

Vasya Pozdnyakov's Dukhobor Narrative

PETER BROCK

PART ONE

THE study of its own history is not likely to develop quickly in a peasant sect most of whose members are illiterate. This has been true of the Russian Dukhobors (Wrestlers for the Spirit) who emigrated to Canada at the end of the last century. Almost half a century elapses before the appearance in their new environment of the first Dukhobor-born historians. In telling the story of their people they mingle personal reminiscence with documentary material and narrative description. They are not of course professional historians, for even today few Canadian Dukhobors enter the universities. The vast majority of them remain a semi-rural people, whose social and ethnic isolation from the rest of the community is only just beginning to be broken down by the tide of assimilation.

The genesis of the Dukhobor sect in Russia is extremely obscure. Theories about its origin have fluctuated between the plausible and the fantastic. Groups as diverse as the English Quakers and the Balkan Bogomils have been credited with inspiring groups of Russian peasants, at some undefined date in the past, to transfer their allegiance from the Orthodox Church to this fundamentally different religious creed. Historical evidence for the existence of the Dukhobors, however, goes no further back than the second half of the 18th century. At first they were scattered over large areas of south-central and south Russia, especially in the provinces of Tambov and Yekaterinoslav, and were at times subjected to bitter persecution by Church and state alike. Under Tsar Alexander I they were permitted to reside in compact settlements on the Molochnaya river, in the province of Taurida, where they enjoyed religious toleration. The reaction under Nicholas I brought renewed persecution, on the pretext of an apparent degeneration in the moral standards of the Dukhobor leadership. Between 1841 and 1844 the Dukhobors were transported to the Caucasus region, which remained their home until their emigration from Russia at the end of the century.

The tenets of the Dukhobor faith have not continued unchanged over the centuries. At its very core, however, has remained the idea of a universalist and undogmatic religion rejecting outward forms and rites and a priesthood. The seed of God dwells within every man,

as it dwelt supremely in the spirit of the man Jesus: true believers, therefore, may be found outside the Christian fold. While the Dukhobors have continued to quote the Bible copiously to outsiders, they came to regard it as of quite secondary importance compared to the living oral tradition of their psalms, and as a book which could easily deaden rather than enlighten the spirit. At most times they have refused military service as inconsistent with a religion of love and non-retaliation, and rejected the taking of oaths; at one period they adopted a communitarian economy. While the need for coercive government was denied, at the same time the affairs of the community were placed in the hands of a semi-divine leader. Dukhobor faith and practice has been a strange blend of religious anarchism and theocratic autocracy. A tendency to conceal their true beliefs, generated by long years of governmental persecution, has made them even more difficult for the outsider to comprehend.¹

The literature on the Dukhobors from their origins in Russia down to the first years in their new Canadian home (the point at which Vasya Pozdnyakov's manuscript breaks off) is quite extensive both in Russian and in West European languages, especially English.² However, apart from a few narratives of purely autobiographical character and some other documentary material, it is the product of non-Dukhobors: theologians, historians, sociologists, journalists, as well as philanthropists and social reformers, writing from many different viewpoints and from a variety of motives, but none of them possessing the peculiar insight that can ordinarily be given only by one who writes from the inside. Such a viewpoint, it is true, suffers from all the dangers of subjectivism, but, if it is the product of an observant and

¹ One of the best studies of the faith and religious practice which the Dukhobors brought with them to Canada from their Russian homeland is to be found in Aurelio Palmieri, 'The Russian Doukhobors and Their Religious Teachings' (*The Harvard Theological Review*, Cambridge, Mass., vol. VIII, No. 1, January 1915, pp. 62-81). Frederick C. Conybeare, *Russian Dissenters*, Cambridge, Mass., 1921, part II, chap. I, is useful. See also the chapter by Hugh Herbison on 'Religion' in *The Doukhobors of British Columbia*, ed. Harry B. Hawthorn, Vancouver, B.C., 1955, pp. 161-83, for a most sensitive treatment which concentrates, however, on the contemporary situation.

² The most comprehensive bibliography of materials compiled in the 19th century is in Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, *Spisok psalmov, pisem, razskazov i drugikh rukopisey po izsledovaniyu ucheniya, zhizni i pereseleniya v Kanadu zakavkazskikh dukhobortsev. S prilozheniyem bibliograficheskogo ukazatelya literatury po dukhoborcheskomu voprosu*, Geneva, 1900. The appendix, pp. 48-80, lists 257 items printed in Russian (including laws touching the Dukhobors) and 32 in non-Russian languages, while the main body of the work lists unpublished writings by or about the Dukhobors. Bonch-Bruyevich compiled his bibliography in exile; he could take into consideration, therefore, only materials available abroad. More easily accessible, and also reasonably comprehensive, at least in regard to materials published in Russia, is the bibliography (cols. 1809-11) in the article on the Dukhobors by A. Palmieri in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, Paris, 1911, vol. IV. See also the bibliography (pp. 194-5) in T. I. Butkevich, *Obzor russkikh sekt i ikh tolkov . . .*,² Petrograd, 1915. Comparatively little of importance has been published since then on the history of the Dukhobors in Russia or on their first decade in Canada. A full-length popular history of the sect is to be found in J. F. C. Wright, *Slava Bohu: The Story of the Dukhobors*, New York and Toronto, 1940.

critical mind, it may be of immense value in understanding the history and social ethos of a group.

An inside history of this kind is indeed provided by Pozdnyakov's narrative printed below. The text is reproduced from a manuscript English translation in the Peace Collection of Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.). The English version is entitled: 'Story of a Spiritual Upheaval, a narrative of a Doukhobor Basil Pozdnyakov about the Doukhoborian movement. Edited by A.M.S.' and is to be found among the papers of Joseph Elkinton (1859-1920), a Philadelphia Quaker who, together with his father Joseph S. Elkinton (1830-1905), was one of the leading Quakers concerned with aiding the emigration of the Dukhobors to Canada around the turn of the century. No trace could be found of the original Russian manuscript, nor have I been able to unravel for certain the identity of 'A.M.S.'. In the absence of Pozdnyakov's version it is impossible to be sure how far 'A.M.S.'—from his style we may presume that he was a foreign-born *émigré*—made a simple translation or in fact edited Pozdnyakov's text. Although the subtitle implies some editing, I believe it more likely that 'A.M.S.' has given us a fairly literal rendering of the original.³

Pozdnyakov began work on his narrative approximately in the middle of 1907 and probably completed it by the end of the year or early in 1908. This can be deduced from two letters which Pozdnyakov wrote to Joseph Elkinton about this time and which are preserved among the latter's papers at Swarthmore. The first of these, dated 16 June 1907, runs as follows:

Dear Brother:

I send you my greeting and I am very glad to get acquainted with you, though by letter.

My name is unknown to you, or, possibly, you may have heard it, if you read some [of] Tchertkoff's publications about the dukhobors. I wrote one of those books and it is entitled: 'The story of Basil Pozdniakoff.'⁴

³ The English manuscript, which is written in an extremely clear hand, is contained in two dark blue notebooks: the first—of 56 pages—records events in Russia, the second—of 49 pages—deals with the early years in Canada. The notebooks are deposited, along with their father's correspondence in connection with the Dukhobors, in the papers of Howard W. and J. Passmore Elkinton. There is also an undated typescript copy of the first part of the MS. In a letter to me Mr Leo Cherbak, of Upland (California), has suggested that 'A.M.S.' was probably a Pole, Aleksander M. Słowiński, who went to Poland after the first world war and died there. Słowiński was an excellent linguist and it is very likely that he was in contact with Pozdnyakov in California.

⁴ *Razskaz dukhobortsia Vasi Pozdnyakova*, ed. Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, Christchurch (Hants), 1901. The 'Story', partly dictated and partly written by Pozdnyakov, is contained on pages 7-29. It was sent to Vladimir Chertkov and printed from his private collection of Dukhobor materials which, along with the collection of another leading Tolstoyan, P. I. Biryukov, was used extensively by Bonch-Bruyevich in compiling his bibliography mentioned *supra* (note 2).

I am a dukhobor and was living formerly in the district of Jakutsk, Siberia, where I was banished for the denial of military service. Not long ago I went to Canada, and from there I came to California, for health. I am living now, with my family, in the country, not far from Los Angeles.

There are about 39 dukhobors in Los Angeles, except me, and we wish all to talk with you, about many things, and we would like to know, if you want it.

I am writing now a detailed narration of the life of the dukhobors in exile, in Siberia, and in Canada and about their leader P. V. Verigin. If you want to know all the truth about the dukhobors, then write to me and I will send to you the above mentioned article, but it will be written in Russian, because I do not write English (this letter is translated for me). Please let me know, if you have somebody to translate my letters.

We, all the California dukhobors, are sending our sincere greeting and brotherly love to you and to all the brothers and sisters of your christian community.

I hope to receive your answer in a little time and remain

Your brother
Basil Pozdnyakoff

The second letter, written in a different hand, was dispatched just over a year later, on 22 June 1908. In it Pozdnyakov wrote:

With best wishes I greet you, my respected friend Joseph Elkinton.

I received your letter on the 20th of May and from it I found out that you had received my article, had read it yourself and shared the information with your friends; I thank you because you love the truth and value it as honest people should. You write that you are willing to publish my article but not at present, awaiting rather a more favourable time. I and all my friends having read your letter expressed our joint opinion which is as follows. We think that at present is the very best time to publish my story, because as you know at the present time the Dukhobors, under the direction of Peter Verigin are beginning to move from Canada into British Columbia, and controversies are arising among them, as some of the Dukhobors wish to free themselves from the power of Peter Verigin. But the majority of the Dukhobors still are strong for Peter Verigin, and his authority over them is strengthened also by the fact that all the outsiders who have written concerning the life of the Dukhobors have described it only from its best and brightest side. And therefore the majority of the Dukhobors think and say, 'Then Peter Verigin must be a very wise man and his rules must be good, if all the learned men write only good concerning him and us, and write nothing bad.' And with this they keep from action even those Dukhobors which are struggling against the authority of Peter Verigin.

We hope that my article will help the Dukhobors, in that they will understand that all who will read my story will see them from their best

and their worst side and then they may stop to consider their own faults and the conduct of Peter Verigin.

And that part of the Dukhobors which is struggling for their freedom will receive support from this article.

At the present time there are in Canada, in the Dukhobor vicinity several Russians who can speak and read English and they read to the Dukhobors the papers, and can also read my article to them.

We are very anxious to know what you will think of this our opinion, and we beg of you to answer this as soon as possible.

With a feeling of brotherly love we wish that God may send all his blessings upon you. Your friends Basil Pozdnyakov and all the Dukhobors of California.

