

Songs of Existence: Sons of Freedom Doukhobors Within Time

by

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B.A., University of Victoria, 2003

M.A., University of Victoria, 2006

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ABSTRACT

The aspiration of this work was a call for justice for the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors - past, present and future. Sharing a Sons of Freedom identity, I worked within heritage; a heritage with deep cultural and spiritual roots that has encountered and responded to injustices through resistance and eventual assimilation into Canadian society. Justice as the primary motivation of this study is contingent upon hospitality or in the same breath deconstruction, derived from the work of Jacques Derrida and John Caputo.

Hospitality is the theoretical, ethical and methodological pulse of this study and made possible a collective re-contextualizing of identity. Hospitality is an open and excessive welcome principled upon unconditional inclusion yet faced with an inevitable interplay of exclusion in all inclusion. The parameters of this study situated within the context of a Sons of Freedom heritage determined the welcome - although broad - was also specific and conditional.

Working within an ethic of hospitality involved working with others in co-created relational spaces. Being in shared spaces generated memories, stories, songs and perspectives impassioned by sadness, anger, hope, ideas and intentions to sustain and keep identity on the move. The role of researcher and participant, or host and guest, was often disrupted as the roles became interchangeable. The blurred roles fostered spaces of sharing, trust, care and a sense of togetherness that “We are in this together.” Walking-alongside became a creative site for mobilizing counter narratives and critical interpretations to re-represent identity and on-going becoming. Justice, key to deconstruction and to this study, opened up the possibility of claiming identity as opposed to escaping or being burdened with an identity laden with stigma and shame.

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This was a collective undertaking; a labour of love of many hearts and hands. Navigating the past, present and future landscapes of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors was contingent upon the support I received along the way by so many dear friends, authors, scholars, poets and storytellers - ancestral and present. You have all contributed to the fabric of these pages, infused with so much sorrow, love and devotion expressed in song, prayer and story – along endless pathways.

With love, Ahna

С Любовью, Анна

ПОСВЯЩЕНИЕ

Это посвящена прошлых, настоящих, и будущих Сынов Свободы Духоборцев и их наследников.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to past, present and future Doukhobor Sons of Freedom inheritors.

Introduction: Meeting the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors

The Sons of Freedom Doukhobors have a history rich with tradition based on a communal lifestyle informed by their spiritual understandings and practice. They have been spirited and tenacious throughout their history of persecution and struggle to maintain their lifestyle and principles in Russia and during the 20th and 21st century in Canada. The Sons of Freedom have been subjected to a variety of discourses, most of which have been significantly disparaging, resulting in the construction and pathology ultimately delegating them as outcasts. This document offers a space for Sons of Freedom narratives that tell stories from the 'inside' drawn from personal experiences and perspectives. This work is based on the theory and practice of hospitality, a gesture of welcome that invites an interplay of communication, relationships and possibilities with those from a Sons of Freedom heritage. Hospitality moves through the entire work and invites a panoramic view of the trajectory of 'history, present and future' within complicated and ambiguous movements across landscapes.

Hospitality is my inspiration and guide alongside fellow Sons of Freedom past and present. Stories, perspectives and interpretations act as counter narratives that represent the Sons of Freedom heritage differently than most publications and discourses. This study is a call for justice that can foster a claim of identity without the weight of stigma, shame or escape. It is a call for justice that provides a welcoming space of possibilities for a future and ongoing

becoming - in other words - hospitality. Hospitality demands justice, and for those of minority communities, who have experienced pressures and repercussions of assimilation and misrepresentation, hospitality opens the door for reinterpretation and recontextualization of history, identity and thus a future. Hospitality as a call and commitment to justice is a perpetual movement toward unknown horizons that remain open to unforeseen possibilities and multiplicities.

Although the context of this study is situated in the past and present of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, the movements within this study, namely the methodological movements inspired by hospitality, have a much broader reach than most research; they are integral for fields of care and service to others, including Child and Youth Care. My professional and academic identity is located in the field of Child and Youth Care where I have worked as a Child and Youth Care Professional and University Instructor. Being with others hospitably - in shared spaces of relationality, infiniteness and multiplicity is essential in all fields of service, research and teaching – any work in fact that necessitates being-with-others. It may be a risk to face, encounter, welcome and engage with unknown others to diminish borders in a careful and relational manner by not entering uninvited into spaces of the ‘other’ as a practitioner with definitive answers and expectations. It is reflecting upon and continually challenging oneself to be more hospitable and less hostile. It is engaging in relationship with courage and openness in shared spaces.

Within an ethic of hospitality individuals are seen as ambiguous and continually shifting; thus, researchers, practitioners and/or teachers cannot assume to acquire universal answers and solutions for others. Arriving at solutions cannot take place outside of relationship - alongside one another, in time and space. Hospitality is not a tool; it is not a prescriptive method or formula. It is a gesture that welcomes singularities and differences. It is open to the unknown and it requires one to face the risks and surprises that emerge in relationship with the unknown other. We are in it together; thus it is a relational process that happens to 'us' whether as a practitioner offering service or a recipient receiving service. It is a reciprocal, complicated and interchangeable process of being 'host' (as a professional offering service) and 'hostage' to the other who in turn becomes the 'host.' Are we as practitioners, researchers, teachers ready to become 'hostages' and know that we cannot know the other and in turn assume to know solutions for the other unless we risk being with, alongside and in relationship with other(s)?

The other that I refer to, through the lens of hospitality, is experienced as multiple, unknown, infinite and full of possibilities, yet impossible to know completely. The other is not situated dichotomously in an 'us and them' positioning as "all of us, every person, is an other" (Caputo cited in Leask, 2007, p. 221). The multifaceted layers of 'other' include myself, community, text, story and song. It is the ancestors, those present and those yet to come. Welcoming others is an invitation to share spaces of relationship that are

infinite with endless possibilities in multi-layered spaces of singularities and commonalities.

This study, situated upon the uncertain, tangled, ruptured and shifting ground of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, will (hopefully) stimulate thoughts, ideas and possibilities of hospitably in relation to providing service as not doing-to but being-with. I invite the reader to not only read but extend this work into ongoing 'relations' of surprise, risk, and possibility animated by hospitality.

The parameters of this study are context specific, namely the history, the present and the possibilities for the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. Within an ethic of hospitality, many with a past and present linked to a Sons of Freedom heritage were welcomed and in turn contributed to this study. The context is complex and is in no way complete. Possibilities of the welcome are endless and hospitality calls for continually extending a welcome not only to those known and familiar but also to the stranger, to those outside of this heritage to include multiple vantage points. Even though the intentions and parameters of this study prevented opening the door even wider - 'no house is big enough to invite everyone' – they can be furthered beyond this project, which hospitality calls for. This project can be thought of as a long awaited tribute and representation of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors – executed differently, within an ethic of hospitality and a call for justice. The following description premises the entry into the storied history of how we, the Sons of Freedom

Doukhobors, have negotiated time and space in the face of trauma, suffering and love.

A brief history of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors

Doukhobors live across a variety of locations in B.C and Saskatchewan, notwithstanding other locations across Canada and in other countries internationally. In B.C. Doukhor communities once thrived in the Grand Forks, Castlegar and Slocan Valley areas and continue to do so, albeit without traditional community structures of a communal lifestyle. A 'spirit' of community exists in community events and ceremonies generating a general sense of interconnectedness. This study is predominantly, but not exclusively, centered in the Krestova and Gilpin areas. Krestova is a mountain plateau above the Slocan River in the West Kootenay region of Southern B.C. It has been populated by Sons of Freedom Doukhobors since the 1930s, and, although the Doukhor presence remains distinct in Krestova, over the years the community has become increasingly populated by many others of non-Doukhor origins. Gilpin is a small community populated by the Sons of Freedom since 1935, and is located near the Kettle River south of Grand Forks B.C. The government provided Gilpin as a place for Sons of Freedom to settle, as many were without a home upon their return from Pier's island and it remains free of private ownership.

Upon their arrival in Canada, from 1899, the Doukhobors gradually formed into three distinct groups: the larger group – the Union of Spiritual

Communities of Christ (USCC) often referred to as the Orthodox Doukhobors¹ who, while valuing and maintaining their Doukhobor principles and lifestyle, eventually integrated peacefully into mainstream Canadian society.

Independent Doukhobors exercised integration without necessarily subscribing to any Doukhobor community/organization.

Although this work is situated within a Sons of Freedom context, Doukhobor traditions, principles, and beliefs serve as an ideological foundation across all Doukhobor groups and inheritors. Doukhobor principles based on vegetarianism, abstaining from tobacco and alcohol as well as military non-compliance, exemplify a conviction of peace and non-violence which has a history that emerged in Russia under various leaders including Lukeria Kalmikova and Peter V. Verigin. The overall Doukhobor belief in divinity within each individual, as well as honouring 'mother-earth' through toil, simplicity, and a collective lifestyle imbued with prayer and song has ambiguous roots that reach farther back than can be retrieved. I argue, that Doukhobor practices and beliefs can be described much more as a 'way of life' than a fundamentally bound religious institute. However, the belief in God/Бог and Christ/Христос is evident in Doukhobor prayers, hymns and expressions; understood, interpreted and reinterpreted in a variety of representations and practices throughout their trajectory within time.

¹ The Orthodox Doukhobors were first established as the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB) in 1908 and reestablished as the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) in 1908. See www.usccdoukhobors.org

Sons of Freedom Doukhobors struggled to maintain a traditional Doukhor lifestyle of simple communal living exemplified by the use of the Russian Doukhor language, not purchasing land privately, not sending children to public schools, and living simply without material accumulation. The Sons of Freedom unorthodox manner of resisting pressures to assimilate into Canadian society occurred over decades; from 1905 throughout the 1960s – during which time resistances to assimilative measures accelerated and gradually declined over the 1970s to the present time. A brief introduction loosely and lyrically encapsulates the history of the Doukhobors – the Spirit Wrestlers - and provides the context of this study.

Welcome to the voices of my ancestors' sweet songs of sorrow...

The ships sailed across the seas, like our voices singing across the waters: thousands of 'Spirit Wrestlers – Doukhobortsi' sailing to Canada, a new land of freedom. No more wrestling, we hope, against oppression, persecution, torture, imprisonment, exile, exile, exile...dragging chains across the Russian Steppes...

*Спускается солнце за степи,
Вдали золотится ковыль,
Колодников гулкие цепи
Взметают дорожную пыль.*

*The sun is going down over the
steppes,
The golden hue of the grass lighted
from afar
The shackles of the convicts ring loudly
Sweeping the dusty road*

*Припев:
Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом
Слышен звон кандалъны,
Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом*

*Chorus:
Dzin-bom, dzin-bom
The sound of the shackles ring
Dzin-bom, dzin-bom*

<i>Путь сибирский дальный,</i>	<i>The road to Siberia afar</i>
<i>Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом</i>	<i>Dzin-bom din bom</i>
<i>Слышен там идут</i>	<i>You hear them from afar</i>
<i>Нашего тобарица на каторгу видут</i>	<i>Our friends are taken to prison²</i>

(Толстой, А.К., 1850 гг.)

Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (1978, p. 667)	<i>(Tolstoi, A.K., 1850)</i>
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Dykho-borsti – Spirit-Wrestlers, wrestle with spirit, not with guns which we threw into bonfires in 1895. We listen to our spirits and not to the doctrines of Church which we denounced early on in our history in Russia – and that happened to incite state forces against us with targeted persecutions. We seek peace, freedom and simplicity. We are communal, we till the soil, we sing, we pray, and our prayer is a song and recognition of the other; the divinity in the other singularly and collectively including the relationship with the earth. And that did not continue without controversy and consequences, in Russia and then in Canada.

Canada was a strange land that we embraced with robust hope of freedom and hard work on the expansive prairie lands. Oh those first years were tough, yet we prospered, until we were confronted by the stipulations of becoming Canadian subjects:

Что? Что Он Сказал? What did he say? We have to sign to own the land? Нет нет нет, этот Божий земле. No, no, no this is God's land. How do you buy mother earth? What? Give allegiance to the King? Our allegiance is with

² My translation into the English language

the creator, God, in everything, in all of us. What? Send our children to your schools? No, we teach them ourselves, our culture, our language, our skills. But you insist? Well then take everything if you must. Take our animals...take our clothing... Jails? Oh yes, we know jails. Torture? Oh yes, we know torture. Our children? No, no, no, don't take...our children. But they did. And they took our lands.

So we moved to British Columbia and settled on lands purchased by a few of us to maintain our communal way of life and avoid individual land ownership. We prospered with orchards, sawmills, brick factories and a jam factory. A small group of us known as СЫНИ СВОБОДЫ – The Sons of Freedom - became distressed and boldly stated *“You are becoming too materialistic; that is not part of our Doukhobor values and principles and lifestyle – we are to live simply, humbly, in freedom. You are all becoming assimilated; you will lose so much; you will lose yourselves. Wake up!”*

Some of us leave, some are forced to leave – we the Sons of Freedom. Sometimes we live in tents, sometimes we are corralled in prison, and once in 1929 we were placed in an abandoned logging camp at Porto Rico, located minutes outside of Nelson B.C., with little food. Initially we found old oats; it was a hard go and most made it but not without loss; children died, elders died. We were described as irrational and crazy.

We were approached again: Buy land individually? No. Send our children to schools? No. Give statistical information? For what? For the military? No.

A multitude of protests took place, schools burned, some of our houses burned, we gave it all, including our clothing and went to jail – the sentence for public nudity went from six months to three years. So there were many three year sentences. In 1932 hundreds of us were placed on Pier's island for up to three years - a small island fashioned into a penal colony alongside Vancouver Island. Our children were scattered about, in orphanages, industrial schools, foster homes – forgetting their language and culture. Three six-week-old babies died under the care of medical staff....starved....rotted...and we sing...of sorrows. Children mourned within the walls...

*We bid farewell to our loved ones
And to our sweet place
They took us to a place so strange
And gave us into angry hands*

*Распрощались мы с родными
Своей милой стороной
Нас увезли в края чужие
И отдали в руки злые*

*They tore our clothing from us
And put us into a basement
Where we cried and mourned
Yearning for our families*

*С нас там платье посрывали
И в подвалы нас сажали
Там мы плакали, рыдали
Про родных все вспоминали.*

*While we sat in the basement
It was very difficult for us
A matron would come to us
And our hearts would freeze.*

*В подвалах мы сидели
Дюже трудно нам было
Вот приходит к нам сташая
А у нас сердце замирает*

*They tormented and beat us
And tried to feed us soup with meat
But we did not accept their soup
Then they would not give us anything
to eat.*

*Нас там мучили и били
Мясным супом нас поили
А мы суп их не приняли
Они есть нам не давали.*

*In the dark we sat
With such sadness
Every day we prayed to God
In God we placed all hope*

*В темницах мы сидели
Очень грустно нам было
Каждый день Богу молились
Все на Бога сположились.*

They tried to force us to work

Нас погнали на работу

*Wanting us to submit
We did not take up their work
And stood all day in the scorching sun*

*И хотели покорить
Мы работу не приняли
На жару весь день стояли.*

*(Children's composition, in school –
1932, cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 39)*

Детское сложения, в школе - 1932

*Buy land? No. Send our children to your schools? No. Protests erupted, fires,
nude marches, jail, hunger strikes, torture – yes, torture.*

1948: a Royal Commission reported on the Doukhobor 'problem.' We were reduced to a problem; the Sons of Freedom become referred to as criminals, as crazy, a problem to be dealt with by prisons and mental asylums. The report provided the following rationality for those deemed irrational "...if a person develops cancer in one hand it may be necessary to amputate the whole arm. A lot of muscle and healthy tissue may be sacrificed, but that sacrifice has got to be made for the preservation of life on the whole body" (p. 24). Those Sons of Freedom, it was said, are really just a "few hundred lazy, indolent, rowdy and immoral agitators, lunatics and criminals" (p. 11). The Sons of Freedom were considered insane and criminal; therefore any measure to deal with them was sanctioned; it became, it was said, a state of emergency and time "for a final showdown" (p. 14).

1953: Certain politicians declared that they would break the back of those Doukhobors, those Sons of Freedom. Messages streamed through the media and political correspondences that positioned us as abnormal, crazy, insane,

autistic, deviants, terrorists, deranged; can we get rid of them? Where? What country? What island? Where? The efforts to find a different location were fruitless.

If we cannot get rid of them, we will start with their children.

1953: Children were rounded up, kidnapped, torn from homes, torn from the arms of parents, night time police raids, helicopters, children hiding in forests, in basements, under floor boards; there was continual vigilance and hiding – yet many were caught! For seven years children were held in a prison. Parents visited every other Sunday for an hour through a high fence if they could get there. Sorrow prevailed - songs of sorrow.

Buy land? No.

Send children to school? Yes, let them out, just let them out.

Hundreds of Sons of Freedom Doukhobors took part in a trek from the Southern Interior of B.C. to the coast - to Agassiz where Sons of Freedom men and women were incarcerated in the Mountain Prison. The trek was also a movement of hope and a yearning for the return to Mother Russia. But no, there was no going back. The gradual return to the interior was met with the last question.

Buy land? Yes.

Are we still here? Who are we now? These seemingly simple questions are in fact not straight-forward; they are sensitive, multiple and perplexing. However, they are premised by the affirmation that our 'ashes' have not been extinguished as evidenced in the stories, perspectives and songs threaded throughout this project.

Similar to the experience of the Doukhobors, immigrant settlers experienced losses of identity in relation to cultural beliefs and practices during the process of settling in Canada. This was especially so for non-Western European settlers prior to the 1960s when there were strict policies for immigrants to assimilate into a British model of citizenship (Elrick, 2007; Soroka, 2007, Dewey, 2009; Siemiatycki, 2012). Consequently, for immigrant settlers, assimilation compromised or devastated cultural lifestyles, languages and practices. A move toward multiculturalism during the 1960s had opened the doors to non-European peoples, and Canada has since been defined as a multicultural country. However, immigrants continue to experience racism, exclusion and inequity across social domains (Elrick, 2007; Soroka, 2007; Frideres, 2008; Mahtani, 2008; Lai & Huff, 2013). Inescapably, when leaving one's home country and culture to integrate/assimilate into another, mourning and loss occurs. However, mourning is integral to identity by both preserving and mobilizing identity - individually and collectively. Loss and mourning describe the experiences of First Nation populations under colonial rule that brutally restricted integral aspects of identity and all manner of autonomy, cultural lifestyle and territory. Communities inexplicably suffered genocide and

yet survive with continuing revival of identities contingent upon remembrance and mourning.

This work is a 'work of mourning and yearning' that keeps the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor heritage moving through the cinders of memory and tears. The declaration of 'yes, we are here' is not to reinforce the divisions amongst Doukhobor groups, but to speak courageously about a distinct heritage and identity that we do not need to run from, in fact that we cannot escape, but perhaps can embrace. The unification of Doukhobor groups has been an aspiration for many Doukhobors throughout their history in Canada. However, for many Sons of Freedom it cannot occur without the acknowledgement of their distinct history, identity and name. I refer to the Sons of Freedom as the 'Sons of Freedom Doukhobors' precisely because they cannot be isolated from Doukhobor history, heritage, identity and the excess of being 'Doukhobor - Dykh-borets - Spirit Wrestler.' Doukhobor communities are coming together in countless ways that diminish divisions through open dialogue and understanding.

Identities across Doukhobor groups are complexified by many individuals and families having not only one identity, but identities across all Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor identities and heritage. Therefore, the relationship with a Sons of Freedom heritage is often shared amongst other streams of heritage. Consequently, many Doukhobors have positioned themselves primarily in one distinct faction. This work, I reiterate, is not to reinforce the boundaries of

division; it is to acknowledge and proclaim heritage and identity within and yet beyond intricate borders and divides.

...the division of separateness, well, that chain is broken now, there is no need for that, you do what you believe, you can pray, there is no need to have conflict between ourselves, and that is the best thing that ever happened, to tie this whole thing together (Alexei).

Initiatives to bridge understanding by welcoming intergroup dialogue and participation in initiatives and events toward possibilities of unification have diminished and continue to diminish divides, animosity and misunderstandings. An example of initiatives to foster understanding and resolve conflicts toward reconciliation across groups was the consultative *Committee Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations* (KCIR) established in 1979, followed by the *Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations* (EK CIR) (see p. 240). The Council of Doukhobors in Canada formed in 2003, facilitates dialogue and collaborative efforts towards intergroup unity. Public meetings and events held in Doukhobor communities are attended by Doukhobors connected to any community and/or heritage, including individuals without a Doukhobor heritage. Although tensions certainly do exist, initiatives to increase openness and interactions continue. The prospect of unity is desired by many Doukhobors through interrelationships that can increase understanding, respect and recognition of diversified streams of Doukhobor identities and positionings. I contend that unification initiatives do not need to diminish or extinguish ties to heritage, history and identity. This

work, situated within the context of a Sons of Freedom history and heritage, encourages the reclamation a Sons of Freedom identity; however, it is important to recognize intergroup diversities which I believe can continue within and across a collective Doukhobor landscape. Even though this work is specific in purpose it is on-going beyond these pages in breadth and possibility for all Doukhobor inheritors.

The Sons of Freedom Doukhobor history is multidimensional and complexified by political, social and religious domains. I do not expect that all individuals from a Sons of Freedom heritage will be in agreement with what is written. I recognize the representational limitations. Nevertheless, I felt 'called' to write about this/my/our heritage and identity differently - a counter and collective narrative as a gesture of justice. This call has been petitioning me for years and slowly I have been addressing it in small ways by reading, listening, gathering materials, and feeling my way into my heritage and eventually saying 'yes.' Thus I was joined by others, present and past, who filled this study with stories, songs, prayers, tears and memories. Consequently, a significant portion of this work is dedicated to the historical experiences of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. This is, in many ways, a response to an ancestral and contemporary call for justice. It is a declaration that we are here, and that we will continue to be here.

The energy of this project was propelled by the open hand of hospitality that I received from others, through shared stories, documents, songs and ideas not to mention tears and laughter. Personal stories and perspectives

included in this work emerged in discussion with a variety of individuals of different ages with a Sons of Freedom heritage. To maintain participant anonymity I have provided a pseudonym for all individuals linked to their shared words. To further assist and challenge me in the process of this project is the philosophy of hospitality, namely a gesture of welcome: love, faith, mourning, risk, justice, forgiveness and possibility as described by philosophers Jacques Derrida and John Caputo. Inspired by their work, I embraced the past, the present and future of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, fueled by hospitality. Hospitality in the most unconditional sense requires an open invitation and acceptance of what is encountered - friend and stranger, stories, text, songs, mourning, anger, pride, beliefs and perspectives.

The heart of singing as relational

Historically the lifestyle of the Doukhobors has been relational and collective; their communal way of life extended into their daily living, whether sharing communal homes or living in small homes in close proximity, working together on the land and sharing the harvest, working to sustain all aspects of community or partaking in collective ceremonies such as community prayer meetings, weddings and funerals. The belief that each individual inhabits what is understood as 'divine' or 'spiritual' is a collective recognition of equity and in turn interconnected spaces that are fluid and shifting, particularly experienced during prayer and song.

Singing has been and continues to be a primary practice of the Doukhobors. Songs convey our religious and spiritual philosophies, convictions and experiences integral to every gathering from собрание,³ моление,⁴ свадьбый⁵ и похорный⁶ and are infused in daily life. Singing is passed on individually within family settings as well as larger ‘choral’ settings. Being in the presence of collective singing, especially during a funeral service collapses individual divides, sweeping those present into an experience of synchronicity and ‘oneness’ or a collective relational space. This is frequently experienced in ceremony or in more casual daily settings where singing takes place for many Doukhobors. Collective singing on larger or smaller scales provides an experience of infiniteness and relationality outside of linear time conceptions.

With a long history of singing in various community events, Mikhail describes his relationship to collective singing:

During funerals or large meetings in Krestova where singing takes place, it is not about performing or getting the notes right. The singing emerges from the heart. It comes from collective hardship; prisons, борьба, труд [struggle, labour]. Через наше страдание, наше пенье очень прекрасное [Through our suffering our singing is very beautiful]. Через борьбу вырабатывает сила [Through our struggle strength is cultivated] which comes out in a person’s singing and connection.

³ Sobranie - gathering

⁴ Molenie – prayer gathering

⁵ Svadba – wedding

⁶ Pokhranii - funeral

When those sitting amongst us have not heard our singing they have approached me afterwards and expressed how blown away they are: ‘When we come to Krestova we fly so high. There is so much energy...so pure.’

Coming together in general, such as sitting in communion during stories, discussions and song, individualities are disrupted by an openness and affirmation of being-with-one-another. It is this sense of communion that sustained and made possible this study. Experiences of communion and relationality are exemplified in many Doukhobor songs and prayers as in the following verse written by the Doukhobor poet, I.F. Sisoiev in 1925 (1978, p. 341).

*Друзья, под знамя соберемся!
Под знамя мира и труда.
В одно душою мы сольемся,
В законе Бога навсегда.*

*Friends, under a banner we gather
Under the banner of peace and toil
We flow into one spirit
within the law of God, forever.*

Or simply put in the words of my mother Pauline from her poem on page 30, a sense of communion and relationship with, as she expresses, ‘all creation;’

*Жажда есть познать всю творенью
И слится в месте в одно*

*I desire to know all creation
and merge together as one*

Songs or poetry composed by Sons of Freedom Doukhobors are integral to this work, lending to an experience of collectivity through voices within time that warm and enliven the ‘text’ and ‘context.’ My process of listening and writing was influenced by song, with lyrical ebbs and flows, and therefore I named each section a song.

Song of dreams and intention describes the initial impulse of this work and the complexities embedded in this ‘topic’ of the Sons of Freedom. I provide a hint of personal context which sheds light on the significance this work has for me on a personal and, more importantly, on a level of heritage and identity. The intricacies of language in translation and tone, described in this ‘song,’ infuse this work with the passion of voices in song, story and perspective.

Song of Hospitality: the impossible welcome presents hospitality and welcome as the philosophical threads of hope and love that weave the landscape of this study, but not too tightly. Hospitality, I explain, is the open gesture of welcoming the past and present threaded with complexity and a hopeful future for our heritage and identity.

Songs of landscapes and timescapes provides a hospitable space for the historical context and movements of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. It spans the depths of history shrouded in darkness, within timescapes of experiences

expressed by historical documents, songs, poetry, and stories that extend into the recent past.

Song of the outsider is an overview of the perpetuation of 'labels' the Sons of Freedom have carried during their sojourn in Canada. This is linked to the increasing power and prominence of psychology that has determined their location in society as 'outsiders.'

Songs of walking alongside the other addresses the resistance to providing a step-by-step methodological plan and confronts the limiting parameters of ethics. Informed by hospitality, I describe the process of being with the other in the sharing of perspectives, stories, and ideas including the emotions that overlay the course of engagement.

Songs of identity and Songs of becoming highlights the voices of those who contributed to this work. These are the voices emerging from the small communions of dialogue declaring heritage, identity and possibilities of a future.

Songs of revolution provides an analysis of Sons of Freedom resistances informed by an ethic of nonviolent resistance as understood by Lev Tolstoy and Mahatma Ghandi.

Songs of Dreams and Intentions

It's impossible to make sense of all this; it will never make sense. How can it be done? The elder across the table looks at me with his sky blue eyes, and with a slight smile says, "It is all fragments. This history, it is all fragments" (Ilya).

I give credit that the Sons of Freedom went and had the guts to do things. I was part of it. So whether it was right or wrong, I don't know. I don't know how to make sense of it (Alexei).

How do I string together fragments? Which ones will I present? I have read books on Doukhobor history and am always disappointed in the way I, my people, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, have been represented and the consequences of those representations.

I would be proud to call myself a Sons of Freedom if the name wasn't dragged through the mud (Mitya).

How do I attempt a different representation? How do I leave out the inexplicable, the seemingly irrational and intricate intertwining of politics, culture and spirit? It is impossible to sift through the entanglement of events that can be described as *кверь торманом* - *kverkh tormanom* upside down and I can only attempt *kverkh tormanom*, and not stifle the non-rational into the confines of 'conventional' rationality but to write this impossible puzzle welcomingly, knowing that many irretrievable pieces are lost and/or hidden. Hence the following is a fragmented and cragged presentation, illuminated by

flashes of light and warmth. The historian Peter Maloff (1948) describes the history and culture of the Doukhobors as a “vast expanse; the higher you climb, the further the horizon is extended and the wider are its boundaries” (p. 14). Navigating this elaborate expanse can only be piloted by faith. Faith has the ability to navigate in the dark, to see “through a glass darkly” and traverse risky and ambiguous terrain (Caputo, 1987, p. 281). The words of a Sons of Freedom, my mother Pauline, described faith as a requirement during resistance.

Once you become involved, answer the call to act, you do so without knowing where you will end up, without knowing how long you might be away, and not knowing what you will be facing. You absolutely go into the unknown with only faith.

Faith might be considered madness and irrational, affirmed by Derrida (2003) who described faith as something that is “of course...madness. If you want to experience faith as something reassuring and wise, something reliable or probable, it’s not faith. Faith must be mad or absurd...” (p. 36). Caputo (2007) describes reason as being “deeply structured by faith” (p. 143) yet coherent for a sense of rationality. Mobilized by faith, the Sons of Freedom generated the capacity to resist pressures to assimilate. Their particular acts of resistance, including nude protests, burning their homes, refusing to send their children to public schools, seemed irrational or mad to the typical Canadian citizen within a predominant colonial society. Yet the Sons of

Freedom rationale for protecting culture and deep-seated beliefs under threat was indeed context-based logic.

The Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, the Orthodox Doukhobors, and the Independent Doukhobors are informed by specific 'reason, rationality and logic' based on entrenched beliefs and values that shape the relational dynamic among them. Doukhobor groups experienced divides and tensions that developed according to diverging principles and values when faced with making choices in relation to pressures to assimilate. They were defined by either the acceptance to assimilate or the resolve to maintain their identity based on a culturally principled lifestyle. Intergroup relations were tenuous as rationality and logic differed across all groups, Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor, according to cultural, political and spiritual underpinnings. However, within and across different contexts and groups, the invitation to one can simultaneously exclude another. Bridging divides across differing contexts within an ethic of hospitality and relationality is not without limitations or - as Caputo (1997) would say - hostilities.

For example, Canada can be considered hospitable when it opened its doors to the Doukhobor migrants in relation to the offer of land and the opportunities to integrate into a colonial society. On the other hand, that benevolence was at the expense of First Nations people whose territories were being appropriated and subsequently offered up to immigrants willing to populate and farm large expanses of land across Canada. In one particular

case in 1908, land was sold to establish Doukhobor communities in Southern B.C. alongside the confluence of the Columbia and Kootenay rivers. This land was utilized by the First Nations peoples who would migrate along the rivers according to hunting and fishing opportunities, and so the land situated at the confluence was from time to time unoccupied. Thus upon their return to their territory during 1909 they found it occupied by Doukhobors who had knowingly or not - while plowing the land for farming purposes - plowed in First Nations ancestral grounds.

Rationalities, identities and interrelationship dynamics are not black and white and cannot be reduced to right and wrong or to sole oppressors and sole victims perpetuating a dangerous 'us and them' dichotomy. The tensions I face that may draw me into a sense of 'us and them' or 'nahsh or ne nahsh' (ours or not ours) can be problematic given the history of a very distinct community that, while facing external pressures, closed their community doors tighter.

Reason, rationality, logic and truth are context-based and for those with a Sons of Freedom heritage, it is not straight forward. There is a desire to know the 'truth' about such a labyrinthian history, and about reasons behind persecutions and resistances. Needless to say the 'truth' is illusive, mercurial, multiple and fragmented. It is not possible to grasp truth once and for all, for it slips through our fingers once we think we have a grasp on it. The following words of a Sons of Freedom woman may be the closest one can 'get' to the truth.

It is so complicated. You can only find your own truth (Pauline).

Yet, the questions continue to be asked...

What is it that we stand for? Why did we burn our homes? I think we need to bring it out there in big bold letters...this is what we stood for, or, not what we stood for, but these are the things that we did, and this is why, right? Why did my father sit in jail, for god sakes? Why did my auntie burn her house? There are so many different answers (Nick).

Why do you want an explanation? What about those in Russia who died? You think they didn't want an explanation of what they were doing? They were put on posts, sitting there overgrowing with moss and they are there, you understand, dying and they don't want to know why this is happening? And now we feel that "Oh I am privileged now, I want to know, it will open to me" (Alexei).

There are gems of truth that emerge when narratives are warmed by the fire of faith and hospitality. I think of Tarkovski's (1989) words when he refers to diamonds that "are not found in black earth; they have to be sought near volcanoes" (p. 47). Listening to and engaging with those sharing their stories was bearing witness to and collectively forging gems near volcanoes percolating with complex emotions and volcanic experiences: now sadness, now anger, now laughter, now silence – gems I endeavoured to integrate into this study.

Work of remembering and mourning

This is a 'work of mourning' (Derrida, 1994) with those present and not present. Acquiring justice within an ethic of hospitality is to remember - remembrance being a gesture of justice; thus, I consider the name Sons of Freedom to be "a spirit of justice we have no business forgetting" (Caputo, cited in Leask, 2007, p. 225).

The identification with the past, my/our heritage, is not something that can be entirely erased or ignored; the cinders continue to smoulder, haunt and disturb. The definitive words of a respected scholar irritated and haunted me for years: "You will need to write about your heritage, you have no choice." I didn't want to believe him, yet I do not have a choice. I am, as Kafka (cited in Cixous, 1993, p. 61) suggested, pursued by the stories that I run before, which toss me about who-knows-where and which I entice who-knows-where? The necessity to write about heritage necessitates the question of how this is to be done. Writing about and for heritage is an on-going process without predetermined methods to follow. In many ways it requires faith.

And so I write as a form of fight and faith: for love, responsibility, honour and justice for my ancestors, my great grandparents, my grandparents, my mother, my sons, and for 'our people' who are here and are yet to come. This is an initiative of justice through welcome which relies on remembrance and recovery.

What is this lineage that I can trace back and follow along over one tumultuous event after another, trying to loosen the rubble bit by bit for glimpses that can be written, re-written, imagined, re-imagined? What next? Where to? Widening the path, restructuring the path, tending the path; this inherited path upon which I walk, stand and sing with so many others.

My Grandfather, now an ancestor, a tall, straight fellow with long white hair, sitting at the table hunched over the lens of a magnifying glass, takes up a pen and writes with his precise script. He has much to say, my grandfather who at sixteen years old was in a prison in Manitoba; three years on Pier's Island, five years in Mountain Prison, eight years in Riverview - a testament to his convictions play upon his body - cigarette burns; the long hunger fasts - ninety pounds of skin and bones; the lobotomy performed without family consent; the forced feeding - ripped passages; electrical shocks; the solitary confinement - no bed, dark, naked in a straightjacket; held at length in ice cold water; building and burning and being burnt; the workman in sawmills, forests and the railway; the figure with behaviours bizarre - ridiculed.

I was walking through Krestova with a lighted lantern at daylight, calling out true sincere Doukhobors, "Will you please come out, from wherever you are, so I can have a look at you, and be your sincere spiritual brother?"

Solid, unshakable, resistant

My grandfather.

My mother: an infinite resource of materials and endless conversations about 'our' history and this project. I walked through the history with my mom close beside me. I look back, and with the descent, memories surface of summer gardens. Homes made lively with 'us' children; us and my mother. There came a day when she was compelled to return to the Krestova community she left before we were born. Then one day she returned with us - youth, reluctant to settle into a community with a history and language somewhat foreign. It didn't take long before my mother was 'back' on the path to keep it from ending. Several years of protests, resistances, forced feeding, court rooms, jail cells and compounds followed. She endured with unshakeable faith - intercepted by heartache and tears. However, those years were intertwined with a home life of gardening, cooking and baking, knitting, reading, writing, and always learning.

"My education" she would say "took place in prison."

*Когда выйду Я своей темнице
 На свежий воздух погулять
 Взгляну на всю природу
 Что творец наш, нам создал
 И хочется в душе
 За петь ту песенку что мы одинь
 Тут солнышко своим теплом светом
 Согреет усталость тела моего
 Птички своей нежный пенье
 Повеселят душу мою
 Цветый и зелен так прекрасно наносят
 Сладкий аромат*

Так хочется обнять всю природу
 И крепко так груди прижмать
 И прославить тебе мой Божье
 За твои великие дары
 Жажда есть познать всю творенью
 И слится в месте в одно

When I emerge from my cell
 And walk into the fresh air
 I look at all the nature
 That our creator created for us
 And in my soul I yearn to sing that we are one
 Here the sun with its warm light
 Warms my tired body
 The birds sing their gentle songs and
 My soul rejoices
 The beautiful flowers and greenery
 Put out such a sweet aroma
 I yearn to embrace nature tight to my chest
 And glorify you, my God, for your great gifts
 I desire to know all creation and merge together as one

{Written by my mother, Pauline Berikoff in the Oakalla prison}

*I am a young girl sitting in the back of my aunt and grandmother's car.
 They are taking me and my brother for a visit and we travel over the
 mountainous skyway between the east and west Kootenays. They sing slow
 melodious songs in Russian which I cannot understand, but I am lulled and hum*

and pretend to sing along mouthing the unknown words, wishing I knew those words, wishing I knew the Russian language which I loved and yearned for. Oh, they too were part of the Sons of Freedom when I was a child. But I did not know. I only knew their embrace.

My grandmother; my aunt

Years ago my younger son wrote an entry in his Grade Two journal, which read:

In thirty more days my old Grandma is coming from jail. She will play in the snow with me and my brother. We will make a big snowman. I will make her a flapping crane and just a normal crane for her and a canoe. She will be happy.

She will have a good time.

I adore this piece he wrote and smile when I think about the experiences of my sons having a grandmother⁷ in jail, which for them was not out of the ordinary. Both my sons experienced visits with their grandmother in jail - Oakalla and the Burnaby women's prison. They received letters in Russian from their Baba and wrote Russian letters in return. They received knitted gifts and skillfully drawn pictures from their Baba. There were frequent phone calls. One day my older son, still very young, made a creative and culturally imbued suggestion:

⁷ Baba in Russian

Мама, Я знаю как мы можем достичь Баба без телефону или писать письма. Мы можем петь, и наши пение достигает все пути к ней.

Mama, I know how we can reach Baba without using the phone or writing letters. We can sing, and our singing will reach all the way to her.

These words have remained with me for over twenty five years. When my sons were young our house was saturated with singing; we sang at home, along the road as we walked, in the car while driving, while working in the garden. We sang Doukhobor/Russian songs. Children's story books in Russian were read over and over again to support my sons' first language – Russian as expressed in the 'minor' Doukhobor dialect.

...don't lose your language and when someone says, "My, you mean you understand Russian, you mean you can talk Russian? Wow five generations!" you know what I am saying, that is like...that is gold (Mikhail).

This writing is saturated with song, story and gold. It is a process propelled by love and beauty but not without grief and despair. I am often paralyzed, yet I dream, I protest, I fear and I love. I write for me, my ancestors and those of the Sons of Freedom heritage and yet, I cannot write for them, but I hope that somehow I am, that collectively 'we' are. I am accompanied by dreams, songs, prayers, books and letters from across past and present timescapes that reflect deep wounding from multilayered sources of pain, sorrow and resistance – wrestling with the spirit and with the name

Духоборцы – Spiritwrestlers and Сыны Свободы – Sons of Freedom. Kafka (cited in Cixous, 1993, p. 17) wrote that,

if the book we are reading doesn't wake us up with a blow on the head, what are we reading it for? ...[W]e need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into the forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us. (p. 17)

For years this project has haunted and bullied me: it has confused me and left me with little choice and unfairly with little courage. For me writing about heritage meant embracing heritage. Given that the Sons of Freedom heritage was rife with tensions, oppression and deep stigma that I personally experienced, embracing it was not simple. Saying 'yes' to this project meant saying 'yes' to heritage and, although this occurred, it is not without tensions and challenges. Cixous (1993) impossibly challenges the writer, maintaining the "only book that is worth writing is the one we don't have the courage or strength to write" (p. 32). She speaks about a book that wakes up with the dead and invites those suppressed "back to the surface of consciousness" (p. 44). One cannot inherit "without coming to terms with some spectre, and therefore with more than one spectre" (Derrida, 1994, p. 24). Similarly, Caputo (1997) encourages the welcoming of the ancestors, the ghosts, to break through the walls of the present, for the ghosts, suggests Ruitenburg (2009), will ceaselessly knock until the door is opened to receive them. The ghosts have

knocked tirelessly and I have opened the door and asked them to speak. Ruitenberg calls this “g/hosti-pitality” extending hospitality to our “ghostly guests” (p. 303). So, yes, I appealed to the dead for their presence. They were guests, yet more often than not, I felt I was the guest subject to my ancestral hosts.

I stare up at the two portraits in my grandparent’s house, stretching up as high as I can, staring, again and again with each visit. The house is warmed by the woodstove and lit by the kerosene lamp that throws its dim golden light across the two large glass-encased photographs. There I am, a child, gazing at my great grandmother and great grandfather; their faces are solemn, maybe sad, maybe just serious. I can’t explain why I felt so transfixed, captured in their gaze. It is only now, looking at myself in the mirror, straightening my hair over my forehead, lingering for a moment, that I recognize my great grandmother in my own image. And I welcome the ancestors...

The Sons of Freedom chose a much harder road to travel than the rest of the Doukhobors, being touched by prison time, leaving husbands, wives and children. Were their thoughts and feelings much different from our people in Russia, the ones that chose the same hard path? Did anyone ever think that maybe these are the same souls here in Canada and are moved by the same spirit? Declared my mother... (Berikoff, 2009, p. 890)

It cannot be argued that the road travelled by the Sons of Freedom was one wrought with struggle and suffering; however, it was one that was travelled

with conviction according to their values and vision. Perhaps it was the only road considered possible and any other road that would deviate from their values - impossible, whether in Russia or Canada. Animated within time are ancestral footsteps and voices along the only road they considered travelling upon.

As a child my mother remembers seeing her mother and father crying over photographs of ancestors long past. She could not understand why anyone would cry over photos of those no longer living. Yet, as an adult she found herself stirred over photos of her ancestors. Her identity inextricably tied to the past, to those who are absent, yet not absent. Similarly, I found myself gripped and overcome with a poignancy and confusion, at once tender and sharp, when gazing at images of those absent, yet not absent.

I welcomed stories that emerged from the underground, from under the rubble and weight of distorted discourses and in turn animated into the present/future through acts of mourning, recovery, interpretation and vision. The trajectory of the Sons of Freedom has been labyrinthian. The impossibility of complete understanding, analysis, and final interpretation of history and heritage does not remove the responsibility of opening up past events to other interpretations and possibilities. I liken this study to the work of Howard Zinn, 2005, author of *A People's History of the United States*, albeit on a significantly smaller scale. Zinn recognized the shortfalls of historical texts which have largely been written within privileged hegemonic perspectives. With his high

regard for social justice and activism “to light a flame under the rest of us,” he drew on voices and historical documents to highlight people’s experiences of oppression, poverty, racism and classism (The Nation, cited in Zinn (2005, n.p.). Zinn provided a space for people’s experiences and perspectives that otherwise were not included in dominant historical representations. His writing is for ‘the people’ and to broaden the scope of history by including experiences delegated to the underground.

History is before us and alongside us; it beckons us to remember and to mourn, to do justice to our inheritance and our ancestors and “to love them by setting on fire, faithfully tending to the burning embers of the remains” (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007, p.18). We are urged to blow into the embers for remembrance and for possibilities. The dead can be thought of as traces, cinders or ashes, remaining without remaining; they have not completely vanished. They haunt and inspire and wait for the breath and tears of mourning to kindle their ashes. Ancestors are those whom we leave behind and paradoxically cannot leave behind which necessitates a responsibility to them. Thus, time escapes timelines, it is “time out of joint” that does not close in on itself, does not and cannot close off the past and is a rupture into the future (Caputo, 1997). Yet, how can we ensure that they continue to smoulder, to ignite remembrance and hope? These are questions shared and grappled with by those that I entered into discussion with.

Am I doing anything in my life that supports what my father did, my grandfather my great grandfather? Do I honour what they did? Or have I been so assimilated into the system that I no longer know what it is? There is something there that is planted, running through my blood...it is there...how does this come back to honouring what my ancestors went through? When I walk into a place amongst different Doukhobors, I walk with my head held high. When I am asked “ah ты чья?”⁸ I am going to tell you right now that this is who I come from...Yes, I come from those radical Doukhobors. I accept who I am and I feel that if I do not talk about it, do not stand up for it, then everything has been in vain. If there is one thing I can do in my life it is to stand up for that. I bring that presence into that place. I bring that strength. I bring that pride. This is who I am (Nadya).

I am rebellious and part of that rebelliousness is telling people where I am from and they could deal with it because it doesn't bother me; so if it bothers anyone, tough. I am not ashamed of it in any way. It is always with me (Marya).

I don't think that I can say that I've done anything, or sacrificed in any way to truly take that name, a name that I hold in such high regard, but I am very proud to be of that heritage (Stenya).

⁸ Ah ti chiya? And who are you?

I don't think it matters how much we've been involved in the community. If you have heard that message in your life it sticks with you. It is a knowing. It doesn't really have to be put into words. Just because we can't put words to it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. It is powerful. I am a freedom fighter. That is where I come from (Nadya).

I am never getting out of it and I have no intention of being anything else and my children are not afraid that they are sons of freedom and my mother who spent so many years in prison, in Kingston, in Oakalla, she would say "nada". It was necessary (Stenya).

...if you ask mom "Do you regret all the times you were in jail or for everything else that happened in your life?" she would say, "No, I would do it all over again" (Lena).

Они (наши предки) протяхвали это дорошка для нас⁹(Апуота).

If I saw my ancestors before me, I would bow low before them (Vasiil).

⁹ Ahnee - nashi predki – protyahvoli eta doroshka dlya nas/They – our ancestors – forged this path for us

Memory or the catastrophe of memory as described by Derrida, (cited in Dooley, 2007, p. 5) is the impossibility of completely remembering and recording the past. The impossibility of the final word on history is precisely the possibility of continuing the incomplete circle with the “stories seldom told or recorded that promise new perspectives...” (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007, p. 5). This holds a promise that there are other stories, other perspectives to be revealed; there is faith in something more, something to come. There is no final conclusion or closure, only an opening, always (Caputo, 1987).

Language of the Doukhobors

The environment of my childhood was permeated by the sounds of a Russian/Doukhobor dialect awkwardly inhabiting the English language. The Doukhobors arrived in Canada with a Russian dialect stitched together by a variety of Slavic dialects contingent upon migrations across Northern, Central, and Southern regions of Russia, and significantly in the Ukraine (Schaarschmidt, 2000). This convergence of dialects had become a distinct Russian Doukhobor dialect (Schaarschmidt); a hybridized Russian, further hybridized by the entry into the English language. Consequently, a nomadic and creative language was forged. Until recently the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors traversed the English language without setting deep linguistic roots. Their diversified dialect rendered them nomads in an increasingly displaced yet deeply rooted Russian language.

During the early 1900's, Bonch-Bruevich (1909) followed his interest in Russian Sectarianism by collecting materials that reflected Doukhobor knowledge expressed through dialogue, prayer and song which he entitled the *Book of Life*, a name he adopted from the Doukhobor oral tradition they referred to as the *Book of Life* – the living book. *Record in the Heart, Proclaim in word* was the basis for the oral transmission of knowledge and wisdom. Bonch-Bruevich (1909) expressed an appreciation for their collective voice as absorbing “all sweetness and sorrow, all hopes and fascination of their life in a collective striving for the very peaks of a better future” (p.XXXIX). Indeed, their voices carried melodically, voiced through song, hymn and prayer. Welcoming and sharing ‘long-ago’ songs is a way for me to invite and acknowledge the ancestors, knowing that it is only they who can “unlock the door for us that opens onto the other side, if only we are willing to bear it” (Cixous, 1993, p. 9).

The Doukhobor/Russian language was a language that flew with song, that protested oppression, that documented plight, that dreamt of possibilities, that remembered and grieved. It was and continues to be a ceremonial language of prayer, song, spiritual meetings, funerals and celebrations. These voices spirited into my writing an intention, a song, a sorrow, a spark, and an appeal and affirmation of who we are and dream to be, and who our ancestors are and will be. We dream of the impossible, long ago and today, here and across the seas, fueled by “passion for the impossible...stirred by justice, driven mad with the passion for justice” (Caputo, 1997, p. 338). Such passion is reflected in the Sons of Freedom compositions spirited with a ‘burning tone.’

The voices integrated into this work are singular and not always in agreement, yet they are nonetheless joined by threads of heritage. In this document they are highlighted in italics and are woven in and out of the pages, softly yet boldly. Where I included written materials, I acknowledged the authors, and especially made an effort to include Doukhobor writers. For example I drew on the work of historian Peter Maloff as well as a number of Sons of Freedom writers: Steve Lapshinoff, Fred Makortoff, Mike Chernenkoff, Mary Malakoff, George Kinakin, Marie Planiden, Pauline Berikoff, among others.

Stuttering in translation

The songs inflaming these pages were written from the late 1800's into the later 1900's and include women, men and children composers. The songs narrate events and experiences within time. They are contextual and emotional; they are appeals and testaments to inner turmoil and faith and they remain vibrant. The flow of Russian in song and story is seamless and magnetic, drawing the listener into a fluidity of rolling and often rhyming sounds. However, to depict the stories I have not attempted to restructure the beauty of the songs with rhymes and flow through translation; that unfortunately is beyond my capacity. So for the most part, I include both Russian and English script. The English versions bump along in a staccato and prickly manner, giving an awfully skewed impression of the poetic abilities of the authors.

Inevitably, crossing from the Russian Doukhobor language, with its particular flow, eloquence and power, into the English language is a perilous and injurious passage requiring an experience of a “hand-to-hand bodily struggle” as Derrida had suggested (2005, p. 99). This imperfection or wounding of the work through translation is addressed by Derrida (cited in Kamuf, 1991), who considered the attempts of translating from one language to another, even in the most faithful and loving manner, an effort that loses “all its rich resonance” (p. 221) rendering the translation prickly and wounded. The songs and stories expressed and experienced in their soulful, passionate and spiritual engagement in their ‘home’ language, become flattened. Nevertheless, I offer the injured translations, hostage to the English language, as a means to more fully include ancestral and contemporary compositions.

Moreover, out of respect for the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor language, I use the soft sound of ‘heh’ to pronounce the Russian letter ‘Т’. This pronunciation has changed since the Doukhobors left Russia over a century ago and is currently and formally pronounced ‘geh.’ For example, Господь (Lord) is pronounced by most Sons of Freedom Doukhobors as Hospod and not as it would be pronounced in contemporary Russian as Gospod. Similarly, Господный – Lordly, the name affectionately given to the Doukhobor Leader Peter V. Verigin, continues to be pronounced Hospodnii. Daniil offers his insights regarding the Doukhobor dialect;

I was introduced to writings and songs in the Sanskrit language. It is one of the

oldest languages that originated in the east and so many languages derived from Sanskrit such as Hindi and all the Slavic languages... the H is an important sound in the Sanskrit language... It resonates from the depth of a being, as exemplified in singing, It was explained that Sanskrit was mainly developed to encompass spiritual awareness. So it carries that essence through sound. For these reasons I think the Doukhobors can be proud of using their language in its true spiritual flavour.

Song of Hospitality: An Impossible Welcome

The question of bread for myself is a material question, but the question of bread for my neighbor is a spiritual question.¹⁰

My heritage and identity as a Sons of Freedom Doukhorbor is animated by the passion, faith, joy, struggle and sorrow that this entails. This heritage is an integral part of my identity that cannot be disentangled from the multiplicity of my experiences and social locations, such as mother, daughter, sister, teacher, writer, artist, gardener, researcher and friend. Identities are not singular and independent, but rather are indistinguishable, inter-permeable, fluctuating and fragmented (Davies, 2000; Weedon, 1987, 1999). Hence, my role as a researcher and scholar does not and cannot exclude my identity as a Sons of Freedom Doukhorbor.

I strive and hope to be ‘in’ research the way that I am and hope to be ‘in’ life with others. My desire for hospitality and justice in life is likewise my desire in research. ‘In life’ and ‘in research’ are not disconnected, but intertwined, informing my interactions and interrelationship with others. Being a researcher from a distinct community with a particular socio-ethnic-religious history begs the question: How does or can a particular socio-cultural positioning inform methodology alongside those of similar or dissimilar backgrounds? The answer, by no means simple, is hospitality.

¹⁰ Nikolai Berdyaev (cited in Frederic & Brussant, 1996)

Hospitality is the welcome. Welcome to the poems, songs and stories from the realm of the Doukhobor ancestors, captured within timescapes and landscapes; *voices across oceans and seas*. With a gesture of openness, care and faith, the experiences and perspectives moored to the heritage and identity of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors are welcomed – similar and contradictory. Hospitality negotiates uncharted territories without a map of ‘knowing’ and without a clear destiny. Thus, the uncharted future of possible ‘becomings’ is welcomed.

The welcome is imperative in this work. A welcome spirited by hospitality, or in other words by deconstruction (Caputo, 1997, 2000, 2002; Derrida, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005). Hospitable methodology is animated by the faith and (im)possibilities of deconstruction. Deconstruction relentlessly disrupts frozen truths and traditions to welcome interpretations considered or yet to be considered. It cracks things open, such as concepts, traditions and beliefs to keep them moving (Caputo, 1997). Deconstruction, fueled by the passion of the impossible and by the madness of faith, demands an excessive welcome, in other words hospitality.

What meanings come to mind around the term hospitality? For many it may mean inviting friends, relatives or even strangers into one’s home. Often a visitor encounters a message of welcome upon a worn foot-mat placed before the threshold of their house or on a wooden plaque adorned with the word *WELCOME* attached to the outside of a door. Walking down city or small town streets, various signs of ‘welcome’ can be seen on business doors encouraging

potential consumers to enter and feel welcome to do business with the proprietors or staff. Contemporary discourses identify hospitality with the hospitality industry involving training, certification standards and professional accreditation. Hospitality has been appropriated into a professional service, offered with the expectation of a monetary exchange to access hotels, restaurants, casinos, and tours to name a few. Countries and communities with hospitality industries recognize the integral role the tourist/visitor has upon the economy.

Considering hospitality from a historical perspective, it also was associated with a kind of tourism, though without expectations of economic exchange for services. The historical tourist was the wanderer, the migrant or the stranger seeking respite, dependent upon and trusting in the hospitality of others for an assurance of survival, and may not have had anything to offer in return (Caputo, 2000). I have been mystified by stories that conjure up images of Doukhobors in Russia being forced to leave their homes into exile, yet before departing they not only left their homes clean but left offerings of food on the table (personal communications). This exemplifies an excessive hospitality, especially when compared to the present time, yet hospitality demands excess and excessive gestures of welcome. The Doukhobors, with their many characterizations, are also known for their hospitality. Hospitality, as I perceive it across Doukhobor timescapes, entails the *welcome*; especially “welcome into our home and you must eat” “What do you need?” “Is there anything that I can help you with?” “Come, help yourself to the garden vegetables” are common

gestures of welcome that I had the opportunity to witness, take part in and offer.

Hospitality as suggested is an invitation and welcome of others into one's home. How often is the phrase "Make yourself at home" extended to others, especially to family and friends? As simple as this may sound 'Make yourself at home' is a complexity of meaning and (im)possibility. Consider for example the Latin roots of the term hospitality which is 'hospes' derived from the word 'hostis' meaning the stranger, enemy or hostile stranger (Caputo, 1997). Now, imagine the unexpected stranger at the door. Do you open the door? Do you extend the welcome? What kind of possible risk is the host faced with by the potentially hostile stranger? What kinds of limitations are placed on the welcome? A stranger at the door is also met by the 'stranger host' or 'hostile host' who decides whether or not to open the door and who exercises power by remaining in control as the proprietor and master of the house (Caputo, 1997).

