CHANGING STEPS TOWARD PERFECTION: Doukhobor Unity in Passage

I. Introduction

In 1899, some 7,427 immigrants passed quarantine at Halifax before ultimate arrival in north central Saskatchewan. They were Doukhobors, the devout core of a sectarian group originated - and oppressed - in Russia since at least 1652. A religious revitalization in 1894, marked by a major pacifist demonstration, 'The Burning of Arms', brought intense official punishment; international opinion and aid from Quaker groups expedited a Canadian refuge for the most committed.

Settlement in Canada was not easy, nor was adaptation to Canadian mores. Rejecting the Oath of Allegiance as the first step towards military registration, the Doukhobors lost their homestead land by 1907; complex but apparently inequitable official dealings ensured the collapse of their communal enterprise, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, between 1929 and 1940. Doukhobors in British

Columbia, where the majority of the sect moved after 1907, did not for the most part own their own land again till the early 1960's. Along with economic stripping, they suffered consequent social injuries, chiefly reflected by the collapse of industry and production, general malaise, and the violent activity of some members of the Svobodniki(Sons of Freedom subsect).

It is a sad fact that the first serious studies of the Doukhobors (outside scanty Russian-language materials published by the sectarians themselves) began scarcely 20 years ago. To date the chief sources are Hawthorne(1955), Tarasoff (1964 & 1969), Peacock (1966 & 1970), Woodcock & Avakumovic (1968) and myself(1972); these deal for the most part with history and traditional lore. To the present other material, most of it objectionable, continues in print, better articulating Canadian prejudice than Doukhobor reality. One is accordingly faced with a large population, a long history, and minimal prior resources.

This paper is based primarily upon folkloristic fieldwork carried out in the West Kootenay region of B.C. since 1970, dealing with Doukhobor people settled in the Boundary and Columbia districts. The landscape is mountainous, inhabited on narrow valley bottoms and on river benches. The Boundary district, of which the town of Grand Forks is the centre, surrounds an ancient lake-bottom; the Columbia district, of which the town of Castlegar is the geographic centre only, is a complex of major and minor river gorges. During the period of Communal living, Doukhobors developed home agriculture and forest industries; since the second World War, the dominant forms of production have been extractive, with forest and mining interests and the hyrdoelectric authority employing workers in an industrial context. Agriculture has become a sympton of a deliberately rural, alternative lifestyle, taking the form of intensive gardening carried on by Doukhobors and aggressively 'country' people. Domicile took two forms in the Communal living period: unique Village habitations for CCUB members, and conventional homes for those who withdrew from the organization. In the late 1930's, Svobodniki withdrew to somewhat isolated areas (Krestova,

Gilpin) and constructed small, impermanent (because inflammable) cabins, a style many have maintained to the present. With the collapse of the CCUB, some families lingered on in the Village houses, which were slowly destroyed by arson; others squatted on their former land in small, self-constructed houses. With the return (by resale) of land in the early 1960's, a majority of Doukhobors built houses which, to qualify for CMHC support, followed normal Western Canadian conventions of plan, materials, and style. It is very arguable that such style was at least as desireable for its expression of achievment by Canadian standards as for its mortgageability.

Demographic data on Doukhobors are not widely available. While the largest organization in the region, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) lists children of over 1,000 families as school-attenders, this list does not cover children of Independent or Svobodnik families; and school boards do not maintain ethnic statistics. The history of prejudice has discouraged most Doukhobors from identifying themselves more precisely than as Russian-canadians; the religious identity suffices for rel igious contexts, and there is seen to be little that is religious about industrial or bureaucratic institutions now that the CCUB is gone. With commendable impartiality, just this sort of identification has become obsolete among the institutions themselves. It is thus impossible at present to describe a normal or typical Doukhobor individual or family with any degree of statistical accuracy, pending suitable large--scale research. Perhaps a useful picture can be given from subjective observation.

Settlement ranges between contentional town dwelling; rural settlements (their form dictated by land resale conditions) of suburban style, with bungalows close-set on 1 to 4 acre lots; and contemporary or older rural houses on more or less isolated sites. Most men and a fair number of women work in local trade and industry; many women are energetic homemakers who maintain large (1/2 - 1 acre) gardens and put up much preserves. A significant number of older people did not adjust easily to the economic and ensuing social shutdown of c. 1938-'40; these live for the most part in small homes, garden and carry out other work as opportunity is seen to arise, and

depend for a portion of their subsistence upon government support. Families tend to be slightly larger than average, with 2 - 3 children common, both parents living at home. Slavic tradition encourages the maintenance of grandparents within or near the household (I have two children's drawings of home areas including typical older houses on the land site labelled 'Grandmother's house'); an informant comments that 'It's a sin not to take care of the old folks;' a value not universally honoured, but producing a fair amount of guilt when defied.

A fundamental tenet of Doukhobor religion is the presence of God within every person, however encouraged or repressed. From this belief rises Doukhobor pacifism: taking life is not only an offense against the victim, but against the God whose presence is thus repudiated. Historically, Doukhobors have advanced their beliefs with strong reliance upon rationalistic argument, and have expressed them with great diversity; thus 'identifieable' Doukhobors may include the literally and simply devout at one extreme, the deliberately agnostic at the other.

This base implies a broad and egalitarian ideal; but it is blended with an administrative tradition of Russian origin, the Mir (village) reliance upon a counsel of Elders for normal conduct of everyday affairs; and with a belief that, as not all persons nourish their divine spark equally, so one must live in every age who best expresses the God within. Such a one, for many Doukhobors (though not all, including the sect of Independents), is their Spiritual Leader. There is no such leader at present for those Doukhobors who belonged to the CCUB, although John Verigin, the Honorary Chairman of the USCC, has such a role expected of him by some older folk; there are a few aspirants to such a role among Svobodniki, of whom Stefan Sorokin has most honour. This complex of beliefs and practices produced in the past a society that accepted and supported an efficient and usually benevolent authoritarianism of a theocratic style. Since the 1930's, most Doukhobors - drawing from the implications of their tradition at least as heavily as from the protestant example of their Anglo-canadian neighbours - have internalized much of that authority. It is important, by

the way, to see traditional Doukhobor authority as a counterfoil, conspicuous and exemplary, to the authority of the Czarist, Orthodox Russian state: God opposing Antichrist. Customarily, community affairs are carried on by assemblies of local representative, occasionally advised by the Chairman (USCC), by a Spiritual Leader (Svobodniki); or chaired informally (Independents).