Here the correspondence breaks off—or at least, if it continued, no further letters have apparently been preserved. There is no indication that the narrative was ever published.⁵ Elkinton, like many others among the Dukhobors' sympathisers, had become increasingly disillusioned with the authoritarian tendencies of their leader, Peter Verigin; yet for obvious reasons he hesitated to make public a document which might increase the difficulties of the sect as a whole at a most critical period in its development, when it had become involved in serious conflict with the Canadian government over the land question. Later in all probability the manuscript was just forgotten.

What do we know of its author? Vasya (Vasilii) Nikolayevich Pozdnyakov was born on 1 January 1869 in the village of Bogdanovka in the province of Tiflis.⁶ The Pozdnyakov family had been among those deported to the Caucasus in the early 1840s by order of Tsar Nicholas I. During his childhood Vasya must have acquired some education, or at least the ability to read and write—a rare accomplishment among members of the sect at that period. He tells us in the interesting *Story of a Dukhobor*, which he composed in 1898 during his Siberian exile, that his was a family of twenty: besides his parents, his wife and himself there were at that time an unmarried brother and sister as well as two married brothers with ten children between them.⁷ After the famous burning of arms by the Dukhobors in mid-1895 and the occupation of his village by Cossack troops, on which occasion he received a severe beating and had to hide for six-

⁵ However, I have not been able to trace any copies in the United States or Canada of a paper which just possibly might contain contributions by Pozdnyakov: *Velikiy okean*, which was published from 1909 to 1917, first at Los Angeles and later at San Francisco, by a Russian radical Anton P. Shcherbak (1867–1921). Pozdnyakov was certainly acquainted with Shcherbak at the period when he wrote his narrative.

⁶ I am grateful to Mr Walter Poznoff, of Shafter (Calif.), eldest son, and Mr John N. Poznoff, of San Leandro (Calif.), younger brother of Vasya Pozdnyakov, for supplying me with several details concerning his life. Pozdnyakov's grave in the cemetery at Bakersfield (California) apparently gives 1866 as the year of his birth. That this must be an error is shown by the statement in his narrative on page 163 below.

⁷ *Razskaz . . . Pozdnyakova*, p. 7.

teen days, he accompanied his family when they and other Dukhobors in the Tiflis area were dispersed as a punishment among Georgian and Ossetian villages. A month and a half later Pozdnyakov, together with two other young Dukhobors, received notice to return to the colours for a further training period of twenty-five days—they had already done their conscript service before their sect had re-affirmed its pacifist stand by the symbolic burning of arms. In this case refusal brought a sentence of two years' imprisonment. 'At the expiration of this term', writes Pozdnyakov, 'they wanted to send us back home so that we should accept our reserve "tickets" (*biletty*); but when we would not accept, they exiled us to the district of Yakutsk for eighteen years.'⁸

The period from the end of 1897 until 1905 Pozdnyakov spent in administrative exile in Siberia, with the exception of those months when he was occupied in the journeyings described in his narrative. It was during his years of exile that he underwent a slow process of disillusionment with his hero, the Dukhobor leader Peter Verigin, a process that eventually made him his bitter foe and drove him to break his ties with the main body of the sect, which was still under the thrall of Verigin's magnetic and domineering personality. The revolution of 1905 freed the Dukhobor prisoners for conscience sake along with thousands of other political and religious deportees. They hastened as fast as they could to the new land across the ocean where the rest of their brethren were settled. But ten years away from home had bred a spirit of independence in many of these 'Yakutian' Dukhobors. They balked at the yoke under which the Dukhobor communities had bowed their head. They found themselves rebels whose opposition to the leader's authority divided them from kith and kin, made them spiritual outcasts in their own families. This surely is the 'spiritual upheaval', the striking phrase which Pozdnyakov (or his translator 'A.M.S.') uses for the title of his manuscript. The sections on the 'Yakutians' are among the most significant in Pozdnyakov's narrative.

In his letter to Joseph Elkinton Pozdnyakov writes that he left Canada for California on account of his health. Undoubtedly the after-effects of the hardships of Siberia, which helped to bring on his early death, were among the factors leading him to exchange the harsh climate of the Canadian prairies for the sunshine of California. But we can imagine that spiritual dissatisfaction was an equally strong impulse behind his decision to join the small group of Dukhobors who had found refuge in that state from the narrowness and sectarianism of life in the Canadian settlements under Verigin's rule.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 26-8. Pozdnyakov had served earlier as a non-commissioned officer. Conscriptio was enforced effectively in the Caucasus area from 1887 onwards.

After his move to California, where he eventually bought a farm near Shafter, we get several further glimpses of Pozdnyakov. Writing many years later, the Dukhobor Peter N. Maloff, whose parents had likewise broken, at least for a time, with Verigin's leadership and moved to the American West, relates how in the spring of 1918, as a boy of eighteen, he had been introduced to Pozdnyakov by a mutual friend. 'That meeting' (even though only a brief one), writes Maloff, 'impressed itself deeply on my memory.' Pozdnyakov himself he describes in the following words: 'He had expressive eyes, a straight nose, ears slightly sticking out at the side, his black hair mixed here and there with grey. He struck me as a man of unusual depth.' He is here said to have written verse on Dukhobor themes and on Tolstoy, as well as a number of nature poems. Most of these are probably no longer extant. Maloff further remarks on the strong hostility which Pozdnyakov displayed in his attitude to Verigin.⁹ Of Pozdnyakov at this period his eldest son writes: 'I have many fond recollections of his kindness to people—troubled ones often sought his advice. His love for reading, writing, singing and discussions of religion are especially remembered. His fondness for corresponding with old and new friends kept him happily busy. . . . He held fast to the Dukhobor religion.' He died on 11 December 1921 in his fifty-third year, leaving a widow, Marta Fedorovna, and two young sons, Walter and Alexander.

Vasya Pozdnyakov made little impact on either the life or thought of his sect during his lifetime. The short account of his early experiences which the Tolstoyan Vladimir Chertkov published in Russian at the beginning of this century is a bibliographical rarity. The rest of his writings have either been lost or, like the narrative printed below, lie forgotten. Pozdnyakov had no pretensions to be a professional writer, still less a scholar. Yet in the earlier work, and even more so in the longer narrative, this largely self-educated Russian peasant displays considerable literary gifts, a poetic sensitivity and a power to put himself inside the characters whose views he is setting forth. Witness, for instance, the wonderfully sympathetic rendering of the feelings of those ecstatic Sons of Freedom who tried to carry out literally the perfectionist commandments of their master Verigin, even after he had tried to restrain them.¹⁰

Pozdnyakov's first editor, the Russian scholar Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich, remarks on the clarity of his style.¹¹ This comes out even

⁹ Peter N. Maloff, *Dukhobortsy, ikh istoriya, zhizn' i bor'ba*, vol. I, Thrums (British Columbia), 1948, pp. 383-4. A photograph of Pozdnyakov is included on p. 384.

¹⁰ See part II to be printed in the next number.

¹¹ Introd. to *Razskaz . . . Pozdnyakova*, p. 4. With the possible exception of the mid-19th-century writer Orest Novitsky, it is Bonch-Bruyevich (1873-1955) who has made the most profound contribution to Dukhobor studies to date. Ethnographer and historian of

more strongly in the later work where the author (it cannot surely be only, or even mainly, due to the skill of the translator) carries the reader along with his rapidly moving narration. He is a born storyteller but never a romancer. True, the speeches he puts in the mouths of people whose story he is telling are not stenographic reports but rather dramatic reconstructions of their thoughts and feelings, in the style of the classical historians (whom Pozdnyakov had certainly never read). What we have in this narrative is not the product of a bloodlessly impartial outsider. It is the history of the Dukhobors written from the viewpoint of an opponent of Verigin, a disillusioned admirer. Yet for all his partisanship he does not distort the facts: his veracity on most points and his integrity are confirmed by the other available sources. Like much *Zeitgeschichte*, this is history mingled inextricably with autobiography. The emphasis is centred on events and personalities that come directly within the ken of the writer. Much that is important, especially as regards religious belief, some things indeed that are essential for a complete understanding of the history of the Dukhobors during the period, are omitted. This is certainly not great history; it is not professional history; but it is good history, however artless the guise of the historian.

Although the earlier account of 1898 is occasionally drawn upon, the narrative printed here is on the whole an independent work. It is more mature and skilful, much wider in its scope and in its aim, which is to sketch in outline the history of the Dukhobors over a period of about two decades. The development of the author's creative power comes out, for instance, in his treatment of the role of Verigin in initiating the reforms of the mid-1890s, which—as Bonch-Bruyevich has pointed out—had been virtually ignored in the *Story*.¹² In the later account Verigin occupies the centre of the picture—and rightly so. The primary sources for the two works are, however, the same: either the personal experience of the author or information gathered at first hand, soon after the events described, from those who had participated in them. In writing the manuscript narrative he probably made use of some of the recent publications of Chertkov and Biryukov on the Dukhobors in Russian, and he may possibly have

religion, Bonch-Bruyevich was politically a convinced bolshevik and one of Lenin's closest collaborators. After the revolution Bonch-Bruyevich became a Soviet academician and was for a time director of the Museum of Religion and Atheism in Leningrad. In 1954 he was reported as saying jokingly to a Canadian Dukhobor visitor: 'I refuse to die till I see all the Dukhobors back in Russia' (*The Dukhobor Inquirer* (Saskatoon, Sask.), vol. I, No. 10, November 1954, p. 7).

¹² Introd. to *Razskaz . . . Pozdnyakova*, pp. 3-4. This concealment from the outside world of the central rôle which the leader played in the life of their community, and the pretence that decisions were spontaneous and that equality prevailed in the counsels of the sect, were very characteristic traits of the Dukhobors in this period and can still be found in some sections of the movement today.

been acquainted, either directly or through some friend who knew English, with the books of Aylmer Maude and Joseph Elkinton. But the most significant portions of this narrative have the value of a genuine original document: in the first part the description of conditions among the Dukhobor communities at the accession of Verigin, for instance, or the events of 1895, or the absorbing account of Siberian exile; and in the second part the sections on the emergence of the Sons of Freedom and Verigin's reaction to them or those on the relationship between the leader and the restive young 'Yakutians' who contested his authority.