In order for hospitality to be extended, it must be offered by the 'host,' the owner of the house - 'welcome in my home.' This may be a generous offer but the expectation of the guest to observe the rules of the host makes the generous offer limited and conditional, revealing the contradictions in hospitality. The owner reaffirms ownership and therefore, even before anyone steps over the threshold, even when invited in with an open and warm welcome, the limits of ownership and thus hospitality are in play (Derrida, 2000).

Typically, friends or family recognize that there are certain protocols that need to be met when entering another's home. They know it is not their home and that they must exercise respect for the property of the host. The host may limit where and how the guest can occupy the home. Hospitality may be restricted by the expectation or even enforcement of certain rules. For example, guests need to take off their shoes, they are not 'welcome' to wander freely through the rooms of the house, or open the fridge to help themselves to a snack or light up a cigarette inside the house. The host does not surrender the property and therefore "make yourself at home" (p. 109) becomes a self-limiting invitation (Caputo, 1997). Hospitality and welcome - the sweeping gesture of the arm to come on in, is not without hostility - not without conditions and limitations.

How one is able to "graciously welcome the other" (Caputo, 1997, p. 111) while still retaining ownership and mastery of the house (or research) is the tension wrought by the conditions and limits attached to hospitality. How is it possible to move beyond the tension, the paralysis or aporia preventing 'unconditional hospitality' or what Derrida would call the 'excess of hospitality' (Caputo, 1997)? If we control the entry into our home prior to the unexpected and perhaps risky visitor, this is, Derrida (1998) would emphatically say, not hospitality. If we control the borders and thresholds of our homes, the gates and doors, that is not hospitality. Unconditional hospitality, pure and impossible hospitality, is accepting the stranger and the risk and danger that we can only imagine. It may involve the destruction of the home, theft, or even

murder. In extreme and unconditional hospitality, Derrida (1998) suggests, “there must be an absolute surprise” (p. 70) that challenges us with the notion of being unprepared for the unexpected or unwanted visitor. That is a lot to ask for, and just as I begin to lose heart, Derrida (1998, 2000, 2000, 2004 & 2005) verifies the impossibility of excessive and unconditional hospitality noting his uncertainty that there could even be such a thing. It seems that the unconditional is not possible, affirmed by Caputo (1997) who contends that hospitality and hostility are compounded into a complicated measure of “hostility in all hosting and hospitality” (p. 109). Hospitality, does however “aim to limit hostility” (Friese, 2009, p. 52), which is an important challenge of this study.

The parameters of this study situated within the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor context limit a more expansive welcome and in turn inclusion. For example, working within an ethic of hospitality as a researcher and scholar simultaneously reveals not only the welcome, but that which is not welcomed. Who is included and who is excluded? I am challenged to hospitably present and interpret from multiple vantage points, yet my bias as a researcher and scholar informed by my identity as a Sons of Freedom is evident. The vantage points I consider are multiple yet limited to heritage and identity. Even though the context of this study is broad and multilayered and the possibilities within hospitality infinite, the welcome is partial by the conditions of choosing to whom, what or where hospitality is extended. It is as Stronks (2012) expressed,

upon the “very threshold of hospitality” (p. 73) where the initial welcome occurs that contradictory forces of inclusion and exclusion are at play.

Fortunately, deconstruction never gives up or loses heart, for it is this very impossibility of unconditional hospitality that keeps deconstruction on the move – keeping the possibilities of this study on the move. Deconstruction is characterized by Caputo (1997) as the “relentless pursuit of the impossible” (p. 32). The pursuit of hospitality is in the same breath the pursuit of love, justice, forgiveness and the gift - ultimately unconditional and thus impossible to achieve completely. For example, to love without condition is to love beyond measure, to give without the expectation of return (Caputo, 1997 & 2000). Similarly, a gift can only be ‘truly’ a gift if it is given without exchange and without expectation of something in return, when it is outside of the circular economy of exchange (Caputo, 1997 & 2000). Receiving a gift in return or even a thank you for a gift is not a gift, and it is not a gift when a recipient is left indebted to the giver (Caputo, 1997 & 2000). Ideally justice can only occur outside the structures of the law yet, paradoxically it depends upon those very structures (Caputo, 1997 & 2000). Is it possible to forgive completely and unconditionally? Is it possible to forgive the unforgiveable? Is complete justice a possibility? Love, justice, forgiveness, the gift and hospitality are caught up in conditions and structures that make the unconditional impossible. For example, can this research study be completely unconditional? Can it be as I suggest ‘ours’ without me as the sole proprietor? Can this document be a ‘gift?’ Can it be given unconditionally without expectation of any return? Can it be

given over freely to be reinterpreted even misinterpreted, and can it keep giving after my death or will it perhaps “go up in smoke, or turn to ash” (Caputo, 1997, p. 175)? These questions become important ideals to strive for while disrupting existing conditions and coming up against the impossible.

The obvious conditions that limit this study implicate me as the primary writer, the decision maker and the one held accountable. These limits are the tensions that I continually wrestle with and push up against. How do I welcome stories and/or views that I do not want to welcome into this ‘research’ home? How can I be the host open to the unexpected visitor, not just the invited visitor? How do I welcome and thus include the unexpected and uninvited stories, perspectives, emotions and beliefs? How do I present and interpret without harm?

I feared controlling the borders of this study, rendering it more hostile than hospitable, more conditional than unconditional, more safe than unsafe. On the other hand, I equally feared the more open and porous border, more unconditional than conditional, more unsafe than safe. Determining what to include and what to exclude meant facing a troubling aporia – a position of indecision - not knowing how or where to proceed. Indeed, hostility in hospitality is apparent in this work, with noticeable conditions put up like walls throughout the research process - decisions to include and exclude. I attempted to prevent the walls from becoming too dense and impenetrable, a weak welcome striving to become more welcoming.

Derrida (cited in Caputo, 1997) insists that “[d]econstruction is not a method or some tool that you apply to something from the outside... [it] is something which happens and happens inside...” (p. 9). The ‘inside’ signifies an impulse and faith that fuels attempts to reach the impossible or, in the words of Caputo (1997), a “passion and a prayer for the impossible” (p. xx).

Hospitality or deconstruction is always on the move, stirring up history, prying open closed doors to the unexpected, the non-rational, the confusing, and the despairing for always more. Even though hospitality is always on the move it cannot escape conditions and structures, no matter how foreign it is to strategy, structure and conditions, “What is foreign to strategy requires strategy” (Derrida, 1998, p. 73). This is good news for me, allowing me to work within an ethic of hospitality as a possible/impossible methodology within context and inevitable structures alongside others, past and present.

I propose that hospitality in a research context is less about a fixed or prescribed method and more about a movement, requiring an attitude and way-of-being, a way-of-being alongside others. It is about being with others within a relational space of shared stories, memories, opinions, perspectives, ideas, values and beliefs with grace, openness and care. Hospitable research requires one to welcome ambiguities, imaginations, sufferings and possibilities; it is a welcome for the arrival of ‘who knows what?’ Hospitable research cannot be defined by what is or will be but reveals the gaps, cracks and unknowns “which inhabits everything we think and do, and hope for” (Caputo, 1986, p. 276).

The process of, or being in hospitality can also be referred to as a process of 'radical hermeneutics' where deconstruction harasses hermeneutics. Hermeneutics, simply put by Caputo (2000), is "the necessity of interpretation" (p. 3). Radical hermeneutics is driven by the passion of not-knowing and keeps on the move to disrupt claims to truth and essentialism and avoids an end to interpretation. Interpretation 'hounded' by deconstruction keeps it moving and does not give up on more possible interpretations. Opening the door to interpretations is a door that can be opened in more than one direction, offering "many choices and possibilities, and none are finite," explains Nancy Moules (2002, p. 37). Hermes is the mischievous element of hermeneutics that keeps us on the edge of risk. Moules, asks us to "resist closed truths of the past encased in the shape of rigid, tight arguments, to recover possibilities, and to free the present for discussion, new thoughts, and practices" (p. 35). Inviting risk is inviting Hermes to continually disrupt our foundations for constant reinterpretation and becoming. While interpretations and reinterpretations were generated alongside those past and present within the context of a complex history of identity and inheritance, the process of on-going interpretation with others is necessary for endless possibilities – not without risk - and endless becoming. This is hopeful for the Sons of Freedom, with their multiplicity of identities that cannot be neatly and adequately captured and represented completely. Becoming is a process in flux, moving along in an uncharted manner alongside others in shifting roles.

I challenged myself to recognize and engage in deconstruction as an event of faith, movement and welcome and found I was at once host and hostage to the visitors, to the ancestors, to the stories and songs, expected and unexpected within time. These double or multiple gestures of 'host and hostage' and 'hostility and hospitality' are the inescapable tensions necessary in the methodological undertaking in this work.

Deconstruction in context

A Sons of Freedom context can be described as multilayered, intricately complex, tangled, messy and limitless, kept in movement by deconstruction. Derrida (1988) refers to deconstruction as a movement inside limitless contexts including economic, historical, and socio-institutional structures. He was fervent in his argument that there is "nothing outside of context" and that deconstruction is an unremitting "movement of re-contextualization" (p. 136). For Derrida (1979), "[n]o meaning can be determined outside of context, but no context permits saturation" (p. 67). Therefore, there is always room for more, and in this case, always room for more interpretations toward recontextualizing the history and thus the future of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. It is important to note that this does not exclude the risk for further complexities, conflicts and contradictions for the future. Recontextualizing history and seeing history differently is a process that does not reach a saturation point or a final historical representation. Mason (2006) speaks about deconstruction as never having a final destination or definitive closure "and if there were to be that this would be catastrophic" (p. 506). Deconstruction remains always open.

This is hopeful for the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors within the perpetual and non-linear movement of past, present and future exemplified by P. Maloff (1948).

«Духоборческое мировоззрение не есть, что-то неподвижное, застывшее в одной кристаллизованной форме...наша вера вечно новая и живая»

“Doukhor ideology is not immobile, or frozen into one crystallized form...our faith is eternally new and alive” (p. 33-35).

This project is premised on welcoming heritage as a hospitable space informed by a historical and cultural context. It is not about romanticizing the Sons of Freedom, or at least not completely, as the love for my heritage does animate this work. I am hopeful that heritage can be a place of belonging to and not running from, where roots of belonging draw deep from the ancestral well of stories that represent culture, tradition and identity. The materials, songs and prayers – in the body of this study and the appendices (see D, E, & F) inhabit obvious references to spirituality and morality and are presented as guidelines that may not be exclusively attainable but represent a reminder of a way to be in life, ideally. The declarations, prayers and songs are well versed in many Doukhor homes, read in the privacy of one’s home or during community gatherings such as molenyie (prayer meetings) or funerals. There is a collective sense and experience of the words and meaning entrenched in these materials that keep them in movement through thought, sound and

conduct. I cannot literally uphold all guidelines, but I can get a sense of how they haunt, remind and tap me on the shoulder (if I am paying attention) in my daily living and decision making. The content of the materials before me - historical documents, songs, prayers, and many collective voices - solicit me to re-visit and re-consider with others, other possible interpretations in our current and future contexts.

Although identity is drawn from the deep well of heritage, it is not stationary or iconic or, as Caputo (1997) describes, nutshells that enclose texts, traditions, beliefs and practices as accepted truths. In spite of that, deconstruction is about opening, releasing and complexifying possibilities previously unheard-of or undreamt-of. In deconstruction, meanings avoid definitiveness and exceed concrete boundaries. Cracking open nutshells or deconstructing traditional Doukhobor texts and traditions does not mean the severing of historical roots, or the discarding of traditional cultural practices and ideas; rather it is about expanding and broadening what already exists. It is, I would suggest, an “attempt to retell the story of who we are” (Kearney, 2004, p. 320). Caputo (1997) suggests the need to “reread and revise the oldest of the old, to unfold what has been folded over by and in the tradition, to show the pliant multiplicity of the innumerable traditions that are sheltered within tradition” (p. 37). Caputo argues that “tradition is not a hammer with which to slam dissent and knock dissenters senseless” (p. 37), rather tradition calls for thorough readings, interpretations and a responsibility to discern and choose interpretations as a way to keep tradition “on the move...so it can be

continually translated into new events...a self-perpetuating auto-revolution” (p. 37). Derrida (1995) has maintained, and I concur, that “[w]hat I dream of is not only the narration of the past that is inaccessible to me, but a narrative that would also be a future, that would determine a future” (cited in Dooley & Kavanagh, 2007, p. 17). And what that future can be and will be, remains unknown, wonderfully, faithfully and even fearfully unknown.

This project is not to portray the Sons of Freedom as victims or heroes. Accordingly, there is no presumptuous intention to heal, presupposing that the Sons of Freedom are impaired and solely victims. Similarly, the Sons of Freedom are often described within a narrative of sacrifice. However, by striving to live according to their values of simplicity, collectivity and spirituality they were living and acting not out of sacrifice, but in alignment with their values including the value to resist injustice. I want to demonstrate that ‘our’ heritage is not just a testimonial certitude of sacrifice, victimization or terrorism, but more importantly a heritage of hope, strength, pride and possibilities - in other words, a heritage that is always on the move and always becoming.

The research context in question encompasses the experiences of the Sons of Freedom compounded into the past, present and future or as Caputo (2002) defines ‘messianic time.’ This is a radically different conception of time described by Caputo as a “stream of past presents, now presents and future presents” (p. 123). Caputo (1997) interprets Derrida’s notion of the messianic as a future of which “deconstruction dreams, its desire and its passion, is the unforeseeable future to come, absolutely to come, the justice, the democracy,

the gift, the hospitality to come” (p. 156). Derrida’s use of the term messianic does not refer to the arrival of a “Messiah” from a particular faith devoted to a “chosen people” (cited in Caputo, p.159). Rather, Derrida conceives of the messianic as an absolute future, a ‘to-come’ that in structure and principle makes it impossible ‘to-come;’ however, more is always possible as the present cannot ever be closed off (cited in Caputo, 1997). The messianic is characterized by having encounters that could not be anticipated, that are without foresight, and without preparation “something that knocks our socks off, that brings us up short and takes our breath away” (Caputo, 1997, p. 162).

Caputo (1997) highlights Walter Benjamin’s perspective of the messianic by understanding the present generation ‘messianically,’ as those “who were all along to come, those who were all along expected precisely in order to ‘redeem’ the past” (p. 157). Caputo goes on to further elaborate on Benjamin’s thoughts about a promise, more precisely ‘our’ promise to the disasters of the past, an inherited promise that was never made, “to recall the disasters of the past...to recall the dangerous memory of past suffering, which is a pledge not to be taken lightly” (Caputo, p. 157). This is a promise to redeem the past and is a hope for a hopeful future spearheaded by the memories and possibilities emerging from the past. Deconstruction is a responsibility to the past (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004). Visiting the past with the escort of ancestral ghosts through historical realms is a work of mourning, yet it is mourning that keeps history on the move. What possibilities will emerge during the re-construction or re-contextualization of history for those of Sons of Freedom heritage and for

those who desire an understanding or new understanding of the Sons of Freedom? This is what remains multiple and unknown, thankfully! Caputo (2002) speaks about historical representations as endless “because they are structured by the to-come of a bottomless obligation, by the obligation to a justice that will always be to-come...” (p. 123). Therefore, there is no closure, no end, on the contrary, the possibilities are infinite.

Historical representation is fragmentary, infinite, continuous, multiple and ambiguous. We can remember and recollect, however, it is repetition that maintains movement and flux, bringing forth that which can be repeated anew over and over again. Repetition does not produce the ‘same;’ it is not a mechanical rote process; it repeats but repeats differently. Even when there is a repetition of “exactly the same thing,” it is repeated “in a new context which gives it a new sense” (Caputo, 1987, p. 142). The process and production of identity is “an effect of repetition” (Caputo, 1987, p. 17). Thus, to be a researcher and scholar faithful to heritage and tradition is to endlessly reinterpret, reaffirm and transform (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004) heritage and identity alongside others with multiple viewpoints from within academic, philosophical and socio-cultural domains. Derrida (Cited in Caputo, 1997) refers to a repetition of commitment, of saying ‘yes’ repeatedly:

when I say “yes,” I immediately say “yes, yes.” I commit myself to confirm my commitment in the next second, and then tomorrow, and then the day after tomorrow... I promise to keep the memory of the first “yes.” (p. 28)

The movement and pulse of hospitality is sparked by the first welcome, the first yes. The repetition assures that hospitable research does not become static and thus prescriptive. The 'yes' requires continual questioning, imagining, wondering, and faith. For Derrida (1968) "[f]aith is blind" (p. 80) yet the 'yes' requires faith. The twofold 'yes' and the invitation to 'come' requires faith and commitment to the arrival of the unforeseen. Deconstruction can be described by three words "*Viens, oui, oui*" (cited in Caputo, 1997, p. 157), in other words, 'come, yes, yes' - 'да, да приходи.'

Complexities in community

Before moving into the historical landscape of the Sons of Freedom, it is important to address not only external complexities and pressures that have stressed and fractured the community, but also internal complexities. To address all aspects of complexity is literally impossible. To undo and reveal tangles of information, perspective, facts or truths, is likewise impossible. Thus, I offer limited insights according to my own ability and knowledge while retaining my respect and care for others. It is important to state that my intention as a researcher, and more importantly a Sons of Freedom researcher, is to provide a space for 'our' experiences and to re-contextualize 'our' representations and identity for other possibilities and becoming always more.

What I am called to do within an ethic of hospitality is to consider contradictory 'sides' within and external to community and heritage while being clear about the limitations I 'operate' within due to my position as a Sons of Freedom Doukhobor. I value my heritage and the multiplicity of voices and

positions, thus I am in a sensitive position not to offend. To be hospitable is to accept the harsh realization that a gesture of hospitality to one may be a simultaneous gesture of hostility to another. To represent all voices and views remains out of my reach, yet, to read this and not see and welcome opposing voices is an assault, a violent exclusion. Thus, my challenge - by no means an easy or accomplished task - is to provide a welcoming space while facing the decision of what to include and what to exclude, a contradictory yet simultaneous gesture of welcome and non-welcome.

A defining feature of the Doukhobors¹¹ is their relationship and high regard for leaders/guides throughout their documented history. Leaders were considered spiritual guides offering Doukhobors spiritual, cultural and practical guidance. This is paradoxical as Doukhobor philosophy contends an acknowledgement of inner divinity in all people based on egalitarianism without hierarchy. This is shown in their historical refusal to observe church and state protocols and non-acknowledgement of any authority claiming to inhabit a greater or more divine status. However, a definite thread within Doukhobor history is leadership. This may be due to living within centuries of hierarchical systems of both church and state. The resistance to systemic hierarchy on the one hand was also gravitating toward an ongoing need for guidance on the other. Guidance was provided by individuals who lived amongst the Doukhobors and were, generally speaking, Doukhobor. They were defined and in turn revered as inhabiting divinity and intellect on a larger-than

¹¹ This refers to all Doukhobors across factions and history

-ordinary scale. Guidance played an integral role for Doukhobors and continues in the form of remembrance and honouring 'past' leaders.

Doukhobor leadership in Canada extended across all Doukhobors, especially within Doukhobor Orthodox and Sons of Freedom communities. An exception is Stephan Sorokin who was acknowledged as a leader by the Sons of Freedom and Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors. Peter V. Verigin and Peter P. Verigin, both arrived from Russia at different times to maintain leadership of the Doukhobors in Canada. Although they are typically understood to be Orthodox Doukhobor leaders, the Sons of Freedom certainly claim them as 'their' leaders as well. Overall, the Orthodox and Sons of Freedom Doukhobors share Doukhobor philosophy and many aspects of leadership regardless of the complexities and contention over how leadership was enacted and understood within both community groups.

There are longstanding and powerful myths, mysteries, secrets and abundant stories about the leaders,¹² especially surrounding Lukeria – affectionately known as, *лушечка* (Looshechka), Peter the Lordly – *Господный* (Hospodnii), Peter the Cleanser – *Чистяков* (Chistiakov) and Stephan Sorokin (acknowledged as *Ястребов* 'Hawk' by many Sons of Freedom). There is an emphasis upon lineage with a general agreement (not without controversy) that each is related through a bloodline. The most controversial has been Stephan Sorokin, believed by many to be an Ukrainian pastor unrelated to the Verigin family. On the other hand, the majority of Sons of Freedom Doukhobors believe

¹² A chronological outline of Doukhobor leaders is provided in the Appendices

he was not only a Verigin but the son of Peter Chistiakov; Peter P. Verigin II – Истребов,¹³ the future leader, who had supposedly died in a Soviet prison camp but escaped under the identity of Stephan S. Sorokin. While S. Sorokin accepted the title Ястребов - the Hawk¹⁴ he did not accept the title Истребов. This long-standing mystery continues.

In Russia, Doukhobor communities became defined and mobilized under leadership by establishing a communal lifestyle of simplicity, toil and hospitality. Initiatives by leaders such as Peter V. Verigin (Lordly) contributed to the definition of the Doukhobor culture by introducing basic principles to abide by, namely, abstaining from tobacco and alcohol, adhering to a vegetarian diet and military non-compliance. Initiatives advocating for a Doukhobor migration began when the on-going persecutions of the Doukhobors by Russian State and Church was brought to the attention of Lev Tolstoy. Due to the efforts of Lev Tolstoy and his associates (Tolstoyans and Quakers) as well as both Russian and Canadian delegates, the Doukhobors immigrated to Canada in 1899. At the time Peter V. Verigin was imprisoned in Siberia, however, he was released from prison and arrived in Canada in 1902. In Canada, following the confiscation of lands by the government settled by the Doukhobors in Saskatchewan, Peter the Lordly purchased lands in B.C. in 1908, for community settlements. Under Lordly's leadership, based upon strict principles of austerity, spirituality and a simple communal lifestyle, the

¹³ Istrabov - Destroyer

¹⁴ Yastrebov – Hawk: This can be interpreted to mean 'seeing from a distance; a visionary; a prophet'

communities prospered. Notwithstanding, there were indeed strains and fissures within communities - compounded by external pressures to assimilate, internal conflicts between individuals, and influences of leadership - that remain inexplicable. This is especially evident after the death of Peter the Lordly and under the leadership of Peter P. Chistiakov (addressed further in *Songs of Sorrow within Landscapes and Timescapes*).

The relationship between the Sons of Freedom and leadership was often symbolic and open to interpretation. For example Peter P. Chistiakov who assumed a leadership role after the death of his father Peter the Lordly, demonstrated support for the Sons of Freedom by naming them the 'ringing bells' and 'scouts' - those in the 'front line' leading the way for the Doukhobors - and yet at other times he publically condemned them. According to the opinion of Grigori, the Sons of Freedom understood and acted out of a unique sense of intuition.

They were non-linear thinkers and not bound by literal thought. They had the ability to read into the message of the message. They could perceive of the mystery behind the message or, simply put, read between the lines.

Perhaps they could 'read' by means of intuition and faith; however, at the very least it was perplexing and open to interpretation. Even in the midst of social and political confusion, the Sons of Freedom maintained devotion to their identity and to leadership whether support - moral, spiritual, or practical - was overt or covert.

After the death of Chistiakov in 1939 and before the arrival and acknowledgment of Sorokin in 1951, there were individuals in the midst of the Sons of Freedom who took on leadership roles, such as J. Lebedoff who held particularly influential and provocative positions within the community. Lebedoff was significantly influential amongst the Son of Freedom Doukhobors, and many activities, such as burnings and bombings, were attributed to his leadership (Lapshinoff, 1987; Perepelkin, nd). However, to place responsibility on any one person is too simplistic given the multifarious tensions, conflicts and devotions.

In 1951, Stephan Sorokin arrived 'on the scene' during the height of unrest within the Sons of Freedom communities. He was readily accepted and celebrated by the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors as their spiritual leader or guide and affectionately called Dyadya (Uncle) by his followers. With an aura of mystery and spiritual insights, Sorokin was a guide for Sons of Freedom communities until his death in 1984. His leadership engendered support and devotion from the people.

Stephan Sorokin was skilled as a leader with scholarly and poetic abilities and was a capable political and social mediator in relation to government agendas. He is credited with initiatives that at once brought the community together as well as fractured it. This resulted in a split by a group comprised of Son of Freedom individuals who gave up any involvement in 'depredations' and were thus given the name the *Christian Community and*

Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors (Lapshinoff, 1994, p. 39). Not all Sons of Freedom accepted the new title; nonetheless they remained devoted to his leadership adding to the complexity of the community dynamic.

S. Sorokin held a leadership role with 'his' people, from humble community members to close-knit committees that protected and worked more closely with him. There is notable ambiguity surrounding Sorokin related to questionable internal conflicts within the Sons of Freedom communities. There are controversies surrounding him and those who worked closely with him that have evoked a plethora of debatable opinions and perspectives. Even so, many remain loyal to Sorokin and his memory, and mourn the loss of his leadership, while others' experiences evoke puzzlement as well deep-seated hurt. The stories are multiple, contradictory and are unfeasible to sift through in order to paint a clear and straight forward picture. There simply is no single story or single perspective that would adequately describe Sorokin's leadership. According to multiple perspectives and experiences, each leader was an enigmatic figure defined by controversy as well as by extraordinary abilities and insights.

I find myself cautiously and sensitively addressing any adverse perspective and experiences directly related to leadership. I tread softly, careful not to offend too significantly, but to respect those whose devotion to leadership is unshakeably firm. My own experiences and abilities to address issues of leadership feel insufficient and, although 'hospitality' requires

welcoming that which is risky and difficult, it is here where I am faced to choose which details to include or exclude – many of which I am not privy to since I do not assume an investigative role.

Without going into detail and remaining on the surface, so to speak, I can say that drawn from the rich source of stories are experiences of manipulation and abuse of power in Sons of Freedom communities, both internal and external to the communities. Certainly not all events and traumatic experiences could be linked to leadership or even to the Sons of Freedom. There were other individuals who played a part contributing to oppressive tactics and what became known as the Doukhobor problem. Peter Malloff (1957) stated in one of his independent reports addressing the ‘Doukhobor problem’ that he and everybody else knew “that this Doukhobor muddle is the work of many hands, Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor” (p. 8).

There are many stories and many details that remain hidden, or only partially exposed. Not immune from the entanglement of internal and external political influences, manipulations became increasingly evident in the Sons of Freedom communities during the mid to later 1900s. The question of manipulation and abuse of power by those in leadership roles, and others who gained power and status within the Sons of Freedom communities, is keenly felt by community members. There are Sons of Freedom individuals who express pain and hurt in relation to occurrences that generally would have taken place between the 1940s and the 1970s. For this study a number of

individuals shared instances of mistreatment they either experienced or were aware of, such as receiving pressure to burn homes - one's own and at times those of others; there were also those who were coerced to leave the community if they did not comply; at times there were those who were physically beaten and abused, as well as generally being caught up in powerful social and political dynamics in the community. The source of such pressures remains unclear as there were a number of prominent individuals who were very influential and/or forceful. Notwithstanding, many Sons of Freedom Doukhobors held fast to a sincere devotion to their movement, identity and overall leadership despite such painful and often contradictory experiences. It is imperative, at this point, not to forget that numerous people burned their homes out of a devotion to the Doukhobor ideals of living a life free from material corruption and protecting themselves from the power of assimilation. It is also important to add that all the events and reasons behind those events are impossible to uncover, or make sense of, or fit into conventional rationality. This is especially so with depredations that took place outside of the community, such as bombings of government properties and properties in USCC communities. Although many Sons of Freedom were implicated and imprisoned for the depredations, clarity around each incident and accountability for the planning and execution is lacking. There were particular events described to me where Sons of Freedom were charged and incarcerated, yet were not the perpetrators.

Hidden information, or in other words secrets and/or mysteries, exist within and across the boundaries of Doukhobor communities. In addition, there were political interferences that remain obscure.¹⁵ Within Sons of Freedom communities shadowy events lacking clarity have been interpreted from multiple perspectives and have increased community complexity; we are after all “a little blind” (Caputo, 1997, p. 127). What are the implications of secrets? And who does not possess secrets? Is it important to know what the secrets are at this point in our history? There are many contradictory perspectives, stories and interpretations in relation to secrets impossible to unravel.

Secrets can protect, enabling a continuance of living together in incomplete knowledge of facts. On the other hand secrets can divide, disrupt, and in turn cause tensions and anxieties. Secrets can silence and demobilize. Secrets reinforce a slippery and illusive ground and foster ‘myths’ and hegemonic ‘truths’ that provide a sense of security but also produce disparities of power. Who knows and who is privileged to know? I contend that nobody completely knows. Harboring secrets and the consequences of those secrets within the Sons of Freedom communities is a relatively small reflection of larger systems that conceal information and in turn perpetuate powerful ‘truths.’ For example, religious institutions, political organizations and governments are

¹⁵ More information is provided regarding political (governmental) involvement in the writings of S. Lapshinoff, M. Chernenkoff and M. Malakoff to name a few.

notorious bearers of secrets. Could it be that we live upon illusive foundations woven with the power and fragility of secrets?

For the Sons of Freedom, living with mystery is done with faith, devotion and trust. Writing across secrets is like writing across dreams. I accept that I will not retrieve secrets and that that is not my intention or role. Revealing Sons of Freedom secrets is not the intention of this paper. I accept that secrets exist perpetuating a mystery and collision of conflicting knowledge and devotions. Historically the Sons of Freedom have been negotiating across the unknown with faith and conviction as well as rationalities particular to their shifting contexts and pressures.

From my relationship with those who participated in this study, as well as my relationship with my heritage and living in Sons of Freedom communities, I realize that conflicts have impacted everyone to some degree. Many who remain devoted to heritage and leadership believe that even though we do not understand all aspects of leadership, there was an overarching purpose behind puzzling events. For many, especially the older generations, this is an ever-present belief which deserves care and respect. On the contrary, there are individuals who do not accept that all aspects of those inhabiting influential roles were simply spiritual, but see it as a confusing influence upon a people who remained open, faithful and in complete service throughout generations of devotion. There are many unanswered questions,

many perspectives, and positions on the instrumental role of leadership as highlighted in the following words of *Lena*.

We are like workers, the working bees... that is why Doukhobors without leadership is like a ship without a rudder, they always need direction. When you don't have that you have what we have in our community. We are so used to having somebody lead us into a place. And when you don't have that and you have been used to it all of your years, it is ingrained in you, you are kind of sailing aimlessly. Doing whatever, but you have that жажда¹⁶ to have something like that in your midst. Even though of course...we are very much questioning everything that is happening to us and for them it was послушение¹⁷

...that is why I think Дядя [dyadya/uncle] said; после меня вождеи не дожидаете¹⁸ and I think because now people have to be on their own and figure out the difference between what is right and what is wrong and just follow your heart.

I feel we are living in an age of transparency. Things that were hidden are now being exposed. It is time to speak our truth. I believe Dyadya Sorokin was Ястребов¹⁹ and Вася²⁰ was his son. The whole Doukhobor movement was always guided by leaders. The Doukhobor leaders are the glue that hold the people together. Without leadership I feel we will lose our identity and flow into the sea of humanity. Maybe it is time after all, as we are one or so we think.

¹⁶ Zshazshda - desire

¹⁷ Poslooshenie - obedience

¹⁸ Posle menya vozshdei ne dozhidaite – after me do not wait for a leader

¹⁹ Istrabov – Sorokin

²⁰ Referring to Vasya Koncewicz, (since deceased) a prominent figure in the Sons of Freedom community and believed by some to be the son of Sorokin.

Mikhail, explains the role fear and conviction played amongst the people.

I think... fear plays a big part in our lives with not only our spiritual obtainment but in everything. Fear scares us and we don't move ahead...If we don't do certain things fear takes over us. So I think if you are governed by fear and many of the Sons of Freedom were because they didn't have the 100% дyx²¹ and were just waiting for someone to tell them to do something.

I'll let [them] go to jail and I will just move things and pull some strings or whatever and there were lots of those who would be in front yelling and when it came to doing a job they would pull back and then the guys that did have this дyx – откровенность²² then they would end up having to go on to serve eight to twelve years in jail. So I think lots of them did this and it was a shame because there was a handful of people that would abuse it and gain by it and right now if you look at families you've got a lot of families that are hurting... Either you do or you pull back but you don't try to abuse another or manipulate them to gain something...

...let's say you have two types of Sons of Freedom, they both are considered Sons of Freedom, one would, like my parents, take us out of the house, light the house on fire, stand there and if the law came and said what did you do? Who started the fire? We did. For this act you have to go to jail. We will go to jail...So the difference between the Sons of Freedom that stood, got arrested, got put in

²¹ Dookh - spirit

²² Otrkrovenost - openness

jail and never hurt anybody in the process other than destroying their material belongings were the real Sons of Freedom

It was during a visit with *Petr*, and entering into a discussion about the Sons of Freedom, that he grew more and more animate; his face became flushed; the words shot out with barely enough space for the articulation of each word.

We were manipulated, taken advantage of by those in power. We accepted them, but their conduct was often immoral and abusive and we accepted that, turned a blind eye, made excuses and justified their actions or swept it under the rug. Don't do as I do, do as I say. We were a simple people, seeking guidance, open for guidance and direction, ready to believe and to follow. We couldn't use our own heads and someone with an intellect, charm and a lack of conscience could walk in and take advantage, but for what reason remains unknown, but the impact was powerfully painful, the wounds deep and lifelong.

Thinking back on her childhood experience of witnessing the burning of homes, Lyooba shares the pressure she felt as a child:

I remember waking up each morning and looking out the window to see whose house was burning that day. And wondering why my parents were not burning our house "wasn't that the right thing to do?" "Shouldn't we be joining everyone else" and left feeling guilty because we still had our house.

Facing pressures to assimilate, enduring injustices endorsed by provincial and federal authorities, and the mounting external and internal pressures that contributed to confusion and injury, which for some was mitigated by faith, all took their toll on Sons of Freedom communities. There are resentments represented in the troubling thoughts and emotions expressed above that unfortunately many individuals are burdened with. A complicated and excessive heritage such as the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, is not by any means embraced by all inheritors. Many are hard pressed to see the value of this heritage; for some the value is identified in the clear sincerity of the early Sons of Freedom before extreme complexities rendered understanding impossible, yet trauma probable. For others, the value of pride in and hope for heritage and identity are more apparent, as shown in the section: *Songs of Identity and Songs of Becoming*.

The following pages provide an incomplete and interpretable history of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. This work is a work of memory and mourning with the presence of ancestors, who accompany those of us in the present. In response, I feel a responsibility and debt to the ancestors who call for justice, for 'our' heritage, identity and future. Hospitality and justice are contingent upon "learning how to speak with ghosts" (Derrida, 1994, p. 176) and they are with us - наши предки.²³

²³ Nashi predki – our ancestors

Songs of Sorrow within Landscapes and Timescapes

If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win²⁴

Stepping into a historical context across landscapes and timescapes was, I felt, necessary to provide a context and a loose form around the Sons of Freedom. The material I have put together does not by any means offer a comprehensive Sons of Freedom Doukhobor history. It slowly unfolds by examining possible yet unknown origins of the Doukhobors; a brief look at what is known about Doukhobor history in Russia, the migration to Canada and the cumulative tensions contributing to oppression, unrest and resistances featuring the role and identity of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. For historical details I draw extensively from historians George Woodcock and Ivan Avukomvic (1968), Peter Maloff (1948) along with many other, Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor. I do not provide a comprehensive history of the Doukhobors, which is available in a number of sources (see Appendix A). Rather I highlight the presence of the Sons of Freedom emerging in stories and narrations and frame the primary events from their own positions and perceptions. The reports, documents, stories and songs that I include address Doukhobor history and events within a contextual situatedness that led to the distinction of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. They ‘excessively’ carried the values and

²⁴ H. Zinn, 2003, p. 11

practices of the Doukhobors in ways that can be described as 'irrational' and fueled by sincerity that Derrida (2003) calls the madness of faith.

The historical background is stitched together under conditions and limitations that solicit for more justice, more explanations, more song and prayer. It is enclosed in memory, will remain fragmented, incomplete without the possibility of unearthing lost or forgotten stories and secrets buried too deeply for any possibility of recovery. Sons of Freedom ancestors walk alongside this work, and are integral to it. They provided many stories channeled through historical documents, personal recollections, letters, appeals, publications, songs and prayers. Conjuring up the past through ancestral experiences of sorrow and determination can be called a work of mourning. The past cannot be reconstructed, but this, claims Derrida (cited in Dooley & Kavanagh, 2007)

should not be cause for sorrow and regret. The past may be irretrievably lost, but that does not prevent us from attempting to resurrect it.

Cinders, may testify to the impossibility of recollection, but that does not mean that we do not do our best to interpret them. If memory testifies to the fact that we can never fully recollect the past, then mourning affirms that we are never finished with the past: that the task of comprehending the past always lies ahead of us. (p. 7)

We exist within the contexts of history and time, and while there may be a zealous desire and attempt to "recollect and resurrect the past, the most we

can do is stitch together the traces and cinders of memory” (Dooley & Kavanagh, 2007, p. 64). The traces and cinders of the past bridge the dislocation of time into the present, yet the bridge is precarious, preventing a complete historical view, obscuring sight through partial blindness (Dooley and Kavanagh).

The cinders of memory, although impossible to fully recollect, disturb, remind and prompt us to not only preserve memory but also consider overlooked memories. Straining our eyes while looking at faded photographs, we conjure up incomplete stories. Yet ‘a work of mourning’ demands that we tell the story even though the story cannot be fully pieced together, cannot be resurrected from ashes of the past. It is through mourning that we provide interpretations, tell the story as a promise of justice, and a promise of the future (Dooley & Kavanagh, 2007).

Welcome to the timescapes and landscapes of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors.

Coalescence of Christian and pre-Christian origins: The land of Rus’

This contextual history begins with uncertain beginnings, delving before and in recognition of unknown beginnings. Given the limitations of historical recollection, I consider the origins of the Doukhobors in Russia, before and during Christianization, written on shaky and speculative ground. The fragmented trail written into this document continues along the collapses and rhythms of time, where the echoes of events become clearer as they become closer within the grasp of memory.

Russia, once known as the land of Rus became Christianised in 988 by introducing and indoctrinating the various Slavic tribes across the territories into an Eastern Christian culture and religion based on Byzantium Orthodoxy (Riasonovsky, 2005). Prior to the Christianisation of Rus and since the second millennium B.C., an on-going pantheistic culture, based on the recognition of the spiritual qualities inherent in nature and individuals and the interrelationship between them, informed the structure of pre-Christian Russia. Livelihood was based on, for example, agriculture, fishing, hunting, weaving and carpentry. Far from static, the pre-Christian cultural, political, religious and spiritual practices were vulnerable to change influenced by the plurality of diverse communities as well as nomadic invaders (Riasonovsky, 2005). For 150 years leading up to the 9th century, ancient Russia functioned with an infrastructure that included, “financial and military systems, law and culture that had come into being under paganism” (Shchapov, 1992, p. 55). Reconstructing the history of pre-Christian paganism in Russia has been highly criticized due to the diverse populations and lack of documentation during that era. Nevertheless, the work of Rybakov (cited in Riasonovsky, 2005) has demonstrated the millennial grip that the “intellectual and psychological structures” (p. 17) of paganism has had on rural populations in Russia. The relationship between human and nature was exemplified in pantheism with the belief and practice of humans being “part of nature, dependent on elemental forces” (Todorov, 1992, p. 61). Christianity on the other hand was contingent upon the idea of the image of humans as a reflection of God, no longer as part

of nature in a symbiotic relationship but as “master of nature” (Todorov, 1992, p. 61). Francis Conte (1992) provides an argument that “Christianity did not systematically eradicate the world-view that gave rise to paganism; in Russia we can even speak of a certain ‘peaceful coexistence’ of the pagan and the Christian world view” (p. 207). She contends that paganism, especially in the more rural areas of Russia, “continued to exist alongside official Orthodoxy right up to the beginning of the present century” (p. 207). Pantheistic beliefs and customs relied on myths to penetrate inexplicable mysteries associated with the sacredness based on the realities of life and death (Conte, 1992). The experience of reality was that both the “world and the supernatural are superimposed on each other” (Conte, p. 208) which is evident in particular practices and beliefs in the Doukhobor culture highlighted later in this section. The culture and practices of pre-Christian Slavs were rooted in agriculture and guided by the cycles of nature motivating processes of growth and harvest. This is characterized in Doukhobor communities well known for their agricultural skill whether in the soil rich regions of the Milky Waters or in the inhabitable regions of the Caucasus and extending into the prairie lands and rich forest lands in Canada.

In pre-Christian Russia, the Slavs did not acquire the concept of private land ownership. Families tended the soil for sustenance, living and working the land in a “symbiotic relationship” (Sharashkin, 2008, p. 95). Similarly, Doukhobors throughout their history in Russia operated in a communal fashion without the need or desire to purchase lands. The concept of a

‘symbiotic relationship’ between animals and humans informed beliefs and practices along with an understanding that the earth was the provider of sustenance. Thus a sensitive reverence of the land (Mother Earth) was practiced. The idea of owning Mother Earth was a foreign concept; it simply could not be owned. This concept remained an integral principle for the Doukhobors in Canada where it became a point of contention, resistance and subsequent punishments. Although most Doukhobors over the years have succumbed to the pressures to purchase property, there continues to be a pocket of unpurchased²⁵ land settled by the Sons of Freedom in Gilpin, B.C. However, this land is under continual threat of being apprehended and sold by British Columbia’s Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (see section on Gilpin further in this section).

Being an oral culture the Doukhobors passed their knowledge, songs, prayers and folklore from generation to generation. Documented evidence of Doukhor communities prior to 17th century remains either non-existent or speculative. However, I argue that the Doukhobors’ developing systems of belief and practices are a coalescence of Christian doctrine and pre-Christian beliefs and practices, namely the pantheistic recognition of spirituality in all aspects of nature, including human life. Although, Doukhobors do consider themselves Christian which is articulated in their psalms, prayers and written doctrines, it is a Christianity unique to them which does not include some integral and dogmatic beliefs and practices essential to the Russian Orthodox Church. The

²⁵ Crown lands

prevalent symbols of the Doukhobor faith are not the bible or the cross but tangible substances from the earth: bread, salt and water. These elements represent a spiritual and practical relationship to the land and to each other and are always devotedly integrated and placed before Doukhobors involved in prayer, song and ceremony. These three basic staples became synonymous with Doukhobors representing a welcoming space for others in a communion of spiritual practice.

Bread Salt and Water on the table are the basic food elements for an individual's physical existence. However there is also a symbolic meaning: Bread means Christ; Salt is following Christ; Water is the living word of Christ.

The soil is worked with a reverence and recognition of Mother Earth's sacred giving of life, which is currently witnessed by the traditional garden practices passed on through the generations from the then communal to the current individual family gardens. Seeds are rarely planted without the typically spoken *Господи Благослови*²⁶ and the planting of particular seeds continues to be guided by the cycles of the moon; indicating a spiritual affinity with the environment. The low traditional bow of the Doukhobors after prayer - touching ones forehead to the ground - is a spiritual gesture that recognizes, I believe, both the spirit and the sacredness of the earth tied to the 'divine' within individuals.

²⁶ Gospodi Blahoslovi – Lord bless

Healing practices, by the use of prayer or incantation, took place over a broad spectrum of communities in pre-Christian Russia. Although the pantheistic practices had been gradually diminished with the increasingly widespread indoctrination of the Orthodox Church, they continued to exist in rural communities, including the Doukhobor communities. Specific people, usually women, were gifted with healing qualities and were well versed in the use of молитва²⁷ and specific techniques to cure a variety of illnesses and traumas and to protect against from visible or invisible forces (Inikova, 1999, p. 31). These people, often called Sheptukhas were highly regarded for their skills, abilities, insights and unique relationship to mysticism (Inikova). A mixture of pre-Christian and Christian methods was employed during the healing practice. Inikova (1999) substantiates throughout her research that incantations reflect the ancient eastern Slavic culture overlaid with Christian beliefs. She provides a well-researched overview of Doukhobor incantations derived from Sons of Freedom elders and Bonch Bruevich's Doukhobor collections.

Highlighted in Inikova's (1999) book is a Sons of Freedom Doukhobor elder, Fenya Konkin, endearingly remembered as Babooshka Fenya. She provided Inikova with a number of incantations linked to specific ailments. I was pleased to receive these molitvi from Babooshka Fenya many years ago and was puzzled by the words which seemed to be irrationally strung together and which propelled my imagination back to a time of mystics and rituals

²⁷ Molitva - prayer

without present day logic and reasoning. Generally, the Sons of Freedom preserved certain cultural traditions such as ‘alternative’ healing practices. The list of молитвы provided by Babooshka Fenya is introduced as an intention for these ancient practices to be perpetuated into the future.

These prayers were written by women of faith from people of faith for the young generation.

Эти молитвы были записаны верующей женщиной от верующих людей для молодого поколение.

An introduction into the личение²⁸ illustrates the Christian influence informing the practice. For example, it was necessary to start with Отче наш²⁹ and Отче всех³⁰ a prayer coupled with the Lord’s Prayer in the Doukhobor tradition. Then one is to say Христос Воскресъ³¹ and respond to oneself Во Истину Христос Воскрес.³² The molitva can then be read; however, it is important to always say Господи Благослови;³³ beforehand and Богу Нашему Славу³⁴ once the healing prayer is complete. The following are examples of molitva read for a variety of ailments.³⁵

From the evil eye and hernias

²⁸ Healing-leechenyie

²⁹ Otche nahsh – Lord’s Prayer

³⁰ Otche vsehk

³¹ Kristos Voskres – Christ has risen

³² Vo Istinoo Kristos Voskres – In truth Christ has risen

³³ Hospodi Blahoslavi – Bless us Lord

³⁴ Bohu Nashemu Slavu – Glory to our God

³⁵ My translation into English

Bless us Lord. In the name of our Father, Son and Holy Spirit, fruit does not come from rock, milk does not come from chickens, eggs do not come from roosters; protect me Lord and pardon me from all sorrow and illness, from hernia, from broken limbs, from the evil eye; pardon me Lord servant of God (name) from all sorrow and illnesses. Amen.

С глазу и от грызи

Господи Благослави. Во имя Отца и Сына Святого Духа, ни от камня плоды, ни от курицы молока, ни от кочета яйца, сохрани Господи и помилуй ото всех скорбей болезней, от грызи, от ломоты, с глазу, помилуй Господи раба Божьего (имя) ото всех скорьбей болезней. Аминь.

When a child cries and is not sleeping

Lord bless us. The glowing sky, blushing girls, in the morning, evening, mid-day, mid-night, those watching, carried by the wind, those crossing themselves, and you white chickens, cry out, leap once over the honourable alder, over the puddles,... night time pathways, screams, cries, insomnia, give this servant of God (name) sleep. Amen.

Когда дете плачеть и ни спить

Господи Благослови. Заря зарницы, красные девицы, утрение, вечерние, полуденные, полуночные, глазавые, ветровные, наносные, перекрестные, а вы куры белые, праскречите, раз лапчите, по честных ольхах, по болотах, по денных, ночных переходах, криксы, плаксы, бессонницы, дайте рабу Божьему (имя) сну. Аминь.

Prayer for the flowing of blood

On the ocean and on the seas, on the islands on the storms, there sat three girls all blood sisters, they were making silk, one is pulling white thread, one is pulling black thread, the third is pulling red thread, the red thread was torn, for the servant of God (name) the blood slowed down, from my river, from my persuasion, now, now, every minute. I stand on the rock and the blood does not flow, I stand on the axe heavily sentenced. Glory to our God.

Молитва от заговора крови

На мори на окияне, на остром на бурьяне, сидели три девици усе родные сестрицы, они шолк делили, одна нитку белую тяня, одна черную нитку, тяня, третья красную нитку тяня, красная нитку оторвалась у рабе Божей (имя) кровь унялась, с моих речей, моих уговоров, сей час, сей час, сею минуту. Стану Я на каминь никапит, стану на топор увесь приговор. Богу Нашему Слава.

Each молитва has strong images from the elements of nature, animals, mythical figures, Mother Earth, God and biblical figures. They are a consistent blending of ancient spirituality and Christianity, and as Inikova (1999) observed, they have deep pre-Christian roots “when the western slavs worshipped the spirits of the dead ancestors and considered that they could help the living descendants” (p. 49). The молитва and лечение have diminished and in the most part have either been forgotten or put aside as superstition. Nevertheless, stories of лечение endure and surviving versions remain as historical accounts or even, in the rare occurrence, continue to be put into practice, as the following examples in my family illustrate.

As a very young girl I remember being present at a healing for my three-year-old brother who was being treated for not speaking. The Lord’s Prayer was read over him then a loaf of bread torn in half was placed over his head. Did this actually heal his silence? We thought so, shortly after he slowly began speaking (Ahna).

When my son was about eight years old we conducted a healing ritual with him with the guidance of a healer. He had been going through years with fits of fright, especially at night with nightmares and strange visions and frights during the day as well. He was scared of so many things. We conducted a healing ritual by snipping a piece of his hair and rolling it in chewing gum. We

took out a knot in a tree in our yard, placed the hair in the small hole and replaced the knot. We also read the Lord's Prayer (Ahna).

With instructions, я личила три дети какие часта испугались и кричали.³⁶ You take bits of hair from the crown of the head and from each side and the back, and roll it in gum. I read the Омче³⁷ before starting. I drilled a small hole in a tree up the height of the child and put the hair and gum in the hole and again read the Омче (Pauline).

This was some years back when I noticed that my daughter had a number of warts on her hand. I asked her if I could try something to make the warts disappear and she agreed. I took black cotton thread and began knotting it in the approximate amount of roots each wart would have. Once I knotted the thread I buried it in the ground. It was important to have cotton thread so it would dissolve in the soil. Months later when I saw my daughter again her warts had disappeared (Boris).

All of the above examples, from deep affiliations to the soil to ancient healing practices, are customs carried on in various capacities by the Doukhorbor people. They are embers of the Doukhorbor and Slavic ancestors from ancient Christian and pre-Christian times.

³⁶ *I treated three children who often were frightened and cried*

³⁷ Otchi – The Lords Prayer

Tracing the origins of the Doukhobors has proven shadowy at best without clear documentation of a time and place of their formation. Existing literature from the 16th century is loosely linked to them, with ambiguous authorships making confirmation of origins difficult, if not impossible, to determine. Inikova (2000) has offered research which demonstrates that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many southern Russian communities were influenced by the non-conformist philosophies of wandering preachers or monks. Doukhobor principles and practices, concludes Inikova, are more than likely derived from protestant beliefs and teachings delivered within Polish territories during the seventeenth century (2000). This might explain the divergence of Doukhobor beliefs and practices from Russian Orthodoxy which would have progressed similarly to other sectarian communities such as the Molokans, Klysts, and Old Believers.

Tracing Doukhobor origins to the Bogomils and Cathars is a likelihood that would explain the source of some of their ideologies and practices. The Bogomils were situated in Bulgaria, a Christian community that rejected the “structure and institution of official churches” (Vasilev, 2011, p. 150). The Bogomils preceded the first European protestant movements by centuries and are considered to have influenced later reformationist movements that spread throughout Western Europe. The Cathars, understood as originating from the Bogomils, are noted as being “an elite of devotees vowed to celibacy, to owning no property, to pacifism and vegetarianism, who rejected the priesthood and the use of church buildings, and so on, which naturally greatly alarmed

ecclesiastical authorities” (Kerr, 2009, p. 52). The Bogomils and Cathars shared similar theological beliefs reflected in Doukhobor principles and practices which included the rejection of confession, liturgy and the oath, rejection of the existence of saints and baptism in water, as well as the role of the priesthood and clergy (Vasilev, 2011), to name the most prominent theological similarities. The Bogomils developed their own independent religious communities that did not support the official Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in Bulgaria and they suffered greatly. They were annihilated by the Catholic inquisition and the Ottoman conquest. Nonetheless, their ideas were disseminated throughout Central and Western Europe by the migrating Cathars and similar groups such as the Lollards and Waldensians (Vasilev, p. 160). Only remnants of the Bogomil and Cathar culture and communities exist today. Very little evidence exists of the spread of Bogomolism into Russia; however, D. Obolensky (1948) suggests that “individual Bogomils may have proselytized in Russia between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries” (p. 277). As mentioned earlier, identifying or unravelling the mysteries of Doukhobor origins is speculative at best, yet remains a topic of exploration and discussion.

The ancient practice of psalm singing is similarly cloaked in mystery. Psalm singing - chanting or singing a prayer with long drawn out vowel sounds - results in long and meditative resonances lulling both singer and listener. Traditionally, the Doukhobors were and some still are very well versed in psalm singing which guides prayer meetings and funerals. The experience of psalm singing is described as producing “what is known as Soul Communion among

the participants; a meditative rhapsody which results in spiritual tranquillity – a connection to God – between the brethren – a feeling unlike any other” (Psalmist Project, 2008). The following thoughts shared by Daniil expresses his thoughts on psalm singing.

If one can engage in psalm singing with earnest attention, filled with an attitude of purity, innocence and oneness, the mind settles and it's like being cradled in the arms of bliss, and the chattering mind becomes subdued by calm inner knowingness.

Keeping a regular practice with this type of singing, offered in devotion, brings one to a sense of wholeness and well being, free from fear, doubt, and anxiety. It could be regarded as an applied science. The combination of certain sound vibrations, the repetition, and extended breathing, together with pure intention, opens a connective channel with the Divine...

If one is on a spiritual path, psalm singing, chanting, or repeating Mantra (which means mind release) involve words chosen for their vibrating sound and meaning.

The repetition of Mantra is an effective way of stilling the mind.

To what extent repetitive singing or chanting has power in transforming consciousness, and what role concentrated 'will' plays in accompanying it, may never be fully known. Though, it will be known by pure knowingness itself... There are ancient cultures that have developed many different ways to practice in remembering this state of consciousness, because it has been observed that if this awakening is not attended, it swiftly gets covered by where ever the attention of the mind may go.

It could very well be, as the focus turned outward and psalm singing became less a priority, that accordingly a sense of regression was felt.

Perhaps all the technicalities of how to unfold and live as fully realized beings were not completely established and recorded, but what was passed on is the strength and support of community spirit in brotherhood, and a profound calling

seated in the hearts of all generations to discover within themselves the living fountain of Divine intelligence.

Psalms are remembered and sung less and less with the passing of elders who harboured this skill. Currently, a psalmist project has brought together Doukhobors from all factions, to revive the psalms and discuss possible origins and meanings of this ancestral custom.

A DVD entitled the *Psalmist Project* (2008) centers on the practice of psalm singing. The haunting sounds overlay the entire DVD, interceded by a number of participant perspectives on their personal relationship to psalm singing. The psalm singers shared their own 'origin stories' of psalm singing, stories often passed on by great grandparents, grandparents and parents, each with a unique viewpoint of why and how psalm singing originated (see the Psalmist Project website for more information: <http://doukhobor-museum.org/exhibits/the-psalmist-project/>).

Mark Mealing (2008) an Anthropologist with an extensive study and interest in Doukhobor cultural practices shared his perspective on the origins of psalm singing as employed as far back as the ancient cave dwellers.

Another perspective, provided by Fred Makortoff (Psalmist Project, 2008), linked the origins of psalm singing to the very similar Tibetan chants in the territory of the Kalmyks. Kalmykia, a republic of the Russian Federation, is located in Southern Russia and borders on both the Black and Caspian seas

(Grin, 2000). The primary practice and beliefs of the Kalmyk peoples is Tibetan Buddhism and they are uniquely “the only Buddhist people in Europe” (Grin, p. 3). The history of frequent Doukhobor migrations throughout Southern Russia included bordering on Kalmykia, lending to the very possible influences from the Tibetan chants of the Kalmyk’s upon the Doukhobor’s chant-like psalm singing. In addition, the Doukhobor name Kalmikov may have its origins in Kalmykia.

There are a number of different ideas of where the Doukhobors/Sons of Freedom originated. One of these links them to early Christian groups such as the Essenes and Druids.

And I think (the Sons of Freedom) came not only from Russia; I think they came probably from the Druids, the Essenes where there were groups of people who always went against man made laws (Mikhail).

