

The religion of the revolution, of the great social reformation, is the only religion which I bequeath to you. It has no other paradise or rewards but your sense of right, your own conscience. . . . When the time comes to back home, to our own people, to preach it. Once there was a time when they appreciated my speech and, perhaps, they will remember me.

I give you my blessing on this path in the name of human reason, personal freedom and fraternal love.

Your father

Twickenham, January 1, 1855

Herzen's letter to Emperor Alexander II, March 10, 1855

It's possible, my boy, that the Creator
Has designated you for the crown.
Love your people, respect the law,
Study hard to become tsar.
For your own sake reverse the voice of true freedom
And discard the negative spirit
Of servility and injustice . . .

An Ode to Grand Prince Alexander Nikolaevich
by K. Ryleev, August 30, 1823

Sovereign!

Your reign commences under an unusually lucky constellation. You have no bloody stains, nor do you suffer the pangs of remorse.

You have not received news of the death of your father from assassins. You were not asked to walk across a square covered with Russian blood to be seated on the throne. You did not have to use force to inform the nation of your assumption of power.

There is not one precedent in your dynasty of such a clean start. But that is not all.

The people expect from you gentleness and human kindness. Indeed, you are a very fortunate person!

Fate and coincidence have joined to assist you. Among all of your relatives you are the only one who was born in Moscow, and you were born at the time when the city began to emerge to new life after the devastating fire [of 1812]. Your birth was announced from the Kremlin Wall by shots fired by the Borodino and Tarutino cannons that had just returned from abroad and were covered with Parisian dust. I was five years old then, but I remember it well.

Ryleev greeted you with advice. Can you not accept the advice of the the heroic defenders of freedom and the promoters of their convictions? Why, indeed, did your center-stage position compel him to write such a meek and peaceful verse? What prophetic voice told him that your then-childish head would, in due time, inherit the crown?

You were educated by a poet [V. A. Zhukovskii] who was greatly admired by Russia. When you came of age the fate of our martyrs improved slightly. As is evident, you are a lucky person.

Then came your journey through Russia. I saw you; indeed, I remember it well. Because of your presence my own geographic fate improved. They transferred me from Viatka to Vladimir. I have not forgotten it.

Exiled in a far-away Trans-Volga town, I observed the genuine affection with which the common people welcome you and I thought "How will he respond to this affection?"

Well, the time for repayment has arrived, and for you it is very simple! Let your heart be free. You seem to love Russia truly. And you really can do so much, very much, for the Russian people.

I, too, love the Russian people. I left them on account of love. I could not keep my hands folded, remain silent and witness those horrors perpetrated on them by nobles and officials.

My departure has not altered my feelings in the midst of foreign surroundings and horrors brought on by [the Crimean] war. I did not change my banner. Recently, [February 27, 1855] the English people publicly greeted the Russian people.

Obviously, my banner is not yours. I am an incorrigible socialist. You are an autocratic emperor. Nevertheless, between your emblem and mine there is one common bond, namely, love for the same people.

I am ready to sacrifice a great deal on their behalf. Neither prolonged years of persecution, nor prison, nor exile, nor painful wandering from one country to another has altered my resolve. I have done all of this on account of my love of the people.

I am prepared to wait, to disappear, or to speak about other matters, if only I could have a real assurance that you will do something for Russia.

Sovereign. Please grant freedom of expression to Russia. Our senses experience constraints. Our thoughts are poisoning our hearts because of the absence of freedom. We suffer on account of the shackles of censorship. Grant us free speech . . . We have plenty to say to the world and to ourselves.

Give land to peasants. It belongs to them. Remove from Russia the disgraceful blot of serfdom. Heal the wounds on the backs of our brothers. They are awesome signs of human persecution.

On his deathbed your father—please do not be afraid, I know that I am

talking to his son—acknowledged that he was unable to do everything that he wanted for all of his subjects . . . In the last moments of his life serfdom struck his conscience.

During thirty years of his reign he was unable to free peasants. Please hurry! Free the peasant from future villainous acts, save him from shedding the blood he will be forced to spill. . . .

I am ashamed that we, as people, are content with trivia. We want material things. You, as everyone else, may have some serious reservations about this. Nevertheless, we are content with this.

