

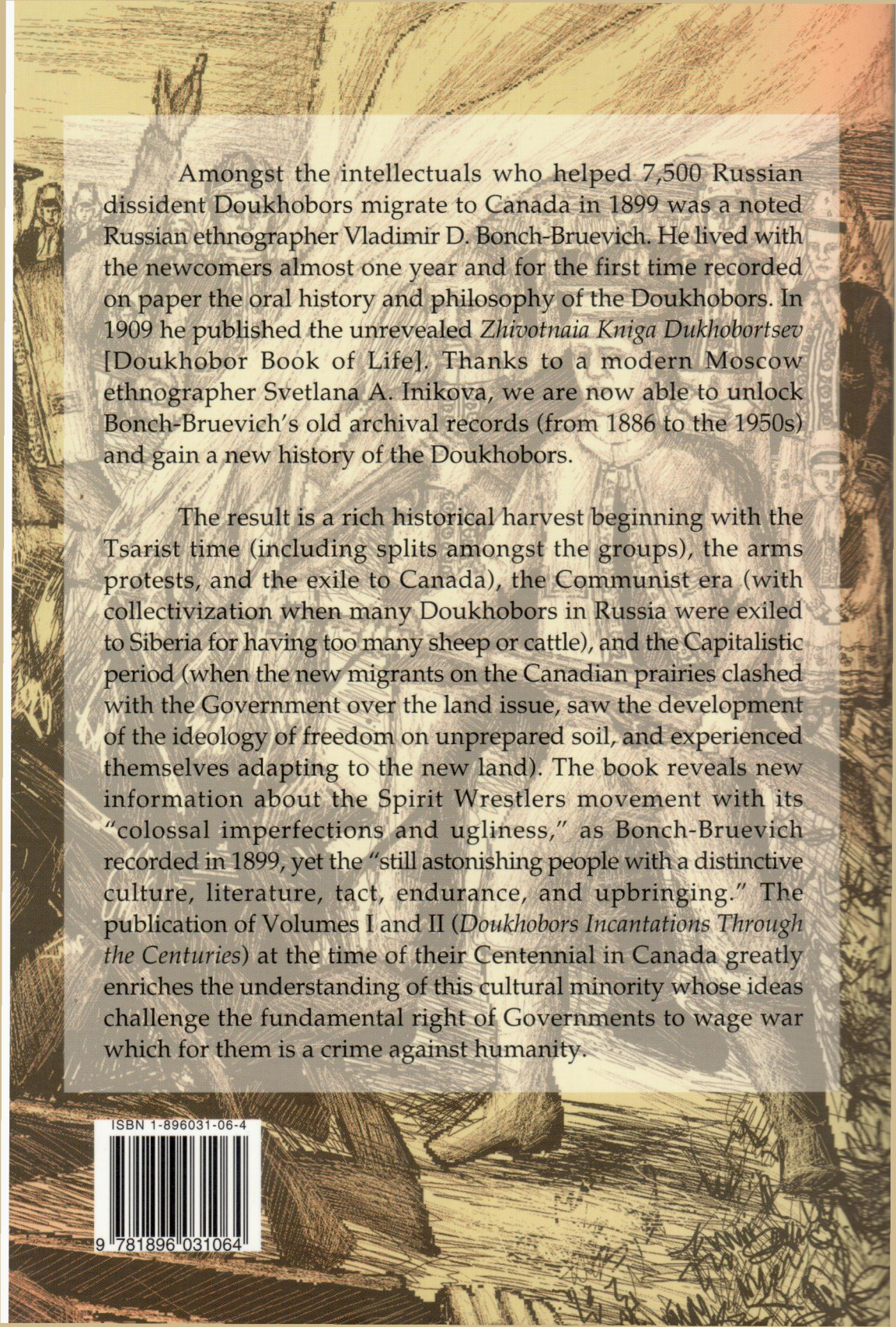
# History of the Doukhobors in V. D. Bonch-Bruевич's Archives (1886-1950s)

An Annotated Bibliography  
by **Svetlana A. Inikova**

Edited by **Koozma J. Tarasoff**







Amongst the intellectuals who helped 7,500 Russian dissident Doukhobors migrate to Canada in 1899 was a noted Russian ethnographer Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich. He lived with the newcomers almost one year and for the first time recorded on paper the oral history and philosophy of the Doukhobors. In 1909 he published the unrevealed *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* [Doukhobor Book of Life]. Thanks to a modern Moscow ethnographer Svetlana A. Inikova, we are now able to unlock Bonch-Bruevich's old archival records (from 1886 to the 1950s) and gain a new history of the Doukhobors.

The result is a rich historical harvest beginning with the Tsarist time (including splits amongst the groups), the arms protests, and the exile to Canada), the Communist era (with collectivization when many Doukhobors in Russia were exiled to Siberia for having too many sheep or cattle), and the Capitalistic period (when the new migrants on the Canadian prairies clashed with the Government over the land issue, saw the development of the ideology of freedom on unprepared soil, and experienced themselves adapting to the new land). The book reveals new information about the Spirit Wrestlers movement with its "colossal imperfections and ugliness," as Bonch-Bruevich recorded in 1899, yet the "still astonishing people with a distinctive culture, literature, tact, endurance, and upbringing." The publication of Volumes I and II (*Doukhobors Incantations Through the Centuries*) at the time of their Centennial in Canada greatly enriches the understanding of this cultural minority whose ideas challenge the fundamental right of Governments to wage war which for them is a crime against humanity.

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**Volume I:** *History of the Doukhobors*  
*in V.D. Bonch-Bruevich's Archives (1886-1950s)*

**Volume II:** *Doukhobor Incantations through the Centuries*

Cover: inset: *Russian Doukhobor elders of the Bogdanovskoi Raion walk towards the sacred site of the arms burning (1895) located near the village of Orlovka, Republic of Georgia, and adjacent to the borders of Armenia and Turkey. (Photo by Svetlana A. Inikova, c. 1990.)*  
Background: *The first mass manifestation of "thou shalt not kill" on St. Peter and Paul Day, June 29 [July 12th, new calendar], 1895, Transcaucasia, Russia (Sketch by Maria O. Inikova)*



**100 YEARS**  
**The Spirit Wrestlers**  
**The Doukhobors / ДУХОБОРЦЫ**  
**Les Doukhobors, Lutteurs de L'Esprit**



*First group of Doukhobors in Canada on S.S. Lake Huron, January 1899.*

Photo by Leopold Sulerzhitsky, Lev Tolstoy's helper.

Designed by Spirit Wrestlers Associates



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Doukhobors  
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(1886-1950s)**

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Fig. 2. – Vladimir Dimitrievich Bonch-Bruevich (1873-1955)

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia



## Abbreviations and Translator's Notes

MS RSL	— Manuscript Section of the Russian State Library in Moscow.
ARCEC	— All-Russian Central Executive Committee.
AUCEC	— All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee.
SMHR	— State Museum of the History of Religion, in St. Petersburg.
PCIA	— People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs.
USCC	— Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, Grand Forks, British Columbia.
CPC	— Council of People's Commissars.
CCUB	— Christian Communities of Universal Brotherhood.
SDHR	— State Department of History of Religion.
Fonds (also Fo.)	— A term of French origin used by archivists to designate a personal special collection of documents.
C.	— Document inventory if it is found in MS RSL.
inv.	— Document inventory if it is found in SMHR.
f.	— File.

## Preface and Acknowledgment

Dear readers! You are holding a book which was born with the collaborative efforts of scholars and others from two countries — Russia and Canada. The unique historic material from the Russian Archives in St. Petersburg and Moscow was collected and presented by the author Svetlana A. Inikova, ethnographer, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, and illustrated by Maria O. Inikova, Moscow. The book is coming to the world thanks to the sponsor William N. Papove, a retired civil engineer; myself Koozma J. Tarasoff, editor and manager of this project; Dr. Robert B. Klymasz, Curator, East European Programmes, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec; and Dr. Leonard G. Sbrocchi, Legas Publishing, Ottawa.

This is Volume I of a two-volume series relating to the Archives of Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich in St. Petersburg and Moscow. It deals with the history of the Doukhobors as found in archival documents from 1886 to the 1950s. Volume II focuses on the exotic — on Doukhobor Incantations Through the Centuries. Both volumes draw on the same archival Fonds and relate to one people — the group of dissidents who left Russia 100 years ago and settled in Canada.

On the 20th of January 1899 the Big Ship *S. S. Lake Huron* sliced through the foggy waters approaching the Halifax Harbour. On deck more than 2,100 people, singing psalms of thanks, were peering at the shoreline, as their voices flowed in waves expressing their joy, anxiety, and impatience. That was the first group of a total of 7,500 Doukhobors (Spirit-Wrestlers) who were forced to leave the Tsar's Russia because they opposed the institution of the church and they refused to serve as soldiers in the Tsar's army.



For these Doukhobor migrants it was an exhaustive journey from the Caucasus to Assiniboia (now known as Saskatchewan), including a long train ride across Canada and a walk by foot to their new village sites on the then untouched prairie turf. These people were not able to bring much belongings in their single family trunks, but in their hearts they brought a rich folklore, culture, folk cures of their Russian heritage — their traditions, customs, psalms, anecdotes, stories, humour, the love of labour, and the co-operative ethic. They brought the collective wisdom of their past and continued to carry it on orally from generation to generation.

Amongst the intellectuals and friends the world famous Russian writer Lev N. Tolstoy who helped the Doukhobors in their migration to Canada, was a noted Russian ethnographer Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich. This remarkable man, educated as a land surveyor/engineer, turned to be one of the most influential Russian folklorists. He lived with the newcomers almost one year recording their unique folklore, customs, economy, and social structure. It was the first time that the oral history and philosophy of the Doukhobors was recorded on paper and this was publicly revealed in 1909 when Bonch published the secret *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* [Doukhobor Book of Life]. In Russia he expanded his collection of documents on the Doukhobors by corresponding with them, the Tolstoyans, and others, right to the end of his life (1955). In his lifetime, he made a tremendous contribution to Russian culture in being not only a celebrated ethnographer, but an advisor to Lenin and his peers, and a curator of the Museum of the History of Religion.

Thanks to Bonch-Bruevich's keen and deep interest in the Doukhobor fate and history, today we can go back to their roots and better understand the history, philosophy and life of the Spirit Wrestlers / Doukhobors — also known as a social movement, a Christian sect, a philosophy and way of life which has existed for more than 300 years.

In the Centennial year 1999, one hundred years after the arrival of the Doukhobors in Canada, William N. Papove ("Bill"), a land surveyor engineer, a Doukhobor from another generation, made the publication of this book possible with his donation. This pioneer of Canada contributed not only to Doukhobor society with his practical advice and work. He mapped the boundaries of the western Canadian provinces and territories and excelled in the world as one of the founders of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) when he introduced a new humanitarian approach to social and economic development in South East Asia.

He himself is a remarkable man. Currently living in the Greater Vancouver Area of Canada, Bill was born to one of the Russian Doukhobor migrants near Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, where in his youth he organized Russian drama nights, and otherwise sought ways to preserve the best of his Slavic culture. He was one of the first Doukhobors to graduate from the University of Saskatchewan where he obtained his Civil Engineering Degree in the 1930s; this led him to become one of the outstanding Canadian land professionals and a pioneer consultant abroad. Bill learned to treat people as equals regardless of whether they were native, local, or international; as a result the colonial experience of treating people from the top down was transformed towards a new more humane democratic approach in participatory development.

His skills and respect are well known. When the British Columbia government was preparing to sell back the community land that Doukhobors had unjustly lost during the 1930s, Bill Papove was commissioned to survey all the Doukhobor lands for the Land Settlement Board. For his brothers and sisters Doukhobors, he served as Chairman for two years (1957-1958) of the Union of Doukhobors of Canada and with Peter S. Faminow (Secretary of UDC) dared to comment on the mistreatment of zealot children behind a high wire fence in New Denver, British Columbia.

In financing Volume I, Bill showed his true generosity as a man with close roots to the soil, with deep ties to the nonviolent approach and one world, and with a keen desire to probe the frontiers of knowledge so as to help improve society.

Dr. Robert B. Klymasz, a folklorist with the Canadian Museum of Civilization, has done us proud when he suggested to the Museum to purchase select Bonch-Bruevich's materials on the Doukhobors in Russia. He also persuaded the Museum to translate this volume into English for the North American market.

Russian scholar Svetlana A. Inikova is bringing this Volume I to the public as well as Volume II (*Doukhobor Incantations Through the Centuries*) at a time when we the Doukhobors are celebrating our 100 years in Canada. It was a labour of love as Ms Inikova spent countless hours pouring through the Bonch-Bruevich Archives in St. Petersburg and Moscow, seeking those gems of knowledge that provide understanding about the dissident Doukhobor group of pacifists. The manifestations, such as the arms burning in Tsarist Russia in 1895, women pulling the plough and cultivating the soil in Canada

in 1899 (when horses and oxen were scarce), as well as women and old men constructing over 80 traditional old country villages (when able-bodied men were working outside) are actions of pioneers and images that will stay on in Canadian history. Over the past 100 years they have built Canada as a country and have raised its morality to a higher level.

Svetlana Inikova of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Russia, who has spent a lot of time searching through the rich Bonch-Bruevich Archives in Moscow and St. Petersburg, found and collected much useful unpublished materials that once was frozen during the Soviet era, and now she has opened them to advance our knowledge. The many Russian archives are indeed a pillar of new information about the world. My appreciation to the Russian people for preserving this important world literary resource.

I'm glad that Marie O. Inikova, Svetlana's daughter, a young Russian artist, has made her debut here in illustrating this history book.

Also my thanks to Leonard G. Sbrocchi, of Legas, for his professional input in creating a high quality work in publishing with Spirit Wrestlers Associates these volumes and other books on the Doukhobors and Tolstoy. As a true publicist and scholar, Dr. Sbrocchi has sought to publish those works that reveal something vitally important about people and their future. His many literary and scholarly births have stretched intellectual limits and have enriched our lives immensely.

For me as editor and manager of this project, this book has been an effort of many years. It has become a rich harvest of a collective team working across two countries thousands of kilometers apart. Manuscript drafts crossed these distances many times before bearing fruit.

I hope that you the Readers will enjoy the fruits of our labour in bringing to you these two Volumes with rich archival materials that transcend the boundaries of time and space.

*Koozma J. Tarasoff,  
Ottawa, Canada*

## Introduction

Hardly any other scholar has done more research on the Doukhobor sect than Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich. Numerous excellent articles about the history and ethnography of the Caucasian and Canadian Doukhobors, a book *The Doukhobors in the Canadian Prairies*, as well as two books published in the series *Material on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism — The Letters of the Doukhobor Leader Peter Vasilevich Verigin* (with V. G. Chertkov) and *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*. These books allow us to consider Bonch-Bruevich as a discoverer of the religious doctrine, way of life, and culture of the Doukhobors.

V. D. Bonch-Bruevich did not have any special training in history. By trade he was a land surveyor. Bonch-Bruevich began participating in the revolutionary movement as a student and as a result in 1896 was forced to emigrate to Europe where he spent ten years. At that time in the late 1890s, thanks to his future wife V. M. Velichkina, Bonch-Bruevich became acquainted through correspondence with Vladimir G. and Anna K. Chertkovs, followers of Lev N. Tolstoy, who were exiled abroad for organizing a campaign to help Doukhobors persecuted by the Tsarist government. At Chertkov's request, Bonch-Bruevich accompanied the fourth group of Russian Doukhobors to Canada. Besides compassion and simple interest in the group, Bonch-Bruevich, as a revolutionary, was attracted by the social trend of the movement; under its religious cover, he discerned a protest of Russian peasants against the autocracy of the state.



It was in Canada that he became keenly interested in researching this group. "I am becoming more and more fascinated by data collection and am getting more and more convinced that the Doukhobors, in spite of all their colossal imperfections and ugliness, are still astonishing people with a distinctive culture, literature, tact, endurance, and upbringing. On top of that, they are organized and free people...", he wrote in his letter to Anna K. Chertkov on November 3, 1899. Bonch-Bruevich intended to spend his winter in Canada and visit various villages to record the Doukhobor psalms (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 223, f. 1, pp. 51 and over-52). During that year Bonch-Bruevich, like the Doukhobors, was half-starving; during the cold winter he went from village to village writing down psalms, recollections, and stories of the Doukhobors. He collected the originals and copies of the letters received by the Doukhobors in the 1890s from their sons and husbands who were serving their sentences in penal battalions, prisons, and exile. All this made up the core of his collection of documents about the Doukhobors. Bonch-Bruevich's archives expanded during the following years as well. The Canadian Doukhobors wrote him regularly right until his dying days; they sent him information about their life in Canada and in the commune, about their relations with the government, and about their ideology.

In the early years of the Soviet regime (1917-1920), Vladimir Dmitrievich served as Administrator of the Council of People's Commissars (CPC). At that time and during the following years, he often worked for the government as an expert on sectarianism. Doukhobors, both Canadian and Soviet, often turned to him with various requests and informed him of their difficulties. Bonch-Bruevich meticulously collected and preserved their letters.

Some of the documents collected by Bonch-Bruevich have already been used by him in his works; several documents have been entirely or partially published by Chertkov's publishing house Svobodnoe Slovo [Free word].

At one time, Bonch-Bruevich's single archives was divided into two. Documents on the history of religion and ethnography of the Doukhobors and an overwhelming majority of the letters are kept in the State Museum of the History of Religion (SMHR) in St. Petersburg. Work manuscripts and a small part of the letters are found in the

Manuscript Section of the Russian State Library in Moscow (MS RSL). Bonch-Bruevich Fonds in SMHR are of the greatest interest and value for a researcher of the Doukhobor movement. They are classified as Fonds No. 2 and consist of 29 document inventories. The documents of the seventh inventory are exclusively devoted to the Doukhobors. The inventory includes 993 files. Part of these documents were transferred to SMHR by Bonch-Bruevich himself who was the head of the Museum of History of Religion from 1946. The rest of the material was transferred to SMHR in accordance with Vladimir Dmitrievich's wishes after his death.

The main part of the documents was received by the Manuscript Section of RSL from Bonch-Bruevich's heirs in 1956 and 1963 after his death (1873-1955). This material formed Fond Number 369. They consist of 433 inventories. Inventories 39-45 are entirely devoted to the Doukhobors. Correspondence of Bonch-Bruevich and V. M. Velichkina with the Doukhobors and Tolstoy's followers was included in different inventories. Most of Bonch-Bruevich's manuscripts were published as articles, commentaries, and prefaces, and were included in *The Doukhobors in the Canadian Prairies*. However, this material in this volume has not been published before.

The two-volume collection of documents *The Movement Among Russian Peasants, So-called Doukhobors, Exiled to the Transcaucasus by the Tsarist Government (1886-1900)* which was dedicated to the anti-government resistance of the Caucasian sectarians in the late 1880s and in the 1890s is the most interesting among the unpublished works.

All the documents from both Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds can be classified and examined under the following topics:

1. The movement of the Caucasian Doukhobors in the late 1880s and 1890s.
2. Emigration to Canada.
3. The Doukhobors in Canada.
4. The Doukhobors and Tolstoy followers.
5. The problem of re-emigration of the Canadian Doukhobors to the USSR.
6. The Caucasian Doukhobors and a resettlement of part of them to the Salsk prairies.

7. Personalities of the Doukhobor leaders P. V. Verigin and P. P. Verigin.
8. The policy of the Soviet government towards the Doukhobors in the 1920s and 1930s.
9. Doukhobor ideology, world view, and historical vision.

The author's goal is to show how extensively and thoroughly the material from Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds covers one topic or another. While it is impossible to characterize every document, but we will single out the ones that give the most valuable information and are the richest in substance.



Fig. 3. – Russian Doukhobors on S.S. Lake Huron en route to Canada, 1899

Photo by Leopold Sulerzhitsky.

## Chapter I

### The Movement of the Caucasian Doukhobors in the late 1880s and 1890s

The movement of the Caucasian Doukhobors which in 1895 grew beyond a local conflict between the Doukhobors and the Caucasian authorities, received a wide response in Russia and abroad. Thanks to Lev N. Tolstoy's followers, the events in the Caucasus were widely discussed amongst the democratic intelligentsia. The first non-violent mass protest against government laws, against serving this government, and against killing aroused an entire movement in support of the Doukhobors.

In this movement Tolstoy's followers saw an example of a struggle for the transformation of the world on Christian principles. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich saw it as a mass social movement of the Russian peasants. In spite of the differences in their outlooks, Tolstoy's followers and Bonch-Bruevich considered it necessary to record these events for the future. With different goals in mind, they collected the material concerning persecution of the Doukhobors, their suffering, and heroism. This topic is presented to its fullest in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds.

As a result of his many years of work, in 1950 Bonch-Bruevich prepared two volumes of the document collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants, So-called Doukhobors, Exiled to the Transcaucasus by the Tsarist Government (1886-1900)* for publication. This material has not yet been published and is preserved, as manuscripts, in the MS RSL in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds. These two volumes were divided into five archival sections. Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 1 is a file which includes a large introductory article of Vladimir Dmitrievich and his





Fig. 4. – Getting married in Russia

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

bibliography. C. 42, f. 2 and C. 43, f. 1 are documents that formed the first volume. They are the letters, recollections, and stories about the Doukhor movement written by the Doukhobors; they are the written records of sectarian stories, letters that talk about the sectarian movement, and recollections of relations with the sectarians written by Tolstoy's followers or people who lived close to the Doukhobors. In these two files there is a small number of official documents from the government and police agencies. The second volume of the collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...* is entirely dedicated to the official documents. In the archives it is also divided into two archival files: C. 44, f. 1 and C. 45, f. 1.

Bonch-Bruevich worked on the document collection at the time when he was the head of the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. The archives of the Museum also contained the Fonds of Pavel I. Biryukov, of the publishing house *Svobodnoe slovo*, and of Ivan M. Tregubov. Bonch-Bruevich used many documents from these Fonds for his collection. Unfortunately, the documents from volumes I and II do not have references, i. e., it is not indicated where the archives and Fonds were taken from. This reduces their scientific value. That is why if a document is both in the collection, *The Movement Among Russian Peasants* in MS RSL and in Bonch-Bruevich's Fond in SMHR, we give a reference to SMHR, marking the number of the file with a star (\*).

Bonch-Bruevich's collection also includes the material published earlier in the illegal publications such as *L. N. Tolstoy's Archives*, or in the immigrant publications (*Listki Svobodnogo Slova* [Leaflets of the Free Word] and brochures), as well as in *The Material on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*. With time they became difficult to access and Bonch-Bruevich intended to republish them.

Essentially the document collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...* exhausts the topic of the socio-religious movement of the Caucasian Doukhobors. Materials on this topic which we found while working in other archives and Fonds do not bring anything substantially new.

The first volume of the collection includes 226 documents on the period of 1886 to 1900. It begins with I. A. Verigin's story *About the Death of Lukeria V. Kalmykova in December 15, 1886* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, F. 2, pp. 1-2). The death of the childless Doukhor leader "dear

Lushechka", as she was called by all her supporters, raised the question of a successor. Five years before her death, L. V. Kalmykova took Peter Vasilevich Verigin, a young Doukhobor from the village of Slavyanka in the Elizavetpol province, to the *Sirotskii Dom*<sup>1</sup> [orphanage] which was located in the village of Goreloe of the Akhalkalak district of Tiflis province. Lukeria persuaded Verigin to divorce his wife and made him her lover. After L. V. Kalmykova's death, her relatives and all the Doukhobors from the village of Goreloe refused to acknowledge him as her successor and, consequently, as their leader. They received the name of *malaia partiia* [Small Party]. An overwhelming majority of the Doukhobors recognized Verigin as their leader. They were called *bolshaia partiia* [Large Party].

According to common folk law, *Sirotskii Dom*, being in Lukeria V. Kalmykova's name, was considered to be communal property. Yet according to government laws, this property was to be transferred to the next of kin — to her brother. Based on arguments of the Small Party, Peter V. Verigin was exiled to Northern Russia as an instigator of the disturbance. The lawsuit for the rights to the *Sirotskii Dom* began between the villagers of Goreloe and Verigin's followers.

\* \* \*

What was the Doukhobor society like at this time? One gets an impression of it from *The Command to All Villages from all the Honorable People and Senior Representatives* dated December 20, 1886 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 2, pp. 3-4) and from the description of life and customs of the Doukhobors from the village of Slavyanka written by D. D. Mikhailidis, the principal of the Slavyanka school (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 545). The issues of land ownership within the Doukhobor society and tax distribution were explored in the letter written by Nikolai I. Dudchenko to Bonch-Bruevich. In the 1890s Dudchenko was serving his time in exile (for disseminating rationalistic ideas among the peasants) in the Doukhobor village of Bashkichet (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 49).

1. *Sirotskii Dom* was a Doukhobor administrative centre, i.e. the centre of all Doukhobor villages, the central treasury, the dwelling place of orphans and single elders, and the residence of the Doukhobor leaders.

Living prosperously, the Doukhobors greatly departed from the Christian ideals, originally propagated by their forefathers. The split among them and the lawsuit for the *Sirotskii Dom* put an end to their quiet life. By the decision of the court, the Doukhobor sacred place changed hands several times. The Large Party was indignant that the court ignored the public opinion and did not take into consideration the testimonies of their neighbors, the Armenians and Tatars.

Bonch-Bruevich included the manuscript written from I. P. Abrosimov's own words, "We, Christians, owned the *Sirotskii Dom*"<sup>2</sup> (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 2, pp. 203-204) into the collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...* Many Doukhobors learned the former text by rote as a psalm. There was a tradition in this group of memorizing especially important texts by rote, so that, if questioned by strangers, everyone would answer the same way. Because of this, many documents of that time are very similar in content, especially the letters of the Doukhobors to Tolstoy's followers, in which they described their beliefs and their conception of events.

The conception of the Large Party when describing the split is summarily stated as follows: Lukeria V. Kalmykova took Peter V. Verigin into the *Sirotskii Dom* to prepare him for the role of leader. However, the insidious and greedy villagers of Goreloe barred the rightful master from it. It was in this form that this conception was stated in detail in the *Note About the Doukhobors That Was Written from Their Own Words on the Basis of One Manuscript* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 505)<sup>3</sup> and in the Doukhobor note *An Explanation of the Life of Christians* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 2, pp. 187-202).<sup>4</sup> Many Doukhobors considered Peter Vasilevich to be Lukeria V. Kalmykova's adopted or even natural son (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 354\*, f. 646).

Valuable information about the split and the reasons of it is found in S. V. Vereshchagin's story *The Doukhobors' Struggle for Their Faith*, written almost forty years later (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 489) and in

2. This manuscript was published in *Material on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 2nd edition, England, 1901.