The diverse influences that shaped the Doukhobors throughout their history remain mysterious, vibrant and unusual. Their origins remain ambiguous and open to interpretation and on-going inquiry. As an oral culture, historical documentation of the Doukhobors is understandably sparse. Their culture, customs and beliefs have been traditionally transmitted orally by way of psalms, songs, and prayers. Elders would engage with children and youth in building a foundation of knowledge through psalms that addressed a broad scope of knowledge related to Doukhobor philosophy and practice (Bonch Bruevich, 1909). To hear and experience the songs and prayers would inevitably widen a glimpse into their philosophical history. Doukhobors have

always been hearty singers, and song was integrated into their daily lives. It is not surprising that song and prayer was the source of strength and endurance throughout all their experiences of exile, persecutions and imprisonment as well as times of relative peace in their communities. Bonch Bruevich, collected and recorded Doukhobor songs, prayers and philosophy into written form which he entitled the *Book of Life*, named after Doukhobor oral knowledge which they called the *Living Book* – ‘living’ as it was not solidified or trapped upon the written page as static teachings. The teachings encased in written form have remained much too stationary, held hostage to text and translation. Nevertheless, the written work has been a helpful resource for many Doukhobors and although it is often read from a literal standpoint it can also be interpreted and reinterpreted to reflect on-going transformations of the Doukhobors.

Bonch Bruevich (1909) spent time with the Doukhobors upon their arrival in Canada and with fondness remembered their singing and the concentration reflected in their faces “intense with meditation full of determination” (p.XXXIX). “I remember them” he said, as being “strong as rock and firm, with a will that could not be shaken” (p. XXXIX). A number of songs have been composed by the Doukhobors/Sons of Freedom to reflect their experiences, a call not to forget, but to remember a call to keep their culture moving. Mark Mealing (1975) wrote about the Doukhobor singing tradition that distinctively includes,

[a] body of texts known as psalms, of broad and mixed origin. Not all are sung; many are not spoken; nor are all for public use: many take the form of private devotions. With Hymns, and certain remembered addresses of bygone leaders, they make up the great oral tradition by which Doukhobors have framed their lives, a body of religious lore known as the Living Book; reflected in the words of an old proverb:

Record in heart,

Proclaim in word (p. 41)

The Doukhobors' oral history offered a distinct picture of their collective practice, "their motifs absorb all sweetness and sorrow, all hopes and fascination of life in a collective striving for the very peaks of a better future" (Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XXXIX). I have included a song in both English and Russian, and although it is presented in my bristled translation, demonstrates the Doukhobor/Sons of Freedom spiritual relationship with the Creator, expressed as an experience of immanence.

*Lord, when I am hungry you feed me
and when I am abandoned you claim me*

*I praise you for kindness, I praise you for the gift of love
I praise you for happiness, I praise you for everything*

*It is not for gifts that I seek your marvelled throne;
Within my soul is captured your shining beauty*

*Like the brilliant sun your reflection beckons me
And I look and bright joyfulness burns in my soul*

*Like a brook that is lost and seeks the ocean,
I too, have faith in you, and seek your eternal presence*

*I have lived in the reverence of your words;
And again I live with one goal, to grasp your love*

*Without your relation I would not be able to take a breath.
How can I not seek the creator of creation here on earth?*

*Господь, меня голгодного Ты хлебом накормил,
И сироту безродного Себя усыновил.*

*Хвала Тебе милости, хвала за дар любви,
Хвала Тебе за радости, хвала Тебе за все!*

*Но не за те даяния ищю Твой дивный трон;
Я красотой сияния Твоей души пленен.*

*Как солнышко прекрасное Твой лик меня манит;
Взгляну, и счастье ясное в душе моей горит.*

*Как ручеек затерянный стремится в океан,
Так я, в Тебе уверенный, стремлюсь в Твой вечный стан.*

*Ожил я дуножением из уст Твоих; и вновь
Живу одним стремлением постичь Твою любовь.*

*Без Твоего общения не мог бы я дышать?
Могу ль Творца творения здесь в мире не искать?*

The Book of Life reveals the unique understanding of Christianity reflecting the basis of Doukhobor beliefs. The following captures Doukhobor

insights about the Church, shedding light on why they did not deem it necessary to attend formal Orthodox churches. The explanation is succinctly structured in a question and answer format, providing a sense of 'living' dialogue.

Do you have a church?

Yes, we do.

Where is your church constructed?

Our church is not constructed in the mountains, nor is it made of wood, nor does it have walls of stone. Our church is built in human souls and human hearts.

What do you have instead of a church?

A voice crying in seas and oceans.

What kind of prayers do you have in your church?

Our first prayer is humility, meekness; it gives one salvation without toil.

Our second prayer is a low, silent bow, a sweet glance, a quiet conversation.

What is heaven?

Heaven means singing, it means a discourse under the sky.

The Doukhobors harboured a firm belief that the spirit is within each and every person, without requiring elaborate rituals or priests to develop or access their individual and interrelated spirituality.

Where does God dwell?

In human souls and hearts; if we love one another, God dwells in us

(cited in Bonch Bruevich, p. 29)

“God dwells in the spiritual essence of our existence. Souls, in human hearts” (cited in Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XVII).

I argue that the Doukhobors were influenced by an understanding that God is omnipresent and exists in all places and beings. Bor³⁸ is revered as an ultimate spiritual being or force; however, it is important to point out that Bor is not understood as a personified being living in a heavenly realm but a living force within individuals. The Doukhobors have also been referred to as Christian Anarchists, with beliefs and practices that do not align with typical Christian Orthodoxy. Peter Maloff (1948) a Doukhor historian, described Doukhobors as anarchists in the sense that their theological perception of the universality of God as living within each person is contrary to acquiring knowledge of God through man-made texts or churches and related rituals. Their anarchistic theological position also extended into their views and positions regarding state structures and authority. The Doukhobors as

³⁸ Bokh - God

anarchists, simply put, are people striving for ideals that go against the grain of the prevailing religious and political culture.

...we the Doukhobors, do not wish to visit your man-made churches, we do not wish to bow before your icons, because we do not expect to find in them any holiness, because we do not assume there is any divinity in them...” (Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XXII).

...we do not bow either ‘to gold, or silver, or stone, or cloth or iron, or wood” (Bonch Bruevich, p. XXII).

A letter written by Peter V. Verigin to L. Tolstoy (cited in Donskov, 2008) included his response when asked by a priest curious about Doukhobor rejection of icons. His words clarify the Doukhobor stance on icon worship and the universal immanence of God.

The priests asked about our rejection of icons. I explained that we worship God, to whom everything that exists is subject, not only the earth and everything on it, but everything in the universe too. God is life and is present in all that exists, and is equally present to protect man, for example as the smallest bird or insect, and therefore, I said: God, whom we worship, is immeasurable vast and great, and it is impossible to put Him in any kind of frame, let alone to represent Him pictorially; we can feel God only in our heart and soul, and express His quality of Love to all living things around us. (p. 215)

Doukhobors, traditionally, bow to one another as equals, and bow to the earth, in recognition and respect for the spirit within one another. Their recognition of God within rendered the church and external articles such as icons and the crucifix as unnecessary for their spiritual practice and progress. This included the ritual of baptism, considered superfluous by Doukhobors because one need only to *create truth and love in your midst – this will be a true baptism not by water but by spirit (Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XXIX)*. As each individual inhabited the spirit of God the idea of priests harbouring a closer connection to God was erroneous and hence unnecessary to foster a relationship to God.

No we have no priests

How do you then pray without a priest?

Our prayer is holy truth, humility, love...

The concept of angels, prevalent in Christian doctrine, were not personified by the Doukhobors as animated beings, *God's angels are simply – good thoughts (Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XXV)*.

Doukhobors in Russia functioned in a communal manner without the expectation or need of purchasing land. The land - Mother Earth, was experienced as a sacred and life-giving force and was honoured through an affinity with the soil. The Creator, Bor, was understood as inhabiting everything everywhere and personal ownership, especially “the selling and

buying of Mother Earth” was thought of as a disgraceful deed (Maloff, 1948, p. 285). This conviction was held fast by many Doukhobors upon their arrival in Canada, but especially so by the steadfastness and zeal of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors.

The Doukhobors defined themselves as those who go against the current using the symbol of the ‘willow-herb’ (плакун трава/plakoon trava) emphasized in the following account:

when our Lord was sowing some seeds fell in fertile soil and grass grew. This grass could float against the current of the flowing water. The water signifies human institutions that have as its aim spiritual eclipse of the people and the children – those who were born of the land – desire eternal life and go against the will of the authorities. (cited in Bonch Bruevich, 1909, p. XXXVI)

Going against the ‘current’ of state and church - a coupling of the most powerful infrastructures in Russia - resulted in mass persecutions of the Doukhobor people. They were identified as dissidents and in 1786 were bestowed with the name *духоборец* (Spirit Wrestlers – dukhoborets), by a prominent Archbishop (Inikova, 2000). Although this was meant to be a derisive title signifying a people who fight against the spirit, the Doukhobors accepted the name with the self-proclaimed meaning of fighting with the spirit. Resisting the supreme authority of the church was dangerous and required extraordinary faith and courage to face the on-going persecutions sanctioned

and implemented by the Tsarist government and Russian Orthodox Church. Encounters with either priest or police resulted in imprisonment (Maloff, 1948). Bonch Bruevich (1909) likens the persecution of one of the most ancient sects, the Doukhobors, to a red thread woven into their teachings imparting “a basic motif of life of peoples inhabiting Russia: suffering, suffering, and more suffering” (Bonch Bruevich, p. XXXVIII).

Joseph Elkington (1903) researched the early history of the Doukhobors in Russia. He commented on their treatment in Russia going back as far as the later part of the seventeenth century. He cites Senator Lapukhin (1806) who wrote that there were no other sects that he was aware of who had “been so cruelly persecuted as the Doukhobortsi, and this is certainly not because they are the most harmful. They have been tortured in various ways, and whole families have been sentenced to hard labour and confinement in the most cruel prisons” (p. 243). Along with other sectarian groups such as the Molokans and Old Believers, the Church investigated the Doukhobor communities to acquire an understanding of their belief systems and of their leaders. The intention of the church was to acquire an overall repentance from the Doukhobors and their return to Russian Orthodoxy, which was not successful. With the impending war with Turkey and need for soldiers, the state decided that all young men without exception assume military duty. This it was felt would provide the sectarians an opportunity to return to the ‘Holy Church’ by redeeming their crimes through sacrifice to their country. The sectarian soldiers would be divided to avoid communication. Boys too young to serve

would be sent to military schools and those five and younger sent to orphanages to be educated. Inhabitants of Doukhobor villages would be dispersed across various locations (Visotsky, 1914, cited in Maloff, 1948). And thus, the diaspora of the Doukhobors continued across the disparate Russian landscapes, yet they remained anchored to the philosophical and spiritual aspirations that animated their lifestyle, values and beliefs.

They gave up the churches, the bible...they recognized that there is spirit within each and every person and not just a priest...there is a voice within each one of us that actually is the guide, that guiding light...(Daniil).

Early leadership and resistance in Russia

Doukhobors without leadership is like a ship without a rudder; they always need direction (Lena).

These words reflect the role leadership has had in Doukhobor communities throughout their history. Although the following historical fragments collide and are often controversial, I have pieced them together from existing documents to tell a story of leadership. So many missing, hidden and secret pieces have not been retrieved, so this is by no means a full and comprehensive view of Doukhobor leadership.

The Doukhobors held their spiritual guides - Духовные Руководители³⁹ - or more often referred to as leaders - Вожди⁴⁰ - in high esteem and respect. They were regarded as occupying and accessing a divinity in excess of what an ordinary individual was capable. Their identities are still warm through

³⁹ Dookhovnie Rookovoteeteli

⁴⁰ Vozshdi

remembrance and reverence within time. Their initiatives and contributions are remembered and re-remembered for their spiritual, cultural and practical guidance. Even though many aspects of leadership remain a puzzle, the collective faith of the Doukhobors remains devoted to the general concept of leadership with varying degrees of affection for particular leaders. An air of mystery surrounded each of the leaders, from their origins to their spiritual and prophetic abilities. There are longstanding myths, mysteries, and secrets surrounding each leader that have endured time by the repetitive ‘stories’ carried and conveyed by Doukhobor elders.

A few documented recollections of early ‘leaders’ or ‘guides’ are based on material or memories that remain open to interpretation. One such document entitled “Краткая Выдержка из Истории Духоборцев”⁴¹ put forward by Peter I. Popoff (n.d), references a list of leaders. According to the document, “Вожди служат им как путеводная звезда.”⁴² The Doukhobors looked to and revered their leaders as ‘guiding stars.’ Popoff lists the Doukhobor Руководители (guides) in chronological order from the first Федор Побирохин Звонов⁴³ to the twelfth - Истребов⁴⁴ the intended leader after the reign of his father P.P. Verigin Chistiakov. However, while he is believed by most Doukhobors to have died in Russia, many Sons of Freedom believe that their leader or spiritual

⁴¹ A Short Excerpt from Doukhobor History

⁴² The leaders serve them like a guiding star

⁴³ Fyodor Pobirokhin – “The Caller

⁴⁴ Istrebov

pastor, Stephan Sorokin, was indeed this very Istrabov. (See full document in Appendix C).

Silvan Kolesnikoff is one of the first known guides of the Doukhobors during the early 1700's, followed by Ilarrion Pobirokhin who is reported as rejecting the bible along with dogmatic practices or rules connected to the church. Pobirokhin eventually died during an exile in Siberia. The next person to assume leadership was Savely Kapustin. He is credited with playing a significant role amongst the Doukhobors by uniting scattered Doukhobor communities, including those exiled and imprisoned. Uniting the Doukhobors was a result of negotiations between Kapustin and Alexander I, the Tsar who was sympathetic to the culture and plight of the Doukhobors. They were subsequently resettled in the scenic and fertile Tavria province known as the "Milky Waters" region from 1802 - 1845 (Maloff, 1948). An advocate for the Doukhobors, Tsar Alexander I, stated on December 9, 1816: "All the measures of severity exhausted upon the Spirit Wrestlers during the thirty years up to 1801, not only did not destroy this sect, but more and more multiplied the number of its adherents" (Tchertkoff, 1913, p. 86). Alexander I, is regarded fondly by the Doukhobors as a benevolent Tsar, who visited their communities and eventually escaped his role as Tsar to live amongst them – or so the story or myth is delightfully prolonged.

Kapustin fostered the development of a functional communal infrastructure based on agriculture and Doukhobor spiritual beliefs and

practices. His philosophical and spiritual teachings required the Doukhobors to renounce both the government and the church to acquire freedom by recognizing the equality of all individuals. Furthermore, his pacifist teaching included not bearing arms, even for those men serving in the military, which resulted in the execution of Doukhobor soldiers in 1806. In order to protect the young men from being taken out of the communities for military service, a creative strategy was employed by having the men dress as children (Maloff, 1948).

After the death of Tsar Alexander I, his less sympathetic successor, Tsar Nicholas I, expected the Doukhobors to accept Orthodoxy and upon realizing their firm resistances he sanctioned persecutions that included torture, murder and exile. A committee of ministers on February 6, 1826 were determined to transport the Doukhobors to the borderlands of the Caucasus where it was believed that on-going confrontation by the “hillsmen” would put them in a position to protect their families by taking up weapons and shift their pacifist stance (Tchertkoff, 1913, p. 86). An expectation that the Doukhobors would renounce their convictions of pacifism by locating them in a territory of conflict, seemed an appropriate strategy. The territory to which they were exiled was called the Wet Hills, a landscape 5,000 ft. above sea level and described as having a severe climate with unyielding frosts (Tchertkoff, 1913). However, the severe climate and dangerous elements that surrounded them including the “warlike hillsmen” (Tchertkoff, p. 87) did not undermine their faith during their fifty-year stay in the Wet Hills. They in fact, through their industriousness,

transformed what was considered inhabitable terrain into successful colonies enabling them to continue their industrious lifestyle. According to Tchertkoff, the wealth the Doukhobors accumulated became apparent in their gradual departure from their principles. They did not, reported Tchertkoff, completely depart from their beliefs, for “as soon as events happened among them which disturbed their outward tranquility, the religious spirit which had guided their fathers immediately revived within them” (p. 87) especially with the impending intentions of the Russian government to introduce universal military service in 1887.

Bonch Bruevich, (1909) recalled the Doukhobors as a diasporic people, suffering forced migrations and exiles. Pockets of Doukhobors were scattered about the vast expanse of Russian and endured...

inhuman sufferings exceeding all measure of imagination...I am horrified when I read these simple epic narrations. In their note-books they have told of their deepest sorrow, of cruel punishment which they had to suffer. The punishments consisted not only in physical beating for men and women, in extortions and robbery, but also in most infamous violence to girls, women and mothers who left them in terrible disgrace. They would have plunged into the very abyss of desperation were it not for their firm conviction that saved them. (p. XL)

The following hymn recalls the tiresome and woeful journey that many Doukhobors were faced with: trudging across the steppes toward a Siberian

exile. The sounds of the chains fastening individual to individual clanged with the monotonous sound of *Dzin-bom, Dzin bom* echoing along the steppes as a constant reminder of the fate that lay ahead.

*The sun is going down over the steppes,
The golden hue of the grass lighted from afar
The shackles of the convicts ring loudly
Sweeping the dusty road*

*Спускается солнце за степи,
Вдали золотится ковыль,
Колодников гулкие цепи
Взметаюют дорожную пыль.*

*Chorus:
Dzin-bom, dzin-bom
The sound of the shackles ring
Dzin-bom, dzin-bom
The road to Siberia afar
Dzin-bom din bom
You hear them from afar
Our friends are taken to prison*

*Припев:
Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом
Слышен звон кандалыны,
Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом
Путь сибирский дальный,
Дзинь-бом, дзинь бом
Слышен там идут
Нашего тобарица на катору ведут.*

*They walk with shaved heads
Taking heavy steps ahead
With heavy sadness upon their brow
Sorrowful thoughts lay upon their hearts*

*Идут они с бритыми лбами,
Шагают вперед тяжело,
Угрюмые сдвинули брови,
На сердце раздумье легло.*

*Lengthy shadows walk with them
Two horses pull a cart
Lazily lift their legs
A convoy moves alongside*

*Идут с ними длинные тени,
Две клячи телегу везут,
Лениво сгибая колени,
Конвойные рядом идут.*

*Brothers sing a song
To forget our sorrows
We see our misfortune
Written since our birth*

*«Что, братцы, затянемте песню,
Забудем лихую беду!
Уж, видно, такая невзгода
Написана нам на роду.»*

*And here they pulled us afar
Singing tearfully
Across the wide expanse of the Volga
The moments of our past go by*

*И вот повели, затянули,
Поют, заливаясь, они,
Про Волги широкой раздолье,
Про даром минувшие дни.*

Singing for freedom on the steppes

Поют про свободные степи,

*Singing for untamed freedom
The day ending (the light is passing)
more and more
The chains sweep across the road,
sweep across the road⁴⁵*

A.K. Tolstoy (1850)

*Про дикую волю поют;
День меркнет все боле, а цепи
Дорогу метут, да метут.*

А.К. Толстой 1850 гг.

A highly revered Doukhobor leader was Lukeria Vasilevna Gubanova, remembered fondly for her honesty, intelligence, justice and care for the people. She was and continues to be affectionately referred to as Looshechka. She became a leader of the Doukhobors in 1864, upon the passing of her young husband who was the proclaimed leader by inheritance. It was not unusual to have a leader who was a woman, substantiating the Doukhobor belief that divinity exists in all individuals. Lukeria's leadership lasted for twenty-two years and is considered the "golden age of Doukhobor history" (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 70). During her leadership she travelled between the various villages where she would be welcomed by Doukhobors in each village with warm greetings, song and prayer, and always presented with the integral symbols of bread, salt and water. Depending upon the greater or lesser harvests in each village, Lukeria ensured that no one would go short by fostering a collective responsibility across communities. Throughout her twenty two years of leadership the Doukhobors enjoyed a peaceful alliance with not only their neighboring communities but with Tsarist authorities and local officials.

⁴⁵ My translation into English

She was well known for her hospitality which extended to “civil servants and army officers who travelled through the Wet Mountains” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p.73). She was highly esteemed by the Tsar’s brother, Grand Duke Michael, the governor-general of the Caucasus during the 1870’s (Woodcock & Avakumovic, p. 73). He apparently respected and enjoyed the hospitality of this leader who received him as an equal. However, these good relations led to a painful compromise when she was asked to provide supplies and transport to the Russian military who were engaged in the conflict with Turkey. After much communal deliberation it was agreed to assist the Russian military. This truly was a test of Lukeria’s hospitality, by welcoming the risk that this decision would invite. No Doukhobor was expected to take up arms and they benefited by being allotted more lands, wealth and immunity from persecution. Lukeria experienced great sadness and disappointment over this compromise. She was distressed by the increasingly compromised behaviour of Doukhobors in relation to materialism, alcohol, smoking and the eating of meat, and would often proclaim “So you will not obey me, because I cannot be strict enough with you. After me will come a man who will be severe, and strong. He will cleanse you” (Maloff, 1948, p. 33). This man would be the next Вождь (leader) Peter V. Verigin affectionately known as Господный.⁴⁶

Lukeria is renowned amongst Doukhobors for her uncanny prophecies including her predictions linked to the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor practice of nudism. Maloff (1948) presented a story passed on by witnesses of a dinner

⁴⁶ Hospodnii - Lordly

orchestrated by Lukeria and attended by Doukhobor and Cossack guests. After being seated at a table, Lukeria had several ‘maids-in-waiting’ walk into the room naked. This was shocking to the guests and Lukeria attempted to calm the situation by asking the guests not be “terrified or surprised. I say to you that the time will come when naked people shall appear among the Doukhobors because this must be so” (p. 34). Endearingly if not somewhat quizzically another story told by Vadim and which has been repeatedly told by others explains Lukeria’s acknowledgment of the future of the Sons of Freedom and their use of public nudity.

Looshechka put one of my grandmothers and another woman down into a well, they were naked, and she lowered them down and she said to her followers “now you have a good look, the голоши,⁴⁷ will be the lowest as you can see I have got them.” But then she had them lifted up and she said “there will come a day when they will be amongst the highest.”

This is a profound example that the Sons of Freedom - Spirit Wrestlers did not originate in Canada but continued from Russia into the foreign lands of Canada. Lukeria’s demonstrations linked the notion and practice of nudity prior to the Doukhobor arrival in Canada.

A significant event for the Doukhobors was the passing of Lukeria in 1887. Her successor, whom she guided throughout his youth as her intended heir, was Peter Vasilevich Verigin who became “one of the most celebrated of all

⁴⁷ Holoshi – naked ones

the Doukhobor leaders” (Maloff, 1948, p. 76). With the death of Lukeria and the imminent reign of Peter V. Verigin, unrest ensued over the rights of leadership, resulting in a split amongst the Doukhobors with the majority aligning with Peter V. Verigin. They were considered the large party and those who aligned with Mikhail Gubanov, Lukeria’s brother and manager of the Orphan’s home (the administrative centre and her place of residence), were considered the small party. A mass remembrance was held six weeks after the death of Lukeria. Thousands of Doukhobors attended the remembrance, regardless of their affiliations, and this is where Peter V. Verigin who became known respectfully as Peter the Lordly, and affectionately as Petyooshka or Hospodnii, was acknowledged as the next leader with member after member bowing low before him. It was during this memorial that he was arrested by police who were observing the event and subsequently sent him into exile.

Peter V. Verigin was sent to Shenkursk, a northern province of Archangel. He was documented as being excessively hospitable to the residents of Shenkursk, specifically those experiencing poverty. He provided them generously with food and money brought in by his followers who travelled under risk and danger to reach him with the task of maintaining lines of communication between himself and his followers. Without heeding warnings from the local authorities to “curb his hospitality” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 87) he was exiled even further north in 1890, to Kola, “an arctic port in the province of Murmansk” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, p. 87).

In 1894 a message from Hospodnii reached the Caucasus advising the Doukhobors to refrain from drinking, smoking, eating meat and to cease any involvement in the military. Solidifying these specific principles was a turning point for the Doukhobors perpetuating an increasing sense of community identity and purpose. In 1895, a number of Doukhobor youth, involved in the military, proclaimed to the military command, "From this day on we are no longer your servants, because by the law of Christ we cannot be murderers, and military service is training us to kill others" and subsequently laid down their arms (Maloff, 1948, p. 38). In Yelizavetopol, Matvei Lebedev refused to take up arms and handed in his rifle whereupon he was confined in an underground cell. The same treatment was allotted to ten of his Doukhobor companions. This was followed by the arrest of other Doukhobor conscripts that totalled sixty – all giving up military service. The punishments they received at the penal battalions were described by Pozniakov, a survivor of the imprisonment and torture (cited in Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968).

From the very first day the bloody chastisement commenced. They were flogged with thorny rods, whose thorns were remaining in the flesh, and thrown in a cold and dark cell afterwards. After a few days they were requested again to do service, and for the refusal flogged again. And so it was going on and on and no end was seen. Besides they were always hungry, because they were eating no meat and were given too little bread. They were physically exhausted; many were sick; but the doctor was refusing to admit them in the hospital, unless they would agree to

eat meat. The chaplain was requiring the performance of the Orthodox rites, and they were driven to the church by fists and muskets' butt ends. Their position was unbearable, so that those few of them which were acting not by their own conviction, but only by Verigin's advice, gave it up, but the majority was convinced and held out. (p. 98)

According to Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) there was one out of those eleven Doukhobor men, Sherbinin, who died as a result of "beating with the rods, which were actually bundles of thorny acacia branches" (p. 98). E. Popoff (2000) notes that all sectarian groups faced numerous forms of "persecution and torture, including property confiscation, public lashings, flesh mutilation, detainment in prisons or monasteries, exile and even burning at the stake or entombment alive in pillory boxes" (p.26). The most horrendous persecutions of the Doukhobors have been documented in detail by A. M. Evalenko (1913) and P. Maloff (1948) and appear to take on mythical and heroic proportions. The following 'story' was shared by Boris, a Sons of Freedom individual who narrated the experiences of his great great grandfather.

My great great grandfather was a big man, 6'7" or 8" and was put into a 'stolp'. It is a form of torture where you are put in a place, like a tiny outhouse, that is so small you can't sit and you can't stand and you are only given bread and water to be kept alive. He spent seven years in that thing. They said it was a celebration when he was let out because he was the only one to survive. He was a big man, but when he came out of there they said he was nothing,

stooped. His hair grew into his clothes he was like an ape. They said he was a sight to behold. People that knew him could not recognize him. When they let him out it was big thing, the Cossacks were lined up and they broke the lock and he stumbled out and the first thing he asked for was a horse shoe and the horse shoes they built at that time weren't like right now, they were huge. It is said that he grabbed it and straightened it out then put it back into its original shape.

It is said that the Cossacks just scattered. He died the next day.

Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) report on incidents of resistance and punishment which sparked an integral event in Doukhobor history when the followers of Hospodnii disposed of all liquor and tobacco in ritual bonfires. A lively momentum had arisen upon the arrival of a message from Hospodnii to resist the violence and power of the state by participating in an event to burn all manner of weapons. This event is celebrated and remembered to this day, is referred to as the *burning of the arms*. It was in 1895 that the bonfires took place in the three main Doukhobor villages, Orlovka in the Wet Mountains, Slavyanka in the region of Yelizavetpol and Spasskoye in Kars region. At Spasskoye the Doukhobors gathered at the great bonfire singing their psalms through the night. In Kars the same event took place, and fifteen individuals targeted as ringleaders were arrested. At Slavyanka, army Cossacks using whips to prevent the people from reaching the bonfire did not deter the Doukhobors from reaching the bonfire in full song and prayer. During the bonfire young men approached a Cossack Colonel to return their conscription papers; they were subsequently beaten and arrested. Eighty Doukhobors from

Slavyanka were arrested. The Doukhobors from Orlovka in the Wet Mountains suffered extensively from their participation in the burning of the arms; nevertheless, the next day up to 2,000 returned to the site for further prayer and song. There they were interrupted by a message from the Governor of nearby Bogadanovka, demanding a meeting. An elder is quoted as replying “If the governor wishes to speak to us, let him come here. He is only one man and there are many of us” (Cited in Woodcock and Avakumovic, 1968, p. 101). After a second message arrived demanding a meeting with the Governor the response was “We must finish our prayers, and after that, if the governor still wishes to see us, we shall go to him” (Cited in Woodcock & Avakumovic, p. 101). The Governor, not accustomed to such disobedience, ordered the Commander of the Cossacks to forcibly drive the unrelenting Doukhobors to Bogadonovka. The commander implemented the orders in excess by instructing his men to ride upon and beat the Doukhobors “into submission” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, p. 101). The mass group of Doukhobor men and women were indiscriminately whipped and herded, bloodied and bruised, toward Bogadonovka. The governor and his entourage met the enforced march of the Doukhobors and insisted that those that had caps on, bare their heads as a show of respect. The Doukhobors did not yield to the orders and in turn the Cossacks were ordered to charge. Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) reported that the Cossack attack was even more vigorous than the attack from the day before.

...one elder was trampled to death under the feet of the horses and one man's eye was torn from its socket by the metal tip of a whip. The Doukhobors resisted passively, drawing their injured comrades within the circle, huddling together and offering their own bodies to the whips, so that all should share in the moment. (p. 102)

Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) report that for years the Tsarist authorities terrorized the Doukhobors in order to break their spirit. One Doukhobor individual, Pozniakov (cited in Woodcock & Avakumovic) recalled the plundering and beatings of anyone the Cossacks came across whether man, woman or child. Pozniakov himself, a military resister, had received three hundred lashes by the Cossacks and was imprisoned for "two weeks in a corn loft on bread and water" (cited in Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 103). Soon after, approximately three hundred Doukhobor men refusing military service were arrested and suffered the effects of torture and imprisonment.

Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) provide details of the Doukhobor's experiences in the Wet Mountain region. They faced severe mistreatment as they were considered the most stubborn of Doukhobors. Over 4,000 Wet Mountain Doukhobors, particularly the ones who declared Peter V. Verigin as their leader were exiled into the malarial valleys of Batum in Georgia. A message imparted by their exiled leader spread among his followers to "suffer with Christ. Though the body might be harmed, the spirit was invulnerable. Therefore, at all costs the faithful are to remain steadfast in refusing to obey

the government” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 105). An official offer to stay in the Wet Mountains was delivered by the authorities on the condition that they swear an Oath of Allegiance to the Tsar, which not a single Doukhobor had accepted whether or not they had known of their leader’s message. Non-compliance resulted in the deliberate separation of the Doukhobors into small groups of three to five families who were then scattered amongst a variety of foreign villages. They immediately were faced with malnutrition, malaria, and dysentery and in a relatively short time hundreds died.

Prince D. A. Khilkov, a former officer in the Hussar Guards, had the opportunity to witness the Doukhobor lifestyle while stationed in one of their villages during the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8 (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 108). His interactions with the Doukhobors resulted in a life-changing decision to resign from the army resulting in his exile to the Caucasus. During his exile, he visited the Doukhobors frequently and when the persecutions of the Doukhobors increased after the burning of the arms he petitioned his friend, the influential and celebrated author, Lev Tolstoy. Tolstoy, in his later years became a seeker of spiritual enlightenment with the hopes of participating in a community that would integrate spirituality with simple living, reflecting the ideals outlined in his book *the Kingdom of God is within you* (1894). Tolstoy, was not only aware of the Doukhobors and their impossible predicament in Russia, he also admired them greatly for manifesting his ideals of spiritual practice. Attention to the persecutions was

made public in Russia and Western Europe which generated support primarily from the Tolstoyans and the Quakers in Russia and England. After years of negotiations with the Russian government it was agreed that the Doukhobors would immigrate to Cypress and the first shipload of Russian émigrés landed in Cyprus in 1898. This, however, proved to be a failed initiative where up to 1,000 out of 4,300 Doukhobors died within three years. This was mainly due to their already poor condition and inability to adapt to the harsh climate and foreign environment. They suffered greatly from malaria, dysentery and malnutrition (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968).

Appeals were put forth for the prospect of immigrating to Canada, a possibility considered by Prince Peter Kropotkin a Russian Anarchist who had travelled to Canada in 1897. He travelled across Canada and visited communal Mennonite villages on the prairies. Kropotkin was approached by Tchertkov, a friend of Tolstoy's and advocate for the Doukhobor emigration, and they both agreed that Canada would be the best location for the Doukhobors. This was soon discussed with the Tolstoyan committee and delegates were sent to Canada to assess the possibilities. Both Kropotkin and Tolstoy had a mutual friend from the University of Toronto, a professor of political economy, James Mavor, who was also an expert on immigration. As a result of on-going correspondences, Mavor suggested to the minister of the interior, Clifford Sifton, that the Doukhobors would "fit admirably into his plans for the accelerated settlement of those prairie regions that were soon to become the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta" (Woodcock & Avakumovic,

p. 131). Sifton demonstrated an openness to receiving Central and Eastern European immigrants, an invitation typically reserved for Western and Northern Europeans (Vineberg, 2012).

Immigration to Canada

It was during the late nineteenth century that Canada set its sights on populating the west with a mass immigration initiative (Elrick, 2007). The selection of immigrants, from 1867 – 1967, was a very limited and discriminatory process based on “race, nationality, and religion as the chief distinguishing” (p. 226) factors that determined the desirable immigrant from the undesirable (Siemiatycki, 2012). Canada typically preferred white Western and Northern European immigrants to support the “British settler society” (Elrick, 2007, p. 2) by being able to assimilate into a British standard, thus strengthening its identity and ties to Britain (Siemiatycki, 2012). It had become apparent that those countries would not provide the numbers of immigrants needed to inhabit and farm expanses of land, notably Central Canada’s prairie lands. Attention was then turned to Central and Eastern European countries, attracting large numbers of immigrants from the Ukraine, Germany, Italy and Russia. The suitability of new settlers was contingent upon the assimilation of particular national and ethnic groups that would not alter the “fundamental character of the emerging nation” (Elrick, 2007, p.2). The Doukhobors were certainly not the preferred choice of immigrant, but were accepted on their agricultural abilities and the need for farmers in the Canadian west (Elrick, 2007).

Before emigrating, the Doukhobors needed to be assured that they would be exempt from military service, that they could live communally on a solid block of land, and that they would be consulted on the form of education for their children. They were under the impression that these stipulations were in place. Woodcock and Avakumovic (1968) stressed “that the Canadian government was aware of these expectations even before the Doukhobor delegates landed in Canada” (p. 132). Following intensive negotiations and fundraising, including the sales from Tolstoy’s book *Resurrection*, the Doukhobors began immigrating to Canada in 1899. Initially, up to 7,500 Doukhobors arrived in Canada (Tarasoff, 1982). Doukhobor aspirations and expectations for their life in Canada are expressed by Daniil:

I recognize what the intention was. The Doukhobors recognized that they needed to live in an environment that was conducive to spiritual growth and they tried to change it around. They gave up the churches and the Bible and to me that was the most significant thing that the Doukhobors had done. To recognize that spirit within each and every person and that not only a priest had that ability. They recognized that, yeah, there is a voice within each one of us that actually is the guide; that guiding light and not get it second-hand and basically compromising your own... so, you know, I can see why they gave up the churches and the Bible. There was war after war and the government says, “Okay, your son has to serve his time,” and everybody is subjected to all this warfare, but it was dealt with by their spiritual beliefs and then the opportunity came to move to Canada, and they figured, yes, we’re going to create this lifestyle where more attention would be given to our spiritual growth.

It was with hope for cultural and religious freedom that the Doukhobors settled in various colonies on the Prairies coupled with their skills of self-

sufficiency which ensured their survival during their first years in Canada. Cultivation of the land began as soon as possible after the winter thaw; cloth was homespun; furniture and utensils were made from hand-hewn wood and, given the lack of farm supplies, it was imperative the communities operate as a collective. Many men found it necessary to work outside of their communities and accepted available work on the railways, leaving the agricultural and carpentry work in the communities to women, children and the elderly. Donations from the Quakers of food and other supplies during their initial years in Canada enabled the Doukhobors to endure and prosper. By 1902 they were no longer in need of assistance (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968).

Shortly after their arrival to Canada, expectations from the government were made evident, specifically the requirement of signing individually for the land put forward by the commissioner of Crown Lands. The consequence for not doing so would be to open up their lands to the general public. This mounting pressure convinced the Prince Albert colony to comply but very few from the North and South Colonies signed for their land (formally called the Territories and in 1905 was established as Saskatchewan) (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968). Although the position of holding land communally was threatened by the Canadian government, other integral values were being threatened as well such as, providing an Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown, providing statistical information, and accepting public education which eventually became mandatory for all children in Canada. The welcome to Canada, anticipated by the Doukhobors as a welcome to live in cultural and

religious freedom was actually laden with a number of conditions that became points of on-going contention. The conditions required the Doukhobors to compromise principles integral to the general functioning of their communities. The conditional welcome surprised the Doukhobors who arrived without clarity about immigrant requirements. The 'welcome' was thus contingent upon the fulfilment of requirements to conform and fit into a British model of citizenry, prevalent at that time. Regardless, the Doukhobors were not willing to compromise their principles and communal manner of life reflective of the ideology of one of their benefactors, Leo Tolstoy.

Tolstoy was a proponent of a communal lifestyle, living and working in unity as opposed to individual land ownership. His admiration of the Doukhobor ideals of communal living reflected his own ideals; however, his concern was piqued when word arrived that the Doukhobors were being pressured to buy lands. The following are excerpts from an influential letter Tolstoy wrote to the Doukhobors on February 27, 1900, advising them against private land ownership (cited in Chernenkoff, nd):

...I learn by letters from our friends, that the life of many of you in Canada is such that the friends of the Christian teaching are confounded, and its enemies rejoice and triumph. "See now – these are your Doukhobors!" say the enemies of Christianity. "As soon as they reach Canada, a free country, they begin to live like other people, and to gather property each for himself, and not only do they not share each with his brethren, but each tries to seize as much as possible for himself.

So that, evidently, all they did before was only done at their Leaders' orders, and without their well knowing why they did it.”

...I know also that if you wish to continue to live a Christian life, and do not wish to disavow all for the sake of which you suffered and were exiled from your fatherland, then you must not live as the world lives, each accumulating property separately for himself and his own family, and withholding it from others. It only seems as if it were possible to be a Christian and yet to have property and withhold it from others, but, really, this is impossible. If once such a thing be admitted, very soon nothing of Christianity will be left except empty words – and words, alas! That will be insincere and hypocritical...In reality, property means – that what I consider mine, I not only will not give to whoever wishes to take it, but will defend from him. And to defend from another what I consider mine is only possible by violence...by a struggle, a fight, or even by murder. Were it not for this violence, and these murders, no one would be able to hold property...Therefore, to acknowledge property is to acknowledge violence and murder, and if you acknowledge property, which is only maintainable by soldiers and police, there is no need for you to refuse military or police service...The temptation of property is the most subtle of all temptations; the evil of it is very cunningly hidden from us; and that is why so many Christians have stumbled over it...to collect property separately for one's self and to withhold it from others – is to act contrary to the will of God and to His commandments.

Your loving brother, Leo Tolstoy

The above letter was widely read by the Doukhobors which would have, I assume, made a significant impression upon their long-lasting determination not to purchase land individually. Messages from Tolstoy as well as messages delivered from Hospodnii, their exiled leader, extolled a peaceful earthly existence. The messages strengthened Doukhobor resolve to live according to their Christian values as opposed to being swayed by lifestyles exemplified by Canadian citizens. A faction of the Doukhobors called themselves the 'Sons of God' and were often referred to as the 'nudes' (Голика); the name Sons of Freedom (СЫНЫ СВОБОДЫ) was given to them later by the Doukhobor leader Peter Chistiakov, the son of Peter the Lordly.

Initial Sons of Freedom Doukhobor resistance in Canada

This group of immigrants were self sufficient and independent, but in being so, they were hardly contributing as being a strong consumer, which the business community was hoping for.

Therefore, the government strongly enforced that the Doukhobor children attend public schools with the intent to assimilate them. Families that refused were penalized by having their farm machinery, horses and grain confiscated. The stand off led to insubordinate retaliation. Some were jailed and children taken away.

Equally steadfast were the Doukhobors in their own ideals, and just coming from an oppressive country, they already had distrust in Government, and so the seeds for a century of misunderstanding were planted.

While the Doukhobors were still overcoming the problems of basic needs and getting settled, and then having their lands taken away, now they were faced

*with giving their children into the hands that intend to educate them with values contrary to Doukhorbor ideals. It was their highest ambition to provide spiritual flight to their future generations, but they now had to be compromised. Their noble efforts and attention were eventually diverted into a fight for freedom. The development of a spiritual Utopia was gradually put on the shelf in the face of this new oppression. In this drawn-out conflict through mostly passive resistance, it was like a double edged sword, where it took some strange turns to also shake off self-stagnation and remain awake, to be in the world yet not of the world
(Daniil).*

The position the Sons of Freedom reflected the ideas shared by their leader Peter the Lordly, namely that ‘men, in all justice are only guests on this earth’ and the only host of this planet is Bor⁴⁸ – the Creator. The constitution of their beliefs included a high regard for and wise use of plants, forests, and animals. In their understanding, man became an exploitive master of the environment guided by greed and destruction. The ‘gifts of nature’ were being decimated, including animals that were killed for consumption, clothing, and tortured in scientific laboratories. In reaction to what they considered barbaric approaches they protested in “in every way they could” (Maloff, 1948, p. 180).

They preserved the strictest vegetarianism and sobriety. They seldom used the products of domestic animals such as milk, butter, and eggs.

They did not allow the use of objects made of skin or bone, such as boots, leather straps, belts, combs, and buttons. Some of them were consistent

⁴⁸ Bokh - God

in refusing to use leather footgear and walked in cloth or rubber boots and in bast shoes (the peasant 'lapti,' sandals woven from wood fiber), according to the weather. All this was done in active protest against killing animals. Every now and then, however, some of the men, unnoticed, acquired leather objects. So the Sons of Freedom were obliged periodically to 'clean up;' all leather things were then piled together and publicly burned. (p. 288)

In 1902, the 'Sons of God' gathered all leather goods which they burnt in fires and proceeded to visit village upon village to spread their message of freedom, often in the nude. As they walked from one Doukhobor village to the other they "were met with hearty welcome and hospitality" and gradually their numbers grew (Maloff, 1948, p. 93). With the intention of seeking a "promised land" where they could live in freedom, by their own principles, a pilgrimage began that increased up to 2,000 thousand Doukhobors (Maloff, 1948, p. 94). Shocking to outsiders, the momentum of stories generated through newspapers increased in steady elaboration about these strange foreigners. Despite encountering townspeople and police who pleaded with them to return to their homes, they continued on. Eventually the police forcibly gathered the women and children and placed them into a locked building (Maloff, 1948, p. 97). After trekking for days in the unforgiving cold and frost, from mid-October to early November, 400 men reached Minnendosa, Manitoba. It was there that they accepted shelter and after three days immigration officials decided to load them onto a train and transport them back to their communities in the district

of Assiniboia. The following poem was composed by an unknown early Sons of Freedom individual who creatively documented the initial Sons of Freedom resistances in Canada.

*Что за жизни голяка
Ее видно издалека
Эта жизнь не легка
Много пыток перенесла*

*What of life for the naked ones
You can see it from afar
This life is not easy
It has carried many burdens*

*Припев:
По мирам по полям
Нонча здесь, а завтра там.
По селам и по городам
Нонча здесь, а завтра там.*

*Chorus:
Over the land one by one
Here today and tomorrow there
Over fields and through the towns
Here today and tomorrow there*

*И по тюрьмам побыли
И побои перенесли.
И водой нас топили
Мясным супом поили*

*Through Prisons we have been
And endured beatings
In water they have drowned us
Soup with meat they have fed us*

*Обжигали нас огнем
Били нас они пинком
Мы сидели под замком
Называли дураком.*

*They have burned us with fire
Beat us with their boots
We have sat locked up
While they called us fools*

*Еще пришлось повторять
Миру голяка объявлять
С новым годом поздравлять
К новой жизни приглашать.*

*Again it came to us to repeat
To the world and declare our
nakedness
A new year to celebrate
An invitation to a new life*

*Поскидали платье
Мы по городу смело шли
Потревожился народ
Забежал к нам под перед.*

*We threw off our clothing
We walked bravely through town
The people became troubled
And ran ahead of us*

*Посадили в коляску
Повезли назад в дом
Мы в доме пожгли
Взяли платье мы пожгли.*

*They put us in a wagon
Taking us back home
At home we lived
And burned our clothing⁴⁹*

⁴⁹ My translation into English

It became apparent that the immigrant Doukhobors did not come with the intention of becoming British subjects which was expected of all immigrants arriving in Canada. At that point in time in Canadian history, the socio-political intentions for developing Canada as a Nation “in the symbolic and cultural sense was oriented toward the replication of a British type of society in Canada” (Dewing, 2009, p. 3). The Doukhobors, considered anarchists, explicitly went against the grain of Canadian laws and colonial cultural expectations, like the willow weed, Плакун Трава, ardently flowing in opposition to the current of prevailing society (Tarasoff 1982, p. xi). The Doukhobors explained, Maloff (1948) considered, “true religious freedom to be that in which each person can without hindrance, build his own life and live in accordance with his own convictions and philosophy” (p. 101). This ‘truth’ was fought for during centuries riddled with all manner of persecutions and “purified and tempered by the fire of centuries of suffering” (Maloff, 1948, p. 101). This ‘truth’ or ‘ideal’ was the on-going task of seeking an “anarchic or hyperbolic justice” (Caputo, 1993, p. 147) and attainment of their spiritual, religious, and cultural ideals. They continued to seek absolute freedom, reflected in the following perspective of Daniil.

Sons of Freedom is basically about liberating themselves, taking the path to liberate themselves from the imposition of the world. They’re not trying to be honourable in the eyes of society by restraining themselves and compromise their spiritual feelings. The Sons of Freedom said “No, we are not compromising

anything; this is the way we are. We want to liberate ourselves and be free to seek a connection with our spiritual natures.”

The march of 1902 highlights one example out of many illustrating the Doukhobors' anarchic and excessive search for freedom and justice. A significant result of the march was the release and acceptance of Peter V. Verigin into Canada in 1902. His arrival was welcomed by the Doukhobors as well as by government officials who had hopes he could resolve the on-going Doukhobor conflicts and unrest. Peter the Lordly was an outstanding figure with a mythical countenance. However, Maloff (1948) contends that his presence was not mythical but a reality. He is described as unusually tall standing about seven feet tall and “gifted with exceptional physical strength and energy” with a serious expression, piercing eyes and calm manner (Maloff, p. 242). Upon Verigin's arrival in Winnipeg a number of newspaper articles described him similarly in the following excerpt from the Manitoba Free Press (cited in Donskov, 2008): “Physically, Verigin is a splendid type of his race. Tall and strongly built and of erect and graceful carriage; he would attract attention among hundreds of good-looking men” (p. 71).

Soon after his arrival in Canada, Peter Vasilievich visited each Doukhobor village and was met with joyful enthusiasm. The events of the ‘march’ quickly became a topic of discussion and Peter the Lordly is said to have responded in appreciation of those involved in the trek for their steadfastness. He is reported to have shared the following words with the forerunner of the ‘march’ Ivan Ponomarev (Maloff, 1948):

Vania, I called you here in order to thank you personally for what you did. You understood me and inspired our men to start on the march. By that you accomplished a great deed. As soon as you who are here set free your cattle, they immediately informed me over there that I was free, that my exile was over. And when you started on your way, they told me to get ready to go...As you see, I received my freedom and a pass to Canada because of your actions. So I am very very thankful to you, Vania, and to all brothers and sisters who walked with you. (p. 107)

Ponamarev answered questions from those curious about his discussions with Peter the Lordly during his visits to the leader's Siberian exile. He stated that Hospodnii prophesised that the Doukhobors would travel to a land far away and during the first few years encounter difficulties and that he, Ponamarev, would need to initiate a movement. "I entrust you with this task" he recounted the words of Hospodnii (cited in Maloff, 1948).

There will be something like a large and stormy river flowing in front of you. You will be frightened, but have no fear; throw yourself into this river, the people will follow you and I assure you, everything will come out right. (p. 107)

This surely was an affirmation that the Sons of Freedom were on the 'right track' no matter the consequences of their fervent actions to attain the freedom they whole-heartedly fought for.

Clifford Sifton, the minister of the interior was sympathetic to the Doukhobors and even though immigrants were expected to make individual

land entries, he accepted communal entries, for which he received much criticism from the private and public sectors (Janzen, 1990). What followed was a period of modernization and prosperity amongst the Doukhobors, especially in the Yorkton colonies in Saskatchewan, which included the purchase of farm machinery and horses contributing to an extensive “industrial enterprise” (Janzen, p. 45) comprised of steam plows, threshing machines, flour mills, saw mills and a brick factory. The structure of the communities was based on communal living with a common economy. Although pressure continued from state authorities to accept private land ownership, most Doukhobors deferred this step and the registration of lands continued to be managed communally. The Sons of Freedom, as I will refer to them from this point, were dismayed by the materialistic lifestyle the community Doukhobors were increasingly engaged in. They recognized the gradual and insidious agenda of ‘state’ assimilation of the Doukhobors and could not agree with land registrations and once again initiated a march to leave Canada. It became clear to them that they would not realize the freedom they expected and fought for in Canada and therefore did not accept Canadian citizenship, but continually sought locations that would accept them absolutely, or in other words hospitably. The dream of relocation to a ‘promised land’ somewhere in the world included the desire to return to ‘mother Russia’. This desire and initiative was fostered throughout their history in Canada. This was a shared desire by the Canadian authorities as well, who would have been relieved to see them leave Canada.

Disappointment coupled with unrelenting resistance continued within this group of Doukhobors intent on maintaining their traditional values and way of life. They continually made every effort to preserve their ideals, while threatened by pressures to conform. Inhabiting an anarchistic attitude and resistance, 52 Sons of Freedom Doukhobors embarked upon another pilgrimage in 1903 marching once again village to village in the nude as a symbolic message of freedom. As they proceeded to Yorkton, the women and children were seized and taken into the village of Nadezhda (Saskatchewan). The men carried on and were eventually arrested for indecent exposure and sentenced for three months in a Regina Prison (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968).

*Мы проверили братья, сестры,
Из начала свою жизнь.
Как мы духом народились
И отдались мы Христу.*

*From the beginning of our lives, we
verified, brothers, sisters,
How we are born through spirit
And gave ourselves to Christ.*

*А Христос есть разумения,
К жизни путь нам указал.
Этот путь есть жить свобода
Всем живущем на земле.*

*Christ is reason,
Showing us life's path.
This path is to live in freedom
For everyone living on this earth.*

*Мы тогда серьезно стали,
Все об этом рассуждать
Как с началом соединится,
И в природу нам жить войти.*

*We then became serious,
Discussing all of this thoroughly
How it came together in the beginning
To go forth and live in nature*

*Тут слетели с нас рубашки
И в «природе» мы пошли
Всех, как братьев вызывали
Любви дело доказать.
Нас собралось душ полсотни
К селу «Надежде» подошли.
Пели мы с таким восторгом:
«Братья, радость вам несем!»*

*Here our clothing flew from us
And we went forth to be in nature
And as brothers all were called
To know that deeds will be proof of
love.
Fifty of us gathered
We came to the village "Nadezshde."
We sang with such rapture*

*Эта радость есть такая:
К жизни вечной нас ведет...
Братья гордо отнеслись,
Радость Божью не хотят.*

*Души из еще во мраке,
Приготовились нас бить.
Божью радость не приняли,
Возвращают нас назад.*

*Мы ж воскликнули «Свобода!»
Смело двинулись вперед.
И дорогу преграждает
Неразумный сей народ.*

*Братья злобно зашумели,
Держут розги в руках
Не успели оглянуться –
Уж удары на плечах.*

*Тут припали мы на землю,
Видим кровь течет из нас.
И между собою стали
Со слезами рассуждать.*

*Мы же Кесарю сказали,
Что убийства нет у нас,
А на дело посмотри-ка –
Кровь невинная течет.*

*Тут взгадали мы про Бога,
Про Спасителя Христа,
Как терпел Он муку казни
Дверь нам царства отворял.*

*Эта дверь Его такая:
Он свободу всем открыл
От ярма людей избавил
Кто уверовал в Него.*

*Но на это ревновались
Злые люди, богачи.*

“Brothers, we bring you joy!”

*It is this kind of joy:
It is to eternal life we are taken...
But the brothers behaved proudly,
They did not want God’s joy.*

*Souls still in darkness,
They prepared to beat us.
God’s joy they did not accept,
Turning us back.*

*“Freedom!” we exclaimed
Courageously moving forward.
While they barricaded the road
The people were all so foolish.*

*The brothers shouted angrily,
Holding birch rods in their hands
There was no time to look away –
Before a smack on the shoulder*

*Here we fell upon the soil,
Seeing our blood flow.
And amongst ourselves with flowing
tears
We began to reason and discuss.*

*We said to Cesar,
That there is no killing amongst us,
Yet look at this action –
Blood without guilt is flowing.*

*Here we look toward God,
Toward our saviour Christ,
How he endured punishing torment
So the door to the kingdom is open to
us.*

*This door of his is such:
He freely opens it to all
He delivered the people from the yoke
Whoever believed in him.*

*But for this there was jealousy
Angry people, rich.*

*И к кресту Его прибили
И казнили палачи.*

*And they nailed him to the cross
And the executioners punished him.*

*Ночь до утра продрожали
Мы нагими на ветру.
Лишь любовь нас согревала.
Мы остались в живых.*

*Night through day we continued
Naked against the wind
Yet love warmed us.
And we remained alive.*

*И сказали: «Мы прощаем,
Вы простите братья нас.»
Гнали Господа и гонят
Всех по вере во Христа.*

*We said: “We forgive you and,
You too brothers forgive us.”
They chase the Lord and everyone with
faith in Christ.⁵¹*

Вася Дутов⁵⁰

Vasya Dutov

In response to the incarcerations and to the accumulation of wealth by their fellow Doukhobors, ten Sons of Freedom men set fire to “the canvas and wooden parts of a reaping machine and binder” and in a symbolic gesture trampled down some wheat (Olson, 2000, p. 222). As a result, Peter V. Verigin pressed charges against the men who were consequently incarcerated for three years and experienced severe tortures during their incarceration (Evalenko, 1913). Protecting cultural freedoms by resisting pressures to conform gained momentum by the Sons of Freedom and reprimands and incarcerations did not deter their spirits or actions.

Lev Tolstoy and Peter the Lordly exchanged letters during the Doukhobor’s early years in Canada. In a letter to Lev Tolstoy written in 1903, Peter the Lordly, Verigin addressed the Doukhobor pilgrimage and the apparent reasons for their trek. An excerpt of his letter reveals the underlying motivation of the movement (cited in Donskov, 2008).

⁵⁰ Cited in Lapshinoff (1999)

⁵¹ My translation into English

Neither the representatives of the Canadian Government nor the Doukhobor people who have been looking after their liberation from their sorry plight, beginning in the Caucasus right up to now, have explained accurately or in detail what the political as well as the territorial and economic obligations of the Doukhobors would be should they decide to stay and live in Canada. This state of uncertainty has delayed the acceptance of land, and has led to one opinion among the Doukhobors that the government's conditions are too strict, and so some Doukhobors have decided they should leave the land that was offered to them, saying let us go in search of truth, i.e., in search of a more humane attitude toward the settlers on the Government's part. (p. 235)

In the letter, Peter the Lordly, Hospodnii, recognized the perspective of the Doukhobor pilgrims, specifically that they felt compelled to offer their guidance to all people across the country, expressed in their messages like *a voice crying in seas and oceans*, with the intention to go forth and "tell everyone along the way that people must stop smoking tobacco, drinking vodka and quarrelling, put an end to military organizations and the violent oppression of people who are their brethren..." (p. 235).

