HISTORY 216

Subject: The Doukhobours

Topic: THE PUBLICITY ON THE DOUKHOBOURS, 1898-1950, AND HOW IT REFLECTED THEIR PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN CANADA.

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INTRODUCTION

Most people living in the West Kootenay area have had personal contact with the Doukhobours and are aware of newspaper articles and some books (Doukhobour Daze, by Helen O'Neail, Doukhobours, by George Woodcock, and Terror in the Name of God, by Simma Holt) which have dealt with the sect during the past two decades.

One purpose of my study was to trace the history of the Doukhobours in Canada from the time of their arrival in 1898, until 1950. This era marks the most important processes of social adjustment and conflict of the Russian Doukhobours. The Doukhobours had been part of a rural, non-literate group whose rules for behaviour were oral and traditional. In Canada, they found a strange land with customs and language foreign to them and a land with an increasily industrial literate culture.

The most important aspect of my research was to:

I. make an interpretive analysis of the literature on the Doukhobours

II. synthesize into one essay the written articles that dealt with the Doukhobours and their problems of assimilation, between 1898-1950.

A study of this nature is important because I found that most of the publicity misrepresented the majority of the Doukhobours by emphasizing the activities of a radical element within the group. These types of accounts instigated hostility in the Doukhobours against the Canadian social system, and consequently tended to delay their acceptance of their new cultural environment.

The Doukhobours emerged into history around the middle of the eighteenth century. The name of "Doukhobour" was first used in anger and derision by one of their opponents, Archbishop Amurosii Serebrennikov of Ekaterinoslav. It meant "spirit wrestlers" and was intended by the Archbishop in 1785 to suggest that they were fighting against the Holy Ghost. The connotation was changed by the Doukhobours, who claimed that they fought with the spirit of God, which they believed to dwell within them.

How the Doukhobour religion developed and whence it came are questions that can be answered by historians and Doukhobours themselves, at best with enlightened conjecture. This is because the peasant masses in Russia in the eighteenth century, lived out their lives in the same kind of obscurity that all illiterate and ahistoric cultures do; consequently, movements that developed among them might have continued long in obscurity before they attracted the attention of the literate and became matters of written records.[1]

It is known and well-publicized by nineteenth-century historians, such as Orest Novitskii, a pioneer in Doukhobour studies, that the Doukhobours radically rejected churches and priesthoods, denied the uniqueness of the historical Christ, proclaimed the immanence of the deity, and neglected the Bible in earlier times in favour of their own body of orally transmitted doctrine. Sylvan Kolesnikov, a

literate man, taught the Doukhobours in the Ukraine and in Southern Russia about 1750, that the external acts of religion were not important and that a Doukhobour might profess any religion provided that he remain true within himself to his beliefs and lived a good and simple life. His teachings also initiated the Doukhobour custom of bowing to the God within every man. Ilarian Pobirokhin, Kapustin, Lukeria Kalmakova and Peter Verigin were other influential Doukhobour leaders during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century.

In summary, Doukhobour beliefs by the end of the nineteenth century, centered on direct revelation and guidance which denied the need for a church organization and by an extension, included a denial of governmental authority or the right of anyone to use human force in human affairs. Throughout the nineteenth century, their actions and beliefs led to intermittent conflict with the Tsarist Russian state and with clerical authorities; the result was that they were persecuted and exiled.[2]

Several factors led to the Doukhobour migration to Canada. If the "dynamic Peter Vasil'evich Verigin had not galvanized the Doukhobours into an open defiance of the Tsarist state in the 1890's and if Tolstoy[3] had not supported the burning of the arms and had not denounced the persecution with all the weight of his world-wide reputation, the Doukhobours might well have been crushed out of existence as other sectarian groups previously had been".[4] If the Russian émigré

geographer, Peter Kropotkin, had not travelled over the Canadian prairies in 1897, the idea of migration might not have occurred to the Doukhobours and their friends and supporters in Western Europe. If the Doukhobours had not migrated to Canada, there is speculation that they may not have entered the situation in which their "bizarre behaviour", as it appeared to most North Americans, was opposed and stimulated by conservative prejudices and a governmental policy; this governmental policy was once described by Elmore Philipoff as fluctuating between "long periods of ignorant indifference and short official bursts of frenzied hostility".[5]

According to George Woodcock,[6] a distinguished biographer, travel writer, and poet it was by a series of "historical accidents"[7] that the "tiny dissenting sect of Doukhobours was drawn out of the obscurity in which most Russian peasants lived during the nineteenth century and into the glaring light of twentieth century North American publicity".[8]

In order to give an idea of how the first parties of Doukhobour refugees were received in Canada and what impressions they produced upon the habitants, I have selected the following newspaper extracts. On January 24, 1899, the reporter of the Halifax "Morning Chronicle" wrote:

> Singing psalms of thanksgiving to almighty God, over two thousand souls freed from Russian tyranny and oppression, sailed into Halifax harbour under the British flag, yesterday afternoon. Their hymn of thanksgiving ascended...

> ...for a double reason. They were thankful for their safe transportation over the mighty waters of the Atlantic and thankful because they were far removed from the land in which civil and religious freedom are unknown - where they are at liberty to practise the tenets of their faith in perfect freedom. One reason why they left their own country was because they refused to take up arms, yet they received a warm welcome in a harbour studded with forts. 9

The rather sympathetic nature of this account is probably due to the fact that North Americans had read and heard about The Doukhobour persecution and exile in Russia. And, they were acknowledging their liberty and equality under North American jurisdiction.

J. T. Bulmer addressed the Doukhobours as follows, Prince Hilkoff[10] acting as interpreter:

> "I have been appointed by a society of workingmen to welcome you to Canada, which I do most heartily. Not only are you a great accession of emigrants of a most desirable class, but more, you bring to Canada something more needed in this country than even immigrants- men who would stand by their principles, no matter how much suffering it cost them... Your noble stand in refusing to bear arms will ll strengthen every good cause in Canada..."

The editor of the Chronicle noted their most striking characteristic - "The bright, kindly sparkle of their eyes which gives a winning expression to the whole face and quickly wins confidence in their character".[12] The St. John "Daily Star" and the "Montreal Daily Star" published similar accounts of

the Doukhobours' arrival from Russia.

I attribute the initial accounts of the Doukhobours as being a direct result of Clifford Sifton's immigration policy. Clifford Sifton was Canada's Minister of the Interior. He was urgently soliciting immigrants, preferably those of hardy stock, who were willing to locate in peripheral areas in order to extend the settled frontier. In 1897, the year prior to the Doukhobour negotiations with the Canadian government, only 21,716 persons had arrived in Canada. Consequently, when the delegation headed by Aylmer Maude, a wealthy Englishman who had lived in Russia, reported that the potential Doukhobour colonists wished to settle "en masse" in an isolated area, the Canadian government welcomed the news. As John Zubek in DOUKHOBOURS AT WAR, stated:

> They [Canadians] did not anxiously scan the social register for the pedigrees of friends and neighbours lest they should lower the standards of the sacrosanct community. Rather, they looked over the fields to ensure that the dry prairie winds would not carry tumbleweeds from poorly tilled acres to their own well-kept properties. [13]

The Canadian Pacific Railway, whose main line had been completed fifteen years earlier, recognized that the prosperity and expansion of the railways depended upon settlement of the prairies. Accordingly, railway officials co-operated with the government's immigration policy, by giving reduced rates from seaports to the interior, and later hiring the Doukhobour men as laborers.

Most of the Doukhobour colonists went directly from Saint John to Yorkton, Saskatchewan where they pitched their tents until such time as more substantive shelters were constructed. By the end of 1899, the people were distributed as follows, according to which villages they belonged to in Russia: 1,472 in the Saskatchewan colony of ten villages, located in two groups, the northern between Blaine Lake and the North Saskatchewan River, and the other, twenty miles to the south, near the present village of Langham; 1,404 in the North Colony at Thunder Hill and in the Swan River Valley where there were thirteen villages; 4,478 in the South Colony, which consisted of thirty-four villages. For these 7,354 people, there were 795 houses in fifty-seven villages. [14]

One of the earliest accounts of the Doukhobours, following their settlement in Canada, was a lecture delivered at the Friends' Meeting House in Manchester, England. John Ashworth began to awaken an interest in the "Doukhobortsi" by comparing them to Quakers and to other religious communities that had suffered or were suffering persecution at the hands of the government.