The Svobodniki present a remarkable case, too complex for full treatment here. Anonymous informants have suggested that the original families of this subsect were conditioned to extreme views of society by their oppression as inhabitants of the village most harshly punished in the 1890's; they accordingly accept their identity as dependent upon state opposition, and when, in Canada, the state proved somewhat tractable, its conformatory hostility was aroused by suitable means, ensuing retaliation identifying the punished as true followers of the ideal. Whatever the case, the Svobodniki first appear clearly as a functioning part of the B.C. Doukhobor community in the late second decade of the century (Maloff MS, pp. 276-306): pious and prophetically-inclined individuals, viewing Community life as overly materialistic, withdrew to small homes on the edges of Community settlements, maintaining a very modest lifestyle and returning regularly to speak and preach on behalf of a spiritual outlook. An alternate social slot thus devloped for the CCUB; as others found themselves at odds with both the Community and the outside world, and as external pressures (economic and social) bore with increasing weight upon all Doukhobors, the Svobodniki became increasingly rigid and narrow in their thought, volatile and antisocial in their action. By the early 1930's, nude demonstrations became a common phenomenon; by the late 1930's, political and religious acts had expanded to include the burning of property: one's own, as a rejection of materialism; one's neighbour's, for reasons that are perhaps less pure. The 1940's and early '50's were to bring terrorism. The press followed public prejudice by failing to distinguish between Svobodniki and other Doukhobors, or between acts that were at least nominally or arguably religious, and

those with outright criminal or psychotic motivation (and thus distinct from Svobodnik policy).

On two occasions, 1932 and 1953, the Provincial government reacted massively (Woodcock & Avakumovic 1968, pp. 318-319, 340-343), in the earlier case isolating large numbers of Svobodnik adults in a prison camp (Piers Is.) with no activities, work, retraining, or adequate health care and distributing children to orphanages or 'industrial schools'; in the latter case, seizing Svobodnik children in violation of the prerogatives of the Children's Aid Society and imprisoning them in a guarded school (New Denver). The policies were maintained for 2 1/2 and 6 years respectively. The Piers Island programme produced no amelioration of Svobodnik interaction techniques, probably the opposite. Various responses have been published regarding the New Denver experiment, most of them biased one way or the other; at best, some children accepted the academic education from which their parents often restrained them; at worst, some children were seriously inhibited, becoming mistrustful, hostile, and seriously neurotic. I note that many non-Svobodnik Doukhobors - who have much to gain at least in security from Svobodnik inhibition - deplore and repudiate the government's experiment. There has been no follow-up, official or otherwise, of the effects of the action.

Following imprisonment of some members in the lower Fraser Valley in 1962, the majority of Svobodniki left the Kootenays and trekked to the coast, setting up a temporary settlement at the prison site. As sentences expired, families slowly returned; but the stay outside the Kootenays, coupled with toleration and economic opportunity at the Coast, apparently broadened Svobodnik techniques for evaluation and dealing with external society. At any rate, the number and violence of actions has diminished since that time, although the only clear conclusion is that amelioration of anti-social institutions without loss of identity is possible.

It seems useful to me to perceive Svobodniki as a functional complement to the majority of Doukhobors, USCC and Independent, a social slot into which the dissident

and deviant can be channeled without loss of 'Doukhobor' identity. Such was evidently the original function of the subsect; to it are presently added the functions our Western society chooses to impose upon the criminal and insane. As such, the Svobodniki, while perplexing and negative, validate the self-image of other Doukhobors while maintaining many ideals of Doukhobor society more consistently and productively than our criminals and psychotics are allowed to maintain our society's ideals.

Enormous and longlived historic forces have compelled Doukhobors to evolve techniques and devices for the affirmation of social unity. These are made most explicit through various events at which the community and the family join. They involve porcesses we are accustomed to label 'political' and 'religious': at which point one must bear in mind an informant's statement,'Remember, their religion is their politics,' basically denying those terms as a dichotomy. The vents include both direct and symbolic expression, and draw upon a subtle oral tradition for verification, the Zhivotnaia Knig' or Living Book, the bulk of oral religious texts. These events take place with regularity and with consistent uniformity, allowing for what prove to be only minor local and subsectarian variations. Even the present distances between Doukhobors are far less that the distance between the faithful and the Czarist, Orthodox Russia against whose darkness believers saw themselves clearly silhouetted when their society laid down its foundations.

II. Religion in Life

A. Meetings.

If ritual were music, it would follow two measures: the steady progress of seasons and hours, and the irregular step of human life. For Doukhobors, that time which is ultimately astronomical produces three classes of ritual at two levels; human time produces the rites de passage. The calendar and the clock call the community to major seasonal festivals and to Sunday morning molenye (Prayer assembly) or Sunday School, and the family to grace before meals. The Passages that are strongly marked are Be-

trothal & Marriage, and Death, Burial, & Commemoration; Birth is dealt with only simply.

Every Sunday the devout may attend molenye, the primary Doukhobor worship service. This falls in two portions: molenye, or prayer, itself, a sacred event, and the quasi-sacred sobrania, community meeting, in which hymn practice, hortatory addresses, Sunday-school presentations, and business of general interest to the community may take place. At different times or locations, children attend Sunday School, a simplified form of molenye which adults supervise but in which they only take leading parts briefly if the children falter.