Hospodnii, recorded his perspective and advice for the pilgrims: "Your motives of self-sacrifice for the common good of human life are legitimate and precious ones, but there is no need to let the children go hungry and cold, so for the time being why not remain with all the rest of the brethren

and teach them?” Those with families took this explanation too as a revelation from God. (p. 235)

In a letter dated 1905, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy wrote to Peter V. Verigin offering his insight and worry that the Doukhobors might surrender under the weight of western materialism (cited in Donskov, 2008, p. 242). Tolstoy expected or at least hoped that the Doukhobors would follow a simple and spiritual path much like his own spiritual aspirations and hopes for the ideal community, in turn contributing to the passion and resolve exhibited by the Doukhobor pilgrims.

Dearest brother Petr Vasil'evich,

I received your kind and interesting letter some time ago now and was so glad both that you remember me and that the financial affairs of your community are coming along well. God grant only that material success does not mean a weakening of spiritual effort and striving for perfection. It often happens that way, just like with a balance: as one goes up the other goes down. You have to try to raise the level of the fulcrum, but if the balance has to swing one way or another, it is better to let people be materially poor so long as they are enriching themselves spiritually. I think, and I hope, and I wish that this is how it will be with the Doukhobors. The spiritual life in your community is so much aflame that it should not go out, but only keep on flaming...(p. 242)

These concerns and hopes of Tolstoy's were in sync with the Sons of Freedom concerns prompting them to fervently resist assimilation, initiated far into the depths of their history in Russia. The Sons of Freedom are described at length by Doukhobor author Peter Maloff (1948) as people who “do not accept the laws, the prerogatives of the state, or its establishments. In this sense they are genuine Christian anarchists. They believe that the government schools represent one of the main supports of the contemporary state” (p. 284). The Sons of Freedom, continued Maloff (1948), regard themselves as “free children of the world” and by taking the oath of allegiance they become slaves to the state (p. 284). Furthermore, in order to preserve their freedom, they rejected “[a]ll state establishments, such as law courts, political boundaries, the right to vote in elections, birth certificates, licenses, and permits of all kinds...” (p. 284). The following slogan, coined by Peter P. Verigin sums up the Sons of Freedom conviction of “complete freedom and simplicity of life” (Maloff, 1948, p. 279).

The Sons of Freedom are not slaves of corruption

The Sons of Freedom Doukhobor position on education remained solid. They understood education as an assimilative measure and felt obligated with unlimited resistance to preserve and sustain their own cultural values in relation to education. This had prompted policies and persecutory procedures of forced ‘integration’ upon the Doukhobor children in order to shape them into law abiding citizens (Janzen, 1990). An on-going ‘wrestle’ between the Sons of

Freedom and the government's position on education, took place from 1909 until 1959. In 1959, the Sons of Freedom succumbed to the force and pressure of the acting B.C. Social Credit Government position and agreed to send their children to school. The following excerpt from a letter, issued by the Sons of Freedom in March 1929 to all those positioned in roles of authority in Canada, provided an explanation of their understanding of public education (cited in Janzen, 1990).

...Take our Government school education; people are so hypnotized by it that they do not see that its results are demoralizing. The present Government schools are nurseries of militarism and capitalism...If there are men to be found among educated people like George B. Shaw, Tolstoy, Tagore, Gandhi, and many others, these men received enlightenment through Spiritual Regeneration, heeding the voice of Christ, and if such men are to be given honour, it was not attained by college education. Our whole history is marked by cruel persecutions by the churches, governments and capitalists. These persecutions are on account of our loyalty to Christ's teaching and our uncompromising refusal to submit to any authority but God's. (p. 133)

Supplementing this explanation with Maloff's (1948) insights and experience on the rejection of public education illustrates that the Sons of Freedom arguments were indeed 'rational' even if they did not fit dominant rationalities in society. For example, the Sons of Freedom believed, Maloff

(1948) wrote, that political systems are less interested in the well-being of its citizens and much more invested in maintaining power. They believed that while educational systems are regulated by the state “the children will not be taught the knowledge useful to them as free men, but information which is useful and advantageous to the state” (p 283). The capacity for and what was meant by independent thinking differed across Doukhobor communities and mainstream communities, expressed in the following words of Daniil.

Hospodnii’s aspiration was to reach that spiritual pinnacle...if only we can put them into an environment, and not subject them to outside influences...we’ll develop this jewel.

That was a big issue you know, giving up your children to another to something that was contrary to your own ideology, to those that are going to teach your children.

They were thinking at that time that knowledge just takes you in, shown in the evidence that as soon as people did become educated, they became rich, they became greedy...

The Sons of Freedom were justified in their fears and understanding of the educational system as a means of control and assimilation of their children which threatened the core of their culture and beliefs. In 1919, a quote from an unidentified authority figure in Regina, reflects the awareness the Sons of Freedom had when it came to the public educational system (cited in Friesen, 2005).

The paramount factor in racial fusion is undoubtedly the school. It is the national melting pot. We must give it our undivided support. The great battle for better Canadian citizenship is being fought by our school teachers. They are the generals in the home field. (p. 1)

Frieson (2005) perceived the school system as a vehicle “intended to promote learning” however, in the case of the First Nations and other communities its primary function has been assimilation (p. 1). Furthermore, Frieson provided a quote by Alex Jamieson (1972) which resonated with the Sons of Freedom comprehension of education; “The institution of education should be recognized for what it is. It can be used either as a tool or a weapon just like an axe, or it can be used as a very efficient means of control” (p. 1).

A devoted adherence to simplicity epitomized in the basic tenants of the Doukhobor philosophy was enacted by the Sons of Freedom on a continuum from Russia to Canada – a continued passion, faith and devotion of upholding their principles and ideals. They were not a new group, they were Doukhobors; Dukh – borets, spirit wrestling, wrestling with the spirit, guided by their ancestors. They wrestled with the spirit by resisting material accumulation, refusing to exploit either human or animal and demonstrating non-compliance with Canadian laws by refusing the oath of allegiance and rejecting private ownership of land. Furthermore, they refused to submit evidence of births, marriages and deaths. The Sons of Freedom are characterized by the tenacity of their spirit stimulating their movement of resistance against the

assimilationist hammer that continually shook the structure and practice of their beliefs and aspirations.

The origins of the Sons of Freedom are often thought of as emerging in Saskatchewan during 1902 when they reacted passionately and excessively to their brethren's gradual conformity into the fabric of Canadian citizenry. My personal assumptions that the Sons of Freedom as an identified group began in Saskatchewan were recently disrupted. While engaged in a conversation with a Doukhobor elder of Sons of Freedom heritage, he stated that the Sons of Freedom did not originate in Canada; rather they were the wrestlers of the spirit in Russia *when they laid down their guns*, exposing themselves to the risk and danger of exile, prisons, torture and death. It was with this fearless spirit and boundless faith that they continued on in Canada struggling to maintain their heritage and their identity and resist compromising their way of life. This perspective had never occurred to me and I readily agreed. Other impassioned views of the origins of the Sons of Freedom expressed by Ilya in a matter-of-fact way indicated that...

...if there weren't factions in the Doukhobors such as the Sons of Freedom, we'd still all be in Russia. Putting the guns into a pile and burning them was a really fanatical, extreme thing to do...that was going against the establishment...taking huge risks...making huge sacrifices. We as Doukhobors in Canada all came here as a result of those people making those sacrifices with those guns in that pile in that fire.

David Kootnikoff (2003) describes the Sons of Freedom as an “extension of the greater Doukhobor tradition of resistance to oppressive authority. They proved to be the perpetual ‘spirit-wrestlers’, continuing to resist” (p. 52). There are calls, cries and stories with different interpretations, such as the following expressed by Kostyei:

When they were in Russia they were all Sons of Freedom [meaning Doukhobors – Spirit Wrestlers] and the Orthodox developed in Saskatchewan.

Doukhobor historian, Peter Maloff (1948) offered the following description of the appearance of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, which was not, he claimed...

merely an incidental chance occurrence, but something quite natural and spontaneous. Certain tendencies peculiar to this group became noticeable while the Doukhobors were still in the Russian Caucasus. The author of this book has found statements that during their last years in the Caucasus a group of Doukhobors had ‘changed to the shovel,’ that is, had refused to use animals for work in the fields, preferring to do all their agricultural work with their own hands, using only a common spade. (p. 277)

Maloff (1948) understood the Sons of Freedom as representing a divergence “to the ‘left’ within the Doukhobor sect” (p. 278). The Sons of Freedom, Maloff suggested continually attempted to protect Doukhobor

interests from internal and external influences. As their movement increased in strength they became a pillar when compared to all other Doukhobor factions.

The history of the Doukhobors shows that in the past when the 'right wing' 'the materialist,' made a dangerous deviation from true principles, the 'left wing' the Sons of Freedom, became more active and aggressive. The latter always considered it permissible to interfere with the affairs of other groups, no matter whether or not the others accepted it. There were a few cases when the interference of the Sons of Freedom helped keep the Doukhobors on the true path and prevented them from taking certain measures which in time could have wrought their ruin...The ideology of the first Sons of Freedom was simple. They had no intention of bringing something new into the Doukhobor movement. In a way, they continued to carry the cross for their sect, since the mass of Doukhobors had slowed down their spiritual march. The activity of the Sons of Freedom begins where the members of the community halt...In their basic principles the Sons of Freedom still belonged to the same religious unit and to the same tradition as all other Doukhobors. (p. 278-279)

A Sons of Freedom Doukhobor wasn't scared to sacrifice and follow a belief...something in their heart...something bigger than themselves...and to act and not just talk. The purest kind of Doukhobor is what a Sons of Freedom is. One that walks the walk. Whatever a Doukhobor should be, or is, that's what Sons of Freedom epitomizes (Stenya).

A form of protest that the Sons of Freedom utilized and which generated ever increasing media attention was public nudity. Although it was used as a non-violent protest, the public was shocked by what they considered indecent acts. Maloff (1948) explained that the Sons of Freedom were not the first or only group to practice public nudity. He refers to ancient sects, including Slavic sects that disrobed during religious ceremony; ancient Hebrews used nudity as means to protest injustice; groups in Asia, Persia and India apparently presented themselves nude to convey impending trouble. Leo Tolstoy, interpreted the naked protests of the Sons of Freedom in a letter to Tchertkov (cited in Maloff, 1948).

Here is my opinion about the Doukhobor movement in Canada. They have harmed themselves materially, but this development revealed that the most precious and the most important feeling – the religious feeling, is alive in them, and it is not a passive contemplative feeling, but an active one, calling for the rejection of the material blessings of the world.

We have to remember that the material well-being which they are reaching, owing to their communal ways of life, is based on the strength of their religious feeling. This feeling was revealed in the movement of the release of the animals. This feeling is more precious than anything else, and woe is not to them who displayed in ugly fashion (here I mean taking off clothes when entering the villages); rather, woe is to them who are completely losing this religious feeling. Their nudity is a display of

symbolic character, having different interpretations given it at different times. (p. 289)

Sons of Freedom understanding and reasoning behind their practices were not based on rationality, especially not on Western-centric rationality; it was, Maloff (1948) shared, founded on “vital and sincere intuition” (p. 296). He was convinced that the Sons of Freedom “always have had one aim, to bring good to mankind. This is an indisputable fact” (p. 296). Mikhail describes the Sons of Freedom origins and beliefs:

...we have certain beliefs so in order to be free we rebel in a manner that we rebel in. Basically not to conform to somebody's rules and regulations, we want to be free, I think that's what it means to me. And I think we came not only from Russia, I think we probably came from the Druids, the Essene's where there were groups of people who always went against man-made laws, Kings, Queens and everything that enforces certain things and as time goes on it seems that more and more were conforming, just blending in to the rest of society and it really is hurting the people...They were not driven by anything else other than that spirit that God has instilled into each one of us...then you cannot control yourself but you go and do and serve for the goodness of all humanity...

An acknowledgment of the ancestors by means of stories kept alive by historians and Sons of Freedom individuals prolonged the historical threads of memory. One of these historians was Alexander M. Evalenko (1913) who captured a number of prison experiences during the early years of the Doukhobor's settling in Canada. In his book, *The Message of the Doukhobors*, Evalenko (1913) documents detailed experiences of the Sons of Freedom

Doukhobors while imprisoned in Regina in 1903. Evalenko identifies over forty men and women sent to the prison and held for three months for public nudity and six men who were incarcerated for burning community farm equipment. The Sons of Freedom endured beatings and berating for not eating meat and for not complying with orders that would inevitably put them in humiliating situations. The description of prison incidents include force feedings, where,

doctors were forcibly injecting medical mixtures through their mouths, which led to excruciating stomach-pains and diarrhoea, resulting in utter exhaustion and feebleness. All were forcibly fed by meat soups, scalding hot, whereby tongues and lips were burned black. All this bodily torture was mostly carried on during the night. As to beating, this was done in broad daylight as well as at night time, using rolling pins, lashes, trampling underfoot both men and women. The men, Alexey Makasayev and Nikolas Antiphayev, were starved and had their arms twisted backwards. They were suspended by their feet with the head stuck in a barrel of water until rendered unconscious and then thrown on the ground as good as dead. (p. 14)

The experiences of Prokoph Pogojeff were also chronicled by Evalenko (1913), describing Pogojeff's torture and resulting death in Manitoba's Brandon Insane Asylum, in 1903. The torture, Evalenko wrote was due to his principles, which included,

refusing all cooked food, and taking naught but fruit and vegetables for nourishment. The authorities considered this abstention a grave menace, which should not be tolerated even by way of experiments over one's own self. So they starved him to death. Firm to the end, he expired of sheer exhaustion whilst placed in a bathtub. He was taking baths very frequently towards the end and sustained his life on grass, which he gathered in the courtyard during the common exercise of the inmates. (p. 14)

The document continues with the death of Alexey Ponomareff who, in 1904, was tortured to death in the Prince Albert prison "by having hot meat soups injected into his stomach through rubber tubing. Ponomareff died during one of such operations with heart rendering crying and praying for mercy" (p. 14).

Another example refers to Alexey Alexievitch Ozeroff who was imprisoned at the end of 1910 or beginning of 1911. Evalenko (1913) indicates that Ozeroff was,

tortured to death. Out of six men put into the cold room at the prison at Winnipeg, Coozma Novokshonov and Vassil Makassayev were tortured to death by being chained to the walls, hands and feet stretched stiff and held in this position for three days in the midst of winter. Both have swollen up beyond recognition through the cold and expired in great suffering. (p. 15-16)

These events had been relayed to me time and again and with equal passion and sadness I was told about Zot Skripnikov, a young man who was fasting and was delivered hot soup through a feed tube, an excruciating form of torture that killed him. His father was in the next cell and was subjected to the screams of torture from his son. It was discovered that the bed frame in Zot's cell was bent as a result of his thrashing during the torture.

I consider it vital not to forget; on the contrary this document is about remembering as a promise to the past, to the ancestors as a gesture of possible justice. This inherited promise remembers and welcomes the ancestors, their suffering and sorrow, and their hope for a better future.

To continue with the historical complexity of the Doukhobor's early years in Canada, it was evident that the initial 'welcome' of the Doukhobors under the Minister of the interior Clifford Sifton dramatically changed when in 1905, Frank Oliver became the new Minister and was less willing to accommodate the Doukhobors and their communal lifestyle. Their collective way of life was based on simplicity, communally cultivating the land, which in turn meant not accepting "individual homestead entries," (p. 59) and refusing the oath of allegiance to prevent conscription into the military as they witnessed in Russia (Janzen, 1990). By December 15, 1904, after desperate negotiations, the Doukhobor reserves were eliminated (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968). The accumulated tensions between the Doukhobors and the government developed "deep and bitter grievances, which have shaped their [Doukhobor] attitudes

and dominated their lives from that day to this” (Woodcock and Avakumovic, p. 215). Similar to their experiences of exile in Russia, the Doukhobors once again faced an impending exodus, not to Russia as many dreamt of or anticipated but to British Columbia.

Migration to British Columbia

In 1908, a year after the seizure of their prairie lands Peter the Lordly and a number of his companions arrived in B.C. and purchased lands at Grand Forks and Brilliant. By 1909, eight hundred Doukhobors left the prairies (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968; Maloff, 1948) and in 1912 this number increased to 8,000 (Kalmakoff, 1999-2013). The Doukhobors in B.C. much like their predecessors in the formidable lands of the Caucasus region in Russia and in Saskatchewan, proved hearty and resourceful. They cultivated rich orchards, farms, built sawmills, a brick factory, grain elevators and a jam factory based on a communal structure and lifestyle. All were expected to abide by the basic Doukhobor principles of vegetarianism and abstaining from the use of alcohol and tobacco. There were strict communal guidelines including personal conduct, practical and spiritual teachings for children, general simplicity and modesty in clothing and manner, and devoted involvement in spiritual practices. There were regular community meetings based on prayer, hymns, and discussions with Peter the Lordly where, for example, the First World War was an over-arching topic of conversation (Maloff, 1948).

Doukhobor life in B.C., although thriving, was not without tensions and conflict and it was only a matter of time before the provincial government

began to “focus its attention on the Doukhobors” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 245). In particular, the issues of schools, the registration of births and deaths, payment of taxes and providing the Oath of Allegiance were of primary concern. In 1911, a school was built in Grandforks in close proximity to Doukhobor lands and increasingly Doukhobor children attended, yet the government continued to trouble the Doukhobors about the above issues and arrested and imprisoned four men to three months in jail for failing to register the death of one of their relatives (Maloff, 1948, p.158). This prompted an immediate withdrawal of all children from the school and reinforced the refusal to provide statistical information (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968). In 1923 pressure to send their children to school increased with aggressive measures of fining the communities; for example, in Grandforks the Doukhobor community was fined \$300.00 for children’s truancy. Sema Chernenkoff was charged and imprisoned for three years for the burning of the school, yet it was not substantiated whether he was indeed responsible for the fire. Four more government schools were burnt during the same year (Maloff, 1948). Investigations into the responsibility of the burnings were met with silence; however, since the Sons of Freedom had previously burned a threshing machine and community home in Saskatchewan there was a presumption of guilt.

By all external appearances the communities operated harmoniously; however, according to Maloff (1948) many individuals in the community had aspirations of acquiring property privately, others took advantage of their

privileged status in the community, and others lived according to communal tenants but lacked deep faith. During his many talks within the Doukhobor communities, Hospodnii touched upon the need for independent thought and obeying one's conscience during the troublesome times they faced. He warned them of becoming seduced by material temptations. A minority group, the Sons of Freedom, preserved their Doukhobor faith and maintained a sincere devotion to Peter the Lordly as their spiritual guide, reflected in his reoccurring message (cited in Maloff, 1948):

Одно время перед вами поставят столы. На этих столах будут расставлены всяки кушанья, яства и приятные напитки, и вас будут приглашать сесть за эти столы. Многие из вас соблазнятся на все это и сядут за столы, и поймаетесь вы как рыба на удочку. Но я вполне уверен, что найдется хотя маленькая часть духоборцев, которая останется верной своему идеалу и не сядет за эти столы.

The time will come when they are going to put before you tables. On these tables will be spread all types of appetizing foods and drinks, and you will be invited to sit at these tables. Many of you will be tempted and will sit at those tables and be caught like a fish on a hook. But I am absolutely certain that a small group of Doukhobors, shall remain faithful to their ideals and will not sit down at those tables. (p. 139)

Unrest and pressure outside of the community, from the government as well as society in general, were mounting and Hospodnii, according to Maloff

(1948) felt an impending death. He is reported as sharing with those closest to him his premonition, that “if something should happen to me, I advise you to protest. They will respect you for that. Let them respect you. When they seize our common property and our common land – take your travelling packs, leave your house for the road....” (p. 145). As his looming death drew nearer he shared a dream he had with those gathered at a собрание,⁵² “I saw Looshechka in my dream last night. She called me to join her. She said; ‘Журушка⁵³ your suffering is completed, come to us. The third flesh is waiting for you’ and this is true; no other Doukhobor leader has served as long as I” (cited in Maloff, p. 145).

Maloff (1948) captured the last words spoken in public by Hospodnii during the night of October 29, 1924, when Hospodnii and his young companion Maria Streliaff boarded a train from Nelson to Grandforks. When the whistle blew to signal their departure, Hospodnii turned to those who saw him off and is known to have said the following:

Ну братья, прощайте и простите меня – едем в дальний путь

Well brothers, farewell and forgive me – I am going on a long journey.

Maria Streliaff, feeling uneasy about the trip, expressed her fear:

«Петюшка я Боюсь»

«Пустяки» он ответил

⁵² Sobranie - gathering

⁵³ jourishka

“Petyooshka I am afraid”

“Nonsense” he answered

He urged her onto the train and when seated he opened the window, looked out to those gathered and repeated:

Ну братья, прощайте и простите меня – едем в дальний путь

Well brothers, farewell and forgive me – I am going on a long journey

(p.147)

Later that morning, at Farron B.C. between Castlegar and Grandforks the Doukhobor Leader, Peter the Lordly, died in a train explosion along with Maria Streliaff and seven others who all were in the same train car. The above dialogue demonstrates a prophetic ability that Doukhobor leaders typically were known for. Hospodnii sensed, assumed or knew what lay before him. Following traditional funeral rituals, six weeks after the initial ceremony and burial, people in numbers exceeding 4,000 gathered at the gravesite. This shocking and unresolved event caused a deep sadness that is presently felt amongst many Doukhobors. The Sons of Freedom demanded court investigations and blamed the government, and reciprocation of blame was targeted at them from governmental sources as well as journalistic sources, in particular, S. Holt (1964). A Royal Commission report written in 1912, by William Blakemore, implicated the government in the death of Peter the Lordly where it was identified that the “real problem before the government of British

Columbia is not the Doukhobors, but their leader - Peter Verigin” (p. 63). The event generated an endless flow of questions without answers. It was a turning point in Doukhobor history bringing a devastating end to “Doukhobor communal living in Canada” (Popoff, 2000). This tragic loss also increased existing conflicts and controversies between the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors and governmental bodies in Canada.

Peter the Lordly’s son, Peter P. Verigin, arrived in Canada from the Soviet Union in 1927 whereupon he assumed leadership and became known as Peter Chistiakov (Peter the Purger). Under his leadership the three groups of Doukhobors, the community Doukhobors (CCUB), the Independents or Farmali and the Sons of Freedom became increasingly distinct and divided. As with previous Doukhobor leaders, Chistiakov maintained his leadership role, although his leadership was coloured by a complexity of controversies. Both devotion and confusion were fostered among the Doukhobors, perpetuated by Chistiakov’s questionable behaviour and temper, as well as by his many speeches in support of the acceptance of schools, denouncing Sons of Freedom resistances to the point of having them expelled from the CCUB communities, then dramatically swinging to the other extreme of validating the Sons of Freedom with expressions of support and condoning their purpose, lifestyle and activities. For example, an excerpt from one of Chistiakov’s well-known

speeches given on August 27, 1929 to a gathering (Cited in Chernenkoff, nd) provides his perspective of the Sons of Freedom;⁵⁴

Here, like our Svobodniki: the future bell – they will awaken us. But the bell is not like the one in Russia, of copper, which only sounds directly around and further is not heard. The Svobodniki ring such, that the sound can be heard for thousands of miles. Here in the spring we shall go to advocate/preach and they will ring throughout the world – even the bones in the graves will shudder, that have lain a thousand years in the soil.

The Svobodniki are the head with horns, the Farmali the tail, and the Community Doukhobors the stomach, full of waste. The Svobodniki are 300 years old: on those kind the host can depend on the binder and give into their hand the reins and they are able to work. The Community Doukhobors- are fifty years old, and the Farmali are three years old, on these the host cannot depend on the binder, because they have not matured and may drop the reins, break the binder and kill themselves.

The Svobodniki are worthy, to be given bread not just once but three times a day. Sincere Svobodniki I bless, bless and will continue to bless...

After his speech Chistiakov continued “There will be a storm; we are ready; we will overcome her,” at this point tears fell profusely from his eyes. Chernenkoff (nd), notes that on more than one occasion Chistiakov referred to the Sons of Freedom as the ‘front line,’ ‘future bells,’ ‘Christ’s soldiers’ to name

⁵⁴ This is an excerpt from the full speech documented in Chernenkoff (n.d.)

a few descriptors. Two significant sayings attributed to Chistiakov defined the name of Sons of Freedom and continue to hold significance for Doukhobors (Lapshinoff, 1990):

СЫНЫ СВОБОДЫ НЕ МОГУТ БЫТЬ РАБАМИ ТЛЕНИЯ

Sons of Freedom cannot be slaves of corruption

Блага всего мира не стоят жизни одного ребенка

The welfare of the whole world is not worth the life of one child (p. 91).

The strength and/or burden of these words upon the Sons of Freedom could only substantiate their faith and determination. The numbers of Sons of Freedom increased with more and more community members refusing to pay community dues toward taxes (Lapshinoff, 1994). Nude demonstrations continued and schools and other properties were burned although according to various testimony, evidence and opinion, they were not likely the sole responsibility of the Sons of Freedom.

In an independent report on the Doukhobors, P. Maloff (1957) wrote about the complexities of the 'Doukhobor problem' and pointed out that most of the resistances during 1900 – 1928 according to material in the government archives were perpetuated by the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. He did not believe that the Sons of Freedom were a Doukhobor anomaly. It was clear to Maloff that their beliefs and practices were contingent upon Doukhoborism and the more extreme practices were related to the

diminishment of Doukhoborism as a result of increasing assimilation. Maloff presented the question “Are they alone to blame?” and provided the response “[a]ll I know, as everybody else knows, that this Doukhobor muddle is the work of many hands, Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor” (p. 8). There is evidence that indeed not all the ‘depredations’ that occurred were the sole responsibility of the Sons of Freedom, despite the fact that they were extreme, courageous and steadfast in their convictions, illustrated in the following poem written in 1928 by a Sons of Freedom composer (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 12):

*Из Востока солнце всходит
И спускает к нам лучи
Мы должны друзья заметить
Как Христос в груди стучит.*

*From the East the Sun rises
And sends forth to us the rays
Friends we need to recognize
How Christ raps at our hearts.*

*Припев:
Мы пойдем, мы пойдем
К святому ни внешнему
Спасителю.*

*Chorus:
We are going, we are going
To the holy not material Saviour.*

*Солнце светит светом белым
И нам жить с ней веселей
Мы должны за Божье дело
Браться дружно и смелей.*

*The sun shines bright white
And with her we live joyously
We need to take up God’s work
Seriously and courageously.*

*Пусть враги бросают палки
Бьют нас в шею, гонят прочь,
На снегу, большом морозе
Простояли мы всю ночь.*

*Let the enemy throw their sticks
Beat us upon our necks and chase us
away,
We stood all night upon the snow in
severe frosts.*

*Пусть враги нам плюют в очи,
Пусть нам смертью грозят,
Но мы будем сколько мочи
Правду в мире возглавлять.*

*Let the enemy spit in our eyes,
Let them threaten us with death,
We will with all our might
Spread truth in the world.*

*Пусть нас бьют колючей розгой
Пусть прольется наша кровь*

*Let them beat us with thorny birch
Let our blood flow*

*Не убоимся все угрозы
Мы откроем им любовь.*

*We do not fear the threats
We offer them love.*

*Пусть сажают нас в тюрьмы,
Пусть отделят от семьи,
На рабов своих Он верных
Верю, смотрит с высоте.*

*Let them put us in prison,
Let them separate us from our family,
He is true to his slaves
So with faith, look on high.⁵⁵*

А. В. Ефанов - 1928

A.V. Efanov – 1928

In 1929 alarm and concern was expressed by the Premier of B.C., S. Tolmie, in a telegram to the Prime Minister, McKenzie King, noting the serious situation in B.C. in relation to the lawlessness of the Doukhobors. Tolmie suggested the establishment of a penitentiary on an island to isolate and control this “dangerous element” (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994, p. 2). Deporting the Sons of Freedom along with Peter Chistiakov was a solution discussed by government officials who were pressured by concerns within the public domain (Lapshinoff, 1994). For immediate purposes incarceration was the more realistic solution, and since an island penitentiary was not yet prepared, an abandoned logging camp was deemed appropriate for a mass arrest and imprisonment.

Porto Rico

Peter Chistiakov began to instruct the Community people to evict the Sons of Freedom due to their refusal to pay community dues toward land taxes. Evictions took place in Glade and Brilliant with the evicted taken to Thrums, at which point up to 250 Sons of Freedom marched until they were

⁵⁵ My translation into English

arrested all together at the South Slokan junction in B.C. (personal communications).

On a warm summer evening surrounded by flowers and vegetable gardens, Nick and I had a lively conversation about what being a Sons of Freedom has meant for him, his mother's experiences before he was born, his childhood, young adulthood and his thoughts and experiences now. I remain outside while he enters his house, moments later returning with a well-worn booklet bound in black. As he leafs through the booklet I notice Russian handwriting, his mom's he says. He flips to the middle of the book and there between the pages are locks of soft golden hair. Your hair when you were a baby, I ask? No, he says, the locks of hair are my brother's who died as youngsters in Porto Rico. They were starved and died within days of one another. I hold the book to read the writing, holding on to what was his mother's journal, his mother, a woman who endured much in her life as a Sons of Freedom and was always devoted to the Sons of Freedom faith and principles. Her memory, her cries, the fragments and cinders of her presence touch my hands and I can see them burning within the pools of his eyes. He has many questions as do I as we strive to piece together a picture from the fragments before us.

According to W. Swetlishoff (1989) a group of Sons of Freedom, up to 600 men, women and children, began a march to Nelson B.C. where their leader, Peter Chistiakov was imprisoned. The group was confronted by the Provincial

police and when they were ordered to return to their homes they refused. Their leader, Peter Chistiakov was later escorted by police to the gathering in hopes that he could prevent any further protest, but they disrobed insisting that the charges against their leader be dropped. In the chaos that ensued a Police officer shot an elder, Mr. Antifieff, in the face with a shotgun loaded with salt and pepper. Mr Antifieff's eyes were blown out and could not be repaired, leaving him blind (Personal communication). Arrests were made and the group of Sons of Freedom were taken by trucks to the Nelson courthouse whereupon the children were taken to the Salvation Army warehouse to await judgement of their parents. For three days the children were kept in an open room without bedding. On the fourth day the children were taken to Porto Rico Rd., where their parents were sent earlier with two year sentences. Porto Rico was an abandoned logging and lumber camp approximately six kilometres from Nelson, B.C.

The imprisoned Sons of Freedom found shelter in the logging camp buildings while others were provided with tents. Initially they were given food, clothing and medicine from the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (Doukhobor) community. However, with the advancement of winter the police blockaded the perimeter of the prison camp forbidding any contact or passing of provisions. Guards were posted along the perimeter 24 hrs a day, preventing any food, supplies and/or medicines from reaching those confined. Without proper supplies for survival, the Sons of Freedom were forced to scrounge the barns on the site for oats previously used in the logging camp to feed the

horses. Although the oats were contaminated with mice droppings there was little choice but to cook the oats for sheer survival. The oats did not sustain them for long and men began to slip away to work in nearby logging camps in order to generate funds for food to assist in the survival of the others in the prison camp. By the spring and summer the healthier Sons of Freedom were able to tend gardens and provide food; however, health care was “never provided for them throughout their confinement” (Swetlishoff, 1989, p. 40). There were a number of deaths that occurred as a result of their inhumane imprisonment. The above account was pieced together by the article by W. Swetlishoff (1989), supplemented by personal communications. There is rare mention of the Porto Rico imprisonment in documented history of the Doukhobors, although Holt’s (1964) much publicized and generally slanderous book about the Sons of Freedom refers to them as confused wanderers who were pitied as “ignorant peasants” by the police and arrested for their own good as well as for the good of the public. Holt goes on to say that the Sons of Freedom were placed on land at “Porto Rico in a loose type of arrest without any real restraints” (p. 67).

The numbers of deaths that took place in Porto Rico are unknown although remnants of gravesites currently exist in the area. Among those that died were the two youngsters who would have been/are Nick’s older brothers. Buried with only a few fragments of memory to recall their existence - tufts of golden hair harboured in their mother’s written pages. Nick mourns the loss of his brothers in a video he produced which focuses on the search for his

brother's graves. He is shown with his wife, an elder who was a child imprisoned in Porto Rico, and is accompanied by two others. They discovered a number of gravesites and Nick was at last able to feel a tangible connection to his siblings through place and prayer.

In my opinion, that could have set my mother off to really go radical, because the police imprisoned them in Porto Rico and no food was being allowed in. Her two sons died; that would take me over the edge in prison. I know myself, and that would take me over the edge and I would probably start fighting back against the government.

Schools and Saskatchewan

Escalating tensions and conflicts in B.C. caught the attention and sympathy of Doukhobors remaining in Saskatchewan. Threatened by the potential influx of Saskatchewan Doukhobors joining the Sons of Freedom, the B.C. premier warned the Prime Minister of this potentiality (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994). Peter Chistiakov apparently did encourage the Saskatchewan Doukhobors to migrate to B.C, and many from each Doukhobor party left Saskatchewan to support the Sons of Freedom in B.C.

Many Doukhobors, referred to as Farmali or Independents, remained in Saskatchewan to farm independently while retaining their allotted portion of immigrant land. However, when military exercises were introduced in the local school district at Arran, the Doukhobor principle of non-violence took precedence over independence and many Doukhobor parents removed their

children from the schools. They requested an exemption from the military marches but were refused. Consequently, the parents were arrested and imprisoned in Prince Albert and their children, from infants to youths, were imprisoned in an “old, abandoned army barracks” (p. 15). George Kinakin (2006), a Sons of Freedom elder, recounted his experiences as a child prisoner in Saskatchewan in an article he wrote entitled *This was Canada*. In the article a photo depicts up to thirty children including the young George standing in front of their place of confinement called the armoury (p.15). Kinakin wrote about his parents being arrested and imprisoned three different times for not allowing “their children to participate in military marches” (p. 15). Prison sentences were initially set at three months and then increased to six months for subsequent incarcerations. In his article, Kinakin recollects his experiences as a young boy of four years old:

The boys and girls, aged 9 months to 15 years, were segregated to upper and lower floors. The caretakers of the children were the caretakers of the old building. For the entire six months of confinement, the Doukhobor girls and boys were never allowed to be together. The only contact they had was dropping messages through a meshed screen between floors. The most ironic part of the confinement was the prison – like environment. (p. 15)

As a result of the relentless policy refusing to exempt Doukhobor children from military marches, the Saskatchewan Doukhobors who were

impacted, namely from Arran, abandoned their farms and moved to B.C. in 1930. This, wrote Kinakin, “is the story of my stark childhood growing up in the supposedly ‘most democratic country in the world.’ This was Canada” (p. 15). Anyoota, a Sons of Freedom elder, reflected on her childhood experiences of incarceration in the same ‘prison’:

The children watched over those who were younger. So we gathered not many of us, about six and asked “Why should we look after the children when we ourselves are children?” and they said “Well how is that?” “You took them, you look after them.” The nurses came, and there were only five of us, now they told us what direction to go to and that is all. And they took us to separate corners in the dark, and what could you do - just sit there, until the evening. We didn't eat or anything.

We sat there and they {the young children} found us where we were sitting and brought and threw us peanuts because they were in the same yard and the boys knew that we were not eating.

Then came their authority figure and she asked “Where are the girls?” And she came into each room and said come out and we came out of the basement. “You let them go right now and so that does not take place anymore.”

She stops to ponder and recollects the moments when her younger brother was being taken away from their parents, prior to being placed in the ‘prison’.

...and when they were taking him {my young brother} away he grabbed onto the cars on the train, his knuckles were white, he didn't want to be taken away from his parents, just screaming at five years old.

I will never forget that ever...

...silence...

Piers Island

Another, yet another, significant event in the history of the Sons of Freedom occurred in 1932, when up to six hundred Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were incarcerated on an Island off the coast of Vancouver Island - a prison compound developed for Sons of Freedom by B.C.'s provincial government to manage the 'problem'.

During our conversation about Pier's Island, Dyadya⁵⁶ Ilya disappears from the room only to reappear with a wooden frame which he hands to me. I run my fingers over the intricate designs in the wood, in awe of such skill. This frame he says was fashioned by his father. I gather my attention to this frame knowing that it was made on Piers Island. The photo in the frame is of the revered leader Peter the Lordly, testimony to his father's continued faith in the leader even while confined on Pier's Island. Dyadya thinks of his mom on Pier's Island without her children, his voice becomes strained, "for three years... and not to have four kids." I cannot fathom it.

It happened in the spring of 1932 when approximately 600 Sons of Freedom including 365 children were arrested for nudity (Hawthorn, 1955; Tarasoff, 1982; Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968). In 1931 the Canadian government amended the criminal code and the original sentence of six months for public nudity was increased to a three year sentence (Hawthorn, 1955;

⁵⁶ Uncle. The term uncle/dyadya is a respectful term used to address older males who may not necessarily be directly related through family

Tarasoff, 1982). Mary Malakoff (1983) recalled the three year sentencing and imprisonment on Piers' Island:

In the year 1932 we were evicted, to be more specific, were virtually thrown out by C.C.U.B for non-conforming. We were arrested at Thrums en masse. Sentenced to three years and sent to Piers Island. Children were taken away, were placed in foster homes, orphanages and Industrial schools. (np)

Whether the origins of the orders to evict the Sons of Freedom came from the CCUB communities is not certain, and they possibly came from either Peter Chistiakov (Ewashen, 2012) or by the C.C.U.B elders (Shlakoff, nd). Nevertheless, the Sons of Freedom were evicted from C.C.U.B communities for not paying community dues. Community dues defined by Nick Nevokshonoff and documented by Marie Shlakoff (nd) were collected for taxes which the Sons of Freedom could not agree with, contending that “the land belongs to God and that taxes should not be paid because they were also used for war” (np). The Sons of Freedom with help from the Saskatchewan Doukhobors created placards with a message that clearly stated their position on the private ownership of land.

*THIS LAND IS THE GIFT OF GOD TO THOSE WHO WILL TOIL ON IT
FOREVER. FREE FROM TAXES, WHICH ARE USED FOR WAR. THE LAND
CANNOT BE BOUGHT OR SOLD.*

A growing number of participants joined the exiled Sons of Freedom who were congregated in the Thrums area. A report by H. Trevor (1931, cited in

Lapshinoff, 1994) offers a revealing picture of the living conditions of the Sons of Freedom, camped in Thrums along a C.P.R railway tract. The Sons of Freedom he writes, “were driven out from the community villages, loaded by force on the wagons, brought to Thrums and dumped on the road” (p. 6). Initially, 117 men and women were arrested and charged with public nudity and sentenced to three years in prison. Soon after, 209 Sons of Freedom were arrested and by the end of May, 745 men, women, and children were placed in a barb-wired compound in Nelson. Smaller protests continued and by the end of June up to 600 adults were charged and sentenced to the three-year mandatory sentence for public nudity. The children were either arrested or left without care during this time (Woodcock and Avakumovic, 1968). Dyadya Vadim remembers being amongst a group who were taken into the barbed compound; after searching unsuccessfully for his parents he gave up and spent three days, sleeping up against a wall. He was eleven years old.

Pier’s Island is a small Island south of Vancouver Island. It is three miles square, and was leased by the Federal government of Canada as a prison camp for the convicted Sons of Freedom. Two large compounds were built, one for the women and one for the men (Hawthorn, 1955; Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968; Tarasoff, 2002).

I sit across from Dyadya Vadim, abundant white hair, sparkling eyes and energy that belie his 80-plus years. Sadness envelopes his face and moistens his eyes when he speaks about his experience of being fostered out to a non-

Doukhobor home in Vancouver. Upon his and other children's return to stay with other Doukhobor families (their parents remaining of Pier's Island), he recalls:

"We got off the train and they had to have an interpreter, we did not know a single word in Russian, except for one and that was паром."⁵⁷ He recalls attending Sunday prayer meetings and "every time I would see someone with a yellow sweater like my mom's I would run and look into their face to see if it was mom. I understood where she was but I still kept looking but it didn't happen."

For all of us gathered at the table, listening to Dyadya's memory, a sadness fell upon us, imagining the hopefulness he must have felt, sparked by the yellow sweater.

The following song, presented in excerpts, was written by a Sons of Freedom witness and poet who described the unfolding events leading to the Sons of Freedom imprisonment on Pier's Island. This poem, in part introduced in my awkward English translation, tells the story more detailed than any book or reports I have found thus far (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 28-35)

*We lived on God's land
and did not pay anyone.
And for this the community Doukhobors pushed us away
speaking badly about us.*

*They pushed us from the land
so we gave them our last clothing.
We stood naked outdoors
and gathered to pray.*

*At the end we decided
to leave upon the railway.
Leaving the community Doukhobors.
Relying upon the Lord.*

⁵⁷ Parom - ferry

*We walked four miles.
We walked to Thrums.
It was here our brothers cheered
And with love they met us.*

*They brought us apples
and invited us to spend the night.
We ate apples there
and had discussions amongst ourselves.*

*How will it be for us to sleep?
And what will we clothe ourselves with?
Shirts and jackets
We lay beside the 'plodorodnoi' gate.*

*We slept safely upon feathers.
We all gathered at ten in the morning.
Our family met and
we prayed to God without wavering.*

*People drove past us
looking at us smiling.
Policemen ran up to us
throwing poison on us.*

*The poison stung our bodies.
Everyone cried and writhed from pain.
We prayed for a long time
but the guards did not wait.*

*They fell on us like creatures.
And looked upon us in anger.
The police arrested our brothers
grabbing us by the hands.*

*The children were taken ahead to Vancouver
and we were taken to Oakalla.
For a long time they were sorting things out
without giving us an order.*

*All this time they could not decide
and so we stayed two months.
And what they will do, and will decide
Will be told to all*

*We will endure this suffering
and it will not be of boredom.
Even if they put us on an island
There will be kind people there.*

*We are not afraid of anything
Christ will overcome.
From century to century, Amen!
Everything done is for Him.*

*The 29th of April they took us
The 1st of May they arrested us
Read with attention
And remember those who suffered.*

*17th of May we came to Oakalla.
The 11th of August 20 people were taken to the Island.
The 1st of September they brought another group.
The 3rd of September a group arrived.
The 8th of September a group of 30 arrived.
The 15th of September a group of 50 arrived.⁵⁸*

Grisha Nazarov – 1932 – Pier’s Island

Paralleling the above testimony is the following composition which captures how a corresponding group of Sons of Freedom from the Grand Forks area were also incarcerated prior to being sent to Pier’s Island. They were held in a camp for five months, forty miles away from their homes. Excerpts from the poem illustrate in detail the harrowing event of children torn, taken away from their parents to be sent off to Vancouver (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 41-51).

*Heavy torment and suffering
is seen to start again.
Herding and pushing the Sons of Freedom
Into buildings.*

⁵⁸ My translation into English

*They pushed men with their families
everyone well and everyone ill.
And here there were women with children.
Babies many still breast-fed.*

*Driving down the roadway
three cars and one big truck
Drove up to our building
And stopped by the threshold.*

*All the arrested were sleeping
But one ill mother did not sleep.
She held her baby to her breast
To feed him.*

*In her heart the sadness is frightening
she is ready at once to die.
She knows already beforehand
They will take the children away.*

*In her soul she carries this calmly
But her heart is burning on fire.
She often is tormented and hurt
how awful it is to remember.*

*Her child was dressed to be ready
it could be within an hour.
From her this child would be taken.
Taken before her mother's eyes.*

*And the mother is focused on her child.
Bitter suffering reflected in her eyes.
And on this fatal moment
flowed a burning tear.*

*And the burning tear
as she shifted over him
landed on her son's cheek.
And softly she was heard crying.*

*She quietly rocked her child
wanting to quieten him.
Yet she did not have the strength to calm him
and she began to sob.*

Whispering to her son is the mother

*shedding her tears.
O, little one sweet one of ours
why were you born on this earth?*

*Why, are you people you strangers
Full of anger over me?
Why are you taking this little one
this child from my breast?*

*Everything is quiet, except for her own cries.
The child is quiet
Again he has fallen asleep by the breast
with sweet childlike dreams.*

*The mother does not sleep, only cries.
And brighter became the light.
Suddenly outside something is heard moving
A sound of steps with metal spurs.*

*The unfamiliar step
was already on the threshold.
And suddenly very many voices were heard,
men's voices so rough.*

*Everyone who slept, quickly awoke.
From sleep it was hard to comprehend.
They awoke to see what was happening,
It was not easy for them to take a breath.*

*The policemen filed in,
six of them in all.
They demanded in creature like voices
"we want to take away all your children!"*

*As they gathered together
the command was given.
And all of them with one word
were ready to render us apart.*

*The light from their lamps
revealed the yellow they wore.
One of them thundered an order,
Shouting "take them!"
They pushed the weary women
and tore the babes so young
from their mother's hearts.*

*Wild moaning was heard throughout.
Parents were crying in the corners.
There were weakened women
Laying without feeling on the floor.*

*One policeman came close
to an ill mother feeding her child.
Looking at her he teared up and
stretched out his arm unwillingly.*

*The children hearing the noises – woke up
and saw the strangers before them.
One little smile was loving
but his mother only cried out even more.*

*Innocent little one you do not know
that you are looking at your enemy.
You will bitterly suffer
when you are in his arms.*

*You do not feel, how little son
they already are taking you away.
Clinging to me you will be torn
from your mother's breast.*

*Look, at least I will give you a kiss
on the cheek, on the lips and the eyes.
Can it really be that this is the last time
that I will be able to look upon you?*

*The voices of the gentle children are heard.
Their cries resounded.
Then another policeman
hurriedly fled to the ill mother and child.*

*With this one came three others
up to the bed made of steel.
Waving a strap like a whip
upon a face and striking the sick.*

*One child they tore from the mother
and two of them held her down.
The babe they tore from the mother
Unleashing her cries and shouts.*

*The one in charge looked upon this suffering,
his look was so cold.
Shouts flowed into moaning
and moaning flowed into one.*

*The children were put into cars and trucks.
Everyone was taken to the station
escorted by the policemen
who strictly watched over it all.*

*Parents were crying so mournfully
gathered together outdoors.
And they did not know what to do
so behind the trucks they followed.*

*Only the wild landscape knew
of the many tears that did flow.
Only it will know
of their despondent dreams.*

*The children were taken against their wills,
they were so frightened.
Their arms stretched out
to their mothers in mourning.*

*Girls and boys,
they could see from the light of the bright fire.
And crying loudly they
prompted tears from me.*

*And suddenly the whistle of the train was heard,
coming from the darkening cliffs.
The train was already near
becoming closer and quieter.*

*The children were put on the train,
hurriedly into a separate car.
To take them quickly away
from their mothers and fathers.*

*With one last glance they all looked
through the locked car.
The children waved their hands
and called through the windows, farewell!*

*The train sped away like a snake.
The cliffs and the land did shake.
Behind the mountains it was hidden
taking with it our children.*

*Fathers, and mothers, all, not willing
were forced back to the prison.
The wind so gentle
carried their voices into darkness.*

*The children were taken away,
left with those who were strangers.
But the mothers' lives are left cruel,
left without their children.*

*The mothers were left to mourn
but it was time for them to go.
We left the warmth of the fire
Only cinders remained and smouldered.⁵⁹*

Timofei T. Savinkov – 17 January 1933 – This event happened May, 1932

The decision to apprehend the children by the Provincial government was of “dubious legality, since it was based neither on parental consent nor on court orders” (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 318). In Harry Hawthorn’s (1955) opinion the placement of the children “was an experiment that did not last long enough to test its possible value” (p. 283). The expense of this experiment proved costly, especially during the economic downfall, which is documented as costing “roughly three million dollars” (Zubek and Solberg, 1952, p. 147). In the spring of 1933, negotiations with Independent and

⁵⁹ My translation into English

Community Doukhobors resulted in the release of the children to Doukhobor homes. In 1947, R.H.C. Hooper (cited in Hawthorn, 1955) wrote about the apprehension of the Sons of Freedom children in his Master's degree thesis from the University of British Columbia. His concluding sentiments about the care of the Sons of Freedom children supported the decisions by the government:

The institutions and agencies were successful in countering many of the negativistic feelings that resulted from the separation of the families, and in preventing the experience from becoming damaging to the children's emotional development. However, it was not within the scope of their activities to attempt a re-education programme, which, if successful, would have resulted only in emotional conflicts when the families were reunited. The children would have been torn between their desire to conform to the wishes and beliefs of their parents and their newly acquired ideologies. (p. 284)

Hooper (cited in Hawthorn, 1955) goes on to recommend a long-term approach of containment for the Sons of Freedom. How ironic that this far-reaching suggestion was realized in 1953, with the abduction and imprisonment of Sons of Freedom children in a New Denver compound, a prison made for children.

The care of the children, according to Hooper's findings, was in "accordance with accepted child welfare standards of the day" (cited in Hawthorn, 1955, p. 284) which leaves me wondering about the standards of

the day. Included in the imprisonment were six babies and their mothers held in Oakalla prison. The babies, still feeding from the breast, were taken away from their mothers to be 'cared for' by nurses in a hospital. Three babies out of those six died. This continues to be spoken about with an on-going sense of sorrow. A parent of one of the babies who died, was cross-examined at a hearing in Nelson B.C. (n.d) and upon being asked about whether or not she was one of the people at Pier's Island the memories of that time stunned and silenced her. Her recollections are documented as follows:

While at Oakalla, two matrons appeared before me and the other woman who also had a nursing child, saying, further you are not allowed to nurse your babies while you are in jail, and forcibly took a ten-week-old baby boy from my hands. Although handicapped as I was by all surrounding, nevertheless, the baby was spry and healthy as can be. The nurse promised, saying, we will let you see your baby in a week or two, we will take good care of them. Two weeks had not elapsed, a matron came running along saying, we are taking you over to let you see your babies...The nurse instructed us saying, you will not be allowed to handle your babies....At first glance we were unable to tell the babies apart, as they appeared not flesh but bones to what they were a few days ago, their eyes saying, Yes, mothers, we have been expecting you...I took courage by taking the baby into my hands, relieving the baby of its wet diaper which was drenched to the last fold of its dryness. It appeared to me that they weren't changed for a long time. OH GOD. What do you think I have found

out? They were neglected, their underarms rotten, behind their ears there were deep running sores – so horrible was the scene before our eyes that I have felt a numbness creeping over my body and my heart shrinking.

With some effort I managed to change the baby from the wet diaper into a dry blanket, as there appeared to be no diapers at hand. On that day the baby was twelve weeks old - frail looking compared to what it had been a few days ago, its head hanging, bones showing, life fading away. After a half hour's stay we were asked to leave. About two or three days later, the matron came again, saying, I have bad news for you, your babies are dead...(n.p.)

A. Efanov, (1933-34, cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 57 – 61) captures this mournful event in a poem (the following is an excerpt).

*Breast-fed babies - children
without guilt, holy angels
pulled and torn from the breast.
Their mothers locked in jail.*

*Three little ones are executed.
Their hands did not quiver.
We were there to witness it
in person.*

*In one grave there were suddenly three.
The authorities decided that
none were any different than the other.
They were put in one hollow.*

*They let the mothers out of
Oakalla prison
to see their children.
So it might be a kind of solace.*

*The mothers shed tears
that streamed onto the earth...*

Very few reports of the deaths of the babies and their condition prior to their deaths are included in historical documents about the Doukhobors. However, a report by the John Howard Society of Vancouver claimed that the babies arrived in a weakened condition aggravated by their mothers' participation in a hunger strike (cited in Hawthorn, 1955) which is in stark contrast to the experiences of the mothers who witnessed their dying and dead babies. It is told they witnessed their children in an extremely deteriorated state of neglect. Efanov's poem continues to describe the mother's visit with their babies.

*Our children lay in the hospital
All wounded, barely living.
On the side stands a nurse
giving vaccines with a needle.*

*I went up to her with courage,
undid the ties from little hands and feet.
I saw the weakened body
and said to them what I could.*

*“Why the needle and the wounding?”
“Why do you give a vaccine?”
“Enough of this torture, wounding on wound.”
And myself, I cried loudly and bitterly.*

*The mother takes her child in her arms
tightly holding the child to her chest.
In death will be separation
What else can she do?*

*An angel lay barely breathing.
The child's eyes are fading,
and no one hears the mother
or the torment in her soul. ⁶⁰*

⁶⁰ My translation into the English language

A.B. Efanov – 1933-34

One of those babies, who survived, now an elder, was close to death, but was nurtured back to health by a Doukhobor family while his own mother and father were on Pier's Island. Dyadya Ilya, considers his situation as an infant. *You just think... I was just very poor. We used to go visit this grandfather, you know, and he was telling us a story... how bad I was. He says, "underneath your armpits, between the legs, you were just raw hamburger." My face was crooked, so what he used to do, he used to put oats into a little sack... oats, just oats. Heat it with water and apply it to my face.*

Zubeck and Solberg's (1952) account of the Sons of Freedom on Pier's Island portrays them as a group singing "happily over their laundry tubs and their handicrafts. Sometimes the songs rose to wails of banshee proportions when mothers longed for their children. Often they sounded content and happy" (p. 146). To sum up the Sons of Freedom, Doukhobor experience on Pier's Island as a group who enjoyed their imprisonment rings of exaggerated over-simplification. Skolrood (1995) referred to government reports that revealed how prison officials were challenged by the Sons of Freedom practice of resistance. A number of punishments were delivered to the prisoners including limiting their diet to bread and water, isolating them, beatings, shackling, and the loss of privileges. According to one report, during the year from 1933-34, two hundred and seventy four Sons of Freedom received punishment. Few stories remain today, or if they do remain obscured.

Stories like movements of ghosts, obscure and intangible speak/sneak through the walls that cannot hold or imprison memories. Memories of those children, now elders, can still speak with glassy-eyed emotion about what they encountered as a result of their resistance and the severity of those who were in charge of their 'care'. At that time my grandfather's three elder sisters spent time in a girl's industrial school where strictness and rules structured the institute. One of the sisters, who would not pick up a pencil during enforced schooling was stabbed right through the soft tissue of her hand by one of the caretakers. An elder recalls her time as a young girl in the industrial school and spoke about an unfortunate younger peer who was beaten so severely she could not hold up her head at the table to eat. Kostyei, recalls the experiences of his parents while held in an industrial school:

My dad and my wife's mom were in reform school, they fed them garbage and dad had boils that big that went right to the bone, you could shove your finger and touch the bone, the holes were that big on his legs and right till he died you could see the marks.

These haunting stories seem to emerge unexpectedly as I continue to wonder and wander. Wandering into the past, into the compositions of the past revealed the following songs by the children whose parents were confined on Pier's Island (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 39-40).

*I sit in prison; I sit behind iron bars.
No word of my dear mother.*

*No word from my father, my brother or my sister.
Could it be they have forgotten about me?*

*Hardship has come upon my heart
To suffer alone without my family.*

*Many little ones are suffering alone here.
Poor ones crying for their family.*

*Where are you my mother?
Do you not know how hard it is without you?⁶¹*

Children's composition, in school – 1932

Songs imbued with sorrow and longing, sung by children in the industrial schools without the warmth of their families, tell their story. And the sorrow in the songs sung by those imprisoned on Pier's Island, in that strange prison camp, without their children, or word of their children, tells their story. The sounds of singing, affectionately recalled by Bonch Bruevich (1909), "make a tremendous impression on one's soul; they divest one's attention from every day cares, and they take one involuntarily, along with all the others, into the world of the past with the profound feeling of sorrow and melancholy accompanying the life at the time" (p.XXXIX). These sentiments written in 1909 continue to resonate with those in the presence of Doukhobor singing today. This particular song, given particular attention by Doukhobor singers today, allows for a sense of those voices on the prison island. Those ancestral voices and the tears that accompany the messages of mourning are propelled into the present through song (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 51 -52).

