



*Lord and Peasant
in Russia: From
the Ninth to the
Nineteenth Century*

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Jerome Blum

To understand Russian history without understanding serfdom—the peasant-lord relationship that shaped Russia for centuries—is impossible. Still, before Jerome Blum, no scholar had tackled the subject in depth. Monumental in scope and path-breaking in its analysis,

Lord and Peasant in Russia garnered immediate attention upon its publication in 1961, a year that also marked the one hundredth anniversary of the emancipation of the Russian serfs. As one reviewer remarked, “No better book on the subject exists; it is indispensable to the serious student of Russia.”

On a scale befitting Russia—a sixth of the earth’s land mass—Blum’s book explored in almost seven hundred pages the legal and social evolution of its predominantly agricultural population, the types of peasant status, and the multifaceted nature of the master-peasant relationship. More important, Blum was the first to articulate the necessity of placing serfs front and center in the study of Russian history. As a reviewer for the *Economist* wrote, “Mr. Blum has written not just a monograph on landlords and peasants in Russia but a history of Russia from a particular point of view. There is no denying that the history of a country where . . . a bare 13 percent of the population was urban can with impunity be written in terms of landlords and peasants.” In 1962, it was awarded the Herbert Baxter Adams Prize of the American Historical Association; it remains a cornerstone of Russian historiography.