

# The Inventory Reform and Peasant Unrest in Right-Bank Ukraine in 1847–48<sup>1</sup>

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IN 1847–48 the Imperial Russian government reformed serfdom in right-bank Ukraine (the three ‘southwestern provinces’ of Kiev, Podolia and Volhynia).<sup>2</sup> Inventories — documents that recorded and regulated peasants’ land allotments and the obligations they owed landowners in return — were imposed on all seigniorial estates. The inventory for each estate was based on standard regulations for the entire region. The aim of the reform was to limit nobles’ power over their peasants. It served instead to exacerbate the already tense relations between them, and provoked over three hundred ‘disturbances’ that left traces in the archival record. At the end of 1848 the authorities revised the regulations to take account of some of the problems that had emerged.

The inventory reform and subsequent peasant unrest have to be seen in the context of the historical, social and political situation in right-bank Ukraine. The region, along with Lithuania and Belorussia, was part of the territory annexed by the Russian Empire from Poland-Lithuania in the partitions of 1792 and 1795. The history of right-bank Ukraine had created a coincidence between religious and ethnic identities and social divisions among the population of the region. The vast majority of the peasants were Orthodox Ukrainians, over two-thirds of whom were seigniorial peasants. Most of the nobles, however,

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<sup>2</sup> The names of the provinces have been anglicized in accordance with P. Magocsi, *Ukraine: A Historical Atlas*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1985. Other place names are given in the Ukrainian versions in V. Kubijovyc (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Ukraine, Map and Gazetteer*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1984, and M. N. Leshchenko (ed.), *Selians’kyi rukh na Ukraini, 1826–1849 rr.: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv*, Kiev, 1985 (hereafter *SR*). Where the two conflict, I have preferred the former. Personal names are given in the likely first language of their holders, usually Ukrainian for peasants, Polish for landowners, Russian for senior officials, and one of the three for lower-level officials.

were Roman Catholic Poles. From the 1790s the officials who administered the region included Orthodox Russians, especially in the upper echelons, as well as Poles and Ukrainians. With the exception of the Poles, national identities were weakly developed. Most Russians, moreover, did not consider Ukrainians a distinct 'nationality'.<sup>3</sup>

The wave of disturbances in right-bank Ukraine which followed the inventory reform was one of the most serious outbreaks of peasant unrest in the Russian Empire between the Pugachev revolt of 1773–74 and the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Nevertheless, it has received little attention from western historians.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, there is a large secondary literature in Ukrainian and Russian,<sup>5</sup> much of which, both before and after 1917, reflects contemporary political attitudes towards Polish and Ukrainian nationalism, and to the Polish population of right-bank Ukraine. Many Ukrainian and Russian writers have been fairly sympathetic to the Ukrainian peasantry, but very hostile to the Polish landowners, who have been portrayed as cruel to their peasants and treasonous towards the Russian state.

The aims of this article are threefold. First, it will examine the inventory reform of 1847–48 as a case study of one aspect of Russian imperial policy on the 'Polish question', paying attention to changing official attitudes to the Roman Catholic Polish nobility and Orthodox Ukrainian peasantry. Second, it will consider the inventory reform in the context of other measures directed at the 'peasant question' throughout the Russian Empire, which culminated in the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Third, it will analyse the relationship between the reform and the peasant unrest in 1848, focusing on the causes from the perspectives of the officials who dealt with them and, to the extent that it is possible, of the peasants themselves. The relative importance in the causes of the unrest of religious and ethnic divisions, on the one hand, and of tensions across the social divide, on the other, will also be considered. In the process, it is hoped to shed light on the part played

<sup>3</sup> See D. Beauvois, *The Noble, the Serf and the Revizor: The Polish Nobility between Tsarist Imperialism and the Ukrainian Masses (1831–1863)*, trans. B. Reising, Chur, Switzerland, 1991 (first published as *Le Noble, le serf et le revizor: la noblesse polonaise entre le tsarisme et les masses ukrainiennes 1831–1863*, Montreux and Paris, 1985), pp. 1–3 (hereafter Beauvois); V. M. Kabuzan, *Narody Rossii v pervoi polovine XIX v.*, Moscow, 1992, pp. 127, 135, 137–39, 149–50; D. Saunders, 'What Makes a Nation? Ukrainians since 1600', *Ethnic Groups*, 10, 1993, pp. 101–24; S. Velychenko, 'Identities, Loyalties and Service in Imperial Russia: Who Administered the Borderlands?', *Russian Review*, 54, 1995, pp. 188–208 (hereafter Velychenko); P. S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1795–1918*, Seattle, WA, and London, 1974, pp. 3–23 (hereafter Wandycz).

<sup>4</sup> For brief accounts, see Beauvois, pp. 30–36; P. Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, Cambridge, MA, and London, 1987, pp. 305–06; O. Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History*, Toronto, Buffalo and London, 1988, pp. 211–12; E. Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710–1870*, Princeton, NJ, 1984, pp. 135–37.

<sup>5</sup> See O. P. Kryzhanivskyi, 'Literatura ta dzherela pro inventarnu reformu 1847–1848 rr. na Pravoberezhnii Ukraini', *Arkhivnyi Ukrainy*, 1970, 1, pp. 73–74.

by Ukrainian peasants, as well as Polish landowners and Russian officials, in shaping the implementation of the inventory reform.

# I

The inventory reform of 1847–48 was part of the general policy of repression, Russification and reform that was pursued by the Russian authorities in the empire's 'western provinces' after the Polish nationalist revolt in 1830–31.<sup>6</sup> After the partitions of Poland, the Russian Senate had declared that the Polish nobility (*szlachta*) should enjoy the same rights as the Russian nobility (*dvor'ianstvo*).<sup>7</sup> This was in keeping with the traditional Russian imperial policy of co-opting existing social élites in new Polish nobles territories.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, many kept alive ideas of a Polish nation and political independence and were disloyal to their new Russian masters. Polish *szlachta* in the Russian Empire's western provinces were far outnumbered by the local peasants, most of whom spoke Ukrainian, Belorussian or Lithuanian, and neither considered themselves Polish nor shared their masters' aims.

The extent of the gulf between the *szlachta* and the peasants was highlighted during the revolt of 1830–31. Very few peasants took part. Some, especially in right-bank Ukraine, helped the Russian authorities. They did so out of hatred for their owners, and because they hoped to benefit. On 19 May 1831 the Russian commander, General-Field-Marshal Osten-Saken, appealed to peasants to capture and hand over insurgents, in return for freedom from serfdom. The promise was not kept. On 28 September 1831 the new 'Committee for the Western Provinces' decided against freeing peasants who had denounced their owners on the grounds that it would encourage further denunciations and disorders.<sup>9</sup> Reluctance to reward the peasants was not matched by an unwillingness to punish the Polish *szlachta*. Following a decree of 1 August 1831, 3,000 estates were sequestered from landowners who had 'oppressed' their peasants for not joining the revolt. The estates were handed over to 138 high-ranking Russian army officers on condition that they implemented reforms in favour of peasants.<sup>10</sup> Most estates and their peasant inhabitants, however, remained under, or were returned to, their Polish owners. Later in the 1830s, thousands of

<sup>6</sup> Wandycz, pp. 105–32.

<sup>7</sup> J. Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, NJ, 1961, p. 461 (hereafter *Lord and Peasant*).

<sup>8</sup> G. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917*, London, 1997, pp. 8–11, 23–30 (hereafter Hosking).

<sup>9</sup> T. G. Arkhipova, 'Komitet zapadnykh gubernii 1831–1848 gody. (K istorii politiki tsarizma v otnoshenii natsional'nykh okrain)', *Trudy Moskovskogo istoriko-arkhivnogo instituta*, 28, 1970, p. 526; Beauvois, pp. 6–8.

<sup>10</sup> Arkhipova, 'Komitet', p. 527; V. I. Semevskii, *Krest'ianskii vopros v Rossii v XVIII i pervoi polovine XIX veka*, 2 vols, St Petersburg, 1888, vol. 2, p. 484 (hereafter Semevskii).

landless *szlachta* were demoted to the *odnodvortsy* (part of the state peasantry).<sup>11</sup> This was the start of the abandonment of the Russian state's policy of co-opting élites in its borderlands.

Since the 1790s, the 'peasant question' had been a crucial political issue in the lands of partitioned Poland. Polish nationalists and the governments of the three partitioning powers took steps actively to win peasant support. Polish national democrats tried, with little success, to encourage Polish landowners to sacrifice their personal interests in retaining serfdom in the wider pursuit of resurrecting an independent Poland with peasant support. The partitioning powers played the same game. Major reforms of serfdom had begun in Prussian Poland in 1823. The abolition of serfdom throughout the Austrian Empire in 1848 began in formerly Polish Galicia (western Ukraine). In the 1830s, in the wake of the revolt of 1830–31, the Russian authorities enacted reforms in the Kingdom of Poland, and began to consider reforms in the western provinces.<sup>12</sup>

## II

Tsars Alexander I (1801–25) and Nicholas I (1825–55) also contemplated reforms of the 'peasant question' throughout the Russian Empire. Nicholas discussed reforms in a series of 'secret committees'. The committee of 1839–42 considered a plan by General P. D. Kiselev to regulate serfdom. In the face of opposition inside the committee, the plan was watered down. The resulting decree on 'obligated peasants' of 2 April 1842 was a half-way house between serfdom and freedom. It allowed noble landowners, if they wished, to conclude contracts with their peasants, regulating the sizes of their land allotments and the obligations they owed in return. Landowners retained police and judicial powers over the peasants, and could call on the local authorities if the peasants breached the contracts. The peasants were not given the same rights if landowners violated the agreements. Few landowners converted their peasants to the new status. A further measure of November 1847 allowed seigniorial peasants of estates sold at auction to repay their owners' debts the right to buy the estates, and their freedom. In principle, Nicholas wanted major reform of serfdom, but feared alienating the Russian nobility if he imposed a reform, or provoking a peasant revolt if a reform fell short of their hopes.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Beauvois, pp. 97–153.

<sup>12</sup> S. Kieniewicz, *The Emancipation of the Polish Peasantry*, Chicago and London, 1969, pp. 105–12, 58–71, 133–39, 144–57; Wandycz, pp. 118–31.

<sup>13</sup> See D. Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: Interaction between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825–1855*, Basingstoke and London, 1992, pp. 62–112 (hereafter *Russian Peasants*).

While the Russian government shied away from major reform of serfdom in the Russian provinces of the empire before 1861, significant measures affecting peasants who did not belong to noble landowners — the appanage and state peasants — were implemented in the 1820s–40s. The state peasant reforms were masterminded by Kiselev. He was a careful and patient reformer, and was concerned to take decisions on the basis of detailed information about local conditions. Among other measures, appanage and state peasants were given some security of tenure of their land allotments, and their obligations were fixed according to the amount and fertility of their allotments and general economic condition. The aim of the reforms was to increase the revenues earned by the appanage department and the state treasury from the peasants on their lands. Kiselev also saw his reforms as preparing the ground for the eventual abolition of serfdom.<sup>14</sup> In addition, substantial reforms of serfdom were carried out in parts of the empire where the noble landowners were not Russian. Earlier in the century serfdom had been reformed and then abolished in the Baltic provinces of Estland, Livland and Kurland, where the nobles were largely German. Unlike most of their Russian and Polish peers, many Baltic German landowners favoured reform. In 1804 serfdom was regulated in Estland and Livland. The existing registers (*Wackenbücher*), which recorded the peasants' land allotments and obligations on all estates, were given force of law. Peasants were granted hereditary use-rights to their allotments, and their obligations were set according to the latter's size and quality. The reform of 1804 provoked objections from nobles and disturbances among the peasantry. Following petitions from some landowners and pressure from Alexander I, serfdom was abolished in all three Baltic provinces in 1816–19. The peasants were freed from serfdom, but lost security of tenure. In the following decades there were regular outbreaks of unrest among the free but insecure Baltic peasantry. The situation in the Baltic provinces went a long way to convincing Nicholas I, Kiselev and other senior officials that landless emancipation was not a viable option.<sup>15</sup> Nicholas I's and Kiselev's interest in regulating serfdom in the 1830s–40s was, thus, a return to the earlier policy implemented in the Baltic provinces in 1804.

<sup>14</sup> See N. M. Druzhinin, *Gosudarstvennye krest'iane i reforma P. D. Kiseleva*, 2 vols, Moscow and Leningrad, 1946–58; L. R. Gorlanov, *Udel'nye krest'yane Rossii, 1797–1865 gg.*, Smolensk, 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Iu. Iu. Kakhk, 'Ostzeiskii put' perekhoda ot feodalizma k kapitalizmu: Krest'iane i pomeshchiki Estliandii i Lifiandii v XVIII-pervoi polovine XIX veka, Tallinn, 1988, pp. 179–274; J. Blum, *The End of the Old Order in Rural Europe*, Princeton, NJ, 1978, pp. 228–30 (hereafter *End*).

## III

Following the revolt of 1830–31 the Russian authorities tried to address the ‘Polish’ and ‘peasant’ questions simultaneously. They wanted to reduce the power and influence of the unreliable Polish nobility, and to gain the support of the Lithuanian, Belorussian and Ukrainian peasantry, lest they be won over to the Polish national cause. The social and political situation in the western provinces, in particular the disaffection among the Polish nobility, gave Nicholas I and his advisers the opportunity to introduce the type of regulatory reform of serfdom they were contemplating for the empire as a whole. They did not need to worry about alienating the nobility since most Poles were already disaffected.

The idea of reforming serfdom in right-bank Ukraine was taken up by two prominent figures. On 29 March 1835 Kiselev sent Nicholas I a memorandum ‘On the political situation in the South-Western provinces’. Kiselev was familiar with the region as his wife owned an estate in Kiev province. He warned the Tsar of the growth of opposition among the Polish population, and argued for decisive action in favour of the peasants to secure their loyalty. He proposed settling Russian landowners on estates confiscated from Poles, granting the peasants on these estates civil rights, and fixing their obligations according to the value of the land. Regulation of peasants’ obligations could then, he concluded, be extended to other estates in the region.<sup>16</sup>

The other prominent figure was General D. G. Bibikov. In December 1837 he was sent to Kiev to serve as governor-general of the three south-western provinces. Like Kiselev, Bibikov was a military man. Unlike Kiselev, Bibikov had little experience of peasant affairs, and lacked his political skills as a reformer. Bibikov’s conduct at the battle of Borodino in 1812, where he served as adjutant to General Miloradovich, reveals something of his character. On being asked where he could find Miloradovich, Bibikov pointed with his left arm to his commanding officer’s position. His outstretched arm was immediately shot off. Without losing his presence of mind, however, Bibikov raised his right arm to indicate, before falling wounded.<sup>17</sup> No doubt this story improved with retelling, but it does suggest a man who was not likely to get bogged down in petty-fogging details. Count Tadeusz Bobrowski, a prominent Polish noble in right-bank Ukraine, recalled that Bibikov had poise and humour, but that he could also be ‘brutal, cynical, and unscrupulous. In

<sup>16</sup> A. P. Zablotskii Desiatovskii, *Graf Kiselev i ego vremia*, 4 vols, St Petersburg, 1882, vol. 2, p. 4; 4, pp. 146–48.