It is possible that in the post you presently occupy, and being surrounded by a horde of flatterers, you will be shocked by my audacity. You may even laugh at this little grain of sand that represents seventy million grains of souls that represent our granite foundation.

Please do not ridicule it. I speak only of things that cannot be discussed in Russia. For that reason I have established the first Russian printing press in a free country [England]. It is to serve as an electrometer to indicate the activity and direction of the suppressed force. . . .

[Remember that] a few drops of water that cannot find any outlet are sufficient to break granite.

Sovereign! If those thoughts should reach you, please read them without any malice. Read them alone, and then reflect on them. It is seldom that you have an opportunity to hear the real voice of free Russia.

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Aksakov's Defense of the Freedom of Expression

Constantine S. Aksakov (1817–1860) was one of the most influential spokesmen of the Slavophile movement. He was a literary critic, historian, political philosopher, and poet. As were many of his like-minded compatriots, Aksakov was inspired by the German romantic movement in general and by Hegel's philosophy in particular. Under their influence he extolled the imaginary virtues of the truly Russian national ways,

viewed the Russian Orthodox Church as a unique source of the country's strength, exaggerated the virtues of the *mir* (peasant commune), admired peasants, and demanded the abolition of serfdom. Aksakov also criticized the "decadent West," deplored the modernizing efforts of Peter I, passionately hated bureaucracy, and, as evident in a poem he published in 1853, he ardently defended freedom of expression and free press.

K. S. Aksakov's Poem "Free Word," 1853

You are the greatest of God's miracles!
You are the beacon and the flame of human thought!
For us you are a heavenly ray on earth,
As well as a banner for humanity.
You drive away the lie of ignorance,
And with your commitment to an everlasting life,
You guide us to light and justice.
You, Free Word!

It is said that spiritual forces grant authority,
And that humans have no power.
But if this view is right it is then contrary to truth,
And it represents justification to lies and vice.
But, regardless of whether free word
Struggles with the lie or
Lives in the new environment,
It always is a threat to injustice!
You, Free Word!

Do not ever bestow on anyone rewards
Based on imposing slavery on peoples;
Because wherever there is slavery,
There also is cause for rebellion and poverty.
Freedom is the surest guarantee against rebellion.
A slave in rebellion is more vicious than an animal,
Because he readily exchanges a knife for his chains . . .
The weapon of a free people is
You, Free Word!

Oh, Free Word, the sacred gift of God!
Whoever desecrates you
Charts a different path for mankind.
He reveals a criminal inclination to slavery!
You need a unique sword
To combat intrigues and hostile talk.
You, Free Word!

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The Crimean War, 1853-1856

The Crimean War was a watershed, not only in Russian but in European history. Russia entered the war militarily unprepared. Although her armed forces fought bravely (both on land and at sea), incompetent leadership, poor communications, domestic discontent and epidemics, the antiquated political and social system, and weapons that were obsolete and in short supply caused them to suffer heavy casualties. It should be noted that incompetent allied military leadership (Turkish, French, English, and Italian) resulted in heavy allied casualties also. In the end, however, the allies prevailed, and forced the Russians to sign the Treaty of Paris on March 30, 1856.

By exposing her weakness, the Crimean War forced Russia to surrender most of the rights she had won in the Black Sea region since the reign of Peter I. It also compelled her authorities to plunge into a policy of "Great Reforms" that fundamentally altered the course of Russian history. The Crimean War also introduced profound changes elsewhere in Europe. It inflated the importance of France (ruled by Napoleon III), it deflated the stature of the Ottoman Empire, and, in a peculiar way, it contributed to the unifications of Italy and Germany. In short, the Crimean War was a major turning point in European history.

Statistical Data on the Strength of Russia's Armed Forces on the Eve of the Crimean War, 1853

<i>Regular Forces</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Rank & File</i>
Infantry	15,382	581,845
Cavalry	4,983	86,282
Light Field Artillery	1,784	40,896
Cavalry Artillery	339	8,057
Garrison Artillery	793	40,681
Engineering Units	364	15,944

Source: A. M. Zaionchkovskii, *Vostochnaia voina 1853-1856 . . . Prilozheniia* (St. Petersburg 1908), vol. I, pp. 476-477. Translation mine.