> The history of the Doukhobours brings home to members of the Society of Friends what our forefathers suffered in the days of George Fox, in the time of the Irish Rebellion, and during the American War. [15]

He gives an interesting and informative account of the Doukhobours and their beliefs. In the fall of 1899, he was able to pay a

visit to some of the settlments, after first obtaining special permission from the Deputy Minister of the Interior. He travelled with a contractor who was on his way to Yorkton to engage 500 Doukhobours in work on the Canadian Northern Railway, which was extending westward out of Manitoba, towards the Rockies. The contractor evidently spoke well of the Doukhobours and thought them to be steady workmen. Ashworth himself said that the Doukhobours were industrious and abstemious and always truthful in their speech. He recalls Emperor Alexander I's expression in one of his rescrips on December 9, 1816,

> "All the measures of severity exhausted upon the spirit-wrestlers during the thirty years up to 1801, not only did not destroy the sect, but more andmmore multiplied its adherents. 16

Ashworth reminds his listeners that during the persecution of the 1840's and 1850's, when the Spirit-Wrestlers were exiled to the extreme borders of the Caucasus and to the wild, unhealthy, and uncultivated district of Elizavetpol, they managed to enjoy peace and prosperity, through their hard work. In his lecture, Ashworth recalls his first impression of a Doukhobour village:

> "I shall always remember...a picturesque group of quaintly built chalet-like houses, made of logs and turf roofs. The sides were coated with clay plaster and presented a uniform appearance. In the centre of the main room was an oven, five feet square, which served the purpose of heating the hut and cooking the food. Everything showed most careful workmanship...

> ...The habits of personal cleanliness acquired in their old country, were continued here, for one of the first buildings put up was a Russian bath...
>
> We had a supper of dark brown, sour bread, tea in glasses, potatoes sliced and baked in oil, which was eaten according to their custom - with the fingers, then a kind of soup made of macaroni, for which they provided home-made wooden spoons. [17]

From attending the Doukhobour meetings, he learns that women are treated equally.

> ...they hear the word of God from each other as each one may express for the benefit of his brethren...the women are not excluded, for as they [Doukhobours] say, women also have understanding, and light is in understanding. [18]

Primarily, he notices in visiting the villages of the Doukhobours, "the power that Christianity in its truest sense has of civilising". [19] These people "deprived of even the few necessaries of life common to the children of the soil, hunted from pillar to post, made to herd like the beasts of the field...are today, the most polite, orderly people it is possible to imagine". [20] He emphasized to his associates that the villages testify the powers of "inherent orderliness" [21] and that the results of self-discipline are apparent in the people as a unit - the "core" of their religious convictions being that of self-restraint. He best summarizes his interest in the Doukhobours by the following reference to the society of his time.

> The times are ominous. Militarism is apparently becoming rampant...There is something unutterably pathetic to those who live in this wrangling, noisy world of the

...

> nineteenth century to see the Doukhobours, quietly and silently bearing with a great patience, the load that is laid upon their shoulders. 22

Not all the Canadians saw their society nor the Doukhobours in this light, particularly once the new immigrants emerged from their settlements, and faced the problems of functioning in a new cultural environment.

Owing to the fact that many young men had been left behind in Russia because of their liability to military service, the proportion of working agemen was relatively small - approximately one-fifth. This was to have a considerable effect on the kind of life that the Doukhobours developed on the prairies. The 1500 adult males sought employment for the summer months, so that they could pool their wages to purchase equipment and supplies for the following year. The women, willingly hitched themselves to plows to till the soil for crops. Canadian and American feminists were shocked by exaggerated newspaper accounts that suggested that the Doukhobours were virtually enslaving their womenfolk. Comments, such as the following, appeared in the newspapers.

> All through the summer days...they [Doukhobour women] would trudge over the prairie, inspired by the eerie harmonies of their own singing... They seemed to symbolize the burdened fate of humanity chanting its protest under the innocent indifference of the sky... 23

And, there are many stories about the difficulties that Doukhobour men, referred to as "Bohunks" encountered during their

work on construction and railway gangs. Fellow workers would insult and annoy them in the hope of breaking down their pacifism.

In the Autumn, when the men returned from their construction and railway jobs, a new issue arose amongst the Doukhobours themselves. Wages on the track were not the same as those for farm hands or construction men. As a result of the question of equity of distribution, some Doukhobours began to secede from the community groups, so that by the spring of 1900, approximately two thousand had separated themselves from the communal system and had taken up individual homesteads. These later officially became the Independent Doukhobours.

It should be mentioned that the uneducated Doukhobours were accustomed to strong leadership. Lukeria Kalmikova had autocratically ruled from 1865 to 1885, some twenty thousand Doukhobours in the Caucasus. Peter Verigin, who succeeded Lukeria, had been and still was a powerful agent in holding the Doukhobours together in Canada. He was however, still in exile in Siberia. Neither Verigin nor Tolstoy, whom some Doukhobours believed to be a link with their leader, had any knowledge of Canadian conditions; consequently, much of the advice that they dispensed to the Doukhobours, from abroad, confused the settlers instead of clarifying their position.

In February, 1900, Tolstoy sent a letter to the Doukhobours, in which he deplored the secession of the Independents and strongly exhorted the loyal to continue to live as Christians in the approved communal fashion. He spoke at length of the evils of secularization.

> The Christian teaching cannot be taken piecemeal; it is all or nothing. It is inseparably united into one whole. If a man acknowledges himself to be a son of God, from that acknowledgement flows the love of his neighbour; and from love of his neighbour flow, equally, the repudiation of violence, of oaths, of state service and of property. 24

Tolstoy warned the Doukhobours that to collect property separately for one's self is contrary to the will of God and his commandements. Much debate and confused interpretations followed as a result of Tolstoy's message. Quite likely, his eloquence sowed the seed for the later Doukhobour nude demonstrations.

Coincidentally, while Tolstoy's letter was still on their minds, the Doukhobours received printed copies of the registration law, translated into Russian. Local land officers began a tour of visits to the immigrants, explaining to them the prerequisites to proving individual ownership of their homesteads. All titles issued in the names of communal Doukhobours were to become invalid; Doukhobours from whom titles were to be withdrawn were allowed to claim any unoccupied farmlands within three months of their receipt of the Declaration.

The Doukhobours sent an appeal to the government and the people of Canada.

> True it is, the people in our vicinity... petty tradesmen...regard our existence with hatred and are surely trying to undermine it as well as to instill this hatred in others...
>
> But, any man of plain common sense and unbiased in this matter, who is not personally familiar with our life, should not place his faith in their statements. 25

The Doukhobours believed that the earth was a common mother and they could not understand why men could not live upon it without divisions or boundaries. They could not understand theidea that they were considered "good fellows" when they had to go to the merchants for everything they were in need of; now that they could supply themselves, they were bad.

The Doukhobours were unpopular for other reasons, most of which arose from their ignorance of the Canadian culture. The following document was widely quoted in newspapers and caused a great deal of public indignation by its questioning of the righteousness of Canadian law.

> ...marriage consists of mutual love, and only so long as this endures is a marriage valid; two dollars paid to a policeman in connection with a ceremony does not make a real marriage. 26

As to the registration of vital statistics - the Doukhobours believed that it was no concern of the government, what changes went on among them. People in Canada and the United States began to think of the Doukhobours as backward barbarians.