*Весной травка зеленеет
Солнце ясная блестит
Вся природа веселеет
И приятно так глядит.*

*In the spring the grass becomes green
The sun shines brightly
Nature itself is joyful
And it is wonderful to see*

⁶¹ My translation into English

*Сосны листья улыбнутся
Запоют птички порой
А мы вспомним слёзы льются
Про счастливый край родной.*

*The shivering pines smile
The birds sing in time
But we remember and tears flow
About the blessed and beloved land*

*Где мы жили наслаждались
Счастьем, радостью одной
А теперь всего лишились
Улетели в край чужой.*

*Where we lived with enjoyment
blessings and happiness
And now everything is sorrow
Landing in this strange land*

*Где теперь сидим в неволе
И в разлуки мы с семьёй
Сердце жгет тоска кручина
Слёзы котятся порой.*

*Where we now sit without freedom
Torn from our families
Our hearts burn to cinders
Our tears flow timelessly*

*Нет отрадного денёчка
Нет минуты дорогой
Заменяли дни счастливы
Нам тюремною тяготой.*

*We do not have days of joy
We do not have moments dear
Our happy days have changed
Into a prison sorrow*

*Нет нам весточки ни откуда
Нет словечки дорогой
Чем могли б мы утешатся
Хоть бы весточкой одной.*

*We do not have news from anywhere
No words from our loved ones
so we could become comforted
by at least one bit of news*

*Вместо радости и счастья
Вместо воли дорогой
Только слышно море стонет
Ветер листья шевелить.*

*Together with joy and happiness
Together with freedom dear
We only hear the moaning of the sea
The wind stirring the leaves⁶²*

Тюремные Женщины – Остров Пирс

Imprisoned women – Peir's Island

Land, fires & prisons

In B.C. the Sons of Freedom lived in various CCUB communities, without any specific area to settle as a cohesive group. The land at Krestova, part of the B.C. land purchase by Hospodnii, was mortgaged along with all the other

⁶² My translation into English

purchased lands in B.C. At a meeting on May 15, 1931, Peter Chistiakov invited all Sons of Freedom to settle at Krestova. Furthermore, he acknowledged the outstanding land debt and stated that he would pay it off himself (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994). However, the Krestova land was included in the foreclosure of 1937, described further on, and eventually fell under the ownership of the Provincial government. Many Sons of Freedom were living in Krestova as well as in other community locations; however, they were not paying taxes or dues which resulted in the evictions prior to the mass arrests and incarceration on Pier's Island. With the impending return of the Sons of Freedom from Pier's Island arrangements to have them settle on communal property in Champion Creek was considered but did not transpire and they re-settled in Krestova as well as other Doukhobor communities such as a Gilpin, a small tract of land outside of Grandforks given to the Sons of Freedom by the Provincial Government (Lapshinoff, 1994).

The CCUB faced increasing pressure from the Sun Life Assurance Company and the National Trust Company for the outstanding debt of \$500,000 when in fact community assets were valued at over six million dollars and in 1937, they were declared bankrupt. The provincial government acquired title to the lands in 1941 after the companies attempted to evict the residents and/or have them purchase the land. The Provincial government pressured the Community Doukhobors to purchase or pay rent on their seized lands. The conviction that the land cannot be bought or sold remained an integral principle for the Community Doukhobors and, when they were faced with

privately purchasing their once communal properties, most resisted. This is reflected in a letter from the USCC⁶³ executive committee (1943, cited in Lapshinoff, 1994) as a response to representatives of the Canadian government regarding their refusal to purchase the lands:

We declare to you, the main reason of our refusal to accept your proposal of buying into private ownership confiscated lands of the CCUB, concludes as such, that we cannot, as members of the Spiritual Community of Christ to betray the principle upon which the community was built. We are aware, in having a private ownership of land is the root of a great evil, especially of all current deceitful capitalistic system: exploitation and enslavement – and a reason of all the wars and calamity of the people. Private ownership creates authority and defends with violence and killing, and each person – regardless of who he is – using the privilege of the authority therefore must defend it... (p. 27)

The Sons of Freedom remained rooted to their convictions; overall they would not consider any involvement in land ownership or public education for their children, both of which they understood as being tied to the military and participation in war.

...you basically are non-conformists and why should we pay taxes for land that was given by God...it is not man-made laws it is laws that are created

⁶³ After the foreclosure of Doukhobor lands in B.C., and dissolution of the CCUB, a new Doukhobor organization was formed by Peter P. Vergin in 1939, under the title *Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ* (USCC) (Popoff, 2000).

by the cosmos for us not some government sitting there telling you what to do and what to pay (Lena).

The Chairman of the Land Settlement Board, W. Turnbull, wrote a memorandum to the B.C premier in 1944 requesting the removal of the Sons of Freedom from Canada, stating that without the Sons of Freedom any Doukhobor situation would gradually disappear. He proposed legislation that would allow deportation of 'refugees' who do not comply with Canadian laws. He continued that "under such legislation the Sons of Freedom could be deported to Russia. One 10,000-ton ship could carry them all" (cited in Lapshinoff, 1987, p. 28). Although such requests were frequent and actually considered by the government of Canada - whether to Russia or other areas in Canada such as Champion Creek, Adams Lake, Lardeau - deportation or relocation was never realized.

By the end of the 1940s Sons of Freedom unrest accelerated with nude parading, burnings and even bombings resulting in lengthy prison terms, not only in prisons, but in facilities such as Riverview/Essondale (a psychiatric hospital since shut down). The Sons of Freedom proved to be resolute resisters even when incarcerated, manifested by a general noncompliance and frequent hunger fasts. They were routinely placed in solitary confinement, endured torturous forced feedings and beatings. There were several reasons for the Sons of Freedom unrest: the continued forced assimilation by the government to comply with laws that were outside of their beliefs and principles, the murder

of their leader Peter the Lordly, protesting the war, and the on-going effort to leave Canada.

In his independent reports, Maloff (1957) states that the blame for the problems faced by the Sons of Freedom, is a shared responsibility across all Doukhobor groups, as well as “the Federal and Provincial governments, Consultative, and Research committees and many Canadian citizens contributed to the creation and complexity of the problem” (p. 19). Shifting the blame and guilt, “upon the shoulders of the Sons of Freedom is wrong and dishonourable” wrote Maloff (p. 22). He argued that there were sufficient reasons to conclude that responsibility for what he terms “many ignoble acts” lay across all Doukhobor groups, notwithstanding non-Doukhobors (p. 22).

Maloff’s reports were extensively detailed given his knowledge and research related to Doukhobor history across all Doukhobor factions. However, most if not all incidents of burnings were attributed to the Sons of Freedom. Turbulence continued through the 1940s and peaked in 1947 with nude marches, the burning of community houses, homes and barns in Krestova, Shoreacres, Brilliant and Gilpin. Many were arrested and given lengthy prison terms (Lapshinoff, 1994). The following poem was composed by the talented poet, T. Samorodin (1946, p. 76) during his incarceration. It provides a touching glimpse into his prison experience and is reflective of many other experiences of those imprisoned at that time.

Из Тюременных Пережижанний Я Скучаю

*Я скучаю по воле отрадной;
Мне тюремный ворок надоел.
Я скучаю по роще прохладной,
Где-бы песенку радостно спел.
Я скучаю по воле одной,
И по роще зеленой, родной.*

*Стук дверей, все тюремные стоны,
Гул и звон надоел мне стальной;
И все члены мои истомлены;
Я-б счастлив был одной тишиной.
Я скучаю побыт в тишине,
Я скучаю по бледной луне.*

*Я скучаю по лунному свету.
Свет искусственный вредный мне стал –
По вечерней зари и рассвету
Я скучаю – давно не видал.
Я скучаю по лунных ночах,
Я по милых и нежных очах.*

*Улетает цветущая младость
Безвозвратно как вянувший цвет.
Улетает и счастье и радость
На рассвете моих юных лет.
Я скучаю по ласках любви,
Где-бы я отдохнул от борьбы.*

*Я скучаю по ветхой избушке,
Где семейство родное жижет,
И по матери, бедной старушке,
Что по сыне родном слезы льет.
И кого так давно не видал.*

Ожидайте меня, мои други;

Мне не вечно сидеть за стеной.
 Все пройдет: все лешенья, недуги,
 Я живу лишь отрадной мечтой:
 Я мечтаю вас видеть опять,
 И кого-то любезно обнять!

Тимофей Н. Самородин (1946)

What I Miss From the Endurance of Prison

*I miss the joy of freedom;
 I am tired of prison walls.
 I miss the cool groves,
 Where I would sing joyous songs.
 I miss especially freedom,
 to walk upon our green groves.*

*A knock on the door, all prisoners moan,
 I am weary of the drone and sounds against steel;
 all my friends are tormented;
 I would be happy to be alone in the quiet.
 I miss being in the quiet,
 I miss being in pale light of the moon.*

*I miss being in the light of the moon.
 The artificial light has become harmful -
 I miss the evening light and light of dawn
 which I have not seen for so long.
 I miss the moon filled nights,
 And for the gentle and meek eyes.*

*My blossoming youth is flying by
 without return like the fading light.
 Flying off is happiness and joy
 on daybreak are my youthful years.
 I miss the caresses of love,
 where I could rest from such suffering.*

*I miss the shabby hut,
 where my family lives,
 and my mother, poor old woman,
 And for my son whose tears fall.
 I miss everyone that I knew.
 And for those I haven't seen for so long.*

*Wait for me my friends,
 I will not sit behind these walls forever.
 Everything passes: All suffering and ailments,
 I live for joyful dreams:
 I dream of seeing you again,
 And to embrace my love!⁶⁴*

Burning has been used by the Sons of Freedom as an extreme form of protest as well as a demonstration of anti-materialism to maintain their values of simplicity and resist material corruption. Maloff (1948) provides an explanation of the use of burning that dates back to the burning of icons and weapons in Russia. The Sons of Freedom practice of burning material goods was centered on the perception that material accumulation prevents spiritual advancement (Maloff). The burning of personal dwellings became commonplace for the Sons of Freedom and did extend to the burning of schools which in their understanding was a “lesser sin before God other than permitting the children’s minds to be poisoned by erroneous ideas taught in public schools” (Maloff, p. 292). Although it was assumed that most if not all burnings were executed by the Sons of Freedom, this was not the case. For instance, it was disclosed by N. Nevokshonoff during the *Expanded Kootenay Committee on*

⁶⁴ My translation into English

Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) discussions (October 28, 1982) that numerous schools within CCUB settlements were not set by Sons of Freedom but by many hands across Doukhobor groups (Cran, 2006).

Krestova

Krestova, has often been described as a haven for the Sons of Freedom who carried on with their on-going struggle to maintain simplicity and cultural freedom. Aside from the tumultuous activities that occurred in Krestova, namely the fluctuating number of burnings, for many it was also a place of community that inhabited genuine collective efforts for a simple life founded on basic Doukhobor principles. Krestova was also a place where the “ceremonial life of sobrania and psalm-singing was richer than elsewhere” coupled with their steadfast resistance to materialism (Woodcock & Avakumovic, 1968, p. 316). Initially life in Krestova centered near communal homes, gardens and the construction of sawmills. However, this eventually changed when resistances to the accumulation of excess wealth resulted in frequent ritual burnings of their simple homes. Nevertheless, the lifestyle in Krestova proceeded in a simple manner in a number of селы⁶⁵ where gardens continued to be held in a communal manner,

In the summertime the higher plateau of Krestova did not have any easy access to water, so two дедыуку⁶⁶ would fill up some barrels by the creek (Goose Creek in the lower Krestova area) and deliver it by horse and cart for 50

⁶⁵ Syoli- smaller villages

⁶⁶ Dedooshki - grandfathers

cents a barrel. The water was for cooking, washing clothes and bathing. Later each village acquired a tap and people would haul water by pail (Stenya).

A fond memory of one elder was the outdoor baking ovens where children would be drawn by the aroma of fresh baked bread. The children would be given a piece of bread with the choice to have it topped with either sugar or salt.

My mother's memories of growing up in Krestova include the emotional remembrances of burning homes, including her own homes, and of the frequent and lengthy incarcerations of her father and her mother. Those memories based on tragic experiences, emerge with expressions of deep-felt sorrow. But what else stands out are her fond memories of living in Krestova, in particular the singing:

In those days, on a Sunday the first gathering would start at 7:00am, people would gather to sing and pray. Another gathering that most attended would begin at 10:00am. Another gathering, an informal gathering to sing songs, would begin at 7:00pm. Singing was also part of the day. As people worked they sang, women sang as they worked in the gardens. Mothers with babies would sit atop logs, singing until their babies fell asleep. Singing began with the rising of the sun through to the setting sun, and even then the younger people would sing into the night. You woke up and fell asleep with the sound of singing.

These childhood memories are remembered warmly by many who grew up in Krestova, a landscape that was also identified with nudity; however, according to my mother, Pauline, nudity had its place and her words demystify the occurrence as ordinary.

Growing up in Krestova as Sons of Freedom we were always surrounded by nude people, our parents and grandparents. We were taught not to be ashamed of our nude bodies because God did not create shame only beauty and pure hearts and to express ourselves only in that manner; from a pure heart. God has created us nude and if we are ashamed of our nude bodies then we are ashamed of his creation. To us nudism is the highest expression of humbleness. If any kind of force was coming from the government because of our faith we would pray and disrobe. Nudism began by our people in 1902 in Saskatchewan where the government took the land from our people when they demanded the oath of allegiance.

There are so many memories that my mother shared with me; she is an extraordinary storyteller, sharing her stories with tears evoking poignancy, whether in sadness or joyfulness. Her recollections conjure up images that are readily 'lived' into, breaking through any divisions of time. She remembered the many nights that lively discussions took place at her home between her father and other community members. The topic of war was taken up seriously and led to many hours of discussion which intrigued her as a young child.

I remember at night while I should have been asleep, men from the community would gather at our house and discuss the war into the early morning hours; they would go on and on about it talking about what should be done. I would pretend to be asleep and nobody thought that I would be paying attention.

The following song was composed by the highly respected Sons of Freedom poet and elder, Yevsei Ogloff (1999, p. 32). He melodically described the land of Krestova with obvious love and affection.

Krestova

Крестовое

*O Krestova and surroundings
We crossed your land
Green with pine trees
And birch trees.*

*О Крестовое окрестность
С перевалами площадь
Ты зеленая у соснах
И березы там стоят.*

*You are upon an elevated place
Your hilltop an open space:
You blush with charm
Breathing the fresh air of your land.*

*И возвышенном ты месте
Сред раскинутых ты гор:
Ты красуешься в прелести
Дышет свежестью твой двор.*

*From the beginning of your childhood,
A heavy cross you did bear:
Much suffering you have endured,
many tears you have shed.*

*От начала ты из детства,
Крестъ тяжелый понесла:
Много тягостей терпела,
Много слез ты пролила.*

*The world did not understand you.
You live in eternal secrets:
Because you are vast,
going forth before the rest.*

*Ты для мира непонятна.
В тайных Вечности живешь:
Потому ты необятна,
Впереди ты всех идешь.*

*Motherland in suffering you brought
forth strong sons
As well as lovely,
kind souled daughters,*

*Родина ты в муках больных
Себя крепких сыновей
И притом душой прилестних,
Добродушных дочерей.*

*You fed them in their poor state
In prisons and hard labour they left:
Convicted for their faith, the cross
The heavy cross everyone carried.*

*Ты кормила их неволей
В тюрьмы, каторги они шли:
За убеждение, свою веру, крест
Крест тяжелый все несли.*

*With suffering you strengthened,
toughened in the fight:
We are children at your breast
We thank you our Mother!⁶⁷*

*Ты страданиями крепила,
Закалилась в борьбе:
Все мы дети твоей груди
Благодарим мы Мать тебя!*

Glory to our God.

Богу нашемы Слава.

Feb. 2, 1987

2 – го Фев. 1987.г

Krestova is described by Daniil as a place that challenged people to keep awake:

The Sons of Freedom have always had a passion for connectedness; that's what I remember. I was quite young, yet, I was in different parts of the country working. I was in Vancouver, and other places but whenever I'd come to Krestova I'd have this sense that all of a sudden you are involved in something, not necessarily involved, you're just kind of thrown into it, it's happening all around. There's discussions, there's actions, there's political upheavals. Stuff

⁶⁷ My translation into English

was going on and I thought, "Well, you know what, whatever it is, but when I'm here, I can't fall asleep"...

And I thought, I gave credit to the Sons of Freedom. I said whatever they are, they definitely keep people awake, you know, they keep people awake...

Gilpin

The small village of Gilpin skirts the Kettle River near Grandforks and, similar to Krestova, was settled by the Sons of Freedom. During the year of 1935, four families in the Grandforks area refused to pay their land dues to the CCUB. They actively supported the principle that the land could not be bought or sold. These families, including their young children, were evicted from the CCUB lands and moved to a nearby district of Almond Gardens. It was there that they erected tents and a placard which read *Gods Land Cannot Be Bought or Sold*. After one winter of 'tenting' in the area and receiving many complaints from local residents, the police approached the families and informed them that an arrangement had been made for them to settle in the Gilpin area. Since they did not comply with the police, the families were forcibly moved to Gilpin and given seeds with which to start their first gardens. Gilpin became available for the homeless Sons of Freedom returning from Pier's Island. From 1936, Gilpin has been settled by the Sons of Freedom and remains under the ownership of the Land Settlement Board of B.C. Since that time the Sons of Freedom in Gilpin have not been subject to taxation. There has been on-going controversy about the understanding between the Sons of Freedom and the Land Settlement Board over the initial agreement regarding the length of time that

the land would remain 'crown land.' The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands continually place pressure upon the residents in Gilpin by suggesting the lands will be made available for private purchase. Gilpin's position on private land ownership reads clearly in the large sign that for years was visible upon entering Gilpin (now it is placed on the far end of Gilpin in my mother's yard) that reads:

THE LAND IS THE MOTHER OF US ALL

AND LIKE THE AIR WE BREATHE, IS A

GIFT FROM GOD FOR ALL INHABITANTS.

IT IS NOT TO BE BOUGHT OR SOLD OR

BARTERED.

The following letter was composed and submitted by my mother, Pauline Berikoff, a long-time resident of Gilpin, to the Grand Forks Gazette in 2008. The letter reflects the position of the Gilpin Sons of Freedom:

Gilpin land is sacred

In 1936 our ancestors were brought to this piece of God's land, Gilpin, where they could live by their beliefs – not to buy or sell Mother Earth. When government worked out a plan for them to live in Gilpin, they believed that God worked through these people.

They came here with nothing; they worked this land with their bare hands, dug ditches by hand to bring water from the mountain for their gardens. They

planted fruit trees. Here they prayed to God together, sang their songs together, and lived through heartbreaks when their husbands and sons were taken to prison; their children were taken away to government schools in New Denver.

This land is soaked with their sweat, blood and tears. They lived here and were buried here.

We believe their spirit is alive and here among us. We, their children, believe in the same principles, that land cannot be bought or sold. To us, this land is sacred. We wish to preserve it as an ancestral sacred place.

Since, 1936, Gilpin has been settled by the Sons of Freedom and, much like Krestova, the people had ‘wrestled’ to maintain their Doukhobor principles of living in a simple manner, not purchasing the land or having their children attend public schools. On a smaller scale than Krestova, houses and small community buildings burned. The Gilpin Sons of Freedom have been arrested for burnings and have had their children seized and taken to the New Denver children’s prison. Yet, for all the unrest they have experienced, the village reflected the simplicity of a typical Doukhobor village. The village nestled between a mountain and the Kettle River is dotted with homes that were traditionally very small and simple. Each family had a substantial garden and fruit trees. One of the first methods of crossing the river was a crafted ЛЮЛЬКА,⁶⁸ a small ‘carriage’ that was attached to cables spanning the river. When needed, up to four people could stand in the carriage and be pulled by cable to the other side. With the construction of a foot bridge the ЛЮЛЬКА

⁶⁸ люлька

became unnecessary. Eventually even the foot bridge became worn and was torn down when the access road to Gilpin was improved.

I have warm-hearted memories during the time that I lived in Gilpin from 1979-1986 with my husband and two young sons. There are many memories of living in our little house without electricity, tending the garden, gathering at the river during the summer, my sons waving daily to the train that chugged through the village a few times a day, the molenyie that was small enough to hear each unique voice of the young and old, the mutual helping hands of the community and the frequent evening gatherings to chat and sing. The community was tight-knit, and as a parent I always felt there was a watchful eye on the children as they played freely in the village, a sense of freedom that my sons mourned the loss of when we left.

The following song written by Yevsei Ogloff (1999, p. 34) captures the warmth and beauty of Gilpin.

Gilpin

*Gilpin: Oh beloved Gilpin,
Although your name is strange to us:
This is not a Russian expression,
But, you resound with our people's
voice.*

*During your childhood beginnings.
There lived here a poor person:
You gave him a name
In this, our 20th century.*

*Upon the banks of a high river
Your settlement is situated:
Away from worldly vanity
you observe your image.*

Гилпан

*Гилпан: О Любимый, Гилпан,
Хоть имя странная для нас:
Она не русского сложения,
Но, в тебе звучит народный глас.*

*Из детских дней твоего начала,
Жил здесь убогий человек:
Его ты именем назвался
В этот наш двадцатый век.*

*Па берегах реке высоких
Расположен поселок твой:
От суети мирской далеко
Ты соблюдаешь образ свой.*

*That is why God was pleased
To settle the sufferers here:
For the conviction of their faith,
to shelter the Sons of Freedom.*

*Затем было так Богу угодно
Здесь страдальцев поселить:
За убеждение и их веру
Сынов Свободы приютить.*

*Even though worldly storms and terror,
tore your people to pieces
People have shed many tears,
and endured much adversity.*

*Хотя мирские бури – грозы,
Тебя терзали, твой народ
Много лили люди слезы,
Терпели множество невзгод.*

*And now everyone glares at them
how strange, they cannot understand:
Where are these people going?
Why do they stand so steadfast?*

*И сейчац на них все смотрят
Так чуждо, не могут понять:
Куда стремятся эти люди –
За что так стойко все стоят?*

*The world is drowning in extravagance
sweeping him away deliriously:
Forgetting Christ – without recognition,
His teachings are not heard.*

*Но мир в роскоши утопает –
Его несет в бред волной:
Забыв Христа – не познавая,
К Его учению стал глухой.*

*O Gilpin, our beloved Gilpin
Do not lose heart, grow and blossom!
Your love, your awareness
the river will carry to the bright and
gentle land⁶⁹*

*О Гилпан, наш любимый Гилпан
Не унывай, цвети и расцветай!
Твою любовь, твое сознание
Несет река в светлый милый край.*

Apprehension of Children & the New Denver Children's Prison

In the spring of 1953 houses were burning in Krestova, Gilpin and the Slocan Valley (Malakoff, 1983). Many were homeless and talk of relocation was in the air. This time Costa Rica was considered and visited by Anton Kolesnikoff, a Sons of Freedom Doukobor, and Emmet Gully, a Quaker; however, this initiative did not bring about any results. Those left without homes decided to gather at Perry's Siding and a tent village was created. M. Malakoff (1983) documented the intensity of events leading up to the Perry's Siding settlement as well as the tensions generated once they were settled:

⁶⁹ My translation into English

After we settled down in the Polatka our main concern and topic of discussion was what shall we do next. There was much speculation about relocation but the utmost concern was about the spiritual aspect and how this was to be accomplished without the spiritual leader. As history relates Doukhobors were based upon the Spiritual leadership. Among the priorities was the need for Sorokin's presence whom we asked to come and solve the problems as he had promised. To this day we are at a loss as to how to follow the incidents of police brutality and how this could have been allowed in Canada. (n.p.)

In September of that year the village was raided by forty RCMP officers (McLaren, 2002). Adults numbering 148 were arrested for alleged public nudity; all were arrested and sentenced from several days to the maximum sentence of three years. Instructions from B.C.'s attorney general Robert Bonner were to observe the Sons of Freedom and move in when any illegal behavior took place, such as nudity (McLaren). Anticipating arrests, a special train was prepared for their departure to Vancouver.

Mary Malakoff (1983) recalls settling down in the tent village - Полатка⁷⁰ and being engaged in discussions about the spiritual aspects of the community. She remembers the attack by the police that had occurred during a meeting attended by both children and adults when...

a large number of policemen armed with clubs and black jacks attacked us with insensitive brutality. In the presence of the children they

⁷⁰ Polatka - tent

proceeded to beat men and women with clubs drawing blood and severe bruises. Their beastly attack was indiscriminate. Women were hit on the face and breast, etc. A couple of men had their heads split open. One can only imagine what effect this had on the children who witnessed this. After the beating we were arrested and the children were left horrified and crying to be picked up later and placed in New Denver Institution. Without charges being laid the grown-ups were kidnapped and taken to a building in Burnaby where charges were laid. We were accused of contributing to Juvenile Delinquency then taken to Oakalla prison. The next day the police came to the prison stating that the previous charges were dropped and we are charging you with being nude in public...Also women who bore no children were sentenced for refusing to let their children go to school...Previous to this incident the public was prepared for the course of action that was predetermined. Prior to this incident there was a statement in the paper by Mr. Bonner revealing their plan of action. Quote: "We need patience of Job and wisdom of Solomon to solve the troublesome Doukhobor problem and that is, we'll give two hard blows at the Doukhobor's back and break their backs once and for all. We have failed with the adults but will succeed with the very young. This is take their children away from their parents for forced education. Also take their lands away from them." (np)

In a speech given in 1993, Nell Parfinuik painfully recounted her memories of the Perry's Siding attack. She was raised in the village of Perry's

Siding, where the children did not attend school. One night their village burned and shortly after the tent village was put together alongside the burnt village.

She recalls her family - mother, father, brother and two sisters - were

never the same again. Never! After Day of New Denver when drunken policemen marched to my beloved village. I could still after all these years hear the terrified screaming. The policemen used their clubs freely. I realized their intent when they walked towards me and my sister. I was nineteen then, a young nineteen. My youngest sister only nine – she flung her arms around my neck, she was sobbing *please, please, don't let them get me*. Other children were screaming, while three policemen forcibly pried and tore my sister from my arms. I did not see my six-year-old brother and fourteen-year-old sister when they were taken. All I heard was the tortured weeping of agony, the moans of anguish in our beautiful green pasture. All the struggling children were put into buses en route to New Denver Institution, and the rest of us were herded like cattle into another direction on train to Oakalla Prison of British Columbia. I remember the goodbyes through the windows of the train, and tear-filled eyes, the waving children's hands through bus windows. There are other scenes in my mind of my father arriving from work and being grabbed by the police, and later being tried for nudism, for which he spent three years in prison – yet he did not disrobe...

The children, along with twelve mothers with nursing babies, were transported to the New Denver prison camp in the Slocan Valley (McLaren,

2002). The mothers were released along with children over school age. The younger children remained under the Protection of Children Act at the prison camp, enabling the authorities to hold them due to the clause that considered them at risk because they were “found in the company of people reputed to be criminal, immoral and disorderly” (McLaren, 2002, p. 259). Under the act it became legal for the RCMP to apprehend children under the age of eighteen who were not attending school. What ensued was a social experiment of enforced assimilation or what McLaren termed “a chilling exercise in resocialization” (p. 285), an experiment that ended up as a “fiasco” (p. 263).

It became the joint responsibility of the Department of the Attorney General and Department of Education to place the Sons of Freedom children in the New Denver prison for children (Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999). In a report comprised by B.C. officials entitled “Report of the Sons of Freedom Situation September 1953 to May 1954,” the following recommendations were formulated: “The children will become good Canadians most rapidly if they associate with other Canadian children in regular schools. It is the belief of your Committees that the major hope of solving the Sons of Freedom problem is by a generation or two (25 to 50 years) of compulsory education of children” (cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p.10).

At this time the Sons of Freedom position on schools did not change. This became a point of contention for the government insisting on the integration of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors into mainstream society, with one of the main methods of integration being education. Resistance to

schooling by the Sons of Freedom was accentuated by the belief that the Canadian government murdered their leader Peter V. Verigin in the train explosion in 1924. Prior to his murder, Peter the Lordly had emphatically stated that Doukhobor children would not attend public schools. The belief that *Господнии убьили за школы* (Lordly was killed because of schools) continues to the present day. This ongoing struggle to assimilate the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors through schooling was certainly brought to a climactic end in 1959 (ombudsman report, Friesen 2005). As Friesen (2005) contends in his article about the New Denver incarcerations, “[t]here was no national emergency, no risk to national security, and in retrospect there was no danger to the greatest good...” (p. 10). He acknowledged the clarity the Sons of Freedom had in regarding education as “a very efficient means of control” (Jamieson, 1972, cited in Friesen, 2005, p. 1). Friesen acknowledged that the Sons of Freedom perspective of the educational system in Canada, as a means to undermine their culture and community by assimilating their children, was not unwarranted, “they were not misjudging the situation” (p. 3).

An investigative report from the Ombudsman of British Columbia (1999) entitled *Righting the Wrong: The confinement of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Children* highlights the mistreatment of the children at the hands of the provincial government and New Denver children’s prison. The B.C. Ombudsman report was an investigation into reports of abuse – both physical and psychological harm – submitted by Sons of Freedom New Denver survivors about their experiences while incarcerated in the New Denver prison.

The B.C. Ombudsman, currently referred to as Ombudsperson (1999), produced a comprehensive report which includes excerpts from several governmental reports: Director Reports from within the New Denver prison, RCMP reports, along with a number of testimonials from the New Denver survivors themselves. The overall report uncovers the multi-faceted occurrences of oppression and abuses that continued with little intention from governmental sources to recognize, address, and improve the conditions that the children lived through. The Ombudsman's investigation "found that the children who were apprehended and confined suffered from a loss of love, nurturing, guidance and childhood; physical and psychological maltreatment; loss of privacy, dignity, self-respect and individuality and loss of civil liberties" (p. 1). The report uncovered crucial information that shed light on the harmful policy and practices, namely a multitude of wrongdoings - by both the provincial and federal governments, prison staff and police; however, it did not hold the government fully accountable. Although recommendations were presented, one being an apology to the New Denver survivors, an apology at this point in time has not occurred.

These were traumatic events spanning the years from 1953-1959 where up to 200 Sons of Freedom Doukhobor children were apprehended/kidnapped and imprisoned in the New Denver institute/prison. Children aged 7 - 15 years of age were hunted down by RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) officers who broke into homes and pulled children out of closets, from under beds and literally out of their parents' arms. The policy of forced assimilation, beginning

with the arrival of the Doukhobors in Canada, continued with aggressive practices and attitudes.

On-going RCMP apprehensions of children took place either in the early morning hours or during midnight raids in Sons of Freedom Doukhobor villages, namely Krestova, Glade and Gilpin. Children and parents were subject to years of hiding and keeping a look-out for the police and alerting others. Some RCMP officers searched for children by means of pitch forks and dogs; as well there were reports of police being under the influence of alcohol. The most notorious raid occurred on the 18th of January 1955 and was appropriately called “operation snatch” and “operation Krestova” where up to seventy RCMP officers swooped down on the village of Krestova and forcibly “netted forty children” (McLaren, 2002, p. 271). A government correspondence to the Department of Child Welfare referred to the raid as “successful” (p. Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 57). The following highlights my visit to a site above the Gilpin area, where children hid in a makeshift camp in a forest:

Years ago went on a short hike up the side of the mountain above Gilpin with a friend of mine who as a child spent time hiding from the police in a forest camp. As we approached, decayed remnants of the camp were visible. Listening to the stories of my friend and his experiences of living in the camp with other children in the forest, left me imagining the struggle, adventure and fear. A sighting of the children by a police helicopter spelled the end of the camp and of the hiding; the children were apprehended and sent to New Denver.

In 1953, the initial group of children in New Denver related their experiences through oral and written verses providing a glimpse into their perspectives and emotional responses. Their sadness, resolve and beliefs are enlivened in poetry: (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 118 -119).

*Денек был осенний холодный
И снежок слегка моросил
И ветер в окон санаторских
По телу мороз пронесил.*

*The autumn day was cold
With the snow lightly falling
And the wind came through the
window of the Sanatorium
The frost propelled through the body.*

*В ненастный тот день собирались
В санаторскую зданию толпа
И там пред толпой совершалось
За школьное дело борьба.*

*On a gloomy day we gathered in the
crowded sanatorium
And before the crowd a struggle over
the school's situation took place.*

*Нас девок, ребят всех семнадцать
Собрались в угол мы
И стали молиться мы богу
Чтоб Он помогнул нам в борьбе.*

*There are seventeen of us, girls and
boys
Gathered in the corner
We began to pray to God
That He would help us in this fight.*

*Чиновники школьные хотели
На скул бас встациить и в вестъ
Где учат они к разрушению
И достигнуть царскую честь.*

*The school officials wanted
To put on us a school bus and take us
Where they teach to destroy
And acquire royal honour.*

*Но школьные свой план ни свершили
Сам Бог помешал им в том
Ну вели негодяи говорили
Мы будим учить вас тайком.*

*But your plans for school did not take
place
God himself interfered with them
But the villains said
We will teach you by force.*

*Но тут они нас не упросили
Ответ им что школы в нас нет
Христос нам один лишь учитель
И Он всем детям нам отец.*

*But they did not ask us
We do not have answers about schools
Christ is our only teacher
And he is the father of all of us
children.⁷¹*

Сложили дети в Нью Денвере.

*Composed by the children in New
Denver*

⁷¹ My translation into English

There are many New Denver survivor testimonials, all deserving a hospitable page, yet with limitations and conditions within hospitality, I include only a few, revealing a number of varying yet similar experiences. The following was shared by a survivor who was eight at the time of his incarceration (cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 13):

So they took us on buses to New Denver. It was late at night when we got in and that was my home for the next three years...Needless to say I really missed my parents. Being so young, I really needed the protection and love of my parents. At least I had my sister...that helped some. That was of course the first time I was away from my parents for any length of time...in a strange place, in an institution with people I did not know. People who did not show any love or affection to us - I mean the staff at the institution.

The following is shared by a survivor who was ten at the time of her incarceration (cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 26):

Well my most vivid memory of it all, my every waking minute for the five years that I was there, was I want to go home. That's my most vivid thought and memory at that time. I thought every waking minute I want to go home, I want to go home. There was no guidance even, you know, from them...

A survivor, who had just turned seven years old before her incarceration, recounts her experience (cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 27):

No emotion – no hugs – you put somebody away into an institution and don't hug them – just a child. The matrons never hugged us. They never gave us comfort. They were not – you were emotionally barren. There was not love given. What does a child grow up thinking then? What is he like or what is she like years later? I don't know too much more. It's just to me like that stuff that was done was not done for my good. It was done to hurt me. They did hurt me.

Repercussions continue for these former child prisoners, who during their 'time' served in the New Denver child prison were not permitted to speak in their native Russian/Doukhobor language. They were denied access to their culture, spiritual practices and language. They were denied physical contact and comfort from their parents who were limited to two visits per month through a high wire fence. They were faced with surviving in a strange environment where language, food, activities, rules and regulations were foreign and where punishments were a regular occurrence from leather strappings to having their visits with parents revoked. In addition, the food and other items from their parents were at times confiscated by staff (personal communications). The Ombudsman's report describes in much more detail the experiences of the child prisoners and is available electronically at this site: www.newdenversurvivors.readywebsites.com/.../righting_the_wrong

The New Denver facility was often referred to as the San, Sanatorium, institute, residential school, all of which I consider euphemisms for prison or prison camp, and are terms I use liberally. The following description from one

New Denver survivor portrays the prison as many other prisons would be described (cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 59):

It just seemed as – New Denver – all these rules. Get up at a certain time, eat at a certain time – there was no flexibility, there was no – you couldn’t sleep in, you couldn’t eat what you wanted. If you missed a meal, you went hungry....It was very regimental. That’s why it was more like a prison with the fence around, and all those rules, get up at a certain time, you make your bed, you use the bathroom at a certain time, breakfast, school, back to the dorm for lunch, back to school. Even in the summertime, it was still very regimental...Just – no flexibility – rules were rules and they had to be obeyed.

An eight-foot-high chain link fence enclosed the perimeter of the prison on all sides excluding the lakeshore. RCMP officers patrolled the premises during parental visits which were conducted through the fence, justified by the Director of the prison as a means of control to maintain ‘peace’. Parents were permitted – with passes - to visit their children on the first and third Sunday of each month for the duration of one hour. This was problematic for most parents required to travel long distances as most did not have vehicles at their disposal. The experience of the fence for one New Denver survivor was depicted as “creating a concentration camp atmosphere,” and another likened it to a zoo (Cited in Ombudsman of British Columbia, 1999, p. 52).

That’s how it was; it was a zoo for the government. And I feel that was an experiment. I feel that part of that was a government decision to get elected - to

break the Doukhobors and the children, and this is what the government did.

They made their own zoo with the children. And every so often, they walked by and said, “Isn’t that a good zoo.”

In a conversation with Tyotka⁷² Alya about her personal experiences as a child in New Denver prison, I observe her sinking into her memories. I gaze at her and recognize a little girl with big eyes and round cheeks talking from within the prison fence and walls:

I have no clear memories of the 1st year; I was seven years old. I know that I began to pee the bed and that I did not speak. It is so hard to talk about and explain. I slept with a few other girls as there were not enough beds. One of them heard some crying in the bathroom and as she recalls, there I was huddled in the corner of the shower naked and shivering and whimpering. There I was huddled up so small. They tried to break our spirit. They made you feel ashamed of your parents, ashamed that you are Russian, ashamed of your religion. There was no comfort or care. No hugs. No one to say “Hey it will be alright”. We acquired behaviours such as lying; think about it, 5 years in that place and you learn not to tell the truth. When I got home my mom did not understand why I was always lying. But as kids we protected each other, you do not tattle on anyone, you do not betray your brother. We also got the strap; you know it was leather with rubber edges. Did it ever sting. We would get strapped on the wrist and it would swell. There was one who was a mean sucker. Once, I was asked

⁷² Auntie: The term auntie/tyotka is a respectful term used to address older females who may not necessarily be directly related through family

to put my arm out and just when the strap came down I pulled my arm away and the matron hit her own leg and did I ever get more strapping because of that. You could get strapped for many things, like not getting your laundry together to be washed in time. You also could not get out of bed until the lights went on. Well myself and a few girls got out of bed before the lights went on and were making noise in the bathroom. Well the matron made us stand before an open door on our knees for at least 45 minutes “голод ветер свистел» (the cold wind whistled).

I remember going to the Dentist and at that time they used a big needle and were not so careful. It was frightening. My brother was with the Dentist and I could hear him moaning and whimpering. At that time I said to myself, I won't cry. Nothing will make me cry. And I didn't. Now, I don't know if that built character or took something away. I took this away and thought about this for a long time. I can't count how many times I have heard that struggling builds character, that it makes one stronger. What did all of that struggle and pain result in?

But all of this did not break my spirit. For some it did. Although I remember that when we were released I did feel ashamed walking with my mother in town; she would wear her long skirt and kerchief. But during the noxom (trek) to the coast we protested at Victory square and after that I always was proud to be a Doukhobor/ Sons of Freedom. I saw that there was a struggle - борба какаўся (a fight of some sort) - and I was proud to be part of the борба (fight). We were

from Krestova and did not know anything and we as young people were so curious about Vancouver.

It is so complicated. You can only find your own truth.

The following poem, composed by an unknown poet, provides a picture and sense of being a 'prisoner' inside the New Denver compound reminiscing about the 'capture' (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 122):

Подружка Из Нью Денвора

*Сижу над тюремным окошком
Подружка, весна уж пришла
Весенние птички порхают
Вокруг уж царить красота.*

*И солнце теплей уже стало
Я слышу ручей зашумел
Из слоканской горы леденистой
Ветер теплей уже запел.*

*Леса и поля зеленеют,
Цветы покрывает землю
В меня сердце все каменеет
Презрение на каждом шагу.*

*Вспомни моя ты подружка
Как гуляли с тобой по лугам
И вспомни как свободно и вольно
Все живущие видели там.*

*Ведь и ныне вся на эта природа,
Себе все также свободно живет.
А мне то в этой тюремной неволи,
И хлеба куска не дают.*

*Ох, как мне хочется на волю
И легко так легко дыхнуть*

Friend from New Denver

*I am sitting under the prison window
Our friend, spring has arrived
Spring birds flutter about
All around beauty reigns.*

*Then sun has become warmer
I hear the sound from the creek
The Slocan mountains are thawing
The warm winds are already singing.*

*The forests and meadows are turning
green,
The flowers cover the land
My heart is turning to stone
Contempt with every step.*

*Remember me my friend
How we walked about the meadow
And remember how free
All the creatures were that we saw.*

*And today all of this nature,
continues to live so freely.
But for me captive in this prison,
They do not even give a piece of bread.*

*Oh, how I want be free
And to breathe lightly so lightly*

*Забить навсегда эту неволю
И к милый мамаша прильнуть.*

*To forever forget this captivity
And fall into my dear mamasha's
embrace.*

*Как вспомню тот вечер разлуки
Когда Бордула меня увозил
Мамаша меня охраняла
Но он одно лишь твердил.*

*How I remember that night being torn
away
When Borudula took me
My mamasha protected me
But he kept repeating*

*Поскорей, поскорей одевайся
Я уж на вечер опоздал
Но плачь и рыдание мамаша
Все приказы его покрывал.*

*Hurry, hurry get dressed
I am late for the evening
And the cries and sobs from mamasha
Were muted over by his orders*

*Она крепко меня к груди прежала
И шептала ты радость моя
А теперь отберет Бордула
Ох, дочь остаюсь я одна.*

*She held me tight to her chest
And whispered you are my joy
And now Borudula takes me
Oh, daughter I am left alone.*

*Я все ее утешала
Но сердце в меня замерла
Бордула жестока взглянул
Идти тебе ух пора.*

*I tried to calm her
But my heart stood still
Bordula cruelly looked
It is time to go*

*Подружка, в меня сердце ныне
играет
И летит к мамаша домой
Рассказать, как, все здесь ридают
За высоки тюремной окном*

*My friend, today my heart is playing
And flies home to my mamasha
Telling her how we all are sobbing
By the high prison window.*

*Ох, мамаша, где твои ручки
И грудь твоя полной любви
Неужели меня ты забыла
В прекрасный сей ранний весны.*

*Oh, mamasha, where are your hands
And your chest full of love
Can it be that you forgot me
In the beauty of this early spring.*

*О Боже разрушь эти стены
И к мамаша меня унеси
Она лаской смоем все обиды
И легко мне станет в груди.*

*O God break down these walls
And take me to my mamasha
With her caresses she will wash away
the hurt
And it will become lighter in my chest.*

*Подружка моя дорогая
Мамашу свою дорожи*

*My dear friend
Value your Mamasha*

*Она в жизни есть твое утешение
И охрана на юном пути.*

*In life she is your comfort
And protector on a youthful path.⁷³*

Автор не известный.

Author unknown

For further information about the New Denver incident, see www.newdenversurvivors.tk which provides detailed information about the New Denver tragedy including personal, historical, political, philosophical and human rights perspectives. Personal experiences captured in poetic compositions add to the poignancy and further understanding of the impact upon the survivors of the New Denver prison, highlighted by the following poem composed by Naida Hamoline (Sapriken) (n.d) accessed from the above New Denver Survivors website:

ROWS UPON ROWS

Rows upon rows of beds

On which we lay our tiny heads

Sobbing ourselves into a restless sleep

Praying to God our souls to keep

Solemn faces all around

Hoping and waiting to be found

Children's pure hearts trampled and shattered

Placed in rows like we never mattered

Longing and wishing for family and home

A simple caress from a human form

⁷³ My translation into English

*Starched white uniform swooshing by
Makes my hair bristle with fear, and I cry*

*Maybe today we will get to go home
And forever leave this hated dorm
The day slips by and dusk is here
And back into our rows we disappear*

Hopes for migration & the great trek

Throughout their history in Canada, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors did not lose hope in migrating to a land where they could realize freedom based on their lifestyle, beliefs and principles. There were numerous references, prophecies and attempts at leaving Canada for other lands, including their 'homeland' which they embraced dearly and seriously. The dreams, myth or possibilities of returning to Russia were perpetuated through the sentiments and prophecies of leaders. In Russia, Looshechka spoke about the Doukhobors getting on a 'black horse' and leaving for a faraway land where through their toil some would forsake Doukhoborism and become rich.

But those who will remain – not rich, not poor – their leader will come to them and he will take his people into a mountainous region covered with forests. Here, in not too long a time, there will be some who will refuse to listen to the leader. They will buy for themselves lands and forests and will start to get rich. But their wealth will not bring them contentment. They will gather at many meetings to discuss various topics, but they will

not understand each other's view point. They will be generally talking about migration to somewhere...From there only a small group of Doukhobors shall migrate. Only such a small handful will move (this is an excerpt of a full document recorded in 1947 by A. N. Popoff from the recollections of his Father-in-law, V. Fedosov).

Early on in the 1900s the Doukhobors realizing that assimilative measures would continue, appealed to "all the nations in the world" that would open their country to them on the basis of religious and cultural freedom (Maloff, 1948, p.92). Their appeal did not receive a response. Peter Chistiakov delivered a speech during the mid-1930s after a failed plan to migrate to Mexico, which was recounted by a number of elders. He stated the impossibility of migrating to any other country aside from Russia.

Mexico, nor South America, nor Turkey, nor any other foreign country for that matter... As it has been ordained by past prophecies, the Doukhobors will make their migration to their one and only country of origin and that is, back to their original motherland – Russia...

The speech highlighted what he called the true spirit of Doukhorism - not being consumed by material possession and private land ownership but inhabiting a spirit of love and care for everyone. The hope for migration did not diminish, especially the hope to return to Russia. This 'hope' is exemplified by

the words of Yevsei Ogloff (1999, p. 38) warmly woven into a poem about our

Родина:⁷⁴

Родина

*Ах ты Родина, мне ты милая,
Но с тобой пришлось мне в
разлуки жить.*

Припев:

*Знать предется мне на
чужбинушки
Голову склонить – сиротинушки.*

*Далеко от тебя живу
странником,
Во чужой стране, я изгнанником.*

*Догло ноченькой, я с мольбой стою
За тебя молюсь – моя Родина.*

*Отец благой, Покровитель мой
Просвети тот край, тую
землишку.*

*Вороти меня к моей Родине
При заходе дня, на упокой туда!*

*Приклонюсь я там, ко сирой
земле,
И прижмы ее, я к своей груди.*

Евсей Г. Углов

Motherland

*Oh you motherland, you are dear,
But it happened that I live apart from
you.*

Chorus:

*I know that before foreigners
I will bow my head – an orphan.*

*I live like a stranger
Far from you,
In a strange land, I am exiled.*

*I stand through long nights appealing
For you I pray – my native land.*

*Dear Father, my Guardian
Enlighten this place, your land.*

*Return me to my Motherland
The day is near, for eternal rest there!*

*I will bow down there, upon the damp
land,
And embrace her to my chest.⁷⁵*

Yevsei G. Ogloff

During the late 1950s, migration to the Soviet Union, formerly Russia and the Doukhobor ‘motherland,’ began to take on tangible significance and

⁷⁴ Motherland

⁷⁵ My translation into English

effort. Initiatives transpired to resettle the Sons of Freedom to other areas in B.C. Areas considered were Graham Island, Pinchi Lake in the Stuart Lake area, the Lardeau valley and Adam's Lake (Lapshinoff, 1994). Migration, therefore, became urgent, especially with the incarceration of the children in New Denver. Therefore, in 1957 a delegation of Sons of Freedom/Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors traveled to the Soviet Union to explore possible migration. Although the possibility of migration appeared favorable it was eventually rejected by the Soviet Union. However, the attachment and affection the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors harboured for Russia was highlighted in many compositions (cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 131 – 132).

*Россия, Мать Сынов Свободы,
Покров для множества племен,
К тебе стремятся все народы,
Различных красок и имен.*

*Russia, the Mother of the Sons of
Freedom,
A protector for our future ones,
All people yearn for you,
Of different names and colours.*

*Препев:
Так здравствуй ты Россия Мать,
Так здравствуй ты Россия Мать,
Так здравствуй Матушка Россия,
Тебя мы будем прославлять.*

*Chorus:
Greetings to you Mother Russia,
Greetings to you Mother Russia,
Greetings Mother Russia,
We will glorify you.*

*Хотя в скорбях ты слез ранила,
И поражений перенесла,
Своим детям ты не изменила,
Свои ты честь не продала.*

*Even though in sorrow your tears fall,
And you endured defeats,
You have not changed your children,
Their honour you did not sell off.*

*Весь мир тобою ведь гордится,
Пример твой многих народил,
Универсальная Царица,
Светила изо всех светил.*

*The whole world is proud of you,
Your example has been birthed by
many,
The universal queen,
Your light has brightened everyone.*

*От нас услышать все народы,
Что мы наследники Руси,
Христовы смелы воеводы,
И верные сыны твои.*

Песнь Делегатов – 1958

*All people will hear us,
That we are heirs of Russia,
With Christ we fight with courage,
And are your faithful sons.⁷⁶*

Song of the delegates – 1958

For the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, leaving Canada was linked to their experiences and understanding that they were exiles in Russia and remained exiles in Canada. A prophesy by Peter Chistiakov is often referred to by Sons of Freedom in relation to burnings and bombings, “[w]e are not emigrants, but exiles, and we will leave Canada through jails” and it is understood that a large number of Sons of Freedom followed the prophecy into prison (Lapshinoff, 1994, p. 42). However, the Sons of Freedom were also incited by the intentions evidenced in a report by Judge Lord in 1961 regarding the sub-division and selling of provincially-owned lands settled by Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, resulting in Kootenay-wide burnings and bombings (Ewashen, 2012). So it was during the 1960s that massive unrest took on monumental proportions. There were potentially dangerous burnings and bombings that occurred in ‘secret’ during the night; some of the targets were power poles, community halls and CPR tracks (for a detailed list of depredations see: Lapshinoff, 1994, *Depredations in Western Canada Attributed to the Sons of Freedom.*) There are speculations about the hidden burnings and bombings and why they took place, yet complete clarity is eclipsed, and riddled with complexity and contradiction.

⁷⁶ My translation into English

Although individuals were exposed to risk they were not targeted, the targets of burnings and bombings were 'material'. Sadly, one incident in particular is remembered with deep regret and sorrow.

Nick and I walk into his shop; there are cars and car parts, but a space is also delegated for headstones which he shapes and engraves from time to time, health permitting, for those requesting this service which he considers a hobby. Away from all the other headstones is one in particular, made out of quartzite and adorned with the image of a heart, a rose and a dove. Engraved on the base are the words 'RIP BRO'. We stare at the headstone which was lovingly and carefully fashioned 50 years after Harry's death. The headstone is for Nick's brother and will eventually, once Nick is satisfied with the outcome, be placed upon Harry's grave. Nick's love and affection for his brother is apparent as his voice falters and we become quiet. Fragmented memories of a self-assured handsome brother emerge, and an on-going curiosity about the night he died. Harry was seventeen years old and not much is known about how or why he was involved in the incident that ended his life.

Nick's brother Harry Kootnikoff died in 1962. He was with a group of men when a bomb exploded prematurely in the car they were in. It is speculated that the bomb was intended for a night-time bombing. The others in the car suffered injuries but Harry was the only one who died – swept up into the night-time depredations taking place during the 1960s. As a child Harry spent time incarcerated in the New Denver children's prison and was exposed

to burnings and bombings in Krestova; nonetheless, there is no definitive answer to this tragedy aside from a young man caught up in the continual pressures surrounding him and his community. Nick holds Harry in his memory, maintaining a continuity of his 'presence' through memory and mourning, and validated in the form of a headstone. Nick's questions remain unanswered.

In 1962, ninety six men and sixteen women were incarcerated in Agassiz's Mountain Prison for sentences from two to fifteen years as a result of burnings and bombings (Ewashen, 2012). A number of statements of guilt were given to the police and whether or not the individuals were indeed responsible for the acts; they were nonetheless charged and imprisoned. Ewashen (2012) stated that it "was quite likely that they were not responsible for all of the arson of that time as many business interests preferred all Doukhobors to disappear" (p. 7). In protest of the incarcerations and a show of support for those imprisoned, not to mention manipulations by influential individuals, Sons of Freedom homes began to burn (Lapshinoff, 1994). A fireproofed section of the Mountain Prison was constructed in 1962 for the imprisonment of Sons of Freedom Doukhobors (Commeree, 1964). Relatives of the Sons of Freedom prisoners were greatly concerned when they learned that the prisoners would be required to wear fireproof clothing made of asbestos which contributed to the urgency of an impending trek (personal communication). The Trek, comprised of a group numbering between 500 – 1,400 Sons of Freedom, commenced en-masse to the coast on September 2, 1962 (Mundy, 1964, p. 1).

This remarkable trek from the southern interior of B.C. to the West Coast could be understood as a prophetic event linked to one of Hospodnii's peculiar exercises. During Hospodnii's time in the CCUB's communities, he put in place strict guidelines for community members to follow; he also initiated gatherings, one of which involved youth (and young adults). The youth would gather in a meadow to sing and listen to Hospodnii speak. He then conducted a puzzling practice called 'Маршировку'⁷⁷ which took place primarily in Brilliant and Ootishenia, near Castlegar B.C. It happened that one day Hospodnii gathered a large number of members of the community and began a long walk from Brilliant to the village of Plodnorodnoe. Along the way people came out to witness this curious march. In Thrums, a crowd gathered, hearing that Hospodnii was leading the whole community of people. When the marchers came near, Hospodnii greeted the crowd and delivered an explanation "[o]ur present procession is our maneuvers, as preparation for the future. One day we will gather like this and walk, walk and walk and leave this place" (Maloff, 1948, p. 133). His premonition or prophecy is reflective of the 'great trek' executed by the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors.

*Мы в походе, мы в походе, и преград не презнаем,
И во имя духоборцев дружно все вперед идем.
Дело наша процветает, громко мы стихи поем.
Ибо снами Божий Ангел, и мы с Ним вперед идем.*

Принев:

Отпусти народ, ни держи народ – вам Господь речет.

⁷⁷ marching

Отпусти народ! Отпусти народ!