The manuscript covers a crucial period in Dukhobor history. It opens with the death in 1886 of the sect's woman chief, Luker'ya Kalmykova, and the ensuing struggle for power which ended with the assumption of leadership over the majority of its members by her young protégé Peter Verigin. Part I describes the sect's attempt in the mid-1890s, at Verigin's behest, to carry into practice at least some of the precepts of Tolstoy's pacifist anarchism, which involved the Dukhobors in serious conflict with the tsarist government, and then carries the story down to the mass emigration of Verigin's followers to Canada. The scene of Part II is set in Canada. Here Pozdnyakov shows us the spiritual unrest among the newcomers which found expression in the radical movement of the Sons of Freedom, the tyranny at once imposed by the newly arrived Verigin, and the 'rightist' opposition to his dictatorship which developed alongside the radical protest. The account closes as the main body of the Dukhobors were on the eve of starting on still another migration, which eventually brought all who acknowledged Verigin's leadership out of Saskatchewan to their present home in British Columbia. As their subsequent history has shown, the 'spiritual upheaval' for Pozdnyakov's fellow-Dukhobors had in fact only just begun.

The manuscript is printed here with only very minor changes. The translator's sometimes rather eccentric, yet usually extremely descriptive English is given unaltered. His American orthography and his transliteration of Russian words have been retained but spelling has been corrected where necessary. Occasionally the sense has required the addition of a word, in which case this is enclosed in square brackets. The existing manuscript is obviously a fair copy, so that words or phrases deleted in it represent merely stylistic changes and not variant meanings, and they have therefore been omitted in transcription. Footnotes in the original are represented by an asterisk. Editorial footnotes are designed merely to elucidate the text and not to give a running commentary on, and general bibliographical data for, the history of the Dukhobors during the period covered by Pozdnyakov's narrative.

In Russia

I

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Doukhobors—numbering about twenty thousand people¹³—were living in the Caucasus in the provinces of Elizavetpol, Tiflis, and Kars. In each province they formed one separate settlement of several neighboring villages.

Basil Verigin—the father of Peter Verigin, the present leader of the Canadian Doukhobors¹⁴—was living in the village Slavyanka, province of Elizavetpol, and was reported among the Doukhobors to be very rich. He was totally illiterate—as almost all the Doukhobors were—and a man of harsh temper. Being once elected Elder of his village, he showed himself a real despot. He used to walk about in the village with a whip and to give lashes for the least disorder or disrespect. His fellow-countrymen were often sorry for having elected for themselves such a severe commander, and they were glad when the term of his service ended. He had seven sons and two daughters. All his sons were tall and possessed a remarkable strength; they were also known to be very proud and ambitious.

Being rich the Verigins could not find their equals among the simply living Doukhobors and had to look for friends elsewhere. The country near Slavyanka is inhabited by many Tartars, Mohammedans, known as desperados and robbers. Many of them are polygamists and particularly the nobility. Much of the land belongs to their petty Princes, and the peasants are generally very dependent from the landlords and sharply treated by them. The Verigins were on best terms with the Tartar Princes; they visited frequently each other and this acquaintance was not without influence on them.

The four elder sons of Verigin¹⁵ were also illiterate and were spending most of their time in the mountains, looking after the cattle. There they made famous themselves by intrepidity and even the Tartars feared them. They got later their share of the inheritance and were living separately.

The three younger sons were called: Peter, Basil and Gregory; I will have to mention them afterwards. Unlike their elder brothers they were learning at home,—there were no schools in the Doukhoborian villages,—but, as soon as they could read and write a little, their father decided that they have learned enough and discharged the teacher. It was resolved that they will be merchants and carry on the trade in the dry goods store their father set up for them. But they did not show any ability in trade and the business was going on badly. In fact, they were living an easy and merry

¹³ V. D. Bonch-Bruyevich (quoted in Aylmer Maude, *A Peculiar People: The Doukhobors*, New York, 1904, p. 150) gives an approximate figure of 21,000 for the 'reign' of Luker'ya Kalmykova: 12,000 in the province of Tiflis, 5,000 in the province of Kars and 4,000 in the province of Yelizavetpol'.

¹⁴ Petr Vasil'evich Verigin (1858–1924). He remained leader of the main body of Dukhobors up to the time of his death in a mysterious bomb explosion on a railway in British Columbia. For Verigin's family and early years, see Grigorii Verigin, *Ne v sile bog, a v pravde*, Paris, 1935, pp. 19ff.

¹⁵ Luka, Ivan, Prokofii and Fedor.

life and spending more money than they could work out, so that the patrimonial fortune was gradually wasting away.

II

The Doukhobors possessed from long ago a charitable institution called the Orphan House,¹⁶ which was, however, more a centre of spiritual and common activity of the Doukhobors than an asylum, as the orphans and the old, helpless people found usually refuge in their native village. The Orphan House was situated in the Doukhoborian settlement of the province of Tiflis, in the village Goreloe, district of Akhalkalaki, and owned much property and about half a million rubles* in money which was kept in the Orphan House itself.

The post of the manager of the Orphan House was very influential and honorable; in fact, the manager of the Orphan House was the leader of all the Doukhobors. At that time the manager was a woman, a middle-aged widow, Glycera Kalmykov.¹⁷ She was clever and had a certain kind of good-nature, for which she was beloved by everybody who knew her. Her management was so intelligent and peaceful that the Doukhobors remember her until now with best feeling.

Once she came to Slavyanka where the Verigins were living. Here she got acquainted with Peter Verigin—who was about twenty years old then and married already—and proposed to him to be her helper in the Orphan House. He consented willingly and went away with her, leaving his wife and a baby at home.

Nobody knew exactly why Peter Verigin was taken to the Orphan House. He had no definite occupation, as all the others employed in the Orphan House had; but was seen always together with the woman-manager when she was going about and giving orders.

So passed [a] few years. In 1886 Glycera Kalmykov died.¹⁸ Her death was quite unexpected, and the first few weeks that followed the affairs were at a dead set and the successor's question was not raised decidedly yet. The post of the manager of the Orphan House was usually hereditary. The late woman-manager had no children, but she had a brother;¹⁹ she did not name her successor, however, and it was unknown who will replace her.

At that time Peter Verigin introduced himself to public notice. During the funeral ceremony already he was giving orders as if he was the manager, which displeased much the relatives of the late woman-manager and all the persons employed in the Orphan House,—he did not enjoy their

* One ruble = about 50 cents.

¹⁶ This institution (*sirotskiy dom*) had been founded in the 'reign' of Savelii Kapustin, before the deportation of the Dukhobors to Transcaucasia in the early 1840s. Its real purpose, according to Maude (*op. cit.*, p. 133), 'seems to have been . . . under a safe disguise, to supply a seat of Government, and form a treasury to meet emergencies, and to centralise the power of the sect'.

¹⁷ Luker'ya Vasil'evna Kalmykova, née Gubanova. She succeeded her husband Peter in the leadership on his death in 1864.

¹⁸ 15-27 December 1886.

¹⁹ Mikhail Gubanov.

sympathy during all the time of his stay there. Many Doukhobors, seeing how boldly he was commanding, began to suppose that he will be the manager. They were saying that probably he was taken to the Orphan House, because the late woman-manager wanted him to be her successor. Some were approaching him and inquiring about the matter, but he was reserved and was not answering frankly. At the same time he was behaving mysteriously and telling prophetically to the people that 'the time of the second advent of Christ is coming, and everybody ought to pray to God that He giveth him the understanding to recognise Christ'. This prediction was not quite unexpected to the Doukhobors, as it was their common belief long since that Christ is living secretly among them, and they were only waiting for His appearance.²⁰

Verigin's words were spreading rapidly and interpreted differently. Very soon a party of friends was formed around him and they suggested to the people that he himself is the Christ. Some of them were saying, they had been told by the late woman-manager that Verigin shall judge all the universe; others had seen him doing miracles; and an old man was relating that the night of Verigin's birth he had seen a star falling on the house of the Verigins and dispersing; he knew that Christ had been born, but ought to be silent; but now it is time to reveal it. The old man is alive yet, now in Canada, and still relating to the Doukhobors there about that star that fell upon the house.

III

The fame of Verigin was growing rapidly and very soon all the Doukhobors were divided into two parties: the Large party, much more numerous, which wanted Verigin to be the manager of the Orphan House, and the Small, opposition party, with all the former familiars of the late woman-manager at the head.²¹

The first public acknowledgment of Verigin was in our village Bogdanovka, not far away from Goreloe, where the Orphan House was. I was seventeen years old then and remember everything very well. It has been

²⁰ The Dukhobors reject the idea of the divinity of Jesus Christ. Jesus, in their view, was a man but possessing within himself the spirit of God like all other human beings, though to a much greater extent than the rest of mankind. This concept they combine with a belief in the transmigration of souls. It is the spirit of the man Jesus, however, whose divine nature differs not in kind but only in degree from the rest of our race, that is re-incarnated in their leaders. This is an important distinction that must be borne in mind in any consideration of the Dukhobor attribution of divinity to their successive chiefs.

²¹ The real leader of the Small Party was not its nominal chief, Kalmykova's brother Mikhail Gubanov, but one of her close advisers, the elder Aleksey Zubkov. Zubkov, however, not being a member of the ruling 'dynasty', had little chance himself of acquiring the position of leader. He therefore backed Gubanov, a weak character whom he expected to be able to dominate. Verigin was related through his mother's family to Kalmykova, and this, combined with the late woman leader's expressed wish for his succession, was undoubtedly a major factor in bringing him the leadership. See Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich's introduction to his edition of *Pis'ma dukhoborcheskago rukovoditelya Petra Vasil'evicha Verigina*, Christchurch (Hants.), 1901, pp. xiii-xv; Maloff, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-8; *Razskaz . . . Pozdnyakova*, pp. 8ff. Pozdnyakov's accounts nowhere give any support to the rumours circulating at the time that Verigin was an illegitimate son of Kalmykova's husband Peter, or of Kalmykova herself, rumours that have occasionally been repeated by later writers on the Dukhobors.

a custom among the Doukhobors to celebrate once a year a three-days' feast—in each village at a different time. Friends and relatives were coming usually in great number to the village where the feast was. In our village the feast was falling on the New Year. Soon after the woman-manager's death came the time of our feast, and our elders sent their invitation to the Orphan House and especially to Verigin. The next day he came in the company of [a] few men of his party. They were all a little intoxicated and merry,—the Doukhobors were drinking at that time yet,—but Verigin was keeping separately, however. He was very active, but reserved, and looked as if he was superior to others.

The guests were entertained in each house, and passing from one house to another Verigin was playing many jokes, which seemed, however, unusual and mysterious to many. His assistants were saying to the people that he is telling parables.

In one house Verigin ordered his men to turn their fur-coats inside out, and, having them on the hair upwards, to walk about in the village. It was executed immediately. The elders were discussing this parable and explaining it differently. Some were saying that the parable is directed against the men of the Small party, and Verigin wants to show by it that he can turn them like a fur-coat and bring them forcibly under his subjection. Others were saying that he shall judge all the universe and establish a new life in a new form.