Other Supporting Units	988	35,302
Internal Security	2,430	144,934
Total	27,009* [Sic]	953,948** [Sic]
<i>Reserves</i>	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Rank & File</i>
Infantry		121,125
Cavalry	736	24,210
Artillery & Engineers		13,540
Total	736	158,875
Inactive and not part of the Military	—	10,760
Total of Regular Forces	27,745	1,123,583
Total of Irregular Formations	3,647	242,203
Grand Total	31,392	1,365,786 [Sic]

An Inventory of Weapons Available to Russian Forces on January 1, 1853

<i>Types of Weapons</i>	<i>Should Have Had</i>	<i>Actual Number</i>	<i>Deficiency</i>
<i>For Ground Forces</i>			
a) Weapons for Infantry	1,014,959	532,835	482,124
b) Weapons for Cavalry and Cossacks	71,038	20,849	50,189
c) Carbines	69,199	21,167	48,032
d) Rifles	37,318	6,198	31,120
e) Pistols	43,248	7,704	35,544
<i>For Garrisons</i>			
a) For Infantry	49,000	9,907	39,093
b) For Cavalry	500	101	399

*This figure includes 3,267 officers who served in regular formations but were assigned to reserve and supporting units.

**This figure includes 10 cossack formations with 2,044 officers and 78,144 rank-and-file cossacks. All irregular forces on active duty numbered 89,168 rank-and-file men.

An Order by Vice-Admiral V. A. Kornilov Calling for the Sinking of Russian Naval Vessels in Order to Defend Sevastopol, September 11, 1854

Comrades! After a bloody battle with the superior enemy, our armed forces have retreated to Sevastopol in order to defend it with our last breath.

You have sampled the enemy's steamers and have seen his vessels that do not use sails. The enemy has doubled his numbers in order to attack us from the sea. We should abandon the frivolous idea that we can destroy the enemy at sea. We are needed to defend the city where our homes are and where most of our families live.

The commander-in-chief has resolved to sink five old ships in the navigation channel. Temporarily they will block the enemy's entry to raid and at the same time [this action] will free our units to reinforce our defense units.

It is an infamous act to destroy one's own work. We have tried every means to maintain our ships, doomed to be sacrificed soon in unenviable circumstances. Yet we must resign ourselves to the inevitable.

[In 1812] Moscow was burning, but Russia did not perish as a result. On the contrary, it emerged stronger. God is merciful! Indeed, He is preparing a new fate for His loyal Russian subjects.

Let us, therefore, pray to God and let us resolve that we will not allow a powerful enemy to conquer us. For over a year he has been gaining new allies and now he has encircled the Russian Empire. Envy is insidious. The Emperor is dispatching a new army to help us and if we do not waver, then the impudence will be punished and the enemy will be crushed.

Peace Treaty of Paris, March 30, 1856

Article 1

From the day of the exchange of the Ratifications of the present Treaty there shall be Peace and Friendship between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, His Majesty the Emperor of the French, His Majesty the King of Sardinia, His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, on the one part, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, on the other part, as well as between their heirs and successors, their respective dominions and subjects, in perpetuity.

Source: N. V. Novikov and P. G. Safinov, eds. *Vitse-Admiral Kornilov. Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: 1947), p. 258. Translation mine.

Source: Sir Edward Hertslet, ed. *The Map of Europe by Treaty* . . . (London: 1875), vol. II, pp. 1250-1264, 1270-1271, 1266-1269.

Article 2

Peace being happily reestablished between their said Majesties, the Territories conquered or occupied by their armies during the War shall be reciprocally evacuated.

Special arrangements shall regulate the mode of the Evacuation, which shall be as prompt as possible.

Article 3

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias engages to restore to His Majesty the Sultan the Town and Citadel of Kars, as well as the other parts of the Ottoman Territory of which the Russian troops are in possession.

Article 4

Their Majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, the King of Sardinia, and the Sultan, engage to restore to His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, the Towns and Ports of Sebastopol (Sevastopol), Balaklava, Kamiesch (Kamyshevaia Bukhta), Eupatoria (Evpatoriia), Kertch (Kerch), Jenikale, Kinburn (Kinburn), as well as all other Territories occupied by the Allied Troops.