<sup>17</sup> *Russkii biograficheskii slovar'*, 25 vols, St Petersburg, 1896–1913, vol. 3, (Bentenkur [sic]-Biakster), St Petersburg, 1908 [hereafter RBS 3], pp. 23–24.

every Pole he saw a potential revolutionary'.<sup>18</sup> In his annual report to the tsar for 1839, Bibikov noted that the loyalty of the local peasants to the throne had cooled since 1830–31, and that action was needed to secure their allegiance. At the same time the authorities in Kiev and St Petersburg were receiving many reports on the peasants' economic distress and cruel treatment at the hands of their Polish owners. Bibikov used these as arguments for reform. He took up the idea of regulating peasants' seigniorial obligations in estate inventories. Under the Lithuanian Statute (the legal system which remained in force in the western provinces of the Russian Empire until 1840), all estates had inventories recording peasants' obligations and land allotments. These inventories were purely descriptive. Bibikov's idea was to introduce prescriptive inventories, similar to the Baltic *Wackenbücher*, that would limit Polish nobles' power to exploit their peasants.<sup>19</sup>

Preparation of the 'inventory reform' began in earnest in 1840 with discussions in the Committee for the Western Provinces. While the Committee was inclined towards a gradual approach to regulating landowner-peasant relations throughout all the western provinces, Bibikov was anxious to press on in the south-west. On 15 April 1844 Nicholas I ratified the Committee's proposal to set up provincial committees of officials and landowners to compile new estate inventories, to be implemented within six years. This gave Bibikov his chance to force the issue. The estate inventories produced by the three provincial committees of the region did not satisfy Bibikov. He believed that they were too varied, were based on inaccurate or distorted information, and would not prevent the Polish landowners oppressing their peasants. Instead of compiling and ratifying inventories for all estates individually, Bibikov decided on a top-down approach. He drew up standard regulations for the compilation of all estates inventories throughout the three provinces. Bibikov's 'inventory regulations' were ratified by Nicholas I on 26 May 1847.<sup>20</sup> Bibikov chose as

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in M. F. Hamm, *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917*, Princeton, NJ, 1993, p. 65 (hereafter Hamm). Bibikov's attitudes are evident in his report of 12 October 1848. *RGIA*, fond (f.) 1263, opis' (op.) 1 [1848], delo (d.) 1955, listy (ll.) 445–62. See also 'K kharakteristke D. G. Bibikova', *Kievskaya starina*, 3, September 1882, pp. 61–80.

<sup>19</sup> Semevskii, pp. 483–84, 486–88; Beauvois, pp. 17–26.

<sup>20</sup> The following summary and other references to the inventory regulations of 26 May 1847 are based on the full original text: *RGIA*, f. 1261, 1850, op. 1, d. 154–b, ll. 1–16. The 1847 regulations were not published in the *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii*, 2nd series, St Petersburg, 1830 (hereafter PSZ), and do not appear to have been published in full elsewhere. For the background and other summaries, see 'Inventarnye polozheniia zapadnykh gubernii', in *Pervoe izdanie materialov redaktsionnykh kommissii dlia sostavleniia polozhenii o krest'ianakh vykhodashchikh iz krepostnoi zavisimosti*, 18 vols, St Petersburg, 1859–60, vol. 4, pp. 1–7, 60–62 (hereafter 'Inventarnye polozheniia'); Semevskii, pp. 481–97; E. D. Stashevskii, *Istoriia dokapitalisticheskoi renty na pravoberezhnoi Ukrainie v XVIII–pervoi polovine XIX v.*, Moscow, 1968, pp. 440–58 (hereafter Stashevskii); *Lord and Peasant*, pp. 460–63; Beauvois, pp. 6–32; G. L. Yaney, *The Systematization of Russian Government*, Urbana, IL, and Chicago, 1973, pp. 169–73.

the model the inventory of an estate in Radomyshl' district, in northern Kiev province.<sup>21</sup> As will be seen, the decision to have one model for the whole region caused problems.

The first article of the 'inventory regulations' of 26 May 1847 laid down that peasant households were to retain use-rights (*pol'zovanie*) of all the land they had cultivated over the previous six years. Peasants' allotments (house and garden plots, meadow and arable land) were to be recorded in the estate inventories, and could not be changed. The custom of individual household land tenure, in contrast to communal tenure that prevailed in most Russian village communities, was retained.<sup>22</sup> As a result of household tenure there were considerable disparities in landholdings between households in right-bank Ukrainian communities. Peasant communities also enjoyed 'servitudes' (*servituty*). These were customary rights of access to parts of landowners' estates, for example, to graze livestock in seigniorial meadows after haymaking, on the stubble in the arable fields after harvesting, and in the fallow fields and woodlands. Other servitudes included the rights to collect timber, firewood, mushrooms and berries in landowners' woods, and to water livestock and catch fish in their streams and rivers. Servitudes were referred to as 'other resources' (*prochie ugod'ia*) in article 2 of the inventory regulations, and were to be recorded in the estate inventories.<sup>23</sup>

In return for their allotments and servitudes, peasant households had to serve seigniorial obligations. The level of a household's obligations depended on the category it belonged to, which, in turn, depended on the size of its land allotments (articles 1 and 2). The first two categories were: *tiaglye* households, which had relatively large allotments of arable and meadow land as well as their house and kitchen garden plots and bore full burdens of obligations; and *polutiaglye* households, which had half as much land and correspondingly lower obligations. The sizes of households' landholdings were sometimes expressed as portions of an old fiscal unit (the *uolka*, *woloka* [P]) of around 19.5 *desiatiny* (roughly 53 acres). This had been a full allotment of land for a household in earlier times when population densities were lower. By the mid-nineteenth century, most *tiaglye* households held between a half and three-quarters

<sup>21</sup> M. Kornylovych, 'Bibikovs'ki obov'iazkovi inventari i selianstvo v Volodymyrs'komu poviti na Volyni', *Ukrains'kyi arkhеоhrafichnyi zbirnyk*, 1926, 1, pp. 223–25 (hereafter Kornylovych).

<sup>22</sup> I. I. Ignatovich, *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane nakanune osvobozhdeniia*, 3rd edition, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 191–92 (hereafter *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*).

<sup>23</sup> See R. Bircher, *Peasant Resistance and the Defence of Servitude Rights in Russia's South West, 1890–1914*, unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford, 1996, esp. pp. 2–5, 54–55, 103–23. See also J.-P. Himka, *Galician Villagers and the Ukrainian National Movement in the Nineteenth Century*, Basingstoke and London, 1988, pp. 36–40.



of an *uvolka*, while *polutiaglye* around a quarter of an *uvolka*.<sup>24</sup> Although this was not mentioned in the inventory regulations, in the southern part of right-bank Ukraine the categories to which households belonged depended on their holdings of draft animals. Thus, *polutiaglye* households were sometimes called *peshie*, literally footmen, i.e. households without draft animals.<sup>25</sup> In right-bank Ukraine in December 1848 *tiaglie* and *polutiaglie* households comprised 34.5 and 48.75 per cent respectively of all households on seigniorial estates.<sup>26</sup> The next category, which contained a smaller proportion of households, were cotters (*ogorodniki* in the regulations, also known as *khalupniki*). Cotters had their own houses and gardens but no arable land. The final category was landless labourers (*bobyli* in the regulations, or *kutniki*) (articles 1, 11, 12).<sup>27</sup> Landowners were permitted to transfer households to higher categories if they had, or were allotted, the appropriate amounts of land and possessed sufficient draft animals and workers (article 22).

The decree of 15 April 1844 had laid down that the level of obligations was to be determined by the principle of 'thirds' (*tret'iatka*): a household had to cultivate half as much land for its owner as it did for itself, or pay one third of its income from its land.<sup>28</sup> The main seigniorial obligation of *tiaglie* and *polutiaglie* households was labour services (*barshchina*, *panshchyna* [U], *panszczyzna* [P]), which were calculated on the basis of so many days' labour a week from each household (not individual peasant). In the late 1850s, 97.4 per cent of seigniorial peasants in right-bank Ukraine performed labour services. The remainder paid cash dues (*obrok*).<sup>29</sup> *Tiaglie* households were obliged to provide a male labourer with a pair of draft animals to work for three days a week on the demesne. *Polutiaglie* households were obliged to provide a male labourer without draft animals to work for two days. Both categories of household also had to provide a female labourer to work for one day (article 2). The regulations stipulated certain norms (*uroki*) to be completed in a day, including: ploughing; harrowing; manuring;

<sup>24</sup> Semevskii, p. 490; *End*, p. 95. In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, an *wloka* varied between 30 and 80 acres. A *tiaglyi* peasant in right-bank Ukraine was the equivalent of a *kmiec* in pre-partition Poland. J. Lukowski, *Liberty's Folly: The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Eighteenth Century, 1697-1795*, London and New York, 1991, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Stashevskii, pp. 255-56; O. I. Levitskii, 'O polozhenii krest'ian iugo-zapadnogo kraia vo vtoroi chetverti XIX st.', *Kievskaiia starina*, 93, July-August 1906, section 1, pp. 267, 268 (hereafter Levitskii); *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 75-76.

<sup>26</sup> See Semevskii, p. 505; 'Inventarnye polozheniia', pp. 4-5, 6-7, 60; F. Voroponov, 'Krest'ianskaia reforma v Iugo-Zapadnom krae. - Po lichnym vospominaniiam', *Vestnik Evropy*, 1900, 8, p. 760 (hereafter Voroponov).

<sup>27</sup> See also Semevskii, p. 490.

<sup>28</sup> 'Inventarnye polozheniia', p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> I. D. Koval'chenko, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v pervoi polovine XIX veka*, Moscow, 1967, p. 61.

sowing, reaping, binding and threshing the grain crop; and mowing, gathering and stacking hay. Norms were defined by numbers of sheaves of set sizes for threshing, or by area of land for other work. Some allowance was made for differing soil types and topography, winter and spring grain, and good and bad harvests (article 3). All other norms were measured by time (articles 3 [note a] and 14). Labour could be commuted to cash dues (*obrok*) by mutual agreement (articles 26 and 27).

In addition to regular labour services, all able-bodied peasants, male and female, were also required to work twelve 'additional days' at the height of field work in the summer (*letnie sgonnnye dni*), to a maximum of two a week. Landowners had to pay peasants for these additional labour days, and the money was put towards their state taxes (article 7). Rates of pay, which were set by the governor-general and approved by the tsar, were announced in the spring of 1848. *Tiaglie* and *polutiaglie* households were also obliged to work eight 'construction days' a year, and provide a night-watchman for the estate once a month. Peasants were to receive recompense (*osobyie vygody*) for these services (articles 8 and 10). Landowners could not demand construction labour days at times of the year when peasants were working in the fields except in emergencies (article 9). Cotters and landless labourers were not obliged to perform regular labour services and had considerably lower obligations (articles 11, 8 and 12). Any other existing obligations, in addition to those specified in the inventories, were banned. Labour beyond that specified in the regulations was permitted only by mutual agreement, and had to be paid in cash (articles 2 [ii], 29, 15 and 16).

The inventory regulations laid down procedures for enforcement. Peasants were ordered to obey their landowners and fulfil their obligations without question (article 36). Estate authorities were to record the fulfilment of obligations in work books that were given out each year and, if the peasants wished, on tally sticks (*koroby*) (articles 37 and 39).<sup>30</sup> Landowners or estate managers were responsible for punishing peasants who breached the regulations, in accordance with existing legislation (article 40).<sup>31</sup>

The inventory regulations and estate inventories were promulgated between late November 1847 and March 1848,<sup>32</sup> before the start of the new agricultural year, with great ceremony. The marshal of the nobility

<sup>30</sup> For an example of a work book (for Semen Ignatiev Bychko of Rebedailivka, Chyhyryn district, Kiev province), see *TsDIAU*, f. 486, op. 1, d. 13865, ll. 297–99.

<sup>31</sup> See *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*, pp. 52–58.

<sup>32</sup> A. K. Koshik, 'Inventarnaia reforma 1847–1848 gg. i krest'ianskoe dvizhenie na Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainie', *Nauchnye zapiski kievskogo universiteta*, 8, pt. 1, 1949, *Istoricheskii sbornik*, 2, p. 105 (hereafter Koshik); A. Z. Baraboi, 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina v 1848 g.', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 34, 1950, pp. 113, 159 (hereafter 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina'); *RGLA*, f. 1281, op. 4, 1848, d. 66a, l. 23.

for the district (*uezd, povit* [U]) and officials from the district police (*zemskaia politsiia*) visited each estate in turn. A special service was held in the village church, at the end of which the marshal read out both the regulations and the new estate inventory to the assembled peasants, in the presence of the district police chief (*zemskii ispravnik*) and landowner or estate authorities. The reform was presented to the peasants as a special favour from the tsar. One set of copies of the regulations and the estate inventory was given to the landowner or estate authorities, another was left in the parish church. The priest was entrusted with the responsibility of answering peasants' questions about them 'without any kind of interpretation'.<sup>33</sup> The Orthodox clergy were thus given the vital function of explaining the regulations to the peasants. This placed them in an awkward position, caught between the Roman Catholic landowners and their Orthodox peasant parishioners. There was considerable distrust between Orthodox priests and the landowners. Relations between priests and peasants were also tense. Peasants resented the fees the clergy demanded for rites and services. At the time of the inventory reform, moreover, these fees were in the process of being converted to labour services, much to the dislike of the peasants.<sup>34</sup>

The inventory regulations were also binding on landowners, estate managers and leaseholders, who were liable to punishment if they infringed them (article 42). The authorities in St Petersburg and Kiev anticipated that the Polish landowners would be hostile to the reform. Landowners were informed of an imperial order of 10 September 1847, which threatened them with trial by military court if they evaded implementation. Marshals of the nobility and district police chiefs took signed declarations from landowners that the regulations had been announced to them, that they would implement them correctly, and that they knew the consequences if they did not.<sup>35</sup> At the same time

<sup>33</sup> For examples, see: 'Obozrenie Kievskoi, Podol'skoi i Volynskoi gubernii s 1838 po 1850 g.', *Russkii arkhiv*, 1884, 3, pp. 31–33; Semevskii, p. 497; Ia. E. Glukhovskii, 'Epizody iz istorii bor'by krest'ian s pomeshchikami na Volyni v sviazi s inventarnoi reformoi Nikolaia I', *Trudy istoricheskogo fakul'teta Kievskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta imeni T. G. Shevchenko*, 1, 1939, p. 215; SR, p. 263; A. V. Predtechenskii (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1826–1849 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov*, Moscow, 1961 (hereafter KD), p. 620.