*Мы в походе, мы в походе, братья, женщины с детьми,
И народы с восхищением наблюдают за нами.
Наши предки идут снами, верим, что мы не падем,
Ибо с нами Божий Ангел, и мы с Ним вперед идем.*

*Мы в походе без оружия, верой Божьей влекомы,
Его милость к убогим, к их страданьем чутки мы.
О мужайтесь Духоборцы, конец пути мы пройдем,
Ибо с нами Божий Ангел, и мы с Ним вперед идем.*

Автор неизвестный - 1962

*We are on a trek, we are on a trek and we do not acknowledge barriers,
In the name of Doukhorism together we go forth.
Our deeds are thriving and loudly we sing our songs.
God's Angel is with us, and we go forth with Him.*

Chorus:

*Release our people, do not hold our people – the Lord sayeth to you
Release our people, release our people!*

*We are on a trek, we are on a trek, brothers, women with children,
The people look upon us with admiration.
Our ancestors walk with us and we believe, that we will not fall,
God's Angel is with us, and we go forth with Him.*

*We are on a trek without guns, leading with faith in God.
We are sensitive to His mercy of the poor and their suffering.
O take heart Doukhobortsy as we reach the end of our journey,
God's Angel is with us, and we go forth with Him.⁷⁸*

⁷⁸ My translation into English

Author unknown (1962, cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 147)

The trek moved along until the marchers were confronted by a barricade sanctioned by the Attorney General's office and secured by the RCMP at the Bromley Provincial Campsite. For several weeks they were prevented from either proceeding or returning; however, the barricade was disbanded due to public concern (Mundy, 1964, p. 24). The group camped near Hope for six months, proceeded to Vancouver for a six-month stay until their eventual settlement near the Mountain Prison in Agassiz. Approximately 150 structures were put together with accessible materials including cardboard, canvas, wood and metal. They were reported to be orderly, neat and clean (Commeree, 1964). The Sons of Freedom Trekkers required financial support which was primarily provided from the Salvation Army in the form of vouchers and limited social assistance from the Provincial Government (Commeree, 1964). Once settled, a number of Sons of Freedom were employed in a range of jobs such as farm work and carpentry (Foerster, 1964). However, the initial years were not easy, exemplified in this poem written by Katya Popova (1963, cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 161):

Жизнь Маршиников в палатках

*В маленькой, низкой и темной
палатки
Лампочка так тускла горит,
Там сырость и холод, не так как
в хатки,
Об этом уж нечего говорить.*

The Marchers Life in the Tents

*In the small, low and dark tent
A lamp sheds dim light
It is damp and cold, not like a little
house
But about this nothing is said.*

*В старинкой шубе, платочком
покрыта,
Седая старуушка сидит,
Руки и ноги греет над ламподой,
А сердце тоскует, так больно
болит.*

*In an old coat and covered with a
platok
The grey-haired starooshka sits,
Warming her hands and feet over the
lamp,
Her heart yearns, how it painful it is.*

*Сидит, одинока, бедняжка –
мечтает,
Когда-то увидит детей,
А ветер так дует, палатку качает,
Не в силах держать, и кольям
петлей.*

*Sitting alone, bednyashka (poor thing)
is dreaming,
of the time she will see her children,
The wind blows, the tent shakes
The loops not strong enough to hold the
stakes,*

*Ночью кричит попугай, - на
палатке,
Наводит на сердцу тоскою,
Не спиться старушки в сырой
одеялки,
А бокам, без перине, так чутко
доску.*

*At night the parrot cries on the tent,
Bringing mournfulness to the heart,
Starooshka cannot sleep in the damp
blankets,
And without feathers, the boards can
be felt right through.*

*Крысы с мышами за крупы дерутся,
Пищат, тарахтит, нет покою всю
ночь,
И сыру за ночь не кусочка не
остается,
А днем так тихо, все удаляются
прочь.*

*Rats with mice fight for crumbs,
They cry and make a racket, there is
no peace through the night
And not a piece of cheese is left,
During the day it is quiet, they have
scattered throughout.*

*Днем старуха лопаткой дычи
капает,
Чтоб в палатки воды не было,
И стены картоном в два листа
обвивает,
Чтоб держалось немножко тепло.*

*In the day Starooshka digs a ditch with
a shovel,
So water would not get into the tent,
The walls are two sheets of cardboard
fixed in place,
To hold in a bit of the warmth.*

*Дров не остается, а гора здесь
крутая,
Надо старушки уж самой туда
лезть,
И с горбленной спиной, сама все
вздыхая,
Топор и пилу не легко ей несть.*

*The wood does not last, but the
mountain is steep,
Starooshka needs to crawl up there
herself,
With her bent back and laboured
breath,
The axe and the saw are not easy for
her to carry.*

*Настала осень, дворишки сырые,
Нельзя ей и супу сварить,
Тот огонек замолк на чем супчик
варила,
Начинает давленку с водой
разводить.*

*Autumn has arrived and the wood is
damp,
She cannot cook soup,
The light has gone out on that which
she cooks the soup,
She then dissolves oats in water.*

*Похлебают, беняжка, сырую
давленку,
И зальется горячий слезой,
Так живет весь год втихомолку,
При голоде и терпит при лютый
мороз.*

*She eats, bednyashka, the raw oats,
And burning tears spill,
She lives through the year quietly
And patiently in the cold and fierce
frost.*

*Вспомнит старушка прежде
жилоь,
Как детки метались кругом,
А в прошлом году, что ей досталось,
Не хочется, бедняжке, и вспомнить
о том.*

*Starooshka remembers how she lived
before,
The way the children rushed all
around,
And the burden she carries from the
last year,
She does not want - bednyashka, to
remember.*

*Эх, вы детки, мои голубятки,
Как хочется мне с вами пожить,
Я забыла б все свои недостатки,
И не стала о прошлом тужить.*

*Oh, you children my doves,
How I want to live with you,
I would forget all of your shortcomings,
And would not pine for things past.⁷⁹*

*Катя Попова – Декабря 1963
В палатках, около Горной Тюрьмы*

*Katya Popova – December 1963
In the tent village, near the Mountain
Prison*

Meanwhile, the Mountain Prison which held their brethren - not far from the Sons of Freedom encampment - was visible. Yevsei Ogloff (1999, p. 44-45), revered Sons of Freedom poet and now ancestor, spent time in the Mountain Prison. His thoughts are skillfully woven into the following poem:

⁷⁹ My translation into English

Mountain Prison

*There it stands the Mountain Prison,
One hundred thirty acre site,
There 'tis linked with barbwire fences,
There it boasts a shameful might.*

*There of steel and concrete buildings,
You praise yourself to all,
In the Fraser Valley yielding,
You sustain a heavy toll.*

*With your crude administration,
Based on hard-earned people's toil,
Will conceal its fornication's,
On Pacific coastal soil.*

*You are built to hide the secrets,
From the public of the land,
To convert the Sons of Freedom
And subjugate them to your hand.*

*There you speak of kindly practice,
Truthful, to the heartless mind,
Which could only be commended,
Amidst pertruders of your kind.*

*You have made there lines divisions,
Cut plantations into high squares,
Boarded walls to high positions,
Placed in, secret catching snares.*

*You seek hope with the intention,
To segregate a doe from male,
Such past ventures and experience,
Have proved fruitless barren, stale.*

*Through the stylish evil gestures,
 You intend to catch the young,
 And for such you seek conjecture,
 From the weakest to the strong.*

*You outstretched your hands for picking,
 Fruit from vines you did not plant,
 See, the owners eyes are watching,
 You the thieves, the starving gaunt.*

*We do say the days are numbered,
 The hours gone by and minutes left,
 To the life of beastly blunders;
 To all the tyranny and theft.*

*Wash your hands from blood of Saints,
 If it be possible at all,
 From all the martyrs to this day;
 From plight and groans of children small.*

*There you stand the Mountain Prison,
 As a monument of Herod's days,
 For our suffering will mar you,
 All our treacherous evil ways.*

Yevsei Ogloff, June 1962

There were many poems and songs composed by prisoners during their imprisonment in Agassiz, all capturing similar yet diverse experiences of longing and oppression.

Мы заключенные здесь, в темнице, We are imprisoned here, in darkness,

*Так далеко от родной семьи,
Но вся надежда у нас на Бога,
Его лишь сила при нас везде.*

*So far from our families,
All our hope is in God,
His strength is always near us.*

*Хотя и больно, тяжело на сердце,
Когда мы мыслим за край родной,
Не знаем день и ночь покоя,
О Боже, Боже, что за такое?*

*Although it is painful and heavy on the
heart,
When we think of our native land,
We do not know rest day or night,
O Bozhe, Bozhe, what is this?*

*Я вижу, как страдаешь тяжело,
Томнишься сердцем, о, брат родной,
Печаль и скорбь в твоих чувствах,
Терплю и я за одно с тобой.*

*I see, how you suffer painfully,
A languid heart, o my brother,
your feelings are of sadness and grief,
And I endure this, with you.*

*Живем в страданье и мученье,
Лишь видим гнет мы пред собой,
Все муки, тяжкие терзанья,
Стесняют всех нас, Отец Благой.*

*We live in suffering and torment,
And carry the yoke before you,
All this torment, painful torture,
They constrain us all, Dear Father.*

*Об этой доле и томленьи
Вам рассказать всем я много б мог,
Что в этом есть для нас спасенье.
Нашу молитву услышал Бог.*

*Of this fate and langour
I could tell everyone so much,
That in this is our salvation.
God has heard our prayers.*

*Препев: 2 Раза.
Но у нас надежда одна на Бога,
Что с Ним Одним мы все победим.*

*Chorus: 2 times
Our one hope is on God,
That with only Him we will triumph.⁸⁰*

*Иван П. Остриков – 12 Ноября 1963
Горной Тюрме*

*John P. Ostrihoff – November, 12 1963
Mountain Prison (cited in Lapshinoff,
1999, p. 168-169).*

The imprisoned men at Agassiz's Mountain Prison participated in a lengthy hunger strike to protest their 'unjustifiable arrest' described in a statement (cited in Commeree, 1964) where they identify the Government as refusing to investigate their situation. The Government, they stated, "refuse us

⁸⁰ My translation into English

lawyers & they refuse us appeals & we have to suffer incarceration for no reason at all” (p. 48). The statement articulated their understanding of being manipulated and “deliberately railroaded into prison” (p. 48). When they reached the 33rd day of their fast, Paul Podmoroff, at age twenty two, died. He died, according to his fellow inmate M. Chernenkoff (1964), as a result of being force-fed hot soup (feeding tubes would be inserted into the throat of the individual through the nasal passage). Chernenkoff described the process of force-feeding in a written document whereupon several guards would hold one of the fasting men by the arms and legs and the prison’s male nurse would proceed to...

straddle the person thus held, begin pushing the over-sized plastic tube into his nostril...He would pull out the tube, dip it in cold water in order that it regain its stiffness, then repeat the process, heedless of the soul-searing cries of the person thus fed, cries that pierced the minds and hearts of those about to be thus fed. The tube, when pulled out, would be red with blood. It would be dipped in cold water, washed out, and used on the next person. (p. 15)

Although the prison officials were aware that the men were vegetarian, the force-fed substance was a meat bouillon which caused the men to become ill. It was during the evening of the 22nd of August, 1963 that Paul E. Podmoroff was “tortured to death” (Chernenkoff, 1964, p. 15). According to media reports Podmoroff’s death was due to malnutrition; however, the Daily Colonist in

Victoria, B.C reported the following on August 24th, 1963 (cited in Chernenkoff, 2003):

More than 500 Sons of Freedom Doukhobors camped outside Mountain Prison Friday made plans for a martyr's funeral for Paul Podmoroff, 22, a jailed member of the sect who died after being on a hunger strike for 33 days. Podmoroff was rushed to nearby Chilliwack hospital early Friday morning by prison officials and died apparently from malnutrition a few hours later. His death touched off demonstrations here and in Nelson and started word circulating that an attempt would be made to bury him outside the prison gates. Freedomites wept, screamed and chanted hymns when they learned of his death. Several hysterical women fell on the ground outside the prison gates and shouts of "murderer" and "butchers" were aimed at prison officials." However, information from other sources, as I am informed, strongly indicate that "he died as a result of force-feeding, from the quality of food used, and the brutality of methods applied."

A poem written in honour of Paul Podmoroff, one of several, describes his suffering and death:

Памяти Павла Подмарева

*Жизнь перервалось –
насильственной смертью,
В Агассиз в не горимой тюрьме.
Еще юний борец красавец,
О, как жить бы хотелось тебе!*

In remembrance of Paul Podmoroff

*A life has ended – a violent death
in Agassiz in the fireproof Prison.
Still young a handsome warrior,
O, how you would have wanted to live!*

Но свои эти юные силы
Ты в борьбе за народ посвятил
И в достоинстве славы
бессмертной,
Духоборчеству верно служил.

But with your youthful strength
you were devoted to the fight of your
people
and worthy of eternal glory,
You faithfully served Doukhorism.

И в тюрьме вам пришлось бороться,
Но не в равной борьбе с сатаной.
Как и предки боролись в России,
Так же жертвовали вы собой.

In prison you had to fight,
but the fight with satan is not equal.
Like the ancestors fought in Russia
you were likewise sacrificed.

Вы борьбой добивались права,
Чтобы жить на земле для Христа.
Получилось тогда невозможность
Провести ту борьбу без поста.

Your fight achieved human rights
to live on the land for Christ.
It was then impossible
to carry on with the fight without the
fast.

И тогда наступили минуты,
Провели вы совет соглаша.
В знак протеста вы пищу отвергли,
Даже жизнь свою нещада.

And then came the minutes
to carry out the agreed plan.
As a sign of protest you refused food
and your life was not spared.

И потом что случилось с тобою,
Ты наш брат как соратник в борьбе
Власти силою со злостью кормили
И желудок прорвали тебе.

And then what happened to you,
you our brother, a companion in fight.
The authorities in power fed you with
anger and ripped your stomach.

Ты не смог пережить те страдания,
Жизнь свою за народ положил
Взор твой ясный для жизни
закрылся,
На груди свои руки сложил.

You could not endure such suffering,
your life ended for the people.
Your bright eyes closed for life.
Your hands placed upon your chest.

Братья сестры сошлись во круг
гроба
Проводить тебе юный борец.
И мы верим, что в вечности Божьей
Ты получишь достойный венец.

Brothers and sisters walked around
your grave
to guide you, the young warrior
And we believe, that in God's eternity
You will be given a worthy crown.

Мы в душе вспоминать тебя будем,
Что ты жизнь свою кончил в борьбе.
И так спи же спокойно, соратник,
Юный воин и брат во Христе.

In our souls we will remember you,
that your life was ended in strife.
Now sleep peacefully comrade
Young warrior and brother in Christ.⁸¹

⁸¹ My translation into English

Татяна В. Подовиннекова – 1
Апреля 1966

Tatiana V. Podovnikova – April 1, 1966
(cited in Lapshinoff, 1999, p. 192-193)

Forward twenty years, to 1983. A number of Sons of Freedom women were imprisoned in the Oakalla penitentiary; my mother was one of the women. They were on the fifteenth day of a hunger strike. Penitentiary authorities decided to force-feed the women and my mother remembers how the prison doctor and nurses came into their compound...

We didn't want or need to be force-fed. It was going to be my first experience of being force-fed and I was scared; the thought of having a hose put down your nose is scary. They force-fed me first. Then they went to force-feed Masha Astoforoff and she fought them. So they took her out to the small fenced yard attached to our compound. They put her on the ground. The nurses held her arms and legs and the doctor pushed and kept pushing the tube down her nose. When they came back in, Masha had blood all over her face. After that the doctor said he would never force feed anymore. It went to court and it was decided that prison doctors could not force-feed anymore. When we went on other hunger strikes and became ill, we were taken to the hospital.

As a result of Mary Astoforoff's harrowing experience of being force-fed, the Provincial Superior Court refused to provide Corrections Service of Canada permission for subsequent force-feedings. The Attorney-General of Canada appealed the court decision and pursued an order that would require prison officials to force-feed Mary Astoforoff to prevent her death. However, "Taggart

J.A. of the Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal. There would appear to be no statutory duty requiring officials of a provincial institution to force-feed A. without her consent” (1983, np). The court’s ruling extended to all inmates that might be engaged in a hunger strike. (For more information, see this site: www.canadianprisonlaw.com/briefs/b.c..htm#TOP)

Purchase of lands

With the majority of Sons of Freedom camped outside of the Mountain Prison in Agassiz, an opportunity to move in and assess the Krestova lands emerged and was acted upon. The intention to subdivide portions of Krestova and Goosecreek areas was referred to in a letter by the Deputy Attorney General to Judge Evans on September 13, 1963 (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994). Judge Evans replied to the Attorney General with strong recommendations to sell the Krestova lands;

Every Doukhobor has a chance to buy land; if they don’t want to buy, then all I can do is to sell it to someone who does. I think the Government has been more than fair to them, and insofar as I am concerned the present policy to buy or get off should be enforced.

I have leaned backwards to try and help them to see sense and settle down; they should be treated like any other nuisance. Other people have to obey the law or take the consequence; the same should be applied to them in all our dealings with them. (p. 45)

The final report by Judge Lord (1965, cited in Lapsinoff, 1994) pertaining to the *Allotment of the Doukhobor Lands in the Province of B.C.* refers to the intention to subdivide and sell the Krestova lands which was in process during 1965. Judge Evans (1966, cited in Lapshinoff, 1994), in a letter to the Deputy Attorney General wrote about the progress being made regarding the land sales and recommended speeding up the process of surveying and selling the land as “[t]his would, undoubtedly, have a very beneficial effect on the whole problem of Doukhobor relations...” (p. 48). By 1969 most of the Krestova and Goose Creek lands were sold. By August, 1972 the Sons of Freedom left Agassiz, some returned to Gilpin, some to Krestova.

The Sons of Freedom in Agassiz and other areas were aware of the land sales; some decided to buy privately, but many disagreed with private land ownership. To provide a location and homes for those returning from Agassiz, a plot of land in Krestova was purchased by four people in 1971. However, the requirements necessary for settling on the land, called the New Settlement, meant abiding by the principles of the Reformed Doukhobors, which many were happy to comply with, and those not willing to accept the terms were refused entry, and some who already had homes there were evicted for engaging in or aligning with the Sons of Freedom (Lapshinoff, 1964).

The New Settlement, referred to in Russian as Новый Поселик,⁸² has a complicated history of initiatives to retain its original simplicity and its

⁸² Novii posyolik

collectivity without private ownership. Mounting pressures from external and internal sources have slowly and contentiously changed the face of the village, especially when they were confronted with a backlash of unpaid taxes. There are a number of media reports, individual experiences and other documents (See: Lapshinoff's *Report on Krestova lands*, 1994) that describe this situation in detail. What warrants mention is the intention of the New Settlement to foster a Doukhobor environment, representing a collective lifestyle with austere homes, each with sufficient room for gardens. This sense of 'community' still exists as one travels upon the dirt roads lined with houses (most are quite humble) and gardens. Although there are many changes, it remains reflective of a humble Doukhobor village.

Three Strong Blows

There were many requests from Sons of Freedom asking for inquiries into the reasons behind the mass imprisonments, the subdividing and selling of the Krestova lands, and the internal and external motives and manipulations contributing to those actions. There are Sons of Freedom scholars who looked into the political involvement and often refer to the well-publicized quote attributed to the Attorney General, Robert Bonner during the era of Premier W.A.C. Bennet's Social Credit Party: "We'll give two hard blows at the Doukhobors back, and break it once and for all. This is, sell their lands and teach their children by force. We have failed with the adults but we'll succeed with the very young children. We'll need the wisdom of Solomon and patience

of Job” (cited in a report by Mary Malakoff and Mary Astoforoff, Feb 16, 1966, from Ontario’s Kingston Penitentiary for women).

The ‘three strong blows’ are identified as follows: the first is the orchestration of burnings of the Shoreacre dwellings in 1947, which implicates government and police forces. The second is the mass burnings of Sons of Freedom homes leading to the settlement of the Perry’s Siding tent village and followed by the mass arrests of children and adults. The third is the manipulations that resulted in the Sons of Freedom burnings and bombings, confessions and arrests of ninety six men and sixteen women incarcerated in the Agassiz Mountain prison. These ‘blows’ resulted in Sons of Freedom burning their dwellings enmasse and trekking to the coast in support of their incarcerated brethren. This, describes Chernenkoff (2003), put an end to the Doukhobor problem. Under forcible measures, children were sent to public schools and the lands were put up for purchase; thus these two integral principles of the Sons of Freedom - causes of so much resistance - were diminished.

There are a multitude of perspectives regarding the intricacies of the Sons of Freedom activities, based on their convictions and compounded with the pressures from federal and provincial government initiatives. There were also manipulations from a number of individuals, Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, Doukhobors from other groups, and non-Doukhobors, who

played significant roles in Sons of Freedom Communities. It is all so entangled that the task of 'making sense' of all of this will remain out of reach...

This is expressed clearly in Maloff's independent report in 1957, and is I believe relevant today:

It is no secret that, not only Doukhobors themselves (all groups), but also the Federal and Provincial governments, Consultative committees and many Canadian citizens contributed heavily to the creation and complexity of the problem. We all know this but none of us is being honest enough to admit his own guilt. Each group and individual is trying hard to absolve himself of the responsibility and shift the blame onto others. Therefore, the problem continues and grows more complicated. (p. 19)

The Doukhobor 'problem' as it has been referred to throughout the 1900's was examined by a number of investigative bodies, including Royal Commission reports (Blakemore, 1912; Sullivan, 1948), Consultative committees (Hawthorn, 1952), and the more recent Consultative Committee *Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations* (KCIR) established in 1979 under the request of the Attorney-General to address and seek resolution for Doukhobor conflicts. This in turn became a more inclusive committee, the *Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations* (EK CIR) with similar intentions, and developed into a broader investigative and discussion forum for groups across the Doukhobor spectrum for possible reconciliation (British

Columbia Archival Information Network, n.d.). For detailed information on the EKCIR process, see Cran, 2006, *Negotiating Buck Naked Doukhobors, public policy and conflict resolution*. The EKCIR revealed significant information about Doukhobor interrelationships, activities and leadership, and to some degree fostered intergroup understanding. It was one of the more successful attempts leading to 'partial' resolutions. Although, Sons of Freedom resistances continued throughout the 1970s and 1990s, it was on a much smaller scale than previous decades and with fewer and fewer 'activists.'

My intention, to provide a picture of the Sons of Freedom was not an exhaustive historical representation, but one that re-presented the Sons of Freedom from the perspective of Sons of Freedom in a general sense only, as it certainly does not and cannot re-present all Sons of Freedom. I am regretful that more key information was not included, this was not out of intentional exclusion, but outside of my abilities to accommodate so many more deserving voices and materials. Thus, there are so many more perspectives, experiences and events that deserve a space upon these pages - stories told and untold - that someday more time, space and welcome will be afforded and prove illuminating.

Arriving at a complete conclusion is impossible. Undoubtedly the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor 'faith' and 'conviction' to protect their ideals, beliefs and principles and their means to attain freedom were excessive and out of the ordinary in relation to societal norms during the 1900s and were and continue

to be incomprehensible by those outside, or even inside, Doukhobor communities. The trajectory of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors was sadly perforated by oppression and assimilation as well as external and internal manipulations, leaving a trail of mazes without a clear sense of 'reasoning' or answers to questions of who and why? Although fingers may continue to point in many directions of 'fault' there is a willingness by many to come together into discussion.

For all of the unending intricacies, the simple devotion to Doukhoborism, and the wrestle to achieve 'freedom' is featured in this document in poem, song, story and declarations. It is also summarized in the words of my mother Pauline, a long-time Sons of Freedom activist:

Once you become involved, answer the call to 'act', you do so without knowing where you will end up, without knowing how long you might be away, and not knowing what you will be facing. You absolutely go into the unknown with only faith.

Song of the Outsider

“The world that is on the good side of law, that is ‘proper,’ the world of order. The moment you cross the line the law has drawn by wording, verb(aliz)ing, you are supposed to be out of the world. You no longer belong to the world.”⁸³

Soon upon their arrival in Canada in 1899 until the present time, the Sons of Freedom have been pathologized and thus reduced to the categorization of ‘the problem’ with a number of more specific descriptors including terrorist, fanatic, zealot, criminal, outlaws, misfits, ignorant, deranged, mentally ill, insane and twisted (Sullivan, 1948; Zubeck & Solberg, 1952; Hawthorn, 1952; Holt, 1964; Stenson, 2007; Androsoff 2011). The following are examples of the demonizing identifiers generated within government communications and public discourses targeted at the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors imparting irreparable effects. They have been, as it is presented, languaged out of belonging.

The term Freedomite is used liberally in many media reports, documents, academic theses and books about the Sons of Freedom (Zubeck & Solberg, 1952; Rak, 1996; Androsoff 2011). Personally, I consider the use of this term derogatory, especially when communicated outside of the Doukhobor/Russian language and community. The correct term is Sons of Freedom – Sini (Sons) Svobodi (Freedom), while the term Freedomite – Svobodniki, is a derivative or

⁸³ Cixous, 1993, p. 117

nickname that emerged within Doukhobor communities. It is reflective of a particular use of derivatives common in the Russian/Doukhobor dialect, not meant to be undermining but becoming just that. Throughout this document I refer to the more respectful use of СЫНЫ СВОБОДЫ (Sini Svobodi/Sons of Freedom).

Until relatively recently, the liberal use of pejorative terms such as ‘douks’ and often ‘dirty douks’ was explicitly targeted at all Doukhobors. A disdain for the Doukhobors associated with their ethnicity classified them as people who were not “white men” (Woodcock, 1968, p. 244). According to Rak (1996) the Doukhobors were not referred to as ‘white’...

because it was thought that they were not Caucasian – an ironic assumption since they migrated from the Caucasus. They were called (and are still called) “Douks” or “Dirty Douks” and they were (and in many cases still are) thought by the people of the British Columbia Interior to be generally unclean and ignorant. (p. 49)

Stereotyped comments directed at the Doukhobors are painfully recollected; for example, *Kostyei* shared experiences of abuse:

I remember getting teased and getting kicked around and punched and getting called a dirty Douk ...dirty Douks

Katya recalled the recurring comments...

Hide the matches a Douk is coming!

Alexei, spoke about the categorization of the Sons of Freedom:

The name itself puts you in a category and not as general Doukhobors. In the mind of those that know the history, or grew up in that era, know that these are troublemakers and so your name automatically refers to that. The Orthodox were going for peace; they were quiet, law abiding, private land owners, so right away we are referred to as the troublemakers and where do you go from there?

The discourses evident in documents exchanged between government officials and other involved parties (the police force, academics, journalists, psychologists, etc.) contributed to the emergence and propagation of descriptors that fixed and classified the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors as abnormal. The following excerpts from government communications demonstrate the development, solidification and unremitting discourses that pathologized the Sons of Freedom. The discourses informed attitudes and in turn tactics to manage these so-called abnormal people.

In 1901 John Gillanders, the Commissioner of Dominion Land, wrote to the Doukhobors, emphasizing that everyone in Canada is obligated to follow Canadian laws. He expressed confidence that upon consideration, the Doukhobors would eventually recognize the importance of and cheerfully comply with the laws, and it is only the “wicked and vicious who have any reason to fear them” (1901, Cited in Lapshinoff, 1989, p. 65).

In a following letter written to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, James Smart recommended securing five or six homestead entries into each village by willing Doukhobors with the preconception that “these people are very much

like sheep, and when they find that certain people of their number have taken certain action, they think it is all right to do the same” (Cited in Lapshinoff, p. 1989, p. 69).

In a correspondence from Sergeant Junget in 1905, addressing the pilgrimage of Sons of Freedom to Yorkton, he conveyed that “sixteen men, sixteen women and five small children, all religiously demented Doukhobors, have entered Yorkton completely nude, after burning their clothes just outside town. They were arrested... [l]ater they were convicted as lunatics...” (cited in Lapshinoff, 1989, p. 89). They were initially arrested and committed as insane but were eventually charged with indecent exposure and sent to the Prince Albert Jail. The category of ‘insane’ shifted to include the category of ‘criminal.’

Included in a report by a Doukhobor Commission (1906) set up to investigate the Doukhobor situation, was the description of the Doukhobor pilgrimage as a religious craze. According to the report, calculations determined that no more than ten percent of the Doukhobor population was classified as undesirable, and this was apparently understandable because most communities with similar histories would have “developed a large proportion of fanatical or crazy folk in their ranks” (cited in Lapshinoff, 1989, p. 123).

The Commissioner for British Columbia, William Blakemore, wrote an extensive report in 1912 for the Royal Commission on the Doukhobors. He provided an overview of the Doukhobors that might be described as a fair

representation by including a depiction of their philosophical, spiritual and religious values and lifestyle. A review of Blakemore's recommendations suggests the cancellation of Doukhobor military exemption and the enforcement of school attendance for children. He did recommend alternatives to imprisonment, emphasizing the need to apply more pressure on leadership to assist with assimilation. After a detailed report on the history of Peter V. Verigin's involvement as the Doukhobor leader, he concluded that "the real problem before the government of British Columbia is not the Doukhobors, but their leader - Peter Verigin" (p. 63). This particular statement became a contentious issue over the ensuing years, especially given the train explosion that killed Peter the Lordly in 1924. In conclusion, Blakemore stated that "it is not desirable that any more Doukhobors should be admitted to Canada except with the clear understanding that no exemptions of any kind will be allowed in the matter of observance of laws" (p. 66).

The resistances of the Sons of Freedom proved to be a force of 'power' not easily dealt with. Pressuring them to comply with laws required of Canadian citizens was a battle of wills, and even drastic measures were not entirely successful. Various solutions were nonetheless employed, including incarcerations, excessive punishments and the exile of adults and children. Assimilation, by any means was the integral goal, exemplified in a letter by the Deputy Minister of the Department of Lands in 1935 (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994):

...If it is finally decided they remain in the country, it might be of advantage that they be separated and placed individually in scattered localities. In this way they would be more likely to assimilate and adopt the customs of the country...As the Doukhobors have shown themselves antagonistic to our laws and customs, the logical solution would be to take any possible means to get them out of the country...(p.14)

In 1944 a memorandum from W. Turnbull, the chairman of the Land Settlement Board (cited in Lapshinoff, 1994), said the following to the Premier: "If we can rid the country of the Sons of Freedom sect, the Doukhobor situation will be greatly alleviated and will disappear in much shorter time" (p. 28). He suggested legislation outlining conditions under which refugees can remain in Canada and any refusal to follow these conditions would result in deportation to their country of origin. Turnbull suggested getting rid of all the Sons of Freedom which could be accomplished with "[o]ne 10,000 ton ship" p. 28).

In a report written by the Royal Commissioner (1948) on Doukhobor affairs, Judge Sullivan refers to the Sons of Freedom as criminals and "the crazy people" (p. 24). He recommended that they be sent to psychiatric institutes and/or "locked up in the penitentiary" (p. 24). His rationality for such measures was that if a person develops cancer in one hand it may be necessary to "amputate the whole arm. A lot of muscle and healthy tissue may be sacrificed, but that sacrifice has got to be made for the preservation of life on the whole body" (p. 24). He further referred to the Sons of Freedom as "a few

hundred lazy, indolent, rowdy and immoral agitators, lunatics and criminals” in comparison to the majority of decent law abiding Doukhobors (p. 11). The answer he suggested was clear: “the problems are as a result of the Sons of Freedom being insane and criminals for the probable gain of power and/or money” (p. 22). The situation, he argued, had reached the proportions of a “state of emergency” (p. 23) justifying legislation as a means to sanction whatever measures were necessary to deal with the problem. It was, declared Sullivan, “time for a final showdown” (p. 14).

A Doukhobor Research Committee released a report in 1952 under the Chairmanship of Harry Hawthorn. The research committee included scholars and scientists, primarily from the University of British Columbia. The B.C. government requested the formation of the committee to shed light on and to provide recommendations to deal with the ‘Doukhobor problem.’ Of key interest for this study is the report by Alfred Shulman, a psychiatrist who wrote a chapter entitled, *The personality characteristics and psychological problem of the Doukhobors* (p. 136). Shulman executed a psychological analysis of the Sons of Freedom by applying psychiatric methods to interview and test his ‘subjects’. He conducted his psychiatric tests at the Oakalla prison in Burnaby B.C. and at the B.C. Penitentiary. He further carried out his testing in the homes of Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, spending several hours at a time with one or two families a day. Shulman initially reported on child/parent relationships pointing out what he considered the inappropriateness of the following: the use of pacifiers, feeding on demand, unconditional love, lack of

discipline, bottle feeding, and older female siblings helping with housework and the care of younger siblings. These parenting practices, reflective of typical practices by many North American families, were identified as extreme and consequently led to a pathological assessment by Shulman's psychological expertise. He even went so far as to ascribe a pathological view of hospitality practiced by the Sons of freedom toward others as an outlet for the denial of their hostile feelings; he termed this "compulsive hospitality" (p. 137).

Shulman (1952) classified the Sons of Freedom as passive without the ability to express hostility and aggression. He went so far as to comment on their sexual roles which he described as "generally guilty and joyless" (p. 135). They are described as having "autism" (p. 132) especially in not being able to decipher the complexities of government, but relying on the term as a general personification of an institution. He interpreted their behaviour as paralleling their obvious autistic thinking, outside of the "the rigorous discipline of logical thought" (p. 132). Their personality type, he concluded, is based on passivity and dependence resulting in a "narrow, rigid, stereotyped, impoverished sort of personality" (p. 135) lacking imagination and creativity. Their movements are described as expressionless with "a few of those spontaneous gestures and grimaces by which less inhibited people give vent to their feelings" (p. 135).

The Sons of Freedom activities, Shulman (1952) alleged, were direct effects of the repression of aggression and hostility during childhood. Shulman reasoned that they exhibited displaced hostility enacted upon objects, rather

than on the actual source of their hostility - their parents. They have, the author affirmed, an “intense urge to destroy everything” (p. 138). Accordingly, it was believed that the Sons of Freedom proclaimed an ideology that concealed their hostile motivations under the self-deceptive veil of faith and their delusionary experiences of persecution. The Sons of Freedom, Shulman reported, “continually see themselves surrounded by enemies who are bent on their destruction and the wildest and most improbable tales of persecution gain ready acceptance” (p. 139). This ‘improbable tale’ included the belief that the government was responsible for the death of their leader Peter V. Verigin, that infants taken away from their parents during their incarceration on Pier’s Island were killed, and that not all depredations were caused by the Sons of Freedom but by government agents. In conclusion, Shulman suggested that the Sons of Freedom need and desire “love and approval” (p. 140) or more specifically, that the lack of love, material prosperity and education contributed to their state of hostility and frustration. In a nutshell, the Sons of Freedom protests, Shulman argued, were actually protests against their parents.

In addition to psychological assessments, Shulman (1952) drew on medical records where he discovered several cases of high blood pressure, dyspepsia and peptic ulcers amongst the Sons of Freedom. He ascertained the findings as contributing factors to the forgone conclusion of a general hostility internalized by the Sons of Freedom. In Shulman’s expert opinion, the Sons of Freedom display of masochistic behaviours was an attempt to acquire “love and approval, but of course they do not get it. This in turn created more anxiety,

more hostility, more guilt, and more masochistic behaviour, and so it keeps on” (p. 149). The Sons of Freedom were considered self-perpetuators of their own sickness and unhappiness and became a “refuge of those who fit nowhere else” (p. 152). Shulman put forward several recommendations in relation to the Sons of Freedom; however, he insisted that a final solution can only be achieved “when the Doukhobors make certain changes in their own personality type, much as when the patients and clients of psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and social workers achieve favourable personality changes through therapy” (p. 156).

The Sons of Freedom were an opportune ground of sensational reporting available in newspapers, magazines, radio, television and books. One of the most infamous books is a twisted tale of fact and fiction *Terror in the Name of God* by Simma Holt (1964), featuring a sensationalized and exploitive image of a nude woman in front of a burning building. Holt was one of many curious journalists reporting on the Sons of Freedom; however, I believe she also recognized an opportunity to write a personally advantageous book about them, especially given her access to court documents and police files. During the time Holt was gathering information for her book, many Sons of Freedom welcomed her persistent presence into their homes, trusted her intentions, and shared their stories (anonymous, personal communications). In the end it was clear that the book was not one written in support of the Sons of Freedom as they were informed, but instead was a deceptive, unethical and unscholarly book that exploited and defined the Sons of Freedom in an insidious manner.

Terror in the name of God is a disturbing book which continues to be made available as a legitimate history of the Sons of Freedom in libraries and book stores. The repercussions from the book continue to evoke fierce reactions from Sons of Freedom. During a conversation between myself, *Nadia* and *Stenya*, the topic of representation emerged. The following words by *Stenya* reflect the perspective of many with a Sons of Freedom heritage:

I would like to have a ritual where I actually burn this thing.

For some it is the only book they have ever read about the Sons of Freedom and that is the only perspective they get.

Nikita vividly recalled the impact of *Simma Holt's* reports:

When I was growing up, the shame and anger was from Simma Holt. My name and picture was plastered in the Star Weekly almost every week.

My personal interpretation of *Holt's* book is certainly biased, and I consider the book a form of 'media terrorism,' since the outcome propagated a sense of fear, judgement, and continued misunderstanding of the Sons of Freedom. *Holt's* fanatical perspectives are woven throughout the book which painted the Sons of Freedom people as violent sex-crazed gangs who are gross, ugly, ignorant, rabid, monstrous, "potential killers" (n.p.) with a "heritage of evil" (p. 173) and where "hate was truth" (p. 1). She made light of the persecutions experienced by the Sons of Freedom as misperceptions and reduced the community to a 'sociological fraud' (p. 160), discounting any suffering based on faith. Her graphic portrayals depict the Sons of Freedom

trapped in a world of hate and darkness where “lovely bodies, like their minds, soon grow gross and ugly – usually starting in the late teens or early twenties” (p. 153). She goes on to describe the Sons of Freedom as “killers and bandits” (n.p.) who harbour illusions of government-induced persecutions. They are depicted as a monstrous human tragedy possessing an evil and compelled to destroy. Holt characterized the Sons of Freedom as insane from their initial protests in Canada in 1902, where “the first indication came that among these settlers were a large number of uncontrollable fanatics, many insane” (n.p.). She blatantly demonized the parents, depicting them as ignorant, mad, and filled with hatred. The children, she went on to write, “have been bent and twisted, moulded and conditioned to fit the shape of their warped society of crime and mass paranoia....emasculated psychologically, intellectually and emotionally by their parents and leaders” (Holt, p. 288). Her message in the end was to incarcerate the Sons of Freedom children as a means of rescuing them, reflective of an existing prejudicial attitude.

Holt’s (1964) book capped the stigmatization and demonization of the Sons of Freedom. Unfortunately it continues to be referenced as a legitimate source of information in current studies (Androsoff, 2011). Author Julie Rak (1996) described Holt’s motives as an exploitation of the community’s unfamiliar and curious lifestyle and resistances that were shocking to mainstream society. Overarching viewpoints that painted the Sons of Freedom as fanatical extended across all Doukhobor groups, subsequently forging a deep and on-going resentment toward them across communities.

Author Ashleigh Androsoff (2011) has written a detailed dissertation addressing the 'Doukhobor problem' and describes the Sons of Freedom as having a conflicted identity as a result of their history of persecution in Russia, as well as their experiencing poverty, a lack of education and cases of mental illness. Accessing and analyzing a number of interviews, most notably one in particular derived from Holt's book, she concluded that "[t]here is some evidence to suggest that some Freedomites did in fact suffer psychological disorder, though the cause and effect between the depredations activity and mental illness is unclear. It is possible that the Freedomite group attracted members who were mentally unstable" (p. 241). These views perpetuate the damaging perspective historically held by many factions of government and professional bodies, notwithstanding contemporary scholars and journalists who continue to place the Sons of Freedom in a small pathological space.

Sons of Freedom identity and activities were not only addressed by those outside of Doukhobor communities, but were also depicted by Doukhobor scholars representing 'mainstream' Doukhobors affected by Sons of Freedom resistances. J. Kolesnikoff (2000) represented a general opinion held by many Orthodox and Independent Doukhobors when he wrote about the Sons of Freedom as plaguing "the lives of peace-loving Canadian Doukhobors" (p. 114) during most of the 21st century. *Stenya* shares her perspective regarding the lack of knowledge about the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors:

Those that know I am a Sons of Freedom don't know enough about anything positive about the Sons of Freedom, other than the headlines and how the Sons of Freedom have made it difficult for the USCC to survive.

Media attention focused on the Sons of Freedom escalated to mythical proportions (Donskov, 2000). Donskov, argued that the 'zealots' were drawn to the idea of martyrdom reinforced by ongoing persecution and oppression which in turn was a method of perpetuating the myths surrounding them (p. 226). Media-inflated stories grew into mythical or even monstrous proportions which cultivated the dominant discourse about the Sons of Freedom. The inflated and powerful discourses became impossible to challenge or reinterpret. History, context and meanings relevant to the Sons of Freedom became generally irrelevant to 'society.'

Canadian media, according to Mahtani (2008), has been examined and shown by media scholars to be a powerful source of communicating messages about social identities and provides a "lens through which Canadians view themselves and their fellow citizens" (p. 231). The messages about immigrants relayed through media sources significantly influence Canadians' perspectives about immigrant groups. Overall, many people learn about immigrant populations in Canada by what they hear, see and read generated through the media. Mahtani views journalists as wielding substantial power, when it comes to representing immigrants, which propagates stereotypes and has impacts that "cannot be underestimated" (p. 231). For example, the author contends

that media plays a role in social control over immigrant groups where they are often 'othered' by portrayals that identify them as criminals, as exotic, and in turn inferior. Hence, immigrant representations take on mythical proportions.

Rene Girard (1995, cited in Kearney, 2003) grounds myth in reality as events of oppression throughout history, which are considered "less matters of fantasy than of flesh and blood" (p. 43). Girard further argues that myth is not "some kind of vaporous literary perfume but a persecutor's interpretation of persecution" (p. 44). The so-called myth surrounding the Sons of Freedom indeed includes persecution based in reality and not in some fantasy that they contrived and intentionally perpetuated for the sake of perpetuating myth. Author Richard Kearney (2003) follows Girard's position on myth by stating "all myths are rooted, in the first and last analysis, in actual persecutions of actual scapegoats" (p. 43). The momentum of the myth, advanced and escalated by means of media sources, government correspondences, and expert research findings, did not refrain from circulating increasingly fantastical and distorted stories about the Sons of Freedom.

The Sons of Freedom Doukhobor culture and legacy, although historically and culturally rich, is overshadowed and reduced by the limiting interpretations of them, sustained by mainstream communications. Their lifestyle and modes of resistances were to the general populace extreme and strange. Kearney (2003) considers extreme experiences as those that shake up the norm by threatening the known and familiar with the out-of-the-ordinary

and unknown. Those considered unusual and out-of-the-ordinary are viewed as strangers, aliens and monsters, exiled to the margins out of fear (p. 3). The Sons of Freedom were viewed as strangers, foreigner-aliens and as fanatics for their irrational behaviour. They were different, not the preferred immigrant, and certainly not normal, substantiated by the display of inexplicable behaviours seemingly void of rationality or reason.

What appears as different - as outside the status quo, sub-standard or unreasonable - is an appeal to isolate the abnormal and repair or force abnormality into normality. It is crucial to keep what appears to be 'the ship of fools' far from the shore, far from disrupting or influencing the lives of the majority (Foucault, 1980). Thus, it was within the discourse of normality that the Sons of Freedom were defined as madmen, justifying strategies to send them to prisons, camps, residential schools and/or psychiatric asylums/institutions.

Michel Foucault (1980) examined the history of punitive practices initiated during the onset of industrial societies that were organized on a system constructed to divide the normal from the abnormal (p. 61). These were complex systems of relations that operated by means of intricate "controls and adjustments" (p. 62). During the early nineteenth century these controls and adjustments appeared as benevolent gestures by those who made it their business to become involved in all aspects of people's lives, such as health, hygiene, and housing. This led to the eventual institutionalization of knowledge

and experts such as “inspectors, social workers, psychologists” (p. 62,) and the classification of individuals who functioned outside the status quo as not just different or odd but “insane, criminal or sick” (p. 62). The classification of Sons of Freedom was powerfully perpetuated by experts, such as Shulman highlighted in the Hawthorn report, and Holt’s many newspaper reports and ultimately in her book *Terror in the name of God*. The ability to assess and determine the abnormal from the normal, and to claim an ability to rehabilitate is based on the emergence of experts entrenched in the established science and normative power of psychology (Foucault, 1980).

Nikolas Rose (1996) offers an understanding of the development and processes of truth, knowledge and power within society as based in psychology:

For many centuries manuals concerning manners, books of advice and guidance, pedagogic and reformatory practices have sought to educate, shape and channel the emotional and instinctual economy of humans by inculcating a certain ethical awareness into them. But over the past fifty years, the languages, techniques, and personnel of psychology have infused and transformed the ways in which humans have been urged and incited to become ethical beings, beings who define and regulate themselves according to a moral code, establish precepts for conducting and judging their lives, and reject or accept certain moral goals for themselves. (p. 64)

Systems of expertise operating with social authority such as doctors, nurses, teachers, managers, prison officers, and social workers are based on psychological knowledge and alliances (Foucault, 1980; Rose, 1996). Therefore, it is with the authority or power linked to psychology that behaviours outside of established definitions of 'reason' are judged, evaluated, diagnosed and organized. Decisions are made, exercised and legitimized by means of the knowledge, power and rationality of psychology. Rose (1996) describes the psychological expertise of our social and personal lives as being "disseminated by health visitors, family doctors...radio and television programs, magazines and advertisements" (Rose, p. 93). Out of this established field of psychology emerge accepted and uncontested norms and vocabularies that provide the general population with "new ways of identifying malfunctions" (p. 93) and of understanding how to live one's life within parameters of normal, self-regulated freedom and success.

Established norms are publically generated through shared language and become, as Foucault (1980) presents, truth or 'regimes of truth' linked into "systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it" (p. 133). Power, contends Foucault (1980, 1995), operates as a network of power relations within society, always emerging anytime individuals come together. Truths emerge and are powerfully networked by fiercely dominating other possible 'truths,' and accordingly fortify economic and political roles and decision making (Foucault). Consequently other knowledges including "arguments, evidence, theories and beliefs are

thrust to the margin” and not permitted to enter what is considered the arena of ‘the true’ (Rose, 1996, p. 55). Truth is created and adeptly appropriated by a hierarchy of experts and judges who produce a play of powerful messages or discourses of normality, ethics and morality that constitute reality and have formidable effects on society (Foucault, 1980; 2007). Foucault (1980; 1995; 2007) further claims that authorities and experts on normality extend their authority and expertise throughout all areas of society which secure their positions of judgment. For example, we find the “teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the ‘social-worker’ judge” (Foucault, 1995, p. 304) all positioned as ‘the expert’ professing and operating under a proclamation of truth. However, Caputo (1987) cautions us to “avoid the illusion that our institutions and practices, that our reason and our faith, that we ourselves have dropped from the sky” (p. 273).

Other meanings or truths that contrast with the dominant truths (dominant discourses) are thus eclipsed (Davies, 2001). Meanings behind Sons of Freedom beliefs, lifestyle and actions were seldom considered or given credence since they did not fit within the regime of truth that became unquestioned common sense, rational thought and logic. Hence, Sons of Freedom’s so-called ‘unreason’ was “constituted as madness, crime, or mental disease...and establishes the monologue of reason with itself that we call psychology and psychiatry” (Caputo, 2000, p. 21). Launching punitive measures or ‘making them fit’ through assimilative measures appeared to be a

‘reasonable’ response to the ‘unreasonable’ Sons of Freedom with their atypical conduct.

Refusing to conform to the customs and laws required by Canadian laws resulted in the Sons of Freedom becoming a common enemy of society. They ‘went against the grain’ by their so-called excessive lifestyle and resistances. They (simply) sought a freedom in contrast to the freedom experienced by ordinary Canadians, described by Rose (1996) as a freedom determined by socially acceptable systems of dominant truths that organize spaces of regulated freedom. The Sons of Freedom resisted regulated freedom for a freedom reflective of their cultural and spiritual ideologies based on a logic and rationality within their communities.

A punitive approach was swiftly taken up to deal with the common enemy, the traitor, the monster. This begs ‘reasonable’ questions, asked by Foucault (1995), such as why shouldn’t society have absolute rights over them and demand their elimination? The refusal to abide by laws in such shocking and explicit ways was beyond conventional reason. These behaviours did not make sense and were considered as a “disturbance to be quelled, an abnormality to be normalized, a cry to be silenced” (Caputo, 2000, p. 24) by experts in the judicial system, the penal system, the medical system, and the systems of science and politics. The experiences of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors during their life in Canada included exclusion and exile into prisons, psychiatric asylums, residential and industrial schools, isolated

camps and an isolated island with the intention of finding them places to live that would not influence and/or disturb mainstream society (Caputo, 2000). Michel Foucault calls this “a great movement of rejection” (Foucault, 1980, p. 184) toward noncompliance defined as beyond reason, requiring suppression, exclusion and silencing of those deemed madmen or fanatic.

Foucault identified the complexities of power as both productive and repressive. The project of dominant and uncontested sources of power is to produce conforming human beings because of an anxiousness and fear “about the human capacity for being otherwise; it is not a little anxious about difference” (Caputo, 2000, p. 36). Following Foucault, Caputo recognized that “[p]ower over freedom implies resistance” (p. 34) and the Sons of Freedom refused to assume acceptable identities of the law-abiding Canadian, especially as represented by a model of British citizenship. They insisted upon freedom as they defined and sought it, yet “[i]f power is cunning and pervasive enough, it will coopt freedom; if freedom is resistant and persistent enough, it will cause power to tremble” (Caputo, p. 33). Extinguishing the Sons of Freedom power of resistance was a clear objective, lest they gain any significant cultural and community freedom and thus influence beyond their communities.

The pathology-laden messages that framed the Sons of Freedom were set in a time and context of colonialism. After all, when it came to immigration, Canada was not prepared to accept immigrants who would go against the grain and model of the British structure and rule. Accepting immigrants and new

settlers outside of Western and Northern Europe was rare and generally not practiced. Facing 'unconventional' Eastern European Doukhobor immigrants placed Canadian experts in a difficult position that evoked discrimination on multiple levels. Canada's doors were opened with a limited welcome, and became increasingly hostile when it was apparent that the foreigners would not readily let go of their own beliefs, values and practices in favour of assimilating into the host society. The 'othering' of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors emerged from differences that collided with the colonial structures of Canada. It was a collision of differences, where the differences appeared to threaten and unravel the fabric of colonial society as much as to threaten and unravel the culture and community of the Sons of Freedom. 'Expert' initiatives were at the time, even if damaging to the Sons of Freedom, thought to be 'just' in relation to preserving the values and structures of the general populace. It was for the common good.

Hospitality requires the opening of the door to those who may arrive with 'bad news,' with 'damaging solutions' and with risk. I am faced with guests whom I would rather not open the door for, and have not hospitably opened the door, rendering this document limited and in turn hostile. Aside from my minimal attempt to contextualize and understand injurious initiatives, meant for the good of the 'whole' (and set in a time guided by colonialism), my gesture of hospitality remains limited, weak and conditional, and as Derrida (2000) suggests, "perhaps no one welcomed is ever completely welcome" (p.6).

The examples of 'hostile' attitudes and initiatives directed at the Sons of Freedom are less individual agendas and attitudes and much more about how pervasive and powerful discourses become, and how as individuals it is easy to be swept into and subsequently act within those discourses. There seems to have been a general sense of shock and pathology which influenced society in general; however, there were initiatives that, even if perpetuating hostility were of good intention. Additionally, there were many individuals who demonstrated compassion, interest and support for the Sons of Freedom across Canadian demographics. There are many examples, many narratives which unfortunately are not included in this document, yet warrant a space of inclusion.

Perhaps what is necessary to acquire a more hospitable attitude of welcome is to forgive and to know that "every other is equally altogether other" (p. 22,) and to disrupt so-called dichotomies or oppositions of 'us and them.' Derrida (2005) suggests a revolution by welcoming what might be considered an enemy into "the heart of the friend and vice versa" (p. 58) making possible a relational space where "opposites slide into each other" (p.64). The age-old axiom of "loving one's enemy as one's neighbor or as oneself" (Derrida, 2005, p. 285) is hospitality.

Songs of Walking Alongside the Other

Proceeding with this research project was contingent upon meeting ethical standards and authorization from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board. I was required to provide ethical guidelines that outlined each step in the research process that would secure the well-being of the research participants. The Ethics Review is a road map outlining the implementation of this project, such as the recruiting of participants, addressing issues of power over the participants, providing informed consent, assuring anonymity and confidentiality, and outlining the use of data.

With acquired approval, I wondered how I would be able to proceed with such carefully considered yet restrictive guidelines upon the turbulent waters of a Sons of Freedom history and frayed community. Hospitality provided me a precariously-fashioned boat to sail into the research context, but with an impaired compass vulnerable to the winds of risk and mystery. I was guided by an ancestral instrument familiar to hospitality – faith. What manner of guidelines could I grasp within hospitality? Hospitality as deconstruction, requires that the researcher face the unknown without the protection of guardrails that determine and protect each step along the way. This did not mean that I could have abandoned or needed to abandon ethics, or that ethics in research should be thrown out, but it did call for an examination into seeing ethics differently, reconceptualising ethics, or as Caputo (1993) challenges “getting beyond ethics” (p. 2).

Reconceptualising ethics

Critical examinations of ethics by qualitative researchers (Smith, 2005; Lincoln & Cannella, 2007; Denzin 2009, 2009) and philosophers (Caputo, 1993, 2000; Bauman, 1994) point out important implications and possibilities for the field of research. The following are but a few examples outlining reconceptualised approaches in ethics within the social sciences.

Denzin (2009) addresses the increasing intrusion and limitations of evidence-based research models that include ethical standards and guidelines which infringe upon qualitative research. He suggests a “path of resistance” (p. 140) that would require malleable guidelines not determined by quantitative measures. Qualitative research is called to commit to the goal of social equity and justice involving the “principles of care, love, kindness, fairness, and commitment to shared responsibility, honesty, truth, balance, and harmony” (Denzin & Giardina, 2007, p. 24). The above principles, Denzin argues, can serve as moral guidelines informing conduct with others, vital in an ethic of hospitality. However, I would caution, the concept of morality is ambiguous and/or understood only within particular contexts, or as Kearney (2004) suggests, “[m]orality is often gray on gray” (p. 302) neither black nor white nor absolute.

Lincoln and Cannella (2007) describe ethics as a construction that essentializes and re-inscribes notions of truth “toward morality” (p. 76). The authors present a reconceptualised, reflexive and critical ethics in the social sciences that are concerned about injustice and the transformative possibilities

of egalitarianism to address problems that occur in representation and positions of power. The authors assert that an “egalitarian social science” (p. 75) is concerned with an ethics that guides our relationships with one another in our various contexts. Piloted by social justice, anti-colonial research methodologies “examine and challenge social inequities, and provide opportunities and possibilities for the emergence of a nonviolent revolutionary ethical consciousness” (p. 76). Challenging social injustice within a nonviolent revolutionary ethic is the hallmark of a Sons of Freedom, Spirit Wrestler ethic.

Bauman (1994) describes ethics as a “code of law that prescribes the correct behaviour ‘universally’ – that is, for all people at all times” (p. 2), generated by an authority and expertise aimed at establishing an expert-dependent society. Becoming expert-dependant undermines our ability to trust our own judgement and perpetuates fear and anxiety, leading to the sense of needing assurance and guidance of the expert to “fetch us back into the comfort of certainty” (p. 3). Bauman (1993, cited in Moss and Petrie, 2002) suggests that “seeking shelter in a universal code” (p. 45) may be conducive to comfort and safety but on the other hand does not encourage critical and creative thought and transformative engagement. Differentiating between ethics and morals, Bauman (1993) considers ethics as a constructed code that imprisons morality and he therefore calls for the “release of morality” (p. 45) from the grip of ethics. Personal responsibility, argues Bauman (1993), is “morality’s last hope” (p. 45) and he suggests the need for less intrusion and more trust to cultivate new attitudes that legitimize imaginings of an alternate

society without critical thought placed at risk of extinction (cited in Moss and Petrie, 2002).

To further this discussion about loosening the grip of ethics and ethical practices, Caputo (1993; 2000) introduces the notion of the ‘end of ethics.’ Ethics as it stands imposes a safety net that is strategically placed beneath the decisions we are faced with making in our daily lives (Caputo, 1993). Ethics, for Caputo (1993), provides a foundation of principles...

that force people to be good; it clarifies concepts, secures judgments, and provides firm guardrails along the slippery slopes of factual life. It provides principles and criteria and adjudicates hard cases. Ethics is altogether wholesome, constructive work, which is why it enjoys a good name. (p. 4)

The end of ethics, proposes Caputo (2000), is the recognition that there is no firm ground beneath our feet and that even though there is the perception of solidity, the ground “is in fact an island adrift in a vast sea” (p. 3). He envisions the end of ethics as the inability to foresee and define each step along the way. Caputo (2000) critiques our often firm grip and thus dependency on rules.

If all I had to do would be to invoke a rule, pull the lever of a universal principle...it would not take much agonizing, much fear and trembling – and it would be far less ‘responsible.’ If things turned out badly I could always blame the rule, the universal. ‘I would like to help you,’ injustice says, ‘but rules are rules.’ ‘I understand your situation,’ injustice

declares, 'but it is the principle of the thing that prevents me.' 'Don't blame me, I do not make the rules. I just work here. I am just doing my job. (p. 180)

Deconstruction demands that 'hospitable research' digress from the safe, well-known and well-worn path of restrictive methods, rules and regulations informed by finite knowledge and directives to venture into the uncertainty of the unknown (Biesta, 2001). The end of ethics or what I call hospitable ethics obliges me to use an open map that is not cluttered with a detailed mapping of each step. A hospitable map is less defined where the ethical steps are taken in response to and with others, and not as predetermined steps preventing intuitive, spontaneous and unexpected responses. Of course my map is still a map, held to limitations of conditional hospitality which unconditional hospitality would ask me to crumple up and throw to the wind; that is, of course, impossible.