Article 5

Their Majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, the Emperor of All the Russias, the King of Sardinia, and the Sultan, grant a full and entire Amnesty to those of their subjects who may have been compromised by any participation whatsoever in the events of the War in favour of the cause of the enemy.

It is expressly understood that such Amnesty shall extend to the subjects of each of the Belligerent Parties who may have continued, during the War, to be employed in the service of one of the other Belligerents.

Article 6

Prisoners of War shall be immediately given up on either side.

Article 7

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, His Majesty the Emperor of the French, His Majesty the King of Prussia, His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, and His Majesty the King of Sardinia, declare the Sublime Porte admitted to participate in the advantages of the Public Law and System (*Concert*) of Europe. Their Majesties engage, each on his part, to respect the Independence and the Territorial Integrity of the Ottoman Empire; Guarantee in common

the strict observance of that engagement; and will, in consequence, consider any act tending to its violation as a question of general interest. . . .

Article 11

The Black Sea is Neutralized; its Waters and its Ports, thrown open to the Mercantile Marine of every Nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the Flag of War, either of the Powers possessing its Coasts, or of any other Power, with the exceptions mentioned in Articles 14 and 19 of the present Treaty.

Article 12

Free from any impediment, the Commerce in the Ports and Waters of the Black Sea shall be subject only to Regulations of Health, Customs, and Police framed in a spirit favourable to the development of Commercial transactions.

In order to afford to the Commercial and Maritime interests of every Nation the security which is desired, Russia and the Sublime Porte will admit Consuls into their Ports situated upon the Coast of the Black Sea, in conformity with the principles of International Law.

Article 13

The Black Sea being Neutralized according to the terms of Article 11, the maintenance or establishment upon its Coast of Military-Maritime Armaments becomes alike unnecessary and purposeless; in consequence, His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias, and His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, engage not to establish or to maintain upon that Coast any Military-Maritime Arsenal. . . .

Article 15

The Act of the Congress of Vienna, having established the principles intended to regulate the Navigation of Rivers which separate or traverse different States, the Contracting Powers stipulate among themselves that those principles shall in future be equally applied to the Danube and its Mouths. They declare that its arrangement henceforth forms a part of the Public Law of Europe, and take it under their Guarantee.

The Navigation of the Danube cannot be subjected to any impediment or charge not expressly provided for by the Stipulations contained in the following Articles: in consequence, there shall not be levied any Toll founded solely upon the fact of the Navigation of the River, nor any Duty upon the Goods which may be on board of Vessels. The Regulations of Police and of Quarantine to be established for the safety of the States separated or traversed by that River, shall be so framed as to facilitate, as much as possible, the passage of Vessels. With the exception of such Regulations, no obstacle whatever shall be opposed to Free Navigation. . . .

Article 19

In order to insure the execution of the Regulations which shall have been established by common agreement, in conformity with the principles above declared, each of the Contracting Powers shall have the right to station, at all times, Two Light Vessels at the Mouths of the Danube.

Article 20

In exchange for the Towns, Ports, and Territories enumerated in Article 4 of the present Treaty, and in order more fully to secure the Freedom of the Navigation of the Danube, His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias consents to the rectification of his Frontier in Bessarabia. . . .

Article 21

The territory ceded by Russia shall be Annexed to the Principality of Moldavia, under the Suzerainty of the Sublime Porte.

The Inhabitants of that Territory shall enjoy the Rights and Privileges secured to the Principalities; and during the space of three years, they shall be permitted to transfer their domicile elsewhere, disposing freely of their Property.

Article 22

The Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia shall continue to enjoy under the Suzerainty of the Porte, and under the Guarantee of the Contracting Powers, the Privileges and Immunities of which they are in possession. No exclusive Protection shall be exercised over them by any of the guaranteeing Powers.

There shall be no separate right of interference in their Internal Affairs.

Article 23

The Sublime Porte engages to preserve to the said Principalities an Independent and National Administration, as well as full liberty of Worship, of Legislation, of Commerce, and of Navigation. . . .

Article 26

It is agreed that there shall be in the Principalities a National Armed Force, organized with the view to maintain the security of the Interior, and to ensure that of the Frontiers. No impediment shall be opposed to the extraordinary measures of defence which, by agreement with the Sublime Porte, they may be called upon to take in order to repel any external aggression.