In another house, Verigin approached a very religious old man and inquired of him loudly: how would he act if he had to demolish an old house; would he begin from the roof or the walls. The old man got troubled with this unexpected question and, falling at Verigin's feet, begged him to explain it. This was the first bow to the ground to Verigin. He did not answer the old man's question, but raised him; and the old man, while rising, kissed Verigin's hand.

After that Verigin continued to be so mysterious all the day long, and everybody whom he was addressing was kissing his hand. He had much success with us, and departed the next day. Our villagers were very satisfied that they were the first to recognise Christ, and the rumor about this event spread rapidly in all the villages.

The leaders of the Small party, seeing no possibility to resist the majority and being not able to reconcile themselves with the idea of Verigin's supremacy, were compelled to use an extreme measure. They reported to the authorities that Verigin is giving himself out for Christ and trying to take possession of the property left by the late woman-manager; at the same time they put forward her brother as the right heir of the Orphan House and all its property. This was not true, because the property was really common, and not personal; but no legal proof of it existed and, before the law, Glycera Kalmykov's brother was the right heir indeed. Thus the police was warned and ready to arrest Verigin at the first cause.

Six weeks after the death of Glycera Kalmykov in the village Goreloe, where the Orphan House was, a commemoration for the dead was taking place. Many people were present, both Doukhobors and strangers. After the prayers had been said and all the Doukhobors—according to the

custom—had dined, all the people gathered in one place. Then Verigin came out and placed himself before the people, as a chief in expectation of a bow,—and all the Doukhobors, with the exception of the Small party, fell to the ground and bowed to him. This general bow was the confirmation of Verigin in the post sanctified by the Doukhoborian ancestors. From that time he has gained a particular greatness in the opinion of the Doukhobors, and his influence and power over them have been immense.

But the triumph of Verigin was soon disturbed. The police, who were also there, arrested him. He was ordered at first to go to his native village, Slavyanka, and live there; but he refused; he was put into prison then and banished afterwards to the very North of Russia, for a term of five years.²²

IV

After the arrest of Verigin the Large party declared to the authorities that the Orphan House with all its property belongs to the Doukhoborian community and that they want to have Verigin for manager. But the Small party testified differently, and thus the affair of the Orphan House went over to the court. Both parties were carrying on their case, and at the same time a personal struggle between them was going on. Their enmity was bitter, and was constantly rising. The Doukhobors, forming one compact body before, were split into two hostile parties now.

Though in exile, Verigin did not discontinue to direct the affairs of his party through his intimates which were constantly coming from the Caucasus to see him. He advised his party at first to take possession of the Orphan House by force; but the Small party got apprised of it and reported it to the authorities, who despatched a detachment of soldiers to protect the Orphan House and subdue the Large party. Then he ordered to break off all relations with the Small party; the Large party should not tolerate anyone who does not acknowledge him. Thus, if anybody belonging to the Large party has a wife which sympathises with the Small party, he ought to turn her out of the house, even if she had children,—let her go to the Small party; and a wife of a husband belonging to the Small party, if she sympathises with the Large party, ought to leave her husband and come to the Large party.

The Large party followed Verigin's order, and thus many families were separated and hundreds of children were left without attendance. The authorities had to issue an order. They ordered the husbands to give allowances to their wives they had turned out; and those wives that had run away from their husbands were installed in their homes again, and forced to provide for their children.

The cause of the Large party in the court was going on badly. The party had little money to carry it on. All the common money was in the hands of

²² Verigin's exile, the result of administrative action and not of any trial, began in 1887. He was first arrested on 26 January/7 February 1887 and sent a few months later to the province of Archangel, at first to Shenkursk (1877-90), then to Kola (1890-2) and later back to Shenkursk. His original term of five years' exile had been prolonged and in November 1894 he was transported to Obdorsk in Siberia, which is situated at the mouth of the river Ob'. The conditions of his exile do not appear to have been too arduous.

the Small party which was regardless of expenses and was giving considerable bribes. The process was lingering on for a long time and, finally, when it was evident that the cause is lost, Verigin ordered his party to discontinue it.

Thus the Orphan House was left with the Small party, but did not become a personal property, however; it is still the common good of a comparatively small party of Doukhobors.

V

At that time Verigin was living in the town of Shenkursk, in the province of Archangel. His life in exile was not hard at all. He had plenty of money, rented good apartments, and was living in an agreeable company. When he was taking a drive, in the company of some girls of his acquaintance, in a sledge drawn by three ambling Caucasian stallions,—a present of the Doukhobors,—he produced no little sensation in the town. In the meantime he was writing to the Doukhobors in the Caucasus some instructive letters and transmitting his orders through his intimates. He proposed to himself to establish a common fund of one hundred thousand rubles, by means of a collection among the Doukhobors, and determined that every man ought to give half of the amount of money he possesses. His intimates, who were returning home after an interview with him, were telling the Doukhobors that 'the way to the Kingdom of God is narrow and difficult and planted with thorns, but there are fields of eternal quietude at the end of it, and nobody should regret his perishable acquisition, but give it for the glory of God'. In that manner more than the required sum was collected, but this money did not form a permanent fund,—as the Doukhobors supposed,—but was spent for different needs of the direction.

Verigin's intimates were telling the Doukhobors to 'pray to God with awe and expect at every moment the coming of Verigin, and the time when he will clear all the Doukhobors and separate the believers from the unbelievers; and grant to the believers an everlasting joy and condemn the unbelievers to destruction'. The Doukhobors were gathering early in the morning to pray to God, then they separated for their daily work, and met again together for the evening prayers; and yet, at home, everyone was kneeling down and praying to God with tears in the eyes, to receive the reward promised by Verigin.

Verigin was supposing that after the expiration of his exile's term he will be let free, and planned to establish his residence further from the Small party in the village Terpenie, in the province of Kars. By his advice, his parents and two of his younger brothers, Basil and Gregory, removed there. A large house was built for them, and they were receiving by free-gifts from the Doukhobors everything they needed. Basil Verigin, junior, was leading the Doukhobors in the province of Kars and absolutely commanding them. He was driving about the Doukhoborian villages in the company of a singing chorus,—of girls mostly,—and everywhere he came he found an entertainment ready.

At that time John Konkin,²³ Peter Verigin's brother-in-law,—who had also a great influence over the Doukhobors,—just arrived from Shenkursk and reported that Verigin is advising to go out in the fields by night and pray to God over there; and particularly not to miss the day-break, because God is distributing the 'talents' (spiritual gifts) then. Basil Verigin assembled a still greater number of young people then, and they were rambling the whole night long in the fields,—and nothing good resulted.

VI

After the five years term of Peter Verigin's exile expired, the Government added him five years more yet. At that time he became acquainted with the teachings of Count Tolstoi, and they had a great influence over him, though, as it appears, somewhat superficial.²⁴ He got convinced of the truth of the new ideas, but he did not experience them and work out practically; and nevertheless he transmitted them incautiously to the Doukhobors, and not as an ideal which ought to be approached in the bounds of forces and possibility of every one, but as a truth, according to which the Doukhobors can and ought to regulate their life directly.

After his acquaintance with the new ideas, Verigin restrained himself somewhat in his private life and his letters to the Doukhobors got another sway. Beginning with 1893 and during the few following years he instructed the Doukhobors in the true Christian life. He advised them to cease to smoke and drink wine, and also not to eat meat—because the men should not deprive of life any being. Further he recommended chastity—for perfectionment's sake; the unmarried—should not marry, and those that are married already—should live as brothers and sisters. 'The Doukhobors ought to purify themselves,' he was saying, 'and be ready to meet Christ as the five wise virgins of the evangelical parable had been.'

The teachings of Verigin called forth a very strong movement among the Doukhobors of the Large party. They were taking everything he was

²³ Ivan Yevseyevich Konkin. See *Pis'ma . . . Verigina*, p. 5; G. Verigin, *op. cit.*, pp. 20, 55-66, 143.

²⁴ Tolstoy's influence on the development of Verigin's ideas is discussed by Bonch-Bruyevich in his introduction to *Pis'ma . . . Verigina*, pp. xx-xxxiv. See also Maude, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-66. From 1893 onwards Verigin was acquainted at least at second hand with Tolstoy's writings. While Verigin sometimes went further than the master, he concealed the major influence which Tolstoyan theories had on the spiritual revival that he was initiating among his people. Tolstoy, therefore, was not at first aware of the degree to which his ideas had been absorbed by Verigin and through him by the Dukhobors as a whole, taking their social philosophy instead as a confirmation rather than a reflection of his own philosophy among the peasant masses. In one of his letters to his followers written in 1896 (*Pis'ma . . . Verigina*, Letter 6, p. 13), for example, Verigin incorporated as his own a whole passage quoted by Tolstoy near the beginning of his *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1893) and taken by him from the 'Declaration of Sentiments' which the American reformer, William Lloyd Garrison, drew up in 1838 for the founding convention of the New England Non-Resistance Society. Verigin's whole letter was committed to memory by many Dukhobors, so that Maude (*op. cit.*, p. 160) could write in 1904 after acquaintance with the Dukhobor immigrants in Canada: 'There are . . . more people in Assiniboia and Saskatchewan today who can repeat a long passage from Garrison's *Declaration* in Russian, than there are in the United States who can do so in English.' Of course it is true that some of Tolstoy's ideas, e.g. his pacifism, had also—at least in the past—been part of the Dukhobor faith.

advising close to heart and were thinking themselves obliged to execute it; but the chastity ideal was, generally, not within their reach, and caused the dividing of the Large party into two approximatively equal parties. One party renounced Verigin and all his teachings entirely, and the members of this party, for the use of meat for food, fell under the denomination of 'Fleshers'.²⁵ The other party remained true to Verigin, left the smoking and drinking off, ceased to eat meat, and exerted herself to attain the ideal of chastity.²⁶ This ideal did not prove to be practical, however, and even drove some to the crime of infanticide, so that most of the married people gave it finally up; but the young people were containing themselves and not marrying, and ready to meet Christ, according to Verigin's saying.

The envoys coming from Shenkursk were still bringing the Doukhobors some more of the new teachings they never had heard before. They were saying: 'The Doukhobors are an elected and true Christian people and should not work physically but spiritually. They should leave their perishable acquisition and go to preach the Gospel; and all the domestic animals should be let free,—because everything alive ought to have liberty; and the money which is Caesar's—should be returned to Caesar. The men are perverting their nature by wearing garments; they should go naked, as the first men, Adam and Eve, did,—and their food should be fruits, vegetables, and water, only. Verigin was trying himself to eat the moss on which the reindeer is feeding and he found it tasty.'

Finally Verigin advised the Doukhobors to renounce the military service and to burn all the arms they have.²⁷

VII

In 1895 almost all the Doukhobors of the Verigin's party decided to refuse to do the military service.