<sup>34</sup> G. L. Freeze, *The Parish Clergy in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Crisis, Reform, Counter-Reform*, Princeton, NJ, 1983, pp. 8–9, 81–91, 200–05; idem., 'The Orthodox Church and Serfdom in Prereform Russia', *Slavic Review*, 42, 1989, p. 373 n. 41; O. P. Kryzhaniv's'kyi, 'Antytserkovna borot'ba selian Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy u seredyni XIX st.', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1986, 10, pp. 49–53; [Mikhnevich], 'Vospominaniia podol'skogo starozhila o vremenakh krepostnogo prava', *Kievskaiia starina*, 60, February 1898, section 2, pp. 50–51 (hereafter Mikhnevich). Relations between peasants and landowners and Orthodox priests was one of the subjects of an investigation into public opinion by the Kiev authorities in 1847. *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 797, [1847], d. 61.

<sup>35</sup> Semevskii, p. 497; Kornylovych, p. 242; *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 457, [1847] dd. 640, 641, [1848], d. 96. The attitudes of landowners to the reform was another of the subjects of the official survey of public opinion carried out in 1847. *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 797, [1847], d. 61.

peasants were informed that if their landowners oppressed them, they were to choose two or three representatives to take a complaint to the district marshal.<sup>36</sup> Since the regulations did not grant peasants the right to complain, and since the legal status of peasant complaints against their landowners was ambiguous,<sup>37</sup> the enforcement of the regulations depended to a large extent on the character of the local authorities.

The middle and lower level officials in right-bank Ukraine were a mixture of men appointed by the authorities in St Petersburg, Kiev and the other two provincial capitals, and men elected by the local assemblies of the (mostly Polish) nobility. After the Polish revolt of 1830–31, severe restrictions were placed on assemblies of the nobility, their right to elect officials, and whom they could elect. At the same time the authorities encouraged the minority of Russian landowners in the region to participate in noble affairs. The Russian language, law and administrative practices were introduced. And the law was changed to allow district police officials to be appointed by provincial administrations. Many of the appointees were Russians and Ukrainians. After these measures only a small minority of Poles continued to be involved in noble affairs and local administration.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, it was not possible to change all the marshals and district officials in a few years. In the 1840s many were still Polish, or acquiesced in the wishes of Polish nobles.<sup>39</sup> Senior officials at provincial level, and the provincial gendarme officers subordinate to the Third Section in St Petersburg, were mainly Russians. Some, including provincial governors and the governor-general, were appointed from outside the region. Most senior officials were hostile to the Polish nobility (but some took bribes from them).<sup>40</sup> Some were sympathetic to the plight of Orthodox peasants at

<sup>36</sup> Iu. F. Samarin, 'Zamechaniia ob inventariiakh, vvedennykh v 1847 i 1848 v pomeshchich'ikh imeniakh Kievskoi, Volynskoi i Podol'skoi gubernii, i o krepostnom prave v Malorossii', *Sochineniia*, 12 vols, Moscow, 1877–91, vol. 2, p. 2; Semevskii, pp. 497, 502.

<sup>37</sup> See B. G. Litvak, *Ocherki istochnikovedeniia massovoi dokumentatsii XIX-nachala XX v.*, Moscow, 1979, pp. 267–75.

<sup>38</sup> See Beauvois, pp. 113–37, 171, 206, 217, 218, 221–30; E. Anuchin, *Istoricheskii obzor razvitiia administrativnykh politseiskikh uchrezhdenii v Rossii*, St Petersburg, 1862, pp. 207–08; V. Lukin, *Pamiatnaia kniga politseiskikh zakonov dlia zemskikh politsei, pomeshchikov i voobshche sel'skie obyvateli*, St Petersburg, 1857, pp. 9–10; *Svod Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii*, 1842, 2, pt 2, appendix to art. 2351; *TsGIA*, f. 733, op. 88, d. 127, ll. 95–96. For the names of the marshals of the nobility in the three provinces, see Liubimov, *Predvoditeli dvorianstva vsekh namestnichestv, gubernii i oblastei Rossiiskoi imperii*, St Petersburg, 1911, pp. 15–16, 27, 47–48.

<sup>39</sup> For Bibikov's views, see *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435, 1848, d. 56, ll. 12–13 ob. See also Beauvois, pp. 23–24, 27, 115–16, 118–20, 134–35; O. P. Kryzhanivskii, 'Porushennia pomishchikamy inventarnoi reformy 1847–1848 rr. (Za materialami Volyn'skoi gubernii)', *Visnyk Kyivs'kogo universytetu, serii istorii*, 1969, 2, pp. 105–06 (hereafter 'Porushennia').

<sup>40</sup> Beauvois, pp. 17–30, 206–13, 216; Velychenko, pp. 195–96. See also J. P. LeDonne, 'The Frontier Governors-General 1772–1825. 1: The Western Frontier', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 47, 1999, pp. 56–88.

the hands of their owners.<sup>41</sup> The divided loyalties of officials in right-bank Ukraine were reflected in peasants' attitudes to them. Peasants were very suspicious of lower-level officials, whom they sometimes believed to be in league with their landowners, but had rather more faith in the more senior officials, including Governor-General Bibikov. There were even folk songs praising Bibikov for granting the inventories.<sup>42</sup> The mixed composition and allegiances of the officials responsible for implementing the reform, and peasants' awareness of the divisions inside the élites, were serious impediments to the success of the reform.

A further obstacle was the chronically poor relations between the Orthodox Ukrainian peasants and their Roman Catholic Polish landowners. There were many peasant 'disturbances' in right-bank Ukraine in the decades prior to 1848.<sup>43</sup> The large number of complaints by peasants suggests that the Polish landowners' reputation as cruel and exploitative had some justification.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, there was a long history of violence by peasants (and cossacks) against the Roman Catholic Polish nobles (and the Jewish population) of right-bank Ukraine. The most notable examples were the Khmel'nyts'kyi revolt of 1648, where peasants joined the rebellious cossacks, and the *Koliivshchyna* uprising of 1768, when peasants rose up against their Polish masters after the latter had taken up arms against the King of Poland. On this occasion, Russian troops crossed the border to put down first the nobles, then the peasants. In addition, into the nineteenth century, bandits (*haidamaki*) raided Polish estates. All these events were enshrined in the local folklore.<sup>45</sup> Tensions inside the population of right-bank Ukraine were revealed again in 1826. In January 1826, after the abortive revolt by the Decembrist Northern Society in St Petersburg, some of their comrades in the Southern Society stationed in army units

<sup>41</sup> Iu. I. Gerasimova, 'Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1844–1849 gg.', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 50, 1955, p. 241; E. A. Morokhovets (ed.), *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie 1827–1869*, 2 vols, Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, vol. 1, pp. 46, 74, 78; *Materialy dlia istorii krepostnogo prava v Rossii, izvlechennia iz sekretnykh otchetov MVD za 1836–1856 gg.*, Berlin, 1872, pp. 35–36, 81, 101, 127–28.

<sup>42</sup> SR, pp. 283, 303. For the text of the songs, see V. Ia. Shul'gin, 'Iugo-Zapadni krai pod upravleniem D. G. Bibikova', *Drevniaia i Novaia Rossiia*, 1879, 6, pp. 104–07 (hereafter Shul'gin).

<sup>43</sup> See SR, *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> Beauvois, pp. 5–10, 17–24; N. Vasilenko, 'Krest'ianskii vopros v iugo-zapadnom i severo-zapadnom krae pri Nikolae I i vvedenie inventarei', in A. K. Dzhivelegov et al (eds), *Velikaia Reforma*, 6 vols, Moscow, 1911, vol. 4, pp. 95–96.

<sup>45</sup> V. A. Markina and V. V. Krizhanovskaia, 'Krest'iane Pravoberezhnoi Ukrainy v bor'be za zemliu i voliu (vtoraia polovina XVII–XVIII v.)', *Voprosy istorii*, 1992, 1, pp. 156–60 (hereafter Markina/Krizhanovskaia); K. V. Chistov, 'Legenda o Maksime Zhelezniake', in idem. (ed.), *Narodnye traditsii i fol'klor*, Leningrad, 1986, p. 241; Z. Kohut, 'Myths Old and New: The Haidamak Movement and the Koliivshchyna (1768) in Recent Historiography', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, 1, 1977, pp. 359–78.

near Kiev also rebelled, but were easily put down. Local peasants welcomed the arrest of the rebel officers, and hoped that they were precursors to the arrest of all nobles in the region.<sup>46</sup> In this atmosphere it is not surprising that the peasants of right-bank Ukraine did not support the Polish revolt of 1830–31, nor that some peasants took action against rebels. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, rumours of impending massacres of Polish nobles by peasants recurred. The rumours turned into reality across the border in Austrian Galicia in 1846, when Ukrainian peasants took advantage of a new Polish nationalist revolt against the Austrian government to massacre their Polish masters on the pretence of loyalty to the Austrian emperor. Thus, tensions between Polish landowners and Ukrainian peasants were high on the eve of the inventory reform.<sup>47</sup>

The most serious impediment to the success of the inventory reform was thus the combination of the tense relations between Russian officials and Polish landowners on one hand, and between Ukrainian peasants and Polish landowners on the other. The situation was similar throughout the Ukrainian lands of partitioned Poland, including Austrian Galicia, and, indeed, had been in the Ukrainian parts of Poland prior to the partitions. On occasions when Polish landowners were at odds with the state authorities, peasants saw the division in the élites, which usually collaborated to oppress them, as an opportunity to try to improve their position. All groups, Ukrainian peasants, Polish landowners and state officials, moreover, were not averse to trying to play off the other two against each other. The presentation of the inventory reform as a favour from the tsar to the peasants heightened tensions across the religious, ethnic and social divide in the rural population of right-bank Ukraine.

Furthermore, 1848 proved a very difficult year for the Russian authorities to implement a reform of serfdom in their western borderlands. Revolutions broke out in much of Europe, causing considerable alarm in government circles in both St Petersburg and Kiev that the upheavals might spread to the troubled western provinces. Nicholas I, in a private letter to Field-Marshal Paskevich (Russian Viceroy in Warsaw) dated 22 March/3 April, regretted that they had undertaken the inventory reform. The revolutionary events of 1848 quickly spread to Ukrainian lands under Austrian rule. On 10/22 April

<sup>46</sup> M. A. Rakhmatullin, 'Krepostnoe krest'ianstvo Rossii i dvizhenie dekabristov', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1977, 4, pp. 127–51.

<sup>47</sup> See I. I. Ignatovich, 'Otrazhenie v Rossii vosstaniia krest'ian v Galitsii v 1846 g.', *Sbornik trudov professorov i prepodavatelei Gosudarstvennogo Irkutskogo Universiteta*, 5, 1923, *Nauki gumanitarnye*, pp. 161–208; N. I. Petrov, 'Obshchestvenno-politicheskie brozheniia v Kievskoi gubernii v 1846–1847 godakh', *Istoricheskii vestnik*, September 1885, pp. 541–56; I. G. Popruzenko, 'Epizod iz istorii pol'skogo krest'ianstva (1846–1848 gg.)', *Istoricheskii vestnik*, 56, June 1894, pp. 711, 715, 724, 57, July 1894, pp. 119–33.

the emancipation of the peasantry in Galicia was proclaimed by the local Austrian governor, on his own initiative, in order to forestall a similar declaration planned by Polish nationalists for the following day, Easter Sunday. Nicholas I sent extra troops to right-bank Ukraine from March onwards, and considered moving into Galicia. In addition, in the summer of 1848 parts of right-bank Ukraine and Russia were affected by cholera and crop failures.<sup>48</sup>

#### IV

The wave of peasant disturbances that broke out in right-bank Ukraine in the wake of the inventory reform was recorded by officials involved in suppressing them and investigating the causes. Certain prejudices can be detected in the official sources, reflecting the composition and allegiances of the officials at different levels. Bibikov noted an anti-peasant bias in the reports, and actions, of local officials.<sup>49</sup> Only a few peasant petitions have survived.

Analysis of the peasant disturbances in right-bank Ukraine in 1848 for the purposes of this article was carried out with the assistance of a database. Information on the timing and geographical locations of incidents, as well as the causes of disputes, peasants' actions, complaints and demands, as reported by officials, was entered.<sup>50</sup> Many historians have used statistical methodology to analyse peasant unrest, but the technique has proved controversial. Debate has focused both on the best methodology to use, for example the unit of counting, and on the applicability and value of the methodology to such phenomena as

<sup>48</sup> A. P. Shcherbatov, *General-Fel'dmarshal Kniaz' Paskevich: ego zhizn' i deiatel'nost'*, 7 vols, St Petersburg, 1888–1904, vol. 4, pp. 197–266, esp. pp. 210, 213–15, 227, 229 (hereafter Shcherbatov); A. S. Nifontov, *Rossia v 1848 godu*, Moscow, 1949 (hereafter Nifontov); D. Saunders, 'A Pyrrhic Victory: The Russian Empire in 1848', in R. J. W. Evans, H. Pogge von Strandmann (eds), *The Revolutions in Europe, 1848–49: From Reform to Reaction*, Oxford, 2000, pp. 135–55.

<sup>49</sup> *IsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435, 1848, d. 56, ll. 12–13.

<sup>50</sup> The sources of information entered into the database were: (i) (primary) *GARF*, f. 109, 4 *ekspeditsiia*, 1848, d. 110; KD, pp. 602–06, 609–30, 804–11; SR, pp. 261–74, 276–77, 279–300, 302–06, 431–51; (ii) (secondary) 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', pp. 104–08; V. I. Dovzhenok, 'Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie na Pravoberezhnoi Ukraine v 40–kh gg. XIX v.', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 12, 1941, pp. 156–63 (hereafter Dovzhenok); I. Ia. Fadeev, 'Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v kontse 40–kh godov XIX veka', *Uchenye zapiski moskovskogo oblastnogo pedagogicheskogo instituta*, 27, 1954, *Trudy kafedry istorii SSSR*, 2, pp. 131–40; Glukhovskii, 'Epizody', pp. 214–17; Kornilovich, pp. 246–64; Koshik, pp. 106–20; 'Porushennia', pp. 105–10; M. N. Leshchenko, 'Posylsennia klasovoi borot'by v ukrainskomu seli v 1848 r.', *Ukrains'kyi istorichnyi zhurnal*, 1973, 2, pp. 46–51 (hereafter 'Posylsennia klasovoi').

peasant unrest.<sup>51</sup> The methodology has some value, however, for analysing large numbers of similar incidents in a particular region over a limited period on the basis of reasonably even coverage of similar sources. The unrest following the inventory reform in right-bank Ukraine in 1848 meets these criteria. Results from the database have been used not as the main conclusions, but guides to further analysis.