Molenye - like the worship of the more extreme Western sectarian movements such as Anabaptists or Quakers - is a quantitatively simple, austere event by comparison with the eucharists of the christian establishment. It is characterized by three phases: first, a number of psalmi (DOukhobor psalms, indigenous religious texts) are recited by leading men and women in turn; secondly, the Lord's Prayer and at least three psalmi are sung by the assembly. The content and musical character of psalm--singing has been adequately described elsewhere (Peacock 1970, pp. 14-49; Mealing 1972, pp. 28-36); here it should suffice to note that not only song text but melodic and harmonic style are unique to Doukhobors, and the whole singing tradition demands and elicits technical, conceptual, and emotional unity. During the singing of the first psalom, an intricate series of bows (poklon) and kisses-of-peace takes place. In the last phase of molenye (to which the bows are conceptually linked), the Lord's Prayer and the Doukhobor prayer Father of All are recited; to the latter are added three bows-to-the-earth (poklon na zeml'e) in which all present join: to the unseen trinity, to the faithful dead, whose unity with God is certain, and to the living, in whom God dwells. The phase and the service end with a series of greetings between males and females: for the holy day, for the absent, for general blessing.

In the course of the meeting, those present have joined in contemplation. They have exchanged or approved a particularly powerful celebration of the kiss-of-peace that points up the unifying presence of God in every person. They have sung in a

tradition that demands highly trained musical skills including subtle harmonic flexibility. They have then joined speech with those elsewhere and themselves, by means of formulaic responses, in the past and future, explicitly affirming their identity and mutual concern. The subsequent sobrania thus moves from symbolic unity to unity in practice. The mode of Sunday School fees children from embarassment or time strain, but articulates them easily into the adult event, from which their own observance differs inly by length, difficulty, and place. Finally, all other calendric observances, and several passages, take place as an elaboration of the molenye format and reiterate its unifying factor.

The calendric observances include major participation and seasonal emphasis at the universal festivals of Christmas and Easter, of which the latter (as for all Slavs) is dominant. The Day of Ss. Peter & Paul, celebrated c. June 27, is named Peace Day and serves to commemorate The Burning of Arms. There is varying observance of the Commemorations of the Peters Verigin on the anniversaries of their commemoration-days. USCC and some other Doukhobors also take part in the Children's Festival and the Youth Festival, usually c. June 6 and May 24 respectively; in the former, sunday-school groups conduct a major molenye and then take up the afternoon with assorted presentations, usually musical; in the latter, youth groups conduct a two-day series of presentations, in which secular music, skits, sacred music, exhortations, and molenye all have parts. This is the most massively attended event of the year. USCC members celebrate Declaration Day c. August 6, on which a well-attended molenye is followed by choral presentations and exhortations commemorating the most recent (1934) Doukhobor credal publication. Independent and Svobodnik individuals are often present at such events, taking a greater or lesser part dependent upon the degree to which the event can be seen as partisan.

Behaviour during these events - in fact, at all community events - takes two styles. Many present involve themselves intensely in the formal aspect of the assembly. But many others, except at the more sacred moments, may spend a good part of

their time talking with friends and kin, playing with other children, flirting modestly with other young people, or dozing securely. It is perhaps necessary to point out that these persons are participating fully in the event - the underlying event of community assembly. They communicate unity at a deeper level than that of the visible ritual, but the ritual is the bearing about which the more inchoate processes revolve.

Formerly, festivals appear to have been less frequent, although we have but scanty accounts, and those no earlier than the late 1800's. It is clear, though, that at least at periods of strong religious consciousness, the communities observed relatively brief molenya most week-day mornings, with the Sunday molenye calling for cull participation in the kiss-of-peace and the singing of complete rather than abridged psalmi. Today a minority of persons, mostly elderly, attends molenye. It is not easy to discriminate between the causes for this change, but they must certainly include, first the secularizing influence of Anglo-canadian example and prosperity; second, a weakening of religious faith following upon both the economic and social derangements of the years following revitalization, and the rigidity of religious style; and lastly, the greater physical security of Canadian domicile and its erosion of the need for the intensely unifying force of the old observance, which strengthened the community not only against the pressures it still feels, but also against apprehended violent persecution by church and state. A further point: the ancient, defining Orthodox conception of worship holds it to be eternal, to and from which the worshipper moves in time; as long as it is maintained by some, it is a resource for all to be used as need becomes evident. For Doukhobors, that need is presently underwhelming. Patterns of Svobodnik action and devotion reflect this with clarity; and conflict and worship appear to occur not so much consequentially, as synchronous manifestations of the same underlying innominate pressure.

The family is variably visible in these events. Men and women are divided in molenye and in sobrania seating, although male relatives may cluster; so with female.

News at sobrania may include the travels of kin. Family groups are often directly involved in choral events at festivals. It is, however, during the low-intensity periods of community events that families become obvious: sitting together when audiences are not divided by sex; seated in groups at meals, for which kin will assemble, often inviting guests to join them. The summertime festivals are conducted out-of--doors whenever possible, and meals take place in picnic style, families sitting with guests and food, commonly arranged in long lines by region of settlement. This placement by locale may appear from the outside to limit family identification, but participants see it as rather affirming that there is a specific, permanent place for their family relative to all the rest.

B. Birth.

The major passages are those of Marriage and Death. Birth has at no recorded time in Doukhobor history been marked off by major observances, the only recorded ceremony being an obligation upon the first person to pick up the child (and any subsequent person picking it up for the first time) to say 'Hōspodi blagoslavi' (Lord bless [us])(private communication). NO ritual seems attached or reported to Naming. There are at least three independent, plausible reasons for this de-emphasis of birth. Firstly, European sectarian groups of extreme quality generally give more attention to a member's failure to conform, with subsequent shunning or expulsion, than to entry: simple birth is adequate entry. Secondly, Orthodox name-giving ceremonies were characteristically licentious; in their rejection of Orthodox religious style, it would be natural for the puritanical Doukhobors of the 18th. C. to reject the whole format of such a recognition, as they limited license at marriage. Lastly, and of most import, Doukhobors traditionally were seen to recognize the entry of the individual into humanity as a slow, late process (Kravchinsky 1888, p. 512):

> ...the soul enters the child...from about the sixth to the fifteenth year of its life, the period during which the child is learning from the Book of Life. The newly-born baby is only a piece of soulless matter.