The number of those that were then in actual service was not large,—about threescore only,—but they all gave up their arms. For this bold action they were put into prison, judged by military court, and condemned to penal battalions.²⁸ Many of them were ready to die, but instead of death lingering tortures were awaiting them.

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

²⁵ I.e. *myasniki*.

²⁶ Verigin's follows were known as 'fasters' (*postniki*).

²⁷ While Verigin's various instructions to his people at home recommending vegetarianism, abstinence from sexual relations, tobacco and strong drink, and refusal of military service, etc. were transmitted orally by special messengers, he also discussed some of these problems in the letters published later in the volume edited by Bonch-Bruyevich.

²⁸ See the booklet edited by V. and A. Chertkov, *Dukhobortsy v distsiplinarnom batal'one*, Christchurch (Hants.), 1902. This includes many letters and accounts of Dukhobors sentenced to the penal battalions or of their friends and relatives concerning their experiences there. Some official materials on the subject are printed in appendices. See also *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, ed. Vladimir Tchertkoff (Chertkov), London, 1897, chap. V; G. Verigin, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-33.

requested again to do the service, and for the refusal flogged again. And so it was going 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 advise, gave it up, but the majority was convinced and held out.

Finally, after one year of suffering,—during which they were either yielding somewhat or persisting,—they were condemned to deportation to Siberia, to the province of Yakutsk, for eighteen years.

At the same time when the Doukhobors which were in actual service were refusing to do their duty, those Doukhobors which were in reserve and living in the villages were giving back their militia certificates. The 29th of June—the Saint Peter's and Paul's day—was fixed for the burning of arms in all the Doukhoborian villages.²⁹

The Government began to persecute the Doukhobors and particularly severely in the province of Tiflis. The Governor of that province, being informed by the Small party that the Verigin's party is planning something about arms,³⁰ came on the above-mentioned day, appointed for the burning of arms, to the village Goreloe, to the Orphan House,—the headquarters of the Small party,—and ordered to all the householders of the Doukhoborian villages in the neighborhood to gather on the following day in the village Bogdanovka. But in the night before the holiday already all the arms—a wagon-load from each village—were burned and melted down in a distant place, and in the morning of the 30th of the month about two thousand Doukhobors gathered for the prayer there. The Governor sent a messenger with an order for the Doukhobors to come to Bogdanovka immediately, but they answered that they will come only after the prayer will be ended. Then a detachment of mounted Cossacks was sent to fetch

²⁹ The time fixed was the eve of Verigin's name-day. A lengthy eyewitness account of the burning is included in N. Zibarov, *O sozhzhenii oruzhiya dukhoborami*, Purleigh (Essex), 1899. Zibarov was illiterate and his story was written down shortly after these events by Bonch-Bruyevich and Chertkov. See also *Razskaz . . . Pozdnyakova*, p. 16, for another, though much briefer account by a Dukhobor participant.

³⁰ This phrase is not quite clear and without his original Russian version we cannot be quite sure of the author's meaning. It is most probable that he was not in fact referring primarily to rumours of the burning of arms which was about to take place, but rather to reports handed in to the authorities by the anti-Verigin Small Party that the Large Party were planning to seize the Orphan Home by armed force. In his *Razskaz Pozdnyakov* writes (p. 17): 'When they [i.e. members of the Small Party at Goreloye] noticed that the Large Party was preparing something—exactly what they did not know—they invented rumours to the effect that the Large Party wanted to attack them and seize the Home. . . . They began to ask for protection from the government, which was given.' Maude (*op. cit.*, p. 172) argues that the action of the authorities was prompted by a genuine fear that the Large Party were about to resort to violence in their quarrel with the Small Party. Since, as we see from Pozdnyakov's narrative (*supra*, p. 165), in 1887 Verigin himself had 'advised his party to . . . take possession of the Orphan House by force', neither the Small Party nor the authorities can perhaps be blamed too much for failing to take into account the revival of pacifism which had recently taken place within the Large Party.

them. Without any warning they fell upon the Doukhobors and beat them—both men and women—unmercifully with their whips, and drove them afterwards to Bogdanovka.

In the meantime the Governor came to Bogdanovka, where all the Doukhobors loyal to the Government were gathered already, and a small part of those of the Verigin's party which were not attending the prayer. The Governor greeted the Doukhobors of the Small party and the 'Fleshers', and asked those of the Verigin's party if they will obey the Government as the Small party does. They answered that they will—if the Government's orders will not disagree with their conscience, but they will not—if they will disagree. The Governor got furious and cried out: 'Cossacks on you! I will make you obedient by force!!' Then a young Doukhobor approached him and gave him back his militia certificate. The Governor snatched out a stick from the hands of the village Elder, who was standing by him, and began to beat the Doukhobor himself. Other Doukhobors commenced then to give up their certificates also. The Governor was not taking them, and they were put on the ground before him. He ordered to beat to arms, and the Cossacks who escorted him appeared instantly. By his order they dismounted and whipped the rebellious Doukhobors, together and singly, till the blood came. After that all the Doukhobors were driven away to their homes and the Governor departed.

The next morning the Cossacks came again and the punishment continued. They quartered in our village over a fortnight and were riding about the villages, plundering everywhere and beating everybody who fell into their hands. In one night, by the permission of their commander, they violated several women, among whom was a girl of sixteen. I was given, from the very beginning, three hundred lashes with Cossacks' whips, and kept in a corn loft afterwards, under arrest, for twenty days. No help was given to me and only bread and water. Finally the Cossacks went away and soldiers of infantry replaced them. They behaved much better and the people, who fled in all directions, began to return home.³¹

Shortly after, all of us, Doukhobors of the province of Tiflis,—over four thousand people,—were transplanted to the districts of Gori, Tionety, Doushet, and Signakh, of the same province, and settled in Georgian and Ossetian villages, by [a] few families in each village. As very little time for preparations was granted, only few succeeded to sell something; most of the property was abandoned or given away to neighbours. Several men—and I was among them—were requested for a monthly repetition of the military service, and, in consequence of their refusal, put into prison for two years, and deported afterwards to Siberia, to the province of Yakutsk.

The Doukhobors of the Verigin's party, who were living in the provinces of Elizavetpol and Kars, were also persecuted, but not so severely, and were not transplanted, as the Doukhobors of the province of Tiflis.

³¹ Pozdnyakov has given a more detailed account of these events in his *Razskaz*, pp. 18–26. See also *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, chap. V; *Dukhobortsy. Sbornik statey, vspominaniy, pisem i drugikh dokumentov*, ed. P. Biryukov, Moscow, 1908, pp. 41–50; Zibarov, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

About the same time Verigin was removed from the province of Archangel to Siberia, to the village Obdorsk, in the province of Tobolsk. A vigilant watch was kept there upon him and, after the expiration of his second exile's term, five years more yet were added to him again.

VIII

The total number of Doukhobors condemned to deportation to Siberia was about hundred and fifty.³² They were sent there in a few separate parties, under the escort of soldiers. The first party—numbering about thirty men—started from the Caucasus in the autumn 1896, but arrived to Yakutsk in September of the following year only, because the Trans Siberian railroad was in construction yet and they had to walk most of the way. The Governor of the province of Yakutsk fixed their dwelling-place in Ust Notora,—a very scarcely inhabited wooded country about six hundred versts* southeast from the town of Yakutsk,—and appointed a police-agent to escort them there. As on the greater part of the way there were no roads at all, the journey was made on ox-back at first, and on a float afterwards, down the river Aldan. Finally they reached the mouth of the river Notora, where the place of their settlement was fixed. Not a single man was seen on the bank, and an empty hut deserted by the Yakuts was only standing. The police-agent pointed it out and said that the Doukhobors ought to live there, and have no right to absent themselves nowhere, without a special permission; and, should it be otherwise, they will be severely punished. After that he departed, leaving them alone.

The place where the hut was standing was quite dull. The nearest neighbors were Yakuts and Tunguses, living with their families some twenty or thirty versts one from another. The hut, which the Doukhobors occupied, was a poor wooden structure with earthen floor and ice-slabs in the window-openings in the winter. The Doukhobors had bought on the way from Yakutsk some provisions and warm, winter clothes, but having not enough money, they could not provide themselves sufficiently for the long Siberian winter.

Soon the winter began and it was so cold in the hut, in spite of the heating, that all the walls get covered with ice inside. It was too cold to sleep, for want of warm clothes, and the Doukhobors had to sleep by turns. While some were sleeping, covering themselves with all the warm clothes, the rest had to walk in the hut to keep warm. Besides they had nothing to make light with and were in a total darkness during all the long evenings. Their situation was very distressing, indeed.

So went on the first few months of the winter and they grew short of provisions; but they could not look for work and earn some money, because they had no right to absent. A policeman was coming every month to verify them, and the Yakuts were ordered to watch them. Then they wrote a petition to the Governor, asking him permission to earn their

* One verst=about $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile.

³² On the basis of official statistics Anatolii Il'insky, 'Dukhobory v yakutskoy oblasti (1897-1905 g.)' (*Golos minuvshago*, Moscow, January 1917, p. 259) gives the number of Dukhobors of both sexes in the province of Yakutsk around 1900 as 153.

living elsewhere, and forwarded it with the policeman. But very little provisions were left already, and the Governor's answer could not come before two months, so that they were obliged to absent secretly. They chose among themselves some of the strongest men, provided them with the best clothes, and those men started on the journey to the nearest village—two hundred versts away. The weather was intensely cold at that time and very foggy—as it usually happens there at hard frost. The snow was deep and the travellers did not know the road, so that the way was extremely hard to them, and they were quite exhausted when they reached the village. Happily, they found some work there, and in a few weeks already they were able to help their comrades in Ust Notora. Shortly afterwards the Governor's permission to work in that village was obtained, and the arbitrary absention went off with impunity.

When the summer came, one party yet of the Doukhobors arrived. Every one went to work; some in the above-mentioned village, and the rest on their own land in Ust Notora. They began to build a large house, provided themselves with [a] few horses and cows, and plowed the land making it ready for the next spring's sowing.

IX

When the deportation to Siberia was announced to the Doukhobors, many of the wives were willing to share the exile with their husbands, but they were dissuaded by them, because the Doukhobors did not know then what kind of life is awaiting them in Siberia. But in the summer 1898, when the Siberian Doukhobors learned that the Caucasian Doukhobors are preparing to emigrate to Canada, they decided to advise their wives to come to them. It was resolved that somebody ought to go to Obdorsk and inquire Verigin's opinion about this project, and proceed to the Caucasus afterwards, and personally confer about the matter there. The task was not an easy one, because there was no permission of the Government for this excursion, of course, and it ought to be done quite secretly. In case of apprehension, a solitary deportation to a remote part of Siberia could be expected.