The fact was that now, after the initial unfamiliarity on both sides, the Doukhobours and the Canadians were beginning to find each other, as Aylmer Maude said of his acquaintances, "men with human limitations and deficiencies, and not the plaster saints I had supposed...".[27] The Doukhobours were realizing that a society without Tsars and Cossacks could still have imperfections and the Canadians were beginning to suspect that the Russian peasants might not easily be assimilated into the kind of society that was being created in the opening west.[28] Doukhobours, in fact, became the objects of resentment in many sections of the Canadian society. They were hated by the ranchers, who had free run of the prairies for grazing their cattle; local merchants, as the Doukhobours noted in their petition, became less friendly when they realized that the co-operative organization of the sect favoured wholesale buying in centres like Winnipeg. Conservatives continued to raise objections about the exemption from military service granted to the Doukhobours.[29]

One of the biggest problem was that of misunderstandings that arose because of language differences. The Doukhobours were largely unaware that public debates were being held about them. Most of the hostilities the Doukhobours encountered were direct and personal from their neighbouring settlers. The conclusion they no doubt reached was that Canadians, collectively and individually were trying to attack Doukhobours principles and destroy their way of living.

The sect was obviously in a state of unrest due to the absence of their leader and due to the increasing pressures over the land titles. On top of this trouble, Petushka in 1902 sent a series of letters to the Doukhobour colonies. He painted a picture of his Utopia, much like Tolstoy's advocacy of non-resistance and simplicity, which he had sent to The Doukhobours in 1900. Some Doukhobours ardently believed that Verigin intended them to leave their homes in search of this Eden. Several villages turned their horses and cattle out onto the open prairies because Petushka said it was wrong to exploit animals. The more realistic opposed the decision to leave their homsteads and both sides apparently quoted scriptures from the New Testament to prove their points. Again, we see an internal conflict within the Doukhobours. The faithful burned their leather harnesses, turned in their money to the immigration department, and nearly four hundred men, women and children marched southward from the Thunder Hill Colony. As they approached each village, they sang and shouted, "Let us all go to the promised land".[30]

The Doukhobour pilgrimmage in search of the promised land contrasted with the rather dull background of everyday life on the prairie and provided for much political partisanship and sensational journalism. English-language Canadian newspapers, more specifically those supporting the Conservative party in Ottawa, published factually inaccurate reports. The

reports were supplemented with editorial attacks on the Liberals in general, and Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, in particular. He was the man held mainly responsible for bringing to Canada, "these mad Russian peasants" and "fanatics in sheepskin coats".[31] Even the French-language newspapers of Quebec showed interest in the West. (This was also true, during the 1960 Sons of Freedom activity). In Sunday editions of the United States papers, the facts became "convenient skeletons for literary ornations illustrated with artistic conceptions".[32] Newspapers in England, prior to pilgrimage evidently had said very little about the Doukhobours. Now they too carried stories about "those peculiar people, who, given a haven in Canada are making a doubtful success of the experiment in practical philanthropy".[33] The Tsar's press too was pleased to prove that the Doukhobours were "hopeless fanatics".[34]

A special correspondent of the "Manitoba Free Press", who accompanied the zealots on their wanderings, evoked the spirit of the pilgrimage in the "lush language of Edwardian journalism":[35]

> That they are showing signs that hunger, fatigue, and emanciation have weakened their stalwart frames. Every man's face is an index, silent and eloquent, of what he has been, and is enduring...a drizzling rain is falling to add to the self-inflicted miseries of these martyrs to mistaken ideals of right.

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> .....Ever and anon will arise their plaintive psalm, its weird minor cadences rising and falling with varying strength, now swelling higher on the breeze like martial music, and again sinking into a mournful dirge of sorrow...
>
> The trail over which these thousand feet have travelled is worn level as the floor of a dancing pavilion...all who have seen it say it looks like a dreadful dream, that is incredible, unrealizable - hundreds of men, with the light of insanity in their eyes, roaming whither and for what they know not, and animated by a belief that brings the dark ages into the dawning twentieth century. 36

We can see, thus, that during these years, publicity of Doukhobour affairs had been built around differences; their redeeming features had never been "played up to" the public, except when they first arrived. Reporters exaggerated accounts of the pilgrimage, the arson, and nude exhibitions. They failed to point out that the responsibility for the arson cases was attached to six Sons of Freedom - hardly representative of 8,000 people! Similarily, reporters failed to realize that the nude trek was not a deliberate violation of the law because the participants were ignorant of such a law. According to Wright, author of SLAVA BOHU, a conversation proceeded as follows:

> "It is very strange," said Alex, "that these people becoms so excited when a human takes off his clothes. It is terrible how far man has strayed from Nature."
>
> "Why do you take off your clothes?" shouted an officer."
>
> "Adam had no clothes before he sinned. We have not sinned and we wish to do no one any harm." 37

The remainder of the sect was blamed for the activities of a few, twenty-eight of whom were sentenced for indecent exposure and were sent to jail in Regina. They refused to conform with prison routine, and were, on occasion, dealt with cruelly. Their own accounts of the prison sentence, subject of much Doukhobour complaint in later years, may or may not be true. Our knowledge of prison conditions sixty-five years ago, make them possible.

Meanwhile, Verigin arrived in Canada on December 24, 1902. The Yorkton "Enterprise" of February 26, 1903, mentioned him in its social and personal column.

> Mr. Peter Verigin arrived in town yesterday with his team of spirited bloods. He is on his way to Winnipeg to make a report to the Department of Immigration after making a tour of the Doukhobour villages. 38

People were optomistic that Verigin would settle the problems of the "Douk hoboes", who refused to register their lands. Indeed, Verigin proclaimed that the Doukhobours would become British subjects and would individually make entry for their homesteads, in accord with the land laws. By 1906, 323,000 acres were registered by all but six families.

Perhaps one of the most historically important things that Verigin did was to denounce the behaviour of the radical element of the Doukhobours, to government officials and newspapers. Ten of the sentenced men in the Regina prison began forming the nucleus of the long-term Sons of Freedom movement.

These men were now certain that Verigin was no longer their "Christ". Secondly, they were now certain that the larger body of Doukhobours was moving away from the true faith through following the "arratic Verigin" [39]; they were becoming secularized and were adopting Canadian farming methods - binders, rollers, and other "satanic contraptions made of metal and constructed in factories". [40] Thirdly, the Sons of Freedom had doubted the government before, but now they had experienced punishment for showing their independence and proclaiming their freedom. Most importantly, the incarceration had placed the ten prisoners in the position of being martyrs. Now they knew that whenever such a parade was repeated, sensational head-lines would result, as well as confinement and "martyrdom".

A lull in publicity on the Doukhobours followed in the few years (1903-05) after the nude parade and arson episodes. Financially, the Doukhobour colonies prospered, largely due to Verigin's administation. (He, for example, negotiated for higher wages from railroad employers) The government was satisfied because the Doukhobours had signed for their lands in 1903. But, the oaths of allegiance, as outlined in the government declaration, had not been fulfilled. In addition, new colonists began to arrive to Canada "en masse". In 1905, 146,266 new colonists arrived and in 1906, another 189,064. [41]

The government could afford to be selective. Sifton, who had been somewhat sympathetic towards the Doukhobours, was replaced

by Frank Oliver, as Minister of the Interior. Oliver immediately sent the following government declaration to the Doukhobours:

> The government is pleased to observe that some of the Doukhobours are tilling their own soil and have become, or are becoming Canadian citizens, and British subjects. But, at the same time, the government greatly regrets to perceive the majority of Doukhobours, after seven years' residence in Canada, still continuing to till their land communally and declining to acquire the citizenship of this country. [42]

In the declaration, the government stated that men born outside of the Doukhobour persuasion demanded that the Doukhobours should not be allowed to go on holding their land without adopting the citizenship of the country.

> The government of Canada represents the majority of the Canadian people and if the majority of the people prescribe that the Doukhobours should not be allowed to retain in their possession the land...then the government is duty bound to obey and must cancel the reservations for homesteads improperly held... [43]

Clearly, all the new settlers were clamouring for the land. They were either already voters or would soon be when they became "naturalized". The Doukhobours, because they did not swear allegiance, were not eligible to vote. The new settlers, in their eagerness to acquire land, circulated rumors about the Doukhobours. They questioned the sincerity of the "selfless" religion of the Doukhobours and believed that the Russian immigrants were as eager to amass wealth as other Canadians; only the "opportunity had been lacking in Russia, not the motive". [44]

Canadians now began to doubt Verigin's ability to clear up the Doukhobour problems. The "canadian Courier" published this statement, on April 27, 1907:

> When the Doukhobour shall put away Verigininism and substitute for it Canadianism, there is every reason to believe that he will be a credit for the country. [45]

In the Spring of 1907, some 235 Independents made legal entries of their land, and these, together with 136 who had already registered, received a total of 59,360 acres. But, because the Doukhobours would not swear allegiance over half the land individually entered by the Doukhobours between 1903 and 1905 was taken away from them completely; on June 1, 1907, 258,880 acres were made availalbe to the general public. [46] Now, nearly all the Doukhobours had become martyrs for their beliefs.