Article 27

If the Internal Tranquillity of the Principalities should be menaced or compromised, the Sublime Porte shall come to an understanding with the other

Contracting Powers in regard to the measures to be taken for maintaining or reestablishing legal order.

No armed Intervention can take place without previous agreement between those Powers.

Article 28

The Principality of Serbia shall continue to hold of the Sublime Porte, in conformity with the Imperial Hats which fix and determine its Rights and Immunities, placed henceforward under the Collective Guarantee of the Contracting Powers.

In consequence, the said Principality shall preserve its Independent and National Administration, as well as full Liberty of Worship, of Legislation, of Commerce, and of Navigation.

Article 29

The right of garrison of the Sublime Porte, as stipulated by anterior regulations, is maintained. No Armed Intervention can take place in Serbia without previous agreement between the High Contracting Powers.

Article 30

His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias and His Majesty the Sultan maintain in its Integrity the State of their possessions in Asia, such as it legally existed before the rupture.

In order to prevent all local dispute the Line of Frontier shall be verified, and, if necessary, rectified, without any prejudice as regards Territory being sustained by either Party. . . .

For this purpose a Mixed Commission, composed of two Russian Commissioners, two Ottoman Commissioners, one English Commissioner, and one French Commissioner, shall be sent to the spot immediately after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the Court of Russia and the Sublime Porte. Its labours shall be completed within the period of 8 months after the exchange of the Ratifications of the present Treaty.

Article 31

The Territories occupied during the War by the troops of their Majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, and the King of Sardinia, according to the terms of the Conventions signed at Constantinople on the 12th of March, 1854, between Great Britain, France, and the Sublime Porte; on the 14th of June of the same year, between Austria and the Sublime Porte; and on the 15th of March, 1855, between Sardinia and the Sublime Porte; shall be

evacuated as soon as possible after the exchange of the Ratifications of the present Treaty. The periods and the means of execution shall form the object of an arrangement between the Sublime Porte and the Powers whose troops have occupied its Territory.

Article 32

Until the Treaties or Conventions which existed before the War between the Belligerent Powers have been either renewed or replaced by new Acts, Commerce of importation or of exportation shall take place reciprocally on the footing of the regulations in force before the War; and in all other matters their subjects shall be respectively treated upon the footing of the Most Favoured Nation.

Article 33

The Convention concluded this day between their Majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, on the one part, and His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias on the other part, respecting the Aland Islands, is and remains annexed to the present Treaty, and shall have the same force and validity as if it formed a part thereof. . . .

Convention Between Russia and Turkey, Limiting Their Naval Forces in the Black Sea, Paris, March 30, 1856

Article 1

The High Contracting Parties mutually engage not to have in the Black Sea any other Vessels of War than those of which the number, the force, and the dimensions are hereinafter stipulated.

Article 2

The High Contracting Parties reserve to themselves each to maintain in that Sea six steam-vessels of fifty metres in length at the line of flotation, of a tonnage of 800 tons at the maximum, and four light steam or sailing vessels of a tonnage which shall not exceed 200 tons each.

Convention Respecting the Straits of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus, March 30, 1856

Article 1

His Majesty the Sultan, on the one part, declares that he is firmly resolved to maintain for the future the principle invariably established as the ancient

according to the laws, and should an indemnity payment be required it must not be raised to several times the value of the missing beast (as has been the practice heretofore).

Should an individual flee across the frontier, at the first warning measures shall be taken immediately to find the fugitive. The arrested fugitive shall then be returned to the frontier authority without any delay and with all objects he possesses; an examination of the motives of flight and judgment on the matter itself shall be carried out by the local authority of the country to which the fugitive belongs. During the time of his stay abroad, from his arrest until his extradition, the fugitive shall be properly fed, and, in case of need, clothed; guards who accompany him must treat him humanely and must not indulge in any arbitrary acts toward him. The same procedure is applicable toward a fugitive about whom no advance warning was given.

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Russian Serfs and Their Emancipation in 1861

Like autocracy, Russian serfdom evolved gradually. It was introduced for state interests and, from inception, Russian serfdom generated an extremely complex and, for the most part, unwritten assortment of rights, obligations, and exceptions that varied from place to place. Students of Russian history are agreed that serfdom was one of the principal barriers to Russia's economic, social, cultural, and political progress. It also was a most inhuman institution.