According to the comrades' desire, I had to go. It took me two months to make the journey to Obdorsk. I travelled partly by rail, but mostly by steamer and boat on the large Siberian rivers Lena and Ob, and nearly one thousand versts I made on foot. On the way, I got acquainted with a travelling companion, a workman, who had a temporal passport which he did not need any more. He gave it to me, and it was very useful to me afterwards.

Finally, one day, late in the evening, our steamer neared Obdorsk, and, from the steamer yet, I saw Verigin who was standing on the illuminated bank-side. I came down from the steamer and, approaching Verigin, intimated him with a glance. He understood me and we went away, a little further from the people. I said who I was and what was the purpose of my visit, and we passed almost the whole night in conversation together. Verigin approved our intention to take our wives to Siberia, and, when I

told him about the bad consequences of the abstinence from marriage, he got thoughtful, and said afterwards: 'Transmit my words to the Doukhobors, that they can marry now.'

The next day I had to keep away from Verigin, because he was strictly watched and no Doukhobor was allowed to see him. I was walking on the bank-side and pretending to deal in fish.

At night we met again and passed it in the field in a conversation about life. He was telling me: 'The term of my exile is ending soon. I will take my wife and my son and come to Canada, to the Doukhobors, and lead the simplest life there. I will have a little house, one pair of horses and a cow, and work as all the brethren; simplicity and laboriousness will be good examples for the Doukhobors.' And further he was relating about the way of life he wishes to establish in Canada: 'I want the Doukhobors to live in communities, but they ought to be based on a free principle. Each family should have a separate house, a pair of horses, and a cow at their disposal. The increase of the cattle should join the common herd and be common. All the work in the fields should be done together. Each family should get its allowance of corn for itself and the forage for the cattle. The remaining revenue should be common and be kept in the cash-office of the community.' And he said to me afterwards: 'Transmit my words to the Doukhobors—let them arrange themselves in that manner.'³³

One evening I came to the lodging of Verigin. He was occupying one room only. He showed to me a turner's lathe and a set of tools, and told me that he is doing joiner's work.

I passed only a few days in Obdorsk. The steamer was going to start; I took my leave of Verigin and departed on my next journey.

The impression Verigin made on me this once was not quite satisfactory. I did not see anything unusual in him now,—as it seemed to me before,—on the contrary, he appeared to me vain and selfish. His speech was usually beginning by the words: I think, I understand, I advise, I order, and so on. He showed himself indifferent to the suffering of the Doukhobors, and, when I related him what they had endured, he said only: 'I know it already; nothing can be done; it should be endured', and passed to his speech. A fish monger of Obdorsk, whom I inquired about Verigin, told me that Verigin is getting much money by post and leading an idle life; and I thought then that probably the joiner's work was not a serious doing. But, nevertheless, the image of the coming life in Canada, which he represented, was so attractive, that I left him filled with hope in the radiant future of the Doukhobors.

X

On the way to the Caucasus I visited Count Leo Tolstoi in Yasnaya Polyana. I was heartily received by him and even lodged in his own room,

³³ These ideas were elaborated in the letter which Verigin wrote on 6/18 January 1899 'to all Dukhobors of the Great Party' (*Pis'ma . . . Verigina*, Letter 60, pp. 132-3). Bonch-Bruyevich adds: 'Very many Dukhobors know this letter by heart. . . . Many of the Canadian Dukhobors are attempting to fulfil exactly all these recommendations of their leader.'

for my safety's sake, during the few days I was staying there. Though everything around Tolstoi did not appear to me to square with his teachings, but he seemed to me himself quite sincere and trying to do his best.

From Yasnaya Polyana I proceeded to the Caucasus and came at first to the province of Kars, where Verigin's parents were living. At night a secret meeting took place and I transmitted to everybody the greetings of the deported Doukhobors, their desire to have their wives in Siberia, and all the instructions of Verigin. Then I went to the transplanted Doukhobors of the province of Tiflis, and communicated to them the same news. The life of the Doukhobors there was extremely hard. The deportation made them all destitute; they got no land and had to work for the natives, whose language they did not know and who were hostile to them. Being habituated to the healthy tableland of the Akhalkalaki district, they were constantly ill with fever in the low and very unhealthy valleys in which they were living now, and the mortality among them was excessive. But, in spite of the general distress of their situation,³⁴ they were endeavoring to execute even the most advanced instructions of Verigin. They were ceasing to eat any animal food, and even many ceased to work. But, when they knew that they can marry again, the next day already several marriages were celebrated.

Just at that time all the Doukhobors of the Verigin's party were preparing themselves to emigrate to Canada. In consequence of the very distressing and quite unbearable situation of most of them, they all resolved to emigrate. Verigin could not direct the emigration then, but the Doukhobors had many sympathisers already, who raised the necessary funds and arranged everything. Count Tolstoi, the Quakers, and many others, did the Doukhobors a great service. The emigration was directed to the Isle of Cyprus at first, and a party of Doukhobors went there. But the poor climatical conditions of this island compelled to renounce to it, and Canada was chosen then.³⁵

I passed in the Caucasus a fortnight altogether, and finally came to the house of my parents, but remained there two days only. I was hiding in the garret in the day-time and was seeing men in the night only. My parents were very old already, and my short stay gave them more grief than joy. My mother, who was ill then, got worse and died in my presence.

When I was departing to Siberia backwards, it was winter already. I took my wife with me—we had no children—and another woman yet; the other women had children and had to wait for the spring. We went by rail as far as Irkutsk, and further with horses. The road was poor and we were thrown out from the sledge hundreds of times; but the cold was the worst of all, and the women could not endure it finally any more. We made a bed in the sledge then, on which the women laid down and covered themselves overhead with blankets and all the clothes we had; and so we con-

³⁴ For the unfortunate plight of these deportees scattered among Georgian and Ossetian settlements, see *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, pp. 10-12, 79-87; Palmieri, 'The Russian Dukhobors and Their Religious Teachings', pp. 68-9.

³⁵ 1,126 Dukhobors had gone to Cyprus in August 1898. They moved on to Canada in the following year.

tinued our journey anyhow. We travelled thus by day and night and in about six weeks we reached Yakutsk.

As the women were quite sick from the hardship of the journey, I had to leave them in the town with an acquaintance of mine and went further to Ust Notora alone.

XI

When I came to Ust Notora I found the Doukhobors living in the new house already [that] they had built during my absence. They were provided with enough provisions and were living much better than last winter.

At the beginning of the summer the wives and children of the Doukhobors arrived, and the new colony got an appearance of settlement. The Doukhobors set up a regular farm. They provided themselves with some more cattle; were raising rye and potatoes; built a blacksmith shop and a horse mill. All the community was composed of equal men; they were taking themselves for brethren and nobody was striving to dominate the others. Many were ill; some in consequences of treatment in the disciplinary battalion and others from the cold they caught in Siberia; but, nevertheless,—and in spite of the poor living,—there was a good understanding among them and everybody was satisfied.

The Yakuts and Tunguses were coming to see the Doukhobors. At first the men only, but afterwards the women and the children, too. They were given a seat at the table and treated to the usual Doukhoborian meal of soup, bread, and potatoes, which was new and very attractive to them, as they are living at home on the animal food, mostly. They are a good, honest people,—in spite of their lack of civilisation,—and the Doukhobors were on good terms with them.

The place the Doukhobors were occupying in Ust Notora consisted of a comparatively small section of land convenient for culture, which was insufficient for all the Doukhobors. The forest was around, but it would be too hard a task to uproot the trees, as the ground in the forest was frozen all the year round. Thus some of the Doukhobors had to hire themselves out to different works in the villages and towns, wherever the government was permitting them. In that part of the province of Yakutsk the villages are inhabited mostly by the sectarians Skoptsy (or Eunuchs—physically mutilated, according to their religious belief),³⁶ who are transported to Siberia for life. They are known by their eagerness for riches and are mostly well to do. The Doukhobors had to work chiefly for them, and very hard, on account of their avidity. The work was lasting about sixteen hours a day, both summer and winter, with only short intervals for lunch and dinner. The most tiresome work was the threshing on the ice-floor in the

³⁶ An indigenous Russian sect originating in the 18th century and practising castration, which its members believed was the hidden teaching of both the Old and the New Testament.

The Skoptsy exiles in the province of Yakutsk were considerably more numerous than the Dukhobors. Official statistics in 1894 give their numbers as 1322 (or 1339 in another reckoning) including the womenfolk (Il'insky, *op. cit.*, p. 245).

winter. It was beginning at about four o'clock in the morning and ending at eight in the evening. For this kind of heavy work well wadded clothes are put on, as fur-coats are breaking when frozen through. This work—in semi-obscurity and at hard frost—was lasting all the winter long, and many were ill from it.

In 1899 the last deported Doukhobors arrived and they went all to work for wages, but every one was giving some money for the support of the Ust Notora community and the friendly relations of all the Doukhobors were still kept up.

But this state of matter changed entirely when the brothers of Peter Verigin and Konkin, his brother-in-law—who were also deported to Siberia on account of their leadership of the Doukhoborian movement—came to live in Ust Notora. They were thinking themselves superior to others, and, as soon arrived, they commenced to require a complete obedience. But their superiority was not acknowledged and quarrels followed. By little and little the first residents of Ust Notora were leaving it and finally [a] few families remained only, and Basil Verigin became the absolute master then.

Those Doukhobors who left Ust Notora founded [a] few other settlements, but at that time already nobody was thinking to settle in Siberia permanently. Since their Caucasian brethren had emigrated to Canada, the Siberian Doukhobors were expecting every moment that the Government will let them free and they will go also there. But years were passing and the liberty was not coming yet.³⁷

³⁷ Interesting impressions of the life and thoughts of these 'Siberian' Dukhobors have been left by a political exile who was their close neighbour from mid-1903 until early in 1905: I. Bobyakin, 'Dukhobory v yakutskoy ssylke' (*Russkoye bogatstvo*, St Petersburg, February 1909, pp. 76-98; March 1909, pp. 34-53). Bobyakin (1909, pp. 37-45) confirms the growing feeling against Verigin among the Dukhobor exiles which comes out in Pozdnyakov's narrative. For an account of life in the province of Yakutsk by Peter Verigin's younger brother, see G. Verigin, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-63. See also *News of the Doukhobortsy*, ed. V. Tschertkoff, No. 5, 8 September 1898, pp. 5-8.

To be continued.