Late in 1907, delegates of the North and South Doukhobour colonies, plus a few Prince Albert colonists, assembled to discuss the future. It was decided that Verigin and his lieutenants should inspect possible areas of settlement, where the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood would have complete control of the land, by means of ownership. The Doukhobours believed that by ownership of land, they would avoid the Homestead Act and its consequences of British citizenship. [47]

Gold miners had penetrated west of the Rockies during the 1860's. After that, the valleys of the Selkirks and the

Monashees, for three decades were largely abandoned to the Indians and trappers. In the 1890's a rush came to the Kootenay and Boundary areas, sparked off by the discovery of silver and base metals. Mines were opened, smelters built, and settlements sprang up. When the mines gave out, some of the cities were deserted but others retained certain importances - either like Trail, as a metal-producing center, or like Nelson and Grand Forks, as the transport, marketing and administrative centers for the mixed farming and lumbering.[48]

Peter Verigin and his companions came to these areas in the spring of 1908. Compared to the prairies, the whole region seemed "a new frontier waiting for a pilgrim people to liberate it from the wilderness".[49] At Nelson, the delegates were met by Claude Fisher, a man of all trades who had taken out options on several square miles of land, when he had heard of Verigin's desire to acquire land. Fisher showed Verigin many tracts of land, with the result that when Verigin returned to the prairies from southern British Columbia, he said,

> "...we will buy our land and own it so it will not be necessary to be subjects of the English kind. No schools are there, and the air is very pure... so we will live in good healthy, in a Christian way...[50]

Verigin then returned to British Columbia leaving behind him "enthusiasm for an exodus".[51] He borrowed $100,000 from a loan company, pledging the prairie acres as collateral. From the community savings pool, the migration fund reached $342,099.[52]

The earliest Doukhobour colonies, registered in Verigin's name, in British Columbia, consisted of twenty-eight hundred acres near Brilliant and twenty-nine hundred at Grand Forks. During the next few years, these purchases were extended to include colonies at Champion Creek, near Trail, Glade, Pass Creek, and Crescent Valley, bringing the total acreage up to 14,403. The colonization of the community followed the pattern that had been established in Saskatchewan. As group after group of immigrants arrived, they cleared lands, marketed surplus forest products, and set out orchards. The Kootenay Preserving Company was bought in 1910 and in the same year a concrete reservoir, with a capacity of one million gallons was built in the Brilliant area. A brick kiln was constructed at Grand Forks.

By the autumn of 1912, there were more than 5,000 Doukhobours in British Columbia. All the new villages were directly controlled by a central executive, which consisted of Verigin and an elder from each new settlement. All earnings of all individuals were turned into a central fund. By 1912, half of the purchase price of the 14,000 acres had been paid. The land tripled in value; by 1916 land holdings had been extended to 19,000 acres of which 39.5% were cultivated. Livestock was valued at $106,000; farm machinery at $44,000. By 1916, eight sawmills were operating, the brick factory making over 2,500,000 bricks per year. Three flour mills supplied the need of the community, with excess flour being shipped to the prairies. The industrial plants and equipment were appraised at $400,000; the

the irrigation works at $100,000; the electric power plant at $25,000 and road improvements at $24,000.[53]

Economically, they prospered but all was not well in this "second Garden" either. Again the Doukhobours encountered problems with their neighbours and later with the government. Sociologists speak of wealth, converted to suitable symbols of status, as the ladder of upward mobility. But, because of the philosophy of the Doukhobours, they declined to convert their wealth to suitable symbols in terms of living standards, recreation, and education. They did not wish to purchase their supplies from the local retailers; instead, as their collective wealth increased, they became progressively more self-sustaining and independent of the townspeople. Publicity on the Doukhobours began to circulate. Headlines such as, "HOW A STRANGE SECT IS ADAPTING TO BRITISH COLUMBIA THE IDEALS OF AN ALIEN RACE"[54] began to appear in "Fruit and Farm" journals. Suspicion of an invasion of Doukhobour colonists led to the following type of accounts, regarding the settlement at Brilliant:

> This interesting experiment is of particular interest to the farming country of the province for if successful it will doubtless result in a very large increase in the number of people of this faith who will seek homes in the valleys of B. C.[55]

Fear that the Doukhobours would establish a "socialist Utopia"[56] appeared in publications by non-Doukhobour settlers:

> They now have their own nursery so that preliminary expenses involved through purchasing from outside sources will in future be largely obviated. 57

By the standards of Western culture, the Doukhobours were failures for they lived a simple life and did not share in civic responsibilities; instead, they preferred to live unto themselves. The following quotation summarizes the Western ideal, which was lacking in the Doukhobours:

> The most primitive life is complex. Simplicity may be defined as the art of ignoring complexity, and thus transferring the burden of its problem to others. Like Russians in general, the Doukhobours are deficient in the sense of responsibility. 58

In an informal discussion with Maurice Hindus, a New Yorker who had lived in Russia as a child, the Doukhobours explained their idea of responsibility.

> "But you see, we are simple people. We are happy as we are. To us education means being a good Doukhobour...we teach all these things to our children. That is, to love all living things and to do no evil.
>
> And more too. The mothers teach their daughters to bake and to cook and to spin and to weave and to embroider, and the fathers teach their boys to be handy with an axe, a carving knife, a plow, a team of horses. 59

Education to the Doukhobours meant doing culturally useful things. The adults felt that their responsibility was to educate their children into the communal way of living.

Had the Doukhobours shown any interest in churches, schools, or recreational facilities, many citizens probably would have defended their culture. But, as a New York editor stated,

> The struggle of this little band of non-conformists to maintain their peculiar form of individualistic communism in the midst of a civilization whose trend is strongly in the opposite direction, has a double interest, sociological and religious. [60]

He felt that the Doukhobours, like other "peculiar peoples who have come to America to obtain freedom and isolation" [62] were finding out that the "solvent action of a democracy is more disintegrating than the oppression of an autocracy". [61] This editor encouraged sympathy for the ideals of the sect but believed that there was little hope at present of their prevailing or even long surviving when "the pressures of the spirit of the time is forcing a more complex and systematic organization of society". [63] We will see how the Doukhobours but especially the Sons of Freedom fought during the 1920's and 1930's against this assimilation into Canadian society.

Even before all the Doukhobours had settled in British Columbia, the citizens began to pressure the provincial government because the 700 Doukhobour children were not attending school. As a result of this and other complaints, the British Columbia government appointed a "Royal Commission on Doukhobours of 1912" to investigate the whole Doukhobour problem. On August 24,1912, the commissioner, an Englishman trained as a mining engineer but of late an editor of a weekly Nelson paper, was sworn in to make recommendations about the Doukhobours.

I was unable to obtain the Commission report but according to John Zubek, author of DOUKHOBOURS AT WAR, "it was formidable only because of the thousands of dollars expended in compiling the nebulous data contained between those leaves. The data was a delightful surprise...an amazing blend of fact and fiction. No one knows or ever did know what parts were true. There were glaring omissions negatively contributing their bit to the lack of clarity".[64] The Doukhobours, themselves were wondering if the government had mistaken "mining" for "human engineering".

Alexander M. Evalenko, an Americanized Russian who came from New York to visit the Doukhobours in British Columbia, strongly expresses his feelings on the Commission Report.

> ...recently with officials resorting to drastic measures in their wrathful eagerness to compel the submission to if not the recognition of their authority by the Doukhobours and the latters' quiet but adamant resistance, the trouble assumed such ominous proportions that the central authority could no longer leave the situation entirely in the hands of the narrow-minded and over-zealous local minions of the law, whose only arguments in bringing the obdurate Doukhobours[65] consisted in handcuffs and the lock-up.