3. A passage from this note was published in the *Materials on the History of Russian Sectarianism*, 4th ed., England, 1902.

4. The note "An Explanation of the Life of the Christian" was published in the *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 2nd ed., England, 1901.



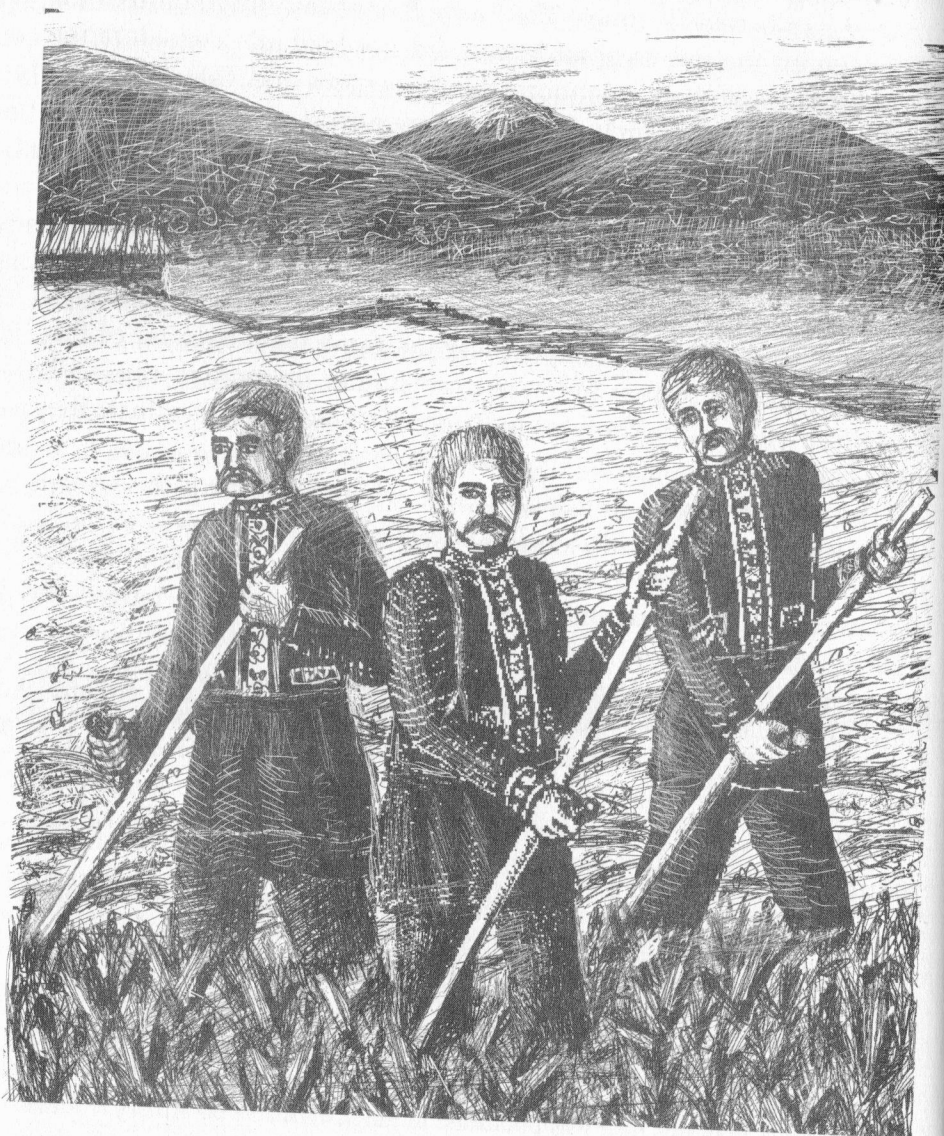


Fig. 5. – Mowing the grass, a co-operative effort

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

memoirs of the Doukhobors Shcherbakov and Zibin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 589)\*.

Unfortunately, neither Bonch-Bruevich nor Tolstoy's followers had any contact with the Doukhobors of the Small Party whose viewpoint on the event of those years is practically absent from the archival documents. One letter written in 1909 by a Caucasian Doukhobor who clearly did not belong to Verigin's party, stands out from the majority of the documents which were almost identical in content. For him, the reasons for the split were as follows: "The society of Goreloe knew his [P. V. Verigin's - S. I.] actions very well. He was cruel and he often created disturbances, got drunk and chased after Lukeria Vasilevna with a sword..." This is precisely why the Small Party did not want to acknowledge him as the leader (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7 f. 450, p. 1).

Many years after those events, already in Canada, a Doukhobor Vasia Pozdniakov wrote in his memoirs *The Truth About the Doukhobors* that Lukeria V. Kalmykova did not appoint P. V. Verigin to be her successor at all. The people who claimed that confessed that they did it to please Verigin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 953, p. 4).

The law-suit for the Sirotskii Dom lasted until August 1893, when the Doukhobor sacred place, finally by the decision of the court which was bribed by the people of Goreloe, was transferred to L. V. Kalmykova's brother. The Doukhobor society changed a great deal during those years; its relations with the authorities changed as well. The Doukhobors began to view all the initiatives and orders from the Caucasian authorities with much distrust and even hostility. They became indignant with the unrestrained bribery which was considered a standard business earlier. Conflict situations arose one after another straining the already tense atmosphere. E. R. Kanigan in his story *A Forty-day Flogging* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7 f. 518)\* and I. Abrosimov in his *Description of Our Flogging in 1894* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 550)\* provided some interesting and detailed recollections of those events. The same topic was addressed in the memoirs of V. Potapov, I. Abrosimov, and V. Kukhtinov (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 565). V. I. Popov wrote about it in his story "Suffering for the True Way" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 562)\*, and F. Popov gave his account in *The Dull and Sad History of the Doukhobors in the Caucasus...* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 563)\*.



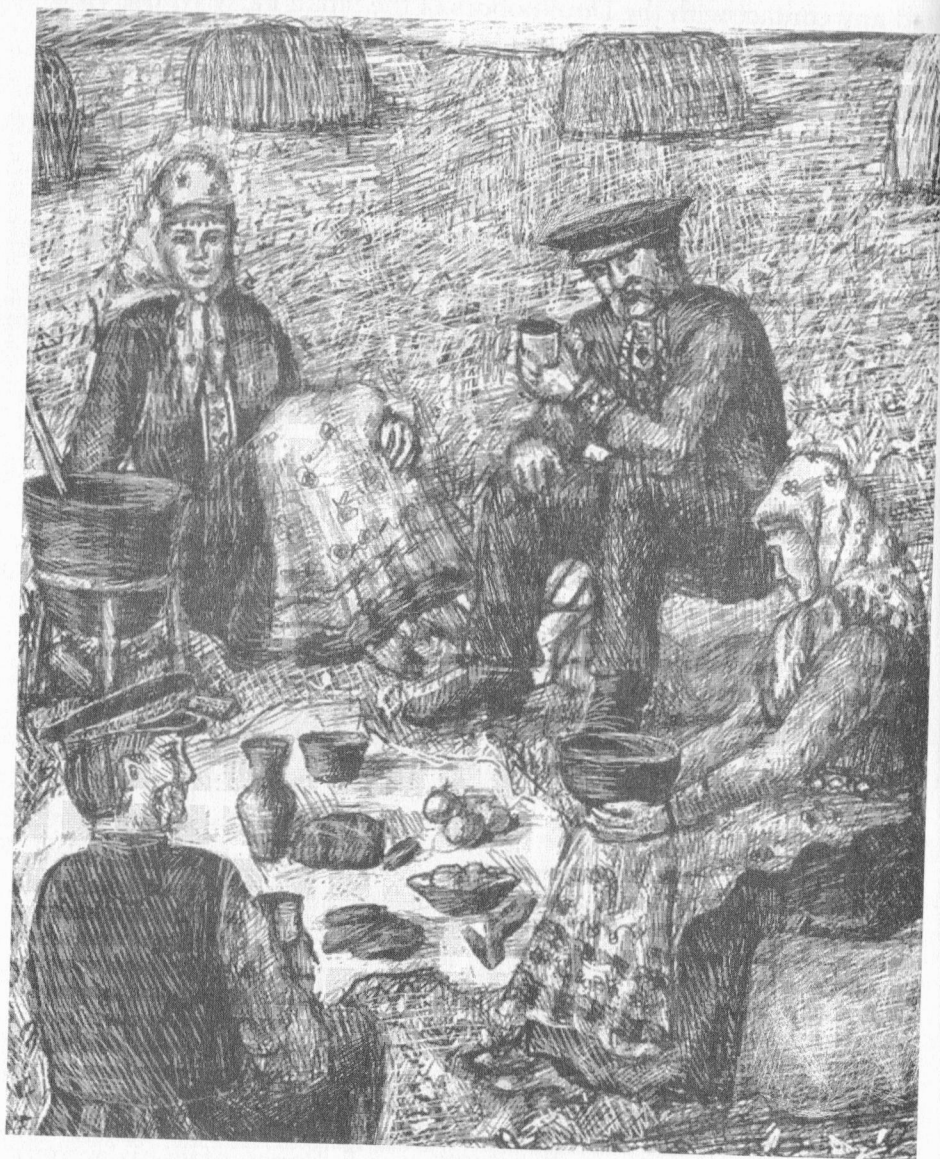


Fig. 6. – A break for lunch to feed the body

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

Influenced by these events and by Peter V. Verigin's "advice", which he sent in his letters and through those who visited him, the Doukhobors decided to build a new life based on Christian principles. There is a very valuable document in SMHR, the memoirs of N. I. Dudchenko<sup>5</sup> who was a witness to all the changes in the life and ideology of the Doukhobors. He wrote that the building of the new life started when Ivan Ivin and Vasili Obedkov returned from their meeting with P. V. Verigin. They visited all the villages and delivered their leader's "advice" to the Doukhobors. Some of the Doukhobors immediately accepted the rules of the new life: they stopped drinking, smoking, eating meat and fish. They were called *postniks* [vegetarians, people who abstain from meat and fish]. The Doukhobors discussed their attitude toward the government and their socio-economic structure (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 501)\*.

From the spring of 1895, incited by elders, the young Doukhobors who served in the army, began to refuse to bear arms explaining that they were fulfilling God's commandment "thou shalt not kill". On St. Peter and Paul day, June 29 [July 12th, new calendar], as the name-day of P. V. Verigin, the Doukhobors-postniks collected and burnt all their weapons they had in their possession. This act of protest against war, killing, and army service became a culmination of the entire Doukhobor movement. After that the Doukhobors refused not only to bear arms, but also to keep reserve certificates and participate in the lottery.<sup>6</sup> These events were repeatedly described by those involved in them such as by N. V. Strelaev in his story "N. V. Strelaev's Life" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 577)\* [by G. I. Soukarev in his Memoirs *My Refusal to Serve in the Army* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 580\*) and by I. I. Khudiakov in *Doukhobor Memoirs* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 586). In Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in the SMHR there is also an account of the events which described people seeing I. I. Khudiakov going off to exile, written by an unknown author (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 547)\*. People perceived these young men as martyrs for their faith, bearing their cross for the whole Doukhobor society.

5. A fragment from N.I. Dudchenko's recollections was published in *Materials on the History and Research...*

6. Those who completed their service in the army or were transferred to the reserves usually received reserve certificates. Draft age Doukhobors, as with other draft age men, took part in the lottery which determined who would serve in the army.



Fig. 7. – The first mass manifestation of “thou shalt not kill” on St. Peter and Paul Day, June 29 [July 12th, new calendar], 1895, Transcaucasia, Russia

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

In the letters of Tolstoy’s followers who lived in the Caucasus, much attention was paid to the movement of those who refused to serve in the military. M. V. Alekhin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 257) and Elena Nakashidze (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 191) wrote about it in their letters of 1895-96.

The burning of weapons took place in three locations: Akhalkalak district of Tiflis province, Elizavetpol province, and Kars region. The event passed peacefully in the two latter localities; however, it had the gravest consequences for the Doukhobors in the Akhalkalak district. Prompted by a call from the Small Party, the Cossacks tortured those who participated in the arms burning. After suppressing the disturbance, more than four thousand postnik-Doukhobors were moved in groups of two to three families to the Georgian villages and Tatar auls [mountain villages in the Caucasus] for an indefinite period of time without any means of sustenance. Doukhobors themselves have many times described the arms burning event and their eviction. All their narratives are similar because the same events were described from the same point of view. Nonetheless, each author concentrated on specific details that were clear in their memory; consequently, each document is interesting and valuable.

In S. V. Kolesnikov’s memoirs, for example, we can find an answer to the question of who initiated the action. Was the weapons burning act an expression of the will of all postnik-Doukhobors or was it initiated by Peter V. Verigin and the *starichki* [old men, as the most respected Doukhobors were called]? According to him, the events were carried out in strict secrecy; only the family heads knew about the preparations (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 511). His words were confirmed in a story about the life of Doukhobor M. V. Makhortov (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, p. 943) written by herself. Among the many documents about weapons burning, we need to single out P. Planidin’s story “Persecution of Christians” (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 560)\*, “The Story of the Doukhobor Vasia Pozdniakov” (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 450) which was published by Tolstoy’s followers,<sup>7</sup> and the memoirs of G. I. Shcherbakov and V. V. Zibin which have been mentioned previously.

7. *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 3rd ed., England, 1901.



A social protest against the government, based on brutal and anti-humane laws, can be clearly sensed in many documents. Shcherbakov and Zibin wrote: "Looking at this godless system, our conscience persuaded us to reject everything connected with them: their rules and their laws..." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 589)\*. Tolstoy's followers made many contributions toward an understanding of this issue. Ivan M. Tregubov, for example, travelled to native villages to question the postnik-Doukhobors who lived there and to record their stories which became the basis of his *History of Weapons Burning* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 507). Arms burning and suppression by the Cossacks were described very figuratively and vividly in the letter-story of I. K. Diterikhs to the Chertkovs. Diterikhs served the Cossack troops in the Caucasus at that time (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 330). He personally became acquainted with the *sotnik* [lieutenant of the Cossack troops] Praga and described him in the letter as a cruel and hypocritical person.

Suffering for their ideals is a theme that can be traced throughout the material about the Doukhobors in penal battalions as well as those who moved to new locations. The living conditions in penal battalions and prisons were described as horrible. Torture took the lives of many or crippled others. This theme was especially emphasized by the Doukhobors and Tolstoy's followers. Doukhobors wrote about this condition in the letters to their relatives and close friends (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 367, 415, 438, 803; MS RSL, Fo. 369 C. 43, f. 1, p. 705). However, Doukhobors seem to have become addicted to suffering, as indicated in I. E. Konkin's letter of May 6, 1896 written from exile to Tolstoy's follower E. I. Popov. According to him, Doukhobors invite suffering as a means of cleansing souls.

"Enduring hardships," wrote Konkin to Evgeny Popov, "they, the sufferers, found spiritual purity for themselves. At the same time, they serve as heralds, luminaries, and examples for the next generation." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 354)\*. Writing to an unknown person in November 17, 1895, M. V. Alekhin was astonished when visiting Doukhobors in jail, the people he met there were "cheerful in spirit joyfully awaiting future sufferings" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 257)\*.

Doukhobors who settled in the Tiflis province lived in dreadful inhuman conditions. Even now, one hundred years later, it is impossible to read their letters without shuddering. The most detailed and

informative letters were written by V. Potapov who was exiled to the Signakh district of Tiflis province (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 397\*, 399, 414, 728, 775). Followers of Tolstoy as well as sympathizers of the movement visited them. One such visit was described by an unknown author in his letter of 1896 to Tolstoy's follower P. A. Bulanzhe [Boulanger] (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 412). In his "Report Concerning the Doukhobors", Ivan M. Tregubov described his visit to the Doukhobors who were settled separately (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 584)\*.

In a letter to their friends in England, December 1895, I. V. Glazkov and A. V. Samsonov, on behalf of the Doukhobors, described the events which occurred in the Caucasus and also stated their principles (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 325)\*.

English followers of Tolstoy were fully sympathetic to the Doukhobors, as reflected in the collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 2, p. 582). A. Rilkov's letter to I. K. Diterikhs of February 19, 1898 contains information on the visit in early 1898 of the Englishman Arthur St. John to the Doukhobors who settled separately and there was reference to a transfer of monetary aid to them (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 4, f. 434)\*.

In December 1896 the separated Doukhobors organized a convention concerning their future. E. P. Nakashidze attended the convention, recorded its Minutes, and later wrote *The report on the Doukhor convention in the Gori district* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 556\*, 976). One of the main issues was the creation of a common fund and the amalgamation of the property.

In their June 15, 1897 letter, V. Potapov and I. Sherstobitov wrote to an unknown person about the communal movement among the Russian Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 728).

The postnik-Doukhobors who had not been relocated organized communes as well. S. V. Vereshchagin wrote about this in his letter to E. P. Nakashidze, July 16, 1897: "Now we are cultivating our fields together, and it is fun working this way. The grain is divided into equal parts for each person; hay for the cattle is distributed equally..." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 277, p. 1)\*.

The material on the movement of the Caucasian Doukhobors allows us to trace the changes in the ideology of the Doukhobors of the Large Party, to explain their attitude towards the government and the



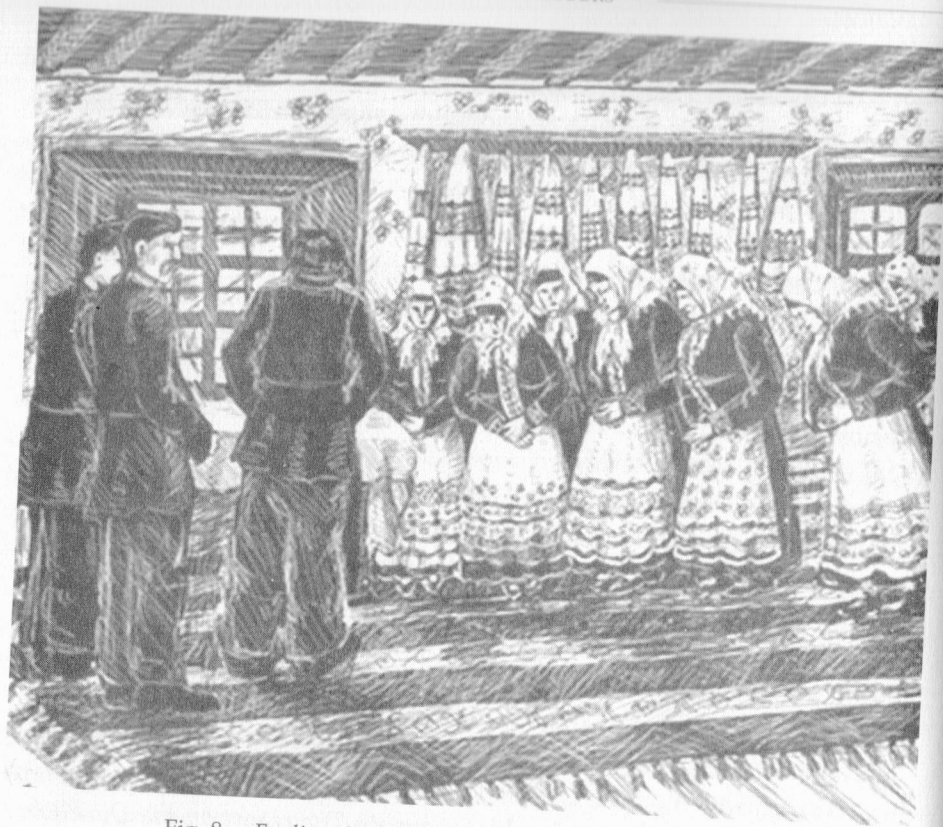


Fig. 8. — Feeding the soul in a traditional *sobranie* gathering

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

motherland, as well as their view on the relationship between patriotism and pacifism. To understand the latter, let us turn to two documents: *The story of the Doukhobor N. Chivildeev*<sup>8</sup> which contains a dialogue between a Doukhobor and a superior officer of the Ekaterinograd penal battalion where soldiers-Doukhobors served their sentences for their refusal to carry weapons (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, pp. 708-711) as well as *The conversation between a Doukhobor and a gendarme in the Vladikavkaz railroad car* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 963)\*. Skvortsev, an official for special commissions working for the chief procurator of the Synod, came to the Caucasus several times to find out

8. Published in *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 4th ed., England, 1902.

the attitude of the sectarians toward the government and the monarch. The written records of his conversations with the Doukhobors are kept in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR and MS RSL (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 487\*; MS RSL, Fo. 43, f. 1, pp. 811-812).

The difficult situation of the postnik-Doukhobors worsened by their utter lack of knowledge about their future. The government found itself in a deadlock. It used up all available repression techniques, and yet, the Doukhobors remained adamant in defending their ideals. The conflict between the sectarians and the government had so worsened that it was impossible to solve without some fundamental changes in the entire government system. As early as August 1896 in his letter to the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna, Peter V. Verigin suggested relocating the Doukhobors to Europe or America as the last solution to this critical situation (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 293)\*.<sup>9</sup> There was no reply to this letter at this time. A certain Alebegov stated in the letter to E. P. Nakashidze, written May 20, 1897, that the Doukhobors were going to ask the Caucasian authorities for permission to emigrate to England or America by a petition to the highest authorities (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, p. 802).

In SMHR there is a draft of the petition by the Doukhobors to the widowed Empress Maria Fedorovna seeking permission for the Doukhobors to emigrate (SMHR, Fo. 2, C. 7, f. 942). The petition was submitted during the empress' stay in the Caucasus in the summer of 1897. She granted permission. Soon after, the Doukhobors submitted a letter to the emperor Nikolas II. It was a petition from the parents whose sons had reached the draft age, asking permission for their children to leave with them. The letter was written in the most loyal fashion, apparently to avoid arousing the monarch's hostility unnecessarily (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 94\*). There was no reply.

In April 1898 the Doukhobors submitted a petition to the Tiflis Governor to issue them family passports and asked him to prepare the documents without specifying the date of emigration, because the place of relocation had not yet been known (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 381).

When the Doukhobors were ready to leave, their sons, husbands, and brothers, whose service in the penal battalions was replaced by

9. The letter was published in *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed., England, 1901.

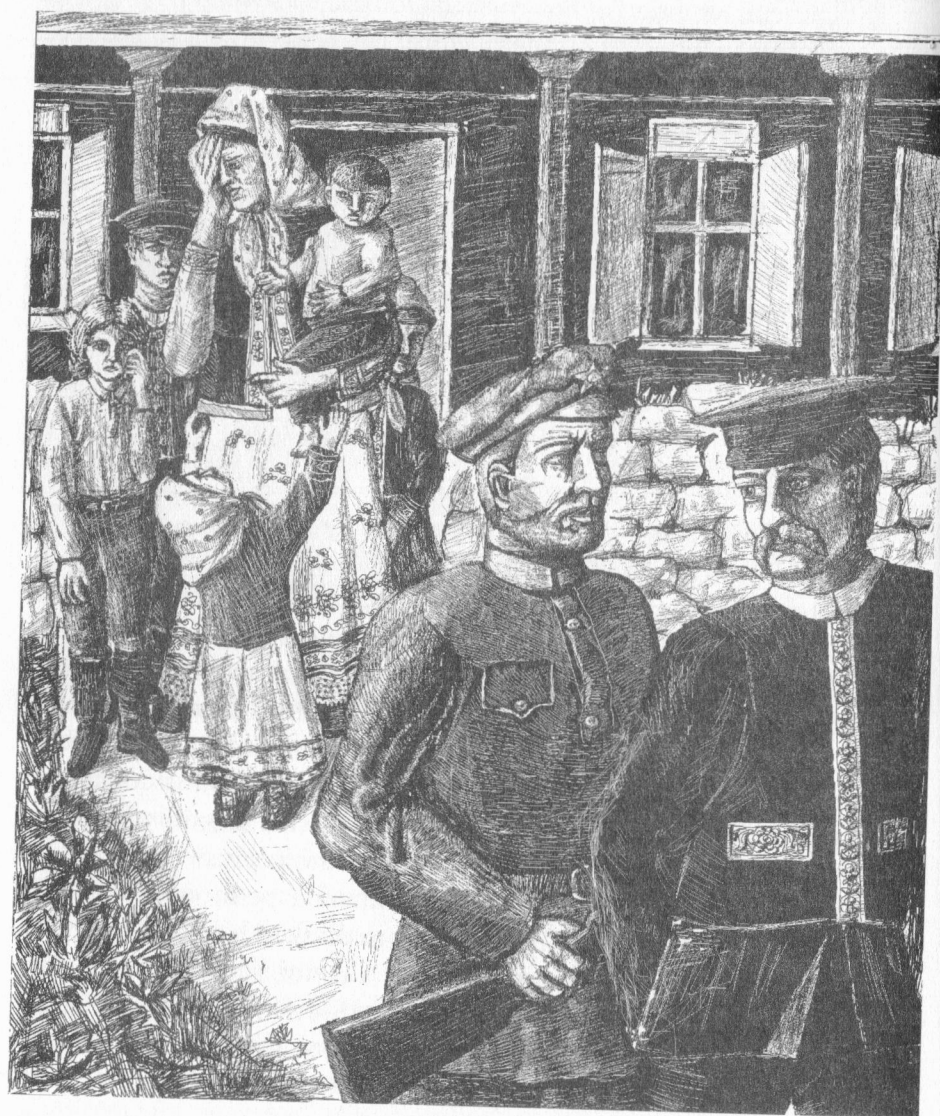


Fig. 9. – Cossacks arrest Doukhobor men for refusing to become soldiers

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

exile to Eastern Siberia on August 5, 1896, remained in Russia. An overwhelming majority of the exiled Doukhobors received an eighteen year sentence. For some people the sentence was three to five years, but more than twenty people received exile for life because they were pronounced to be the instigators of the movement. In his archives, V. D. Bonch-Bruevich collected a vast amount of documents concerning this group whom he called "Yakutsk's Doukhobors" after the name of their place of exile, the Yakutsk province.

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain a *List of the convicts to the Yakutsk province and to other parts of Siberia* up to December 31, 1897 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7 f. 573)\*.

In their letters to relatives and Tolstoy's followers, the Doukhobors described in detail their passage to exile and the hardships they faced (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 319, 410, 411, 416)\*. The collection reveals a very interesting and detailed letter to Tolstoy written by a political convict who walked together with the Doukhobors to exile in Yakutsk (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, pp. 895-899).<sup>10</sup>

L. T. Levental, who accompanied the Doukhobors, described the final stage of their passage from Yakutsk to a small settlement of Ust-Notora and their establishment in the new place (MD RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, pp. 903-910). Apparently he is the author of the letter to Bonch-Bruevich written on September 8, 1897 which describes the arrival of the Doukhobors to Yakutsk (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 417).