For the purposes of this article a 'disturbance' is defined as a joint action by peasants of a single settlement. Individual villages or townships (*mistechko* [U] or *sloboda* [U]), but not estates, were counted as settlements. Estates were counted as single settlements only if no information was available on the number of villages they contained. A single incident could include several different forms of action by peasants taken at the same time or consecutively, for example, refusal to perform labour services and submission of a petition. Likewise, a single incident could have several causes relating both to different aspects of the reform and to other factors. If disturbances recurred in the same settlements, they were counted separately. Thus, there were 310 known peasant disturbances in 305 settlements connected with the inventory reform in right-bank Ukraine in 1848.<sup>52</sup> These figures need to be treated with caution. First, we cannot be sure that all incidents were reported to the authorities, or that the reports concerning all those that were have survived.<sup>53</sup> Second, it is likely that some landowners exaggerated the scale of unrest in their representations to the authorities in order to discredit the reform by presenting it as a cause of disorder.<sup>54</sup> Since these two points pull the figures in opposite directions, 310 may be taken as a reasonable indication of the scale of the unrest.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, B. G. Litvak, *Opyt statisticheskogo izucheniia krest'ianskogo dvizheniia v Rossii v XIX v.*, Moscow, 1967; P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii*, 3rd edition, Moscow, 1968, pp. 41–44 (hereafter Zaionchkovskii); N. N. Leshchenko, 'Osnovnye etapy, napravlennost' i formy klassovoi bor'by v ukrainskoi derevne v epokhu domonopolisticheskogo kapitalizma', *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy 1971 g.*, Vilnius, 1974, pp. 333–40; A. M. Anfimov, 'O metodike ucheta krest'ianskikh vystuplenii i kolichestve uchastnikov v nikh', in S. L. Tikhvinskii (ed.), *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiie Rossii*, Moscow, 1986, pp. 131–44. For assessments by Western historians, see R. Edelman, *Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest*, Ithaca and London, 1987, pp. 92–93 (hereafter Edelman); M. Perrie, 'The Peasants', in R. Service (ed.), *Society and Politics in the Russian Revolution*, Basingstoke and New York, 1992, pp. 13–19.

<sup>52</sup> Soviet historians working in central and local archives came up with similar figures. 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', pp. 104–06; Iu. A. Kurnosov, *Polozhenie krest'ianstva pravoberezhnoi ukrainy i ego klassovai bor'ba v 40–50-kh godakh XIX veka*, unpublished candidate dissertation, Kiev State University, 1960, Avtoreferat, p. 15; O. P. Kryzhaniv's'kyi, 'Selians'kyi rukh u Volyns'kii hubernii pislia provedennia inventarnoi reformy 1847–1848 rr.', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1970, 3, p. 106. Baraboi's and Kryzhaniv's'kyi's higher figures for Volhynia are for both 1848 and 1849.

<sup>53</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 105, n. 63.

<sup>54</sup> Semevskii, pp. 498–99, 507; Shul'gin, pp. 99–100; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 64–ob.



The figures can be broken down by province and district to give an indication of the geographical distribution of the disturbances (see Table 1 and Map 1). There were 124 disturbances in 120 settlements in Kiev province, 104 in 103 settlements in Podolia, and eighty-two in the same number of settlements in Volhynia. When a distinction is made between the non-black earth districts of the north of the region (most of Volhynia and northern Kiev province) and the black earth districts to the south (southern Volhynia, most of Kiev province and all of Podolia) a pattern emerges. There was an average of only 7.5 disturbances per district in the less fertile north, compared with 9.2 per district in the more fertile south. Agriculture, which was rigidly regulated in the inventories, was more important in the black earth districts in the south. It is significant, moreover, that the model inventory on which the regulations were based was from an estate in non-black earth, northern Kiev province. The regulations, especially the detailed norms for field work, may therefore have been less appropriate to the black earth districts. In addition, while the custom of seigniorial labour services was long established in the northern part of the region, it was rather newer in the south, which had been colonized by Polish landowners and Ukrainian peasants more recently.<sup>55</sup> The large numbers of disturbances in Kiev and Zhytomyr districts (ranked third and equal fourth) may simply reflect their proximity to the administrative centres of Kiev and Volhynia provinces. Here unrest was more likely to come to the attention of the authorities. Kam'ianets-Podil's'kyi district, however, which contained the provincial centre of Podolia, had fewer incidents.

The numbers of incidents can also be broken down by the month in which they started (see Table 2). The timing can give a general indication of the causes. Some specialists on peasant movements have argued that the timing of protests is determined largely by the seasons. Referring to the rural revolution of 1905–07 in the Russian Empire, Teodor Shanin wrote of 'the clear agrarian seasonality of the peasant revolt. . . Summer is the time to rebel and autumn and winter the time to retreat.'<sup>56</sup> A. V. Dulov examined the timing of peasant disturbances in the entire Russian Empire between 1796 and 1860. He showed that peasants were most 'active' in May, June and July, and most 'passive' in the autumn and winter (see Table 2). While stressing that the actual causes of disturbances were not connected with the environment, he

<sup>55</sup> E. Melton, 'The Russian Peasantries, 1450–1860', in T. Scott (ed.), *The Peasantries of Europe from the Fourteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, London and New York, 1998, pp. 244–45, 252–53.

<sup>56</sup> T. Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century*, 2 vols, Basingstoke and London, 1986, vol. 2, *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth*, pp. 177–79. See also G. Gill, 'The Mainsprings of Peasant Action in 1917', *Soviet Studies*, 30, 1978, pp. 75–78.



MAP I

argued that the seasonal cycle of agricultural labour was clearly a factor in their incidence. At peaks of field work in the spring and summer landowners put most pressure on peasants, leading to disputes. Moreover, the steady decline in peasant households' reserves of food in the months prior to the new harvest would have heightened tensions. Crop failures and epidemics, which influenced peasant behaviour, were also seasonal in their occurrence.<sup>57</sup> By rebelling at a key time in the agricultural year, moreover, peasants may have been trying to exert maximum leverage on élites. Ripe crops had to be harvested straight away and could not wait.<sup>58</sup> Other specialists, in contrast, have stressed the importance of occurrences outside the villages, such as major

<sup>57</sup> A. V. Dulov, *Geograficheskaya sreda i istoriya Rossii: konets XV-seredina XIX v.*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 232–40. On the agricultural year in right-bank Ukraine, see Stashevskii, pp. 335–37; and in other parts of the empire, M. Confino, *Systèmes agraires et progrès agricole: l'assolement triennal en Russie aux XVIIIe-XIXe siècles*, Paris and The Hague, 1969, pp. 69–71, 78.

<sup>58</sup> See Edelman, p. 98.

TABLE 1: Geographical distribution of disturbances

Province	District	Black earth/ non black earth	Nos of districts	Rank order
<i>Kiev</i>	Berdychiv	be	8	13
	Cherkasy	be	15	6=
	Chyhyryn	be	1	33=
	Kaniv	be	8	13=
	<i>Kiev</i>	nbe	20	3
	Lypovets	be	1	33=
	Radomysl'	nbe	1	33=
	Skvyra	be	23	2
	Tarashcha	be	6	22=
	Uman'	be	2	30=
	Vasyl'kiv	be	5	24=
	Zvenyhorod	be	34	1
<i>[sub-total]</i>			<i>[124]</i>	
<i>Podolia</i>	Balta	be	15	6=
	Bratslav	be	8	13=
	Haisyn	be	8	13=
	Iampil'	be	11	10
	<i>Kam'ianets-Podil's'kyi</i>	be	6	22
	Liatychiv	be	7	18=
	Lityn	be	17	4=
	Mohyliv-Podil's'kyi	be	5	24=
	Novo Ushytsia	be	0	36
	Ol'hopil'	be	12	9
	Proskuriv	be	8	13
	Vinnystia	be	7	18=
<i>[sub-total]</i>			<i>[104]</i>	
<i>Volhynia</i>	Dubno	nbe	2	30=
	Kovel'	nbe	9	12
	Kreminaets'	be	3	27=
	Luts'ke	nbe	3	27=
	Novohrad-Volyns'skyi	nbe	7	18=
	Ostroh	nbe	2	30=
	Ovruch	nbe	7	18=
	Rivne	nbe	3	27=
	Starokostiantyniv	be	10	11
	Volodymyr-Volyns'kyi	nbe	15	6=
	Zaslavl'	nbe	4	26
	<i>Zhytomyr</i>	nbe	17	4=
<i>[sub-total]</i>			<i>[82]</i>	
Total			310	

Average number of disturbances per district = 8.6

Black earth districts (24) = 9.2, non-black earth districts (12) = 7.5

Sources: see note 50.

TABLE 2: Timing of disturbances

Month	Rt-bk Ukraine in 1848		<i>Disturbances</i> Rn Emp 1796–1860	
	Numbers	Per cent	Numbers	Per cent
January	22	7.20	205	6.90
February	25	8.10	177	5.90
(Spring)				
March	81	26.40	238	7.90
April	23	7.50	281	9.40
May	27	8.80	321	10.70
(Summer)				
June	44	14.30	321	10.70
July	63	20.50	354	11.80
August	15	4.90	292	9.70
(Autumn)				
September	5	1.60	219	7.30
October	1	0.30	216	7.20
November	0	0.00	186	6.20
(Winter)				
December	1	0.30	185	6.20
Total	307	99.90%	2995	99.90%

Sources: *Right-bank Ukraine in 1848*, see note 50.  
*Russian Empire, 1796–1860*, see Dulov,  
*Geograficheskaiia sreda*, p. 233.

The timing of the seasons is based on M. N. Leshchenko, *Selians'kyi rukh na praroberezhniï Ukraini v period revoliutsii 1905–1907 rr.* Kiev, 1955, p. 90.

political events, in provoking peasant disturbances and affecting their timing.<sup>59</sup>

The timing of peasant disturbances in right-bank Ukraine in 1848 (see Table 2) seems largely to have reflected the introduction of the inventory regulations and the agricultural cycle, rather than events outside the villages, such as the 1848 revolutions, however dramatic they seem to subsequent historians. Unrest began immediately after the regulations were announced. The upsurge of disturbances in March (26.4 per cent of the total for the year) coincided with the implementation of the regulations as preparations were made for the start of the

<sup>59</sup> See J. Bushnell, 'Peasant Economy and Peasant Revolution at the Turn of the Century: Neither Immiseration nor Autonomy', *Russian Review*, 46, 1988, pp. 83–86; and J. H. Kress, 'The Political Consciousness of the Russian Peasantry: A Comment on Graeme Gill's "The Mainsprings of Peasant Action in 1917"', *Soviet Studies*, 31, 1979, pp. 574–80.

agricultural year. The numbers tailed off in April (only 7.5 per cent of the total), when ploughing and sowing of the spring fields were under way. The increase in the number of disturbances in June and July (14.3 and 20.5 per cent respectively) coincided with the most intensive period of field work in the summer. The pressure of summer work was intensified if, as happened in parts of right-bank Ukraine in 1848, hot weather caused the winter and spring grain to ripen simultaneously, rather than in succession.<sup>60</sup> More important than the intensity of work, however, were problems created by the rigid regulation of norms, and the contentious 'additional summer days'. There were few disturbances in the autumn and winter as field work tailed off.

The decline in the numbers of disturbances in April coincided with the arrival in the villages of right-bank Ukraine of the first news of the revolutions in Europe. It is likely that peasants initially learned of these dramatic events from Nicholas I's manifesto, issued in far-off St Petersburg on 14 March, that was read out in churches from the end of March. Closer to home, and more directly relevant to the lives of Ukrainian peasants under Russian rule, was the abolition of serfdom in Austrian Galicia on Easter Saturday (10 April according to the Julian calendar in use in the Russian Empire). Information about this quickly spread across the border to right-bank Ukraine. The Russian authorities were very concerned that news from Galicia, and other parts of Europe in the throes of revolution, might influence the peasantry. There were indeed contacts between peasants living on either side of the border between the Russian and Austrian Empires. A few estates straddled the border. The impact of news from abroad, however, appears to have been rather less than the authorities feared. The end of serfdom in Galicia seems to have been a major factor in only one disturbance, near the Austrian border in the village of Shydlytsi, Kam'ianets-Podil's'kyi district, Podolia.<sup>61</sup>

Despite these findings on the timing of disturbances, the peasants of right-bank Ukraine were not totally cut off from the outside world and influenced only by the passage of the seasons. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority were engaged mainly in agriculture, performing onerous labour services for their landowners for part of the week and working on their own land on the other days. Very few left their villages to seek wage-labour or seasonal work. What contacts peasants did have with the outside world were mediated mostly through the parish clergy, landowners, local officials, tavern keepers, and the occasional migrant worker or traveller. Peasants' main concerns were

<sup>60</sup> SR, 294; 'Obozrenie', p. 34.

<sup>61</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', pp. 106–07; Nifontov, pp. 45–110, esp. pp. 69–74, 108–10; SR, p. 448.

immediate, and throughout 1848 seem to have focused on the impact of the inventory reform on their obligations and work. The cholera and bad harvest were also major concerns. Whatever peasants heard about the 1848 revolutions, and however they interpreted the news, they did not prompt peasants in right-bank Ukraine to action.

## V

The detailed reports on the peasant disturbances in right-bank Ukraine in 1848 enable us to look in more detail at their causes, or rather the causes as they were perceived by the officials who wrote the reports. Official perceptions of the causes of the unrest were important as they influenced the changes made to the inventory regulations in December 1848, and the future course of attempts to regulate and reform serfdom in the Russian Empire. During the following discussion of the causes of disturbances, attempts will also be made to gauge peasants' attitudes to the reform. Analysis of the causes is further complicated by two factors. First, the sources contain information on officials' views of the causes of only 170 of the 310 incidents. Second, officials felt that many disturbances had more than one cause. The main causes arising from the regulations, as officially reported, can be broken down into a number of groups: i) peasants considered the new obligations to be burdensome; ii) peasants were dissatisfied with the pay for additional summer labour days; iii) peasants and landowners disagreed over the issue of work books; iv) peasants did not, or refused to, understand the regulations, or believe they were genuine; v) the regulations were unclear, inappropriate or impractical in certain situations; vi) some peasants believed that the reform indicated that the tsar had taken their side, and/or had issued further legislation; and vii) landowners or estate authorities breached the regulations (see Table 3). Other factors that contributed to the unrest included popular memories of the history of serfdom in the region, harsh treatment of peasants, the cholera epidemic and partial bad harvest in the summer of 1848.