Vasya Pozdnyakov's Dukhobor Narrative

PETER BROCK

PART TWO¹

THE second part of Pozdnyakov's narrative is in some ways more fragmentary than the earlier sections of the story. The Dukhobors' exodus across the ocean at the end of 1898 and during the first half of 1899 is given only bare mention, while their initial hardships in their new settlements, and their struggle to implement a communitarian system of economy in the absence of their leader Peter Verigin, who arrived from Siberian exile only at the end of 1902, are passed over in a few pages. It is the movements of the spirit among his brethren that most interest Pozdnyakov and must have made the deepest impression on him during the brief year or so he spent in Canada between his release from Yakutsk and his departure for California. While we may regret the omission of information that might have thrown new light on both the internal affairs of the community and its relationship to Canadian society and government, the author surely shows his grasp of essentials in concentrating on what is in fact one major theme: the struggle between the traditional authority of the leader and the anarchistic Dukhobors of the free spirit, the *svobodniki* or Sons of Freedom as they soon came to be called, on one hand and, on the other, those Dukhobors who, whether by reason of their greater financial resources or their independence of mind, refused to conform to the communal pattern.

The portrait of Verigin is clearly a partial one. But usually we are made to see the giant strength of the man towering above the defects of his character and manifold human weaknesses. It is of course the opposition of the Independent Dukhobors, with whom Pozdnyakov and most of his fellow 'Yakutians' sided after their arrival in Canada, that is given most favourable treatment, but even the motives of the Sons of Freedom are handled sympathetically and the mass of brethren for all their faults are regarded lovingly. Despite his deep disillusion both with the revered leader and the blind allegiance of his followers, Pozdnyakov ends on a note of sober optimism concerning the future of his people. 'Something is done already,' he concludes his narrative, 'but, of course, there is no perfection and much is to be done yet.'

¹ For Part One see *Slavonic and East European Review*, XLIII, No. 100, pp. 152-76.

In Canada

I

In the years 1898 and 1899 all the Doukhobors of the Verigin's party—over seven thousand people—emigrated to Canada. The Small party and the 'Fleshers', who were loyal to the government remained in the Caucasus.²

Canada was for the Doukhobors a land of promise and they had a firm intention to fully realize there the ideal of Christian life as Verigin depicted it. They were representing Canada to themselves as an abundant country, with a mild and pleasant climate, favourable to the new way of life; and when they saw the Canadian winter in its full severity, they were somewhat disenchanted. They founded two large colonies in the present province of Saskatchewan—some three hundred miles one from the other: the Yorkton colony and the Prince Albert colony. About five and a half thousand people settled in the former and one thousand and a half in the latter. Many sympathizers, both Russians and Americans, were helping them very actively in the first year of their settlement, but the Doukhobors were not wholly understanding all the disinterestedness of this attention. Thinking themselves an elected people and Verigin a man of higher power, they were looking at this attention as on their due and a consequence of Verigin's power, and they did not appraise it sufficiently. When the time came to begin to work, they were somewhat spoiled already, and were working indolently at first, still expecting an assistance whatever; but they recovered themselves afterwards and commenced to work with all their usual energy.

The first few years were very hard for the Doukhobors, on account of their general poverty and of their ignorance of the language and customs of the country. Almost all the men were away hiring themselves out to different works, and the women, who were remaining at home, had to do the farming. As they had very little cattle in the beginning, they were sometimes obliged to carry timber for the building of the houses, and even to plow, on themselves.³ But by little and little the position of the Doukhobors became better. Each family builded a house for itself and provided itself sufficiently with cattle and implements. But still most of the men were working for wages, as there was no money in reserve.

At the same time the Doukhobors were attempting the community life, according to the advise of Verigin,⁴ but they were mostly unsuccessful.

² The first party left Batum on the *Lake Huron* on 10 December (O.S.) 1898 and arrived in Halifax (Nova Scotia) on 11 January (O.S.) 1899. The rest followed during the first half of that year. The exact number of immigrants at this time was 7363. A small trickle of Dukhobors left Russia for Canada during subsequent years. Those who emigrated in 1898-9 represented rather over a third of the estimated total number of Dukhobors of all parties. For the voyage and the first year or so in Canada, see L. Sulerzhitsky, *V Ameriku s dukhoborami*, Moscow, 1905; V. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Dukhobortsy v kanadskikh preriyakh*, pt. I, Petrograd, 1918.

³ I.e. to use human traction instead of animal labour.

⁴ See *Pis'ma dukhoborcheskago rukovoditelya Petra Vasil'yevich Verigina* (ed. Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich), Christchurch (Hants), 1901, Letter 60, pp. 132, 133; also Part One, p. 173.

After many trials the majority began to live individually,—as they had been always living in the Caucasus before,—and only a few of the villages succeeded to live in communities.

II

In 1902 the term of Verigin's exile was ending and he wrote to the Doukhobors that he will come to Canada and live with them. The expected coming of Verigin was an event of the utmost importance for the Doukhobors, but they were fearing it, because they did not realize most of his instructions.⁵ They were saying between themselves: 'How can we meet our master now, when we have not executed all his commandments. Did not he tell us that a true Christian should not work, but preach the Gospel,—and we are oppressed with labor. We should have no money at all,—and see there, how busily we are hunting for it! He told us to liberate the animals,—and we are tormenting them with work. We ought to feed on fruits and vegetables and wear no clothes at all; the first men had no clothes and God was warming them. Do you remember, brethren, what was said to us about the ten virgins? How the lamps of five of them were gone out . . . It is we! It is our lamps that are gone out!! . . . How can we meet Christ then? He will come soon, find us unprepared, and we are lost then!'

The leaders of this movement were John Ponomarev and Nicholas Zibarov⁶—both totally illiterate. They were saying to the Doukhobors that 'the time of the general purification—of which Verigin was speaking long ago—is just coming now. He that will leave off all his property and will go to meet Christ,—shall be freed from work for ever and shall live with Christ in everlasting joy; and he that will not do it,—shall work eternally and perish thus, out of disobedience.' Ponomarev was relating that when he had been in Shenkursk,⁷ he had heard himself Verigin saying: 'Behold, brethren! the time shall come when a great river will pass through. Throw yourselves into it. I am a good swimmer,—I will save you!' And in conclusion Ponomarev was saying: 'Now, brethren, here is that river! I throw myself the first into it, and you follow me. Let us clear ourselves from everything sinful and let us go to meet Christ!'

Earlier groups emigrating to the New World (e.g. English Shakers or German Inspirationists) had likewise adopted communitarianism, in order to cope with the pioneering conditions presented by their new environment. 'I am convinced', wrote Professor James Mavor, who taught economics at the University of Toronto and was a close observer of the Dukhobor settlement, 'that what really determined their adoption of it [i.e. communitarianism] were practical considerations' (*My Windows on the Street of the World*, II, London and Toronto, 1923, p. 12). For a good account of the Dukhobor experiment in community living during their first years in Canada, see Aylmer Maude, *A Peculiar People: The Doukhobors*, New York, 1904, chaps. V and VIII. See also C. A. Dawson, *Group Settlement: Ethnic Communities in Western Canada*, Toronto, 1936, pp. 7-29.

⁵ See Part One, p. 173.

⁶ For Zibarov, see Part One, p. 169, n. 29. See also Aylmer Maude, *op. cit.*, pp. 190, 191, 229.

⁷ Ivan Ponomarev had been one of the two messengers 'who originally brought from Kóla Verigin's recommendation to abandon meat, tobacco, and strong drink. These men exerted great influence among the sect' (*ibid.*, p. 227).

Over one thousand Doukhobers—almost exclusively of the Yorkton colony—joined this libertine movement.⁸ They began to feed on bread and raw potatoes only; ceased to cut their hair; threw out all the woolen and leathern clothes, and tore off from their cotton clothes all the metallic appurtenances, as buttons and hooks. They let their cattle loose⁹ and gave up all their money to the local authorities. They ceased to work altogether and were wandering in crowds, singing psalms and preaching the Gospel to others. They made the tour of the Doukhoborian villages, inviting every one to join, and they set off afterwards in the direction from which Verigin was expected to come. The little children and the sick persons were carried in hand-barrows. They were feeding on grains of corn and berries they were gathering in the fields, and were begging for bread and potatoes in the farms on the way. They were sleeping in the fields and were enduring cold, as it was in the autumn and freezing in the mornings already. The authorities were stopping them; they detained in Yorkton all the women and children, but the men were unwilling to go back and were continuing to go forwards toward Winnipeg. They were expecting every moment to see Verigin, barefooted, with a long beard, and in simple clothes, going towards them. But Verigin was not appearing. In fact, he was in England then, where he stopped on the way to Canada. The thought struck the Libertines then that Verigin does not appear because their faith is not deep enough, and some of them may not have delivered themselves from all their sinful property yet. A general inquiry proved that many had watches, knives, needles and some other objects yet. It was all taken and thrown away, and the Libertines proceeded indefatigably further. They made about two hundred miles thus and were all stopped finally, put in a train, brought to Yorkton, and conveyed to their villages.¹⁰ But they were

⁸ I.e. *svobodniki* or 'Sons of Freedom'. This movement expressing in its most extreme form the element of spiritual and social anarchism in Dukhobor religious philosophy has persisted up to the present among a small but active minority of the sect. It has been a thorn in the flesh of the more moderate members and of successive Dukhobor leaders, as well as of the Canadian authorities.

⁹ We are reminded here of the account written in 1753 by a Swedish Lutheran pastor visiting the Ephrata cloister in Pennsylvania of the early years of this pietist communitarian brotherhood: 'At first, also, it was regarded as a sin to use horses for working, and they themselves dragged home their own wood, and for this purpose put on themselves a suitable harness. Now they labor with horses and oxen, which, however, they treat very kindly' (quoted in Walter C. Klein, *Johann Conrad Beissel*, Philadelphia, 1942, p. 128). The Ephrata brethren at first, like the Dukhobors, were also vegetarians. It is not possible, however, that they could have exerted any direct influence on the Dukhobors.

¹⁰ Several accounts of the pilgrimage were published shortly afterwards. That by John Riddington, 'The Doukhobor Pilgrimage' (*The Canadian Magazine*, Toronto, January 1903, vol. XX, no. 3, pp. 211-22) is sympathetic though puzzled; it was written by a Canadian who was not acquainted with the sect from inside. It contains some fascinating photographs of the participants. He gives the total number of pilgrims as approximately 1,700, among whom there were about 1,100 women and children. See also the account in the *New York World* (9 November 1902), reprinted in full in Joseph Elkinton, *The Doukhobors: Their History in Russia, Their Migration to Canada*, Philadelphia, 1903, pp. 19-26. More enlightening are the versions given by Maude, *op. cit.*, chaps. VI and VII, and 'Vladimir Ol'khovskiy' [V. Bonch-Bruyevich], 'Dukhobortsy v kanadskikh preriakh', part 5, *Obrazovaniye*, St Petersburg, August 1903, pp. 81-85, both of which deal also with the positions taken up subsequently by Verigin, on one hand, and by the hard core of the *svobodniki* on the other. We know from I. Bobyakin, 'Dukhobory v yakutskoy ssylke' (pt. I, *Russkoye bogatstvo*, St Petersburg, February 1909, p. 94) that Bonch-Bruyevich's articles were read by the Dukhobors exiled to Yakutsk, and they may, therefore, be a source for

still waiting for Verigin and, though the winter has settled already, many were unwilling to work and to take care of themselves, and the authorities had to look after them. All the cattle that had been let loose was caught and sold by the authorities, and the money thus received, and that money which had been given up by the Libertines themselves,—all was used for their assistance now. Some men were hired to look after them; they were carrying provisions, firewood, and even, sometimes, heating stoves for them.