The first year turned out to be a terrible ordeal for the exiles. A Doukhobor N. F. Khudiakov wrote to Ivan M. Tregubov, July 15, 1898, about life in Ust-Notora where the majority of the convicts had settled in (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, pp. 938-939). The same events were described in V. F. Sherstobitov's letter November 1, 1898 to Tregubov (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, pp. 969-973). The initial period in the life of the Doukhobors in Yakutsk exile is illustrated very well in the documents of SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 316, 318, 349, 462, 466, 692, 713, 791, 792). In our opinion, the most valuable information which a researcher can obtain from these documents concerns the social organization of this group. This issue is described most completely and

10. Published in *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 4th ed., England, 1902.



thoroughly in the memoirs of a political convict I. Babiakin, *The Doukhobors in Yakutsk Exile* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 485)\*. He knew the life of the Yakutsk Doukhobors very well because he lived close to them for several years. Babiakin wrote that many Doukhobors who, on Peter V. Verigin's advice, started their life in exile by organizing a commune, became completely disillusioned with it later. The majority of them became convinced that a communal society only constrains people and brings about nothing but animosity. The commune experience of Yakutsk Doukhobors in those years became the reason for their opposition to Peter V. Verigin and the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood in Canada. The Canadian brothers tried to put economic pressure on the Yakutsk Doukhobors. In his memoirs, Babiakin included a letter of 1903 from Canada in which the Doukhobors stated that they would send money not to each convict individually, but to the entire commune. This letter also exists in Bonch-Bruevich Fonds (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 390).

The Doukhobors who were exiled to Yakutsk were released from exile by an amnesty of 1905. After that they left for Canada.

While exiled to Siberia and to Northern Russia, the Doukhobors became acquainted with the life and culture of other people, other religious groups and sects. At P. V. Verigin's urgent request, a Doukhobor I. E. Konkin made a journey through Siberia to search for the Doukhobors. Traditionally it was known that they lived in the Amur river area. In SMHR there is his *A Diary of Travels through Siberia* which contains notes concerning Konkin's visit to a village where several Doukhobors were living (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 500)\*. This diary is valuable not only because it is written by a Doukhobor and reflects his view of the Amur co-religionists, but also because any authentic information concerning the Amur Doukhobors is extremely rare in literature and in historical archives. The Fonds also contains their letters to Konkin, Bonch-Bruevich, and the Caucasian Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 37, 472, 473, 799).

Returning to the movement of Caucasian Doukhobors in the late 1880s-1890s, it is necessary to mention the official documents in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR and MS RSL. In SMHR there are several archival files concerning the early history of the Doukhobors in the Caucasus. There is a note dated 1805 called *Some Characteristics*

*of the Doukhobor Society*.<sup>11</sup> A notebook with the hand-written text of the above note was received by Bonch-Bruevich from the Canadian Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 591). These are the materials from the Deputy's office in the Caucasus concerning the first Doukhobors exiled from the Army of the Don (Don Cossacks) to Karabakh in 1830 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 593-594). The Fonds in SMHR also contains the materials of Spilioti, a geographer and ethnographer, who collected data about sectarians in the Caucasus. However, it has little information on the Doukhobors (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 596).

The rest of the official documents deal with the 1880s-1890s. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR contains numerous copies of *Predstav-lenie* [Presentation] of the Tiflis Governor Shervashidze to the head of the Civil Department in the Caucasus S. A. Sheremetev written in 1895 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 595)\*. 163 official documents are included in the second volume of the collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...* They were taken by Bonch-Bruevich and his employees out of the archives of Moscow, Leningrad, and Tbilisi from the police department Fonds, from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, from the Office of the Chief procurator of the Synod, and from the Fonds of the Head of the Civil Department in the Caucasus (MS RSL Fo. 369, C. 44, f. 1; C. 45, f. 1).

These documents take the form of business correspondence on the Doukhobor issue by the officials of all ranks and from various departments, materials of the investigation committee concerning events of 1895, statements and reports of the Caucasian authorities and police departments regarding the Caucasian Doukhobors, and police records on individuals (primarily Tolstoy's followers) involved in the movement. Bonch-Bruevich decided to collect all the material on this subject which existed in the archives of official departments in order to reveal the hidden side of the government policy relating to the Doukhobors; as well, it reveals how the clumsy government bureaucracy functioned, and describes the confusion of the Tsarist administration in exhausting its options in problem-solving in this area. Some official documents were also included by Bonch-Bruevich in the first

11. It is published in the magazine *Russkaia Starina* [Russian Old Times], 1896, note 87, #8.



volume of the collection (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, f. 2, C. 43, f. 1). In essence, all official sources of some value are included in the second volume of the collection. The main shortcoming of these sources is an absence of reference documentation.

The official sources, although very biased in nature, provide trustworthy statistics on the division of the Doukhobors in terms of which party they belonged to in all three areas of their residence and the number of Doukhobors settled separately. They present the exact sequence of events, and therefore supplement the first volume of the collection. We do not consider it expedient to single out any individual document because all of them are closely interrelated. A researcher who is interested in the Tsarist government policies toward the Doukhobors should study this volume in its entirety.

## Chapter II

### Emigration to Canada

Mass emigration of the Caucasian Doukhobors to Canada drastically changed the lives of 7,500 people. This event attracted the attention of many of their contemporaries both in Russia and in Canada. Dozens of people became actively involved in their emigration. They left for posterity their recollections, diaries, and epistolary heritage. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain just a portion of this extensive material.

On December 31, 1897 the Minister of Internal Affairs issued a document giving the Doukhobors permission to emigrate. The only ones denied were those who were of draft age. The Doukhobors had to leave at their own expense and sign in advance an oath of no return. Because they had no money for travel and did not know where to go, they appealed to Lev N. Tolstoy and his friends for assistance. Vladimir G. and Anna K. Chertkovs, Dmitry Khilkov, Pavel I. Biryukov, and Tolstoy's English followers Aylmer A. Maude and Herbert P. Archer all joined in giving support to the emigration process. Originally the island of Cyprus which belonged to England was chosen as the place for settlement. English Quakers helped a great deal in collecting money. However, it soon became clear that Cyprus was not a suitable place for the Doukhobor way of life because of adverse climatic and natural conditions. It was therefore decided to look for land in Canada.

*An Article-Report Regarding Preparations for Doukhobor Emigration to Canada 1898-1900* is an extremely informative and interesting work

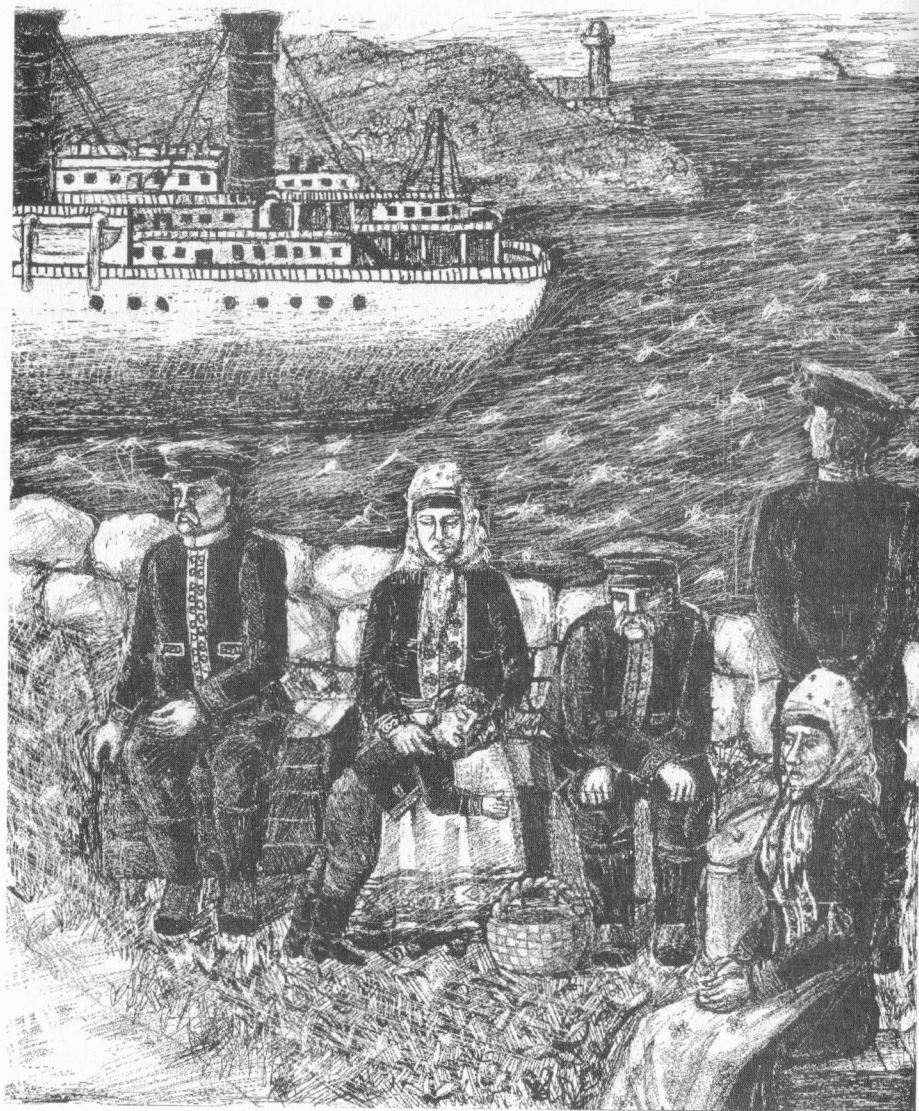


Fig. 10. – Waiting for S. S. Lake Huron to depart for Canada - December 1898

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

which discusses the relocation preparations. It was written by Aylmer Maude who was one of the main organizers of the emigration. Consisting of four notebooks, this manuscript was sent to Bonch-Bruevich in 1904. Vladimir Dmitrievich intended to publish it abridged, but it was never published. Maude mentioned the role of the English Quakers in assisting the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 546). The issue of the Doukhobor emigration is mentioned in the letters of Arthur St. John to Vladimir G. Chertkov during 1898-99 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, 334-342)."

Doukhobor representatives Ivan Ivin and Peter Makhortov arrived in England early in June, 1898, to make the final decision concerning the emigration and selection of the settlement location. For reasons which will not be discussed here, the Doukhobors had to give their consent to emigrate to Cyprus. Ivin and Makhortov went to view the location after all, while the first group of Doukhobors gathered in the Port of Batumi on the Black Sea eager to depart.

On June 17, 1898 Ivin and Makhortov sent a letter to their brothers, which is preserved in SMHR. In this letter they wrote that it was impossible to live at the location they are being sent to; there was no water, no forests, no fuel, and not enough land. These two Doukhobor representatives wrote: "Those who have not moved, let them stay; those in Batumi who already left and received their passports, let them find out about a passenger-ship to Canada... Our advice is let at least part of them go to Canada, if there is no possibility of staying in Batumi" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 856, p. 2).

The heavy gears of migration had started and now it was impossible to stop them. The first group departed from Batumi on August 7, 1898. At Tolstoy's request, Leopold A. rzhitsky was invited to accompany the group, but did not get permission to do so. Sulerzhitsky only had time to examine the ship and bid farewell to the people. He wrote to V. G. Chertkov about this in a letter of August 9th in which he described a plan for action. He expressed his feelings at the time of the ship's departure: "Psalm singing was heard from the ship for a long time. I was agitated as hardly ever before; I was in tears. What will happen to them? Dear kind people — why are they being persecuted? How deeply insulting is everything that has been done and is



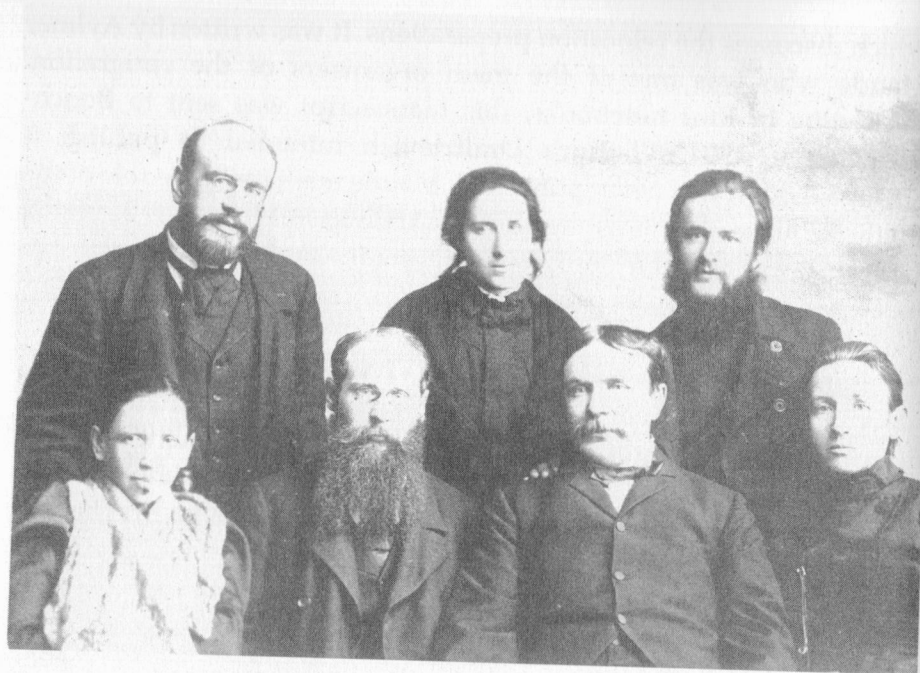


Fig. 11. — The first group of Doukhobor helpers. Left to right: Efrosinia Dmitrievna Khiriakova (nurse), Sergei L'vovich Tolstoy (son of Lev N. Tolstoy, who headed the second shipload of Doukhobors on S. S. Lake Superior), Prince Dimitry Aleksandrovich Khilkov (Tolstoyan), Maria Aleksandrovna Sats (nurse), William F. McCreary (Commissioner for Immigration in Winnipeg), Leopold Antonovich Sulerzhitsky (Tolstoyan who supervised the first shipload of Doukhobors to Canada), and Maria Aleksandrovna Chekhovich (nurse).

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia

being done to them. This is an insult to the whole mankind" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 788, p. 5).<sup>1</sup>

Peter V. Verigin's attitude to emigration at this time is reflected in several letters. In the collection *The Movement Among Russian Peasants...*, Bonch-Bruevich included a letter of a Doukhobor Vishlov of September 17, 1898. Vishlov wrote that when he visited Peter V. Verigin in Obdorsk in August — i.e. at the time when Doukhobors had

already been waiting in Batumi for departure abroad, he received the following "advice": "Everyone shall immigrate. Nobody shall stay here in the Caucasus..." (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 43, f. 1, p. 959). Wishing to learn Tolstoy's opinion concerning the departure of the Doukhobors abroad, P. V. Verigin states his opinion in his letter to him on August 15, 1898: "As for me, I am almost certainly against the emigration, for the people of our commune work for self-perfection; therefore, wherever we move to, we will bring our weaknesses with us. As for the opinion that in general there is more freedom for an individual abroad, I think that maybe there is not much of a difference" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 292)\*.<sup>2</sup> When emigration was already in progress, he suggested its conditions according to which it would be possible. In a letter to his parents, August 18, he wrote: "Maybe the Lord will soon unite all of us as a result of the move abroad" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 290)\*.<sup>3</sup>

On December 10, 1898 the second group left Batumi for Canada. On December 23 it was the third, and on May of 1899 the fourth ship departed. In 1929 at V. G. Chertkov's request, Bonch-Bruevich made a detailed report on the number of people in each group, the time of their departure and arrival, and family names of people who accompanied the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 237).

In SMHR, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contains the initial estimate of the expenses for the emigration to Canada and the responsibilities of the owners of the ship *S. S. Lake Huron* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 913).

A feldsher [an independent nurse or doctor's assistant] E. D. Khiriakova accompanied the third and fourth groups of Doukhobors. At Bonch-Bruevich's request, she wrote the *Memoirs About the Doukhobors* in 1930 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 585). Vera M. Velichkina, who also accompanied the fourth group as a feldsher, kept a diary which is preserved in MS RSL (Fo. 369, C. 436, f. 4). Several extracts from this diary were included in her article "With the Doukhobors to Canada".<sup>4</sup> Her diary evaluation of the Doukhobors differs substantially from the one in her article. In the diary, she noted an enormous conceit of the

1. Sirotskii Dom was a Doukhobor administrative centre, i.e. the centre of all Doukhobor villages, the central treasury, the dwelling place of orphans and single elders, and the residence of the Doukhobor leaders.

2. Published in *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed., England, 1901.

3. In *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed., England, 1901.

4. Published in the newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti* [Russian Gazette], 1900, No. 135, 145, 153, 165, 181, 193.



Doukhobors, their deep conviction that "they are the chosen people, that they are the true Christians" (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 436, f. 4, p. 61). With great artistic skill, Velichkina paints a picture of the Doukhobors including their psychological characteristics.

The emigration process through the eyes of the Doukhobors is recorded by G. Kanigan who wrote his memoirs shortly after moving to Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 516). Simeon V. Vereshchagin wrote in detail to Ivan M. Tregubov about his journey to Canada in his letter of August 6, 1899 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 280). The majority of the Doukhobors awaited with suspicious fear the forthcoming journey across the sea to an unknown land. Even many years after, they could not forget the feelings that they experienced on the deck as the ship cast off from shore.

In his extremely interesting memoirs, A. A. Konkin described his impressions of these events as follows: "When leaving the harbor, there were hard feelings and boredom, timidity, and fear that we might drown lay heavy in our hearts because our brothers from the Small Party who stayed behind used to frighten us by telling us that this would happen" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 946, p. 14 cont. over). In the letter to Bonch-Bruevich, apparently written in the late 1940s or early 1950s, V. A. Makaseyev recalled the prophecy of the leaders that he heard long ago in the Caucasus. The Doukhobors supposedly would temporarily leave Russia which after that would be enveloped in great flames. Russia would cleanse itself, and the Doukhobors would come back. When the Doukhobors boarded *S. S. Lake Huron* and set off, many were nervously waiting for the flames to envelop Russia (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 949, p. 3).

In the beginning of 1899 the second and third groups of Doukhobor migrants set foot on Canadian soil. The fourth group joined them in early summer. For these people it was the end of their wearisome and dangerous journey and the beginning of a new life.

While the campaign assisting emigration was unfolding in Russia and Canada, the group in Cyprus was awaiting a resolution of their fate there. Doukhobors Vasili Potapov and Ivan Sherstobitov described their journey across the Black Sea from Constantinople to the island (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 402). The Doukhobors were settled on private lands. On September 7, 1898 Pavel I. Biryukov signed a lease for one

year. Although the landowner gave them five bulls, ploughs, seeds, and building supplies for four houses, the conditions of agreement were very unfavorable. The Doukhobors would be left with around 40% of the crop. This contract is kept in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 863).

The emigrants worked under the supervision of an estate manager Elmassian who came to feel deep respect toward the Doukhobors, their faith, determination, and diligence. His undated letter to V. G. Chertkov, *Notes About the Doukhobors' Arrival to Cyprus* and *A Letter About the Doukhobors' Departure from Cyprus*<sup>5</sup> (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 859, 860, 861) contains some extremely detailed information concerning life of the Doukhobors on Cyprus, their difficult situation, customs, dogma, and the way of life.

The Doukhobors themselves also wrote about their farming, living conditions, and illnesses. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR comprises a selection of letters from Cyprus for 1898-1899, and almost every letter talks about deaths (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 421). The climate turned out to be hot, while the people had been weakened when they were exiled to the separate districts of the Tiflis province. On October 22, 1898, Doukhobors wrote a letter to Lev N. Tolstoy and Ilya P. Nakashidze stating that fifty people had already died and that they would not be able to live on Cyprus. They asked for help to move to Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 857). Earlier they asked the English Quakers to help them move to Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 853). The Quakers promised to help (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 855). Everyone lived with only one hope — to emigrate before the beginning of the hot season. V. Potapov and I. Sherstobitov wrote on behalf of all Doukhobors to P. I. Biryukov, February 15, 1899: "We want very much to leave Cyprus before the hot season. We asked grandfather Tolstoy, Chertkov, our friends the Quakers, as well as Khilkov and Acha [probably Herbert Archer, S. I.] in Canada about it" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 421, p. 48).

Feldshers A. Rabets and E. Markova wrote to Anna K. Chertkov regarding the physical condition of the people that it was not likely that they would survive the summer season (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 430, 770).

In the beginning of 1899 some money was deposited in the Doukhobor funds by P. Sharapova and Lev N. Tolstoy. It was possible to spend it on either tools for the Doukhobors who moved to Canada

already or on the migration of Doukhobors from Cyprus to Canada. The right to solve the problem was given to Cyprus Doukhobors themselves. They chose the latter. V. Potapov wrote about it to Anna K. Chertkov in his letter of February 6, 1899 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 400). The Cyprus Doukhobors moved to Canada in the spring of 1899. They left graves of the near and the dear on Cyprus. In his archives, Bonch-Bruevich preserved a list of those who died on Cyprus in 1898 and the text of the inscription on the tombstone installed by the Doukhobors in the cemetery of the city of Athalassa in memory of all co-religionists who remained on foreign soil (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 864, 865).

## Chapter III

### The Doukhobors in Canada

A vast amount of literature relates to the life of the Doukhobors in Canada, especially during the first years in the country. It was written by people who participated in the emigration and those who lived with the Doukhobors in the beginning. They are Alexander Bodiansky, Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich, Aylmer Maude, Leopold Sulerzhitsky, and Joseph S. Elkinton. However, those opinions, impressions, and facts which were intended for the general public were usually somewhat retouched by the authors. A complete accurate picture appears only when a wide range of sources are used: private correspondence, official correspondence of the Doukhobors with the Canadian government, business documentation of the Doukhobor commune (financial statements, convention reports and resolutions, convention statements, etc.). Bonch-Bruevich's Fond in SMHR stands out because the material collected in it was diverse in its origin and nature. An overwhelming majority of the documents deal with the vital activities of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB). There are fewer documents on the history of the *svobodniks* or sons of freedom [a group of extremists] and almost nothing on the independents or farmers [individual peasants outside the CCUB].

The history of the Doukhobors based on the materials of Bonch-Bruevich can be divided into several periods:

- 1) From the time of immigration to the end of 1902 when Peter V. Verigin arrived in Canada from exile. It is the initial period of their life in Canada.

- 2) From 1903 to 1924 is the time when P. V. Verigin was head of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. The commune flourished at this time.
- 3) From 1925 to the late 1930s is a period of the rapidly progressing economic and moral decay of the commune.
- 4) From the late 1930s to the early 1950s.

If we examine the documents in chronological order, we will notice that most of the material concerns the first and second periods. This is because Bonch-Bruevich actively took part in the Doukhobor migration to Canada and lived there for almost one year. He continued a lively correspondence with his former countrymen even after his departure until the late 1920s. From the 1930s it became considerably more difficult to stay in contact because of political considerations; moreover, many Doukhobors who knew Bonch-Bruevich closely had passed away.

The first several years in Canada were difficult and intense for the Doukhobors. They found themselves in an extreme situation; without

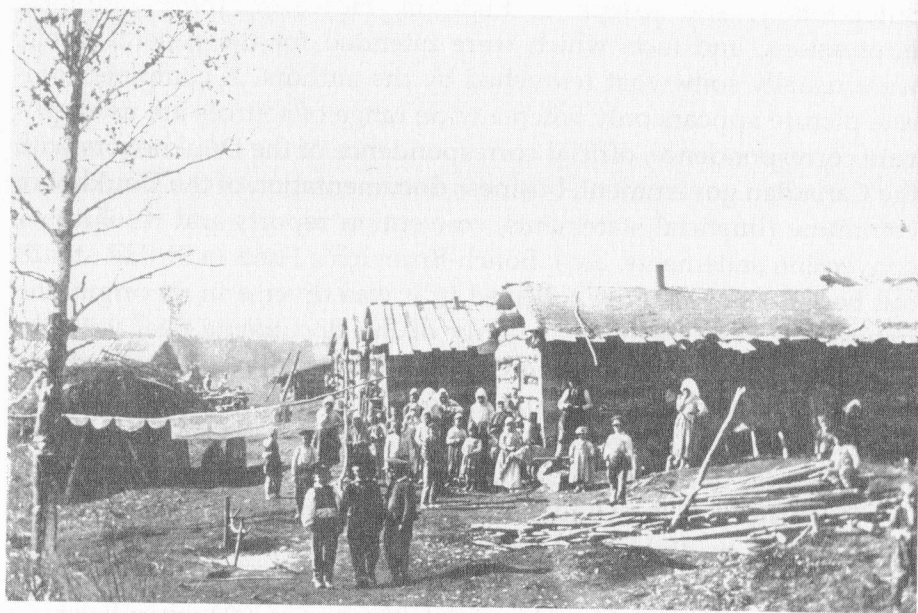


Fig. 12. – Early Doukhobor village in Saskatchewan

Photo by Leopold Sulerzhitsky

any means of subsistence, without any knowledge of the language, customs, and laws of the country. The Doukhobors had to start from nothing, and had to solve many problems. All those intricate clusters of problems and disputes between the Doukhobors and the government as well as within the Doukhobor society (which became a source of growing conflicts in the future) originated from this period.

The Doukhobors settled in Saskatchewan in the district of Assiniboia and in the province of Manitoba. In SMHR, in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds there is a geographic map of the Northern part of the Doukhobor settlements (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 933). However, the information concerning their settlement is very fragmented and does not provide a complete picture regarding this issue. On May 14, 1899, soon after their arrival in Canada, a Doukhobor Vasili Potapov reported to the Chertkovs that the Cyprus Doukhobors were in the process of selecting land. Dmitry A. Khilkov chose two plots of land for them, but it turned out that there had not been enough land there and they had to look for a different plot. Potapov wrote that the land was found and they decided to plant a garden there first so that they would not miss the planting season, and then to build villages later. In his letter he mentioned the issue of their relations with the surrounding population. Within the short time of his stay in Canada, Potapov had time to notice that Canadians were divided into two types: "the first type likes and respects us very much, but the other one, on the contrary, detests us" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 401, p. 4).

Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich and Vera M. Velichkina also wrote about the hostility of the local people toward the Doukhobors in the letters to the Chertkovs. Their letters from Canada are very detailed and animated. Each of the letters may be published as an independent journalistic work. Indeed, several Bonch-Bruevich's letters to the Chertkovs later formed the basis of his book *The Doukhobors in the Canadian Prairies*, 1918. I would like to single out Bonch-Bruevich's letters to Vladimir G. Chertkov of September 4, 1899 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 222, f. 3) and to Anna K. Chertkov of November 3, 1899 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 223, f. 1), as well as the Velichkina's letter to A. Chertkov of August 27, 1899 (MS RSL, F9.369, C.439, f.15). Bonch-Bruevich and Velichkina wrote about the conditions of the Doukhobors, about their supplementary earnings, about their relations with each other, about





Fig. 13. – Early Doukhobor village in Saskatchewan

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia

an attempt to form a Committee for conducting business affairs and dealing with the government. With much indignation they wrote about the *kulaks* [rich peasants who exploited somebody else's work] who, having horses, either would not lend them to other people, or would lend them in exchange for heavy labor. Bonch-Bruevich wrote to Chertkov in anger: "On the whole, there is a terrible exploitation of the poor peasants by the Doukhobors-kulaks. For instance, Ivin took half a house from one of the families for transporting their baggage on his horses from the winter residence to the place of settlement only 20 *versts* [a verst is 3,500 feet] away" (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 222, f. 3, pp. 60-61).

Those Doukhobors who immigrated from the Elizavetpol province and the Kars region were the most prosperous. They suffered less from repression than those who lived in the Akhalkalak district of Tiflis province. Therefore, it turned out that some villages were very

poor, while others got on their feet very quickly. However, the prosperity of a village commune depended on people's unity and on their leader. The commune Terpenie, which was headed by Paul Planidin, got on its feet quickly. The Christian principle "feed the hungry, warm up the cold" became of secondary importance in these hard economic times. Tolstoy's follower A. M. Bodiensky, who came to the Doukhobors in Canada, wrote in December 1899 to Bonch-Bruevich, who was in another village, that the same Planidin, in spite of the extra food supplies in the storehouse, refused to share them with other communes (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 16).

There were various degrees of collectivization in the village-communes; some of them had almost full communal sharing, while others worked as individual farmers, and joined together at the time of ploughing, sowing, and harvesting; still other communes practiced regular individual farming.

The main thing that the Doukhobors dreamed about in the first several years was to become well off; therefore, the people primarily worried about their economic problems.

Particularly during the first few years, the letters of the Canadian Doukhobors almost always contained information about harvesting and farming. Some of them are very detailed. Together, these letters give a full picture of the initial stage of Doukhobor life in Canada. Vasili Potapov wrote in his letter to Anna K. Chertkov of August 15, 1899 that many people went away to make money, that for the time being it was hard to live in Canada, but with time it is possible to "establish oneself well", for woods are close and are given for free. Potapov wrote in detail about the prices of basic foodstuffs, so that one could get an idea of the purchasing capacity of the Doukhobors at this time (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 400).

The following letters described life in Canada: Zibarov's letters to Bonch-Bruevich in 1900-1901 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 632), letters of Ivan M. Strelaev from Blagodarenovka [Blagodarnoe] (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 154), letters of N. Pozdniakov from Liubomirovka [Lubovnoe] (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 112), letters to Pereverzev from the village of Goreloe (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 671), Antifaev's letters (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 609, 610), and the letters to Peter V. Strelaev from the village of Verovka (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 703). The need of these letters is

very different. V. Vereshchagin wrote in his letter of September 25, 1900 about the difficulties, shortages, and low spirits (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 21). Ivan P. Vereshchagin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in his letter of February 13, 1901 about his tiny farm; but he stated with confidence that he would go away to make money, would buy everything required and would expand his farm (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 623). Apparently the Doukhobors experienced both conditions as they were getting established quickly. In January 1902, S. E. Chernov from the village of Terpenie wrote with pride to V. M. Velichkina: "Now we are eating our own bread, and we have milled flour on our own mill" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 719, p. 1).

G. N. Shcherbakov and V. V. Zibin wrote about the first years of their life in Canada in their *Memoirs About Our Former Life* in 1901 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 589). All the documents listed above describe Doukhobor life as seen through their own eyes. It is like a look from within.

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds also have documents on the economic statistics of the Doukhobor villages. Two of them are dated 1901; the third one, apparently, was produced at the same time. Judging by the markings on one of the documents, it is a copy of Herbert Archers's report. In spite of their great value, the data in these documents has one essential defect: some of the names of the Russian villages are distorted beyond recognition (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 916).

There is some information on the first years of life of the Doukhobors in Canada in the letters of Herbert Archer to Vladimir G. Chertkov in 1899-1900 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 265, 266, 267). I would like to draw special attention to Archer's letter written to the government official John Bellows on September 10, 1900. In this letter Archer provides some detailed statistics on the livestock and on the number of agricultural equipment and machinery. He describes the situation of the supplementary earnings, the health of the Doukhobors, and examines the economic situation of each settlement. He expressed his confidence that within five years the Doukhobors would be well established and would prosper as they did in Russia (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 235, f. 27).

Bonch-Bruevich did not share the optimism of Archer and Sulerzhitsky who tried to prove to the Canadian public from the very beginning that the Doukhobors are doing rather well. This even led to

conflicts. Bonch-Bruevich himself wrote about one of these conflicts in his article *Something About the Doukhobors*. The article was apparently not published in Canada, as previously intended (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 39, f. 8).

N. I. Dudchenko, who moved with the Doukhobors to Canada and lived in their village of Kamenka, wrote a great deal about them. He offered his very interesting observations in the letters to Dmitry A. Khilkov during 1901-1903 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333). In his letters of October 19 and 25, 1901, Dudchenko gave detailed descriptions of two Doukhobor villages. In Terpenie, the villagers farmed as a commune, but in Kamenka, they farmed individually. He wrote about the problems of the Doukhobors, their interrelations, character, etc. His letters are the most valuable source of Doukhobor ethnography.

From far away in exile, Peter V. Verigin tried to give economic advice to the Doukhobors. He advised them to breed pedigree dairy cattle, pedigree horses, plant fruit gardens and at the same time look for more convenient places to settle in the region (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 309). There is only one letter of this kind in the Fonds, although there apparently were other letters with "advice" as well.

Success by the Doukhobors was possible only because of their superhuman efforts, strict economy, and well developed mutual assistance among the relatives. S. Prokopenko, who was close to Tolstoy's followers and lived next to the Doukhobors in Canada, noticed that related Doukhobors grouped together. This was especially important when the men went away to work and when only women with children and old people were left in the villages. The money they made on the side was the main source of their income. Gradually, people stopped giving all their money to the communal funds even if they belonged to communes. Prokopenko wrote about all this in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich on July 25, 1900 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 689).

Canada offered ample opportunities to hard-working people and the newcomers began to accumulate property against which they fought so hard in the Caucasus. *Starichki* [old respected men], who suffered patiently in Russia for their ideals of communal Christian life, were especially discontented. V. Vereshchagin, one of these elders, wrote to Bonch-Bruevich on September 25, 1900 from the village of Terpenie: "Many among the Doukhobors have forgotten the Christian





Fig. 14. – Monument of Nikolai I. Dudchenko, Tolstoyan helper. Died in Kamsack, Saskatchewan 1916. "His religion TOLSTOY".

Photo by Koozma J. Tarasoff

life and have begun to live as before, accumulating property and denying the sufferings of the near and dear ones" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 21, p. 9). The Doukhobors who were devoted to Peter V. Verigin were afraid of disobeying the wishes of their "equal-to-God" leader concerning the organization of their life in Canada. Vasia Pozdnyakov, who visited P. V. Verigin in exile, conveyed these wishes to the Doukhobors just before his departure from Russia. Verigin believed that in the new place each family should have its own house, cow and horse; however, everybody should work together and divide the products of their labor per person. Vasia Pozdnyakov left some very interesting memoirs concerning life in Russia, and then in Canada, including his meeting with P. V. Verigin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 953).

It is possible that the book *The Letters of the Doukhobor Leader Peter Vasilevich Verigin* (in the series *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed.) published in 1901 had such an influence on the Doukhobors that in the beginning of 1902, as N. I. Dudchenko wrote in his letter to D. Khilkov on January 19, 1902, they started to read the Bible intensely and looked for prophecies there. Dudchenko wrote: "They have been thinking for a month now that all of them should join together into a commune. So they decided to join together. They again started dividing livestock, money, and trash, even pillow feathers were weighed per person" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333). However, they were able to organize the commune as a united economic organization only after the arrival of P. V. Verigin to Canada.

The documents in Bonch-Bruевич's Fonds allow us to examine the relations between the Doukhobors and the government during the initial period of their life in Canada. Already in the first year there was mutual discontent between the Doukhobors and the government immigration officer W. F. McCreary. Without informing the Doukhobors, McCreary used their bonus money to pay for the medicine of their sick. His letters to Vera M. Velichkina during 1899 offer a great deal of information on this subject (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 440, f. 30).

At first glance, the conflict was not very significant. However, economic hardships and disorder of the day deepened the Doukhobors' distrust of the Canadian government and incited them against it. Velichkina wrote about this in her letter to the Chertkovs on October 17, 1899 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 439, f. 15).



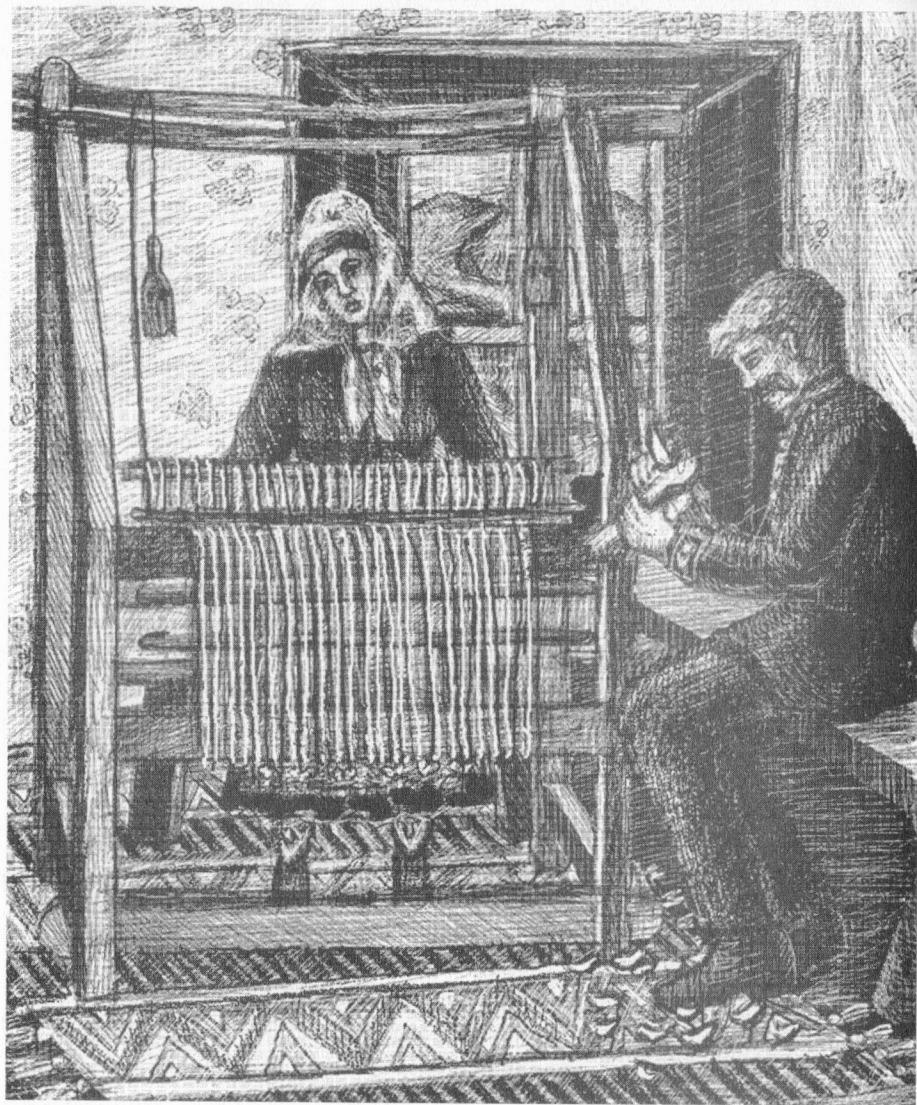


Fig. 15. – Self-sufficiency: Golden hands create rugs, ladles, clothes and other domestic necessities

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

Dr. William Sanders, a representative of the Department of Agriculture, visited the Doukhobor settlements in early October and tried to clear up the misunderstanding regarding the medicine and expressed a sincere desire to help in providing seeds. He repeatedly wrote about this in his letters to Vera M. Velichkina in 1899-1900 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 440, f. 47). The land issue became the stumbling block. When moving to Canada, the Doukhobors did not know that they would have to obtain land as private property. Dmitry Khilkov is usually blamed for failing to find out in advance how the land issue is dealt with in Canada when he negotiated with the government about the Doukhobor immigration.

However, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR contains a very interesting letter April 20, 1898 by the Doukhobor respected elder Nicola Zibarov who was en route from the Caucasus to England to St. John. Zibarov expressed an ardent desire to get to a "free country" as soon as possible. He wrote that the Doukhobors would like to rent or buy land, although the most convenient way for them was to live on government lands as they had been living in the Caucasus (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 345). It is apparent that at the time the Doukhobors entertained the possibility of land purchase, perhaps the question of the basis on which the land was going to be used did not arise.

The earliest document in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds concerning the land issue is dated May 28, 1900. It is *The Appeal and Request to the Canadian Government from the Authorized Organization of Universal Brotherhood*<sup>1</sup> which was written by A. Bodiansky on behalf of the Doukhobors. In this "Appeal" the Doukhobors expressed their gratitude to the government for granting them shelter. At the same time they stated that the Canadian laws regarding land ownership and registration of deaths and births in police registers were not acceptable to them. They felt that these laws were wrong from their point of view and asked them to be changed (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 273).

Alexander M. Bodiansky's role in the Doukhobors' rejection of land ownership is raised here. He firmly stood by the Tolstoyan position: "Land belongs to God; it cannot be sold or bought." Even though the idea existed in the Doukhobor teachings in the 1890s it had never

1. Meaning the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB).



Fig. 16. – Cultivating the prairie with plow and oxen, 1900

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia

come to the forefront because the Doukhobors lived on government lands in the Caucasus. In Canada they were confronted with the need to resolve the land issue. It is difficult to say how this problem would have been resolved if it were not for the strong agitation by Bodiansky. A researcher who takes it upon himself to clarify this issue should refer to the Bodiansky's letters to Bonch-Bruevich in 1900 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C.241, f. 28). These letters give grounds for doubt that the Doukhobors themselves were the initiators of *The Appeal and Request to the Canadian Government*...

This Appeal first of all made an impression on the Quakers who had helped the Doukhobors to emigrate and who had assured the Canadian government of the benefits to be gained from the new settlers. The first to respond was Aylmer Maude who was very involved in the life of the Doukhobors. On August 20, 1900 he wrote a very kind letter to them in which he explained what the government expected from them and what can be done in this situation. Maude thought that

if they acquired the land for all of them as a group, then those who might want to leave the commune would not be able to do so; therefore, such a solution would not be fair (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 772).

Without doubt, the leaders of the Doukhobor commune could not help but foresee that there would always be those who wished to leave the commune; this, however, would lead to its weakening and erosion. This was the reason why they accepted Bodiansky's position on the land issue. Maude's letter had some impact on the Doukhobors and their opinions became divided; some of them became supporters in acquiring land as private property. A Doukhobor Vasili Potapov wrote in his letter to Diterikhs in November 1900 that they decided to wait for the government's reply to their appeal (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 775).

At the same time in November 1900 *The English Society of Friends for Assistance to the Doukhobors* turned to the Doukhobors with an admonition. In their opinion, the Doukhobor letter to the government had "elements which could be an obstacle to a favourable attitude towards the Doukhobors." Just as with Maude, they also tried to explain why the government made these laws and not other ones (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 730).

In Canada the Doukhobors attempted to create the same independent mini-state within the state which they had in the Caucasus before 1887. They wanted to obtain the land as one chunk for all of them, pay taxes on it, and live there without any more government interference. N. I. Dudchenko wrote about this desire of the Doukhobors and about their distrust of the Canadian government in his letters to D. Khilkov on October 17 and 19, 1901 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333). According to Dudchenko, the Doukhobors did not feel completely settled in Canada because of the uncertainty of the land issue. Hence, they had thought about their new sufferings, about moving to Turkey.

Constantly repeating the notion that "land is God's land", the Doukhobors nevertheless claimed their right to it. For instance, Dudchenko wrote in his letter to Khilkov on December 8, 1901 that the Doukhobors from the village of Kamenka demanded an eviction of all non-Doukhobors from the village declaring that there would not be enough land for their children. In the same letter, Dudchenko remarked correctly that the land issue would be resolved only after P. V. Verigin arrived in Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333).



In his letter to Khilkov of January 19, 1902, Dudchenko mentioned some letter from Peter V. Verigin in which he advised the Doukhobors not to build big houses because of possible relocation. This letter by Dudchenko reveals what was going on within the Doukhobor commune in their conflict with the government (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333).

In 1902 the Canadian government distributed to the Doukhobor villages a circular *Public notice concerning the issue of land appointment to the Doukhobors*. It informed the Doukhobors that from then on the land allotted to them was not considered theirs. This document is preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 915).

Semeon F. Reibin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in his letter of February 5, 1902 about the arrival of a government official from Ottawa for negotiations with the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 694).

When the Doukhobors were moving to Canada, they thought that it would be their Promised Land, that they would be able to settle down exactly the way they wanted, and that they would be absolutely free from "human laws" as they called government laws. But the reality of the land question stunned them. A Doukhobor from the village of Osvobozhdenie, Peter V. Storozhev, wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in February 1902 that they dug this land with spades, tilled it themselves, and now the *angliks* [a made-up word for Englishman] would profit from their labour. "If there is no God's law here," concluded Storozhev, "then there is no freedom here" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 152, p. 1). At the same time the disappointed Semeon Reibin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich that they had hoped to find a respite from forced roaming from place to place and from persecution in Canada, but the Canadian government turned out to be the same as the Russian one (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 694).

A new stage in the life of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood in Canada began with the arrival of the Doukhobor leader Peter V. Verigin in November 1902. Unfortunately, there are no documents concerning the vital activities of the commune in 1903 and 1904 in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds. There is one letter by Peter V. Verigin, December 7, 1904, from Canada to his son Peter P. Verigin in the Caucasus. In this letter, Peter Vasilevich admired the excellent Canadian soil, which was easy to cultivate. He wrote that they had acquired their first steam engine (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 300).

Peter V. Verigin successfully persuaded the government to register all the land in the name of three members of the CCUB. In file 71, inv. 7, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds, SMHR, there is a Verigin's letter to Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, written January 1, 1905, in which he expressed his gratitude for the permission given to the Doukhobors to settle in villages. He argued for the economic expediency of settling by villages and attached a list of corrected names for 44 villages.

However, in several years, the land issue arose again when the government broke all agreements made with P. V. Verigin and requested that the Doukhobors become citizens, otherwise they would lose their lands. The Canadian government appealed to the Doukhobors in both Russian and English (1907) stating: "The government is pleased to see that some of the Doukhobors are cultivating their own land and have already become or are becoming Canadian citizens and British subjects." It would not force the Doukhobors to become citizens, but it also "can no longer give them such land ownership privileges which are not given to other people" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 922).

The Doukhobors used their own money to purchase some land in British Columbia, and part of the commune members moved there in groups within several years. In the letter to Bonch-Bruevich on April 3, 1909, G. N. Kanigan wrote about the Doukhobors' move to British Columbia and described the new sites (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 71). Ivan E. Konkin wrote about the same events in his letter to A. K. Chertkov, March 14, 1912; with it he enclosed a "farewell address" which was given by a group of Doukhobors leaving for British Columbia in 1913. This address was, apparently, intended not only for the Doukhobors, but also for the general public. It provided two reasons which led to the move:

- 1) Their refusal to swear allegiance to the King;
- 2) The climate was unsuitable for vegetarians (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 69).

The land issue was resolved with this move and the citizenship problem became less urgent at this time. At the same time, the Doukhobors composed and memorized a new psalm concerning





Fig. 17. – *Spinning wool into yarn...*

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

citizenship, which consisted of questions and answers. A researcher may familiarize with it in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 896).

Simultaneously with the land problem during these years was the problem of the registration of births, marriages, and deaths by the Doukhobors, as well as the issue of attendance of their children in the English schools. While not refusing to supply the Canadian authorities from time to time with the information regarding population increases, the community and zealot Doukhobors were flatly against registration in special books (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 878). Already by 1902 they refused to provide even Bonch-Bruевич with the information on marriages and births (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 625). These problems appear in several documents dated 1914. There is a letter from the CCUB Doukhobors, March 1914, which was sent to the Attorney General of British Columbia, William Bowser, in which they stated their position on these questions. The administration threatened the Doukhobors of B. C. with a fine for disobeying Canadian laws. In response, they wrote: "All the Doukhobors, and there are six thousand people in the commune, they will take off their clothes which were left after the robbery by the Saskatchewan government, and would throw them in the faces of the officials in Nelson and Grand Forks. They would remain naked on the streets and this would be a good illustration reflecting the attitude of the government officials toward the Doukhobors" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 431, p. 3). In these words one can feel the deep resentment of these cheated people. This letter also contains an explanation, written on behalf of the children, as to why the Doukhobor children did not attend public schools. It is composed in the form of Questions and Answers.

At the same time the female Doukhobors of the commune sent an appeal to the Canadian government, signed by themselves, but composed by Ivan E. Konkin. The appeal pointed out the unfair treatment of the Doukhobors by the government (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 520).

The talks concerning the rejection of schools and registration of births, marriages, and deaths were conducted in 1914 during the visit to the commune by the British Columbia Minister Ross and the Attorney-General Bowser. The conversation was recorded by Ivan E. Konkin and Simeon Reibin and is preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 519).

The economic aspects of life in CCUB at the time of Peter V. Verigin was well documented in the materials from Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR. Ivan E. Konkin, an ardent supporter of the commune, wrote in great detail and enthusiasm about the commune's achievements. His letters to a Russian *skopets* [a member of a religious sect practicing castration], M. N. Migachev, an acquaintance of his through Siberian exile, especially contain a great deal of interesting information. One of them dated April 12, 1906 and another one written two years later in December 22, describes the amount and kind of property the commune had and its cost; he also wrote about the plans for the future (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 523). In his letter to K. S. Zabava in Russia, 1906, he also described communal farming, supplementary income from gathering seneca roots and working on the railroad (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 521). In his letter to Bonch-Bruevich, March 22, 1911, Konkin wrote about the harvest in Saskatchewan, prospects for farming in British Columbia, and the "wonderful" communal life (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 69). In his letter to Anna K. Cherkov, March 14, 1912, Konkin colourfully described the light white bread eaten by commune members, the tasty borsch made of fresh vegetables, homemade jam, and stewed fruit (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 69). In sum, I. E. Konkin's letters serve as a complete and fairly credible source despite a somewhat excessive praise of communal life.

In 1909 Peter V. Verigin wrote about the commune, its farming and customs in an extensive letter to V. G. Iakushevich who, apparently, wanted to reside together with the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 298). V. I. Strelaev wrote Bonch-Bruevich on February 14, 1913 about the life in the British Columbia communal house in the village of Plodorodnoe. In his letters between 1913 and 1916, P. V. Strelaev described the life and farming in the Saskatchewan village of Vernoe (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 154-155).

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR contains a list of all the communal property which in September 1917 totaled \$1,980,748. It was put together in the form of an announcement for public educational purposes. It stated that the Canadian government granted the Doukhobor commune the right to legally establish the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 879).

The documents listed above contain a vast amount of valuable information about the customs established in the commune and about

the nature of its spiritual life. Unfortunately, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain almost no letters from P. V. Verigin to the Doukhobors with the economic advice and moral admonitions which he sent to the villages in great numbers. The only exception is his letter to all commune members, October 15, 1912, in which Verigin informed all the Doukhobors about the representative meeting in the village of Otradnoe, thanking God for granting them a good harvest (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 300).

One ought to single out one more document concerning life in the CCUB. It is a letter by S. Evdokimov, January 1922, to the editor of the newspaper *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* [New Russian Word]. This man accidentally found himself among the Doukhobors of British Columbia and spent only one day with them. A very observant person, Evdokimov recorded the most valuable ethnographic information about their table manners and food preparations; moreover, he calculated the expenditure of foodstuffs and money for each eater of the commune (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 502).

The vital activities of the CCUB can be examined through the documents from the yearly conventions, although the fonds lack certain years. There are accounts for the conventions 1906<sup>2</sup> and 1908-1912 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 893-903); the financial accounts can be found for only 1911-1912 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 909).

If one were to judge by the official accounts of CCUB and by the letters from the Doukhobors, life in the commune was plentiful, happy, and prosperous. The above mentioned Peter V. Strelaev enthusiastically wrote in 1913 about collective harvesting with the use of machines: "...would simply say how happy and agreeable everything is, everything gets done so well. For now the life is so prosperous..." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 155, p. 10).

One can also find some negative remarks about the commune in the letters of the Doukhobors. First of all the authors did not like the unlimited power of the leaders and a complete absence of rights to ordinary commune members. M. A. Abrosimov who left the commune with his family, wrote the following about his reasons for leaving in his letters to Bonch-Bruevich in 1910: "...a commune is a good

2. In the book *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*.



thing, there are no poor people, nor rich ones; no one is dying of hunger or walks around without shoes or clothing. But to divide everything in a Christian-like way, that is not there, no. Those who are strong and sharp-tongued live well, but it's not the same for the rest..." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 2, p. 13). In the other letter he wrote: "It's funny, but true; Verigin, our leader, became an absolute master of our labour. The man cunningly took possession of the enormous property..." (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 2, p. 6).

S. F. Reibin expressed his dissatisfaction with the communal customs and Peter V. Verigin, who was given the nickname of "Lordly" in Canada. A large group of the Doukhobors including himself left the commune in 1923. Reibin reminisced about this period of his life in his letter to V. D. Bonch-Bruevich on August 5, 1952 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 136). Reibin sent Bonch-Bruevich his story *Two elders*<sup>3</sup> to demonstrate convincingly the unlimited powers and petty tyranny of Verigin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 135).

Ivan G. Bondarev gave a brilliant testimonial of the commune and communal society. Looking back and analyzing his communal life of 25 years as well as following the life in the USSR through newspapers, he wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in 1933: "The masses must silently and unquestingly obey the decrees and decisions (made by the assembly supposedly) which always place the interests of plans and strategies far higher than the individual interests and everyday requirements of the individuals comprising the masses" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 19, p. 8). As we can see the assessments of the commune varied, but the researcher who wants to obtain an objective picture must consider all of them.