By far the most important cause of disturbances according to officials was that peasants believed the new obligations, especially labour services and additional summer days, to be burdensome. This was a factor in 123 of the 170 incidents for (72 per cent). The timing of these disturbances was very closely related to the cycle of agricultural work. There were seventeen such incidents out of thirty-eight in the spring for which causes were reported (45 per cent), but ninety-two out of 102 at the height of field work in the summer (90 per cent). The peasants' dislike of the new levels of obligations was reflected in the forms of

TABLE 3: Causes of disturbances (according to official reports)

Causes	Number of Disturbances
Peasants perceived obligations as burdensome	123
Rates of pay for additional summer days	9
Work books	8
Peasants 'misunderstood' regulations	20
Regulations unclear/inappropriate	13
Peasants believed tsar on their side	4
Landowners breached regulations	38

N.B. Officials reported more than one cause for some disturbances

Sources: see note 50.

unrest. In an overwhelming 255 (82 per cent) of the 310 incidents, they refused to perform the obligations specified in the regulations. 101 of the 255 incidents occurred in the spring and 107 in the summer.

In some cases peasants disliked the new obligations because they exceeded their previous ones. This was the situation on Countess Branicka's Liuboml' estate, in Volodymyr-Volyns'kyi district, Volhynia. Before 1848 peasants on the estate had performed labour services for only two days a week. The reform increased this to three days for *tiaglie* households. Until the reform, moreover, there had been no labour services for female peasants. In March 1848 peasants on the estate 'refused to fulfil the labour services fixed (by the inventories)'.<sup>62</sup> The increase in obligations on some estates was an inevitable consequence of Bibikov's decision to issue standard regulations for the whole region. On the estate which served as the model, obligations were around average for the region, but thus higher than on some estates.<sup>63</sup>

The next upsurge in disturbances caused by peasants' resentment at the burden of their obligations came in the summer. The obligation peasants found most burdensome, according to official reports, was the twelve additional days (at no more than two per week) in the summer. This led to eighty-three disturbances, which comprised 81 per cent of all those in the summer for which officials reported on the causes. In July the police chief of Starokostiantyniv district, Volhynia, reported to Bibikov that 'in almost all settlements the peasants do not want to work

<sup>62</sup> SR, p. 435; KD, pp. 602, 604; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 25-ob.; Korniylovych, p. 246. The governor of Podolia believed peasants of magnates (like the Branickis) were better off than those of lesser landowners. RGLA, f. 1281, op. 4, 1847, l. 92a, l. 33.

<sup>63</sup> Korniylovych, pp. 223-25. On obligations before 1848, see V. Hnatiuk, 'Do istorii Bibikovs'kykh inventariv na Volyni. (Z istorii pozemel'nykh vidnosyn)', *Zapysky Volyns'kogo zemleustroinogo tekhnikumu imeni t. Rakovs'kogo (Zhytomyr)*, 1927, 3, pp. 211-12 (hereafter Hnatiuk); *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*, pp. 192-94; Levitskii, pp. 254-74.

the additional days'.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, in one hundred cases peasants refused to work the additional days in the manner laid down by the regulations. The incidents in which the additional summer days were reported as a cause were concentrated in the black earth districts in the south of the region. Only twelve of the eighty-three incidents (14 per cent) in which the additional days were a cause occurred in the non-black earth north. Thirty-eight of the eighty-three incidents (46 per cent) occurred in the ten most southeasterly districts (five districts in each of Kiev and Podolia). The additional days on top of regular labour services would have seemed especially burdensome in these parts as regular labour obligations had been introduced only at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>65</sup> In 1843 the Ukrainian writer and ethnographer Panteleimon Kulish met an old man, Kondrat Taranukh, in Smila, Zvenyhorod district, southeastern Kiev province. Taranukh claimed to remember the old days when obligations had been much lighter, and there had been no labour services,<sup>66</sup> let alone compulsory additional summer days. The twelve summer days would also have seemed burdensome to some peasants as they exceeded the number they were used to working. Before 1848, some landowners had demanded six or only two.<sup>67</sup>

Official investigations also revealed more specific reasons for peasants' objection to the additional days. In the second half of June a serious disturbance was brewing in the township of Zhabotyn, Cherkasy district, in southeastern Kiev province (near Smila). The peasants who refused to work the additional days explained to officials that the extra work was burdensome as many of them lived in small *tiaglie* households with only two adults. Since the husband and wife were already required to work three and one days' regular labour services respectively, an additional two days a week from each would leave them very little time to harvest their own fields.<sup>68</sup> The burden of the labour obligations was greatly increased by the cholera epidemic. In June one fifth of the population of Zhabotyn either died or was taken seriously ill, leaving the rest to do all the work.<sup>69</sup>

Peasants put forward specific demands concerning their obligations. In twenty out of sixty-nine disturbances in which I was able to find information on peasants' complaints, they protested about excessive obligations, especially labour services and additional days. Peasants in twenty-four incidents, including that on Branicka's estate, demanded

<sup>64</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 105, n. 63.

<sup>65</sup> Markina/Krizhanovskaia, pp. 159–60.

<sup>66</sup> P. Kulish, *Zapiski o Iuzhnoi Rusi*, 2 vols, St Petersburg, 1856, vol. 1, pp. 96, 143–44.

<sup>67</sup> Hnatiuk, p. 211; Kornilovych, pp. 224–25. Additional days began as a voluntary custom, with food and drink provided by the landowner, but had become an onerous obligation by the early nineteenth century. Stashevskii, pp. 339–41.

<sup>68</sup> SR, p. 279; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 78ob.–79.

<sup>69</sup> 'Posylsennia klasovoi', p. 51. See also RGLA, f. 1281, op. 4, 1849, d. 84a, ll. 14ob.–16.



lower obligations or a return to their previous, lower, obligations. In nine incidents peasants asked for lower norms or work without set norms. Peasants in at least seven incidents called for fewer additional summer days. In Zhabotyn peasants demanded only one additional day each month.<sup>70</sup> In nine incidents landowners were forced to make concessions to peasants. Landowner Fijalkowski of Zhabotyn proposed that his peasants work only one additional day a week for cash in hand. He also allowed them to keep every fourth sheaf harvested in the seigniorial fields.<sup>71</sup>

Peasants were dissatisfied with the rates of pay set for the additional summer days. This was reported to have been a contributory cause in nine incidents, including those at Zhabotyn, seven settlements in nearby Tarashcha and Kaniv districts, all in southern Kiev province, and Vily Iaruz'ki, Iampil' district, in southern Podolia. In Zhabotyn, the peasants compared the rates unfavourably with those for freely-hired labour. Peasants in Vily Iaruz'ki also demanded to be paid immediately, rather than have the pay put towards their taxes, as laid down in the regulations.<sup>72</sup> The rates of pay for the additional summer days were confirmed by Nicholas I on 7 April 1848 and published by Bibikov in Kiev on 10 May. They were set at 15 or 10 silver kopeks for one day's male labour with draft animals for norm and non-norm labour respectively, 10 or 7.5 silver kopeks for a day's male or female work without draft animals, and between 3 and 5 kopeks for child labour (see Table 4).<sup>73</sup> The peasants' complaints that these rates were low were true. In 1845–47 Bibikov's chancellery had gathered information on existing rates for summer work. In Kiev province the average pay for a day's non-norm labour with draft animals was 22.5 kopeks, and without draft animals, 13.5 kopeks. In Podolia the corresponding figures were 28 and 16 kopeks, and in Volhynia, 26 and 15 kopeks. Other sources, however, contain data on higher rates for freely hired labour at harvest time in parts of the region. The survey of Volhynia by the Imperial General Staff in the late 1840s reported that daily rates were 30–40 kopeks with draft animals and 20 kopeks without.<sup>74</sup> It is significant that all the disturbances provoked by the rates of pay for the additional days noted above took place in the southeastern part of the region. Not only were the going rates of pay there higher than those set by Bibikov, but this was the only part of

<sup>70</sup> SR, pp. 269, 279, 295.

<sup>71</sup> SR, p. 289.

<sup>72</sup> SR, pp. 279, 292–93, 295, 297, 304.

<sup>73</sup> *TsDAU*, f. 442, op. 435 [1848], d. 16, ll. 57–58ob. See also 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 117.

<sup>74</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 117; I. O., Hurzhii, *Rozklad feodal'no-kriposnits'koi systemy v sil'skomu hospodarstvi Ukrainy pershoi polovyny XIX st.*, Kiev, 1954, pp. 300–01.

TABLE 4: Rates of pay for 'additional summer days'  
(All figures in silver kopeks for a day's labour)

Type of labour	Initial proposal by Bibikov			Proposal by Mr Int Affs 28 Mar 1848	Official rates 7 April 1848
	<i>Kiev</i>	<i>Podolia</i>	<i>Volhynia</i>	<i>(all 3 provs)</i>	<i>(all 3 provs)</i>
1. Male, with draft animals, tasks	10–15k	15–30k	15–20k	12–15k (min)	15k
2. Male, with draft animals, w/o tasks	10–15k	15–30k	15–20k	12–15k (min)	10k
3. Male, w/o draft animals, with tasks	7.5–10k	7.5–25k	12.5–15k	8k (min)	10k
4. Male, w/o draft animals or tasks	7.5–10k	7.5–25k	12.5–15k	8k (min)	7.5k
5. Female, tasks	7.5–10k	5–10k	10k	6k (min)	10k
6. Female, w/o tasks	7.5k–10k	5–10k	10k	6k (min)	7.5k
7. Child	3–5k	5–7.5k	3–5k	6k (min)	3–5k

Sources: RGIA, f. 1263, op. 1, 1848, d. 1949, 1.310 ob

right-bank Ukraine where wage labour was common. Moreover, it adjoined New Russia (southern Ukraine), where there were plenty of opportunities for paid work, and rates of pay were relatively high.<sup>75</sup> Some landowners in Balta district, the most southerly in Podolia, paid peasants double the governor-general's rates for additional summer days.<sup>76</sup>

There was a widespread rumour that the low official rates for the additional summer days were influenced by some landowners in Volhynia who had given Pisarev, the official in charge of Bibikov's chancellery, a bribe of 35,000 silver roubles in 1847. News of the bribe reached St Petersburg, but Pisarev was not dismissed because it was known that Bibikov would then resign as he was a 'very close friend' of

<sup>75</sup> B. G. Pliushchevskii, *Krest'ianskie otzhozhie promysly na territorii evropeiskoi Rossii v poslednie predreformennye desiatletia (1830–1850 gg.)*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Leningrad State University, 1974, pp. 98–101, 105–09; E. I. Druzhinina, *Luzhnaia Ukraina v period krizisa feodalizma 1825–1860 gg.*, Moscow, 1981, pp. 26–28.

<sup>76</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 108.

Pisarev's wife.<sup>77</sup> Another explanation for the divergences between the pay set by the authorities in the spring of 1848 and the going rates can be found in the records of the session of the Committee of Ministers in St Petersburg on 28 March 1848 which set the rates. Bibikov had recommended that the Committee set different rates for different districts to reflect variations in local conditions. The governor-general was pressing for a decision, moreover, because he needed to announce the rates as soon as possible to avoid misunderstandings and disorders. The minister of internal affairs was not happy with Bibikov's recommendation. He argued that, since the additional summer days were compulsory, the rates of pay should be less than for freely hired labour. He also disliked the idea of differential rates, and proposed minimum rates for all three provinces. Bibikov responded by setting the rates he had proposed for Kiev province, which were the lowest, for the entire region (see Table 4).<sup>78</sup> Perhaps a hint of exasperation can be detected in Bibikov's precipitate action.

Closely related to the peasants' perception of their obligations as burdensome were disputes over the issue and filling in of the work books in which their obligations were recorded. This was a cause in eight incidents. In twenty-one incidents, moreover, peasants refused to accept the books. In most cases it was the books themselves that caused the problems. Sixteen of the twenty-one incidents occurred in Cherkasy, Chyhyryn, Kaniv and Kiev districts, Kiev province, which lay along the right-bank of the river Dnieper, directly opposite left-bank Ukraine. In Rebedailivka, on the estate of landowner Trypolski in Chyhyryn district, officials carried out an exhaustive investigation to find out why the peasants refused to take the books. Several dozen peasants were questioned. Most of their statements reveal a great reluctance to admit to anything that might be used against them. Nevertheless, a number of reasons recur: the books were written by hand rather than printed; they had the crest of their landowner and not the state or the tsar; the books set the number of days' labour services at four-five a week, i.e. higher than laid down in the regulations; books had not been issued in other villages; and peasants in other villages were also refusing to take them. All the peasants were very suspicious of the books. Some believed them to be 'false'.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps the most striking reason Rededailivka peasants gave was that 'once [. . .] across the Dnieper in Little Russia [left-bank Ukraine] those who took the books remained serfs [. . .], but those who did not [. . .] remained free

<sup>77</sup> Voroponov, p. 761; P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Pravitel'stvennyi apparat samoderzhavnoi Rossii v XIX v.*, Moscow, 1978, p. 147.

<sup>78</sup> *RGLA*, f. 1263, op. 1, 1848, d. 1935, ll. 76–95; f. 1263, op. 1, 1848, d. 1949, ll. 300–20b.

<sup>79</sup> *TsDIAU*, f. 485, op. 1, 1849, d. 13865, esp. ll. 31–ob, 54, 57ob, 95ob–96, 100ob, 127ob, 249–ob.

cossacks'. Peasants claimed they had been told this by passing migrant workers from left-bank Ukraine.<sup>80</sup> The same story was current in Zhabotyn and other parts of neighbouring Cherkasy district.<sup>81</sup> The story was probably based on the introduction of the poll tax to left-bank Ukraine in 1783. All peasants and cossacks who were entered into the records of the fourth revision of the tax census of 1782–83 were bound to their places of residence. Many were later enserfed. The loss of freedom and cossack status became part of Ukrainian folklore.<sup>82</sup>

The peasants' reluctance in 1848 to accept the books that recorded their obligations according to the inventory regulations was typical of reactions by illiterate people to written documents. Commenting on circumstances that provoked popular revolts in early-modern Europe, Yves Marie Berce wrote: 'Not understood, [the written document] is, at the same time, admired and feared. Men ascribe to it a direct and magical power; it proves, establishes, founds and binds, not by its contents, but by its very form.'<sup>83</sup> During many revolts illiterate peasants have destroyed documents, such as title deeds and tax records.<sup>84</sup> The suspicions peasants in right-bank Ukraine felt towards their landowners and local officials increased their fear of being tricked into taking documents that confirmed, rather than limited, the authority of their owners to extract obligations from them. A little over a decade later, after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, many peasants in right-bank Ukraine (and elsewhere) refused to sign the 'regulatory charters' (*ustavnye gramoty*), which set the sizes of their land allotments and obligations for the next stage of the reform.<sup>85</sup>

Closely related to peasant attitudes to written documents was the issue of how peasants understood, or misunderstood, their contents. A significant number of disturbances following the inventory reform seemed to officials to have been caused, at least in part, by peasants' failing to understand the inventory regulations. This appears to have been a factor in twenty (12 per cent) of the 170 incidents for which officials reported on the causes.