Unconditional hospitality, writes Caputo (1998), is a relational obligation that is "ethical beyond ethics, the ethical without ethics, the hyper ethical, the fine point of the ethical soul, the very ethicality of ethics, but always without and against ethics" (p. 84). Ethics without ethics is not without responsibility in ethics reflected in the words of Richard Kearney (2004) who very eloquently speaks of "an aesthetic imagination to keep our minds open to ever new possibilities and perspectives and an ethical imagination to remind us that, no matter how innovative and daring our dreams may be, we are always, in the first and last analysis, responsible toward the other" (p. 325). My responsibility

as the primary researcher of this project enhanced and/or complicated by my position as a Sons of Freedom Doukhobor concerns those who are directly or indirectly linked to this work within timescapes of past, present and future.

Drawing on Indigenous roadmaps

To remain mindful of working with those located in a distinctly minority culture with a history of oppression and misrepresentation, namely the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, I draw on the knowledge and practice of Indigenous methodologies described by Tuhiwai Smith (2005). In this paper, I have presented the notion of less defined and blurred methodological roadmaps; however, Smith suggests that “[w]e need to draw on all our maps of understanding” (p. 102). This includes new maps that challenge and expand the boundaries of current understanding that will emerge as a result of the research process without forgetting traditional maps.

Tuhiwai Smith (2005) emphasizes the importance of working alongside others in Indigenous research, which I consider a gesture of hospitality and thus hospitable research. I recognize how Smith’s research approaches in Indigenous communities can make important contributions to research in Sons of Freedom Doukhobor contexts. As an insider researcher, I am interested in ways that historical misrepresentations and misunderstandings can be disrupted, displaced and replaced by Sons of Freedom Doukhobor voices, stories, experiences, reflections, imaginings and truths.

An invitation into hospitable research has the potential for Sons of Freedom Doukhobors to “theorize their past histories with their future lives”

(Smith, p. 90). According to Smith, Indigenous approaches emphasize the role researchers have in the presentation of research through cultural stories reflective of the experiences of Indigenous peoples including “their ceremonies, their aspirations, their incarcerations, their deaths” (cited in Smith, p. 90). An Indigenous approach is a willingness and openness to be in the cultural fabric of people’s lives. Contrarily, research has historically been an instrument of colonization and perpetuation of oppression. However, the critique and deconstruction of research methodologies challenges researchers to step beyond prescribed limits and methods and employ a means of reclaiming languages, “histories and knowledge, to find solutions to the negative impacts of colonization and to give voice to an alternative way of knowing and being” (Smith, p. 91). The question is not how we can serve ethics; the question is how can ethics serve us.

As a researcher with a Sons of Freedom heritage, I choose not to research as a gesture of ‘doing to’ but as ‘doing with’ and alongside kin in heritage. This aligns with Smith’s findings that “[m]ore indigenous researchers are choosing to research alongside their own communities” (p. 96). Researching alongside others within a space of hospitality opens up possibilities for reconceptualising identity, heritage and the future. Researching alongside has included that which is typical in Doukhobor Sons of Freedom homes and interactions: an open welcome, evident for example in the liveliness around the kitchen table, the ongoing offering of food and attentive care, the open, passionate and

challenging discussions, and typically the laughter, but not without pain and grief... in a word - hospitality.

Hospitality is demanding and asks me to see where my methodological and ethical roadmap has been drawn too tightly and too safely. Hospitality urges me to muster up the courage to allow new lines to form and old lines dissolve, revealing maps that change, that breathe, that remain out of focus and permeable. Perhaps, a roadmap conceived in the dark or dusk when the diminishing light distorts one's vision. A no-map – map, that requires the suspension of expectations, conclusions and answers in order for the emergence of unexpected gifts and surprises.

Being held accountable by ethical guidelines creates a tension of how to balance my position as an academic required to uphold ethical standards as mapped out according to University ethical standards, as well as - what I consider equally important - my own cultural and traditional ethical/moral guidelines. Relational conduct and spiritual endeavours within the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor culture are transmitted historically through practice, oral traditions, and more recently in written form. The Doukhobor's spiritual understanding of the immanence of God and particular interpretations of religion/spirituality/Christianity are reflected in the generous number of prayers, hymns, songs and stories which ask for an acknowledgment of one another as spiritual or, as Derrida (2007) would say, the 'wholly other.' The 'wholly other' is the infinite depth of the unknown of each other, the 'infinite other' of all of us which remains unfathomable, rendering us mutual strangers

in an on-going process of being-with (Caputo, 2000). Caputo (1987) first and foremost pays attention to the mystery of one another that exists beyond the restricting web of rules and conduct that define what is considered an ethical life.

I walk alongside the other with the familiarity and experiences of community, heritage, traditions, and culture. Walking alongside the other in familiarity includes the opportunity to speak in the Russian language. It also involves similar experiences of being affected by historical representations as terrorist who march(ed) nude, burned and bombed and as targets of assimilation and persecution. Within a deconstructive movement the pervasiveness of dominant discourses that position and reduce minority communities/Sons of Freedom to finite identities of terrorists and/or victims need to be disrupted making visible other identities and surprising possibilities. Marie Hoskins (2012) addresses the problematic issue of reducing people to “perpetrators and victims” (p. 250) while their multiple differences are often overlooked. The importance of looking beyond our preconceptions of communities or groups as homogenous reveals “they are in fact, multiple in almost every way; they are full of contradictions, inconsistencies, ambiguities and mythologies” (Hoskins, p. 250). Derrida (cited in Caputo, 2000) speaks of infinity, asserting that “we live in infinitude” (p. 58). That is “where hermeneutics leads us: not to a conclusion which gives comfort but to a thunderstorm, not to a closure but to a dis-closure, an openness toward what

cannot be encompassed, where we lose our breath and are stopped in our tracks...”(Caputo, p. 214).

Hospitality insists on an excessive welcome, inviting the unknown that arrives with possible gifts that may be wonderful or dangerous. It is a leap into the darkness that defers or suspends strategies and conclusions informed by, for example, existing methodological research guidelines that prepare researchers for what to expect and how to proceed. Research can be riddled with the tensions and anxieties of ‘not knowing,’ and research within an ethic of hospitality requires the researcher to take the risk of proceeding without the assurance of knowing. As a researcher, I must take the risk of making the conditional less conditional, of using a methodological roadmap that is not defined, that is blurred, ambiguous, and uncertain. It is this condition of the unknown that holds the promise of untold possibilities (Derrida, 1998, 2000, 2005; Caputo, 1997, 2000; Mason, 2006; Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007).

It is important, Caputo proposes (1987) - drawing from Heidegger, that our perception of methodology expand to consider ways that the matter at hand is pursued, which is ‘methodos; meta – odos,’ and is contingent on the nuances and complexities of what the matter is. ‘Meta – odos’ keeps on the move finding a way through even when it seems there is no way through. It keeps things on the move in a repetition that repeats forward in new ways. Caputo recognizes the parameters that methodology can become trapped in by avoiding unpredictability and distrusting the call of play and love that yearn to break out of prescribed boundaries. I agree with Caputo, that playful

hermeneutics is closer to comprehending situations of being-in life. It is ready to play, perhaps even 'play with fire.' By putting aside notions of "mastery over things" (p. 213), hospitality or radical hermeneutics, according to Caputo, offers us "room to stretch our intellectual limbs" (p. 213) and room that allows for trust in oneself and the other. Trust in the play for intellectual spaciousness is required for 'reason' during encounters of crisis and revolution that can override the rationale of science.

Excessive hospitality is welcoming that which is unknown; it is saying 'yes' to that which is unknown; it is affirming the other through the "yes-I-say-to-the-other" (Caputo, 1997, p. 194). However, facing others with an attitude and approach of not knowing does not inhibit the knowledge and skill necessary to proceed. Hospitality is not a passive waiting, but an active welcoming, which requires facing and passing through an aporia, or in other words the undecidability of not knowing how to proceed which necessitates the question "What will I do?" For only then, asserts Caputo (1997), can there be a genuine responsibility, a response to a situation that has not been programmed in advance allowing for the invention of new gestures. Not knowing the next steps, preceded by the question "What will I do?" is working within the unknown. This does not, however, preclude a responsibility to know as much as possible even if the knowing is never complete and never without questions and decisions. This work affirms being with one another in relational spaces of mystery, messiness, multiplicity, creativity and fluidity while actively seeking

the knowledge necessary to proceed better. It demands that impossible decisions with unknown solutions are faced without giving up.

The following notes from the field highlight a few out of a number of visits that I was fortunate to have with ‘collective participants.’ The visits varied in time, anywhere from three to six hours and often extended beyond the recording into continuing conversations and continuing visits. Some visits were one-on-one encounters, usually taking place over the host’s kitchen table but also in other locations such as a park, during a car ride, in a restaurant, through email, in hand-written letters and via the telephone. Visits occurred with generations of family members gathered together around a table; some arrived later or left sooner; unexpected visitors would pop by, all of which was welcomed without prior invitation. The contexts obliged me to let go of notions of host and guest, researcher and participant, and live into the experience of shared and fluctuating roles.

‘Walking alongside’ others was contingent upon loosening the reins of control to reconceptualise the role of researcher and participant and welcome other possibilities of what research can come to mean. Research ‘alongside’ reminds researchers that they must be “self-aware of their need for engagement in power-sharing processes” (Bishop and Glynn, 1992, cited in Smith 2005, p. 97). Hospitable research demands a welcome that gives up ownership – but, since that is impossible, perhaps a sharing in the ownership and processes of power is possible. I continually asked myself how I could step back and welcome others to step forward to share in this process. This fluctuated

according to context and engagement, where at times I remained open to the fluidity and frequent loss of the role of researcher and host, and other times when I was faced with providing guidelines and decision making in the research process. Even though it is my hope that this study becomes less mine and more ours, it is not without an on-going negotiation of how to loosen the grip on the helm.

For example, before engaging in conversation I was required to present and clarify the consent form to all those willing to contribute. However, as an acknowledgment of the historical attitude of the Sons of Freedom, 'participants' were not required to sign the consent form. This was an important gesture for me accommodated by the Board of Ethics, as stories about Sons of Freedom's refusal to sign documents as a manner to uphold tradition and resist conformity are common. For example, my grandmother, along with a number of others who were imprisoned for nudity and burning their own homes, were offered the opportunity to be released if they signed for their release. My grandmother would not sign, which consequently resulted in her transport and living out her sentence far from her family and community in the Kingston Women's Penitentiary in Ontario. I recall the many times my mother was in prison along with others who would not sign documents which would ensure their release. Even though she was threatened with not being released, her unyielding resistance successfully challenged administrative protocols, and in turn the protocols were compromised. Release without signing. I was pleased

that the academic ethical review acknowledged and supported this aspect of heritage which softened the ethical boundary and broadened the welcome.

I welcomed those present during the visits to share their perspectives on heritage. This led to rich and open conversations and experiences that travelled along unexpected tangents and pathways into fruitful territories of emotions, memory and imaginings. I did not present a prescribed or detailed map of directions and questions; the conversations moored to heritage were at the same time unmoored. The welcome felt limited, but became increasingly open and expansive with conversations warmed by the hospitable fires of trust and care.

Each visit and ensuing conversation was unlike an interview - they were 'small communions.' This was a term coined by a friend and contributor to this project which better describes the complexity and nuances experienced during the times spent together. Each 'communion' was located in the landscape of heritage and identity, and involved sharing and learning within a hospitable space. Spaces were forged with care, kindness, trust and safety for vulnerability and sensitive emotions. Each 'communion' was a shared encounter and reciprocation of hospitality. Contingent on context, methods of research could not be prescriptive; on the contrary, they played out differently with each communion.

Some visits were unplanned and spontaneous while others were set ahead of time. I did not determine time frames and often the 'small communions' lasted hours, requiring the digital recorder to be shut off,

especially when conversations became more confidential, as well as during times when more casual topics arose. Even though I acknowledge the contributions from each person as singular and memorable, I present them in this work as a 'collective' threaded together in a way that represents heritage, identity and possibility. Being 'with' the other in a communion of sharing relentlessly forced me to think and re-think this heritage, the implications and the possibilities, including the deep seated pain and suffering that in no small measure coursed throughout each 'small communion.' I often lost my footing on this tumultuous ground and the debilitating grip of doubt haunted me and asked me over and over to let go and give up. I could only continue by holding on to the bits of mad faith that enabled me to proceed – blindly (almost).

My purpose - 'meta - odos' - was to be with others in an open and hospitable space, a curious space to contest, to investigate, to reinterpret and to perhaps blow on the cinders of revolutionary spirits as a promise of a future. The visits or communions were nothing less than spiritual, nurtured in spiritual environments of vulnerability, trust and surprise. In the hopeful words of a friend... *we discovered that all is not lost...*

Small communions

Visiting Tyotka (Aunt)

When I asked Tyotka if she would agree to share her stories of the time she spent incarcerated in a girls' industrial school while her parents were held on Pier's Island, she asked for my mother - her friend - to accompany me. I was glad that my mother was willing to join us. Walking toward Tyotka's house

my mother and I were met by the welcoming aroma of baking bread. Three black cats scurried playfully past us in a yard bursting with flowers, fruit trees and a meticulously tended vegetable garden. Tyotka walked out to greet us, inviting us inside after the traditional formal greeting of Слава Господу⁸⁴ and the response of Славим Благодарим Тебе Господу,⁸⁵ followed by hearty hugs. We sat in her living room on colourful homespun blankets spread upon her couch. The walls were adorned with photographs and crowded upon a small table portraying children, grandchildren and great grandchildren as well as relatives long past. After looking through the photos we all sat down and Tyotka's voiced cracked as she wiped her tears and began to recollect her time at a girl's industrial school in Vancouver. Her experience was highlighted with shocking details evoking sadness as she spoke about herself and her peers in a foreign and often hostile environment. We were engaged and oblivious to the digital recorder capturing our voices. At points the stories were intercepted by conversation and questions by both my mother and myself. I wasn't sure about a particular direction or specific questions and wanted to only listen to Tyotka's stories. The atmosphere was warm, supportive and touching, and I was lulled into a state of resting in her stories and the images they generated.

After an hour of conversation when we reached a mutual silence, I asked to see the 'hole' in the floor of her old house next door that her daughter had mentioned. The old wooden house appeared weary but exuded character with its gradual loss of symmetry. It sat perilously atop an eroding bank above the

⁸⁴ Slava Hospadu/Blessings from the Lord

⁸⁵ Slava Blahodarim Tebe Hospadu/We are thankful for the blessings of the Lord

river. I tried to imagine the house filled with warmth and movement as it must have been forty years back. We entered a side room and she pulled back a piece of torn green linoleum and underneath was a wood floor with an outline of a 2' by 2' square trap door, flush with the floor. The trap door was released by popping up a nail and pulling it open which revealed a hollow with a dirt floor beneath. It was where her son would hide during the 1950s when the police would raid the village to abduct children and deliver them to New Denver's prison camp for children. It was painful to imagine a young child hiding under the floor in the dark and this image gripped me. As we walked back to her house, she described the small camp in the wooded hillside where children would hide from the police. Adults would send them food and one or two would accompany them through the nights. The stories are interrupted; it is time to remove the bread from the oven.

Looking back...

The visit felt very much like an ordinary visit and not an interview. Our conversation was seized on the digital recorder, yet it seemed to me that the conversation might have been the same without the recorder.

I was immersed in Tyotka's storied memories and was left wondering if I should have thought about more definitive questions, and be ready to steer the conversation into more intentional territory. Would that have limited what was shared? Or would it have expanded it into more possible regions of ideas and insights, memories and experiences? I was lulled into her stories like a child

transfixed under the storyteller's spell. Possible questions did not disrupt my comfortable engagement while I escaped into the stories.

Nonetheless, I did ask Tyotka what importance being a Sons of Freedom held for her; I was impressed by her immediate and powerful response. She stood on the principle of not buying land, and her pride of living on 'God's' land shone through her penetrating eyes. This was one of my initial visits, and I quickly realized that I was Tyotka's guest held hostage by her stories, her protocols and timeframe. It was important to be 'in' grace and care required by hospitable research, to let go of the helm that she already held with steady hands.

Eating, drinking and storytelling around the table

Conjuring up a memory, I see the large table with three generations of family members. I feel honoured to sit amongst them and be part of the conversation addressing their perspectives and stories about being Sons of Freedom Doukhobors. The table is set out with refreshments and snacks which are continually replenished. I am a guest at their table; they are hosting me. At the same time they are guests of this research study and I am the host with the obvious recorder strategically placed in the middle of the table.

The conversation begins with the family elder, Vadiim, who easily retrieves memories expressed into stories of his childhood accented by migrations and displacements, and one especially poignant story stood out: *The yellow sweater*. We were all caught off 'emotional' guard. The story was set during the time when his parents were both incarcerated on Pier's island, and

he at four years old was staying with a Doukhobor family. He attended Sunday Prayer meetings and would be on the lookout for the familiar *yellow sweater* that his mother would wear, and even though he knew she was far away, the yellow sweater offered him the sense and, who knows, the possibility that it would be her in the sweater. *I kept looking but it didn't happen.* His bright blue eyes became soft and faraway, his tone of voice strained under the weight of the story of the *yellow sweater*. The weight of the story mournfully quietened the room, and his daughter who had not heard this story could not hold back her tears. The story, after decades of elapsed time, was offered to everyone around the table and we all needed time to sink into the quietness and settle the intensity. Thus, a tone of sincerity, care and engagement was fostered during a forum for emerging experiences and perspectives, kept sealed for so long. The gathering became less about gathering information and more about an experience of sharing, of listening to the other, and in turn learning more about one another within an atmosphere enveloped by warmth and care. Tanya, a granddaughter of the elder, and her friend Sara, broke the intensity with their energetic ideas projected for a possible future for the Sons of Freedom. They had so much to say and not only expressed their sadness and pride for their elders, but they also excitedly expressed the possibilities 'we' have to keep on the move in an inviting and inclusive manner.

I guess, the way I feel I should always be doing something to make the world a better place in a way, not necessarily for me obviously but also for others around me, and I think that really comes from the Doukhobors. I look back

at what my baba went through and the things she sacrificed, and that really impacts me, and I think that I should be sacrificing and doing more (Tanya).

I was not solely the researcher, the witness or observer. I was part of the collective, a participant in the conversation, sharing perspectives and experiences along with the others. We considered the Sons of Freedom history, present implications and future possibilities. Emotions and reflections were sparked with sadness, curiosity and exciting ideas which readily emerged throughout the collaboratively facilitated gathering, the not-so-small communion. The recorder was turned off which did not determine the end of the gathering. It went on until it was time to disperse, signaled by on-coming quiet, followed by warm hugs and promises to return to come together again, soon.

A visit with Dyadya⁸⁶

I arrive at Dyadya Ilya's. He is a very gentle and kind-hearted man with a soft voice and tender blue eyes. We knew each other for many years, however over time our visits had become less and less frequent. When I introduced my idea of this project Dyadya began to weep saying he was so touched that someone was interested in talking to him. When he broke into light crying during our conversation, it evoked a struggle within me not to join him in this emotion but to stay with him and support him with calm and embracing words.

I am not sure how I will continue to manage the sadness that I absorbed and carry from the stories animated in his eyes, face and gestures indicative of

⁸⁶ Uncle

both his strength and fragility. I was honoured to receive his stories and their long-lasting imagery. I was fearful that the sorrow would be difficult to bear, sorrow that I did not know so personally before and was surprised by. I felt an increase in the responsibility I had to Dyadya and to those he included in his recollections that are so close to his heart. His tears and recollections spilled out into a vulnerable and loving space, after so many years of silence.

Dyadya spoke quietly, at times with a voice that trembled but in an attitude of gratefulness for an opportunity to be listened to and valued for his humble wisdom. I listened attentively and graciously and felt fortunate to receive so much knowledge. We traversed a conversational river of calm, interspersed with undercurrents of emotions. Several times his voice tightened and he cried wiping his eyes on his red hankie. He recalled the frequently-visited yet impossible memory of being torn away from his mother's arms and delivered into institutional hands when he was six weeks old, and of his impending death and the actual deaths of other infants he laid beside, while his parents were held prisoners on Pier's Island. All these years later, in his seventies, he holds firmly to his heritage, that of a Sons of Freedom, coupled with his membership and involvement in the Orthodox Doukhobor community. I depart warmed by the reflections of his gentle smile, wisdom and humility.

Recollections around the dining room table

I gaze gently at the elder, Anyoota, sitting across from me at the table; her experiences written across her pleasant face and generous eyes. I am sitting with a family of four generations around the dining room table. The

conversation opens with an invitation for the elder to begin. Her experiences are eye-opening for me as they are for her family. Her incarcerations began when she was a young girl in Saskatchewan. She vividly recalls her experiences of being led into the dark basement of the compound where she and other children were held while holding fast their positions of resistance. I wonder how one continues with faith and devotion to a people, to a movement riddled with strife, like so many had done for so long? We are all deeply touched and she smiles; her words affirmed that she is proud to be a Свободник⁸⁷ and would not change her experiences. Her daughter *Lena* posed the question...

“Do you regret all the times you were in jail or for everything else that happened in your life?”

“No, I would do it all over again”

The conversation is picked up by others, sharing experiences, perspectives and questions. Two younger members of the family share their open curiosity, their lack of knowledge about the Sons of Freedom history, and their appreciation of learning more about their parent’s and grandmother’s stories.

When I was young I didn’t think about where I came from, right? Or who are my ancestors? So I think it is important for me now... when I was young I didn’t care; who cares? I am with my friends that is what I cared about... but now I am getting older and I am becoming more and more interested in my

⁸⁷ Svobodnik/Sons of Freedom

heritage and stuff and I find it really interesting to listen to baba and this whole conversation... I think it is awesome (Stasya).

The conversations, the coming together of individuals, fostered a space of vulnerability, trust, comfort, sorrow and future possibilities. The sharing around the table ebbed and flowed with passion and quiet intensity and was surprisingly tempered by the arrival of the elder's four-year-old great granddaughter, who with gentle prompting from her mother recited a Doukhor prayer typically read by children.

Господи благослови.

*Дом наш благодатный, упование Божье, прибежище Христово,
покровитель Дух Святой, при пути, яко с нами Бог.*

Богу нашему слава.

Lord, bless us.

Our home is blessed, our hopes are with God and in refuge and guardianship of Christ the Holy Spirit. Upon our path God is with us.

Glory to God

We listen, smile and the visit is complete, punctuated by a prayer, a prayer that is evidence of the embrace and sustainability of heritage. I leave, so full of stories and reflections and relationship that they seem to spill over, and I am left feeling that this is a worthy and necessary project. I hope that I can do it justice, even though it feels much too monumental.

I have nothing good to say

When I approached my friend Petr, about sharing his perspectives and experiences of having a Sons of Freedom heritage, he warned me “I have nothing good to say.” It was during the second encounter and invitation that he reiterated those words in the same manner. This time we set a time to meet. Hospitality requires a welcome to the stories I might find difficult to bear; those stories wait at the door as well. I felt unsure, even a bit nervous about what stories and emotions I would encounter but the invitational door had opened and the ‘yes’ to him was affirmed.

I had the opportunity to sit down with both him and his wife. The invitation to ‘come in’ was, to say the least, warm and welcoming. Snacks and refreshments were placed upon the table with the typical “Help yourself; please eat and drink.” It was impossible not to help myself. There was an unspoken understanding that the conversation would proceed without being recorded. The words quickly took over, filling the atmosphere with a tone that accelerated into a passionate tenor of anger exposing long-lasting hurt. His face reddened and his words burst out tumbling word-over-word. His body tightened, animated with expressive gestures that demanded my attention. I was a hostage to this extraordinary gift of sharing. Paralyzed into a state of attentiveness, shock, admiration and care, I listened. The conversation shifted between both husband and wife, with shared experiences of confusion and injury reflected not only in their words but paralleled in their expressions. My personal history of experiences, linked to being a Sons of Freedom, was not

without hurt and confusion. My memories simmered close to the surface and emerged with sharp clarity as we sat in communal recognition.

We were a simple people, seeking guidance, open for guidance and direction, ready to believe and to follow. We couldn't use our own heads and someone with an intellect, charm and a lack of conscience could walk in and take advantage, but for what reason remains unknown, but the impact was powerful and painful, the wounds deep and lifelong.

Once the emotions settled we found relief in the quiet. I realized that we had only now discovered so much about each other by means of similar experiences resulting in a deepening of friendship. Upon my leaving we asked ourselves:

So what good can be said of the Sons of Freedom?

We agreed that we could more easily accept the early initiatives based on simplicity and determination before pockets of the movement became so convoluted, messy, and in cases manipulative and intricately political.

I was certainly shaken off of an already tenuous balance. This heritage was not without deep-seated injuries, too many to ever document. This heritage is one that they, I and others cannot escape. Any fragments of anchoring that I harboured for this study seemed to unravel. I grasped for 'straws' or bits of mad passion to keep going, but really the winds stilled the sails of my work, and I faced the sheer impossibility of this work. How could I keep going when so much pain and despair had occurred within my own community and

heritage? I felt let down by the risk of welcoming trauma that shed light on my own trauma. The door opened to charred memories and hearts that were also part of the Sons of Freedom heritage in a significant and unfortunate way. Afterward I experienced a complexity of feelings ranging from sadness, compassion and, yes – love; my heart felt at once an expansion and contraction. Caputo (2007) describes LOVE as a “kind of excess or unconditionality” (p. 218) fostered in hospitable spaces of communion.

Despair and hopelessness haunted my thoughts which were becoming increasingly doubtful about this project, leading me to question whether or not I should continue. My steps were accompanied by an increasing sense of impossibility and weakened resolve. I became more and more of a hostage to this study, to the ancestors, and to the inescapable mourning and sense that justice was out of reach for those past and present. I lost my footing and any ground beneath my feet, or was I fooling myself that there was a ground beneath my feet at all, and if so, this ground, if I did not realize it earlier, was unstable and shifting. Thus, each step carried more doubt and indecision. Each step more apologetic. Hospitality and justice seemed so far out of reach.

Looking back...

Each time I left a visit, a communion, I was consumed by an intricacy of emotions and thoughts requiring a self-reflective sorting out and always within mourning. The honour I experienced, the inspiration and the learning followed, yet paralyzed me. I felt left in a desert of not knowing how to proceed, yet paradoxically this was the motivation and fuel to continue. I increasingly

experienced myself as a prisoner and hostage to this heritage, to this study and to time.

With each ‘small or not-too-small communion’ I faced the other, the unknown of the other and through time, trust and care in hospitality I came to progressively witness revealing depths of each individual. I knew that I could never come to know the secret, the gifts of the other completely. The eyes of the other we are told are windows to the soul, mysterious pools of shimmering light that draw us into the “mystery and confusion, shadows and dark recesses; they are not windows of the soul but a house of mirrors” (Caputo, 1987, p. 274). In reflection I realized...*there is so much to know but coming to know is endless in the infinite presence and being of the other. I am with you, but you are a mystery, and just when I think I know something about you, your eyes flash and reveal something different.* And so for me to remain present, I was drawn into the spell and influence of each individual, folded into their energy that fluctuated along the deeply felt stories and commanding opinions. The partnership of love and pain made the experience of ‘communion’ with others impossible yet possible. I fall in love over and over.

The letter: no I will not speak to you

When I asked Luke to have a conversation with me, he emphatically said no. He would not talk to me about this, let alone be recorded. Not that he didn’t want to share his perspective, he just did not want to be in the space of conversation, especially recorded, and he offered instead, to write. I felt disappointed and had an emerging resistance to his idea of writing his

thoughts. Wasn't hospitality about being 'with' the other in the communion of their stories, perspectives and emotions, face-to-face? I struggled with this thought and the hostility that I felt by not wanting to stray from hospitality. I questioned whether or not this was straying from a hospitable ethic and quickly realized I was restricting hospitality by attempting to limit the possibilities by 'making' it into a method. Hospitality is also about being with others without pressures that may restrict rather than forge a welcoming space of sharing, spaces that can diverge from expected methods of conversation. I welcomed his request and received his letter via email. I continued to wonder about the effectiveness of this relationally restricted format, until I read the letter. The words were thoughtfully written and expressed in a manner that demonstrated the need for time and space to be composed. I grasped the benefit of welcoming his written work animated through reading. My perception of hospitality continued to deepen. I became excited by this new possibility and welcomed others to share by means of writing - a communion of a different sort, one with carefully composed thoughts, feelings, and ideas. I was grateful that this young man stood firm in his decision, consequently challenging me to loosen the self-imposed limitations that I had not realized I had placed on hospitality.

Hospitality: a song and a prayer

I experienced Hospitality as a reciprocal gesture with others and was welcomed beyond expectation. I was at once the guest, invited into a home, and was at once the host as a presenter of this study. We were inextricably tied as

guest and host, mutual hostages one to the other. Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) present this as a situation that “makes everyone into everyone else’s hostage” (p. 125). My becoming a host was dependent upon the guests for their contributions that became the substance and life of this project. Host and hostage were roles played out simultaneously, becoming interchangeable and indecipherable. Even upon neutral ground for example, conversing in a car or park, the reciprocal exchange of host and guest was apparent.

I felt that yes, I am as you, an inheritor of this heritage, an inheritor of experiences streaming through a lineage traced with suffering, determination and resistance. I am an inheritor of the messages compounding into labels that contributed to pain, doubt, shame, resistance and pride. I am an inheritor, inheriting much that is obscured, that is unknown and ‘secret,’ which may or may not ever become unearthed. What I am not is an expert on this heritage. What I have is the complexity and fragments of inheritance and dedication to act with others and to listen, to uncover, to create, to imagine, and to dream and continue ‘becoming’ with others.

The question of proprietorship disturbed and continues to disturb me and the indecision about what to include in this work remains with me. I am bothered by this ‘bit of meanness’ in hospitality or, as Caputo (1997) suggests “hostility in all hosting and hospitality” (p. 109). I am both relieved and dismayed that hospitality, no matter how much I desire its excessiveness, I cannot escape the limits I come up against (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007). This was far more than a research project; it was an affirmation and embrace of

heritage, an embrace of tears, heartbreak, prayers, song and joy, and an affirmation and embrace of the future. Heritage is not set in stone, but is in perpetual movement with the possibility of creating new interpretations. Heritage, as Derrida puts forward is not to be left “intact or unharmed;” one is “not to leave safe the very thing one claims to respect before all else” (p. 4).

Maintaining faith in heritage requires a double gesture of endless reaffirmation and reinterpretation. This leaves me wondering that as a researcher and someone with distinct historical roots, am I what Derrida and Roudinesco (2004) might call “faithful and unfaithful” (p. 3) to my heritage? I would consider this the case, especially as hospitality requires the researcher to accept the invitation into history, into the stories as a way to peer into unforeseeable possibilities for the future that may challenge and exceed existing traditions.

During the ‘small communions,’ I realized that this study would go to places that I could not anticipate or plan for. I was on shaky and uncertain ground and I came to understand that faith is not about having certain and solid ground to tread upon. I was walking without complete intention, allowing for a spontaneous zig-zag toward the unexpected, guided by a map that did not indicate the cracks and gifts along the way. What I did know was that we do not need to ‘fix’ our identities; we can re-shape history through re-shaping, reconsidering and re-contextualizing. This is deconstruction in the history, present and future of the Sons of Freedom Spirit Wrestlers.

Songs of Identity

I am a Svobodnik. That is my heritage and I am tied to it through my heritage

(Ilya).

The words threaded throughout this study declare ‘we are here’ today and will be tomorrow. The words are an affirmation and a ‘yes’ to heritage and identity.

I am a Doukhobor Sons of freedom, the first word is Doukhobor. I am proud to be a Doukhobor and was brought up Sons of Freedom (Matvei).

Well, yeah, there are little bits of jewels that I’ve picked up from older people that were kind of subtle, but then you see the depth of what they’ve said. I feel very fortunate, actually, to have had the experience of being a Sons of Freedom, to witness an opening towards a sense of expansiveness...like freeing the mind a little bit (Daniil).

I was in it... I do not want to lose it; I cannot forget. I am happy for this heritage; this is the heart of it. The Sons of Freedom followed their hearts more than the others. Sons of Freedom was an extreme path with extreme heart and spirit. Complete heart devotion – the underlying factor was that you can take it all from us but you “can’t break our spirit” (Stenya).

...it was what they believed in, in the time; I can’t say it is not right because at that point in time it probably was the right thing to do (Matvei).

When I asked Alexei...

Okay, what does it mean to you - the Sons of Freedom?

His answer was definitive:

It means that is where I come from. Ты есть печатъ,⁸⁸ you are just branded with it. And that's about all, and you are always thinking that way. That is what I am saying, that it is not that simple to let go of everything. A person who decides to do that, we know that it is not that easy and I have to give credit to those people who can pull it off and not regret...

Sons of Freedom is an identity, an inescapable inherited identity that we can trace along genealogical lines of history, whether we want it or not, “like it or not, know it or not” (Derrida, 1994, p. 54). Affirmations of identity and the tone of those affirmations reflect a Sons of Freedom tone evident in our passionate and definitive testimonials. Whether or not we ‘like it,’ identity is distinct - *you are branded with it* - branded a Sons of Freedom, declared Alexei. We can view our traditions and our identities from our present vantage point but this vantage point claims Derrida is “always haunted by spectral traces of absence, loss and death” (Dooley & Kavanagh, 2004, p. 17). The declarations affirm identity in the face of a long-suffering past riddled with losses, and now we face the unknown... ‘whither to now?’ This is a burning question for many of us, notwithstanding the question ‘who are we now?’

Stenya, described what the heart of the Sons of Freedom means to her...

A Sons of Freedom Doukhobor wasn't scared to sacrifice and follow a belief...something in their heart...something bigger than themselves...and to act

⁸⁸ Ti yest pichat/ you are branded

and not just talk. The purest kind of Doukhobor is what a Sons of Freedom is. One that walks the walk. Whatever a Doukhobor should be, or is, that's what Sons of Freedom epitomizes.

Marya's identity as a Sons of Freedom is clear...

A value I have carried is that I am rebellious, and part of that rebelliousness is telling people where I am from and they could deal with it because it doesn't bother me; so if it bothers anyone, tough! I am not ashamed of it in any way...it is always with you - always with you. I have a better sense now of peace and serenity and being much more accepting of myself now than I was before... I recognize how different we were from the rest of society and yet I recognize that we are unique in society and that uniqueness, I feel special...maybe that is somewhat egocentric.

Nadya expressed her pride in heritage...

...I mean, just my pride in being a Doukhobor, emulates just who I am, a Doukhobor in the sense of my heritage. I don't know that I can say that I've done anything, or sacrificed in any way to truly take that name that I - that I hold in such a high regard... but, I am very proud to be of that heritage...

The values, principles, culture and lifestyle of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were fought for by us, the Doukh-boretsi - Spirit Wrestlers. Even though it is not replicated into the present, it is nonetheless 'remembered' into the present and provides the ability to say 'we are here.' The purposeful 'fight' for non-conformity may be blurred and certainly compromised but not forgotten - not entirely. The ideals and struggles for freedom have not been delegated to forgotten realms. They remain alive, especially re-enlivened through collective memories and open discussion, perpetuating discourses about 'who we are.'

What consistently emerged through conversations within small communions was a confirmation that 'who we are' does not need to include shame or disgrace.

Many cultural manifestations of Doukhobor oral history and way of life continue today, although many have been compromised, specifically our simplistic manner of living. The Russian language is also spoken less with each generation, especially in conversation and in the recitation of prayers and singing of hymns and songs which is a hallmark of Doukhobor events: celebrations, sobranie and funerals. Nevertheless, the generational transmission of our collective knowledge and heritage continues. Doukhobor traditions are apparent in the affinity we have with the soil, evident in gardens we skilfully sow and harvest, and present in the preservation and preparation of food. We have cultural healing practices, and a skilled and artistic manner in which many work with wood, wool and cloth; we embrace family, extended family and community all of which demonstrate our practices of hospitality. The cultural landscape is continually shifting, yet the historical identity, the inheritance, is kept alive through mourning, yearning and remembering.

A defining feature of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors as a collective is the losses suffered throughout our history, and the mourning and yearning that ensure and sustain our memories, are also parts of the fabric of our identity. Our historical trajectory in Canada began with the loss of our homeland, Russia. The yearning and hope to return to Russia, mother Russia, was a desire and initiative, from the first mass migrations to Saskatchewan, to

the Trek in British Columbia in 1962. Correspondences that took place between Soviet officials and the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors in their hopes of returning were shattered. We mourned the loss of our homeland, and yearned to return 'home,' not as strangers but as those who belonged. With the significant changes that occurred in Russia, from Tsardom to Communism and the cumulative tyranny under Stalin, the return was impossible. We carried the coveted memory of our homeland, even when it was in the midst of drastic changes. We would not return, yet we would not forget our homeland. Even for all the suffering and losses experienced, Russia was nevertheless 'home.' There were substantial losses, changes and transformations in both Russia and Canada, yet it is the deep sadness for those losses that prevented forgetting and fostered remembering, a process and constitution of identity.

It is impossible to retrieve or repeat the past in the same way, yet the yearning for the past - the remembrance - is integral for transformation and reconstruction of who we are. It is a repetition that is repeated differently. Yearning and mourning sustain ties to the past, affirm the present and keep us moving into the future, perpetuating the process of becoming.

The Sons of Freedom communities, in general, desired and, for the most part, lived a lifestyle of simplicity and hospitality. The manifestation of this desire continued repeatedly over generations marked with differences according to the contextual changes the community faced. References to community values emerged during our discussions.

Living together, helping each other out was taught to us and not to be greedy. I try to live up to that, try not to hurt anybody (Matvei).

The idea and principles of not being attached to material gain and land exploitation were carried through as long as they were able to by the sons of freedom (Ahna).

...you basically are non-conformists and why should we pay taxes for land that was given by God, you know, and I think that is the role; it is not man-made laws, it is laws that are created by the cosmos for us and not some government sitting there telling you what to do and what to pay (Lena).

It meant to live a simple life and help each other...people were helping each other out just like brothers and sisters...and not to be tangled up in the system...we are caught up and I don't feel good about that, and it seems like we are scared to step outside of the box and go back to where we were. Especially through all the turmoil we went through, our parents and the turmoil they went through being taken away and stigmatized and you could almost say that I am broken now. I am a broken Sons of Freedom, you know, and I hope that our kids can find their way back... we weren't fulfilling our destiny because all around us you could see the things are falling apart and that's why I believe...what the Sons of Freedom were doing is trying to ring that bell to show everybody that we are way off track and that was our main purpose and a lot of the stuff didn't make sense. Nobody wanted this freedom we were trying to push because they were getting all assimilated; they were working and all this new stuff is coming, power, electricity, T.V., conveniences and.... I think there was a lot of good in what they were trying to do...and I think maybe a lot of good did come out from the Sons of Freedom for the whole world to watch (Kostyei).

Our ancestry is part of being a community, a continuation of community and a strong community. We want to be able to do it ourselves, build it ourselves, use

our hands and help our neighbors. Then the sacrifice...that affected my mom's life, being able to burn her house and detaching from materialism, because when she died, eighteen years ago, she never did have cupboards in her kitchen, but she cooked every day of her life and had many people over and always entertained. But the house, you know... that was not her goal (Stenya).

The primary purpose of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors was to live in freedom and simplicity with one another in a cultural lifestyle guided by their principles and their spirituality - permeated by song and ceremony. The desire to live in freedom according to their ideology, can be considered excessive and idealistic - or perhaps an unconditional Doukhoborism. The Sons of Freedom - Spirit Wrestlers followed *their hearts more than the others. Sons of Freedom was an extreme path with extreme heart and spirit. Complete heart devotion.* For Stenya, they were fearless and not scared to sacrifice and follow a *belief...something in their heart...something bigger than themselves...and to act and not just talk. The purest kind of Doukhobor is what a Sons of Freedom is.* The ties to identity through heritage and striving for freedom and justice by means of what might be considered 'madness' and the irrationality of faith generated questions and reflections evident in our shared insights.

As a child growing up, I was very accepting of my family and where we were at and our life position, so it didn't really hit me to start questioning until my daughter was almost five years old. That is how old I was when my mom decided that she was going to go to jail. And I'd look at my daughter, and think, "Oh my... I can't imagine anything that I'd leave her for. How could my mom have left me? Didn't she love me enough... what was it?" So it wasn't until then, which wasn't that long ago, that I started to actually question her motives; up to

then I was accepting. It was like, the thing to do, and lots of other people did it, and it was the movement so it didn't become really important until my child was at that age. Even though I try to understand it, I will never have those answers as to why. But there isn't resentment, there isn't anger, there isn't any bitterness about it (Stenya).

She hid me and then people came and said "If you don't let her go to New Denver get out of here over the bridge." So with that pressure we moved away for a couple of years; so there was peer pressure. And even when houses were burning and you didn't burn your own they would come and burn it. People did that out of fear. But...it is our heritage...I never was ashamed, I never was, I never said I was a Ukrainian like some people did; I always was a Doukhobor...(Lidia).

At night you wake up and it is red, it is dark and red. I felt afraid; I would run to the villages. One time a house was on fire and I ran in my shorts and I slipped in a puddle. My dad grabbed me from the puddle. Later when I was a teenager, singing would start in the big hall and a home would burn, I would run home. When we went on the trek our house burned. As a kid I was afraid. But there were fun things in the community too. Working and singing. People got together in groups in the evening to sing, you could hear it for miles (Pavel).

I said mom "enough, довольно, довольно"⁸⁹ be with the grandchildren and she said, "no, I've got to do it or else you guys are going to be suffering and they will come after you." The way I look at it, she did what she thought was right, whether I agree with a lot of it, some of it I do agree with and some of it, no, at this point in my life (Matvei).

⁸⁹ Dovoilna/enough

There was so much personal and collective suffering and fear manifest to extraordinary degrees illustrated throughout these pages. It cannot be forgotten. On the other hand, we should not be solely identified by suffering. The Sons of Freedom communities were also characterized by an active spiritual foundation of song, prayer and work that saturated daily life, and especially so during ceremonies, community events or in more personal contemplative moments as expressed by Lena:

...you know, this idea of spirituality whether it is a name like Богушка⁹⁰ or just something spiritual, it could be working in the garden in this kind of meditative state or taking walks in the forest, but there is something really powerful about going into a собрание.⁹¹ The singing elevates you. Or just even having the small communion like this.

Community events in Krestova draw people together, such as the annual Thanksgiving celebration, acknowledgment of Mother's day, and the once well-attended Sunday morning meeting to sing and pray. Over the years this once highly-attended meeting, the моление,⁹² has seen fluctuating and decreasing attendance. It is often maintained by a few with hope that the моление will once again emerge as lively as in the past. There have been initiatives to bring the younger generations together for Russian language classes. A community school called моральная школа⁹³ (during the 1990s) brought children and

⁹⁰ Bohyshka - God

⁹¹ Sobranie - gathering

⁹² Molenyie - prayer meeting

⁹³ Moralnaya shkola - school of morals

youth together to learn about their heritage through songs and stories and provided a forum for discussing issues of history, politics, spirituality and community. Children's preschools, primarily in the Russian language, continue and not long ago a community gardening initiative brought all ages together – Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor - to prepare soil, plant seeds, tend to the plants, and which was highlighted at the end by reaping the harvest and inviting everyone for a community Borsht feast. Discussion groups, meditation groups, singing groups arise, subside and arise as people's interests and ideas are brought together.

An integral community event is the funeral. And even though the organizational structure of funerals has changed over the years from engaging in a three-day ceremony to the current one-day ceremony, they are still attended by those of all ages, with song and prayer being the prominent and permeating elements. Community involvement becomes apparent from the skilled cooks preparing the meal, the psalmists leading the prayer and singing, to the капачи⁹⁴ - those digging the graves by hand. The experience of death calls for a coming together for the departed and for the family. It is a community event of many hands, where death is embraced in ceremony. It is a spiritual and hospitable walk alongside the other - with those present, with the one who has passed, and with all present ancestors.

⁹⁴ Kapachi/gravediggers

... we accept death and understand it a little bit more because we were around it. I was attending funerals before I was ten and you just understand it, and it is scary, and it is sad, but we also know it is beautiful and at the same time part of our life (Sara).

First off, what is a funeral? Is it simply disposing of one's body? To some of course that's all, but to me it's the removal of energy out of one's self. Since we all vibrate to a certain frequency, one's death should be celebrated with upmost dignity and respect. All of this is done in a simple manner, keeping in mind more the spirit than our body, our vehicle. Since our forefathers set up a pattern of simplicity and a very powerful prayer service, I feel we should continue this process the same way. We have condensed our funerals from three days to two days to two hours, speeding up the souls departure to its other phase of existence. I'm not sure I like this style, but certainly after 2000 years we still have something left. In other words, two hours is better than cremation with no service. Keep singing, keep the reciting of psalms and meditate in silence. I hope it keeps going that way. Help hold the Doukhobor community together as long as possible is my aspiration (Mikhail).

To me, being a Sons of Freedom holds a strong sense of belonging. As far back as I could remember, my family and I would attend Molenyie on Sundays and evening classes on Mondays. This is where I was given the opportunity to learn how the community grew as a whole and how its growth was as big a part of me as I was a part of it. The old teaching the new, strong helping the weak. It's closeness and ability to overcome any obstacles or tasks by pulling together for a greater purpose. I could only imagine what it would have been like to work on the communal gardens years and years back, or the trials and tribulations that transpired on both sides of the fence at the New Denver camps.

I have a great appreciation to my parents, grandparents and their parents and so on, for if it weren't for their strong belief in themselves, our way of life (religion), and in each other, we would not have what we have this very day that I myself hold dear. A grounded belief of a strong yet passive religion and a strong sense of family and community.

I remember to this day, the very first time I was asked to take my Papa's place as a Kapachi. I hear stories from others and from my brother on how digging a grave for a community member wasn't a sad event, but a chance to help out the grieving family. To hand dig a grave and cover it again by hand with fellow men from the community is an experience that I cherish to this day, as an honorable task taken to hold together the community.

All my experiences here in the community have molded me into the kind caring loving man I am today. To lead by example and to follow a simple yet profound way of life. To treat everyone equal in life, and to help others in their time of need. My life has taken me away from home over the last 10 years, but without a doubt, while I was away, I knew that my place was in the community I grew up in, and I would always find my way back (Timofei).

Community walls

During a history marked by exiles and migrations, the Doukhobors maintained their close-knit ties to heritage and to community. Being in community sustained language no matter how migratory it became.

Community sustained a cultural lifestyle of collectivity in work, hospitality and spirituality, hallmarks of a Doukhorbor community. When faced with exiles in Russia, they demonstrated an ability to uphold community and identity even across distances when they were scattered throughout Russian landscapes.

In Canada, a similar trajectory of pressure upon the Doukhobor communities to assimilate and conform continued. The relentless hammer of assimilation attempted to shatter the walls of community; however, the seductive call of assimilation was equally powerful and lured many Doukhobors out of their protective walls of community to buy land, accept public education and become materially successful. The Sons of Freedom Doukhobors rebelled and resisted the 'assimilationist blows' and formed community(ies) that upheld language, principles and a traditional lifestyle while wrestling with the infiltration from the 'outside.' The 'outside' represented by general Canadian society perceived the Sons of Freedom – Spirit Wrestlers as threatening to their way of life. There was a general fear of the stranger, fear of those who were too different. The Sons of Freedom Doukhobors – the 'strangers' lived differently, dressed differently, spoke differently and refused to take up the opportunities to become good Canadian citizens, in other words to become the 'same.' Within time many Doukhobors integrated into a more mainstream Canadian lifestyle; however, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors fought assimilation and integration throughout most of the 1900s in a rebellious and anarchic fashion. As hard as the assimilationist forces came down on our community walls, we resisted and wrestled with those forces resulting in a perplexity of dire consequences. The walls that protected our use of language, the simplicity of our lifestyle, our spiritual ideologies and practices, and our fervent desire for freedom became tenuous. And as shown repetitively in this study, prison time was frequent and often torturous,

children were kidnapped out of their culture and language; the death of our Leader, Peter the Lordly, that occurred in 1924 was significant including other deaths during long lasting resistances. Additionally, the insidious infiltration and undermining of our principle of non-ownership of land all underscore the violent stabs at the spiritual heart of the Doukhorbor communities.

Hospitality is about crossing borders, not only individual and community borders, but also national borders. Derrida (cited in Caputo, 2000) challenged the notion of 'borders' and the limits of hospitality "by calling for the abolition of immigration laws" (p. 57) for the generosity and risk of open borders. This of course is the impossibility of unconditional hospitality, for Derrida (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004) also clearly understood the importance for organized societies to adhere to laws and structures in order to maintain territorial, cultural, linguistic and national sovereignty. Hospitality is an interplay of openings and closures that does "calculate the risks, yes, but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and the foreigner" (Derrida, p. 6). Hospitality requires structures, yet I believe it is imperative to continually examine, reconsider and challenge those structures to allow for more openness, excess and difference - in a word - hospitality.

In order to protect their own lifestyles and identity, traditional Doukhorbor communities could be described as having walls around their communities. Similarly, general society in Canada, especially prior to the move toward multiculturalism, fashioned their own walls to protect and maintain their communities built on British values and structures. The Sons of Freedom

Doukhobors threatened those walls by disrupting conventional rules and protocols. And the walls built by the Doukhobors were threatened under the auspices of assimilation.

According to a Canadian model of immigration, from 1867 to the 1960s immigrants were required to assimilate into the prevailing Anglo way of life based on a “replication of a British type of society in Canada” (Dewey, 2009, p. 3). The Doukhobors were expected to conform, but they could never be complete members of the mainstream. They were not completely accepted, much like many immigrants with languages and lifestyles that differed from the dominant populations in Western Canada. Kiwanis (2006, cited in Mahtani, 2008) explains that immigrants, past and present, are perceived as “being outside of real ‘Canadians’ and are encouraged to ‘fit’ into Canadian society” by means of assimilation (p. 234).

Canada as the host country remained the master of the nation by controlling the border and exercising mastery after the guests had arrived (Derrida, 1998, cited in Kearney, 1998). Thus, the welcoming of the Doukhobors in Canada can be thought of as a limited or even hostile welcome. It was a welcome that recognized the skilled ‘farmers’ which Canada could utilize, but there was the surprise; they were strangers who were stranger than expected. They did not behave like typical farmers and pioneers striving to benefit from the opportunities that becoming Canadian citizens could provide.

The Doukhobors arrived in Canada and were welcomed with unfamiliar conditions⁹⁵ and although many compromised and accepted the conditions, many did not. The Sons of Freedom remained strangers and outsiders in Canada for most of the 20th century. They arrived in a home that wasn't a home. They posed a risk to the 'community' of law-abiding Canadian citizens. Community, according to Caputo (2000), attempts to "minimize the risk" (p. 57) from the stranger(s) who may disrupt commonly-held national traditions and structures. Similar to many immigrants, the Doukhobors did not belong 'here' or perhaps anywhere, and were without a "native place, no place to rest their head" (Caputo, 2000, p. 64). That is precisely why Derrida, who was troubled over and advocated for less restrictive immigration policies, recognized the importance of friendship in relation to hospitality. Hospitality means to befriend the stranger, "to treat one who is not 'one of us' the way we treat our 'own,' to take the other into our home" (Caputo, 2000, p. 64). Within an ethic of hospitality, extending friendship to the stranger does not require the stranger becoming the same as the host. The host need not predetermine, change nor conquer the stranger, the guest, or the friend. The arrival and settling of the stranger/guest must include welcoming uniqueness, or as Derrida (2005) would say, "irreducible singularity or alterity" (p. 22) of the 'Other.'

Canada has gradually opened its doors to immigrants arriving from a variety of countries on a world-wide scale. It has gained a reputation of establishing a multicultural country of acceptance and diversity and is a

⁹⁵ For example: Private ownership of property, providing allegiance to the King, providing statistical information, and sending children to public schools.

preferred location for many immigrants. Although Canada can be described as a country that values diversity and that is accepting of ethnic and cultural identities, there are significant inequities. Even with the introduction of the multiculturalism policy in 1971 (Reitz, 2012) and the recognition of the increase of immigrants from multiple countries and cultures, there continues to be a hierarchy privileging the white Western and Northern European (Haque, 2012). Multiculturalism is understood as a “platform that allows all Canadians to be part of the backing of our Nation” based on policies of equitable participation (Hyman, Meinhard & Shields, 2011, p. 3). Although multiculturalism assumes an acknowledgment and acceptance of ethnic differences and integration into all facets of society, integration, stated Wyczynski (1996, cited in Haque, 2012), “is euphemism for assimilation [and] will remain the core of the dominant societies policies” (p. 191). Jiwani (2006, cited in Mahtani, 2008) emphasizes that the main message relayed to immigrants is one of assimilation, where they are perceived as being outside of real “Canadianness” and are encouraged to ‘fit in’ to Canadian society” (p. 234). Current studies (Li, 2003; Bannerji, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2006; 1999; Kallen, 1982), cited by Hyman, Meinhard & Shields, (2011), provide a critical analysis of multicultural policies and demonstrate that multiculturalism accentuates ‘unfamiliarity’ or ‘strangeness’ in particular social groups, which consequently keeps them in positions of dependency. The authors explain that dependency sustains their status as second class citizens and in turn minimizes the “challenge they pose to the so-called ‘dominant’ group” (p. 9). Lee (2003) argues

that a multicultural discourse obliges the other, the immigrant ‘them,’ to become part of the dominant ‘us.’ In other words there is a continued expectation that immigrants integrate; however, barriers to integration have been identified by policy analysts who assert immigrants are often unable to adapt to the host country compounded by facing “systematic discrimination” (Wang and Lo, 2007, cited in Frideres, 2008, p. 87). Debates continue as to whether or not multiculturalism perpetuates injustice or justice. Is the invitation more conditional than unconditional, more hostile than hospitable? Does multiculturalism reinforce walls around ethnic groups perpetuating intolerance of differences and thus a marginal social positioning, or take down walls assuming assimilation and a reduction of differences into the same?

Not willing to compromise their lifestyle and principles, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were caught up in a reciprocity of suspicion that perpetuated a dichotomy of ‘us and them.’ They were not accepted due to their differences and for not adapting to conventional society. They in turn perceived Canadian customs and laws as a risk to their traditional lifestyle which they sustained within the walls of community, intensifying the position of ‘us and them,’ or as historically spoken in the community “наш или не наш”⁹⁶ - “ours or not ours.” After years of protecting the walls around their community the Sons of Freedom were forced to accept the ‘blows’ that crushed those walls. They accepted schooling for their children, accepted private ownership of land, and witnessed the slow dissipation of their language by the increasing use of

⁹⁶ Nahsh ee ne nahsh

the English language. In general there was a gradual conforming to the expectations and laws of the nation state.

Community, according to Caputo (1996, 1997, 1997, 2000 & 2002) and Derrida (1998, 2000, 2004 & 2005), is characterized by a fortification that protects the homogeneity of community, keeping it safe from the outside. In this case the community walls protected the Sons of Freedom from the 'outside' and similar walls protected mainstream society/community from 'them.' However, deconstruction is about cracking into all manner of walls that protect and defend; deconstruction calls for walls that are "permeable and porous" (1996, p. 26). Permeable walls with cracks and fissures are certainly "vulnerable to chance and surprise from what is out-side the community...that release the unforeseeable, unpredictable effects, like sparks from a roaring fire" (p. 26). The reciprocity of roaring fires threatened the respective barriers of traditions and lifestyles of minority and majority communities.

The violent measures of assimilation that rammed the walls of the Sons of Freedom community were not deconstruction, not a gesture of welcome, but forces of destruction. The relentless force of assimilative measures repeatedly struck our walls, as opposed to the gradual openings that would have led to porosity through curiosity, openness and sharing which had no opportunity to unfold. The walls did not have a chance for gracious openings. Our defenses increased to defend against the blows which proved too powerful and relentless through the century. Subsequently, many continue to reel from the reverberating blows of destruction and we wipe the dust from ourselves. I can

only wonder what might have emerged were we afforded the freedom to exercise a lifestyle of collectivity and simplicity without the restrictions and expectations to conform, leading to resistances and punishments.