Those centrifugal forces which existed in CCUB, multiplied by the desire and resources of the government to disintegrate the commune, produced their results after Peter V. Verigin's death in 1924.

Soon after the tragic death of Peter V. Verigin, there was a split among the commune members: a negligible part of the people went with Anastasia Golubova who lived in Verigin's house for many years; the rest came to recognize Peter Petrovich Verigin who lived in

the USSR as their leader. In Canada he was better known under a nickname of "Chistiakov". A. A. Konkin mentions the split in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich dated February 25, 1935. S. F. Reibin wrote about the same thing many years later on November 19, 1946 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 68, 137).

After P. V. Verigin's death, major financial difficulties came to light in the commune. The materials from the yearly meetings of CCUB shareholders from 1924-1925 throw light on some of the problems (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 907). The information concerning the relations with the banks as well as the economic concerns for that year can be found in the *Special Rulings of the Directors of the Christian Community* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 908).

Peter Petrovich Verigin who arrived in Canada in 1927 immediately began his attempts to find money to pay the debts. For this purpose, Peter Petrovich established a personal fund which he created from the proceeds of bonds bought by the Doukhobors. However, not all the moneys collected were used for public purposes. There is a document in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds titled *Peter Petrovich Verigin-Chistiakov. Creation of a personal fund*. Its author is not indicated, but it is a person closely related to the leader and well versed in the financial affairs of the commune (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 875).

The commune's economic condition is reflected in the yearly reports for 1928-1929 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 910) and in the *Estimate of Profits and Expenses for 1930* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 911). The governing body of CCUB tried to find resources from renting vacant lands to its own members in 1929 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 912).

Upon his arrival in Canada, Peter P. Verigin tried to unite all the Doukhobors regardless of their religious and socio-economic differences. On Verigin's initiative, the individual farmers, the communal farmers and the sons of freedom announced at the Convention on June 27, 1928 that from then on they will be called the *Imenovannie Dukhobortsy* [Named Doukhobors]. The Minutes of this Convention and an Agenda are preserved in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 904). Another archive file contains a list of representative delegates of the Named Doukhobors who came to the Convention on March 30, 1930 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 905). A significant issue of that period was the adoption of the *Declaration of the Named Doukhobors*

3. Published in S. F. Reibin's book *Trud i mirnaia zhizn: Istoria dukhobotsev bez maski / Toil and peaceful life: History of the Doukhobors Unmasked*. San Francisco, 1952.



at the Convention which took place from July 29 to August 7, 1934. It has been published many times and is widely known. One copy is also preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 921).

Despite the numerous resolutions, Convention Minutes, and declarations, the crisis situation intensified not only in the economic domain, but in all aspects of the Doukhobors' life. Tension was growing with the government as well as antagonism between the sons of freedom and the rest of the Doukhobors. In 1932 and 1933 Vasili A. Makaseev wrote about this in his articles for the press. He sent two of them to Bonch-Bruevich: *The Letter to the Minister of Education in the province of Saskatchewan* and *The Doukhobors and the government* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 536, 537).

The well-known story about Peter P. Verigin's arrest and his attempted deportation to the USSR served to worsen the already difficult situation. We will not touch upon the question of whether or not this move by the Canadian government was morally justified. One can make judgments about the attitude of the Doukhobors towards this decision by the appeal that they sent to the government. This document is preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 182). The Doukhobors literally begged the Canadian administration not to deport their leader from the country by painting terrible pictures of the repercussions of this ill-conceived action. "And what will happen after Mr. Verigin's deportation, when these poor victims, having lost all of their facilities, will have to take off their clothes (as has already been done by part of them) and will stretch out in a wretched line along the railroad", they wrote in their appeal (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 182, p. 6).

Peter P. Verigin was not deported but unfortunately even this ordeal did not affect his lifestyle. A Doukhobor S. I. Dubasov wrote about this to Bonch-Bruevich in his letter of August 25, 1935 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 46).

I would like to single out a manuscript of Paterson among the documents concerning the Canadian Doukhobors in the 1920s and 1930s. It was written in the second half of the 1930s and to a greater or lesser extent touches upon various aspects of Doukhobor life (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 590).

In 1938 not long before P. P. Verigin's death, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) was created to replace the Christian

Community of Universal Brotherhood. The communal life based on Christian principles—the reason for their relocation to Canada—became a thing of the past.

The problems of the Doukhobors in Canada were exacerbated by their inner disagreements, splits and conflicts. In December 1945 they convened an All-Doukhobor Convention during which they tried to analyze the reasons for the estrangement and find ways to eliminate them. V. I. Kuchin sent the resolutions of this Convention, which also dealt with other problems, to Bonch-Bruevich. The Union of Doukhobors of Canada in the 1940s was described in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich on November 19, 1946 by S. F. Reibin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 137).

The 50th anniversary of the relocation of the Doukhobors was celebrated in 1949. The Doukhobors from the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ celebrated this occasion on July 31 and August 1st. The program and script of the 18-act performance was staged by them and preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 897). In effect, this script is a Doukhobor interpretation of their own history. It was undoubtedly collectively discussed and performed in front of a mass of Doukhobors. It presents the historical conception of the Doukhobors as interpreted from a USCC perspective. The performance was primarily intended for the younger generation as a reminder of the legacy of their ancestors.

The process of integration of the Doukhobors into the Canadian society which happened naturally and regularly was accompanied by a weakening of their ethnic and religious isolation. First of all, this process affected the young people. Doukhobor historian Vasili A. Soukorev offered his own vision of this problem in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich dated June 18, 1949. In his letter he also enclosed his article *The Future of the Doukhobors* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 158). As the generations were changing, the problem of preserving their traditions, language, religion and transferring these to the young people became more and more urgent. These and other questions were examined in November 1950 at the Convention of the Union of Youth, created as part of Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ. The materials of this Convention are preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 906).

Among the documents which reflect the history and ideology of the Canadian Doukhobors, there are documents concerning the movement of the sons of freedom or svobodniks. These are the letters of the

sons of freedom, their memoirs and diaries, appeals, petitions and open letters which they published and widely circulated. All of them are preserved in SMHR.

Unfortunately, during the formation of Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds, these documents did not arrive regularly. The Fonds contain a few documents on the initial stages of the freedom movement; then there is a gap until 1912, and then there are a few more sources containing information on the freedom movement in 1911-1913. The next pause lasted until the second half of the 1920s. There is a large collection of documents for 1928-1929. The freedom movement of the early 1930s is represented very sparingly in the Fonds. There are just a few documents concerning this group of the Doukhobors in the second half of the 1940s. Certainly a researcher cannot reconstruct such complicated and diverse phenomenon as the freedom movement by using these documents. The materials of the Fonds can nevertheless shine some light on some distinct periods of the movement. The personal documents (diaries, letters) allow us to glance at the movement from the inside, through the eyes of the sons of freedom themselves.

The earliest documents date to the summer of 1902, i.e. exactly from the time when the freedom movement had just emerged. The sons of freedom marked their arrival by a complete rejection of all foods of animal origin. In the Caucasus, the postnik-Doukhobors refused to eat meat, but in Canada many of the sons of freedom stopped eating butter, milk, and eggs. They also refused to use cattle to do farm work. Ivan E. Konkin reported this to the Chertkovs with chagrin on July 11, 1902. He hoped that all this was temporary and "the Lord will send them insight" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 763, p. 1). The sons of freedom turned to an Immigration officer in Yorkton asking him to convey their message to the higher authorities regarding an allotment of a vacant lot of land with a good climate for the cattle that they wanted to release (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 877). The leaders of the sons of freedom, Ivan Ponomarev and E. Popov, reported to A. M. Bodiansky in the fall of 1902 the reasons for their unusual actions. It was in their plans to find a location with a warmer climate for themselves as well (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 392).

Several documents were written by people who saw the freedom movement in completely different ways as they described the first trek

of the sons of freedom in the fall of 1902. One of these was by sons of freedom V. V. Kolesnikov in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich in October 1904 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 64). Much later, in 1924, A. A. Konkin wrote about the trek of the sons of freedom in his memoirs. His mother was a sons of freedom, but he himself did not support the movement (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 946). The Fonds contains one more document whose authorship is ascribed to a Canadian, a lieutenant Lotbiniere. It is called *Excerpts from a Diary*, but more likely, it is a report concerning the trek of the sons of freedom to Yorkton prepared by the lieutenant at the request of the superiors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 873).

In 1912, F. P. Rezansov wrote three notebooks of memoirs-reflections, called *A Book of Suffering and Death of Dear People in Canada for Their Faith in God*. The beginning of this narrative begins in 1903 and covers the time period up to 1912. It is dedicated to the freedom movement and is written from their point of view (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 571).

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contains a diary of a son of freedom M. A. Voikin which he called *Life and Suffering*, dated 1912. The diary covers a brief period and its entries were not made on a regular basis; nevertheless, it is very interesting. In his diary a researcher could find not only a narrative of events and discussions on religious topics, but also everyday sketches down to recipes for berry preserves used by the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 497).

One of the key questions of the sons of freedom' ideology was their refusal to own property, a concept that was defined very broadly. A relationship between a husband and his wife were viewed by them as proprietary. The active members of the movement A. Makhortov in his letter of August 7, 1911, and M. A. Voikin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich about the victory over family egotism (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 90, 31). Their letters also contain other interesting details of the lives of the sons of freedom.

G. N. Kanigan's letter written in October 1912 was to be delivered to the King's commissioner. Kanigan wanted to explain to the commissioner the aims of the movement of his accomplices and their actions (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 71).

The next document on this topic in the chronological order begins in February 1926. This is an article written by a sons of freedom V. Vlasov, *Life and Peace*, in which he states his thoughts on God and life

(SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 495). The Fonds preserved a large number of pamphlets describing the sons of freedom' ideology written in 1928-1929. These are appeals to specific government officials on various levels, to the collective image of "the rulers and executors of human laws", to "brothers and sisters", to "Christians of the whole world", as well as the open letters. Their purpose was to present the main idea of the sons of freedom' teachings to various strata of the Canadian population and to the world community, to show their determination to champion their principles and, if possible, to seek support. Altogether these documents disclose the reasons for the conflict between the government and the sons of freedom, they throw light on the key points of their doctrine and allow one to understand their ideas, purpose, and place in human society (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 87, 627, 880-882, 885-893).

I would like to concentrate on just a few of them. *The Appeal of the Sons of Freedom to the Christians of the World* is dated August 19, 1928. The sons of freedom state in it that the Named Doukhobors<sup>4</sup> are nothing less than the "ark which preserved and delivered the Truth up to the present time". They are the advance detachment of the commune, and it is they who must atone for the sins of all the living beings, i.e. as God's true sons, they are sent to save mankind. Here is the origin of the glorification of suffering, readiness to suffer in the name of mankind, and the search for suffering. In this *Appeal*, as in many others, one can hear the eschatological motifs about the end of the world, and the impending death of civilization (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 87). The same motifs are found in the *Open Letter to Inspector Dunwoody* written in 1931 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 480).

In 1929 the sons of freedom turned to "brothers Quakers". In an attempt to open their eyes to the actions of the Canadian government, the sons of freedom hoped to find understanding and support among the Quakers (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 87). Having heard of the oppression of the Doukhobors in the USSR, the sons of freedom sent their

4. Up to November 1927, only *svobodniks* called themselves "Named Doukhobors". After Peter P. Verigin's speech of October 29, 1927 in Brilliant, British Columbia, this name expanded to include all Doukhobors: commune members, *svobodniks*, and individual farmers. However, in their documents, the sons of freedom continue to denote only themselves when talking about the Named Doukhobors.

petition to a vague destination: "To Moscow", naively urging the Soviet government "to live according to God's wishes" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 885).

Of special interest is a document, *An Appeal of the Named Doukhobors to all Other Idealists of the World*. It was written in 1934 by the sons of freedom incarcerated in the New Westminster prison of British Columbia and sentenced to hard labor. It is of interest not so much because of its content, but because of its form. The appeal is written in a form of a prayer (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 890).

Sons of freedom' appeals are always very emotional, sometimes with a shade of certain exaltation. Even in their personal letters, as for example in A. Dutov's letter to Bonch-Bruevich in 1928, one can hear the declarative, slogan style peculiar to them. A. Dutov wrote: "Away with war, revolution, exploitation, property ownership, and egotism. Land, our mother, is not to be bought, sold, or paid taxes for; Satan's throne is built on taxes" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 627, p. 2).

Sometimes, overcome by their feelings, the authors of letters and manuscripts placed poems they had written in their appeals (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 90, 575).

An undated manuscript of Vasili A. Makaseyev, *Doukhobors-Svobodniks*, can apparently be dated to the late 1920s or early 1930s. Its author was not a sons of freedom / *svobodnik*, but he witnessed the very hard life of his father Alesha Makaseyev, who truly experienced full suffering. His father was one of the active *svobodniks*. Rejecting the freedom movement, V. A. Makaseyev still felt compassion for these people and tried to be objective (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 533).

The material on the freedom movement of the 1930s and 1940s reached Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds mainly through Peter N. Malov. This man was the author of many of them. They are *The Speech of svobodnik Malov on Peter's Day June 29, 1935* and a letter to the most progressive group of Doukhobors in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan in 1936 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 87). His letters to Bonch-Bruevich of the 1940s is of great interest. First of all, what is surprising in them is that P. N. Malov is very well-read, has great erudition, and is predisposed to analyzing. He was at the center of the freedom movement of that time and for that reason reported some interesting facts and details (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 86).



In his letter to Bonch-Bruevich, July 8 and 22, 1949, V. A. Soukorev attempts to examine the essence of the freedom movement. Soukorev thought that this movement was not based on religious principles, but had a socio-political character which was revealed in their rejection of any authority and of any social order. He had an extremely negative attitude towards this philosophy and stated that the sons of freedom caused not only material, but also moral damage to the Doukhobor movement (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 158).

Isolated references to the sons of freedom are also found in other files of the archives of SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 537, 590, 635).

Except for isolated references and several letters of Vasili A. Makaseyev to Bonch-Bruevich during the 1930s, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds essentially lack any material on the life of the so-called Independents or farmers. They are the ones who left the commune and became land owners. Of special interest is the letter November 4, 1933 in which Makaseyev described his life since 1913, wrote about his farm, and told about the difficulties and sufferings he had endured before he could get on his own feet (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 659, pp. 2-5).

As we can see, documents from Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds concerning the Canadian Doukhobors are sufficiently varied in their nature and origin. Not all aspects of their life from different periods of history are dealt with equally well. However, we consider that the Fonds are indispensable for researchers studying the first years of the residence of the Doukhobors in Canada.

## Chapter IV

### Doukhobors and Tolstoy's Followers

During the tragic fate of the Doukhobors, those closely and immediately associated was a group of intelligentsia who were called Tolstoy followers because they shared the views of the great writer. Scholars still argue whether or not the Tolstoy movement was a new religious sect or it represented philosophical-ethical teachings. By the middle of the 1890s many common directions were discovered in the religious-ethical teachings of the Doukhobor and Tolstoy movements. Researchers talked about the ideological influence of the followers of Lev N. Tolstoy on the Doukhobor movement. We shall not raise this question now as it demands a scrupulous study.

Suffice it to say that if it was not for the involvement and assistance of Tolstoy followers, the fate of the Doukhobors from Transcaucasia would certainly have been different. The question of their interrelationship inevitably comes up as soon as we consider the Doukhobor movement of the 1890s, the relocation to Canada, and the first years of life at the new location. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in MS RSL and SMHR contain a large collection of documents dealing with this subject. These are the Doukhobors' letters to Tolstoy's followers and vice versa, extensive correspondence of Tolstoy's followers among themselves, and appeals of Tolstoy's followers to the military and civil authorities. Starting from 1895 Tolstoy's followers paid a great deal of attention to the Doukhobors. The amount of attention gradually lessened from the 1900s. The greatest number of documents date from exactly that time.

What was it that attracted Tolstoy's followers to the Doukhobor movement? They saw their confederates in the poor sectarian peasants; they viewed them as people able to realize the ideals proposed by Lev N. Tolstoy. An unknown author, undoubtedly Tolstoy's follower, wrote about this in his letter to Pavel A. Bulanzhe [Boulanger] in the fall of 1896. With enthusiasm, he argued that the Doukhobors' conception of God, God's kingdom, man, and his purpose is the same as that of Lev Nikolaevich; later he argued that the existence of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood "provides a brilliant example of the harm of the church and government and their needlessness. To help this movement means to help mankind to get rid of all evil from which it suffers" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 412, p. 4)\*. There is another document in the Fonds which has passages answering the above question. This is the *Article-Report on the Preparation for Emigration of the Doukhobors to Canada*, authored by Aylmer Maude. Maude wrote that Tolstoy's followers considered the Doukhobors to be "ideally peaceful people, full of love for their enemy", that the Doukhobors have solved the most important problem, they "found a way to combine complete personal freedom with the equality of position and the material basis of peace and order in a communal establishment" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 546, pp. 28-29).

In the opinion of Tolstoy's followers, the Doukhobors have resolved the contradiction between the social organization which was the commune and personal freedom of its members. Maude remarked that Lev N. Tolstoy hoped that the Doukhobors' manifestation against militarism would be widely supported, although in his attitude towards them, Tolstoy was more subdued than his "fanatical followers".

Apart from the ideological one, there was another reason for connecting Doukhobors with Tolstoy, i.e. simple human compassion. Being Christians, Tolstoy's followers could not help but offer assistance to the persecuted and the suffering. As soon as the information about weapons burning and cruel repression against the Doukhobors reached Tolstoy's followers, they started a wide campaign to protect the sectarians. Tolstoy's followers continually followed the development of events, visited the locations where the Doukhobors, exiled from their native villages, were resettled, began to collect material aid

for them, and visited prisoners in jails (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 257, 412, 756; MS RSL, Fo. 369, K. 43, f. 1, pp. 792-793\*, 830-844\*).

Tolstoy's followers were energetic in releasing their compassion. They wrote and distributed petitions to the public in Russia and abroad asking for assistance for the sufferers; they published articles describing all the horror of the Doukhobors' situation. SMHR contains a copy of an article by Vladimir G. Chertkov, *Persecuted for Love*, written in 1896 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 588) and a petition for help written by Ivan M. Tregubov in the same year (MS RSL, Fo. 269, K. 43, f. 1, pp. 652-654). Readers responded warmly to the publications in Russian newspapers regarding the Doukhobors. In his letter, March 23, 1897, to Iu. Eshchenko in Tiflis, P. A. Bulanzhe wrote that after publication in the newspaper *Russkie Vedomosti* [The Russian Gazette] of a letter about the difficult situation of the Doukhobors resettled among the population of the Caucasus, many people in Moscow expressed their desire to help them (MS RSL, Fo. 269, K. 43, f. 1, pp. 777-778). Tolstoy also took part in this campaign.

Undoubtedly the appeals of Lev N. Tolstoy, Vladimir G. Chertkov, and Ivan Tregubov to the chief of the Ekateringrad penal battalion played a big part in saving the Doukhobors who were sent there and in replacing their sentences with an 18-year exile (MS RSL, Fo. 369, K. 43, f. 1, pp. 622-623, 682-684, 685-691). Tregubov's letter to the chief of the Caucasian military district S. A. Sheremetev is written with great emotion. He takes up the cause to defend Doukhobors Vasili Verigin and Vasili Vereshchagin who were rumored to be sentenced to death. The letter was printed on a hectograph by the author himself and was widely distributed throughout Moscow. Tregubov's letter generated a stream of appeals to Sheremetev in defense of the convicted (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 452)\*. V. G. Chertkov was exiled abroad, while Pavel I. Biryukov and I. M. Tregubov were exiled to the Baltic region for organizing help for the Doukhobors. Tolstoy's followers were able to draw the attention of society to the plight of the Doukhobors and to prevent the authorities from concealing the lawlessness and atrocities committed by the Caucasian administration and by the Cossacks.

Tolstoy's followers idealized the Doukhobors; in their letters they eagerly told each other about Doukhobor pacifism, communal movement, humility, and other Christian virtues. To a certain extent their

letters characterize Tolstoy's followers themselves. They saw in the Doukhobors only what they wanted to see. Alekhin's opinion about the work of Dmitry A. Khilkov, *The Teaching of Spiritual Christians*, is significant in this respect. Alekhin wrote to Tregubov in a letter, February 23, 1896, that Khilkov presented only those parts from Doukhobors' teachings that matched his personal beliefs (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 258)\*. Diterikhs saw them as "good and honest workers" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 329)\*.

It was peculiar to Tolstoy's followers at that time period to display a certain degree of self-abasement as well as a desire to be taught by the Doukhobor-martyrs who showed them an example of Christianity in action. Inspired by the example of the Doukhobors who refused to serve in the army, Leopold A. Sulerzhitsky refused to serve. "We took upon ourselves to teach them," he wrote in a letter to his brother on November 11, 1895, "but they outdistanced us and we got lost in our lust, sciences and arts." Later, he wrote: "Let's acknowledge our mistake and come out and help them" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 787, p. 8).

At the same time, Tolstoy's followers tried to popularize their ideas among the Doukhobors; they attempted to make them follow Tolstoy's teachings. This popularization was conducted not only by Tolstoy's followers who often came to visit the Doukhobors and through letters, but also through the literature published by V. G. Chertkov's and P. I. Biryukov's publishing house *Posrednik* [Intermediary] and distributed in the Caucasus. The publications of *Posrednik* were regularly sent to Peter V. Verigin.

However, in his article *Where is your brother?*, written in 1898 and partly published in 1902 as an introduction to the collection *Doukhobors in a Penal Battalion*, Chertkov tried to prove complete independence of the Doukhobor movement of the 1890s. He wrote that it had "nothing new, nothing contrary to the way they acted earlier, i. e. in the beginning of the 19th century" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 943, p. 14). D. Khilkov also tried to prove that despite some common points in the dogma of the Doukhobors and Tolstoy's followers, the former professed it even before Tolstoy (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 733, p. 5).

As for the Doukhobors, they gratefully accepted financial aid and moral support from Tolstoy's followers. They wrote them numerous letters from the Caucasus, from jail, from the halting places for con-

victs telling them about their lives, and turning to them as friends. Even though the Doukhobors constantly stressed that they would gladly suffer, in almost every letter they called for help.

It is well known what an important part Tolstoy's followers played in the relocation of the Doukhobors to Canada and during the first years of settlement at the new locale. Aylmer Maude, D. Khilkov, Alexander K. Konshin, Bodiansky, Prokopenko, N. Dudchenko, and L. Sulerzhitsky lived in Canada among the Doukhobors and had an opportunity to examine them closer. P. Biryukov was in Cyprus together with the Doukhobors. Tolstoy's followers began to look more closely at the Doukhobors, began to discover new traits in them, and saw that they were not saints, but rather ordinary people with their own weaknesses, people fanatically dedicated to their leader and not willing to heed to the teachings of their intellectual friends.

The letters of Tolstoy's followers at that time are the most interesting sources for the study of social psychology of the Doukhobors. Ecstatic comments about the Doukhobors in the correspondence of Tolstoy's followers gave way to critical evaluations of them, right up to complete rejection. It was more difficult to part with illusions for those who did not live directly with the Doukhobors in Canada, as for example for V. G. and A. K. Chertkov, P. I. Biryukov, and I. M. Tregubov. A. Maude wrote about his disappointment in the above-mentioned *Article-Report...* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 546, pp. 35-36). A. Bodiansky, who lived with the Doukhobors in Canada for a few years, was shocked that they perceived P. V. Verigin as God's son Christ. He wrote a letter to Verigin in December 1900 trying to find out the position of P. V. Verigin himself on this issue. Tolstoy's followers, who always considered that the highest authority for the Doukhobors was reason and conscience, suddenly found out that the highest authority was P. V. Verigin. Bewildered, Bodiansky wrote that the Doukhobors do not reason, do not think, "live almost unconsciously, as a herd", and at the same time consider themselves to be the chosen people (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 271, pp. 2-9). He concluded that "they have very few Christian qualities" and stated this in his letter to Bonch-Bruевич on June 8, 1900 (MS RSL, Fo. 369, c. 241, f. 27, p. 6 and over).

The opinion of Nikolai Dudchenko who lived with the Doukhobors in Canada for several years was even more critical. In his



letter from Canada to Dmitry A. Khilkov on December 8, 1901, he wrote that the Doukhobors divide the whole world into "us" and "it", that they want to be rulers and consider themselves to be the chosen ones. In another letter dated November 2, 1901, Dudchenko reached the conclusion: "Yes, they are fighters but not for truth and not for freedom, but for independence and success of their tribe" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 333).

The Canadian Doukhobors, especially those who were unhappy with the barrack-like practices of the commune and left, wrote rather frankly about God-like worship of Peter V. Verigin and about the departure from those Christian ideals that they fought for in Russia. In 1907 the Chertkovs wrote an open letter to the Doukhobors of Canada, and after making copies of it, sent it to all the villages of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. The letter is very critical, but self-restrained and tactful, and is preserved in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 524). However, the response of Ivan E. Konkin, written July 20, 1907 and addressed not to the Chertkovs themselves, but to "friends and brothers in Christ", is of even greater interest to a researcher of the Doukhobor movement. Of course Konkin's opinion cannot be considered to be the opinion of all commune-member Doukhobors, but he was one of the ideologists of the Doukhobor movement, a relative and follower of P. V. Verigin and one who expressed the sentiments of the Doukhobor leaders. Konkin angrily pounced on the Chertkovs and on those who joined them during the struggle of the Doukhobors with the government in Russia and then in Canada. Konkin wrote: "But, unfortunately, none of them was able to understand the simplicity of the Doukhobor life which is based on equality and brotherhood of all people... Having had a closer look at everything, they voluntarily withdrew to their own places without a murmur." He reproached the Chertkovs for aspiring to be Doukhobor leaders. Even though he recognized the material contribution and help of Tolstoy's followers, Konkin saw God's providence in the relocation from Russia to Canada. He completely rejected their ideological influence (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 524, pp. 1-6).

I. E. Konkin was fanatically devoted to P. V. Verigin and sharply, if not aggressively, stopped any criticism towards the leader and the commune. In 1909 Diterikhs apparently also touched upon the subject

of the leader in one his letters and received the following reply: "...it is not your carriage, and you are not to pull it" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 352, p. 1). Owing to a number of objective reasons, the commune was already beginning to fall apart slowly in the early 1900s even though the signs were not apparent then. In his letter of March 14, 1912, I. Konkin accused Anna K. Chertkov in instigating the Doukhobors to leave the commune through her anti-commune propaganda and thus condemning them to a disaster (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 69).