This aligns with another datum (private communication):

> Used to be, a baby was born really handicapped, body or mind apparently, they wouldn't feed it for three days. If it died, it was meant to; but if it lived, they had to take real good care of it, because such was the will of God.

The place of the child within the community is defined in two psalms. Psalm 182 (Bonch-Bruevich numbering) identifies the virtue of the infant, going on to the devout child's behaviour and eventual adult witness for the faith:

> [The Lord] created the person, little fellow. The young lad grows up, he acts in God's will;...

The late psalm Basic Rules for Young Children (Mealing 1972, pp. 280-282; not in Bonch-Bruevich) was composed - perhaps shortly before 1910 - by Peter Vasilievich Verigin. It sets out a very wide range of simple regulations for children's life in the Community Villages: leading to the assumtpion that a child is a member of the community already, and requires no special entry rites: birth sufficed for that.

For Doukhobors, then, initiation into society was marked by the slow internalization of religious lore: who had the faith had real existence. It should be noted, with care, that the doctrine and practices described are the norm delivered in society. Actual treatment of infants, recognition of the prerogatives of children, and family emotions, are warm and strong, and children are characteristically objects of special concern (Hawthorne 1955, examples pp. 265-276 passim). The child's entry into society functions, then, as a matter of accomplished fact, which the child confirms by normal maturation and enculturation.

C. Marriage.

Of all religiously-defined events, Marriage departs furthest from the molenye format. Mate selection has historically varied in formality; while in the 19th. C marriages were customarily arranged by parents, in both the 18th. C. and since settlement in Canada, the principals have been responsible for their own choice:

> Marriage...is accomplished merely by the mutual consent of the young

> couple. As, among the Spirit-Wrestlers, no preference is given to wealth or rank, the parents do not at all interfere in the marriages of their children. (Chertkov 1899, pp. 30 - 31; from material dated prior to 1804)

It appears that, with the security of isolated settlement in periods of the 19th. C., parental preference came to the fore. Mr. Harry Lebedeff of Thrums, B.C., reported from interviews with elders in 1972 (private communication):

> ...weddings performed in the native country were quite different in all respects to the concept of the word marriage....there was no real formality in the conduct of the marriages.
>
> Sometimes, but not always, the parents decided when to marry their children and to whom. The boy and girl had no say in the matter. Two families, who thought their son and daughter would make good marriage partners, would gather at the girl's parent's home and have a little party of their own. Close relatives were also present. The arrangement was very simple and consisted more or less of tea-drinking and a supper. It was typical to choose a girl who was older than the boy, because work was always a burden and an older person would have experience to cope with it.
>
> Next day, the parents would bring their son to the girl's house and would announce that they were married. The boy and girl would usually oppose the parents but would have no power to argue about their sudden union. The words of the parents were final....the girl would gather her belongings and go to the boy's home....The couple had to live together, and most of the time the union worked out quite well.
>
> Weddings of this kind were common in Russia for a substantial time. Priests and churches were not recognized by the people, who therefore established their own customs....
>
> With the migration of the people to Canada, the customs changed. In the early 1900's, people were not married in that manner any more. The parents would gather at the girl's home, talk, recite or sing a hymn [Psalm??], have a cup of tea, and then would pronounce the couple husband and wife, and wish them a happy life. The girl would then take her change--of-clothes and move in with her husband. The procedures of marriage were short and simple.
>
> From this developed the style of the present. It is much more complicated than that given above and seems much more appropriate....It made marriage seem more real and have more definite meaning in the union of the couple.

Although all accounts of 19th. C. marriage stress parental arrangement, such phrases as 'sometimes but not always' lead to the view that compulsory marriage was exceptional and thus most memorable. The concluding comments - as a summary of conscious present attitudes - gain weight through the voice of a member of the community. It appears that ceremony has evolved from a minimal form set in con-

scious opposition to the repudiated Orthodox-style majority rites, to recognition of a social urge (probably in part conditioned by Canadian example) for a rite revealing more dense social, symbolic, and material layers.

Contemporary marriage style has changed over the past few years, but exhibits consistent foundations. There are two clearly-defined events, the latter further divided. Betrothal is recognized by a rite usually in two parts. The couple, their parents, and close family and friends arrive at the girl's home; the parents greet each other, using the Easter greeting and seeking guest status:

Slava Hospodi!	Glory to the Lord!
Slava blagodarim Boga za 'evo milost'	With glory we thank God for his favour!
Christos voskris!	Christ is risen!
Vo istinnykh Christos voskris!	In the righteous is Christ risen! [Bow]
Prinimayte nas zagostey	Accept us as guests
Milosty prosim	We ask your favour

On a table nearby are placed the signs of Doukhobor worship, bread, salt, and water; the former, as loaf and shaker-full, were brought by the fiancé' parents. Those present form a circle, fiancé' party on his left, fiancée's party on her right; before the couple is a rug. Be Devout (Psalm 128) is commonly recited, a gnomic text that has become traditional in this context, though other psalms are acceptable; after this all bow. Next any member recites the Lord's Prayer, followed by a bow; then the psalm Father of All; bows-to-the-ground are performed by family members. The fiancée's parents approach the couple, who kneel on the carpet, bow-to-the-ground, rise, and kiss their parents or inlaws-t-be; in the same way, this ceremony is repeated with the fiancé' parents. A greeting, Dobry chas('A good hour!') is offered, for good fortune and happiness. All present then take a meal, at which hymns and graces are characteristically used; the couple are again greeted with Dobry chas; and Borscht, Pirohi(pirogis) and Ploh (rice pudding) are eaten, with other,non-obligatory foods. After a concluding grace, the evening becomes an ordinary social gathering, in which group singing commonly plays a large part. Lately devout families have, on the earliest subsequent Sunday, repeated the initial greetings and

announced the names of all concerned and the wedding date, as a major feature of post-molenye sobrania.