<sup>80</sup> *TsDIAU*, f. 485, op. 1, 1849, d. 13865, ll. 124ob.–125; *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 92 ob., 98; see also *KD*, p. 610; *SR*, p. 271.

<sup>81</sup> Dovzhenok, pp. 160–61; *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 62ob; *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435, 1848, d. 111.

<sup>82</sup> *PSZ*, series 1, 21, no. 15724 [1783], esp. pt. 1, art. 8; Z. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate 1760s–1830s*, Cambridge, MA, 1988, pp. 242, 277–79, 296–98; I. de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, London, 1981, pp. 311–15.

<sup>83</sup> Y. M. Berce, *Revolt and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: An Essay on the History of Political Violence*, J. Bergin (trans.), Manchester and New York, 1987, pp. 111–12.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, J. C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in South East Asia*, New Haven, CT, and London, 1976, pp. 144–45.

<sup>85</sup> N. N. Leshchenko, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine v sviazi s provedeniem reformy 1861 goda*, Kiev, 1959, pp. 266–346; A. Z. Baraboi et al (eds), *Otmena krepostnogo prava na Ukraine: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Kiev, 1961, pp. 225–83, esp. 266–71 (hereafter *Otmena*).

The problem of peasants' understanding of the regulations was compounded by the fact that they were written, in officialese, and in Russian. The largely illiterate, uneducated, and Ukrainian peasants therefore had difficulty understanding them on three counts.<sup>86</sup> Many Russian officials, including Bibikov, believed that the Ukrainian language was a dialect of Russian spoken by peasants or 'Russian [...] distorted by Polish'.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, after the suppression of the Kirillo-Methodian Society at Kiev University in 1847, the Russian authorities severely restricted publishing in Ukrainian.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, some officials recognized that Ukrainian peasants spoke a language other than Russian, and that they needed to use it if they were to communicate effectively with peasants. Syvyts'kyi, an official for special assignments attached to Bibikov who was sent to Zhabotyn in July 1848, was concerned that the peasants had not understood the regulations. He ordered the parish priest to read them out 'as slowly as possible' in order to get their literal contents across to the peasants. Syvyts'kyi also saw fit to explain the regulations to the peasants in 'a language (*iazyk*) intelligible for their comprehension'.<sup>89</sup> The language problem may have been the reason the authorities entrusted the Orthodox parish clergy, who spoke Ukrainian to their parishioners,<sup>90</sup> with the task of explaining the inventory regulations to the peasantry. This merely added to the problem. Some peasants suspected that their priests were in league with the landowners and local officials, whom they did not trust. They refused to believe that the regulations or the priests' explanations were genuine, suspecting the clergy of concealing the 'real' regulations.<sup>91</sup> Shortly after the introduction of the reform, the tsar banned priests from explaining the regulations to peasants lest this cause disturbances. The ban was not announced to the peasants, who

<sup>86</sup> For a similar problem in southern France, where peasants spoke 'patois', see P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution*, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 208–10.

<sup>87</sup> Hamm, p. 67; *RGI*, f. 1180, op. XV, d. 74, l. 1000b.; B. Dmytryshyn, Introduction to F. Savchenko, *Zaborona Ukrainstva 1876 r.*, Reprint, Munich, 1970, p. xvi. On the 'blend' of Slavonic languages spoken in the city of Kiev at this time, see Hamm, pp. 100–06.

<sup>88</sup> D. Saunders, 'The Kirillo-Methodian Society', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 71, 1993, pp. 689–91.

<sup>89</sup> SR, p. 289. (I have Ukrainianized his name.) During serious disturbances in Kiev province in 1855, Captain Gromeka was sent to the villages because he could speak 'Little Russian'. S. S. Gromeka, *Kievskie volneniia v 1855 godu*, St Petersburg, 1863, pp. 3, 7. In 1861, the government took an interest in P. A. Kulish's proposal to translate the statutes abolishing serfdom into Ukrainian. 'Perevod P. A. Kulisha na ukrainskii iazyk manifesta 19 fevralia 1861 goda i polozheniia o krest'ianakh', *Kievskaiia starina*, 88, January–March 1905, pp. 324–37, 423–60.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, L. M[atsevich], 'Zametki k istorii kievskoi kozachchiny 1855 g.', *Kievskaiia starina*, 88, January–March 1905, p. 58.

<sup>91</sup> Kryzhaniv's'kyi, 'Antytserkovna borot'ba', pp. 49, 52–53.

seem to have taken priests' subsequent refusals to explain the regulations as further evidence for their collusion.<sup>92</sup>

Closer examination of incidents in which peasants' misunderstandings of the regulations were a factor suggests that they fall into two categories. In some cases, peasants' misunderstandings appear to have been unintentional. This was Bibikov's view.<sup>93</sup> In others, however, peasants seem to have been unwilling, rather than unable, to understand what was announced to them. In Zozulyntsi, Berdychiv district, Kiev province, it is likely that the peasants' misunderstanding were inadvertent, and that lack of access to the text of the regulations, rather than the language, was one of the causes of the incident. When the peasants started to harvest the winter grain on 2 July, peasant Stefan Dyshliuk told the others that they did not have to reap sixty sheaves in a day, as landowner Abramowicz had told them (and as had been laid down by Bibikov). Instead, Dyshliuk stated that men had to reap fifty sheaves and women only forty. An investigation revealed that the misunderstanding had arisen because the steward had confused the norms set for threshing with those for reaping (article 3, vi–viii). The steward may have been confused because Bibikov had changed the way the reaping norms were calculated, from area of land to numbers of sheaves, after the regulations were first announced. Moreover, reaping norms of fifty sheaves had allegedly been announced in Hrushka, Ol'hopil' district, Podolia. The peasants tried in vain to force their priest to read the regulations to them to clarify the issue, but he was no longer permitted to do so.<sup>94</sup>

In rather more cases peasants' misunderstandings of the regulations may have been deliberate. Thirteen of the twenty such incidents began between late February and the beginning of April. This suggests that peasants were particularly reluctant to understand, or accept, the regulations when they were being implemented at the start of the agricultural year.<sup>95</sup> The other seven incidents took place in June and July. Refusal to understand the burden of the labour obligations peasants were required to perform at the height of field work in the summer may have been a thinly veiled form of protest against them. Peasants who had previously served lighter obligations than those laid down by the regulations had good reason to have problems 'understanding' them as the authorities had presented the reform as a 'favour'

<sup>92</sup> 'Pravobereznaia Ukraina', p. 115; Mikhnevich, pp. 50–51; N., 'Ukrainskaia derevnia vtoroi chetverti nyneshnego stoletia (po vospominaniiam detstva)', *Kievskaiia starina*, 4, October, 1882, pp. 63–64; *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 451, 1848, dd. 20, 55, 115.

<sup>93</sup> *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435, 1848, d. 56, l. 12–ob.

<sup>94</sup> SR, pp. 282–83; Kornilyovych, p. 229; KD, p. 620. There were many mistakes in the copies of the regulations given to landowners. *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, l. 80–ob.

<sup>95</sup> See also *Pomeshchich'i krest'iane*, p. 209.

from the tsar. Peasants were also reluctant to believe that the regulations which had been read out by the district-level officials were genuine. They were aware of the divided loyalties of these officials, whom they sometimes believed to be in league with the landowners, and were therefore very suspicious of their actions.<sup>96</sup> In March, peasants in Illiashivka, Lityn district, Podolia, demanded that the spring wheat they had been ordered to thresh be considered as winter wheat.<sup>97</sup> They presumably knew full well that the regulations required them to thresh fewer sheaves of the latter (article 3, vii and viii). In Hrushka, Ol'hopil' district, Podolia, officials allowed a literate peasant, Pavlo Kushnira, to read the regulations in the hope that he would then persuade the others to obey them. District police chief Szuszkiewicz reported that this failed, since the other peasants 'almost punished [Kushnira] because he understood the regulations even before he had taken [them] from the estate office'.<sup>98</sup> This incident suggests that Kushnira knew all along what the regulations had laid down, but that the other peasants preferred their own interpretation, regardless of their actual content. Throughout 1848 some officials and landowners suspected that some peasants were wilfully misinterpreting the inventory regulations to their advantage.<sup>99</sup> Deliberate misunderstandings of legislation can be interpreted as attempts by peasants to resist what they saw as unjust laws, to articulate grievances and aspirations, and to take advantage of opportunities.<sup>100</sup>

A further contributory factor behind the unrest reported in the official documents, and an additional cause of misunderstandings, was that on some estates and in certain situations the regulations were unclear, inappropriate or impractical. This was a factor in thirteen incidents, ten of which occurred in the spring, the other three in the summer. It was not clear in the regulations whether the norms set for threshing included winnowing, i.e. separating grain from the chaff as well as from the straw. This led to a dispute in Potaptsy, Kaniv district, Kiev province. On 17 March on the instigation of peasant Volodymyr Cherep, twenty-five peasants went home at three o'clock in the afternoon having threshed, but not winnowed, the allotted number of sheaves.<sup>101</sup> The terms of the peasants' obligation to work construction labour days were also unclear. Except in emergencies, landowners were not permitted to demand construction days during 'times of field

<sup>96</sup> SR, pp. 283, 303.

<sup>97</sup> KD, pp. 623–24; SR, p. 437.

<sup>98</sup> KD, p. 618.

<sup>99</sup> See, for example, GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, ll. 440b–45; KD, p. 615; SR, pp. 285, 299.

<sup>100</sup> For discussion of this phenomenon among Russian peasants, see *Russian Peasants*.

<sup>101</sup> SR, pp. 273–74; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 770b.

work' (article 9). The regulations did not, however, specify what constituted field work. In mid-March, thirty peasants from Trybusivka, Ol'hopil' district, Podolia, were sent to build a dam a few miles from the village. Preparations for the spring ploughing would have been under way by this time.<sup>102</sup> The peasants did no work, and ran off after beating up an estate official sent to check their progress.<sup>103</sup> The regulations were also unclear on how many construction days a landowner could demand in a week. Peasants in Ivanivtsi, Lityn district, Podolia, refused to spend more than three days a week strengthening a dam which was threatened, and subsequently breached, by the spring floods.<sup>104</sup>

The regulations on measuring labour norms during the harvest turned out to be inappropriate and impractical. They stated that a peasant was to reap 1/9 *desiatina* or 1/5 *morg* (approximately 3/10 acre) in one day (article 3, vi). On some estates, however, the land had not been accurately surveyed. Consequently, on 30 May 1848 Bibikov changed harvesting norms to the number of sheaves to be reaped in a day, which he set at sixty.<sup>105</sup> The change did not prevent problems arising. In addition to the incident in Zozulyntsi, in Kydanivka, Kaniv district, Kiev province, in July the peasants rejected new harvesting norms. They insisted instead on harvesting the area originally specified. When they found that this was not to their advantage, however, they refused to accept the new norms, and harvested as much as they wanted.<sup>106</sup> The new norms, measured in sheaves rather than areas of land, were impractical in the event of natural disasters. Kydanivka, like Zhabotyn, was badly affected by cholera, which reduced the numbers of peasants fit to work in the fields.<sup>107</sup> The new harvesting norms were also inflexible if the crops grew badly. In Vily Iaruz'ki, Iampil' district, Podolia, peasants Iurko Luk'ianiv and Vasyl Nahirniak told officials that it was very difficult to reap sixty sheaves in a day as the grain was thin on the ground.<sup>108</sup> On 13 July Bibikov reported to St Petersburg that cholera had spread to many places, that there were insufficient means to aid the sick, and that the epidemic had coincided with the height of field work. He added that the drought had burned up the hay and ripened the spring grain. As a result 'landowners are hurrying to

<sup>102</sup> Ol'hopil' district was in the far south of the region. Further north, in Vinnytsia district, Podolia, ploughing began around 24 March. Stashevskii, p. 335.

<sup>103</sup> KD, p. 614.

<sup>104</sup> KD, p. 623.

<sup>105</sup> Kornilovich, p. 229.

<sup>106</sup> SR, pp. 302–03. See also *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 76ob.–77.

<sup>107</sup> SR, p. 304.

<sup>108</sup> SR, pp. 295–97; KD, pp. 626–27. The harvest in Podolia was lower than in 1846 and 1847. *RGLA*, f. 1281, op. 4, 1847, d. 92a, ll. 88ob.–90; 1848, d. 69a, ll. 89ob.–91; 1849, d. 130a, ll. 104ob.–106.



gather in all at one go in order not to lose grain. The peasants, who have lost spirit, are in no condition to do all the work at once, for there are not enough working hands'.<sup>109</sup>

An important respect in which the inventory regulations were inappropriate and impractical stemmed from the criteria laid down for dividing households into categories with different levels of obligations. Before the reform on some estates there had been other categories besides those listed in the regulations. According to the regulations, moreover, households were divided according to the size of their allotments. Categories had been determined in this way in the northern part of the region where the model for Bibikov's standard inventory came from. In the south, however, categories were based on ownership of draft animals. Some peasants felt that *tiaglie* households were disproportionately burdened with labour services relative to *polutiaglie*. Peasants' discontent with the categories to which they had been assigned, or with the corresponding level of obligations, was a cause of seven incidents. One occurred in the northern part of the region, and involved a dispute over peasants' land allotments. The other six took place in the southern part of the region, and most concerned draft animals.<sup>110</sup>

In February in Kustivtsi village and Kustovets'ka township, Vinnytsia district, Podolia, peasants who had been classified as *tiaglie* considered themselves to be *polutiaglie*, and worked two rather than three days a week. They initially claimed they belonged to the latter category because their draft animals were too young to work. District marshal of the nobility Szydlowski reported the incident to Bibikov, and asked whether households with *tiaglie* allotments but no draft animals were to work two or three days. In the meantime Szydlowski told the estate manager that households without draft animals were to work only two days. This seems to have raised the hopes of other *tiaglie* households in the settlements. In late May the district police chief reported to Bibikov that hardly any of the *tiaglie* households were working three days, and that the peasants at issue had accumulated a backlog of 1,352 unworked days. *Tiaglie* households were now claiming not only that they did not have animals fit for work but that they did not have sufficient land. After their initial success, however, it seems that the peasants pushed their case too far. A subsequent investigation decided that they had been 'deceitful'.<sup>111</sup> In Samhorodok, Cherkasy district, Kiev province, *tiaglie* households threatened to sell off their draft animals so that they would become *polutiaglie*, with lower labour obligations.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 54-ob.

<sup>110</sup> GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 75-76ob.; 'Porushennia', p. 108; SR, p. 432.

<sup>111</sup> KD, pp. 613-14, 688; SR, pp. 276-77.

<sup>112</sup> GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 11. See also Semevskii, p. 502.