During the first years in Canada there were numerous conflict situations and bitterness between the Doukhobors and Tolstoy's followers. However, it would be wrong to present their relationship in a bad light only. For all that, the bulk of the Canadian Doukhobors were deeply grateful and trusted Lev N. Tolstoy, the Chertkovs, Biryukov, Tregubov, and Bonch-Bruevich to their dying days. They conveyed this gratitude to their children and grandchildren. This is manifested through numerous letters in the Fonds of Bonch-Bruevich, Tregubov, and Biryukov preserved in SMHR and through letters to the Chertkovs in Vladimir Chertkov's Fonds in MS RSL.

In the beginning of the 1900s the contact between Tolstoy's followers and the Doukhobors who remained in the Caucasus was erratic; moreover, it was only with the Doukhobors of the Large Party. After the October Revolution the relationship between the Caucasian Doukhobors and V. Chertkov and I. Tregubov grew closer. The latter protected sectarian interests, attained the adoption of a decree on alternative military service, and were intercessors during the time of relocation of the Doukhobors from the Caucasus to the Salsk prairies. Tregubov maintained a constant contact with the Salsk Doukhobors and wrote ecstatic articles about them. He took upon himself the role of their guardian and advisor; he, too, became disappointed. In his letters in 1926-1927, he reproached the Salsk Doukhobors in great sadness for shutting their eyes to the drunkenness and hooliganism of their leader Peter P. Verigin who brought shame upon them (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 836, 838); he even threatened to stop being their intercessor. I. M. Tregubov wrote: "What then would I use as a basis for my intercession, for example, to release you from military service on religious grounds when you fight among yourselves and tolerate brawls between each other?" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 836, p. 1).



Fig. 18. – Doukhobor boy in his first school in Saskatchewan, c. 1906

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia

This same question about Peter P. Verigin's conduct was posed to Peter Petrovich himself in a letter by P. I. Biryukov. They were not personally acquainted, but since Biryukov was a friend of P. V. Verigin and the Doukhobors, he tried to bring the Doukhobor leader to his senses (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 268). This very kind and sincere letter apparently made an impression on P. P. Verigin although it did not stop him. In 1927 when he was leaving for Canada, P. P. Verigin invited P. I. Biryukov to come along.

Despite everything, Pavel Biryukov remained an incorrigible idealist. He foretold a great future for the Doukhobor commune in Canada. In 1928 he wrote to Bonch-Bruevich from Canada: "I have always said and will always say that in the second half of the 19th century there were two great phenomena in world history. They shone brightly and give a mighty push to the moral and social development of mankind; these two phenomena were Lev N. Tolstoy and the Doukhobors" (MS RSL, Fo. 369, c. 240, f. 8, p. 16).

In spite of their disappointment and realization that the Doukhobors had not lived up to their expectations, Anna K. and Vladimir G. Chertkovs, Ivan M. Tregubov, and Pavel I. Biryukov always came to their help whenever needed right to their dying days, because they considered it to be their Christian duty; they believed in the future of the Doukhobor movement, and hoped that their involvement might change the world for the better even a little bit.

## Chapter V

### The Problem of Re-Emigration of Canadian Doukhobors to USSR

One can often sense the yearning for the distant and often already strange motherland in the numerous letters of the Canadian Doukhobors sent to Bonch-Bruevich. Forced to abandon it at one time, the Doukhobors considered their emigration to be temporary; they believed and conveyed this belief to their children that there will be a time when they will all return home.

Attempts to return to Russia were undertaken even at the time of Peter V. Verigin. As is generally known, in 1906 a Doukhobor delegation came to Russia. After the February Revolution of 1917, another attempt was made to renew the talks. Both attempts yielded no results because of many reasons which will not be discussed here.

However, four years after the October Revolution, October 1921, the Soviet government sent an appeal *To Sectarians and Old-Believers Residing in Russia and Abroad* in which it invited the people who emigrated because of religious reasons to return home and help with agricultural development. The author of this petition was Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich. In the Manuscript Section of RSL in the Fonds No. 369, there are Vladimir Dmitrievich's memoirs concerning the birth of this interesting document, the great hopes placed on sectarians and old-believers who were used to working collectively, and the reasons why this wonderful initiative "shed its blossoms before they could bloom" (MS RSL, Fo. 369, c. 36, f. 3, p. 27).

The Canadian Doukhobors were the first to respond to this call. As early as March 5, 1922 the independent Doukhobors applied to the



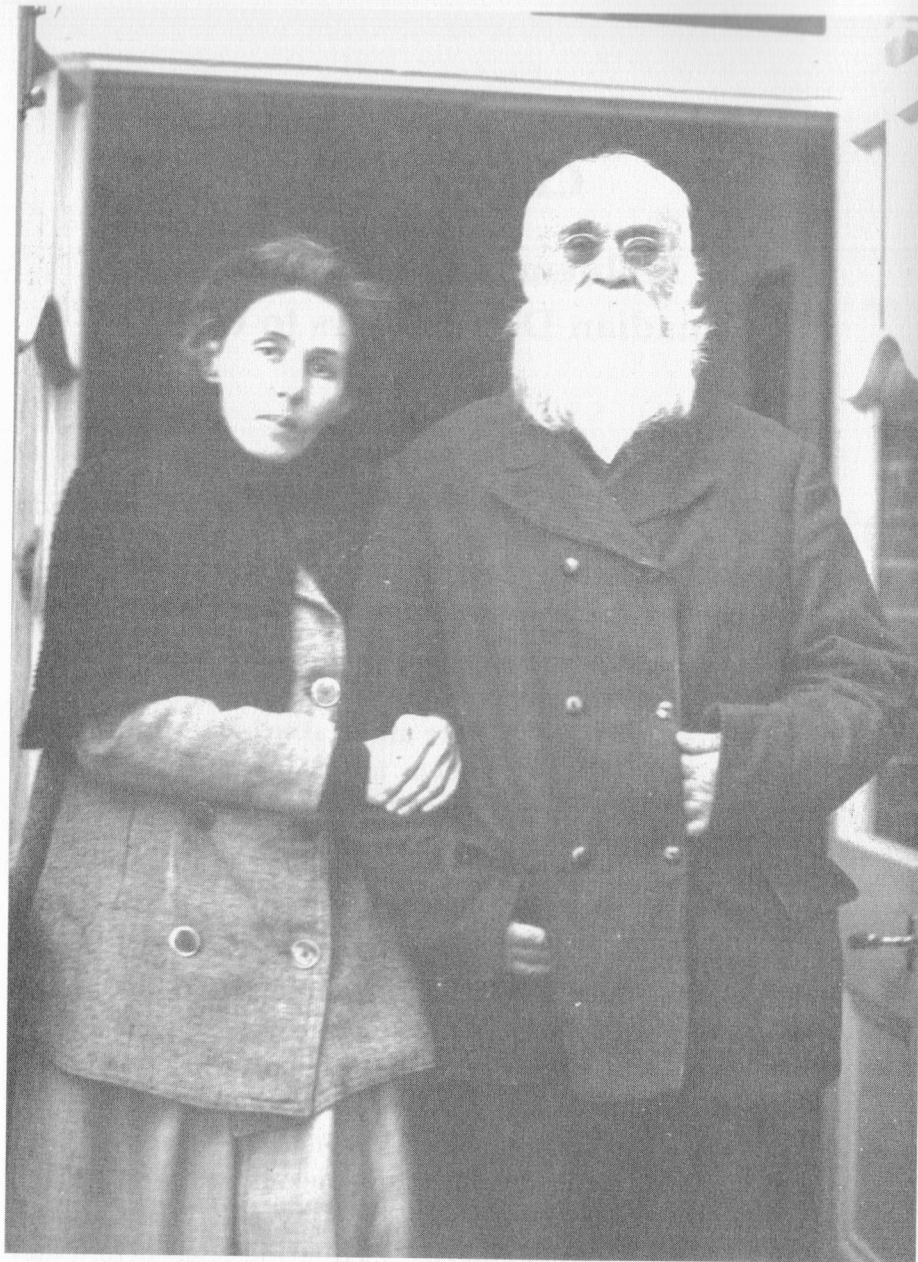


Fig. 19. – Anna K. Cherkov (a Tolstoyan) and “Grandfather” Vania Makhortov, in England, 1907.

Photo by A. K. Chertkov, Moscow

Soviet government and to all Russian people with a request to be taken back to Russia. They hailed the overthrow of autocracy which persecuted the Doukhobors and explained the reasons for their forced departure to Canada. “But now when the dawn of freedom shines in our motherland, we are forced to think about it. On top of that”, the Doukhobors wrote in their appeal, “we dare to ask the Soviet government and all Russian people to accept us, as outcasts, into our native land where together with the Russian people we would be able to begin to forge public happiness and freedom we believe in...” (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 883, p. 3). They were planning to be individual farmers, but at the same time to live in a commune which would cooperatively own mills, grain elevators, and storehouses.

In the fall of 1922, the messengers of V. Potapov and A. Taranov were sent to the USSR. They asked to be allocated land in the Salsk prairies (Northern Caucasus) where at that time the Caucasian Doukhobors were being relocated. The difficulties that they encountered in working out this problem forced them to appeal to Bonch-Bruevich for help (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 125). The course of negotiations concerning land allocation is not presented in the documents of the Fonds; for that reason, a researcher interested in this subject would have to turn to the archives of the central government institutions.

Vasili A. Makaseyev’s letter to Bonch-Bruevich, February 15, 1923, said that instead of the lands in the Salsk district, the Doukhobors were offered lands in the Melitopol district which they did not like (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 81). There were difficulties not only with the search for the land to settle on, but also with finding the means for relocation. This was mentioned to Bonch-Bruevich by V. Makaseyev in the above mentioned letter of February 15, 1923 and by I. N. Antifeev on January 5, 1925 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 8).

The Soviet government was very interested in the arrival of the Canadian Doukhobors because they promised to bring their own machinery. However, only the independent Doukhobors agreed to relocate, while members of the CCUB were still discussing the question of relocation. Peter V. Verigin was against this move. After his death, a relocation of the commune-Doukhobor members to the USSR seemed more feasible. Realizing fully well the interest of the Soviets in their arrival, the leaders of the CCUB tried to use this time to

resolve their internal problems. Several letters preserved in SMHR reveal the course of the negotiations. The main condition of the Canadian Doukhobors' proposal was the departure of Peter P. Verigin to Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 20, pp. 3 and over; f. 24, p. 25, 27; f. 29, pp. 6 and over).

The people dreamed of returning to their motherland "to live peaceful lives by honest work". However, people such as G. F. Vanin who had been exiled to Yakutia for refusing military service, were very concerned as to whether they would be released from military service (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 2, f. 20, pp. 1 and over to 2).

Beginning January 4, 1919, a "Decree of the release from military service because of religious reasons" was in force in Russia. Based on this law, the individuals who could not serve in the army because of religious reasons were given an opportunity to substitute for it by working in infectious hospitals, and in special cases a complete release from army service was given. However, in the early 1920s the implementation of this Decree was hampered by various additions, instructions, and explanations. Even though the Decree was not officially abrogated, it was already practically not in force by the late 1920s. Those privileges for the sectarians promised to the Canadian Doukhobors in the early 1920s were rescinded by the time of their relocation. Judging by the letters of F. I. Makaseyev to Ivan M. Tregubov on August 3, 1927 and of G. F. Vanin to Bonch-Bruevich on April 15, 1947, the mandatory military service was the main reason for their return to Canada in the late 1920s (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 20, f. 766).

The first group of Canadian Doukhobors came to Russia in 1923; in 1927 the people started to return to Canada. Their reasons for leaving Soviet Russia are presented rather well in the letter of F. I. Makaseyev to Ivan Tregubov. Apart from military service, they were concerned with the following: lack of land, overcrowding, theft, poor relationship with local authorities, hostile attitude of the local population who perceived them to be kulaks, and a ban on prayer meetings (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 766). During the same year (1927), Bonch-Bruevich wrote a note to the People's Commissar of Agriculture, Osinsky, called *Brief Information Regarding the Expulsion of Sectarians and Old-believers from Russia to Other Countries During the*

*19th Century*. A draft of this note is preserved in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in MS RSL (Fo. 369, K. 36, f. 15). Bonch-Bruevich touched upon not only the events of the 19th century, but also of the present day, in particular the re-emigration of Canadian Doukhobors to Russia and their second migration to Canada. He named the conflicts with the local authorities and population as the main reason. These conflicts were a consequence to that abnormal situation of the repression of an individual, universal equalization of property and laws, or rather lawlessness, understood as equality, which was created in the country after 1917. The fate of these people would undoubtedly have been tragic if they had not managed to leave before the universal collectivization.

In 1931 the Canadian Doukhobors made an attempt to renew their negotiations with the Soviet government, but this time they were concerned with the departure of the Soviet Doukhobors from the USSR. They were well informed about those repressions which befell the Doukhobors in the USSR and hoped to organize their relocation to Canada. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contains a letter from the Canadian Doukhobors to Vladimir Dmitrievich on August 3, 1931. They were in Berlin and could not receive entry visas into the USSR to meet with their co-religionists and discuss with them the relocation of the latter to Canada. The delegates placed great hope in Bonch-Bruevich's help (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 24).

However, Bonch-Bruevich flatly refused to help: "There is no reason for you to come to Russia with such delegations. It is absolutely clear that you come to confuse the already confused Doukhobors residing in the Salsk district." In a letter of August 10, 1931, he advised them "to think of moving to the USSR themselves and not the other way around" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 220, p. 1 and over) despite knowing very well the kind of future that would await them in the USSR.

I would like to draw attention to still another letter of Bonch-Bruevich, dated November 18, 1931, and addressed to the People's Commissar of the Foreign Affairs, M. M. Litvinov. In this letter, V. D. Bonch-Bruevich expressed his personal attitude to the emigration of the Doukhobors from the USSR. He said that "it is extremely harmful and completely unnecessary" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 226, p. 1). In his letters to the Canadian Doukhobors and in his articles



appearing in *Kanadskii Gudok* [The Canadian Whistle] and *Vestnik* [Herald], Bonch-Bruevich campaigned for the relocation of the Doukhobors to Russia. Some Doukhobors were guided by these publication's idealized life in the USSR (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 83). It is difficult to say why Bonch-Bruevich was doing this. It is possible that he himself sincerely believed what he was writing, although as an intelligent person who can sensibly assess a situation, he could not help knowing what was happening behind the facade of Soviet happiness. Bonch-Bruevich was assigned to write the propaganda articles for the *Kanadskii Gudok* by the editorial staff of this pro-Soviet newspaper. This is evident from the editorial letter to Bonch-Bruevich on April 16, 1933 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 204).

The Doukhobors listened to the opinion of Vladimir Dmitrievich and respected him. Bonch-Bruevich remained the only participant of the emigration epic of 1898-1899 who kept in contact with the Canadian Doukhobors. A letter by V. A. Makaseyev to Vladimir Dmitrievich written apparently in the late 1940s or early 1950s is of specific interest. It helps to understand Bonch-Bruevich's role in the Canadian Doukhobors' movement to return to their motherland; it also helps to understand the psychology of the sons of freedom who were especially striving to return East to Russia as was predicted by their ancestors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 949).

The relationship between the Doukhobors and the Canadian government deteriorated at this time. Its worsening stimulated the Doukhobors to renew the question of emigration to the USSR from Canada. In 1948, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ authorized Ivan I. Planidin to go to the USSR to conduct negotiations, but Moscow failed to grant entry visas for the delegates. I. I. Planidin wrote about this to Bonch-Bruevich on July 23, 1952 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 107). At the same time the sons of freedom began to apply for visas, but failed to get them (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 652).

The Canadian Doukhobors had a very strong impulse to return to their motherland at that time. This is evident from the numerous letters preserved in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 95, p. 16; f. 107, p. 7; f. 129, pp. 35 and over to 36). The Doukhobors wrote touching letters about their yearning for their motherland. One of

them, written by Ivan Planidin, called "Yearning for the Motherland", became a popular song. As follows:

"We have lived in a strange far-away country  
For half a century already  
We passed away the time monotonously  
Always dreaming about you.  
We raised our eyes  
To the far-away East  
Across the seas, forests and mountains  
Where the native land is..."

(SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 129, p. 7).

The same sad motif can be heard in the letter of a young Doukhobor woman M. L. Samoylov, written to Bonch-Bruevich on December 20, 1948: "I grew up here, i. e. in Canada, and all the same it is boring for us here; if there is a Russian film, I sit and watch my motherland all day long" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 142).

The negotiations over the visa issue stretched for years. Two letters of Eli A. Popoff, editor of the Doukhobor magazine *Iskra* [Spark], to Bonch-Bruevich in 1950 and 1951 were all about the negotiations with the Soviet Embassy in Canada concerning a visit of the delegates to the USSR and about the sentiments among the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 119).

Apparently the Soviet government was afraid of the arrival of the sons of freedom in the country; but there was also another reason, that of universal military service. The Doukhobors were wondering if they would be exempted from it (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 20, p. 13; f. 119, p. 11; f. 158, p. 5; f. 652, p. 2). The documents of the Fonds do not reflect the course of negotiations on this question by the government, but most likely, it was impossible to solve this problem. Hence the negotiations dragged on and on and eventually became fruitless.

For those who are interested in the problems of ethnic adaptation of the Doukhobors to Canadian society, it would be interesting to examine the reasons for the re-emigration movement of the Doukhobors through the materials of Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR. They are revealed in the letters of the Doukhobors themselves



to Bonch-Bruevich. These are the letters of historian Vasili A. Soukorev of June 22, 1949 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 158), M. I. Makhortov, February 14, 1951 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 92), and V. P. Reibin's letters from 1949-1954 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 129, pp. 9-10, 35 and over to 36). Among these reasons was a prophecy of the Doukhobor Lady Lukeria V. Kalmykova who conveyed the message that Doukhobors, after wandering over the seas, will all gather together in the East. Other reasons for this interest are a feeling of ethnic infringement, unwillingness to be assimilated, and resentment of their unfair treatment by the Canadian government.

During recent years there has been a renaissance of interest in the re-emigration movement of Canadian Doukhobors. For that reason, a study of even a small amount of material on the migration history can be very useful in interpreting the present.

## Chapter VI

### Caucasian Doukhobors and the Resettlement of Part of Them on the Salsk Prairies

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain very few documents concerning the life of the Doukhobors of the Large Party who remained in the Caucasus; and it entirely lacks any documents on the life of the Doukhobors of the Small Party. In 1909-1912, Vladimir Dmitrievich conducted expeditions from the Academy of Sciences to the Kholodnoe<sup>1</sup> and Elizavetpol Doukhobors. In his notebooks, preserved in MS RSL, there are brief notes about these trips and *A List of Objects Collected from the Doukhobors* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 82, f. 26, K. 83, f. 5). There are also drafts of his articles *With the Elizavetpol Doukhobors*, *With Transcaucasian Doukhobors*, and *To Kholodnoe Doukhobors* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 41, f. 7, 8, 9). Bonch-Bruevich's impressions from the visit to the Kholodnoe Doukhobors were included in an article which was published,<sup>2</sup> whereas the material from the visit to the Elizavetpol province, the sectarians remained in manuscript form.

In 1910 an Academy of Sciences expedition to the Caucasus was conducted by E. Lineva. Her aim was to record the psalms and spiritual poems of the Russian population including the Doukhobors. The manuscript of her report, published in the same year<sup>3</sup>, is kept in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 948).

1. Kholodnoe [cold] is a place in Akhalkalak district, where Doukhobor villages were situated.
2. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, "With the Transcaucasian Doukhobors", *Sovremennyi Mir* [Modern World], 1911, no. 6.
3. "A report on the activities of the department of Russian language and literature of the Academy of Sciences of 1910", St. Petersburg.

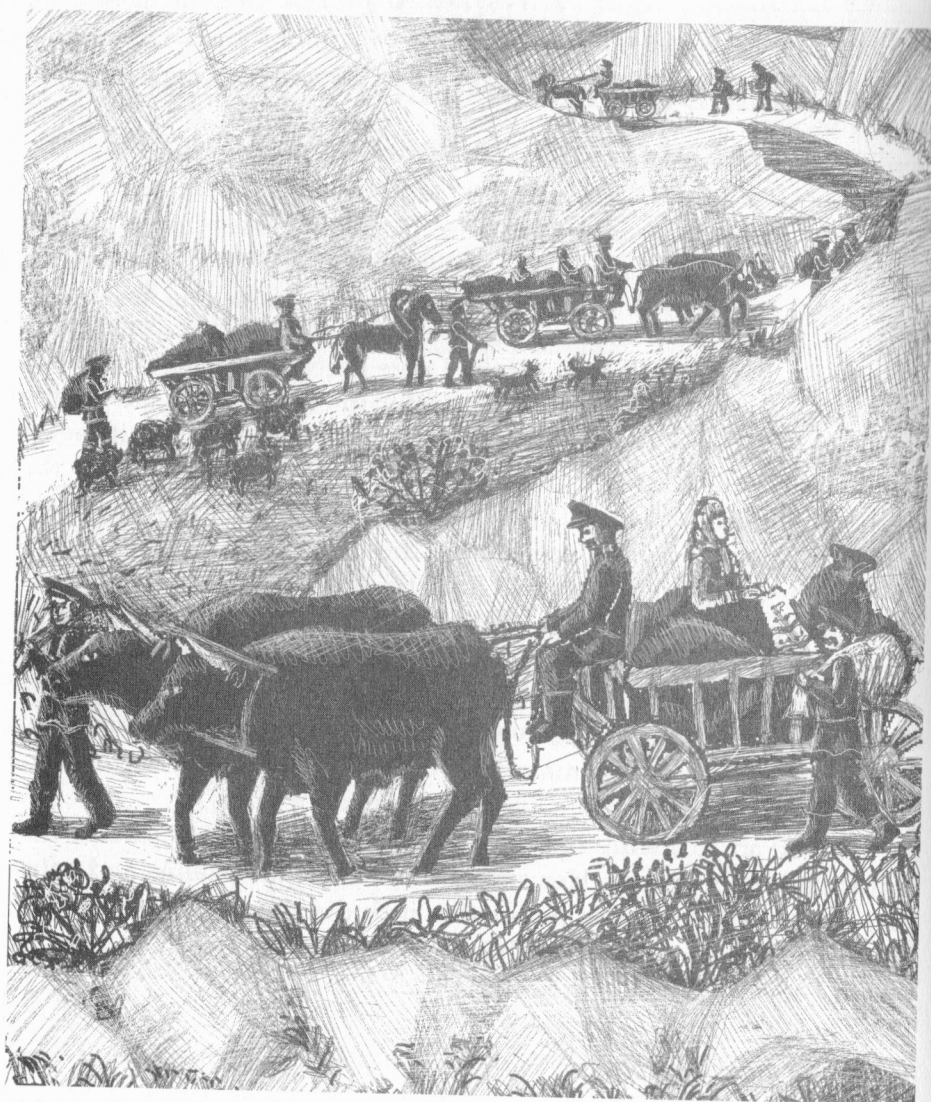


Fig. 20. – Exile from Tauria in the Crimea to the Caucasus, 1841

Sketch by Maria O. Inikova

During his trip to the Caucasian Doukhobors, Bonch-Bruevich met Peter P. Verigin. Their acquaintance was renewed much later in 1921 when the Doukhobors decided to relocate to the Southern province in Russia and turned to Bonch-Bruevich for help. By that time he was no longer occupying the position of administrator for CPC, but still was close to the governing circles. Apparently it was at this time that the documents from 1917-1921 got into Bonch-Bruevich's archives. They deal with two questions: the creation of a commune by the Caucasian Doukhobors of the Large Party and their movement to relocate to the Salsk district of the Don region of the Northern Caucasus.

This first question is presented rather well in the Minutes of the First and Second Conventions of the commune councils of the *Commune of the Caucasian Doukhobors*. The meetings took place November 2, 1920 and March 11, 1921. The question concerning the creation of communes was addressed in the Minutes of the special meeting of the convention on March 20, 1921. These documents reflect the organizational structure of the commune and its management system. The Second Convention of the Doukhobors hailed the establishment of the Soviets in Georgia. Despite the proclaimed pacifism, the Doukhobors decided to present their five best horses to the first Red Army division which sets foot on the communal territory (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 820, 821). Apparently such a decision was not made without the influence of Peter P. Verigin who was an active supporter of the new government and was at one time an assistant to the chairman of Akhalkalak district revolutionary committee and then a chairman to the regional revolutionary committee (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 808, 828).

A letter of the Caucasian Doukhobors to CC RBCP (Central Committee of the Russian Bolshevik Communist Party) on May 5, 1921 contains some valuable information about the commune (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 808).

Raids of the Turkish bands from abroad interfered to a great extent with the farming activities of the *Commune of the Caucasian Doukhobors*. The great losses suffered by the Doukhobors from these raids are evident from one of the documents in the Fonds (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 834).

The Caucasian Doukhobors never forgot that they were living in exile. They had a legend that they were moved to the Caucasus for

only 40 years and then they were forgotten. The overthrow of the Tsarist regime, which they hated so much, in February 1917 gave them hope to return to Russia. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds have a series of unique documents: the public verdicts (decisions) of the Doukhobor conventions in Georgia for 1917, 1918, and 1920 which introduced the question of relocation. In their verdict of May 7, 1917, the Doukhobors wrote that now, when the old government which took away all their property "including our lands in the Tavriya province and which subjected all of us to exile, collapsed and was overthrown by the combined forces of the freedom fighters, there is a possibility for us to return from exile to one of the interior provinces of the free Russia" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 816, p. 1). A Central Committee was selected at the second convention on February 17, 1918 in order to carry out this decision. The Convention of December 21, 1920 decided to send a delegation to CPC in Moscow to meet V. I. Lenin and discuss the problems of relocation (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 816).

A little earlier than December 21, on September 30, 1920, the Doukhobors from the former Elizavetpol province of the Slavic society also decided at the general meeting of the village commune to send representatives to Russia for land selection (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 818). They came to Moscow in October of the same year and turned to Bonch-Bruevich for help (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 210).

A delegation of Akhalkalak Doukhobors headed by Peter P. Verigin came to Moscow in the end of April 1921 and also turned to Vladimir Dmitrievich for assistance. His SMHR Fonds contains their notes asking him for a meeting (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 29).

The Caucasian Doukhobors were determined to create advanced farms in new locations so as to set an example for the establishment of a new communal lifestyle. Elizavetpol Doukhobors even applied to Bonch-Bruevich in October 1920 with a request to send young Doukhobors to the special courses for learning various trades (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 811, 812). During their stay in Moscow, the Kholodnoe Doukhobors sent a letter to CC RBCP on May 5, in which they asked to be resettled on the vacant lands in the Don region so that their commune could direct its energy to "the most productive and creative work" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 808, p. 3).