Notwithstanding, there were those 'outside' of Doukhobor communities who were sympathetic and supported (morally and practically) the Sons of Freedom in their struggle for freedom. However, their voices of concern and admiration were quieted by the more powerful discourses in public, private and media forums. There was an exchange of skill, knowledge and relationship-building across community borders that increased over the years, especially as the walls of the community became more open.

We do not need to close a wall around ourselves, against the 'outside.' With cumulative fissures, our community perceives and experiences itself differently. It is a community of differences that welcomes difference, yet mourns the past as a double gesture of openness to the future and ties to the past. It is an open community that cannot close the circle around itself; instead the play of plurality and differences "invents endless loops and spirals, tangents and ellipses, amazing mazes and wild scribblings that cannot be ordered, dominated, or untangled" (Caputo, 1993, p. 55); in other words the community is defined more by singularities and differences - and thus possibilities (Caputo, 1996).

Our community is tied to a community past and is open to a community future. It may appear that we have assimilated into obscurity, but our identity continues to not only smoulder, but to burn, as evidenced in the collective

voices represented on these pages that recognize we still are community. It continues to be a place of belonging and of welcoming our ancestors. This is expressed by Stenya, who stated that *our ancestry is part of being a community, a continuation of community*. And while our community continues, it is also a demographically diverse landscape of cultures, languages, spiritualities and religious orientations, not to mention all levels of educational pursuits and careers. It has been a gradual movement from a homogeneous community to an increasingly heterogeneous community.

In discussion, Pavel conveyed that community is referred to as something to be held together, and we need to *help hold the Doukhobor community together as long as possible*. This was the general aspiration of singular voices reflected collectively. Holding together the community calls for a holding that is less tight and more welcoming of richness and risk.

Community has been a place of our identity, our home. It has been a home that has changed drastically over the years but does not forget its historical trajectory. We can say ‘yes’ to our identity, and to our future. The continuation of our identity is the fire that inflames “our passion for the impossible...to incite a riot, to drive us mad with passion, not to neutralize exciting and inflaming discourses” (Caputo, 1997, p. 59).

The conversations in small communions that I was fortunate to be a part of, and the voices illuminated on these pages, illustrate that – yes, we are here – and more than that, we continue to ‘become.’ We affirm and re-affirm our identity and heritage, and do not simply accept it, but re-launch it otherwise

and keep it alive (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004). The words of Peter Maloff in 1948 flow into the future when he declared that the “Doukhobor ideology is not immobile, or frozen into one crystallized form...our faith is eternally new and alive” (p. 33-35). We say ‘yes’ to the future and to hospitably that opens the door to the risks and gifts of the future. When I reflect upon my identity as a Sons of Freedom – Spirit Wrestler, I acknowledge that, although it is not traditional, the spirit of identity continues.

I am a Sons of Freedom. Maybe no one can really tell. My attire and work is what can be thought of as conventional. I have a house, property, a car and other material things. But something rushes through my mind and body and doesn't let me completely forget. I am a Sons of Freedom. Not the same as my parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, but I feel the sadness of their suffering, and especially so when they witness me consumed by materialism swept into the fast-paced 'normal' life, and assimilated out of my traditional language and 'community' ideals - almost. But there is that spark. It is there. It scratches at my consciousness and lets me know I am a Sons of Freedom and that I am still here. It doesn't let me forget the pain yet it also lets me feel the pride. It hasn't gone away. I am still here.

We are still here. These words reflect a deep sense of identity even when we feel that we are stuck in the darkness. However, the darkness prepares us for another dawn, and “just when the sun has sunk the deepest we turn around to see the traces of the new dawn” (Caputo, 1987, p. 165).

Songs of Becoming

How can we still have a Sons of Freedom spirit in this day and age? I think that is the question you should be asking (Olya).

You don't reach the ideal but there is an ideal to strive for (Stenya).

There is much to remember and much that necessitates mention, mourning, interpretation and hope. When we mourn our traditions, our values and past lifestyles, we experience a longing to resurrect them, but at the same time we desire to let them go. These are simultaneous gestures of remembering and valuing our past while remaining open to the future, loving our identities through mourning “to love them by setting them on fire, faithfully tending to the burning embers...” (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2004, p. 17). We affirm and reaffirm our heritage and are summoned to keep it alive and on the move (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004). Solicitation from a Sons of Freedom heritage is not a call to remain the ‘same’ or continue in the same way, but to continually transform and step into an “unforeseeable future-to-come” (Derrida and Roudinesco, 2004, p. 4-5).

Heritage is identity and memory that is patchy and disjointed. It is gradually brought into the present by igniting the cinders which shed light on that which has not been said, yet desires to be heard. Inheritance is an inspiration for what can be. We are not creating something entirely new, but actualizing or re-actualizing what we already are (Caputo, 1987). The collective voices captured in these pages announce not only our existence, but also

proclaim that it is on the move toward something different. We invite openings. We do not “seek closure, but an opening up” (Caputo, 1987, p. 294).

The infiniteness of the ‘other,’ of heritage and of the future cannot be based on reductions of memory depicted by historical representations in the many articles and books that refer to us. Despite the knowledge or information made available, we as a group cannot be ‘nailed down and defined’ into narrow and suffocating frames. The horizon of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors is sustained by an immeasurable distance and is always held a step out of reach. Yet that distance becomes the potential space of imaginative possibilities. Therefore, as a researcher, scholar and Sons of Freedom Doukhobor, I and those engaged in this work are required not to stop, rest or sleep with the acceptance of the labels imposed upon us through privileged discourses. We are solicited to move continually into spaces of imagination and possibility beyond the threshold of fixed horizons to encounter unknown possibilities of heritage and identity. The passionate discourses occupying space on these pages affirm we are here and will continue to be here along the flux of time, always on the move and always becoming.

This project is a project in flux, moving within time without arriving at an answer or original source. It is a hermeneutic project that goes beyond hermeneutics, a radical hermeneutics that remains “open to the mystery” (Caputo, p 271) and is always on the move with endless interpretations. Radical hermeneutics does not arrest the movement of the flux to “lay claim to truth and unity of meaning” (Caputo, p. 153); it is always on the look-out for

and prepared to disrupt privileged and powerful ‘truths,’ in other words discourses that have targeted the Sons of Freedom throughout their sojourn in Canada as terrorists, zealots and/or monsters. Deconstruction like a thunderstorm can then rupture those discourses that have contributed to what became limited Sons of Freedom identities (Caputo, 1987). The passion and inquiry into Sons of Freedom identities and resistances are reflected in the excerpts derived from long and thoughtful talks:

If the people really understood it and really I think there was a lot of good in what they were trying to do...and I think maybe a lot of good did come out from the Sons of Freedom for the whole world to watch (Kostyei).

...it is kind of sad sometimes when...I think about my Dyeda, it makes me sad, but I am proud of him as well. I am proud of my family and what they have done but...couldn't you have done it a little bit differently? I really like what you are standing for but there are different ways we can do it, right? Could we have done it any differently? Sometimes I think that isn't easy though; well why could it not have been done differently? But when you look at some of the reasons of why it first started out and then how it accumulated, perpetuated, progressed and it kind of makes sense of why we had to be so resistant in the ways that we were resistant (Sara).

...it is interesting and scary to hear all of that kind of stuff, but I think that now we don't hear about it, I barely know anything about my history, right? Just what I learned from baba telling stories and what mom and dad taught me. I think it is important to hear about things like that because then you know where you come from. When I was young I didn't think about where I came from, right? Or who are my ancestors? So I think it is important for me now... when I was young I didn't care, who cares, I am with my friends that is what I cared

about...but now I am getting older and I am becoming more and more interested in my heritage and stuff and I find it really interesting to listen to baba and this whole conversation...I think it is awesome.

Five years ago I would just say well I am a Doukhobor because that is what I thought I was but now I say I am a Sons of Freedom, even right now talking to my friends. I have friends that are Doukhobors and they ask about my family and my past and things like that and I say, well I am Sons of Freedom and they say "oh so you guys are the ones who burn down houses?" That is how people think of us; they don't see...the spiritual part, they don't see the fear, they just see the fires and bombings and stuff like that, but that is not all of it...that is what everybody remembers....I talk to them about that kind of stuff, but when you are not a Sons of Freedom, or when you don't look at it like that, then all you see are the burnings...they don't know anything else about it, right? I am proud to be who I am, but maybe later in life I will see more, I don't know, I will be more involved...(Stasya).

Like I say there are a lot more Sons of Freedom out there than just in Krestova and they are the youth that are coming back and know that this is not right, we don't need this type of lifestyle. It is all about money, all about power; it doesn't matter what happens to our planet. I think that the youth right now have that in them. You hear these kids and their conversations are different; their thoughts are going to a different place and to me that shows that we are evolving and changing (Mikhail).

I guess, the way I feel I should always be doing something to make the world a better place in a way, not necessarily for me obviously but also for others around me and I think that really comes from the Doukhobors. I look back at what my baba went through and the things she sacrificed and that really impacts me and I think that I should be sacrificing and doing more. They did so much back then. I feel like I am getting such a free ride now....it is definitely something that has

impacted how we view our life today. Our outlook on life is a lot different from a lot of people we meet that are our age, just because of how we were raised (Tanya).

How do we keep things on the move, in the flux without resting – too much? This is a complex gesture of not only looking to the future, but simultaneously doing justice to our past- to our ancestors who, invited or not, walk alongside us and solicit us to keep moving toward a better future. We envision a future that is broad in scope, one that looks beyond our diminished walls to an outside that is no longer outside but alongside others in a worldwide sense.

I would see it as a different regrouping, not as a Doukhobor regrouping but a regrouping of people that have similar ideas and mindsets as Doukhobors because I see a lot of people, especially in this area, who view earth and peacefulness and kindness to animals. I see a lot of people that have a harmony with things around here, and that is the whole point of the Sons of Freedom - that we are all connected, or what is the point? Doukhobors or Sons of Freedom are like messengers. I feel like we were really ahead of the times in the way we believed and saw things, and felt that God is in everything, which seems to be more of a common theme. People will talk about the universe guiding us and I feel like that is something I always believed, but it is becoming this new-age thing as well which is cool because I feel like, “Oh, I have already known that for so long” (Tanya).

I think there are a lot more Sons of Freedom out there that are of non-Doukhobor heritage, because if you look at what is happening, people are taking action and taking what they believe in out into the streets. We can say it is a Doukhobor

movement but I think it is a world-wide movement; of course it is not always peaceful and you can see in our own background that it wasn't always a peaceful movement. But I think for our planet сами вышш достижение,⁹⁷ the highest, because to be a Son or Daughter of Freedom means you are not tied to anything and you can understand it in a physical sense, like having material things that are not important. In a spiritual sense you are not tied, so you are always moving, moving, moving, and as soon as you tie yourself you can't really evolve. So for me that is very important to be a Freedomite or a Son or Daughter of Freedom (Lena).

Movement and repetition in this context are the Sons of Freedom on the move, evolving into something 'more,' *evolving and changing* as described below:

I think everything evolves and I think that the Sons of Freedom movement is evolving, it doesn't mean that we are worse than what our predecessors were, but I think that we are evolving into something that is more about spirituality instead of having the duality where you are using arson....why use those things? I think that at that time it was necessary and I don't think it is necessary any more. I think this whole movement is evolving into something that is very spiritual and now we are coming to the spiritual aspect of the Sons of Freedom. Even Senior⁹⁸ said "Сыни Свободи сами вышше достижение⁹⁹ for this planet." The whole meaning behind that is, you know, very spiritual, and I think that is the evolvment and I don't think that we have to stand there and undress to show that we are Sons of Freedom or that we have to go burn a school or something (Lena).

⁹⁷ (sahmi vishi dosdizhenie/the very highest achievement)

⁹⁸ John J. Verigin, Grandson of Peter V. Verigin and Son of Peter P. Verigin.

⁹⁹ (cini svobodi sami vishiye dosdizshenie/the Sons of Freedom are the very highest)

When you first start building a house, you start with a foundation. You do your concrete work nice and level and square and then you build on it. From my own perspective I think through the hundreds and maybe thousands of years there is a certain foundation that was built and we continue to build on it. The Sons of Freedoms, maybe fifty years ago or whatever, put a foundation for the future generation that, maybe a hundred years into the future, they will be building on what we put down for them...where the Sons of Freedom of the past were the foundation and where the Sons of Freedom are now are maybe the walls and the next generation might be the roof. And therefore the building gets complete, but it takes so many years. So for us to go back and become what was...don't start putting a foundation on top of a foundation (Mikhail).

We can trace fragments of those foundations in our traditions and histories. We loosely build upon those foundations according to our present situations and context. We have not completely forgotten the guidance provided by our ancestors. However, nothing is safe, stationary or guaranteed when it comes to our identity and our future, which “always contains within itself the possibility of its being repeated and reinterpreted otherwise” (Dooley and Kavanagh, 2007, p. 39). We do not know how the on-going architectural shaping of our traditions, identities and communities will continue; nevertheless, it continues as shown in the following perspectives:

Definitely, it is there all the time, a lot of us dulled it so it doesn't come around as much, but it's there, it's there full tilt and if something goes for shit in the world, you would be surprised how fast it is going to come back into everybody. Because mostly it is there working hard to be heard and it is being shut down (Kostyei).

I believe...I think this dyx¹⁰⁰ might fall asleep for a while. I really believe and know this dyx; it is evolving, but if ever something has to happen I believe these people are going to move forth with it because it doesn't just go away...if we have to stand up for our beliefs it will happen. I believe we have the capacity (Stenya).

I am reminded of a quote by Howard Zinn (2003) who wrote that “the memory of oppressed people is one thing that cannot be taken away, and for such people, with such memories revolt is always an inch below the surface” (P. 443). I consider the revolt as possibilities of reclaiming and courageously continuing and becoming. Earlier in this work I referred to Tchertkoff (1913) who witnessed the weakening influence of prosperity on the Doukhobors in Russia; however, the departure from their ‘beliefs’ never came to a stand-still, for as soon as they were challenged by events that “disturbed their outward tranquility, the religious spirit which had guided their fathers immediately revived within them” (p. 87). We have the capacity, as Stenya stated. *All is not lost* is a sentiment voiced by Kostyei and encapsulates a general sense within each discussion:

In just a couple of hours we found out that all is not lost. I think there is one thing for sure - I don't think that any of us are going to pick up a gun and go kill a human being and I don't think too many of our kids will, and I think that the next foreseeable trouble is going to pull people together. I think eventually we are all going to end up with some kind of movement again, everybody. It might be a beautiful thing, the next movement.

¹⁰⁰ Dookh - spirit

A beautiful thing - a beautiful surprise – that is surely open for interpretation, but it was enough that it was said with a hint of a hopeful smile, signifying that, yes, *all is not lost*. We are not lost. We are still moored to heritage, but the mooring does not preclude possibilities and hope we have to keep moving and keep becoming. It is through our continual movement and repetition forward that we keep becoming.

More than nostalgia, although that too plays a part for us, we can call on *the old Doukhobor ways* as expressed by Matvei, to assist us with our current conditions within contemporary structures:

...they did what they thought was right for them; I am not saying that it is necessarily right for me; I don't really want to say it but there are some things that the government does that makes me think we should go back to the old Doukhobor ways...

The old Doukhobor ways, articulated by Lena, included devotion to leadership. This has since changed and she acknowledges that we must now turn to one another:

...Doukhobors without leadership is like a ship without a rudder, they always need direction. We are so used to having somebody lead us into a place. And when you don't have that, yet have had it for years...it is ingrained in you, you are kind of sailing aimlessly. You have that жажда¹⁰¹ to have something like that in your midst. Now we are very much questioning everything that is happening to us, but for them it was послушение.¹⁰² Dyadya said: после меня

¹⁰¹ Zshazshda/desire

¹⁰² Poslooshenia/obedience

*вождей не дожидайте*¹⁰³ and I think because now people have to figure it out on their own, the difference between what is right and what is wrong and just follow your heart...It seems that there is no challenge, but I think it is coming; we can see it worldwide; things are happening and I think we all need to act and it will all be different, but in some places it will bring us back into the fold.

Coming back into the fold of heritage and identity - as it courses along lines of movement and creative repetition, always *evolving and changing* - does not shatter our bonds with our heritage. Our collective experiences, integral to our identities, are called to be shared to foster trust and to move on together, not too tightly, but openly and with care.

Until people start sharing their experiences...we have to get together as a community and leave fear out of it, and maybe fear was used once to drive the Doukhobor movement or the Sons of Freedom movement, but now we have to get together and speak the truth, get some answers, because people shed their blood and their tears, lost families and they don't know why. And we need answers to that and that would be when we could blend all the Doukhobors together. Until we get that we have our own battle up here, and the battle is to figure out what happened to us (Lena).

We are cloaked in mystery, in secrets that will always escape excavation. We will always be faced with a mystery that “defines and sustains us...to keep open to the mystery as a mystery...” (Caputo, 1987, p.108). The mystery is intangible and, try as we might, we cannot arrest the flux of mystery and stop the movement to nail things down into complete clarity or ‘truths.’ We cannot

¹⁰³ After me do not wait for Leaders

always make sense of things even if we try, for making sense can lead to powerful and debilitating definitions, discourses and judgements. That leaves open spaces for many questions and perspectives.

So what is left of the Sons of Freedom Spirit in our generation and in the younger generation? Is there anything?

No there isn't anything unless there is a movement, okay? Unless there is a movement. And one thing that you need to give credit to is that the Freedomites had the guts to do things; they were not afraid of anything, and more than faith moved them (Alexei).

*More than faith moved them, an excessive faith perhaps, as it is faith that steps in when rationalities falter (Caputo, 1987, p. 282). Faith kept us moving even when we faced and endured oppression and on-going labels that were, according to Mitya, *dragging us through the mud*. We are not static; we are called out of "our tranquilized comfort," a tranquility seldom enjoyed by our ancestors (Caputo, 1987, p. 146). Our ties to heritage and identity are a double play of permanent non-permanence, always on the move, constantly moving forward, yet also looking back, respecting the places we have been and the histories and memories that accompany us and fuel us to press forward.*

Growing up in a Sons of Freedom Community, I assumed I was a Freedomite. Now as an adult I feel that Freedom has to be earned. That is probably why our people were always in turmoil. At this point in my life I would have to say I am striving to be a Daughter of Freedom.

I think the ideal was to live as close to nature as possible, to respect all life, to treat your body as a temple and live in harmony with your neighbors.

The Freedomites became a political tool for our вожди,¹⁰⁴ because they were willing to sacrifice themselves and their children for the greater good of humanity.

Growing up as the youngest in our family, I wasn't taken to New Denver. My earliest memories were of the RCMP coming to our home at night, waking us up and demanding to see the children. I was too young, my oldest sister was too old. My other sister was hiding so they took one of my other sisters.

A few years later I remember waking up at night (I was sleeping next door) to see our house in flames. Soon after we went on the Trek to the coast. From a young person's point of view it was great, we got to camp, stay up late and go to school in a field. I guess for our parents it was pretty traumatic. But the upside was we would sail off to our homeland Russia.

I asked my parents if they would have chosen to do things differently now that they look back on their lives. They both said no, they have absolutely no regrets.

As for myself, I love my heritage.

I remember during Dyaya Sorokin's reign, our community was flourishing. We had mass molenyies, picnics, choirs, etc. We also had [other forces in our community]. The poor Freedomites were terrorized. Homes would be burned at night (our neighbors could have lost their lives if it wasn't for their little dog barking and waking them up). People were beaten and left for dead. Tires were slashed and, most horrific, young were molested. Because of these depredations our community is shattered. Only through love and forgiveness can we make it whole again (Lena).

The question of forgiveness is integral for us, for our heritage, community and future. The offences and wounding we experienced were from both external and internal sources, outside and inside community, outside of us and by us. So how do we forgive? How is persecution greeted with love, hospitality and

¹⁰⁴ Vozshi - leaders

thus with forgiveness? Forgiveness requires a letting go of retribution and payment; it renders “reasons equal on each side...and opens up the possibility of a community of equals, all equally forgiven and equally detached from getting even” (Caputo, 1997, p. 228). Forgiveness releases the past and opens the future. “Forgiveness asks who among us can cast the first stone” (Caputo, 2000, p. 39). The complexity of transgressions presented in this document, remain partial, tangled, hidden and unresolved. The fault, the wounding and suffering caused do not go away; forgiveness, nevertheless, asks for the pardon.

There is a paradox in forgiveness as there is in hospitality. The impossibility of unconditional hospitality is also true of forgiveness; how does one forgive the unforgivable? How does one forgive unconditionally? If truly granted, forgiveness is the ultimate gift and ultimate hospitality. Granting hospitality is granting forgiveness which “must be infinite or it is nothing: it is excuse or exchange” (Derrida, 2000, p. 380,) therefore it must be excessive. Forgiveness, in an unconditional sense, is impossible, but that does not let us off the hook.

Forgiveness may be about releasing, yet Derrida (2000) posits that it is not about forgetting. On the contrary, he argues that there cannot be forgiveness if there is no memory, for to “forgive is not to forget, above all not to forget” (p. 381). Memory can render forgiveness impossible, for to forgive, if that is possible, means one must “forgive the unforgivable” (p. 385). To forgive is not to excuse something that is readily forgivable. Forgiveness is to forgive that which is unforgivable and is faced by doing the impossible; “it must undergo

the test and ordeal of its own impossibility in forgiving the impossible” (p. 385). The impossibility of the unconditional is the shared thread between hospitality, the gift, and forgiveness – a giving without the expectation of a return, giving beyond oneself, excessively (Derrida, 2000). Alternately, Derrida (2000) addresses “mutual non-forgiveness” (p. 32) where reciprocating compassion can occur and allow for forgiveness to filter through.

Caputo (1987) encapsulates the notion of forgiveness as a gesture of compassion: extending a hand of acknowledgment that knows none of us are innocent and are all “siblings of the same dark night” (p. 39). We are all in this together.

...the division of separateness, well, that chain is broken now; there is no need for that, you do what you believe, you can pray; there is no need to have conflict between ourselves, and that is the best thing that ever happened, to tie this whole thing together (Alexei).

As presented in the introduction of this study, the purpose of this work is not to perpetuate divides but to present the intricacies of our history and identities and to declare our existence. With this said, this work does not prevent bridges of understanding, care and forgiveness.

As this study approaches an impossible conclusion, a conclusion without conclusion, it is important to address the implications of the name Sons of Freedom. This name ‘sons’ is experienced more and more as gender-biased. Where the name did not seem to be questioned in earlier times, it is now critiqued and there is a call to open the name, crack into the solidity of the

name, and deconstruct the name for more - for a more welcoming and inclusive name.

Right now I am having a real challenge with the Sons part...What is with the Sons thing, right? Sons and Daughters of freedom.

...we really need to start thinking about the way we use words. People of freedom? Children of freedom?

I really don't think that it should have been Sons of Freedom; I think it should have been sons and daughters or brothers and sisters because it kind of just went to sons...(Mikhail).

'Daughters of Freedom' is currently used more ofte; for example, a documentary film entitled "Daughters of Freedom" (2001) is narrated by and highlights the experiences of Helen Freeman and Kathleen Makortoff (along with others) during their incarceration as children in the New Denver children's prison.

Remaining faithful to our heritage does not presuppose remaining faithful in a way that arrests our movements for reinterpretations and reaffirmations for something 'otherwise,' even our name. We do not accept everything, and on the other hand we do not erase everything (Derrida and Roudinesco, 2000). Our heritage informs and guides us as we move along in new contexts without making idols out of our traditional "beliefs and practices." On the contrary, we can open them up for more, for new interpretations and possibilities in our present context (Caputo cited in Leask, 2007, p. 224). Hospitable interpretation avoids definitive answers and avoids the violence of definitive and sutured conclusions (Derrida, 2005), but seeks

better interpretations. The future is that which we cannot anticipate, which evokes fear, anxiety and at times very little hope, and without well-working navigational tools or fail-proof plans (p. Caputo, 2000, p. 36). It is not the resolution that is essential, it is the opening created by deconstruction (Caputo, 1986). Deconstruction is good news that prevents a single truth and single destiny (Caputo, 1996). We, heirs of the Sons of Freedom heritage, do not know where it is we are going, what the future holds, yet we are here to take the risk of deciding – now what? We continue on, open to the future while enlivening our heritage, retrieving “something ancient in a new and even shocking form” (Caputo, 2013, p. 89) for that which we are not certain.

Hope, and especially determination are evident and enlivened in the words that demonstrate an ancestral faith and courage that we can draw on - a gift from our ancestors. We cannot move without the faith, the passion, even the sadness and hurt as a result of our heritage. We are here and will continue into the future - a future that is a horizon of surprises, complexities and risk.

Songs of Resistance

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor experiences in Canada were defined by political, academic and media discourses in reaction to their culture, lifestyle and resistances. The Sons of Freedom diaspora in Canada can be traced from Saskatchewan to B.C. with further community fracturing that out-cast them to the peripheries of the larger Orthodox Doukhobor communities. Fluctuating in numbers and locations, the Sons of Freedom 'wrestled' to sustain their principles, identity or, in other words, their cultural and spiritual freedoms which they witnessed as gradually being lost into an abyss of assimilation. The responses of the Sons of Freedom - the spirit wrestlers - were not what one might describe as passive, confirmed by the position the Doukhobors held in relation to persecutions in Russia. Traditionally Doukhobors are described as pacifists; however, this was not always the case, especially when faced with pressures, to conform to state expectations. Perhaps if they did not face on-going pressures they could have maintained a pacifist trajectory. For example, while in Russia, they did not quietly submit to the church and state laws and duties that were counter to their principles. They took strong stands demonstrating their strength of will and consequentially accepted punishment. Their responses informed by their spiritual values and principles centered on military non-cooperation, a communal lifestyle based on toil and simplicity, vegetarianism, and abstaining from tobacco and alcohol. In a letter advocating for the emigration of the Doukhobors, Tolstoy (1987) wrote that the Doukhobors "cannot disregard that

very law which they consider as divine, and consequently, as supremely obligatory” (p. 225), and this superseded obligations of church and state. Submission was not an option. Men actively refused to take up arms in the military, resulting in torture. Doukhobor communities declared their stand on injustice and burned all weapons in large bonfires and in turn faced the wrath of soldiers who beat them while they resolutely continued resisting. Facing exiles in formidable environments only increased their resolve to survive and hold fast to their principles. They did not shy away from facing persecution or from suffering for a greater purpose of wrestling for justice; this can be described as the manifestation of nonviolent resistance.

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Lev Tolstoy are celebrated figures who led nonviolent resistant movements based on spiritual/religious ethics (Ackerman & Duvall, 2000). Nonviolent action campaigns, whether emerging from a religious or secular ethic, have “been part of political life for millennia, challenging abuses by authorities, spearheading social reforms and protesting militarism and discrimination” (Zunes, Kurtz & Asher, 1999, p. 1). Ackerman and Duvall (2000) document nonviolent campaigns that took place across global environments and histories, such as Gandhi’s mass campaigns actively resisting British rule and injustices, as well as numerous other nonviolent movements within Russia, Poland, Holland, Salvador, Africa, South America, South Africa, etc.

Nonviolent resistance is action; it is not obediently submitting to oppression (Herngren, 1993). Nojeim (2004) contends that the practice of pacifism is not nonviolent resistance, and nonviolent resistance is not pacifism. Nonviolent resistance, often referred to as civil disobedience, is committed and determined resistance in the face of on-going persecutions, such as “intimidation, threat, blackmail, hardship, violence or ridicule” (Wallis, 1987, p. 77).

Mahatma Gandhi (2008) used the term Satyagraha to describe nonviolent resistance as “Truth-Force” or “Love-Force or Soul-Force” as coined by L. Tolstoy (p. 309). Satyagraha is, in the words of Gandhi, “the pursuit of truth, faith in truth” (p. 328). The conditions of Satyagraha according to Gandhi require three imperatives: one must not harbour hatred against the opponent, but patience and sympathy; there needs to be justified reasoning behind the resistance; it is important to be “prepared to suffer till the end” for one’s cause (p. 386). The acknowledgement of and capacity for suffering is a key feature of nonviolent resistance. Nonviolence, wrote Gandhi “in its dynamic condition, means conscious suffering” (p. 134), not by meekly submitting, but resisting with a ‘strength of soul’ toward oppressive forces. Gandhi professed that killing does not constitute bravery; bravery is dying for the cause. He contended that one must have the fortitude to experience suffering in order to take up nonviolent resistance. He explicitly stated that one “who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never non-co-operate” (1961, p. 67). Simply put, the achievement of freedom cannot be

accomplished without suffering (Gandhi, 1961) which is understood as the utmost “form of defiance” (Wallis, 1987, p. 77).

The extraordinary capacity to resist and accept punishment is apparent throughout the history of the Doukhobors in Russia and Canada, documented in *Songs of Sorrow within Timescapes and Landscapes*. Early on in Canada, the Sons of Freedom were defined by their movement of ‘spirit wrestling for freedom’ - in other words, nonviolent resistance: refusing to individually purchase lands; resisting the accumulation of material goods in order to prosper; emancipating animals from imposed labour and not using clothing and footwear derived from animal products; keeping children in community as opposed to sending them to public schools; and refusing to provide statistical information and an oath to the King required by the Canadian government. Nude marches were employed as declarations to remain true to their convictions of living simply in a communal manner on land that could not be individually owned. Nudity continued as a measure of resistance throughout most of the 1900s, for which they were regularly incarcerated. Hunger strikes in prison were common forms of resistance resulting in ‘forced feedings’ which were at times brutally administered. Resistances resulted in solitary confinement, in beatings, and in other physical abuses such as fingers being broken for not complying with the finger printing process.

Eventually, Sons of Freedom resistances included burning their own dwellings along with schools and even community halls, and this is where the

resistances grew in complexity and deviated from a nonviolent ethic. This was especially so between the late 1940s and the 1960s where burnings and bombings took place on a disturbing scale. Suffice it to say, forms of non-violent resistances continued significantly throughout the Sons of Freedom history, even though overshadowed by more aggressive forms of resistance highlighted in media, research and political correspondences. This was a tumultuous period in the Sons of Freedom history, where external impacts and punishments as well as internal turmoil affected individuals, families and the community as a whole. Imprisonments occurred on a large scale, amplifying stress and tensions as well as resolve to resist. Prisons and ‘mental asylums’¹⁰⁵ were an inevitable destination for Sons of Freedom men and women activists. Henry David Thoreau (1965), author, poet and advocate for civil disobedience, illustrated that “[u]nder a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison” (p. 157). This sentiment would have resonated with many Sons of Freedom activists, as there was a general sense of being treated unjustly throughout their history in Canada, and thus being placed in prison was experienced as a further indicator of injustice in response to wrestling for justice.

How could veering from non-violent resistance to violent resistance occur? This question, simple as it may sound, is complicated. The interpretations of this transition are numerous according to one’s positioning

¹⁰⁵ The term ‘mental asylum’ as opposed to ‘psychiatric institute’ was a common term used in early Canadian history

and experiences. The social and political climate in reaction to the Sons of Freedom became increasingly 'heated,' resulting in government initiatives to resolve the so-called Doukhobor problem reflected in the intention to 'break the Sons of Freedom.' In addition there were internal conflicts within the Sons of Freedom communities, resulting in opportunities for certain individuals to take on controversial 'leadership' roles, as well as cross-community relations and manipulations that perpetuated a progressively tenuous atmosphere.

Peter Maloff (1957), a Doukhobor historian, addressed the complicated situation surrounding the Sons of freedom as "the work of many hands, Doukhobor and non-Doukhobor" (p. 8). He compiled independent reports to shed light on the escalation of resistances in which he attributed responsibility to not only the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors but also to both Federal and Provincial factions of government, to research committees, as well as to "many Canadian citizens" (p. 19). Determining responsibility or placing blame is not entirely possible.

Many Sons of Freedom responded to the weight of surmounting pressures from 'all sides' and were further incited to resist - not surrender. The Sons of Freedom position on 'truth' and 'justice' reflected Gandhi's (cited in Merton 1965) conviction that "[n]o government on earth can make men who have realized freedom in their hearts salute against their will" (p. 73). The escalation of violent resistances occur, explained Kahn (1994), when oppressed peoples have not experienced success with alternate methods of resistance and

thus become increasingly “willing to try violence as a last resort” (p.79). Both nonviolent and violent resistances took place during a time of heightened pressures and emotions, multifaceted interferences, and extreme determination to do what was considered ‘right.’ Paralleling nonviolent initiatives, such as petitioning government authorities, mass protests (in the nude or not) and hunger strikes, were also violent resistances: burnings, bombings and intimidation. (I would like to reiterate that not all violent resistances or intimidations took place at the hands of the Sons of Freedom.)

During the late 1940s through the 1960s there were underground activities involving bombings and burnings, giving rise to confessions and lengthy incarcerations. The responsibility for a number of the activities currently remains in the shadows. The deviations toward violence can only be explained as a ‘buckling under the weight’ of a web of inter-related yet contradictory pressures. Internal conflicts within Sons of Freedom communities emerged from an inexplicable tangle of devotions and manipulations, internal and external to community, and in relation to powerful roles taken up by different members at different times. An open and easy ground for blaming and scapegoating positioned the Sons of Freedom as those solely responsible. However, they were caught up in matrices of colliding relationships and disproportionate positions of power that inevitably led to differences of opinion that influenced their active resistances. Generally, in my opinion, whether violent or non-violent, the Sons of Freedom resistances were a means to wrestle and suffer for the attainment of justice without an intention

to cause harm. This is not to say that people were not impacted or did not suffer as a result of Sons of Freedom actions.

Even though there was a distinct move from non-violent to violent resistances, I feel compelled to address the ambiguous distinction between violence and non-violence. I can say with confidence that Doukhobors do not condone violent actions, these have not been a part of their philosophy or lifestyle, and this position continues to inform their overall Doukhobor values. However, when people [community] are placed on the brink of destruction and all other options prove fruitless, resulting in the cultural ground being decimated under our/their feet, what then? I have always avoided using the terminology of 'terrorist' in relation to the Sons of Freedom, as the retaliations were not intended to destroy an existing order, but rather to protect their own from being destroyed, even if using extreme retaliatory methods. When looked at closely, terrorism is an ambiguous term begging the question asked by Noam Chomsky (2003): What is the "distinction between terror and resistance?" (p.189). Chomsky (2003) questions the resistances of people forcibly deprived of independence and freedom of rights, and asks, do "such actions fall under terror or resistance?" (p. 190). Slavoj Zizek (2008) speaks about violence as "inherent in a system: not only direct physical violence, but also the more subtle form of coercion that sustains relations of domination and exploitation, including threat of violence" (p. 9). Such tactics are utilized in colonial systems and current neo-liberal systems of control and submission which does not exclude smaller or larger community contexts.

For Nojeim (2004), violence and non-violence are related along a continuum without obvious demarcations where “no actions can be totally nonviolent or totally violent...then it follows that people can only conduct themselves more or less violently or more or less non-violently” (p. 9). Gandhi asserted that “strictly speaking, no activity and no industry is possible without a certain amount of violence, no matter how little” (cited in Nojeim, 2004, p. 9). Seemingly contrary processes, violence and nonviolence can occur concurrently and compromises any claim of being completely without harm (Nojeim). With an explicit intention of violence there is an infliction of pain and suffering upon another while attempting to limit one’s own pain and suffering. However, the intention of nonviolence involves self-sacrifice in order to transform injustices while “openly breaking a law and accepting the punishment” (p. 10). Both Gandhi and King would not have tolerated passive resistance as they were “men of action who considered it their duty to fight for justice and against human degradation” (Nojeim, p. 17). Civil disobedience differs from criminal behavior, and even though both methods break the law, those who employ civil disobedience accept punishment without an intention of personal gain (p. Nojeim, 2004, p. 41). Gandhi (1961) resolutely professed that given a “choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence...[b]ut I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence; forgiveness is more manly than punishment...[s]trength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will” (p. 133).

Without condoning violence, it is important to reiterate that the lines between violence and non-violence in the Sons of Freedom context were blurred, as well as the rationale leading to violent events. Gandhi (cited in Merton, 1965) understood the difficulty of achieving complete nonviolence “in thought, word and deed” (p. 36); however, he insisted upon the goal of progressing toward complete nonviolence. Albeit compromised, non-violence remained a principle for the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors and continued in the form of non-conformity, nude protest, prison hunger strikes, petitions, etc. In a complexity of resistances, the underlying goals of the Sons of Freedom were freedom, justice and the possibility of social change and transformation. There simply is no clear-cut homogenous description of Sons of Freedom Doukhobors that can reflect a single truth or fully explain the violent deviations that took place in relation to the Sons of Freedom resistances. Suffice it to say, that currently Sons of Freedom inheritors, who not only claim but also re-interpret ‘identity,’ value a philosophy of non-violence and dismiss engagement in violence.

I have often imagined what it would look like if the Doukhobors were welcomed into Canada unconditionally, or less conditionally, by accepting not only their agricultural skills but their unique singularities. What would it have been like if these differences were considered gifts to be shared? For example their valuing of and affinity with the soil, their ability to live collectively, their ceremonial practices, their recognition of humanity and the divine within each individual, and their active engagement for justice all may have served not only

to disrupt but also to open and enhance the dominant society. What would their trajectory look like if they did not need to protect their collective lifestyle, their beliefs and convictions, and in turn their identity? Perhaps the experiences of the Doukhobors and other groups, such as First Nation communities, immigrants, refugees and multiple social groups that have encountered and continue to encounter injustices, can ignite our imaginations, courage and aspiration for justice, and consequently change society through hospitality. Perhaps we can see beyond narrow representations of, as Ngozi Adiche (2009) has so poignantly expressed, the single story. Hospitality does not just recommend but requires breaking up the single stories across social groups, to complexify identities beyond scripted positions of 'us' and 'them' and foster permeable borders and interchangeable positions of host and guest. Perhaps what Lincoln and Cannella describe as a "nonviolent revolutionary ethical consciousness" (p. 76) is what a Sons of Freedom Doukhobor ethic - an ethic of hospitality - exemplifies.

Appendix A: Further resources about the Doukhobors

The following materials provide comprehensive historical and contemporary overviews of Doukhobor culture and experiences in Russia and Canada from a variety of perspectives. This is by no means an exhaustive list of resources related to the Doukhobors as there are many more books, articles, reports, theses and dissertations that deserve mention.

The Doukhobors by Joseph Elkington (1903), *The Message of the Doukhobors* by Alexander Evalenko (1913), and *Christian Martyrdom in Russia* by Vladimir Tchertkoff (1913) provide an early history of Doukhobor experiences in Russia that include their communal lifestyle, beliefs, migrations and persecutions.

Bonch-Bruevich's (1909) *Book of life* documents the dialogue of early Doukhobors describing their spiritual and religious beliefs in the form of questions and answers and includes numerous psalms.

In their book *The Doukhobors*, George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic (1968) provide a comprehensive examination of Doukhobor history spanning early history in Russia and early life in Canada to the later 1960s. They present detailed information, on socio-political, ethnic and religious aspects across all Doukhobor groups.

Doukhobor historian Peter N. Maloff (1948) provides a creative and insightful history of the Doukhobors both in Russia and their early days in Canada entitled: *Doukhobors, their History, Life and Struggle*. He highlights the

ideologies and practices of the Community, Independent and Sons of Freedom Doukhobors, including the tensions, conflicts and oppression they faced with the assimilative policies and procedures of the Canadian federal and provincial governments.

Koozma Tarasoff, an Orthodox Doukhobor author and historian, offers a detailed look at Doukhobor history and culture in *Plakun Trava: The Doukhobors (1982)* and *Spirit Wrestlers: Doukhobor Pioneers' Strategies for Living*: Koozma Tarasoff (2002).

The Doukhobor Centenary in Canada (2000) is a compilation of essays by editors Andrew Donskov, John Woodsworth & Chad Gaffield that shed light on different aspects of Doukhobor history and culture.

History of the Doukhobors in V.C. Bonch-Bruevich's archives (1886-1950s) is a historical view of Doukhobor origins by author Svetlana A. Inikova (1999).

In *Regulating Lives: Historical Essays on the State, Society, the Individual, and the Law* (2002) by John McLaren, Robert Menzies & Dorothy Chunn, McLaren examines the confiscation, imprisonment and indoctrination of Sons of Freedom children in relation to the 'law' and social control during the 1950s.

Limits on liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada (1990) by W. Janzen is a comparative study of these

three unique ethnic communities and their respective experiences negotiating cultural and religious freedoms in Canada.

Fred Makortoff's master's thesis examines the divergence between younger and older generations of Doukhobor heritage living in Krestova, B.C., entitled *The Krestova Doukhobors: Knowledge and Devotion in the Krestova Doukhobor Community*.

Steve Lapshinoff provides a number of reports related to the Doukhobors including information on Doukhobor Lands in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Krestova, as well as documented depredations allegedly committed by the Sons of Freedom.

Helen Chernoff Freeman (2013) author of *Girl #85: A Doukhobor Childhood*, provides a powerful testimonial regarding her experiences of being taken away from her family and placed in the New Denver's children's prison in B.C. from 1955 – 1959.

Julie Rak (2004) provides a picture into Doukhobor culture, collectivity, and struggles to maintain identity through a theoretical framework of autobiography in *Negotiated Memory*.

In her doctoral dissertation *Spirit Wrestling Identity Conflict and the Canadian "Doukhobor problem" 1899-1999 (2011)*, Ashleigh Androsoff delivers a historical overview of the Doukhobors and primarily addresses and frames the "Doukhobor problem" in Canada as a struggle of identity.

Sonya Natal White's masters' thesis identifies the importance of 'collective memory' in light of a future for Doukhobor communities in *History from the Heart: Difficult Pasts and Possible Futures in the Heterogeneous Doukhobor Community in Canada (2011)*.

John Kalmakoff facilitates the *Doukhobor Genealogy Website* providing a rich and comprehensive resource of Doukhobor history represented in articles and stories, research sources, and genealogy links at www.doukhobor.org

Appendix B: Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Historical Trajectory

- ⌘ Pre-Christian origins presumed
- ⌘ 17th century: Documented evidence of Doukhobor communities
- ⌘ Early 1700s: Silvan Kolesnikoff acknowledged as one of the first known guides of the Doukhobors
- ⌘ Pobirokhin followed Silvan Kolesnikoff as a Doukhobor guide
- ⌘ Savely Kapustin followed Silvan Kolesnikoff as a Doukhobor guide
- ⌘ 1802-1845: Doukhobors settled in the “Milky Waters” region in Russia as a result of negotiation between Kapustin and Tsar Alexander the 1st.
- ⌘ 1826: Tsar Nikolas the 1st supports a ministerial decision to transport the Doukhobors to the borderlands of the Caucasus region in Russia
- ⌘ 1864 – 1887: Lukeria Kalmikova (Looshechka) guided the Doukhobors as a leader
- ⌘ 1887 – 1924: Peter Vasilevich Verigin (Hospodnii) guided the Doukhobors as a leader
- ⌘ 1894: A message from P.V. Verigin is conveyed advising the Doukhobors to refrain from drinking, smoking, eating meat and ending involvement in the military
- ⌘ 1895: Doukhobor youth in the military refuse to take up weapons
- ⌘ 1895: The burning of the arms. Significant bonfires took place across Doukhobor communities to destroy all manner of weapons
- ⌘ 1898: Over a thousand Doukhobors immigrate to Cyprus, a failed attempt at relocation resulting in 108 deaths
- ⌘ 1897: Prince Peter Kropotkin travelled to Canada to explore a possible Doukhobor migration to Canada
- ⌘ 1899: Approximately 7,500 Doukhobors begin migrating to Canada
- ⌘ 1902: Up to 2,000 Doukhobors known as the “Sons of God” burn their leather goods and proceed on a nude pilgrimage to spread a message of freedom
- ⌘ 1902: P.V. Verigin arrives in Canada from a Russian exile
- ⌘ 1903: Doukhobors imprisoned in Regina for public nudity
- ⌘ 1904: Elimination of Doukhobor reserves in Saskatchewan
- ⌘ 1907: Seizure of Doukhobor reserves by the Canadian government
- ⌘ 1908: Community Doukhobors purchase lands in B.C. on behalf of and for community settlements
- ⌘ 1909 – 1912: 8,000 Doukhobors migrate to B.C.

- ⌘ 1912: A Royal Commission report on the Doukhobors is written by W. Blakemore
- ⌘ 1923: Increasing pressures to send children to school, provide statistical information, payment of taxes and provide the Oath of Allegiance sparked Doukhobor resistances
- ⌘ 1924: Peter Vasilevich Verigin is murdered in a bomb explosion while travelling on a train. The bombing remains unresolved
- ⌘ 1927: Peter P. Verigin (Chistiakov), son of Peter V. Verigin, arrives in Canada from Russia and assumes leadership
- ⌘ 1929: Peter P. Verigin acknowledges the Sons of Freedom
- ⌘ 1929-1931: Exiled Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were transported to Porto Rico Road outside of Nelson B.C.
- ⌘ 1930: A wave of Doukhobors migrate to B.C. from Saskatchewan as result of imprisonment for refusing to send their children to schools because of school policies requiring children to be involved in military marches
- ⌘ 1931: The sentence for public nudity was increased from six months to three years
- ⌘ 1932: Up to 600 hundred Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were charged with public nudity and sentenced for three years on Pier's Island modified to become a penal colony
- ⌘ 1932: Three infants out of six who were taken away by authorities and placed in a hospital, die from neglect while the parents were held at Pier's Island
- ⌘ 1933: The federal government attempted to illegally deport Peter P. Verigin. The attempt failed
- ⌘ 1936: Sons of Freedom were provided land by the provincial government in Gilpin, B.C.
- ⌘ 1939: Death of Peter P. Verigin
- ⌘ 1941: The provincial government in B.C. acquired title to Doukhobor community lands (CCUB) as a result of outstanding debts
- ⌘ 1940s – 1960s: Incarceration of many Sons of Freedom for resistances that included burning of homes and barns and increased to the bombings of a number of government facilities
- ⌘ 1948: A Royal Commission report on Doukhobor affairs is written by H. Sullivan
- ⌘ 1951- 1984: Stephan Sorokin arrives in the Kootenay area and is accepted by the Sons of Freedom as a spiritual leader until his death in 1984

- ⌘ 1953 - 1959: Sons of Freedom children are apprehended by police and forcibly taken to New Denver B.C. where they are placed in a residential school/prison until their release in 1959
- ⌘ 1961: A report by Judge Lord outlined government intentions of subdividing and selling 'crown' lands settled by Sons of Freedom Doukhobors
- ⌘ 1962: A mass Sons of Freedom trek occurs, departing from the Kootenays to the West Coast to join their brethren incarcerated at Agassi's mountain prison and with hopes of returning to Russia
- ⌘ 1963: At 22 years of age, Paul E. Podmoroff died as a result of 'torture' during a hunger strike in the mountain prison
- ⌘ 1969: Most lands formerly settled by Sons of Freedom in Goose Creek and Krestova were sold
- ⌘ 1972: Sons of Freedom arrived back to the Interior from Agassiz and most settle in Gilpin and Krestova
- ⌘ 1971: A small group of Reformed Doukhobors purchase land in Krestova called the "New Settlement" to establish a collective and simple manner of life
- ⌘ 1979: the Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (KCIR) is established followed by the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EK CIR) to explore possible Doukhobor reconciliation
- ⌘ 1970s – 1990s: Doukhobor resistances continue on a smaller scale and eventually cease
- ⌘ 1999: An Ombudsman report is released detailing the impacts from the New Denver prison experience on the children held there

Appendix C: Historical Chronology of Leadership

The following is a loose translation from an undated document put together by Petr Ivanovich Popov. It is assumed that this was written prior to the Doukhobor immigration to Canada.

A short excerpt of the History of the Doukhobors

This is taken from a written book as well as from the memories of elders. This sect appeared as an organization in Russia at the beginning of the 18th century when they rejected the church...religious ceremony and decidedly renounced giving the oath of allegiance as well as fulfilling military obligations. The Doukhobor sect follow the prayer written on the heart of Doukhobors, and are guided by their leaders. The leaders serve them like a guiding star and express the words of the lord. Three Doukhobor leaders were from the Romanov lineage.

1. Fyodor Zvonov, given the name Pobirohkin. He is – Fyodor Pobirokhin “Zvonov”
2. Larion, son of Fyodor Zvonov, named after his mother’s family – Larion Fyodorovich Karmilets “Bosov”.
3. Ivan, son of Larion Bosov - Ivan Larionovich Bosov.
4. Larion, son of Ivan Bosov, hidden under the name Kapustin. His mother was Anastasia Gureeva - Larion Ivanovich Radost “Kapustin”.
5. Savelii, son of Larion Kapustin - Savelii Larionovich Karmilits “Kapustin”.
6. Vasilii, son of Savelii Kapustin, named after his grandfather, the father of his mother, “Karmikov” - Vasilii Savelii “Karmikov”.

7. Larion, son of Vasilya Savelyicha Kalmikova - Larion Vasilevich Kalmikov.
8. Petr 1st, son of Lariona Vasilyicha Kalmikova - Petr Larionovich “the Brave” Kalmikov.
9. Lukeria - wife of Petr 1st, from the Gubanov family – Lukeria Vasilevna Kalmikova.
10. Petr, son of Vasilya Prokoficha Verigin(a) - Petr Vasilevich “Hospodnii” (Lordly) Verigin.
11. There will be Chistiakov (Cleanser)
12. There will be Istrabov (Destroyer)

Istrabov will conquer all deceptive churches and will then provide a life plan for the rescue of the faithful; as for the non-faithful, they will perish from hunger and the sword.

In note: Chistiakov and Istrabov were given names prior to their births.

Appendix D: Be Devout

The following declaration can be found in most Doukhobor homes. It is presented as “an ideal” to strive for and accepted by all Doukhobor groups. It continues to be read regularly by many Doukhobor people.

BE DEVOUT

Be devout. Trust in God and love him with all your heart. Be diligent in the affairs of His Holy Church. All his Holy Commandments respect and guard. Be virtuous, avoid vices. Be prudent. Have the end result in mind. Be cautious in choosing your means. Do not attempt anything without first deliberating, take time to think it is the source of power. Do not delay but act as the circumstances require. Do not believe everything you hear. Do not wish to possess everything you see. Attempt to do only what is necessary. What you do not know, do not decree. Inquire and then you will act prudently. Be frugal. Do not take food without hunger, and do not drink without thirst. Take only as much as is necessary. Fear drunkenness like Hades. Abstinence brings forth a long and healthy life. Non-abstinence breeds illness, and illness causes death. Be humble, not daring; remember what peace there may be in silence. Observe and do not boast. Do not have predispositions to people or be proud. Be affectionate and do not flatter anyone. Be just: do not covet other people’s property or ever steal. And whatever you need – acquire through your own toil. If you are in need, ask for help; if they offer you aid, accept it and be grateful. Return what you have

borrowed. Leave idleness aside. If you want to begin a project, first measure your resources, and then continue. Do not lose heart in misfortune or let good fortune have a debilitating effect upon you. Observe poverty. What the patient ones endure, the faint hearted weep. Be of good will and merciful. Give to the needy who ask, and help the poor if you can. If anyone offends you, forgive him. It is praise worthy not to hold a grudge. Forgive the fellow sinner. If anyone pleads with you – reconcile. Be obedient to elders, companionable to equals.

Welcome those who come to meet you. Greet those who greet you. Give an answer to the seeker. Teach those who do not know. Give consolation to those in sorrow. Do not envy anyone – wish well to all. Be of service to mankind, thus you will satisfy all good people. Your friends will like you, and your enemies will have no reason to hate you. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; never lie. These things preserve and you shall be in good faith.

Praise God

Appendix E: Я Человек...

This prayer was written in the Krestova community in 1989 illustrating the belief in the immanence of God.

Я – человек бесконечного Бога...

Я – часть бесконечного жизни...

Протекает через меня – бесконечная сила...

Охраняет меня – бесконечный разум и управляет мной...

Я – человек – бесконечности, надеждо ведомый и охраняемый...

Вся жизнь Бога – моя жизнь...

Вся сила Бога – моя сила...

Вся любовь Бога – моя любовь...

Я обращаюсь к Тебе – Богу во мне, исцелительной силе Божества,

Проникает все мое тело, обновляет каждую клеточку, каждый атом,

И они работает в гармонии и совершенстве.

Все блага Твои – мои блага...

Все здоровье Твое – мое здоровье...

Все совершенство Твое – мое совершенство...

Божественная любовь наполняет меня миром, направляет меня

К единству с Бесконечным, делает меня свидетелем Божественной любви и истины.

Я – человек бесконечного Бога.

Я – часть Его.

Вся жизнь Бога – моя жизнь...

Вся сила Бога – моя сила...

Вся любовь Бога – моя любовь во мне.

Аминь Аминь Аминь

I am – a person of infinite God...

I am – a part of infinite life...

Through me flows – infinite strength...

I am protected and guided by – infinite reason

I am – a person of – infiniteness, visibly capable, and protected...

All life of God – is my life...

All strength of God – is my strength...

All love of God – is my love...

I turn to you – God within me,

The healing strength of God fills my whole body, regenerates every cell, every atom,

and they work in harmony and perfection.

All your rewards – are my rewards...

All your health – is my health...

All your perfection – is my perfection...

Divine love fills me with peace, leads me to infinite unity, and makes me a witness of divine love and truth...

I am – a person of infinite God.

I am – a part of God.

All life of God – is my life...

All strength of God – is my strength...

All love of God – is my love within me.

Amen, Amen, Amen

Appendix F: Частлив Тот...

This song is frequently sung by young and old across Doukhobor communities, written in 1903 by I. Gorbunov – Posadov.

*Счастливи тот, кто любит все живое,
Жизни всей трепещущий поток,
Для кого в природе все родное –
Человек, и птица, и цветок.*

*Счастливи тот, кто для червя и розы
Равную хранит в себе любовь,
Кто ничьи не вызвал в мире слезы
И ничью не пролил в мире кровь.*

*Счастливи тот, кто с юных дней прекрасных
На защите слабого стоял
И гонимых, жалких и безгласных
Всей душой и грудью защищал.*

*Полон мир страданьями людскими,
Полон мир страданьями зверей.
Счастливи тот, чье сердце перед ними
Билось лишь любовью горячей.*

*Счастливи тот, чья ласка состраданья
Для забитых, темных и немых
Облегчает тяжесть их страданья,
Боль обид, жестокостей людских.*

*Счастливи тот, чей голос неустанно
За теснимых пламенно звучит,
Чья душа, сквозь тучи и туманы,
Как маяк, любовью к ним горит.*

Богу Нашему Слава

*Fortunate are those who love everything living
All life that quivers and flows
For whom all life is related
Humans, and birds and flowers*

*Fortunate are those for whom worms and roses
Are equally protected with love
For those who have not caused in this world tears
And have not in this world spilled blood*

*Fortunate are those from their youngest days
Have stood in defence of those weaker,
Persecuted, poor and blind
And with soul and heart have defended*

*The world is full of those that suffer
And full of animals that suffer as well
Happy are those who follow their hearts
Within them their love is warmth*

*Fortunate are those with a gentle nature
To help lighten the suffering
Of those meek, lost, silent
And hurt from people's cruelties*

*Fortunate are those, whose voices are unfaltering
Through narrow passages clearly cry
Whose soul, through clouds and fog
Is like a lighthouse within him love burns*

Glory to God

Appendix G: В Минуту Жизни Трудную...

The following poem was written in 1839 by M. Lermontov; a well-known Russian poet. This poem is frequently sung in Doukhobor communities.

*В минуте жизни трудную,
Теснится ль в сердце грусть:
Одну молитву чудную
Твержу я наизусть*

*Есть сила благодатная
В созвучьи слов живых,
И дышит непонятная
Святая прелесть в них.*

*С души как бремя скатится,
Сомненье далеко,
И верится, и плачется,
И так легко, легко...*

*In that moment when life is hard
And my heart tightens in my chest
There is one prayer so miraculous
I have learnt by heart*

*There is a strength that is blessed
That rings the word of life
And to breath is incomprehensible
Held by what is sacred*

*From my soul falls my burden
My doubt is far away
And I have faith, and I weep
And it is lightness, lightness...*

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