The incidents in which lack of clarity, inappropriate and impractical regulations were factors reflected both the peasants' discontent with the level of obligations demanded, and the problems caused by Bibikov's decision to impose standard regulations based on one estate on all estates throughout the region, without regard to existing practices, and without taking into account varying natural conditions, or allowing for natural disasters.

In contrast to problems with parts of the regulations and some peasants' seeming difficulty in understanding them, other peasants were well aware that the main aim of the reform was to benefit them at the expense of their Polish landowners. Indeed, the reform had been presented as a favour from the tsar when it was promulgated. This was a factor in at least four incidents. In late 1847 General Buxhoeveden of the Corps of Gendarmes reported that the preparation of the reform had raised peasants' hopes that the government intended 'soon to free them from serfdom'.<sup>113</sup> In March, on Branicka's estate in Volodymyr-Volyns'kyi district, Volhynia, peasants backed up their demands by telling officials that 'times have changed, and now the sovereign is standing firmly behind the peasants'.<sup>114</sup> It was a short step to the belief that the tsar had issued further legislation in their interests. In Zhabotyn in June peasants claimed that there was a new decree, which granted them freedom from all obligations.<sup>115</sup> This may not have been just wishful thinking. The announcements of the rates of pay for additional summer days and the change in the harvesting norms, after the regulations were promulgated, would have provided grounds for the belief in a new 'decree'.

In addition to the inventory reform, peasants in right-bank Ukraine had other reasons to have some faith in the Russian tsar. The reform was the latest of several actions by the Russian authorities against Polish landowners, which Ukrainian peasants interpreted as being in their favour. In 1768 and 1831 Russian troops had been sent against Polish nobles in right-bank Ukraine. Although the peasants' hopes of further action against their masters had been dashed on both occasions, they may have been revived by various measures concerning state and church peasants enacted throughout the nine western provinces in the 1840s. In 1841 and 1843 estates belonging to the Roman Catholic Church were secularized and handed over to the Ministry of State Domains. There had been widespread unrest among Orthodox Ukrainian peasants living on estates belonging to the Roman Catholic

<sup>113</sup> Nifontov, p. 101. On popular monarchism among Ukrainian peasants in Chyhyryn district, Kiev province, in the 1870s, see D. Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, Boston, MA, and London, 1989, pp. 112–207.

<sup>114</sup> KD, p. 605.

<sup>115</sup> Dovzhenok, p. 161.

Church, and they welcomed the measure. In 1844 all state peasants in the western provinces were transferred from onerous labour services to fixed cash dues (*obrok*), thus bringing them into line with state peasants in the Russian provinces of the empire.<sup>116</sup> The governors of Volhynia and Podolia reported that the transfer of state peasants to *obrok* had led to significant improvements in their condition, and that they were much better off than neighbouring peasants enserved to Polish nobles.<sup>117</sup> These reforms of the non-seigniorial peasantry seem to have had some impact on peasants on the estates of Polish nobles in 1848. In at least four disturbances in 1848, peasants demanded transfer to *obrok*, conversion to the state peasantry, or even freedom. Peasants on the estate of Countess Branicka in Volodymyr-Volyns'kyi, Volhynia, made all these demands, and peasants elsewhere made similar demands.<sup>118</sup>

That there was some basis for the Ukrainian peasants' apparent faith in the tsar in 1848 suggests that it was not simply 'naive', as many Soviet scholars asserted.<sup>119</sup> On several occasions discussed above, peasants tried to use their interpretation of the tsar's intentions in their disputes with landowners and officials. Moreover, peasants were well aware, once again, that the Russian authorities were at odds with the Polish landowners of the region over the inventory reform, and used the opportunities created to articulate their aims and aspirations. The Polish landowners, however, had good reason to dislike the inventory reform, and to see it as the latest of a series of Russian measures directed at their interests. Several landowners expressed their feelings about the reform while beating their peasants: 'Here's the decree for you, here's the sovereign's favour!'; 'I'll put the decree on your back and beat you until I've pulverized the decree and your skin!'; 'No one has the right to tell me how to treat you, I can beat my peasant to death, no one frightens me!'<sup>120</sup>

The hostile reaction to the inventory reform among the landowners of right-bank Ukraine was, of course, hardly a surprise to the authorities. Indeed, they had warned landowners that they would be held to account if they violated the regulations. Bibikov's attitude to Polish landowners is suggested by the following anecdote. When he

<sup>116</sup> Druzhinin, *Gosudarstvennye krest'iane*, vol. 2, pp. 149–50; Kieniewicz, *Emancipation*, pp. 140–50; A. L. Zinchenko, 'Reforma gosudarstvennoi derevni i sekularizatsiia tserkovnogo zemlevladieniia v zapadnykh guberniakh Rossiiskoi imperii', *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 112, 1985, pp. 98–125; *idem*, 'Z istorii selians'kogo rukhu na Pravoberezhnii Ukraini u XVIII-pershoi polovyni XIX st.', *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, 1991, 1, pp. 36–45.

<sup>117</sup> *RGIA*, f. 1281, op. 4, 1849, d. 130a, l. 46; 1847, d. 80, l. 64ob.; op. 5, 1849, d. 73a, l. 47.

<sup>118</sup> *KD*, p. 602, Glukhovskii, 'Epizody', pp. 215–16; *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 25ob. See also I. O. Hurzhii, 'Selians'ki rukhy na Ukraini v pershii polovyni XIX st.', *Visnyk AN URSSR*, 1952, 1, pp. 25, 33.

<sup>119</sup> See M. Perrie, 'Popular Monarchism', in G. Hosking and R. Service (eds), *Reinterpreting Russia*, London, 1999, pp. 156–69.

<sup>120</sup> Shul'gin, pp. 100–01; Zaionchkovskii, p. 60; *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 39.

heard that one young nobleman, with a reputation as a playboy, was not adhering to the inventory regulations, he summoned him to Kiev. Attributing his action to inadequate knowledge of the regulations, Bibikov ordered the 'perplexed dandy' to come to his office every morning at nine o'clock, adding: 'You will be shown to a room, where you will study [the regulations], and my adjutant (at this point he glanced at the adjutant who clicked his spurs) will supervise your studies and listen to what you have learned. At the end of your studies, I will listen to you myself.'<sup>121</sup>

In spite of the attitude of the governor-general and the warnings they had been given, there were many reports throughout 1848 of landowners and their agents infringing the inventory regulations on their estates.<sup>122</sup> Such actions were a major cause, indeed the second most important cause, of peasant disturbances as reported by officials. Breaches of the regulations by seigniorial authorities were a factor in thirty-eight (22 per cent) of the 170 incidents for which officials reported on the causes. The actual number may have been far higher. Proximity to the provincial capitals seems to have made it more likely that breaches came to the attention of the authorities. Twenty-four of the thirty-eight incidents were in the districts of or adjoining Kiev, Kam'ianets-Podil's'kyi and Zhytomyr. This suggests that the authorities elsewhere may have been less assiduous in uncovering such breaches. Indeed, police seem to have turned a blind eye in return for bribes. An anonymous author wrote to Bibikov that in Starokostiantyniv district, Volhynia, 'there are barely ten estates where the "inventory regulations" are being fulfilled because all [the landowners] are paying the police'.<sup>123</sup> In April 1848, moreover, Bibikov expressed concern that peasants were being punished by local officials for complaining about infringements by their landowners.<sup>124</sup> It later transpired that landowners had silenced peasants who complained, or tried to complain, about their infringements by sending them to the army or penal servitude.<sup>125</sup>

In thirty of the thirty-eight incidents for which information is more readily available, landowners or estate authorities demanded obligations in excess of those set by the regulations. In February landowner Zakrzewski of Mativ, Volodymyr-Volyns'kyi district, Volhynia, ordered his male peasants to work for him for four, rather than three, days a

<sup>121</sup> 'K kharakteristike', pp. 70–71.

<sup>122</sup> In addition to the cases mentioned below, see *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435 [1848], dd. 51, 70, 88; f. 442, op. 445, 1849, dd. 6–12; f. 442, op. 448 [1848], d. 60; f. 442, op. 451, 1848, dd. 2, 17, 53.

<sup>123</sup> 'Porushennia', pp. 110. Only one breach of the regulations by landowners in this district is recorded in a comprehensive survey of archival sources on peasant unrest in right-bank Ukraine in 1848. *SR*, p. 440.

<sup>124</sup> *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 435, 1848, d. 56, ll. 12–13 ob.

<sup>125</sup> *GARF*, f. 109, 1 eksp., 1849, d. 3, ll. 122–25 ob.

week. In return for some of the extra days, Zakrzewski bought exemption for his peasants from the recruiting obligation. He counted the others as additional summer and construction labour days. He neglected, however, to inform his peasants of this. He was thus clearly in breach of articles 2, 15 and 16 of the regulations. Zakrzewski also required his peasants to work norms which took two days rather than one. The peasants complained to the authorities, as they had been instructed, but also refused to work according to the regulations.<sup>126</sup>

The peasants of Kuz'myntsi, Kaniv district, Kiev province, complained about the actions of their landowner, Konopacki. He required peasants who lived in large households containing more than one married couple to send two peasants, rather than one, to perform labour services. Some households had performed labour services in this manner before the reform. Nevertheless, this practice was in breach of article 2 of the regulations.<sup>127</sup> Other landowners demanded norms in excess of those laid down in the regulations. In February, landowner Piotrowski forced his peasants in Babychi, Zhytomyr district, Volhynia, to plough an area of land in sixteen days that they were supposed to have thirty days to complete. The peasants complained to the authorities. They also took matters into their own hands and beat up the steward.<sup>128</sup> In February and March several landowners and stewards provoked protests by ordering peasants to thresh more sheaves than set by the regulations.<sup>129</sup>

Some landowners anticipated the stipulation that peasants were to retain their existing land allotments (article 1) by taking land from them on the eve of the reform.<sup>130</sup> This continued in 1848. In nine of the incidents in which breaches of the regulations were a factor, landowners interfered with peasants' allotments. In at least six cases, peasants complained to the authorities. All but one of these incidents took place in the fertile black earth districts, where land was more valuable. In Zhabotyn, landowner Fijalkowski allegedly took away good land from his peasants and gave them poor land in exchange.<sup>131</sup> In at least one

<sup>126</sup> Kornylovych, pp. 246, 247, 249, 252, 264; SR, p. 434.

<sup>127</sup> GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, l. 43-ob.

<sup>128</sup> 'Porushennia', p. 109; SR, p. 433.

<sup>129</sup> See, for example, SR, pp. 433, 435; KD, pp. 620-22, 805; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 63ob., 67-68.

<sup>130</sup> Kornylovych, pp. 243-44.

<sup>131</sup> Koshik, p. 118.

incident, the landowner interfered with his peasants' land allotments as well as demanding unlawful obligations.<sup>132</sup>

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A few general conclusions can be made about the relationship between the inventory reform and the wave of peasant disturbances that followed. Peasant attitudes to the authorities and, in particular, awareness of the divisions between higher level Russian officials (and the tsar) and Polish landowners, were more important than religious and ethnic tensions between Orthodox, Ukrainian peasants and Roman Catholic, Polish landowners. These tensions, however, together with popular recollections of the history of serfdom in Ukraine coloured the unrest. News of the abolition of serfdom in neighbouring Galicia may have influenced some peasants in border areas, but overall peasants were motivated in their protests by the impact of the inventory reform on their lives, not by events in the rest of Europe in 1848. The most common cause of unrest was a perception among peasants that the obligations set by the inventory regulations, especially labour services and additional summer days, were burdensome. The second most common factor was breaches of the regulations by landowners and estate authorities.

Some disturbances were caused in part by misunderstandings of the regulations, unintentional or deliberate, by peasants. The lack of clarity of some parts of the regulations and the impracticality of implementing standard, inflexible regulations throughout the region, were a further cause of disputes. In preparing the regulations, Bibikov took no account of the important differences in agriculture, working practices, and rates of pay between the less fertile north and black earth south of the region. The inflexibility of the regulations was also demonstrated by the impact of the cholera epidemic and partial bad harvest in the summer of 1848. Bibikov's approach and mindset may have been appropriate to a parade ground, but the Ukrainian peasants and Polish landowners were not like soldiers and did not respond to minute regulation. Bibikov's approach to rural reforms can be contrasted very unfavourably with that of Kiselev.

<sup>132</sup> GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, ll. 43–44. For other cases of landowners breaching the regulations on land allotments, see *TsDIAU*, f. 442, op. 451, 1848, dd. 2, 17. Landowners took land from peasants after 1848. A. Z. Baraboi, 'Obezzemelivanie pomeshchikami krest'ian Kievskoi i Podol'skoi gubernii nakanune i v period revoliutsionnoi situatsii 1859–1861 gg.' in M. V. Nechkina (ed.), *Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859–1861 gg.*, vol. 1, Moscow, 1960, pp. 29–48.

## VI

Some historians, for example Soviet scholar A. Z. Baraboi, have argued that over the course of 1848 there was a rapprochement between the Russian authorities and Polish landowners of right-bank Ukraine at the expense of the peasants, i.e. a reversal of the original aims of the inventory reform. The reasons for this alleged change, it has been argued, were the wave of peasant disturbances that threatened law and order in the region, and the news of the revolutions that had broken out throughout much of Europe. The Russian government did not wish to create fertile ground, among nobles or peasants, for the spread of revolution to its western borderlands.<sup>133</sup> This argument is a little too clear cut, however, and the shift in the attitude of the Russian authorities was more subtle. On 29 March 1848, in the wake of the outbreak of revolutions in Europe, Nicholas I ordered that 'the slightest spark of insubordination' among the peasantry of right-bank Ukraine was to be strictly punished.<sup>134</sup> The authorities strove to contain and suppress the wave of peasant disturbances. Rising levels of pressure were applied to 'insubordinate' peasants, starting with exhortations by district level officials, then more senior officials, culminating in extreme cases in exemplary punishment of the alleged 'ringleaders', including running the gauntlet, and billeting of troops in villages to ensure the continued obedience of their inhabitants.<sup>135</sup> There was, however, never any question that Ukrainian peasants who disobeyed their landowners or the state authorities would not be punished. Whether the punishments meted out to peasants were more severe than might have been the case, but for the European revolutions, is difficult to assess. Comparisons with the suppression of disturbances in villages in right-bank Ukraine before the spring of 1848 and elsewhere in the Russian Empire in the 1840s<sup>136</sup> suggests that they were not.

Measures were taken against the interests of Polish landowners long after the start of the peasant rebellions and after the news of the outbreak of revolutions in Europe. On 15 July, during the wave of peasant protests against the additional labour days in the summer, Bibikov asked marshals of the nobility to persuade landowners to make concessions like that of landowner Fijalkowski, who had reduced additional summer days from two to one a week.<sup>137</sup> Moreover, official investigations were carried out throughout 1848 into cases where

<sup>133</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', pp. 114–19. See also Dovzhenok, p. 155; Beauvois, pp. 34–36.