Ivan M. Tregubov's letter to V. I. Lenin on May 5, 1921 allows one to suppose that soon after May 5, the Doukhobors could meet with the Chairman of CPC (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 835). The Fonds contains documents which show the mechanism used for bargaining and discussing the Doukhobor question in various government departments (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 253, 815).

The Doukhobors had planned their future relocation very well. File 249 in SMHR has a note dated May 9, 1921, with an outline of the plan. On May 17, Peter P. Verigin received a mandate to review some land in the Don region from the People's Commissariat of Agriculture (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 825).

The Elizavetpol Doukhobors were already allocated lands in the Don region by the spring of 1921, but the government of Azerbaidzhan did not permit them to take cattle and agricultural implements to Russia (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 813). To begin a relocation of two thousand people without working tools or cattle in the conditions of ruin and famine that existed in the country was equal to suicide.

The relocation of Kholodnoe Doukhobors began in the summer of 1921, and after a year, the Doukhobors reported to Bonch-Bruevich: "Our relocation is going well and according to the plan. By the spring we are hoping to establish ourselves at the new places; we are establishing ourselves very well" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 29, p. 5 and over).

The question of relocation of the Doukhobors of Elizavetpol province was raised again during the implementation of the land reform (1924-1925) when the Doukhobors lost half of their land to the native population (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 246). In the fall of 1925 this question was discussed between the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 9). Unfortunately the subsequent fate of this group of sectarians is not pursued in Bonch-Bruevich's archives.

The Salsk Doukhobors, as the former Caucasian Doukhobors who relocated to the Don River, grew roots very quickly. I. V. Tomilin described this in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich on January 14, 1925 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 171).

At the new locations, the Doukhobors organized village-communes, joined into the *Doukhobor Community of Universal Brotherhood*,



and adopted its Charter (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 824). This is a very interesting document because file 823 contains its draft which is somewhat different from the final version.

The Fonds in SMHR contains other documents concerning the fate of the Salsk Doukhobors; however, they are all related to the repressive policy of the Soviet government and will be examined in a different section.

## Chapter VII

### Personalities of the Doukhobor Leaders: Peter V. Verigin and Peter P. Verigin

Because of the peculiarity of their religious tenets, most Doukhobors always considered their leaders to be incarnations of God on earth. This explains the enormous role that they played in the life of the movement. Based on the scale and significance of their reforms in the history of the Doukhobors, two individuals arise as the most important: Savely Kapustin, who was a prominent leader of the sect in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and P. V. Verigin.

Drastic changes in the life and ideology of the Doukhobors are associated with the personality of Peter Vasilevich Verigin. One cannot research the social experiments conducted by the Doukhobors in creating a new human society built on Christian principles, without considering P. V. Verigin's ideology. The picturesque personality of this Doukhobor leader and his actions evoked the most controversial appraisals from his contemporaries. This in itself indicates his uniqueness.

The archives of Bonch-Bruевич in SMHR contains the most extensive collection of Peter V. Verigin's letters of 1894-1902. The earlier period is represented by only one letter by Verigin dated March 6, 1888 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 287)\*. The most interesting and socially significant letters were published by V. G. Chertkov and V. D. Bonch-Bruевич in 1901.<sup>1</sup> In his messages to the Doukhobors, Verigin acted as a leader and as a mentor to his co-religionists. In the letters to his friends

1. *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed. *Letters of the Doukhobor Leader Peter Vasilevich Verigin*. England, 1901. Many of Verigin's letters were published in *Listi Svobodnogo Slova* [Leaflets of the Free Word].



Fig. 21. – *Peter V. Verigin and Vladimir G. Chertkov in England, 1902*

Photo by A. K. Chertkov, Moscow

close to him in spirit, Verigin writes about his philosophical arguments and reflections. These very different letters show the different sides of P. V. Verigin's personality. The Fonds contains some letters which have not been published and were not intended for strangers, but which are very personal even though they also contain many discussions on religious-ethical topics. They are Verigin's letters to his ex-wife Evdokia Kotelnikova and his son Peter (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 299, 300, 741, 742); to Ivan E. Konkin, his brother-in-law and confederate (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 745); and to his friend and adopted brother Alesha Vorobeov named Khvalinsky (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 296, 744).

Peter Vasilevich, as indicated in all his letters, was undoubtedly an intelligent, thinking, analyzing, and strong-willed person; at the same time he was self-conceited, callous and selfish. The latter is especially evident in his letters to his wife and son. One would like to draw special attention of P. V. Verigin's letter to I. E. Konkin of March 4, 1896, in which he tries to justify him leaving his family a long time after the fact (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, fo. 745). P. V. Verigin's letters to his son are replete with sermons and admonitions; that written already in Canada and dated December 7, 1904 stands out among them. In this letter Peter Vasilevich told his son about life in Canada, about his grandmother, reproached his son for not moving there with the rest of them, wrote that he felt "spiritual closeness" to him, and expressed hope that they would meet again although he did not invite him to come and visit (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 300, p. 17 and over). It is possible that it was this letter that gave P. P. Verigin the idea of visiting his father in Canada.

Peter V. Verigin's letters to Alesha Vorobeov seem more sincere and warm-hearted. The two shared memories of their youth spent close to Lukeria Kalmykova. Peter Vasilevich invited him to visit Obdorsk (in Siberia) many times. A. Vorobeov became the head of the more moderate Doukhobors who acknowledged P. V. Verigin as their leader, but who rejected the principles of property equalization and did not partake in the burning of weapons. Possibly P. V. Verigin hoped to overcome the ideological differences by maintaining correspondence with Vorobeov and by inviting him for a personal visit. Apparently he also hoped to find support from Mania Tikhonova, a friend of Lukeria V. Kalmykova, with whom he maintained correspondence. Tikhonova, as with Peter Vasilevich, also lived in the Sirotskii Dom and remained there after the



split. She was highly regarded by the Doukhobors from the village of Goreloe, i.e. the Small Party. P. V. Verigin invited her persistently, as an old friend, to come and visit him (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 743).

An analysis of P. V. Verigin's letters allows one to judge the degree of influence that Tolstoy's ideas had on him.

There are very few letters in the Fonds from the Canadian period on P. V. Verigin's life. These are the already mentioned letter to Peter P. Verigin of 1904, a letter to A. M. Iakushevich of 1909, and letters to A. M. Evalenko of 1913 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 297, 298).

As a self-confident person, Peter V. Verigin liked to give public sermons. His first speech of this kind was given at the Society for Sobriety in the city of Obdorsk in November 1, 1895. Its manuscript is kept at the SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 492). A text titled *Some Thoughts*, written in August 17, 1914, is put together in a form of a conversation. The conversation is dedicated to the question of schools and the relationship to the Canadian government (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 491). The Fonds contains still another speech, *The Mysteries of World Laws. How is the Universe Kept Together?* dated February 23, 1922. It is written in an allegorical style on the topic of organizing the world and a person's place in it (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 951).

During his exile in the far northern city of Kola, in 1890, Peter V. Verigin kept a diary. This is the period when his ideology underwent significant changes. This was reflected in his diary entries, preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 493)\*. At least partially, the diary makes up for the lack of documents on Peter V. Verigin's life in the early 1890s.

The materials in the Fonds allow us to look at P. V. Verigin from different sides through the eyes of different people. They make it possible for a researcher to observe the factors that influenced the changes in the ideology of the Doukhobor leader. The other exiles who met him in prisons and in places of residence left some interesting recollections and impressions of him. These include the letter of Nikolai T. Iziumchenko from Siberia, August 1, 1898, memoirs of I. Rosliakov, and diary entries of A. S. Dashkevich. Because these documents had already been published,<sup>2</sup> Bonch-Bruevich placed them in the document collection *The*

*Movement Among the Russian Peasants...* (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 42, p. 84, 104-113, 114-121). He also placed there a story which was never published written by a Shenkursk resident A. Isupov, *A Sojourn of a Doukhobor P. V. Verigin in Shenkursk* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 506)\*.

According to these memoirs, Peter V. Verigin lived comfortably in exile and could afford to have vegetarian meals in the northern conditions. When he worked, it was more for his own entertainment than to earn his daily bread. However, in the eyes of Tolstoy's followers, he attained a halo of a hero-martyr who, "to avoid compromises and bargains with his conscience... he preferred poverty and exile to admiration and riches". This was written by Dmitry A. Khilkov in his letter to Vard de Sharier, April 3, 1900. Khilkov considered Peter Vasilevich "an outstanding person" (SMHR, Fo. 2, f. 733, p. 5).

Another person close to Tolstoy's followers, S. Prokopenko, after meeting with P. V. Verigin in Canada expressed a completely different opinion in his letter to Khilkov January 12, 1903. He did not consider P. V. Verigin to be a gifted individual. Prokopenko was left with an unpleasant feeling after their meeting. He did not like that Verigin had a large retinue with him and that the Doukhobors called him a Tsar and God (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 405). Tolstoy's followers, who were poorly familiar with the Doukhobor teachings, were astonished when they found out about this.

Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain letters from Matrena Krasnikova to various people including A. St. John, D. Khilkov, P. I. Biryukov, Bonch-Bruevich, and V. Chertkov in which she wrote frankly that all\* the Doukhobors acknowledged P. V. Verigin as God (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 364, 365, 513, 646). Their leader's tragic death was perceived by the Doukhobors as Christ's sacrifice for people's sins. F. I. Vishlov wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in 1927 that "Verigin was killed not by a villain's will, but he perished as a sacrifice for repeating the teaching of Jesus Christ through actions and proclaimed the second coming" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 35, p. 4).

\* This statement is applicable to all or most members of the community and zealot Doukhobors, but it does not apply to the Independent Doukhobors. The latter rejected the divine right of kings thesis as being contradictory to the Doukhobor movement and instead sought the spirit of God in every man and woman regardless of color, rank or belief. This is one of the ideological differences between Independents and the Community and zealot Doukhobors. Editor's note.

2. *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism*, 1st ed., England, 1901. Supplement.



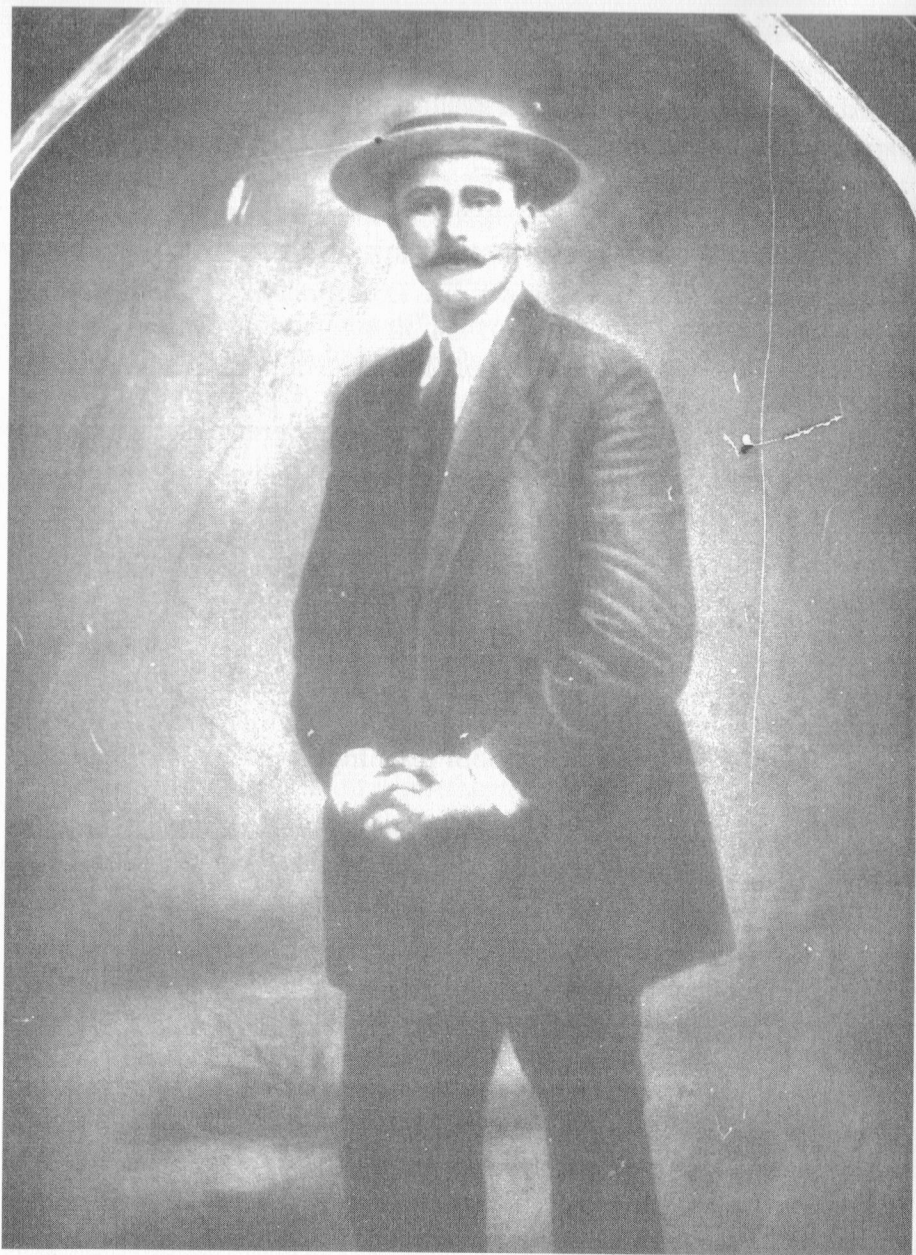


Fig. 22. – Peter P. Verigin ("Chistiakov")

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Not considering him to be God, some Doukhobors saw him as a brilliant leader, who gave "wise advice" and was modest and unassuming in clothing and food. This was written about him by Simeon V. Vereshchagin in his letter to Bonch-Bruevich, February 8, 1913 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 24).

Many years later, Ivan I. Planidin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich about Verigin's modesty in a letter of July 23, 1952 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 107). Vasili Soukorev thought that a human society needs leaders with a strong will; and Peter V. Verigin was one of those people, even though "some of his reforms were burdensome" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 158, p. 4).

Critical views of Peter Vasilevich's personality and his reforms were more typical of the people from the commune and to those who knew him well or knew about his wild youth.

S. F. Reibin wrote to Bonch-Bruevich in 1949 about his disappointment in the "licentious life of leaders". Reibin, the future author of *Toil and Peaceful Life: History of the Doukhobors Unmasked*, worked for Peter V. Verigin as an interpreter, knew him well and considered him to be a cruel petty tyrant. He wrote about this in his story *Two old men*, which he sent to Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 135).

In spite of the controversy connected with Peter V. Verigin's character, it is doubtless that his personality was exceptional in its virtues and vices, a personality which deserves the closest attention of the researcher.

Another Doukhobor leader who took Peter V. Verigin's place after his death, Peter Petrovich Verigin-Chistiakov was inferior to his father in the magnitude of his plans, his ability to carry them out, and in his willpower and reason. He was a person affected from his childhood by the duplicity of his situation: on the one hand, he was the leader's son, and on the other hand he was a child abandoned by his father. His mother's relatives were irreconcilable towards P. V. Verigin, while his father's relatives who lived close by were treated with great respect by the Large Party. Peter Petrovich could hardly forget how his father received him and his family in 1905 when they came to Canada. Deep in P. P. Verigin's soul there was always a wounded pride and self-esteem. S. Petrov described him very precisely in our opinion in his letter from Canada to E. D. Khiriakova in 1927. He noted that from childhood his position as the leader's heir "developed in him terrible arrogance, an exceptional pride... His indomitable temper, savagery of his uncontrollable, hot

personality, power and that school which gave birth to him and which educated him, all this explains him, and he begins to emerge for me as a tragic figure indeed" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 468, p. 2).

The Fonds do not contain any data on Peter P. Verigin's life in the Caucasus before 1918. The Minutes of the Conventions of communal counsels of the *Commune of the Caucasian Doukhobors* showed that Verigin desired to develop a communal movement among the Caucasian Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 816, 820). At the same time he was one of organizers of the fight against the bands of Turks-Kemalists [a group which follows the principles advocated by Kemal Ataturk]. The Soviet government recognized his efforts in this activity. The chairman of the Akhalkalak revolutionary counsel wrote: "All the burden of saving half of the district from the Kemalists was born by Comrade Verigin with distinction. It was only thanks to his self-control and willpower that it was possible to do anything" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 808, p. 5). Peter P. Verigin organized superbly the move of 4,500 Doukhobors from the Caucasus to the Don region. With his enormous arrogance, he needed a great deal of activity, power, and recognition of his services. Spoiled by the reverence of his co-religionists and unsatisfied with his life, P. P. Verigin drank and behaved immorally while still living in the USSR. This is evident from Bonch-Bruevich's letter to the Doukhobors of the *Christian Communities of Universal Brotherhood in Canada* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 219).

Peter P. Verigin went to Canada with great plans and good intentions. This is evident in his speeches to the Doukhobors after his arrival in 1927. They were recorded by P. I. Biryukov and the copies are kept in the archives of SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 866).

The general worship of the Doukhobors in the commune spoiled Peter P. Verigin completely. The negative traits of his personality overwhelmed his positive traits. Vasili A. wrote a great deal about the Canadian period of P. P. Verigin's life. At first, Makaseyev trusted the leader fully, but then he became disappointed in him (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 539, 655-657). In his articles and letters, Makaseyev offers many quotations from Peter Petrovich's speeches, and describes his activities and behavior. A. S. and A. I. Popov wrote about P. P. Verigin's moral make-up (SMHR, Fo. 3, inv. 7, f. 113, 114). It was an irony of fate that Peter P. Verigin became one of those who wrecked the Christian Communities of Universal Brotherhood, the major creation and the purpose of his father's life.

## Chapter VIII

### The Policy of the Soviet Government Towards the Doukhobors in the 1920s and 1930s

Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in the SMHR has a whole corpus of documents which reflect the policy of the Soviet government towards the Doukhobors in 1928-1935, i.e. during the period of agricultural restructuring.

The policy of collectivization was accepted by the 15th Congress of the All-Russian Bolshevik Communist Party (ARBCP) in 1927. This process was inseparably linked with the eradication of the kulaks. The main methods of combat against the so-called kulaks were the grain-collection campaigns and the very high quotas for grain delivery established for the well-to-do farms, individual taxes, property confiscation in the case of failure to pay taxes or fulfill the grain delivery quotas, land cuts, arrests, and exile to the northern and uninhabited regions of Kazakhstan. The property of the collective farms was formed not only through the contributions of the poor and average peasants, but also through the personal property and real estate confiscated from the well-to-do villagers. The endless decrees and instructions from the government to the provinces established not only the rate of collectivization in the provinces, but also a required number of uncovered kulak farms. Not only well-to-do farmers, but also average or even poor peasants fell prey to those numbers.

The Northern Caucasus — the Salsk prairies — where a part of the Caucasian Doukhobors who moved in the beginning of the 1920s to the Ukraine; particularly they moved to the Melitopol district of the Zaporozhie region where another group of Caucasian Doukhobors



had earlier moved to in the middle of the 1920s — here according to government plans the region was slated for 100% collectivization. This meant that the collectivization rates here were even higher and the methods used were crueler.

The repression of the Doukhobors during this time was intensified by their belonging to a religious sect. The Soviet government which raised atheism to the ranks of state ideology was always negative towards anything that had to do with religion. However, in the beginning of the 1920s, when the sectarian-commune movement was in full swing, such sectarian groups as the Doukhobors, the Molokans, and the New Israelites were viewed as fellow-travelers and were tolerated for the time being. In the second half of the 1920s, the image of a sectarian-communist gradually disappeared from the press; and the image of an anti-Soviet sectarian-kulak and an enemy began to form vigorously.

Against their will, the Doukhobors found themselves in the midst of a class struggle. The campaign against the kulaks and the anti-religious campaign were intertwined to such an extent that it seems expedient to examine them as a whole.

The documents on this subject can be divided into several groups. First of all, there are the letters that the Doukhobors sent to their Canadian brothers, to V. D. Bonch-Bruevich, Ivan M. Tregubov, as well as numerous petitions and appeals of the Doukhobors to the highest government authorities, the resolutions of the Doukhobor meetings, i.e. everything that originated from the Doukhobors themselves.

The other group of documents consists of the letters from Tregubov and Bonch-Bruevich to the Doukhobors and to the government authorities. These two individuals were greatly respected by the Doukhobors. I. M. Tregubov was a Doukhobor representative for many years. He was involved in their relocation from Transcaucasia to Russia and the Ukraine and appeared in the press on numerous occasions defending their communal movement. V. D. Bonch-Bruevich was well known as a participant of the campaign to relocate and to settle the Doukhobors in Canada, as a compiler and editor of *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*, and as a person who had helped the Doukhobors on numerous occasions. The Fonds contain their letters to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (ARCEC) and to the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (AUCEC). Also this group of documents

is interesting in revealing the personalities of Tregubov and Bonch-Bruevich.

Finally, the third, a small group of documents includes the official papers, primarily the figures of the Commission of ARCEC which investigated the complaints of the Doukhobors from the Salsk district in 1930. All three groups of documents supplement each other significantly and create a truthful and horrific picture of terror and lawlessness created by the government.

Only two documents are dated from 1928 and they are a distraint of N. K. Kotelnikov from the Verigino commune of the Salsk district who was fined by the government (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 833) and a letter of K. Abramov from the Melitopol district to Tregubov, dated June 12, 1928, with a request to inquire about possible emigration to Canada or Turkey (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 849). This second letter indicates that in spite of the lack of documents about the repression of the Doukhobors during the earlier period of time, their relations with the government and local authorities were far from satisfactory. These sentiments probably came about following the departure of the Canadian Doukhobors back to Canada after they tried to settle in Russia.

The last name of K. Abrosimov appears in another file. Sometime in 1912 in response to Abrosimov's request, Vladimir Dmitrievich sent him the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*. Sixteen years later, when Abrosimov was already living in the Melitopol district in the village of Trudoliubimovka, he and his family were denied the right to vote because of their possession of the book and their reading of this book to others (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 1). The file contains a resolution by the meeting of the entire village which took place on February 16, 1929 to petition in defense of Abrosimov. The Manuscript section of the RSL contains some letters from Bonch-Bruevich to Abrosimov, 1929-1930, regarding this issue (MF RSL, Fo. 369, C. 122, f. 12, 13).

Tregubov sent a petition to the Chairman of AUCEC G. I. Petrovskii in which he talked about the denial of the right to vote to the Doukhobors and for reading the *Zhivotnaia Kniga* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 848).

In 1929 the government cut the Doukhobors' "extra lands" which they received during the resettlement. K. Abrosimov wrote about this to Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 1); the Doukhobors of the



Salsk district wrote about the same thing to the Central Committee of the All-Union Bolshevik Communist Party (AUBCP) on December 5, 1929 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 248).

The Doukhobors of the Melitopol and Salsk districts lived in communes which differed from one another in the degree of collectivization. In fact, these were the same collective farms which the government and the party were fighting for, but they were based on religious principles. The local authorities refused to legalize them, and what is more, tried to wreck the sectarian communes, to separate people in order to dispossess them later on. In their petition to the Chairman of the Commission of Sects of ARCEC, P. G. Smidovich, the representatives of the Salsk Doukhobors tried unsuccessfully to explain that they lived in communes, worked together and asked to pay taxes not from each family, but from the commune as a whole (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 246).

The majority of the documents on this subject are dated from 1930 when the new wave of collectivization and combat with the kulaks got under way. Many documents of that year tell about the unfounded arrests of the Doukhobors charged with anti-Soviet activities and about property confiscation (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 1, 208, 245,<sup>1</sup> 246). In Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR, a researcher will find a description of the concentration camp where some of the Doukhobors served their sentences and the work conditions of the prisoners (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 246).

In their letters to the ARCEC, the Doukhobors were constantly trying to prove that there was no and there could be no kulaks or "counterrevolutionaries among them because the Doukhobors not only believed in the communist idea, but even practiced it and have always carried out their duties and responsibilities to the Soviet government" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 1, p. 1).

In an effort to avoid the wrath of the local authorities, the Salsk Doukhobors paid their grain-collection quotas in full in 1930. However, new instructions regarding extra grain delivery arrived from above. The frightened people turned in their seed grain in order

1. File 245 is conditionally dated from 1929. By comparing it with the document "Request of the Representatives of the Melitopol Doukhobors..." dated July 26, 1930 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 246) one concludes that the documents from the file 245 are dated 1930.

not to be charged with anti-Soviet activity. This was described by the Doukhobors of Khlebodarnoe village counsel to the ARCEC in October 6, 1930 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 246). Tregubov wrote about similar atrocities toward the Melitopol Doukhobors to the AUCEC Chairman Petrovskii on April 8, 1930. In his letter he quotes the letter of the 63-year-old Doukhobor P. A. Kalmykov which is full of bewilderment: "... so through my labor I turned in to the government 400 *poods* [1 pood = 16.38 kg.] of all grain crops, paid all government taxes and insurance on time, bought bonds for 25 rubles and did everything else, and joined the *artel* [a peasants' cooperative]. And they won't leave me in peace in the artel. It's just incredible how one needs to live nowadays" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 172, p. 12).

At that time a song appeared among the Doukhobors with the words which reflected extremely well the hopelessness of their life:

"Oh, my God, my God, what's happening on Earth,  
Innocent tears are shed everywhere and all people are suffering.  
Either they take our cattle and give us bonds,  
Or take away our bread and don't give us money,  
They try to accomplish their Five-year plans  
and take away our clothes" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 599, pp. 41-42).

The Ukrainian Doukhobors wrote to Bonch-Bruevich on March 23, 1930 that after the revolution they "began to breathe deeper", but soon after "the foul persecution of honest laborers replaced freedom" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 208, p. 5).

Nightly round-ups, beatings, mass arrests became part of the people's life. The dispossessed and their families were treated roughly. They were a "class enemy" regardless of their age or sex. In the communes of Chistiakovo and Verigino, Salsk district, after the routine arrests of the Doukhobors, they began to evict their families. "The armed members of the Young Communist League would yell at the scared children: 'Get off the stove' and the frightened children would hide one behind the other with heart-rendering screams", quoted Tregubov from one of the Doukhobor letters in his note to the ARCEC dated March 25, 1930. "The Young Communists would catch the children by their legs and pull them off the stove and take them outside

onto a cart. Since it was cold outside, the children would jump off the cart and run back to the stove. The Young Communists would pull them by their legs again and put them onto the cart" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 844, p. 2). The crowd that gathered there did not let the cart through, defended the arrested, and people were forced to spend the nights with two or three families per house.