The order for a Wedding is essentially the same as that for a Betrothal, with explicit elaborations. The ceremony is repeated twice, first at the bride's home and then at that of the groom. Both groups of parents carry bread and salt with them; at the groom's home, the bride's loaf is sliced and placed on the table. A hymn is sung after the couple's bows and kisses, commonly The Blessing of Trees in the Valley, possibly The Giving of Precious Moments by God or I am Rich in the Land. Lastly, the groom's parents kneel before the bride's and formally thank them for nurturing her and releasing her to their family; the parents then kiss each other.

The bride's parents may provide a dinner, after which wedding gifts are given. Till the present generation, this usually took place in the groom's home; now it often merges with the Supper, which commonly takes place in the nearest Community Hall, to which gifts are brought. After the gift-giving, or on the way to the groom's house, the bride customarily brings not only her gifts and personal belongings, but also linen and a quilt for a double bed. After the wedding supper, she will remove the linen carefully prepared by her mother-in-law, and will install her own in its place.

In the last generation, public recognition of the marriage has largely moved to the local Community Hall, to which a large (the more, the more prestigious the event) number of guests - 500 is a nice total - is invited, and may be fed in two sittings. These arrive early, and greet the wedding party on its arrival. The initial greeting is once more exchanged, but now it is the bride's parents who ask to be guested. and are taken to speak for all the guests present. For more acculturated families, a receiving line is formed just inside the hall, and entering guests greet the wedding party personally; this usage, acquired from Anglo-canadians, seems to have climaxed in the 1960's and to be moving into disuse. An invited choir performs intermittently during supper, which begins with the 'Cook's Greeting':

Slava Hospodi!	Glory to the Lord!
Slavim blagodarim Boga za evo milost'	We praise [and] thank God for his mercy
Zvol'te kushat'!	Come and eat!

Many of the commonplaces of Canadian weddings - toasts (usually non-alcoholic), real or preposterous and bawdy congratulatory letters and telegrams, and applause or cuptapping to make the couple kiss - are added to the Doukhobor core of grace, traditional food, and choral song. Gifts may be displayed (unopened), and will not be opened for a day or till the honeymoon. An account is noted (Hawthorne 1955, p. 278) in which the guests gave small bills, rapidly, the couple having to kiss as each bill fell. Supper and traditional observance end with grace.

An hour or so later, for many families, the evening will reopen with dancing. At this time - as in Russia before the revitalization - license extends to the use of alcohol. The break allows the devout and elderly - not always identical sets - time to depart without embarassment for the pious or licentious. As in most wedding traditions, mild bawdry is not unknown. The newlweds will usually leave in the middle of the evening; wedding trips have become normal, but simple homegoing is still not unusual.

As in old Russia, a Doukhobor girl takes the patronymic. At marriage, she joins her husband's family. Further, marital residence is characteristically patrilocal. Till the present generation, that meant explicitly at the groom's home; recently, while domicile is visibly neolocal, the home in question is typically financed or donated by the groom's father. The in-law problems are thus not as impacting as in material patrilocality; but unsuitable homes have been provided, tolerated as long as politeness demanded, then were exchanged throught the market for something better suiting the newlywed's tastes.

Unsurprisingly, formal license - specifically reflected in acculturative elements and toleration of otherwise reprehensible alcohol - is more observable in weddings than in any other recognizable event within the community. Chertkov's source(q.v.

supra) comments: 'Marriage among them is not regarded as a holy sacrament....'(loc. cit.). It appears that Doukhobor marriage was originally a devout recognition of a secular fact, but that over two centuries the rite is evolving into a form affirming the place of religion in marriage, and the right of the community to conspicuous announcement and celebration. It is noteworthy that - despite the clearly analogours example of Quaker marriage - no Doukhobor marriages (or offspring) were legally held legitimate in B.C. till 1953, a gross example of prejudice, but also an indication that the traditional ceremony had low visibility.

Currently, widest community approval of the informal kind is bestowed upon weddings which combine North American extravagance with maximum religious content. As the wedding is the most acculturated Doukhobor event, it appears also to be the vanguard of reaffirmation of identity, an identity keyed to a popular concept of 'tradition' and hence creating a new tradition that will not resemble whatever really took place in, say, 19th. C. Russia, but is clearly distinct from, say, what takes place in English Canada.

Canadian folklore accords almost proverbial status to the phrase 'Weddings aren't for the bride and groom, they're for the family.' This is not an unsound insight: while the newlyweds are to be the focus and centre of the ceremonies, they, after all, have already chosen each other, their attachments are settled. It is the families and close friends who have suddenly, with no real preparation, acquired quite a throng of unevaluated associates. Weddings anounce the availability of new bonds of friendship and the variously compulsory new bonds of kinship. All present must see and acknowledge the newlyweds (ostentatiously) and each other (surreptitiously), for whatever future reference may be desireable or unavoidable.

Doukhobor families already live - and lived - in a close context. They shared an outcast faith, which impelled them together; they shared their geographic community, and in Community days, sometimes residence itself. The Russian tradition affirmed the relation of bride and groom, and the place of the parents in the life of each.

The cutting of the bride's wedding bread is subject to various interpretation, none deduced by Doukhobors; this includes the physical separation of the girl from her family, and perhaps her formal relinquishing of virginity through marriage. More explicit is the delightful custom of the bride unmaking the bed and remaking it herself, which is said to symbolize her willingness to maintain the home she has joined and 'a happy married life', but seems to focus upon her sexual duties as a wife and her replacement of the mother as first woman in the groom's life.

In its present form, the Doukhobor wedding re-emphasizes bonding between the two families. Households are primary, even to the modified form of patrilocality, and so remain the site of the primary marriage rites. No priestly figure is present - unless God within the parents, as emphasized by the ritual bows - is present directly, precluding intercession. The family is not merely present at the wedding; it embodies the wedding.

Additional field material of high quality may be found in Rhoads 1900(pp. 26-29) and Hawthorne 1955(pp.277-279).

III. Religion and Memory

Death presents an ultimate empirical challenge to all institutions: it will remove their members from continued participation, it will unassailably change the future. Beyond it nothing is materially documented; birth brings the known, but death the unknown. Institutions and their members must thus find means to limit death.

