International Association RUSSIAN CULTURE
St. Petersburg Branch of the
Russian Institute for Cultural Research
UNESCO Chair for Comparative Studies of Spiritual
Traditions, Specifics of their Cultures
and Inter-religious Dialogue
UNESCO Moscow Office



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 in St. Petersburg, Russia on December 17th, 2004

St. Petersburg
2005

Supported by the UNESCO Moscow Office

Editorial board:
D. L. Spivak (*editor-in-chief*), A. V. Venkova (*academic secretary*),
E. V. Elagina, D. A. Ivashintsov, E. V. Lunyaev, A. M. Melikhov, A. Yu. Timashkov

Serfdom in Russia and its Abolition: History and Present-day Issues. — St. Petersburg: EIDOS, 2005. — 164 p.

ISBN 5-88607-028-1

Proceedings of seminar 'Serfdom in Russia and its Abolition: History and Present-day Issues', 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, with participation of intellectual, cultural and educational leaders of St. Petersburg, are presented in the present bilingual, English-Russian edition.

The brochure is foreseen for wide audience of readers.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this issue belong to their respective authors and may not necessarily be representations of the views of the UNESCO organization.

UNESCO Moscow Office
for Armenia, Azerbaijan,
Belarus, Georgia,
the Republic of Moldova
and the Russian Federation

15/28, Bolshoi Levshinsky per., bld. 2
119034 Moscow Russia
Tel.: (095) 202-80-97; 202-87-59; 202 -81-66
Fax: (095) 202-05-68
moscow@unesco.ru; www.unesco.ru

International Association
RUSSIAN CULTURE
iarc@pochtamt.ru
www.russkyformat.ru

St. Petersburg Branch of the
Russian Institute for
Cultural Research
spbric@mail.ru

ISBN 5-88607-028-1

© EIDOS, 2005
© UNESCO Moscow Office, 2005

Contents

Spivak D. L. Introduction* 5

Mironov B. N. Serfdom: Rational Institution, or Unquestionable Harm? 8
Poltorak S. N. Humane Aspects of Russian Serfdom 11
Gordin Ya. A. Serfdom and Class Politics of Russian Autocracy 12
Sverdlov M. B. Origins of Serfdom and its Abolition* 14
Archimandrite Augustine. The Second Serfdom of Communists 17
Kavtorin V. V. Communal Ownership of Land in the Framework of Serfdom 20
Chebanov S. V. A Cycle of Russian History: from Emancipation of Peasants to Yeltsin's Leave* 23
Semenkov V. E. Serfdom: Civil Rights or their Absence? 25
Griakalov A. A. Mythologeme of Serfdom in Contemporary Consciousness 26
Okladnikova E. A. On Axiology of Status of those employed in Services in Contemporary Russia* 28
Protasenko I. N. «Slave Routes» in Contemporary Mentality 32
Travin D. Ya. Reform of Serfdom and the Global Economic Crisis 35
Shchelkin A. G. Phenomenon of Russian Paternalism 37
Chernoukha V. G. Lack of Alternative as Basic Property of Russian Serfdom 38
Makhlina S. T. Serfdom and Contemporary Artistic Culture in Russia* 41
Melikhov A. M. Uncle Anton's Cabin* 46
Sekatsky A. K. Serfdom in History of the «Emergency State» in Russia 49
Annenkova E. I. Serfdom and Russian Literature 53

Concluding Remarks

Gordin Ya. A. Products of «Unproductive Bondage» 55
Lurie F. M. State Policy after Abolition of Serfdom 56
Letyagin L. N. Apparition: Fragments of a Political and Artistic Chronicle* 58
Sobol V. A. Slavery and Gentry: Friends or Antipodes? 62
Cherva V. E. Notion of Freedom in Life of Russian Peasants 64
Kavtorin V. V. Russian Reforms Yesterday and Today 67
Chebanov S. V. Serfdom: History or Phantome? 68
Sverdlov M. B. History of Serfdom between Historical Materialism and Ideology 69

* Titles marked by an asterisk belong to the authors; titles not marked by this sign, have been introduced by the editorial board.

Spivak D. L. Conclusion* 70

Appendix 1. Radioserial ‘Serfdom in Russia and its Abolition: History and Present-day Issues’ 71

Appendix 2. Basic Information Concerning UNESCO Project «Slave Routes» (1994–2004) 74

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 tool 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^{ies}, 1870^{ies}, 1880^{ies} 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^{ies} 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.