Based on their obligations, Russian serfs fell into three categories: *obrok* (quitrent), *barshchina* (corvée), and household. Regardless of category, all serfs were human chattel. While their treatment varied from owner to owner, all serfs were required to pay their masters in cash, kind, or labor. They could not complain against their master, and could neither move nor marry without their master's permission. In addition, Russian serfs

paid taxes to the government, served in the military, and performed countless other obligations.

By exposing her backwardness and weakness, Russia's defeat in the Crimean War convinced Emperor Alexander II that the abolishment of serfdom and introduction of the long-overdue reforms could no longer be postponed. The Reform Era, as the period after 1861 is commonly known, began with the Emancipation Manifesto of March 3, 1861. That act shattered the entire structure of Russian society and forced the government to introduce other reforms that affected all aspects of Russian life.

Census Data on the Number of Russian Nobles and Serfs, 1835 and 1858

Figures Based on the Census of 1835

Category of Nobles	Number of Nobles	Number of Serfs	Number of Serfs per One Noble
Nobles without estates	17,763	62,183	3
Nobles with up to 20 serfs	58,457	450,037	8
Nobles with 21 to 100 serfs	30,417	1,500,357	49
Nobles with 101 to 500 serfs	16,740	3,634,194	217
Nobles with 501 to 1000 serfs	2,273	1,562,831	688
Nobles with over 1000 serfs	1,453	3,556,959	2,448
Total	127,103	10,766,561	

Figures Based on the Census of 1858

Nobles without estates	3,633	12,045	3
Nobles with up to 20 serfs	41,016	327,534	8
Nobles with 21 to 100 serfs	35,498	1,666,073	47
Nobles with 101 to 500 serfs	19,930	3,925,102	197
Nobles with 501 to 1,000 serfs	2,421	1,569,888	648
Nobles with over 1,000 serfs	1,382	3,050,540	2,207
Total	103,880	10,551,182	

**The Distribution of Obrok and Barshchina Serfs
in Selected Gubernias in 1858**

<i>Gubernia</i>	<i>Percent of Obrok Serfs</i>	<i>Percent of Barshchina Serfs</i>
Kostroma	87.5	12.5
Iaroslāv	87.4	12.6
Vologda	84.0	16.0
Olonets	72.0	28.0
Vladimir	70.0	30.0
Moscow	68.0	32.0
Nizhnii Novgorod	68.0	32.0
Kaluga	55.0	45.0
Novgorod	45.6	54.4
Voronezh	45.0	55.0
Tver	41.0	59.0
Riazan	38.0	62.0
Orel	28.0	72.0
Smolensk	27.0	73.0
Tula	25.0	75.0
Penza	25.0	75.0
Kursk	24.5	75.5
Pskov	23.0	77.0
Tambov	22.0	78.0
Total Average	47.6	52.4

Source: I. Ignatovich, *Pomesbchichi krestiane nakanune osvobozhdeniia*. 2nd ed. (Moscow: 1910) p. 49. Translation mine.

***The Emancipation Manifesto,
March 3, 1861***

By the Grace of God We, Alexander II, Emperor and Autocrat of All Russia, King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, and so forth, make known to all Our faithful subjects:

Called by Divine Providence and by the sacred right of inheritance to the throne of Our Russian ancestors, We vowed in Our heart to respond to the mission which is entrusted to Us and to surround with Our affection and Our Imperial solicitude all Our faithful subjects of every rank and condition, from the soldier who nobly defends the country to the humble artisan who works in industry; from the career official of the state to the plowman who tills the soil.

Examining the condition of classes and professions comprising the state, We became convinced that the present state legislation favors the upper and middle classes, defines their obligations, rights, and privileges, but does not equally favor the serfs, so designated because in part from old laws and in part from custom they have been hereditarily subjected to the authority of landowners, who in turn were obligated to provide for their well-being. Rights of nobles have been hitherto very broad and legally ill defined, because they stem from tradition, custom, and the good will of the noblemen. In most cases this has led to the establishment of good patriarchal relations based on the sincere, just concern and benevolence on the part of the nobles, and on affectionate submission on the part of the peasants. Because of the decline of the simplicity of morals, because of an increase in the diversity of relations, because of the weakening of the direct paternal attitude of nobles toward the peasants, and because noble rights fell sometimes into the hands of people exclusively concerned with their personal interests, good relations weakened. The way was opened for an arbitrariness burdensome for the peasants and detrimental to their welfare, causing them to be indifferent to the improvement of their own existence.