Evalenko thought that the chief cause of the problem was that the non-Doukhobour settlers in British Columbia did not understand the Doukhobours and that the Doukhobours could not make themselves understood in the manner followed by them - justifying their doctrine by <u>living it</u>. He, therefore, suggested that the Doukhobours write a book to spread their message.

Peter Verigin responded to Evalenko's plea by writing an article in answer to, "the writings of unscrupulous persons, Russians as well as English, who are meddling with things which are out of their line, by writing what they ought not to say and condemning that which is not for them to criticize".[66] He explained that the Doukhobours shaped the course of their earthly life, "as far as our reason conceives and our physical powers enable us, after God, through Jesus Christ, his true son and heir who proclaimed: 'Praised be our Lord in Heaven, peace on Earth, and goodwill to all men'".[67] Therefore, having such a spirit within them, the Doukhobours, according to Verigin, could go on undisturbed, even heedless of "such trivialities as petty calumnious attacks of both those Russians and the Englishmen".[68]

Already, then, the Doukhobours in British Columbia, considered themselves a minority group and realized that they were bound to "contend with misunderstandings, misinterpretation, and slander"[69] when they published their beliefs. Verigin possibly exaggerated when he said,

> "We are to face a storm - vanity, pharisaism, ambition, cruel-rulers, powers-that be... all this joining forces in order to annihilate us Doukhobours ".[70]

But the book, THE MESSAGE OF THE DOUKHOBOURS, does contain highly informative accounts of the Doukhobours' origin, their beliefs, and problems they encountered during their settlement in Canada. It is the first and detailed publication of the Doukhobours' problems, as they saw them.

The following expression by Archie Bell, who visited British Columbia in 1917, supports Evalenko's notion that information on the Doukhobours had largely been misinformation, thus showing that publication of the Doukhobour's message should have positive results.

> ...my impression of the Doukhobours had been gained chiefly from sensation-loving newspapers in the United States, that gave much space to the Russian peasants some years ago when... they set out on the prairie to 'meet the Messiah".

He believes that his idea was doubtless the general opinion of American readers who "swallowed at a gulp exactly what certain officials wanted them to swallow".[72] Everywhere in British Columbia, Bell heard about the Doukhobours but he felt that what he heard was very confusing and shed very little light upon the truth.

Antagonism erupted among the Doukhobours themselves, in August of 1914, when World War I broke out. The Doukhobours, under the Militia Act of 1904 (revised) had been granted exemption from the services. Although the Independents had formed their group for economic reasons, they continued to believe in the Doukhobour religion and continued to be conscientious objectors. They did not, however, know their status under Canadian law, and consequently began flocking back into the communities, when conscription rumors circulated. Verigin evidently chose to reject the Independents because thy "have forsaken our way of life and are no longer Doukhobours".[73]

The Independents under the leadership of Peter Makaroff, a lawyer from Saskatchewan, formed a Society and sent letters to Prime Minister Borden, and to R.B. Bennett, who was then chairman of the Canadian Registration Board. The government agreed to exempt them.

The greater antagonism over the war issue resulted from the fact that parents of volunteer and conscript soldiers protested the Doukhobour exemption. Their protests could best be summarized in the corruption of McCrae's poem:

> In Flanders Fields the poppies blow,
> Between the crosses, row on row...
> But in the Kootenay and Saskatchewan [74]
> The Douks get rich while our sons are gone.

"Why they're not even Canadian citizens, yet the government protects them", were other comments made.

Soldiers who returned from the war demanded that the Doukhobours should be dispossessed as unfit for residence in Canada. Some of this contempt of the Doukhobours died down when after the war ended, it became known that twelve Doukhobours had volunteered and served overseas. Also, Verigin, as a gesture of goodwill had contributed a shipment of "K.C.Brand" jam as a gift to the troops in France. He took the opportunity to point out that the Christians could not fight in a war, but that Christ had said that no man should go hungry. [75]

Meanwhile trouble with the British Columbia government continued. The Report of the Commission of 1912 had not suggested

a means of ensuring enforcement of school attendance and registration of vital statistics. Consequently, Attorney General William Bowser, in 1914, prepared the first specifically anti-Doukhbour legislation to be enacted in Canada. This Community Regulation Act repreated the obligations under law to provide vital statistics and send children to school, and it specified the fines to be levied. It differed from previous legislation in adding a clause that allowed distraint on the possessions of the Community for the offences of its members.[76] Verigin promised to enrol enough pupils to fill the schools that then existed. The Doukhobours built nine schools on their own land in the Kootenay area and sent their children in Grand Forks to schools provided by the school district.[77] This was the first major break-through in the traditional illiteracy of the Doukhobours. This educational comprimise lasted for seven years (from 1915-22). Not all the regulations were followed but during the war years the Provincial and Federal governments had more important tasks on hand, without supervising the Doukhobours.

In some respects, the Doukhobour community deteriorated after the war. The year 1921 was particularly difficult. Due to the weather, crops were small, prices began to fall, and less outside work was available for members of the Community. Verigin seemed very pessimistic and apparently jokingly said that in the interests of ensuring continued profit now that prices were

levelling off, that he intended to get rid of all old people and children who were either pre- or post-productive.[78] Newspapers all over the country picked up the story and officials and police from Ottawa and Victoria questioned hundreds of Doukhobours. Even the Vancouver "Daily Province" came out with banner headlines on February 21, 1922.

HAS VERIGIN GONE CRAZY?

Horrible scheme of Doukhobour leader is frankly admitted to slaughter women and aged, so men may roam about.[79]

Letters arrived from Religious Societies in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. Peter Makaroff, Secretary of the Independents, using great insight, replied that he thought Peter Verigin was attempting to embarrass the government with publicity in the newspapers because he did not wish his people to pay school taxes.[80] Verigin decided that the joke had gone far enough and used the press for elaborate public apologies. These, however, were accompanied by statements of grievances and demands for help. The Vancouver "Daily World" of February 27, 1922, reported that,

> Specifically, Mr. Verigin asks for a commission of inquiry and that the province reimburse the community for the roads it built, including a $30,000 bridge, which was the community's invested capital, and also that a loan of $50,000 be provided for irrigation.[81]

According to Woodcock, the demand for an inquiry, the "request for help from a government rejected by Doukhobour principles - these, accompanied by theatrical gestures aimed at arousing

public attention, were to become regular features of Doukhobour activity from this time onward".[82]

The Doukhobours aroused no response from the provincial government regarding financial assistance. As a result, in 1922, Doukhobour parents began to withdraw their children from school. The authorities acted quickly and fined eight parents. The fines were not paid until the police prepared to seize community goods. A similar incident happened in the spring, when a truck was seized by the police and released after payment of the fine. But, this was clearly not the way to cope with the problem; in May 1923, a school was burnt by unidentified arsonists. In the months that followed, nine schools in the Brilliant district were also destroyed. The burnings seemed to coincide with some attempt by the police to seize property in payment of fines. For example, when thirty-five Doukhobours failed to pay fines for not sending their children to school, the Mounted Police seized Doukhobour property and auctioned it for $3,500, to non-Doukhobour residents of the area. In addition, they hauled off $1100 worth of cedar poles and railway ties.[83]

Early in the morning of October 29,1924, Peter Vasilovich Verigin, died when the railway coach in which he was travelling was blown to pieces on its way through the mountains between Brilliant and Grand Forks. There is much public speculation about the causes of the explosion - Sons of Freedom activity, suicide, jealousy, a ploty by Verigin's son to get rid

of his father.[84] Many Doukhobours, annoyed at the failure of police investigations, believed that Verigin was a victim of the government or that the bomb had been intended for John A. Mackie, who was sitting across the aisle from Peter the Lordly. Thousands of people flocked to his funeral. Doukhobours (Independents and Sons of Freedom included) took the opportunity even on the day of his burial to discuss the question of a new leader.