<sup>134</sup> Shcherbatov, p. 213.

<sup>135</sup> Measures to restore order were the main topic of official reports. See, for example, SR, pp. 288, 292, 350–51.

<sup>136</sup> See SR and KD.

<sup>137</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 116.

landowners breached the regulations. A few estate officials and landowners were reprimanded or punished for violations of the law.<sup>138</sup> The punishments handed down to recalcitrant Polish nobles were not as harsh as those for peasants convicted of rebellion. This does not suggest a change in attitude over 1848, however, but simply reflected the existing Russian law that nobles, unlike peasants, were exempt from corporal punishment.<sup>139</sup> In a decree of 15 October 1848,<sup>140</sup> however, Nicholas I did take actions in the landowners' favour. He ordered all investigations into abuses of seigniorial authority that had taken place before the implementation of the inventory reform to be stopped, and that all estates which had been taken into trusteeship (*opeka*) for this reason be returned to their owners at the discretion of district marshals of the nobility. On the other hand, investigations by the authorities in Kiev into breaches by landowners of the inventory regulations continued. By the end of 1848, however, only twelve estates in the three provinces were in trusteeship because of abuses by their owners, suggesting that the authorities were either being lenient or slow to act.<sup>141</sup> In a further concession, Nicholas I ordered that rights be restored to landowners who had been banned from local noble elections because of involvement in the 1830–31 revolt.

Nevertheless, Bibikov does not seem to have altered his overall views on the reform. On 12 October 1848 he sent Nicholas I a lengthy report surveying his actions as governor-general since his appointment to Kiev a decade earlier. In the section on the inventory reform, he staunchly defended the measure and its original aims. He acknowledged that there had been disorders during the first year of the inventories. But, he alleged that, after the Polish landowners had heard news of the revolutions abroad, they had cynically provoked disturbances among the peasantry in order to discredit the reform in hope of persuading the authorities to take their side against the peasants and withdraw the inventories. In contrast to his picture of the treasonous Poles, Bibikov portrayed the peasants as naive and gullible, rather than wilfully disobedient. He advocated that, in the long run, the peasants should be removed from Polish influence altogether to ensure their loyalty to the 'Orthodox Russian tsar'.<sup>142</sup>

Bibikov and other senior Russian officials were well aware, from the detailed reports they received, of many of the particular problems with

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, KD, pp. 630, 647 n. 431; GARF, f. 109, 4 eksp., d. 110, ll. 69–ob.; 1849, d. 3, l. 124.

<sup>139</sup> S. P. Frank, 'Emancipation and the Birch: The Perpetuation of Corporal Punishment in Rural Russia 1861–1907', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 45, 1997, pp. 401–16.

<sup>140</sup> PSZ, 2, vol. 23, pt. 2, pp. 646–47 (no. 22,652, 15 October 1848). I am grateful to Prof. David Saunders for this reference.

<sup>141</sup> RGLA, f. 1281, op. 4, 1849, d. 84a, l. 47; d. 130a, ll. 19, 63; op. 5, 1849, d. 73a, ll. 66–67.

<sup>142</sup> RGLA, f. 1263, op. 1, d. 1955, ll. 455–60. See also 'Obozrenie', pp. 34–35.



the inventory regulations that had led to some of the disturbances, especially those where the regulations had seemed inappropriate or unclear.<sup>143</sup> In order to address some of the problems thus revealed, revised inventory regulations were drawn up and ratified by the tsar on 29 December 1848.<sup>144</sup> The revised regulations were longer than those issued in May 1847, containing sixty-five rather than forty-four articles. Some of the changes clarified issues that had led to problems.

The revised regulations went into much more detail on peasants' land allotments (articles 1, 3–10). Standard (*normal'nyi*) sizes for land allotments for each category of household, sufficient for their needs, were to be set for each estate. Those of *polutiaglie* households' were to be no less than half the size of *tiaglie* households' allotments. Landowners were now permitted to exchange parts of households' land allotments, but only for the same quantity and quality of land in the same area. New categories of households, with larger land allotments and higher labour obligations than *tiaglie*, were now permitted. All changes in peasant' allotments had to be by mutual agreement, and have the consent of the local authorities. Alterations were also made to peasants' obligations. The problems in enforcing some of the work norms were addressed. The regulation on threshing norms was amended to include winnowing, and taking the straw away (article 8, viii and ix). The ambiguity over when landowners could demand construction labour days was resolved by stating clearly that 'times of field work', during which they were not permitted, meant only harvest time. Moreover, landowners could demand only one construction day a week (article 24). Bibikov's alternative harvesting norms, measured not in land area but in numbers of sheaves, were added to the regulations. Land area was cut from 1/9th to 1/10th of a *desiatina*. The number of sheaves was to be used on estates which had not been surveyed with sufficient accuracy. The predicament of how peasants could be required to reap a set number of sheaves if the harvest was poor was dealt with by stating that, in such cases, they were to reap as much as they could manage (article 8, vi). The revised regulations also changed the peasants' obligation to work additional days in the summer by cutting the number landowners could demand in any one week from two to one. Moreover, cotters' additional summer days were to be counted against their other labour obligations. But the total number of summer days peasants had to work, twelve, and the rates of pay, were left unchanged (articles 18–20).

<sup>143</sup> For general reports on problems that reached St Petersburg, see *GARF*, f. 109, 4 eksp., 1848, d. 110, ll. 73–81 ob.; *RGIA*, f. 18, 1848, op. 2, d. 1328, ll. 7–11.

<sup>144</sup> 'Inventarnye polozheniia zapadnykh gubernii', in *Pervoe izdanie materialov redaktsionnykh kommissii*, 4, pp. 191–211.

Landowners were instructed to prepare new estate inventories on the basis of the new regulations and submit them to Bibikov for approval. This took nearly four years. Unlike the original regulations and estate inventories, the revised regulations and new inventories were not read out to the peasants.<sup>145</sup> It can be surmised that this was in an attempt to prevent peasants misunderstanding them. District marshals of the nobility were made responsible for settling any 'misunderstandings' that did arise (article 11). A few further changes were made. From January 1849, stewards needed to prove their worthiness to manage estates, and were banned from administering corporal punishment.<sup>146</sup> In 1850, landowners were banned from increasing obligations where the inventory regulations specified higher dues than those demanded before 1848.<sup>147</sup>

Baraboi and others have argued that the revised regulations of December 1848 favoured the landowners, and were further evidence for a rapprochement between the Russian authorities and the Polish landowners.<sup>148</sup> Such an assessment is too one-sided, and does not pay sufficient attention to the changes that went some way to addressing problems peasants had experienced, and drawn attention to by their actions, in 1848. Along with other scholars, however, Baraboi also noted how landowners violated the new regulations. In particular, some took advantage of the provision permitting landowners to exchange parts of their peasants' allotments in order to seize land from them. But it can be argued that the problem lay, not in the revised regulations, but in the way they were enforced by lower-level officials, a problem that was not addressed in 1848.<sup>149</sup> To the extent that, from 1848, there was a slight 'zig zag' in policy, with a switch towards the interests of the of right-bank Ukraine landowners, it was part of a broader trend throughout the empire prompted by Nicholas I's reaction to the 1848 revolutions. The relatively minor revisions to the inventory regulations in December 1848, moreover, were nowhere near as clear cut as the virtual repeal in early 1849 of the empire-wide law of November 1847 that had permitted enserfed peasants to buy their land and freedom at auctions. This step signalled the end of significant measures to address the 'peasant question' until the accession of Alexander II in 1855.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Semevskii, p. 503.

<sup>146</sup> Semevskii, p. 507.

<sup>147</sup> O. P. Kryzhanivskyi, *Inventarna reforma 1847–1848 rr. u Volyns'kii hubernii*, unpublished candidate dissertation, Kiev State University, 1970 [Avtoreferat], p. 14.

<sup>148</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', pp. 117–18.

<sup>149</sup> 'Pravoberezhnaia Ukraina', p. 118. See also Semevskii, pp. 503–04.

<sup>150</sup> *Russian Peasants*, pp. 71–108, 205.

The main beneficiary of the inventory reform was Bibikov himself. In August 1852 he was promoted to serve as Minister of Internal Affairs. Shortly before he left Kiev for St Petersburg he made a speech to the noble assemblies of the three provinces of right-bank Ukraine. Referring to the reform, he diplomatically blamed breaches of the regulations not on nobles but their estate managers, stewards and leaseholders. He concluded: 'Popularity I did not seek, your love I do not have, but I hope [I have your] respect. Future generations will remember my service in this region.' Indeed, stories about Bibikov circulated for decades.<sup>151</sup> Bibikov tried to use his new post to speed up the introduction of compulsory estate inventories in the other western provinces. In a move typical of his impatience, on 22 December 1852 he ordered that the revised regulations approved for right-bank Ukraine on 29 December 1848 be extended to the Belorussian and Lithuanian provinces. This served only to galvanize opposition from the largely Polish nobility, especially since the regulations of December 1848 were not appropriate to these regions. When Bibikov was dismissed as Minister of Internal Affairs in 1855, he had still not succeeded in extending the inventory reform beyond right-bank Ukraine.<sup>152</sup>

## VII

The inventory reform of 1847–48 did not succeed in either of its aims to resolve both the peasant and the Polish problems in right-bank Ukraine. Rather, the experience of the reform, and the responses it provoked among the peasantry, nobility and officialdom, served to emphasize the difficulties posed by these problems for the imperial Russian state. Peasant unrest continued in the region after 1848. The most dramatic example was the 'Kiev cossackdom' of 1855, when thousands of seigniorial peasants tried, illegally, to join the state militia in the hope of becoming 'cossacks'. During the disorders that ensued, some peasants tried to find the revised inventory regulations and estate inventories that had been concealed from them after 1848.<sup>153</sup> The inventory reform did make a significant contribution to the abolition of serfdom throughout the Russian Empire. In 1857, under the renewed

<sup>151</sup> 'Rech' D. G. Bibikova k Dvorianstvu Iugo-Zapadnogo Kraia', *Kievskaiia Starina*, 2, June 1882, pp. 534–35; 'K kharakteristike'; RBS 3, pp. 23–25.

<sup>152</sup> See V. I. Neupokoev, *Krest'ianskii vopros v Litve vo vtoroi treti XIX veka*, Moscow, 1976; N. N. Ulashchik, 'Vvedenie obiazatel'nykh inventarei v Belorussii i Litve', *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii Vostochnoi Evropy, 1858 g.*, Tallinn, 1959, pp. 256–77.

<sup>153</sup> See SR, pp. 451–58; M. N. Leshchenko (ed.), *Selians'kyi rukh na Ukraini, 1850–1861 rr.: Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv*, Kiev, 1988.

threat of extending the inventories to Lithuania, the local Polish nobles made a proposal to abolish serfdom without land for the peasants, on the Baltic model. This gave Alexander II the opportunity to issue his famous rescript to Governor-General V. I. Nazimov of Lithuania, in which he laid down principles for a reform more favourable to the peasants. This set in motion the process that led to the eventual legislation of 1861.<sup>154</sup> In addition, the reformers drew on the experience of the inventory reform in the preparation of the more far-reaching reform. The statutes of 1861 laid down a lengthy process for ending serfdom. It included an intermediate stage of 'temporary obligation', during which relations between landowners and peasants were regulated according to charters (*ustavnye gramoty*). These charters were broadly similar to the estate inventories, but were prepared for each estate individually on the basis of general principles rather than a rigid, standard model.<sup>155</sup>

The inventory reform, and the associated measures enacted after the Polish revolt of 1830–31, did not end the threat posed by Polish nationalism to Russian rule of the western provinces. Poles rose again in revolt in the Kingdom of Poland in 1863. The rebels proposed further measures in the interests of the peasants. The insurrection spread to the western provinces, including right-bank Ukraine. But, as in 1831, most Ukrainian peasants did not support the Polish insurgents, and many assisted the Russian authorities against them.<sup>156</sup> This time the Russian authorities took more decisive action in favour of the peasants against their Polish owners. The terms of the abolition of serfdom of 1861 were revised for all the western provinces. The intermediate stage of 'temporary obligation' was brought to a premature end, and peasants moved straight to the redemption operation, which enabled them to buy their land outright through the intermediary of the government. Moreover, peasants were allowed to purchase more land from nobles, and at a lower price, than had originally been envisaged.<sup>157</sup> In the decades after the 1863 revolt, the Russian government continued to promote the interests of the local peasants at the expense of the Polish nobles. For many Russian officials, for example M. N. Muraviev, 'the basic issue in the Western Provinces was

<sup>154</sup> See D. Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855–1861*, Cambridge, MA, 1976, pp. 77–83.

<sup>155</sup> *Pervoe izdanie materialov redaktsionnykh kommissii*, 4; *Otmena*, pp. 97–169; B. G. Litvak, *Perevorot 1861 goda v Rossii*, Moscow, 1991, pp. 128–51 (hereafter *Perevorot*). For further discussion of this point, see D. Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, forthcoming.

<sup>156</sup> Kieniewicz, *Emancipation*, pp. 154–69.

<sup>157</sup> *Otmena*, pp. 284–89; *Perevorot*, pp. 175–76.

the liberation of the local “Russian” population from Polish oppression’.<sup>158</sup> This policy created another dilemma for the Russian authorities since, contrary to their perceptions, the local peasants were not Russian. Official fears that the tiny Ukrainian intelligentsia would promote ‘a specifically Ukrainian (rather than Russian) consciousness among Ukrainian peasants’ were probably the main reason why the authorities suppressed the use of the Ukrainian language in print in the Russian Empire until 1905.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, the peasants of right-bank Ukraine had shown repeatedly that they could not be disregarded or taken for granted. The ‘disturbances’ of 1848 are a very good example of this. Despite official concerns about the identities and actions of Ukrainian peasants, however, Polish nobles were seen as the greater threat. As a result, from 1863, the traditional Russian policy of co-opting social élites in the non-Russian borderlands of its empire was abandoned throughout the lands that had been annexed from Poland-Lithuania in the 1790s.<sup>160</sup> The reversal of policy began after the Polish revolt of 1830–31, leading to the inventory reform of 1847–48. This measure, however, was a less dramatic and at best only partly successful attempt to ensure the loyalty of the peasantry of right-bank Ukraine to the Russian Empire.

<sup>158</sup> T. R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914*, DeKalb, IL, 1996, pp. 71–72 (hereafter Weeks). See also *ibid.*, pp. 47–50, 57–58, 98.

<sup>159</sup> D. Saunders, ‘Russia’s Ukrainian Policy (1847–1905): A Demographic Approach’, *European History Quarterly*, 25, 1995, pp. 200–01.

<sup>160</sup> See Hosking, pp. 376–80; Weeks, *passim*.