The Doukhobors wrote letters to the higher authorities, sent messengers hoping to get to the truth, but their complaints were transferred to the provinces, and the messengers were arrested on return (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 244). On April 17, 1930 after the Melitopol Doukhobors complained of the oppression from the local authorities to the Procurator's office of the Ukraine, a member of AUCEC came to the Trudoliubimovka village counsel to investigate the situation. Armed police forces suddenly appeared at 4 o'clock in the morning on April 18. "Our brothers heard noise and screaming, came outside and saw that our village was attacked from all sides", wrote an eyewitness of the event to Ivan M. Tregubov (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 840, p. 2).

The only thing that the Doukhobors asked for was to be allowed to live in peace or to emigrate to America. The Doukhobors could not understand why they were not allowed out of the USSR if they were standing in the way of Socialism (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 192, p. 6).

The idea of fleeing the country as the only escape from the existing situation was repeated in the letters of the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 244, p. 2; f. 246, p. 5; f. 255, p. 2).

The dramatic nature of the situation highly resembled the end of the 1890s, except that now the Doukhobors confronted the government which was establishing Socialism instead of the autocratic government.

From their perspective, the Canadian Doukhobors tried to help their co-religionists to move to Canada. On April 5, 1930, they sent a petition to the ARCEC to allow the Soviet Doukhobors to leave the country. The Named Doukhobors asked the government to liberate their brothers from prisons and exile and to allow for the creation of a emigration committee. They wrote that it is their historic dream to gather together in one place (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 845). The same file contains the Minutes of the Convention of the delegates from the

Named Doukhobors of Canada which took place on March 30, 1930 and which confirmed their decision to help the Soviet Doukhobors.

The numerous letters from the Salsk Doukhobors and their representative I. M. Tregubov to the ARCEC about the existing atrocities produced some action. In April 1930 a special Commission was created whose mandate was to study the situation of the sectarians in the Northern Caucasus and to determine the course of action required to remedy this situation. It was headed by A. Shotman. The documents of that Commission appear in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 599, 826). They include a report presented to the Presidium of ARCEC and suggestions based on Shotman's report. The Commission was forced to admit that the local authorities violated the laws and decrees of collectivization. However, it was a common practice of that time that a government Commission would arrive at a location, accuse the local authorities of going too far, replace a few persons and, having reassured the people, leave. The day after its departure everything would return as before. After the government Commission visited the Salsk district, a number of files were reviewed and some Doukhobors were returned from the concentration camps and jails (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 250, 847). However, the positive suggestions proposed by the Commission (about the possibility of adopting a charter of sectarian communes, and about giving up the practice of denying voting rights to presbyters and preachers) were not carried out.

The year 1931 did not bring any improvements. Letters from the Doukhobors that year contained the same bewilderment and hopelessness, and the same requests and entreaties as in the previous year. In January and February 1931, driven to extremity, the Salsk and then the Melitopol Doukhobors sent petitions to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the AUBCP, I. V. Stalin, to the member of the Central Control Committee of the AUBCP, A. A. Solts, and to the Chairman of the Commission on Cults at the ARCEC, P. G. Smidovich. They asked to be allowed to leave for Canada to get reunited with their brothers in faith (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 255). In March and April of the same year, the Doukhobors sent several more letters to the government leaders. They are all kept in file 255.

They wrote about the devastation brought about by the Red Army in February 11, 1931 in the villages of Petrovka and Veseloe, about the



arrests, about a forced amalgamation into collective farms, whereas they already have their own communes, about the confiscation of the communal property, and its sale to the *kolkhozniks* [collective farmers on government farms] for next to nothing. The Doukhobors saw that the cattle were dying in the neighboring collective farms because of mismanagement and lack of fodder; they saw the utter confusion in the collective farms, and they asked the leaders of the government and the party: Why did they need such collective farms? (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 207, 255). Apparently, these people had an inexhaustible reserve of faith in justice of the higher authorities, if, having gone through all the horrors of Social agricultural reconstruction, they continued to hope that somebody will hear them and will help them.

The Doukhobors wrote to their Canadian brothers hoping, if not for help, then for compassion. The Salsk Doukhobors gave a very emotional description of flogging in Petrovka by the Red Army soldiers. The soldiers demanded a release of the kulaks; they beat up people, and when asked for the reason they answered: "We are beating the insensibility out of you and culture into you." Blood poured from the smashed heads and faces and the snow was red in places. During a storm the people were driven to the edge of the village, made to kneel in the snow and then, frozen and weak, they were driven on foot to a regional center Tselina, and from there to the Rostov jail. Altogether 94 people were arrested (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 47).

The famine in the Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus in 1932 was an expected outcome of the endless grain requisitions in 1931-1932. Even during the famine when people were dying from starvation, the remains of the seed and consumption grain were still confiscated from the peasants including the Doukhobors. The Salsk Doukhobors informed Smirdovich at the ARCEC about this on December 30, 1932 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 31, p. 5). Smirdovich called all those atrocities continuously reported by the Doukhobors to the ARCEC for several years as "temporary mistakes". He also advised the Doukhobors to actively help establish Socialism (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 247).

A small group of documents during 1933-1935 deals with the problem of the extra-early sowing. By that time collectivization was generally completed. Collective farms were organized in place of the Doukhorbor communes even though some Doukhobors persistently

remained individual peasants. Socialist ideologists believed that a transition to a socialist economy should be accompanied by a radical remodeling of the very principles and methods of farm management including a rejection of the traditional agricultural practices tested through the centuries. The date of sowing and harvesting no longer depended now on the weather or soil conditions, but on the decision of the government. In 1933 extra-early sowing was conducted throughout the country in order to increase the crop. All peasants including individual peasants from the Salsk district were obliged to start sowing in the frozen soil on March 20. Three individual peasants (M. Voikin, P. A. Vasilenko, and K. Nichvolodov) refused to obey the order; by dinner-time on March 21, they came out to the fields because they were afraid of the consequences of their actions. The district court of the Northern Caucasus charged them with anti-Soviet activities and sentenced the first two to be shot, and the third one to 10 years in jail (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 830).

In 1935 the extra-early sowing was conducted in the Salsk district in February. I. V. Tomilin's letter to Bonch-Bruevich, March 10, 1935, sounds like the cries from the soul of a grain-grower. He begged Bonch-Bruevich to do something to prevent a loss of harvest; he also asked a question that was tormenting him: Is it possible that, by issuing this ruling, somebody wanted to destroy the crops on purpose and blame it on the collective farm? (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 171). This question undoubtedly was on the mind of every sensible person even though only a few would dare ask it.

Not only were the Melitopol and Salsk Doukhobors victims of the repression's of the 1930s, but the Caucasian Doukhobors from the village of Gorelovka suffered a great deal. Quietly and persistently they rejected the socialist efforts to reorganize their agricultural way of life, the efforts of which were destroying their traditional foundations and beliefs. However, Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds completely lack any documents on this subject. Firstly, this is because Vladimir Dmitrievich did not keep in touch with the Small Party at all. Secondly, the residents of Gorelovka viewed all their hardships as God's tests and bore them quietly, without turning to the Soviet government with complaints and petitions. The verbal stories by Gorelovka's elders are the only source on this subject.



Ivan M. Tregubov played an active part in the fate of the Doukhobors. As the official representative of the Doukhobors, he tried to champion their interests everywhere, not considering the possible negative consequences for himself. His numerous letters and reports to ARCEC and AUCEC are written in a convincing and bold style (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 172, 246, 839, 840, 842-846, 848).

Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich's attitude to the Doukhobors lacked the idealization which was characteristic of Tolstoy's followers. A Communist and an atheist, Bonch-Bruevich regarded the Doukhobors as allies in the battle with autocracy up until 1917. After the Revolution, he thought that the Doukhobors, as hardworking and exemplary peasants, will be able to contribute a great deal to the land development and agricultural growth, and helped them to relocate from the Caucasus to Russia. As a scientist, Bonch-Bruevich was interested in the Doukhobors.

Despite their differences in opinions, Tregubov always considered Bonch-Bruevich to be an unbiased and decent person. When he found out about the creation of the Commission at the ARCEC, headed by A. Shotman, he asked to include Bonch-Bruevich as an expert instead of F. M. Putintsev, an active member of the Union of Atheists and author of the book *Dukhoboriia* published in 1928.

In their letters the Doukhobors addressed Bonch-Bruevich as "an old friend" and "protector". Being personally acquainted with the heads of various government agencies, he often acted as an intercessor to the Doukhobors. Bonch-Bruevich tried to restore lawfulness and to protect the Doukhobors from repression against them. In his letter to the Chairman of AUCEC, G. I. Petrovskii, October 29, 1930, he expressed his sincere outrage at "the passivity of the provincial procurator's powers which set no limits to the atrocities committed against all those grain-growers by the provincial authorities in the remote provinces" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 244, p. 1). Bonch-Bruevich took part in the fate of V. I. Golubov, a Doukhobor from the Salsk district, who was arrested in 1931 and disappeared without a trace in the bowels of PCIA (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 234).

The Doukhobors had a great trust in Vladimir Dmitrievich because it was he, they wrote, "who knew the Doukhobors, their sufferings, degradation and cruelty towards them better than anybody

else... We consider you as one of our sympathizers and hope that you would pity us more than others and would not refuse to help us and petition for our freedom and for an end to our persecution" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 207, p. 2).

Bonch-Bruevich responded to the letter from the Salsk Doukhobors about a pogrom by the Red Army soldiers in the communes of Petrovka and Veseloe on February 11, 1931. He wrote in his reply: "One need not say that everything that happened to you is truly horrible, illegal and totally contrary to the spirit of the Soviet government" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 240, p. 1). He continued to believe that after the letter of the Doukhobors to Stalin, the authorities would investigate all the atrocities and everything would get settled.

Bonch-Bruevich's archives contain one more letter which deserves some attention. This is his reply to Ivan G. Bondarev in Canada, September 23, 1933. Apparently, Bondarev expressed his outrage at the cruelty and injustice of the Soviet government which sentenced the Doukhobors to capital punishment because of a delay in their arrival for extra-early sowing. The contents of Bonch-Bruevich's letter contradict everything that he wrote earlier about lawlessness towards the Doukhobors. "He who prevents us from establishing Socialism and from setting our people up so that they feel happy will be swept from the path of the proletariat with an iron broom with no regret, no matter who he is", Vladimir Dmitrievich wrote to Bondarev. Those who failed to come out to the extra-early sowing were in his opinion "the kulaks who came from Transcaucasia where they were used to exploiting the Tatars in the most cruel way. Here they also wanted to ruin the sowing campaign which was conducted everywhere according to a well thought out plan" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 218, pp. 8-9). V. D. Bonch-Bruevich knew about grain being extracted from the peasants and about the famine in the Northern Caucasus and Ukraine. In spite of all that he declared that the talk of famine was a blatant lie and that "it was already the 16th year as the happy Russian people victoriously progressed forward", and that joy and happiness reigned in the collective farms (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 218, p. 10).

It is hard to believe that the letters to Bondarev, Smidovich, and Petrovskii are written by the same person. A researcher of the life and work of Bonch-Bruevich would find the answer to the puzzling

question: "What happened?" if he looks at the file 809 in the archives of SMHR and reads the report of V. V. Poliakov, the General Procurator of the Ukraine, written on December 19, 1930 and forwarded to Petrovskii, Chairman of AUCEC. Poliakov was instructed to inquire into the law violations reported by Bonch-Bruevich to AUCEC in his letter of October 29, 1930. Defending the regimental honor, Poliakov swept aside Bonch-Bruevich's accusations of the local authorities and concluded that the Doukhobor "sect was not only counter-revolutionary in its actions toward the Soviet government, but that their prayers contained a great deal of counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet beliefs." The General Procurator accused Bonch-Bruevich in that he "stepped off the right track to such an extent that he became a deliberate and outspoken protector of the interests of the Doukhobor kulaks..." Poliakov also wrote that his "support and protection of the Doukhobor sect may take on an anti-Soviet and anti-revolutionary significance" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 809, pp. 4-6). The author of the report did not lose the opportunity to reproach Bonch-Bruevich for compilation of the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*. Such accusations especially coming from such a prominent person were fraught with the most serious consequences for Bonch-Bruevich. On Petrovskii's orders, a copy of Poliakov's report was sent to Bonch-Bruevich. Undoubtedly, Bonch-Bruevich suffered a major moral blow; he was frightened and broken.

The relationship between the Soviet government and the Doukhobors in 1920-1930s is revealed mostly through the documents from the Doukhobors found in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR. For a more thorough research it is undoubtedly necessary to turn to the archival Fonds of ARCEC and CPC stored in the State Archives of the Russian Federation (the former October Revolution Central Government Archives of the USSR).

## Chapter IX

### Doukhobors Ideology, World View and Historical Vision

Doukhobor manuscripts and letters describing the principles of religious upbringing, ideology, religious dogma, and Doukhobor history consisting of tales and legends, religious folklore, and rituals are presented in the Fonds of Bonch-Bruevich better than anywhere else. This has to do with the personal interests of the creator of the Fonds. Bonch-Bruevich was interested in the spiritual life of the movement. He always tried to delve deeply into its inner life, to discover the secret meaning of the psalms and rituals which was usually hidden from strangers. Thanks to his extensive friendly contacts with the Doukhobors, Bonch-Bruevich received information which was often inaccessible to another researcher.

The greatest accomplishment of Vladimir Dmitrievich was the collection of the Doukhobor religious folklore and the compiling and publishing of psalms in the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* in 1909.

One of the peculiarities of the Doukhobors was that its doctrine was conveyed orally from generation to generation. The Doukhobors acknowledge only the "living word" and had no written traditions. Each family knew a certain number of psalms. Under the guidance of their mothers and grandmothers the children learned them from early childhood; Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain some interesting evidence for this (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 543-545). When the whole village gathered for a prayer, an oral *Zhivotnaia Kniga* (A Book of Life) was compiled. This is what V. D. Bonch-Bruevich recorded and published.

Many years later in his letter to Vasili A. Makaseyev, May 11, 1936, Bonch-Bruevich recalled how he had walked all over the northern part of the Doukhobor settlements in Canada. Accompanied by a Doukhobor Kanigan, he went from house to house recording their psalms (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 171, f. 25).

His notebooks with these records and materials for the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* are kept in the MS RSL and SMHR (MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 39, f. 11; C. 41, f. 2; SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 962).

Some materials found in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds were not included in the book. An example of this are the four spiritual poems called *stishki*, sent from the village of Orlovka in the Caucasus by I. V. Tomilin. It is possible that they were not included in the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* because they were received after the book was published. Three of the poems are archaic, and one seems to be written in the 1890s by one of the Doukhobors from the Large Party. Peter V. Verigin is mentioned in this poem under the name of Peter the Great (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 583).

Incantations / spells against sickness, accidents, and weapons collected by Bonch-Bruevich in Canada were also not included in the *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev* (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 977). This is an amazing stratum of the Doukhobor folklore which has not been researched by anyone until now. Incantations were frequently used among sectarians during the first decades after moving to Canada. They are still used among the Georgian and Russian Doukhobors. Bonch-Bruevich could not help recognize the scientific value of this material; however, he abstained from publishing it. More likely the Doukhobors themselves asked him not to publish it because even now they are wary of reading such spells to a stranger. SMHR has one typical letter from a Doukhobor I. Vereshchagin to Bonch-Bruevich dated February 13, 1901. In this letter he asks the scientist not to include everything he recorded in the *Zhivotnaia Kniga* because the Doukhobors "sing many devilish songs" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 623, p. 1).

Bonch-Bruevich was especially interested in the cosmogonical meaning of the psalm *Tsar David Aseevich*; and the Doukhobors sent him letters from Canada with their interpretations of this psalm. This material is preserved in SMHR (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 613, 950, 979).

At the request of Bonch-Bruevich, a Doukhobor V. Potapov sent him an explanation of the obscure words found in the psalms (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 568). Bonch-Bruevich used his explanations in the commentaries to the *Zhivotnaia Kniga*. The interpretation of the so-called "question-answer psalms" is found in the letter of A. Rilkov to Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 418).

In Canada the Doukhobors composed many new *stick* and psalms. F. I. Vishlov told Bonch-Bruevich about this in his letter of November 14, 1927. He pointed out that many psalms from the *Zhivotnaia Kniga* have come true and have grown obsolete, while for the other ones such as "In the ancient times" the time has not yet come to be fulfilled (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 35). Apparently Bonch-Bruevich was going to supplement and republish the *Zhivotnaia Kniga*. With this goal in mind, Vasili A. Makaseyev sent him the new Canadian psalms and *stikhi* in the early 1930s. This is mentioned in Makaseyev's letters to Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 83; MS RSL, Fo. 369, C. 171, f. 25). However, the material itself is absent from the Fonds. We were able to establish that they are kept in V. A. Makaseyev's Fond in SMHR (Fo. 6, inv. 1, f. 57). Apparently Bonch-Bruevich transferred these materials to the Museum of History of Religion during the establishment of the archives. At that time he was not able to publish the enlarged *Zhivotnaia Kniga*.

The Caucasian Doukhobors had read neither the Old, nor the New Testament before the 1890s. Under the influence of Peter V. Verigin and Tolstoy's followers, the Gospels became a regular part to their life. It had a significant influence on the religious views of many Doukhobors of the Large Party. The materials from Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds provide us with an opportunity to follow the changes in the religious ideology of the Doukhobors.

The sources on this subject can be divided into three groups.

1. The documents which reflect the traditional Doukhobor ideology adhered to by the Caucasian Doukhobors as well as by the older generation during the first years of their life in Canada. It was based on the oral *Zhivotnaia Kniga*, on legends, and on prophesies.

A letter of the Caucasian Doukhobor V. Obedkov to Tolstoy's followers E. I. Popov and I. M. Tregubov of 1896 is of great interest as a



portrayal of the Doukhobor religious views (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 377)\*.

V. Sherstobitov provided his interpretation of the Doukhobor teachings in his letter written on the way to exile in March 1899. At Tregubov's request, he explained the Doukhobors' concept of the words "Our Lady", "angel", and "to pray" (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 466)\*.<sup>1</sup>

A. Ril'kov wrote some very interesting letters with the description of the Doukhobor faith. They were written in 1901 and addressed to Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, F. 2, inv. 7, f. 418, 696). Another person who can be called a "traditionalist" is M. Krasnikova who was close to Lukeria Vasilevna Kalmykova when the latter was alive. Her letters are somewhat confused, hysterically emotional, but her views are very typical of the majority of the Doukhobors (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 364, 365, 646).

A researcher needs to look at two more manuscripts in order to characterize the traditional Doukhobor teachings. They are the *Brief Interpretation of Faith* written by an anonymous author in 1896 and the *Description of the Real Christian Faith and Epistemology of the Truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ* written by I. Abrosimov (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 553, 967). They deal mainly with the ritual side of the Doukhobor religious life. In Canada after the arrival of Peter V. Verigin, many religious rituals described in these manuscripts were changed or abolished altogether.

2. The sources which reflect the new Doukhobor beliefs formed in the 1890s under the strong influence of Peter V. Verigin's ideas, and through him, under the influence of Tolstoy's movement.

Among the Doukhobors, Lev N. Tolstoy's ideas produced a completely unexpected result. Here of course one has to turn first to the letters of Peter V. Verigin which are very numerous in SMHR. One should not equate the socio-religious ideas preached by P. V. Verigin with the notions shared by the Doukhobors as a whole. Verigin tried not to get embroiled in the maze of the dogmatic tenets. His ideas were rather socio-ethical than religious. The new socio-ethical directions together with the traditional tenets brought forth a new Doukhobor ideology in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Undoubtedly when researching this subject, one should turn to the let-

ters of the Doukhobors who actively participated in the movements of the postnik-Doukhobors. These are the collective letters of the Doukhobors from the Elizavetpol jail to I. M. Tregubov written June 8, 1896 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 419), I. V. Verigin's letter to I. K. Diterikhs from prison dated March 24, 1898 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 319)\*, and a letter of the exiled Doukhobor from the city of Olekminsk to the Kars Doukhobors, August 1898 (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 409)\*.

The Fond in SMHR contains many such letters and narratives of the Doukhobors. I would like to single out the letters of I. E. Konkin (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 354-356, 358, 761) which are very interesting. He was a philosophical person who wrote verbose letters to E. I. Popov, I. M. Tregubov, and G. K. Shatalin. He knew the Gospels very well and quoted them frequently. I. E. Konkin was P. V. Verigin's devoted follower and often recounted his ideas almost verbatim in his letters. In Canada, Konkin recorded his own thoughts in the form of conversations (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 528-530). His letters contain many controversies; the traditional ideas merge with the new ones. His conversation *The True Coming of Christ* (1922) is, in fact, a transposition of the ancient Doukhobor psalm *Who is he, then, that John, the new Moses*<sup>2</sup> (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 530).

The ideology of freedom also developed as a result of the sowing of new ideas into the unprepared old soil. The fundamentals of this ideology were laid down in the Caucasus, but it took its final form in Canada. When talking with his co-religionists, P. V. Verigin never expressed any ideas that could be interpreted by them incorrectly because he was very familiar with the Doukhobors. It would be difficult for an outsider to understand all the subtleties of the Doukhobor beliefs and the peculiarities of the sectarian psychology. In this respect, Alexander Bodiansky shows a very keen insight. There is a letter in the Bonch-Bruevich's Fond in the MS RSL in which he warned Bonch-Bruevich of the danger of publishing P. V. Verigin's letters because the Doukhobors would interpret their leader's every word as the Lord's command. According to Bodiansky, this publication might cause great harm to the Doukhobors. He warned: "... One should treat the contents of such publications with great caution" (MS RSL, Fo. 369,

2. *Zhivotnaia Kniga Dukhobortsev*, 1909, 71.

C. 241, f. 28, p. 19 and over). The emergence of the ideology of freedom confirmed his correctness.

3. The sources which reflect the ideology of the Canadian Doukhobors.

This ideology began to take shape around the 1920s, at first among the individual Doukhobor farmers and later spreading to the commune farmers. It was characterized by an even greater departure from the traditional Doukhobor beliefs with a primary emphasis placed on the common Christian and humanistic notions. These notions can be found in the letters and articles of V. A. Makaseyev (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 540-542, 655), in V. I. Koochin's letters, and in the letters to the editor Eli A. Popoff of the Doukhobor magazine *Iskra* [Spark], written in 1951 and addressed to V. D. Bonch-Bruevich (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 650, 119).

In reality there was a co-existence of all three trends of the Doukhobor world view; therefore, such a division of the archive materials is somewhat arbitrary. Moreover, we singled out the most striking and interesting documents in each collection of materials. In fact, the overwhelming majority of the documents in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds deals more or less with the question of the Doukhobor world view and should be studied as a whole.

I would like to address another question in this section: the Doukhobors' own view of the history of their movement and their outstanding leaders. The Doukhobor sect was an ethnological group of Russians torn away from their main ethnic group and living close together among other peoples. The Doukhobors were united by their religion, culture, self-awareness as well as awareness of their common history which, by the way, was often made up and mythical. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds contain some documents which reveal the Doukhobors' views on the origin of their movement and on how these views were changing in Canada (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 22, 24, 696).

The Fonds contain the most interesting manuscript of M. S. Androsof *A Story of Our Ancestors*<sup>3</sup> (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 483). This

3. Published in *Materials on the History and Research of Russian Sectarianism and Split*, 1st edition, 1908.

story offers a mythical narrative of the history of the group and the life events of its founder under Savely Kapustin. In his letter to Bonch-Bruevich, a Canadian Doukhobor P. S. Vereshchagin told a legend of another Doukhobor hero, Edom and his meeting with the Tsarina Catherine II. In Vereshchagin's opinion, the English Quakers were started by Edom who was ransomed by the English from a jail and was taken to England. That is the reason why the English Quakers and the Doukhobors have so much in common (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 6, f. 22).

A historical narrative about a Doukhobor who took part in the defense of the city of Sevastopol during the Crimean War 1853-1856, has some didactic overtones. He was awarded a pension for his heroic deeds, but since wars are unrighteous in nature, this money was also unrighteous and in the end the protagonist had his money and his life taken away from him (SMHR, Fo. 2, invent 7, f. 488)\*.

The SMHR Fond contains an interesting and unique document: *The Explanation of the Doukhobor Elders of the Slander Which Accuse Them of Beastly Crimes and Various Cruelties Performed by Them in Tavriya Province* (Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 554). The Doukhobors did not and do not like to talk, and all the more, write on this subject because it is always veiled in mystery. In this "Explanation" they tried to steer the accusations of the historians away from them and offered their own conception of those historical events.

In her story, *In 1840*, M. Krasnikova wrote about a specific event in history of the Doukhobors, i.e. their relocation to the Caucasus and their life there (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 512).

Because of the fact that the materials concerning the Doukhobors' view of history are not plentiful, they allow one to examine the problem of how and with what purpose the real history of the sect was interpreted.

Besides the written documents, Bonch-Bruevich's Fond in SMHR has some illustrations, a collection of photographs of the Doukhobors. They are found in Fo. 2, inv. 29, f. 205-293. The majority of the photographs reflect the life of the Doukhobors in Canada. There are many pictures of P. V. Verigin and other outstanding Doukhobors at the beginning of the 20th century. The photographs show the scenes of the Doukhobors work life, their celebrations, religious rites, and daily life. A small number, mainly group photographs, were taken even in the



Caucasus. The Fond contains pictures taken aboard the ship during the relocation of the Doukhobors to Canada. Apparently these photographs were taken by L. A. Sulerzhitsky since it is known that he took many pictures during the journey across the ocean. A few photographs were taken in 1927 in the Doukhobor villages in the Salsk district of the Don region. Many of the photographs found in the Fond are already widely known and have often been published. However, there are also some pictures that have never been seen before.

A. A. Konkin supplemented his memoirs written in 1924 with illustrations. In a way, this is an illustrated chronicle of one life (SMHR, Fo. 2, inv. 7, f. 946).

The photographic portraits of some Tolstoy's followers who were involved in the fate of the Doukhobors are found in MS RSL (Fo. 369, C. 427, f. 2, 6, 20, 44; C. 435, f. 6).

On the whole, the collection of the Doukhobor photographs in Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds is not vast, but it is sufficiently diverse and reflects various aspects of the life of the Doukhobors from the end of the 19th century until 1949.

We have examined the archive sources (written and illustrated) on the history of the Doukhobor movement in Vladimir D. Bonch-Bruevich's Fonds in SMHR and in MS RSL. There is no doubt that these documents do not answer all the questions of the many-sided history of the group. However, one of the great and unquestionable advantages of this material compared to the material from other personal archival Fonds is that it allows one to follow the historical development of the group during a time frame lasting over half a century in the countries with three different socio-economic and political systems (Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, bourgeois-democratic Canada) and in different climates and geographic conditions.



Fig. 23. – *The new generation*

From the Tarasoff Photo Collection on Doukhobor History,  
Provincial Archives of British Columbia



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