Cablegrams were sent to Russia to the son of Peter the Lordly. The Community Doukhobours received a reply in early summer, that Peter Petrovich Verigin, would be arriving in about three weeks. The Doukhobours were overjoyed because the new Petushka would come and advise them what to do, regarding the school question. But, months of waiting followed and still he did not arrive. He continued to correspond with the Doukhobours telling them how he needed money to help the people who had moved from Caucasia to good land by the River Don. He wrote the following letter, on March 22, 1926, to his cousin, Andrew Katelnikoff, of Yorkton.

> ...Everywhere and at all times I have had to depend on my own strength and resources...resources very limited...while my expenses were very great...I think that you should know that the present circumstances do not admit of too much discussion...[85] your help will be a great relief to us in our cause...

Andrew was instructed to go to all the farmers and to make the request for financial aid. He was asked not to send less than five thousand dollars.

> ...These dollars are necessary for me and will allow me to depart quickly...I repeat, the sum should not alarm you, nor should return of the money worry you...86

Independents, Sons of Freedom, and the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood responded to the call for funds. Still Verigin did not arrive. The belief was that he was being held prisoner by the Soviet government, who planned to further persecute him by sending him to Turkestan. John Regubov, anti-imperialist journalist during the reign of the last tsar, prevailed upon Soviet authorities for Verigin's release.

On September 16, 1927, Peter Petrovich Verigin entered New York harbour. Through his three year correspondence with the Doukhobours, he knew that the major contention between Ottawa and the Doukhobours, were education and vital statistics. Consequently, upon his arrival, he raised these issues and informed the government that the Doukhobours would obey all Canadian laws. At Winnipeg, he told the "Free Press Prairie Farmer" that he was anxious that the Doukhobours should have the best educational advantages without relinquishing any of their religious tenents. He said, "we are willing to give the government our energies and our brains, but not our souls".

> "We will educate our children in the English schools, and we will also set up our own Russian schools and libraries, for which explicit purpose I am bringing along from Russia - Pavel Ivanovich Birukov, close friend and associate of Leo Tolstoy." 88

The government was pleased and newspaper reporters evidently wrote "glowing" accounts of the new Doukhobour leader. The

public was glad to hear that here was a leader who really would stop all the "uncivilized behaviour of the mad Russians".[89]

The situation of the Community had deteriorated sharply since the death of Peter the Lordly. The outbreaks of incendiarism that continued from 1923-25 and the seizure of Community property combined to lower the Doukhobour's confidence in the Community. Petushka had been able to charm businessmen and bankers but after his death, short-term creditors began to demand payments. Over the winter of 1924-25 the Community held a series of meetings where it was suggested that the Doukhobours return to Saskatchewan, where the government had handled the education question without distraining upon Community property.[90] The Doukhoburs did have a point because this idea of forcing instruction is futile, even in our own schools. Force tends to develop strong aversion for any system. The Doukhobours were initially unaware of education as a tool; consequently, the governmental seizure of goods and property was most regrettable in that it caused the Doukhobours to become more hostile towards assimilation into Canadian society.

The Community was financially depleted. A loan for $350,000 was negotiated with the National Trust, representing the Canadian Bank of Commerce. The finance company obtained mortgage on all lands and buildings; the $350,000 was used to pay off taxes and the short-term debts. By 1928, the Community's debts had reached $1,202,579 and its credit vanished because there was nothing left to mortgage.[91]

Peter Petrovich, who during a fiery speech named himself Chistiakov - the Purger, decided quickly that he must free the Community of its debt. The financial relations between Chistiakov and his followers were very complicated. He has often been accused of misappropriating funds on a colossal scale. It is not easy to find the true facts, since there are great gaps in the records, and there is no conclusive evidence to show what really happened. The fact remains, however, that by his death in 1939, he had cut in half the debt of the Community.

Another of Chistiakov's main objectivies was to unite the Independents (about 2000 in number), the members of the Christian Community (about 5,500 adults), and the Sons of Freedom into one strong group. On June 27, 1928, he called a conference in Kamsack, Saskatchewan. The conference founded a new, all-embracing organization known as the Society of Named Doukhobours.

The Sons of Freedom stood aloof from the Society and in the same year, they began new demonstrations against education. Doukhobour communities began to expel the Sons of Freedom who then began to wander. Vancouver dailies challenged both the public and Verigin. "Why did the public permit the existence of such lawlessness in a democratic country? If Verigin were really Christ, as he professed to be to the faithful, why did he not keep his flock in line? Surely no "Christ" would allow his sheep to become public charges on the British Columbia government."[92]

Two results of this sequence of nude parades are noteworthy. First, the maximum penalty under Federal Law was extended to three years, for indecent exposure. Secondly, the Saskatchewan government posted reward notices offering one thousand dollars to anyone giving information leading to the apprehension of the arsonists who were destroying school buildings.

In 1931, another problem arose. This was the taking of the Dominion census. Vital statistics were evaded at other times because without direct supervision, the government had no way of knowing who was born or who had died. In 1921, the reception of the enumerator had not been cordial. The "Grand Forks Gazette" printed the following item concerning the 1921 census-taking.

> As a result of the difficulty of the census enumerators in collecting information from the Sons of Freedom, seven men...were brought to court this week. In order to get them to appear, before the magistrate, the local R.C.M.P. had to fight a small battle, using only words and hands against an onslaught of pitchforks, cordwood, and other farming implements. 93

The enumerators fared no better in 1931, in Sons of Freedom areas. The "Grand Forks Gazette" again reported:

> Fanatic Sons of Freedom on the North Fork failed to scare off the census enumerator, with a nude parade. When Mr. _____ questioned them in a routine manner, the Doukhobours gave the alarm and soon 150 were parading in front of him. 94

These and about fifty more Sons of Freedom from the Kootenay area, were charged and committed to serve sentences.

From 1931 to the end of the decade, the story of the Doukhobours in Canada is woven of three different strands - the personal actions of Peter Chistiakov, the Community hampered by outside hostility and internal disunity, and the development of a small-scale mass movement by the Sons of Freedom. As I previously mentioned, there are gaps in records of Doukhobour history, in the Selkirk Library; that is, there is virtually no first-hand information on the Doukhobours during the 1930's. I will, therefore, try to trace the major developments of the Doukhobours during this decade, through the use of major books which reflect this time.

Because of the 1931 demonstrations, the Dominion government was faced with the problem of finding penitentiary room for several hundred convicted Sons of Freedom. Another problem was to make some provision for the children of the convicted adults. Some 306 children, ranging in ages from newly born to seventeen years accompanied their parents to jail. One policeman succintly defined the problem:

> "How in the name of justice and humanity can we lock up these women for three years and take the babies away from them? If we release these mothers who are just as guilty as the rest, what will people think of the consistency of our punishment?" 95

The authorities decided that suckling babies should remain temporarily with their mothers in Oakalla prison. Young children were dispersed among homes and orphanages; most of the older boys went to the Boys' Industrial School at Coquitlam. Oakalla did not have room for all the adult inmates. This accommodation

problem was debated by the Federal Department of Justice.[96]

Ottawa's decision was to remove the Sons of Freedom to Piers Island, a small island just off the coast of Fancouver Island. Buildings for the new penitentiary were started in August and by November were ready for occupancy. Separate compounds had been built for men and wowmn. Paradoxically, the Sons of Freedom were rewarded instead of punished by the Piers Island banishment; they had agitated for isolation from educational and secular influences and for simplicty of living.

The Sons of Freedom probably intended to use their weapon of passive resistance to authority in the penitentary. The warden, however, ingeniously turned this weapon againa the prisoners. He called his staff together for instructions.

> "No physical coercion will be used...these people are not criminals in the usual sense. Their errors are of omission, not commission. Many of them would welcome lashings because it would enhance their prestige in their own group- they would be martyrs. 99

He decided that the best way to beat the Sons of Freedom at their own game was just to ignore them.

