Aleksandr Nikolaevich Engelgardt's

LETTERS FROM THE COUNTRY, 1872–1887

Translated and edited by CATHY A. FRIERSON

New York Oxford OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 1993

• •

Contents

Glossary, xv Introduction, 3

Letter I, 21

Daily Life with the Peasants on My Estate, 22 Village Poverty and Charity: Crusts of Bread, 28 My Natural Healer: The "Old Woman," 32 Village Justice, 34

Letter II, 36

The Peasants' Poverty and Dependence on Local Gentry Landowners, 37 The Peasant Thief Kostik and the Volost Court, 39 The Question of Public Health in the Countryside, 45 The Rural Clergy, 47 My Trip to the Zemstvo Elections, 48

Letter III, 51

Work Done "Out of Respect," 52 Trespassing and the Peasants' Sense of Private Property, 59 Peasant Fatalism and Attitudes toward Agricultural Innovation, 64 The Subsistence Nature of Russian Agriculture, 72

Letter IV, 79

"Rogues Exist to Teach Fools to Be on Guard," 80 Honesty and Industry of the Russian Peasant, 83 Individualism in Peasant Farming, 86 A Visit to the Local Agricultural Exhibition, 87

Letter V, 102

Old Lyska, 103 The Role of Peasant Women in the Rural Economy, 112 Peasant Individualism in Labor, 115 Peasants as Skilled Laborers, 122 Intelligence of the Russian Peasant, 125

Letter VI, 134

Rural Responses to the Russo-Turkish War, 135

Letter VII, 156

The Diggers' Artel as a Model of Collective Labor, 157 Extended Peasant Households, Collective Labor, and Prosperity, 163 Individualism of the Peasant Woman, 166 The Futility of Legislation for the Village, 169 The Peasant Economy in Post-Emancipation Russia, 170

Letter VIII, 184

New District Officials, 185 Persecution of Local Jews, 193 Bureaucratic Measures to Prevent Plague, 195 My Descent into Alcoholism, 198

Letter IX, 203

The Economics of Seasonal Labor for the Peasant, 204

Letter X, 210

Prospering Peasants in the "Happy Little Corner," 211 The Peasant Exploiter: The Kulak, 223

Letter XI, 228

Peasants' Rumors about the Land, 228

ï

.

1

Letter XII, 239

Peasant Land Purchases and Local Farming, 239 The Promise of Phosphorite Fertilizer for Russian Agriculture, 245

Notes, 256

Bibliography of Related Works, 269