For Doukhobors, as for many European traditions, the solution is to view death as a change rather than a termination. Two techniques, available simultaneously, are used. Rationalism postulates the survival of the individual within the corporate memory of the family and community, as in the second bow of molenye:

> -Vechnaya pamyat' pokoinim bortsam za istinnu!
> -Eternal memory of the dead wrestlers for truth!

- the dead are not here, but the immortal part of them, the divine spark of God within,

is not diminished. Faith postulates the entry of the dead believer into the Kingdom of God, the community of the gone-from-here, as in Psalm 79:

> ...Angels of God came flying for this Israelite soul, they raised this soul with song, they carried this soul to Christ himself, to our God; the Lord God himself met this soul: Go, my soul, Israelite...to my serene paradise....

Other references (esp. Pss. 123, 130, 384) affirm the places of the righteous dead with the goal of the living. As for the unrighteous, they balance a dyad by becoming identified with all the living reject. (It is useful to bear in mind that, despite popular theology and agnosticism, Heaven & Hell are not simply a carrot and a goad for the devout donkey: in Judaeo-christian tradition, they are ideal absolutes,available more nearly than the other side of the grave).

It is further useful to note here that Doukhobor theology, while millenarian, is only occasionally and locally adventist - typically among the deviant Svobodniki. Human society is seen to be in a constant progress:

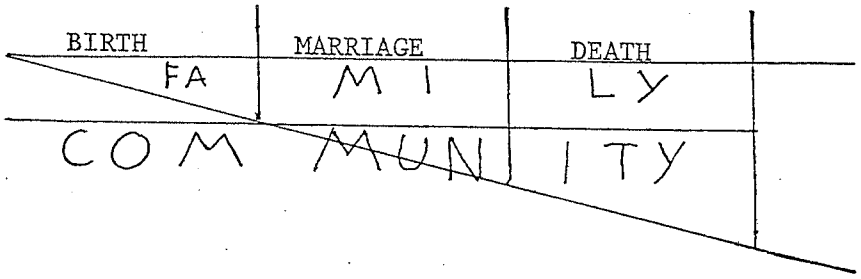
> -We hold ourselvs to be people of a wandering, pilgrim nature because we are always moving from a land of Egypt, from a state of confusion, towards attainment of the promised land, a land of enlightenment of truth....
>
> (Ps. 6/Var, 12)

> 5. The world is based upon going forward; all things strive for perfection, and through this process seek to rejoin their source....
> 6. In all that is in our world we see changing steps toward perfection....
>
> (Ps. 144)

hence the ideal assumptions of apocalyptic afterlife can be (I will not say, always are) seen to obtain in the present, insofar as the eternal state is an epitome of the temporal process. So the community can indeed function as City, Kingdom, of God: nothing more than imperfection, itself changing, separates the community from the identity to which it moves. It will not be different when it arrives, only better. And so with the believer, living or dead; death is an overnight camp at the wilderness' edge, a change of state but not of status for the soul.

It is necessary to all individuals, in or out of the family involved, to respond to the negation of death with an affirmation of integrity. Perhaps a simple diagram

may show the expanding impact of the major human passages:



Birth is primarily a family matter, and the community traditionally holds itself little involved. Marriage, involving more than one family, necessarily calls for community recognition, but only the portion of the community known to both families; that will be sufficient witness. Death, however, is the business of the entire community. In practise, marriages and funerals are open to the whole community, and persons are invited to both: but also in practise, chiefly guests are expected at weddings; at funerals, preparations are made to receive the whole local community.

The only historic account of a funeral is necessarily sketchy(Fitzgibbon 1899, pp. 59-61); the account in Hawthorne(1955, p. 267) is incidental and impressionistic. The reluctance of Western scholars to examine Doukhobor funerals may be regretted. At present local traditions vary, with the Grand Forks area tending to a limited service of c. 3-4 hours; outside centres, 27-hour funerals remain common, in spite of gentle pressure from undertakers.

The body of the dead is prepared as soon as possible, either by the undertaker or (not rarely) in the family home. In the past five years there has been increased preference for the use of home-made coffins, prepared quickly but carefully of plain materials by local joiners; family members may be involved in carpentry and textile handling. The body is taken to the Community Hall on the second morning after death for a service which begins about noon.

Several things are remarkable about this service. It is the longest in duration of any conventional observance. As for weddings, a choir is specifically invited. But another honoured group is also present: the gravediggers, half-a-dozen or more community men who rotate on a roster but who are requested rather than expected to be present; they may include family members, and function as exemplars of the community's duty to the dead. The service itself is, like many, supervised; molenye is led by experienced elders, and festivals are conducted by appointed community members in committee; but funeral management is expressly the duty of the family of the dead, who take a leading part in all that is done.

The coffin is placed behind the usual head table with bread, salt, and water; it is conventionally open, often with photographs of the dead made a few years before standing on the inside edge of the lid,'So people can see how they were when alive' - i.e., to remember the dead as living. Graveclothing is dark suit with light shirt (male) or kerchief and ankle-length dress(female); elders may retain their old Community linen suits for burial. If the undertaker has prepared the body, it is likely to be enbalmed.

At the service's opening and close, spoken psalms are recited by the family, and psalms are sung by all present. A good number will be on hand for the first hour or so, and close friends may remain or return frequently. Attendance will flag in the afternoon, and activities will be limited to sporadic prayer and song with long slack periods. The body will be watched during a night-long vigil by family members and friends; near its end conversation will be light, and jokes, including bawdry, may be used. As in most wake traditions, this serves not only to release emotional tension but also to reaffirm the liveliness of the community in the face of apparent death. Through the following morning, community members return to stay at the hall, and intermittent song and prayer build up. About noon, there is more speaking and singing of psalms

Singing and prayer are usually instigated by family members, who may also pre-

cent opening lines; even young children are expected to share this duty. At the service' end, the coffin is temporarily closed; if wreaths or bouquets have been used, it is often the youngsters who will take these up, and line a walkingspace for the coffin and its bearers. The funeral party proceeds out-of-doors.