Meanwhile, Verigin's drinking and court-room escapades brought extremely bad publicity to the Doukhobours in general and helped to destroy the unity that he had promoted during his first years in Canada. The Community, the center of Doukhobourism in Canada, shrank steadily in membership throughout the decade. In 1928, there were 4,326 members in B.C.; by 1936, the number had fallen to 3,083. In the prairie the decline was from 1,149 in 1928 to 386 in 1936.[100] Some members drifted away of their own accord; people were also expelled for failing to meet their

Another threat to the unity of the Society of Named Doukhobours was the formation of a political left movement. The Russian language paper "Kanadskii Gudok" prepared the ground by its articles discussing Doukhobour affairs and criticizing Chistiakov. In 1934, a small group formed the Progressive Society of Doukhobours. This was an "anti-militarist, anti-capitalist program coucher in Orthodox Marxist rather than in traditional Doukhobour phraseology".[101] This rebellion of 1934 alarmed Chistiakov, who publically denounced its adherents as "Bolsheviks". Membership in the Society was always small and was concentrated in the prairies. (Community influence was still very strong in B.C.)

The Society of Independent Doukhobours began to reassurt itself and with each revelation (mostly press accounts) of Chistiakov's irresponsibility, it moved farther away from him, until on his final imprisonment in 1937, the Independents dissociated themselves publicly from Verigin, denounced his leadership, and declared that they no longer recognized the Verigin dynasty.[102] This did not cut all ties between the various groups of Doukhobours but it did mean a destruction of a united Doukhobour movement.

The most important event of the decade was the downfall of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. It began in 1937 when the Community went into bankruptcy; it was consummated in 1938 when the two major creditors, the National Trust and the Sun Life Assurance Company won proceedings that allowed them to issue eviction notices to the Community in 1939. To the National Trust Company was owad $168,281.13 in

principal and interest and to the Sun Life, $192,297.51, for a total debt of $$360,580.64. [105]

In Alberta and Saskatchewan the creditors sold the land to individual members of the Community, and so virtually created a new group of Independents. In British Columbia a receiver was appointed and the moveable assets of the Community were sold for cash. Money was still scarce in 1938 and the implements, machinery, lumber, etc. were sold at very low prices. Early in 1939, the Sun Life and National Trust were about to start evicting the members of the Community, preparatory to puttings its properties up for auction. Many newspaper and magazine articles discussed this issue, the editors stressing that the Doukhobours could no longer maintain their identity and would quickly become assimilated into Canadian Society. Headlines such as DOUKHOBOURS AND THEIR UTOPIA PROBLEMS OF COMMUNITIES IN CANADA caught the public light; through their pessimistic attitude, these articles did little for the Doukhobours themselves, who feared being swallowed up totally by the Canadian social system.

Up to this time, the provincial government had not interfered in the dismantling and dispersion of the Community's assets. But, once it was certain that the Community as a business concern was destroyed, the authorities acted to prevent the disorder that would have arisen if several thousand Doukhobours were evicted without resources. Before the eviction notices went into effect, the government acquired for $296,500 the Doukhobour lands and buildings in the Kootenays and Grand Forks. [106] The Community holdings which were now the property

of the province, were administered by the Land Settlement Board, and the settlers were allowed to remain on the land for a pyment of rents. But, the business structure of the Community was destroyed, and according to Woodcock, its members were "reduced to individual tenants without the capital or the machinery or the incentive to make proper use of land that they now inhabited on sufferance".[107]

To the Doukhobours, this situation seemed like a repetition of what had happened in the prairies in 1907. Again they lost their lands and it seemed to them that the government had played a significant part in the transaction. It was as if there was a plot between the authorities and the financiers and even now the Doukhobours talk of the "stealing" of their land. There is some justification in their resentment because if the government had offered the $296,500 as a loan to the Community, it may not have saved the Community but possibly it would have helped. One reaction to this question is that "the government made sure that there would be no resurrection of a communitarian enterprise that was resented by powerful local interests".[108] Woodcock feelsthat if the government did not murder the Community, it deliberately neglected to keep it alive.

Chistiakov called a convention to consider how the sect might be reorganized to survive under the new conditions. When the time arrived for the meeting, Chistiakov was unable to attend because since early in 1938 he had been suffering from pains in his lungs. He went instead to Vancouver where the doctors recommended an immediate operation. He refused

and returned to Brilliant. In November, he conducted a convention, at which the economic organization of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood officially came to an end and the Union of Spriritual Communities of Christ arose in its place. The USCC was and still is, based on common religious beliefs and is formed of about thirty-seven communities in British Columbia and the prairie provinces.

On February 11,1939, Chistiakov died of cancer of the liver and stomach. He had not been a mere drunk, although he did have a strong tendency towards obscene talk and drinking. He had as much intelligence and energy as his father, Peter the Lordly, but they were manifested in different ways. He had an active but often lurid imagination; for example, he admitted to the people,

> "I know I swear a lot, and tell many dirty jokes. I also drink whiskey...it is very wrong to blaspheme...but I have to do it for good reason.. You brothers and sisters have often left the straight and narrow way that leads to heaven. Some of you will go to hell. 110

He stated that he has to drink whisky and blaspheme so that he could descend into hell and intercede for his people. He was a man of contradictions but even the Community Doukhobours till defend him as a man of "misjudged idealism".

As previously mentioned, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ was a less ambitious organization than its predecessor, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. It owed its survival during the first years mainly due to the fact that Doukhobours paid dues as a safeguard against military draft notices. The outbreak of World War II, thus not

only helped to preserve the main Doukhobour organisation, but it also helped individual members, after the liquidation of the Christian Community. From the end of 1939, the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled workers grew and the Doukhobours found no difficulty in obtaining employment as sawmill workers carpenters, or railraod maintenance men. (They had been left on their farm lands, but had niehter equipment nor working capital).

The attraction of outside employment drew almost all Doukhobour men away from the fields and orchards so that in a few years one of the strongest traditions of the sect had been broken. Though they continued to regard themselves as being "sons of the soil", by the middle of the Second World War, the Doukhobours had "ceased to be peasants and were more like a semi-rural proletariat".[111]

This transition brought communal and personal stress. The younger people felt liberated from the conformity of the old Community life. Others - particularly the old people, clung to the ideals of Doukhobourism. They fought against the assimilation into Canadian society, which would become inevitable if workers from their Community acquired a new value system, outside the Community. The war situation strengthened by reaction, both the traditionalist and the radical elements within the sect and united them into an important resistance movement.

The burning of the jam factory was also the beginning of a new wave of direct action by Sons of Freedom. It was followed in January, 1944, by demonstrations at Krestova in which

women's clothes and jewellery were burned as symbols of "the vanity of modern civilization".[112] Schools at Krestova and Gilpin were destroyed as well as a CPR station in Appledale. This activity is sometimes attributed to protest against government action in attempting to enforce military conscription from all areas of employment, under the Selective Service Act. But, I believe that the motivations for the terrorist activity can be contributed to more complicated issues. Individuals had become prosperous because of their four years of wartime employment. Their standard of living rose and many began to desire and attain the material benefits enjoyed by their non-Doukhobour neighbours. Individual homes were constructed. Younger Doukhobours gradually since 1925 had begun to pay attention to fashion and to attend dances and movies. Everyone who could possibly afford it, bought a car or a truck. One journalist who visited the Doukhobours summarized this deterioration of traditional Doukhobourism.

> "Contact with modern civilization, through the machine, the railroad, visits to town, have stirred the individualism and a wish for independence. Some of the boys have discovered the pleasures of the cigarette, the bottle of whisky, and the steak. Of course, when they are caught in these illicit joys, they are threatened by the Community. But that only intensifies their fear and dissatisfaction with the existing order. 113

The Sons of Freedom outbreaks that followed every few years from 1944 to the last acts of arson and dynamiting in 1962, can be interpreted not only as protests against institutions, but more importantly, against this tendency towards assimilation by individual members of the Doukhobour group.

CONCLUSION

Clearly the history of the Doukhobours in Canada has been their struggle to maintain, as a group, social, political, educational, and religious individuality. They realized that the ability to be an independent group would depend on their having a secure land tenure; in this way, they hoped to keep from governmental control and to do without governmental benefits. Also, in order to remain a separate and distinct group, the Doukhobours were unwilling to participate in the social activities of the "English-speaking" population. They felt that they must help themselves because no one else could aid them in achieving spiritual perfection.