These facts had already attracted the attention of Our predecessors of glorious memory, and they had adopted measures aimed at improving the conditions of the peasants; but these measures were ineffective, partly because they depended on the free, generous action of nobles, and partly because they affected only some localities, by virtue of special circumstances or as an experiment. Thus Alexander I issued a decree on free agriculturists, and the late

from *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Russkoi Imperii . . .* (Complete Collection of the Laws of the Russian Empire), 2d Series, vol. 36, no. 36,490, pp. 130-134. Translation mine. Words in brackets are mine.

Emperor Nicholas, Our beloved father, promulgated one dealing with the serfs. In the Western *gubernias*, inventory regulations determine the peasant land allotments and their obligations. But decrees on free agriculturists and serfs have been carried out on a limited scale only.

We thus became convinced that the problem of improving the condition of serfs was a sacred inheritance bequeathed to Us by Our predecessors, a mission which, in the course of events, Divine Providence has called upon Us to fulfill.

We have begun this task by expressing Our confidence toward the Russian nobility, which has proven on so many occasions its devotion to the Throne and its readiness to make sacrifices for the welfare of the country.

We have left to the nobles themselves, in accordance with their own wishes, the task of preparing proposals for the new organization of peasant life—proposals that would limit their rights over the peasants, and the realization of which would inflict on them [the nobles] some material losses. Our confidence was justified. Through members of the *gubernia* committees, who had the trust of the nobles' associations, the nobility voluntarily renounced its right to own serfs. These committees, after collecting the necessary data, have formulated proposals on a new arrangement for serfs and their relationship with the nobles.

These proposals were diverse, because of the nature of the problem. They have been compared, collated, systematized, rectified, and finalized in the main committee instituted for that purpose; and these new arrangements dealing with the peasants and domestics of the nobility have been examined in the Governing Council.

Having invoked Divine assistance, We have resolved to execute this task.

On the basis of the above mentioned new arrangements, the serfs will receive in time the full rights of free rural inhabitants.

The nobles, while retaining their property rights on all the lands belonging to them, grant the peasants perpetual use of their domicile in return for a specified obligation; and, to assure their livelihood as well as to guarantee fulfillment of their obligations toward the government, [the nobles] grant them a portion of arable land fixed by the said arrangements, as well as other property.

While enjoying these land allotments, the peasants are obliged, in return, to fulfill obligations to the noblemen fixed by the same arrangements. In this state, which is temporary, the peasants are temporarily bound.

At the same time, they are granted the right to purchase their domicile, and, with the consent of the nobles, they may acquire in full ownership the arable lands and other properties which are allotted them for permanent use. Following such acquisition of full ownership of land, the peasants will be freed

from their obligations to the nobles for the land thus purchased and will become free peasant landowners.

A special decree dealing with domestics will establish a temporary status for them, adapted to their occupations and their needs. At the end of two years from the day of the promulgation of this decree, they shall receive full freedom and some temporary immunities.

In accordance with the fundamental principles of these arrangements, the future organization of peasants and domestics will be determined, the order of general peasant administration will be established, and the rights given to the peasants and to the domestics will be spelled out in detail, as will the obligations imposed on them toward the government and the nobles.

Although these arrangements, general as well as local, and the special supplementary rules affecting some particular localities, estates of petty nobles, and peasants working in factories and enterprises of the nobles, have been as far as possible adapted to economic necessities and local customs; nevertheless, to preserve the existing order where it presents reciprocal advantages, we leave it to the nobles to reach a friendly understanding with the peasants and to reach agreements on the extent of the land allotment and the obligations stemming from it, observing, at the same time, the established rules to guarantee the inviolability of such agreements.

This new arrangement, because of its complexity, cannot be put into effect immediately, a time of not less than two years is necessary. During this period, to avoid all misunderstanding and to protect public and private interests, the order actually existing on the estates of nobles should be maintained until the new order shall become effective.