In earlier times, the coffin was carried, usually some distance, to the cemetary; today it is commonly taken in a hearse. Depending upon weather, distance, and road conditions, the gathering will either drive or process behind the hearse to the cemetary. At its arrival, the undertaker, if present ends his duties.

At the cemetary, the family gathers on the south or east of the grave, beside the reopened coffin. The choir will sing a psalm, and the Lord's Prayer and Father of All are recited; the gravediggers offer a prayer of their own, close the coffin and lower it into the grave. This is usually the moment of greatest tension: the family has formally dismissed the dead, the community does so through the gravediggers, who take over care of the body. Family members, including children and often friends, will cast a number of clods into the grave, and friends often join the diggers in completing backfill and topping-off. With this finality, pressure eases; conversation begins, and the assembly returns to the hall. Throughout, a special greeting,

Tsarstviye Nebesnoye Pokoinomu! The Kingdom of Heaven for the Dead!

is used both formally and informally. All now join in a funeral meal. Food is essentially the same as that for a wedding, with a remarkable exception: Pirohi is obligatorily replaced by Lapshi, Noodles. Young women of the community serve food, and the family, gravediggers, choir, and undertaker and specially invited friends have the right to eat at the first sitting. A psalm and funeral hymns will be sung. With this meal, which usually ends c. 4 and 5 PM, the funeral is over.

But observance is not over. The essential immortality will continue to be affirmed indefinitely by a special process. About six weeks after death, on the anniversary of the burial day, the family will return to the graveside for

Paminki, Commemoration. This is a short rite consisting of family prayers and perhpas the singing of psalms, followed by another formal meal. The time period, c. 40 days, recalls not only ancient beliefs known through Europe at least regarding the slow departure of the soul from the body's vicinity, but also, analogously, the ascension of Christ. The believer would not be expected to arrive in heaven earlier than did his Lord. Rationallistically, this period of time also allows the living to become accustomed to the absence of the dead. Beyond this service, two options exist: it may be repeated a year later (and indeed subsequently on the anniverasry, as in the ancient European custom of Yearmind); otherwise, it may be rescheduled to a brief observance at Easter next. In the latter case, the Commemmoration obvsiously moves to association with Christ's resurrection; note that thereby the event becomes indistinguishable from that celebrating Christ's passage into a transcendental life, affirming the functional identity of both actors, Christ and the commemorated dead. With that identity, commemoration of the individual becomes indeed as perpetual as the church's commemoration of Christ, and imoortality becomes as absolute as any other tenet of faith.

It is customary to mark graves. After the revitalization of the 1890's, plain values and rejection of materialism enjoined minimal marking, at most a rock at the east (foot) end of the grave; markers returned to use in the 1920's. Usually these record the name and kinship role of the dead, and often include the phrase Vechnaya Pamyat, Eternal Memory. There is remarkable variety in gravemarker style.

Deaths of the very young and of the aged are generally regretted but felt to fall within the scheme of things; but untimely death, at any point between 6-7 and c. 70 years, is viewed as abnormal and deeply regrettable. Especially regrettable are the deaths of adolescents and persons in their twenties; grief will be unrestrained and the grave correspondingly ornate.

Graves awaiting a permanent marker often possess a temporary shrine-shaped structure containing wreaths and a photograph; the practice, flourishing in the East

of this continent c. 1870 and used in western Canada mostly c. 1890-1925, of attaching to the marker a ceramic plaque with a transfer-print photograph, is used sporadically by Doukhobors to this date: more remembrance of the dead as living.

The only ghost legend collected thus far deals expressly with personal conflicts arising out of a death and their transcendental resolution(1972, p. 585):

> N- and his wife, both in their early twenties, were coming home...after a meeting one night and their car went off the road, they were both killed. Well, old Mr. N-, the father, he was really upset even after the funeral and all. He couldn't sleep nights, and finally he went out to the barn very early one morning, not on schedule, you know, and started to milk the cow. Then he heard very quiet steps behind him and someone said, 'Dad, Dad.' But he didn't turn around, he was shocked, you know, it was N-'s voice. Then he said,'Dad' again, and Mr. N- turned around, it was his son standing there. And he said to him,'Don't worry about us, Dad, we're all right. Don't worry any more.' And Mr. N- didn't feel shocked or upset any more, you know, he just got up and started to go indoors. Then he looked around for a minute, there wasn't anyone there any more. And he went inside and went right to sleep without thinking about it at all. But when he woke up in the morning, he was a little upset about it, because he realized what had happened, and things like that don't happen very often, it never happened to him or anyone in his family before, he's not that kind of person. And he got in touch or told all the members of the family that N- had come to see him and that they were all right. So nobody was upset any more.

In this story, belonging to an ancient tradition (cf. Child 78, Unquiet Grave, in which the dead bids morning cease,to give him peace), but perhaps anecdotal for all that, the father - the central figure - has an experience which resolves his grief. Transcendental or hallucinatory, the experience serves the needs of personal adjustment and confirms underlying integrity ('...we're all right.') in a universe that had displayed confusing, improper events (in their early twenties...were both killed). Again, the experience is not merely hoarded: the entire family is addressed and the happy affirmation confirmed.

In reviewing this observance of death, the last and - by the evidence - the greatest any Doukhobor can make, we perceive two foci. For the family, death observance itself begins with the last care of the body, laying-out, and continues

over a three-day period. The sorrow that in some other observances is allowed or encouraged to become deeply obsessive, is here inhibited both by its formalization and by the family's practical involvement with other duties. In the very act of successfully playing the role prescribed for mourners, the family is compelled to commit its attention not to the dead, but to the living. In turn, the community-at-large shares in this communication, and affirms to the family its own life, with the compassionate comfort, cheerful conversation, youthful flirting, dozing, inattention, and devout worship that are all parts of its presence. The bereaved family will be, no doubt, exhausted at the end of the funeral; they will also be purged of much of the injury done them by this death. Their personal experience is blended precisely into a familiar, formal ritual; the necessary memory of the dead has already begun to prevail, because the dead has become part, with his or her family, of that aspect of community ritual life that is directed toward memory. All the subsequent observances - casting earth on the coffin, sharing in the burial, Paminki, and the erection of a gravemarker - affirm and complete the fundamental theme: the dead is not here and therefore has become immortal.