But, the materialistic, competitive nature of Canadian society soon affected the Doukhobours, as a group. As the Indepdents began to break away, modifying their views to incorporate school attendance, registration, oaths of allegiance and other points of Canadian law, they were excluded from the majority of the Doukhobours. Contact with the outside settlers, largely through employment opportunities, gradually weakened the old ties that bound Community Doukhobours together - family life, village life, neighbourhood life By 1950, the majority of the Doukhobours had assimilated into the Canadian social system, despite the fact that they do keep together in a loosely knit group by keeping alive their most important traditions and customs.

Pacifism is perhaps the most durable and widespread attitude of the Doukhobours. Other cultural traditions include the Russian meal, handicraft, and among the older people, the manner of dress.

There is, I feel, one major factor involved in the Doukhobour problem in Canada. I have selected the following discourse between an interviewer and some Doukhobour people, to summarize my view of the situation.

> "To the outside world we are a crazy people, yes crazy...perhaps we are, who knows. We are not educated. You see, we believe in God and do you know what belief in God means?...God, brother, means love, and do you know what love means? Love means freedom, absolute, everlasting freedom, to let every man do, not as books and priests and man-made laws prescribe, but as his own inner spirit dictates... and how much freedom do you have in your world? You have nations, governments, schools, property, and all these kill freedom; and when you kill freedom, you kill love; and when you kill love, you kill God."

The interviewer said that after his discussion, he lay awake at night for a long time, meditating. "How futitle and childish these people seemed! How futile their outlook upon life, and their impossible anarchist conceptions of freedom! To an Anglo-Saxon, with his orderly ways, his utilitarian aspirations, his search for a comfortable berth in the world, the efforts of these unread, unlettered, muzhiks to attain a certain peculiar standard of spiritual perfection must appear absurd and irrational."[114]

Indeed, the Doukhobours had perceived Canada as a place in which they could develop their spiritual perfection. The Anglo-Saxon rejection of this ideal was manifested in magazine articles and in newspaper accounts that tended to disrupt the goals of the Doukhobours. Unfortunately, now, most people, including a large segment of the Doukhobours, consider the Doukhobours as "just plain Canadians", something they radically strove against.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE "DOUKHOBOUR" RESEARCH PAPERS:

Every research project is rewarding because it familiarizes an individual with some segment of his field of interest and allows him to formulate ideas on the topic. But, such an undertaking can be frustrating because time does not permit a thorough investigation of the subject.

Research which I feel is relevant on the Doukhobours includes:

I. Analytical study of the literature (primarily newspaper) of the 1950's and 1960's as it pertains to the Doukhobours.

II. A study to determine what customs and traditions are prevelant among the Doukhobours of today.

III. Effect of leadership on the Doukhobours' migration to Canada, and life on the prairies and in B. C.

IV. Contribution of the Doukhobours to the development of this area.

V. Thorough study on the government's involvement with the Doukhobours.

END - NOTES

1. George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, The Doukhobors, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1968.

2. For further information on the Doukhobours' persecution and exile, see Woodcock's chapters on Milky Water, Caucasian Exile, burning of the weapons, or Wright's, SLAVÁ BOHU for a more picturesque account.

3. Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a famous Russian writer who had travelled abroad and gained a favourable reputation.

4. Woodcock, p. 9

5. Vancouver Daily Province, May 28, 1945.

6. Some of George Woodcock's publications include

7. Woodcock, p. 7

8. Ibid, p. 9

9. A. M. Evalenko, ed. The Message of the Doukhobours, International Library Publishing Company, New York, 1913.

10. Prince Hilkoff was

11. The Message of the Doukhobours, p. 141.

12. Ibid, p. 144

13. John Zubek, Patricia Solberg, Doukhobours at War, Toronto, Ryerson Press, 1952.

14. Annual report of the Department of the Interior, 1899, p. 112.

15. John Ashworth, The Doukhobortsi and Religious Persecution in Russia, A lecture delivered in Manchester, April, 1900, p. 1

16. Ibid, p. 4.

17. Ibid, p. 10-11.

18. Ibid, p. 13.

19. Ibid

20. Ibid.

21. Ashworth, p. 13.

22. Ibid, p. 14.

23. Woodcock, p. 163.

24. Woodcock, p. 167.

25. Message of the Doukhobours, p. 36

26. Ibid, p. 41

27. Alymer Maude, A Peculiar People, p. 63.

28. Woodcock, p. 164.

29. Woodcock, p. 165.

30. J.F.C. Wright, Slava Bohu, Toronto, Farrar _ Rinehar 1940, p. 30.

31. Ibid, p. 197.

32. Ibid, p. 197.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Woodcock, p. 179.

36. "Manitoba Free Press", October 31, 1902.

37. Wright, p. 216.

38. Yorkton "Enterprise", February 26, 1903.

39. Zubek, p. 68.

40. Ibid.

41. Annual Report of the Department of the Interior, 1907.

42. Message of the Doukhobours, p. 29.

43. Ibid, p. 30.

44. Zubek, p. 81.

45. "Canadian Courier", April, 1907.

46. Woodcock, p. 222.

47. Woodcock, p. 224.

48. Ibid, p. 225.

49. Ibid, p. 226

50. Wright, Slava Bohu, p. 251.

51. Ibid.

52. For a detailed description of the monetary transactions in the purchasing of Land in British Columbia, see Woodcock's chapter, "The Second Community".

53. Zubek, Doukhobors at War, p. 87.

54. The Doukhobour Colony at Brilliant, In Fruit and Farm, v. 4., no. 6, March 1913.

55. Ibid, p. 202.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. James Mavor, The Doukhobours, In his My windows on the street of the world, London, Dent, 1923, v.2, p. 37.

59. Maurice Hindus, Bookless Philosophers, In, The Century, v. 105, January, 1923, p. 425.

60. In The Independent, v.75, July 3, 1913, p.21.

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Zubek, p. 96.

65. Message of the Doukhobours, p. 9.

66. Ibid, p. 1[illegible].

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid, p. 18.

69. Ibid, p 19.

70. Ibid, p. 20.

71. Archie Bell, Sunset Canada, British Columbia and Beyond, Boston, Page Company, 1918, p.232.

72. Bell, p. 232.

73. Zubek, p. 98.

74. Ibid, p. 99.

75. Wright, p. 272.

76. Woodcock, p. 251.

77. Ibid.

78. Zubek, p. 102.

79. Vancouver "Daily Province", February 21,192[illegible]

80. Zubek, p. 102.

81. Vancouver "Daily World", Febrary 27, 1922.

82. Woodcock, p. 255.

83. Zubek, p. 109.

84. For a discussion on the possible causes of Peter Verigin's death on Oct. 29, 1924, see Slava Bohu, "Railway Explosion", p. 276 -285.

85. Wright, p. 289.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid, p. 290.

88. Eli Popoff, A historical Exposition on on the Origin and Evolvement of the basic tenants of Doukhobour life-conception, n.p., 1964, p. 23.

89. Zubek, p. 113.

90. Woodcock, p. 265.

91. Ibid.

92. Zubek, p. 125.

93. Ibid, p. 126.

94. Ibid, p. 129.

95. Ibid, p. 141.

96. Ibid, p. 142.

97. Zubek, Doukhobours at War, p. 143.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

100. Woodcock, p. 301.

101. Ibid, p. 303.

102. Ibid.

103. Harry Hawthorn, ed., The Doukhobours of British Columbia, Vancouver, U.B.C., 1955, p. 54.

104. Audrey Fullerton, The Doukhobours and their Utopia Problems of Communities in Canada, In, Sunset, the Pacific Monthly, v.38, February, 1917.

105. Ibid.

106. Hawthorn, p. 57.

107. Woodcock, The Doukhobours, p. 306.

108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

110. Zubek, p. 123.

111. Woodcock, p. 309.

112. Ibid, p. 321.

113. Hindus, Bookless Philosophers, p. 430.

114. Freedomites who burn money and eat raw FOOD, In, Literary Digest, v.88, January 23, 1926, p. 406.

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