Towards that end, We have deemed it advisable:

1. To establish in each *gubernia* a special Office of Peasant Affairs, which will be entrusted with the affairs of the peasant communes established on the estates of the nobility.
2. To appoint in every district justices of the peace to solve all misunderstandings and disputes which may arise from the new arrangement, and to organize from these justices district assemblies.
3. To organize Peace Offices on the estates of the nobles, leaving the village communes as they are, and to open *volost* offices in the large villages and unite small village communes under one *volost* office.
4. To formulate, verify, and confirm in each village commune or estate a charter which would enumerate, on the basis of local conditions, the amount of land allotted to the peasants for permanent use, and the scope of their obligations to the nobleman for the land as well as for other advantages which are granted.
5. To put these charters into practice as they are gradually approved on

each estate, and to put them into effect everywhere within two years from the date of publication of this manifesto.

6. Until that time, peasants and domestics must be obedient towards their nobles, and scrupulously fulfill their former obligations.

7. The nobles will continue to keep order on their estates, with the right of jurisdiction and of police, until the organization of *volost* and of *volost* courts.

Aware of the unavoidable difficulties of this reform, We place Our confidence above all in the graciousness of Divine Providence, which watches over Russia.

We also rely upon the zealous devotion of Our nobility, to whom We express Our gratitude and that of the entire country as well, for the unselfish support it has given to the realization of Our designs. Russia will not forget that the nobility, motivated by its respect for the dignity of man and its Christian love of its neighbor, has voluntarily renounced serfdom, and has laid the foundation of a new economic future for the peasants. We also expect that it will continue to express further concern for the realization of the new arrangement in a spirit of peace and benevolence, and that each nobleman will realize, on his estate, the great civic act of the entire group by organizing the lives of his peasants and his domestics on mutually advantageous terms, thereby setting for the rural population a good example of a punctual and conscientious execution of state regulations.

The examples of the generous concern of the nobles for the welfare of peasants, and the gratitude of the latter for that concern, give Us the hope that a mutual understanding will solve most of the difficulties, which in some cases will be inevitable during the application of general rules to the diverse conditions on some estates, and that thereby the transition from the old order to the new will be facilitated, and that in the future mutual confidence will be strengthened, and a good understanding and a unanimous tendency towards the general good will evolve.

To facilitate the realization of these agreements between the nobles and the peasants, by which the latter may acquire in full ownership their domicile and their land, the government will lend assistance, under special regulations, by means of loans or transfer of debts encumbering an estate.

We rely upon the common sense of Our people. When the government advanced the idea of abolishing serfdom, there developed a partial misunderstanding among the unprepared peasants. Some were concerned about freedom and disconcerned about obligations. But, generally, the common sense of the country has not wavered, because it has realized that every individual who enjoys freely the benefits of society owes it in return certain positive obligations; according to Christian law every individual is subject to higher

authority (Romans, chap. xiii., 1); everyone must fulfill his obligations, and, above all, pay tribute, dues, respect, and honor (*Ibid.*, chap. xiii., 7). What legally belongs to nobles cannot be taken away from them without adequate compensation, or through their voluntary concession; it would be contrary to all justice to use the land of the nobles without assuming responsibility for it.

And now We confidently expect that the freed serfs, on the eve of a new future which is opening to them, will appreciate and recognize the considerable sacrifices which the nobility has made on their behalf.

They should understand that by acquiring property and greater freedom to dispose of their possessions, they have an obligation to society and to themselves to live up to the letter of the new law by a loyal and judicious use of the rights which are now granted to them. However beneficial a law may be, it cannot make people happy if they do not themselves organize their happiness under protection of the law. Abundance is acquired only through hard work, wise use of strength and resources, strict economy, and above all, through an honest God-fearing life.

The authorities who prepared the new way of life for the peasants and who will be responsible for its inauguration will have to see that this task is accomplished with calmness and regularity, taking the timing into account in order not to divert the attention of cultivators away from their agricultural work. Let them zealously work the soil and harvest its fruits so that they will have a full granary of seeds to return to the soil which will be theirs.

And now, Orthodox people, make the sign of the cross, and join with Us to invoke God's blessing upon your free labor, the sure pledge of your personal well being and the public prosperity.

Given at St. Petersburg, March 3, the year of Grace 1861, and the seventh of Our reign.

Alexander