For the community, the experience is a little different. Discrepant and light incidents at a funeral are matter for critical comment; the duties of the family are held to be onerous. The community is not obliged to be conscious of all the implications of its actions, merely to carry them out; and what it essentially carries out is the affirmation of its own life. Its integrity is challenged but undiminished by the loss of a member - indeed, that member is not lost, he or she has simply carried representation of the community into another mode of existence. So the community for the most part enjoys the funeral, in several senses; and, through identification with the choir and gravediggers, extends special services, affirming its stake in the passage to immortal memory.

In this passage more than any other, the integrity of family and community is confirmed. Each is indispensible to the other; each is fundamentally involved in the

state-beyond-the-grave: the family has a representative there, the community is moving in time to a period when there will be no distinction either side of death, but all will be perfect. Life with God and his angels, life in company with all the faithful departed, is affirmed; ordinary life, with its flowers and bruises, goes on in fact, and no mere death is allowed to interrupt it. As the family is that part of the community most threatened and injured by death, so the community affirms the strength and vigour of the family and honours it as its own agent in the conduct of ritual, the people most qualified to lead the rest. The apprehended effect of death is division; the rite of passage retaliates with union, and proposes eternal union. Under historic pressure, most Doukhobor customs stress processes of unification; death, the extreme pressure, calls up the strongest rebuttal.

IV. Conclusion

Before summing up, a caution is in order. This discussion is based directly upon field observation - unrepeateable contexts - and from review of traditional texts. Outside the culture or within it, evidence is only open to interpretation, rarely to proof beyond accuracy of reporting. Folkloric analysis, given the kinds of evidence available, rests much upon the fieldworker's ability to enter the mores and philosophy of a scoiety as well as its more overt behaviours and communication. What is presented here is not the Law of the Medes & Persians Which Changeth Not, but the analysis fieldwork trains me to make of the raw materials Doukhobors offer through their tradition. The reviewer must not expect to go to any isolated Doukhobor and ask,'Do you believe this? Is this a fact?' He or she might, however, profitably ask,'Does this make sense to Doukhobors?'

Doukhobors rites-de-passage concern themselves with changes in human status, as do any rites of passage. They do so in the context of a society that has been educated by history to see itself as threatened, righteous, exemplary, and ultimately

vindicated (Ps. 150). This society not only sees itself in a presently imperfect circumstance, but it sees its curcumstances as continually progressing to perfection. The pessimistic implication of history is opposed by an optimistic social and ideological goal.

For the Doukhobor family, integrity must involve Doukhobor identity. Birth assumes this identity to be a fact, and to need no special confirmation: such will come developmentally. Marriage includes the psalm Be Devout, in which the hearers - the newlyweds - are enjoined to Doukhobor behaviour; the rite has moved from integrity by opposition to the established form, to identity by distinction from local, surrounding forms. Death causes the strongest possible affirmation of family and community integrity.

But Doukhobor identity is not simply a matter of formal behaviour. Indeed, it is a credal matter that '...we see changing steps toward perfection...'(Ps, 144/6), In spite of their natural inertia, customs will be adapted, observances will alter. This process need not be destructive: it may, as the psalms suggest, imply the correct progress of Doukhobor society. Hasty change, of course, is not commended, and the psalm Basic Rules for Young Children(Mealing 1972, p. 280-'2) advises in its Sixth clause

> [Doukhobor children...ought] to restrain themselves sensibly in adaptation to the times,...

Thus their faith calls Doukhobors to tread a narrow path: to affirm an identity, but to accept changes in the accidental phenomena of that identity. Armed with the historically conditioned emphases of community assemblies, and defended by the expectation of ameliorative change, the Doukhobor family stands not inly in benefit but an agent of unity.

F.M. Mealing, Ph.D.
Institute for Doukhobor Studies
Selkirk College
Castlegar, B.C.

F. M. Mealing

December 22, 1977

Bibliography

Bonch-Bruevich, Vladimir

1954 Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev (From the Book of Life of the Doukhobors). Winnipeg, Regehr's Printing. repr. of 1910 ed.

Chertkov, Vladimir

1899 Christian Martyrdom in Russia. Toronto, Morang.

Fitzgibbon, May

1899 The Canadian Doukhobor Settlements. 'by Lally Bernard'(pseud.). Toronto, William Briggs. Pamphlet.

Hawthorne, Harry, ed.

1955 The Doukhobors of British Columbia. Vancouver, Dent & U.B.C.

Kravchinsky, Sergei M.

1882 Russian Peasantry, their agrarian condition, social life, and religion. 'by Stepniak'(pseud.). London, Sonnenschein. Vol. II, pp. 505-549.

Mealing, F. Mark

1972 Our People's Way: a survey in Doukhobor hymnody and folklife. Ph.D.(Folklore & Folklife) Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia.

Maloff, Peter

MS The Doukhobors, Their History, Life, & Struggle. Unpublished typescript partial translation of

1948 Dukhobortsi: ikh Instori'ia, Zhizn', i Bor'ba. Thrums, B.C.. p.p.

Peacock, Kenneth

1966 Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada. Ottawa, National Museum.

1970 The Songs of the Doukhobors. Ottawa, National Museum of Man.

Rhoades, Jonathan

1900 A Day with the Doukhobors. Philadelphia,[?]. Pamphlet.

Tarasoff, Koozma

1964 In Search of Brotherhood/a History of the Doukhobors. Vancouver, p.p. Vols. III. MImeograph edition of 10.

1969 Pictorial History of the Doukhobors. Saskatoon, Prairie Books/Western Producer.

Woodcock, George, & Ivan Avakumovic.

1968 The Doukhobors. Toronto, Oxford University Press.