdom and Social Control, p. 157.
- (120.) Add. MSS 47428: 241.
- (121.) Add. MSS 47429: 1-2.
- (122.) Ibid.: 3.
- (123.) Ibid.: 44-48.

(124.) Add. MSS 47430: 41.

(125.) See the recent biography by Michael and Diana Josselson, *The Commander: A Life of Barclay de Tolly* (Oxford, 1980), especially pp. 134-165.

(126.) Add. MSS 47430: 41.

(127.) Ibid.: 274-275.

(128.) Add. MSS 47429: 56.

(129.) Ibid.: 235.

(130.) Ibid.

(131.) Ibid.

(132.) Ibid.: 237-242; Add. MSS 47427: 59-62.
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(133.) Add. MSS 47423: 64-65.

(134.) Add. MSS 47429: 237.

(135.) Ibid.: 117.

(136.) Add. MSS 47430: 118.

(137.) Ibid.: 118.

(138.) Add. MSS 47430: 100-102.

(139.) Ibid.

(140.) Ibid.: 10-11.

(141.) Ibid.: 15-30; 48-56.

(142.) Ibid.: 48.

(143.) Ibid.: 92-99.

(144.) Ibid.: 21.

(145.) Ibid.: 130-131.

(146.) Ibid.: 164-167.

(147.) Scott, *The Moral Economy*, pp. 43-44.

(148.) Melton, *Enlightened Seigneurialism*, p. 699.