All the remaining Doukhobors, which have not participated in this movement, were living and working as before, but they were anxious anyhow, and were not certain, to whom Verigin will come: to them or to the Libertines.

III

At last Verigin arrived and stopped in the village Otradnoe, of the Yorkton colony, where his mother was living (his father was dead already). He came alone; he did not take neither his wife nor his son with him, and they remained to live in the Caucasus.¹¹

As soon as it became known that Verigin arrived, many Doukhobors, both Libertines and non-Libertines, came to salute him. The Libertines were looking meager and weary, and were clad in the simplest clothes; and the non-Libertines were cheerful and properly clad, and had a singing chorus with them. All wished to see Verigin, and he came out to them.

He was well dressed, in everything new and dear. He had a fur-coat on, a beaver hat, and high leathern boots. He was looking as a man in his prime and did not appear to be oppressed by his long exile.¹² The aspect of the Libertines did not strike him. He was well aware of their movement

Pozdnyakov's narrative here, together with information obtained from his fellow-secretaries after his arrival in Canada. Bobyakin, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 95, also relates that the Yakutsk Doukhobors, when they received news of the pilgrimage in letters from their relatives in Canada, reacted extremely unsympathetically (*nedoverchivo i vrazhdebno*). Stories of how 'the *svobodniki* had let their horses and oxen go free were greeted with laughter.' 'Ol'khovsky', *op. cit.*, p. 85, also remarks on the hostility aroused among the 'Yakutians' by the activities of the *svobodniki*. Among later accounts of the pilgrimage, see Pyotr N. Malov, *Dukhobortsy, ikh istoriya, zhizn' i bor'ba*, vol. I, Thrums (British Columbia), 1948, pp. 69-74. The exact object of the pilgrimage is not quite clear; different theories are given. Some accounts agree with that of Pozdnyakov in claiming that the pilgrims went out to meet Verigin, whom they were expecting; others say that they sought Jesus Christ or the promised Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The key seems to lie in the idea of the re-incarnation of the soul of the human Jesus in the person of Peter Verigin (see Part One, pp. 163, 164, 165; Part Two, pp. 409, 411).

¹¹ His son by his first wife Dunya, *née* Katel'nikova, Pyotr Petrovich Verigin (1882-1939), came to Canada in 1927 to take over the leadership after his father's death three years earlier. Peter the Purger (*chistyakov*) had now succeeded Peter the Lordly (*gospodnyy*); his 'reign' forms one of the most curious chapters in Dukhobor history.

¹² The correspondent of the *Manitoba Free Press*, 23 December 1902 (quoted in Elkinton, *op. cit.*, p. 72) described Verigin as follows: 'His manner was marked with a natural courtesy and simple dignity that would single him out for notice anywhere. His voice is low, and of a singular sweetness. 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. His features are regular, and his skin of an olive pallor. His hair and beard—which is luxuriant—are black as jet. His eyes are dark and thoughtful.' Photographs of Verigin confirm the impression of a remarkably handsome and powerful man.

already, and it is also doubtful if he recognized all his responsibility for it. Other feelings were probably agitating him. His people was again before him, as obedient as fifteen years ago, in the Caucasus, when he left them.

Verigin conversed favorably with every one. He addressed the Libertines and thanked them warmly for the ardent belief they displayed for him. 'You went to meet Christ,' he said to them,—'now he appeared to you. Go to your homes, live, and work for your living.' And he thanked the non-Libertines for the joyful welcome they arranged for him, and for all their labor and assiduity.

All were listening reverently to Verigin's words. The non-Libertines were very satisfied with them and were glad to see Verigin as dressed as they were, but the Libertines were disenchanted and afflicted.

IV

When the leaders of the Libertines heard from Verigin himself that they ought to work, they obeyed him instantly and the majority of the Libertines with them, in spite of their disenchantment. They put their households in order and began to work and live as formerly.

But a small part of them—[a] few scores only—were thinking independently and remained firm in their conviction. These last Libertines said to Verigin: 'We were taking all thy teachings as commandments coming from God, which are immutable for ever. We acknowledged them and we were doing our utmost to execute them. . . . Why hast thou altered thy words now? . . . No, we do not want to be traitors and we will continue to do our duty.' But, as they were not many, Verigin did not pay any attention to them and would not let them approach him any more.

When [a] few months later Verigin arranged himself already, and the last Libertines saw plainly how much his life was disagreeing with his teachings,—all their hopes failed and they fell into despair. They were saying: 'There is no divine spark in him and unfortunate are those who believe in him. Let us take our clothes off; let us go and tell him: "Behold! thou hast said that man should go naked,—we took our clothes off. Now thou do it, and let us go to preach the Gospel."' And they did as they were saying. They pulled their clothes off—it was in the spring already—and went to Verigin, but they were not admitted to him. They were trying to talk with him somewhere on the road then, but they did not succeed in it. At last they got all together and decided to reach him whatever may happen. They went in a crowd—men, women, and children; all naked—by the road to the village Otradnoe where Verigin was living. It was reported to him and he ordered to stop them, but they were breaking through the crowd of those who were detaining them and were still advancing. Then, by Verigin's order, they were unmercifully beaten with rods and dispersed finally. And so, they could not get to Verigin again.

Shortly after about two scores of them, all naked, went to Yorkton. They were arrested there and put into prison for three months. But when released they began to behave as formerly again.¹³

¹³ This second pilgrimage, when for the first time a small group of the *svobodniki* began

Once several of them were going through a field and, seeing a reaping-machine newly bought by Verigin, they stopped before it. They recollected all what had been said about machines: how oppressive and unhealthy the workmen's work is, and how those human inventions are disagreeable to God; and they thought it a good deed to destroy the machine. They overlaid it with straw and burned all the wooden parts of it. Verigin reported it to the authorities and those Libertines were put into prison again.

The prison-authorities did not show any indulgence to the excited Libertines and were treating them very harshly. As they were refusing to eat any animal food and were unwilling to work, some up-to-date methods were used to subdue them. They were fed with broth, which was conducted through a hose into the stomach directly; and to make one work, he was brought into a special cell and sand was strewn from above, threatening to cover him entirely, and compelling thus to dig himself out. But these measures did not change the Libertines. They were firm and obstinate and remained Libertines however.

Afterwards they were put into prison [a] few times more, but they were treated well. Some of them are in prison and some had been released, but are still living in their own way.

V

Shortly after his coming to Canada, Verigin invited several girls and a singing chorus, and in such a numerous and merry company he took a trip through all the Doukhoborian villages. In each village a solemn reception was given to him. All the Doukhobors were in high spirits and listened attentively to every word he was saying. He was relating them about the grand Doukhoborian community, the 'free principle' on which she shall be based, and about the happiness of the coming life.

When he returned home, he convoked a general meeting and advised the Doukhobors to take up their homesteads officially,—they had been taken temporarily as yet,¹⁴—but to cultivate all the land conjointly. Thus, since Verigin's coming, all the Doukhobors—with very little exception—formed one great community. The land was counted common, but each family had a household and some property of its own.

This state of affairs was changed very soon, however, by Verigin himself. He abandoned the 'free principle' and adopted the 'principle of centralization'. By his order all the cattle of each village was taken to the common herd and all the agricultural implements to one shed. Large communal stables and sheds were built, and attendants were appointed; modern

to practice nudism, took place in May 1903. Nudity, symbol of purity of soul and of detachment from the world, has been practised from time to time in history by radical religious sects such as the Adamites of Hussite Bohemia. The Sons of Freedom were soon, as we shall see, to move on to arson—fire the purger indeed has been over the centuries a not infrequent element in the beliefs of extremist Russian dissidents—and later to other even more violent methods of destroying what they considered evil or materialistic, or opposed to the freedom of the spirit. The mixture of religious symbolism and pathological impulse in the Sons of Freedom continues to-day to puzzle observers of the Sons' activities.

¹⁴ I.e. hitherto.

agricultural machines were bought and several corn-mills were built,—but, for want of money, everything on credit.

The Doukhobors were working but little at home, however. They were sowing corn for their own use only, and only one-fourth of all the workers was remaining at home. Over one thousand men were leaving their homes for all the summer every year. They were hiring themselves out as workmen, and every one of them had to give up in the autumn at least one hundred and fifty dollars to the cash-office of the community.

During the few following years the system of centralization was reinforced. All the orders were printed in the headquarters of Verigin and each village was getting a copy of them. It was exactly said in each order what to do and how to do: how much cattle to keep and how to feed it; how to plough and what to sow; how to build houses, and even how to dress oneself. Thus, by one order, was simplified the children's dress. All the boys and girls below thirteen had to submit to a new rule. The boys get long shirts, instead of trousers, and the girls had their hair cut—and they were all very afflicted by that.

In spite of the zealous work of the Doukhobors and their modern way of farming, they were still remaining very poor. Each village—composed of just forty houses—had about twenty cows only and very few chickens, so that the Doukhobors were living on bread and vegetables, mostly. Besides, they were getting from the common warehouse a very insufficient quantity of clothes. In consequence of that many were ill, both from cold and for want of proper food.

Almost all the Doukhoborian children were learning then, but they were getting very little knowledge, however. Verigin was of the opinion that a true Christian should have only Christ for teacher; he would not admit strangers and ordered to each village to choose a teacher among themselves. But, as there are no Doukhobors enough educated to be teachers, sometimes a teacher had to be appointed who could hardly write his own name; and thus the children were often, in few months already, as advanced as the teacher himself.

Not all the Doukhobors were satisfied with the Community. Those that were not—were setting up their own farms and were mostly successful. But their number was not large.¹⁵

VI

In the year 1905, after the religious liberty had been proclaimed in Russia, all the Doukhobors deported to Siberia were liberated and set off for Canada.

The Siberian Doukhobors, or 'Yakutians,' as they were called, had at that time already some views quite different from those of the 'Canadians,' or Canadian Doukhobors. An individual life in a remote country made

¹⁵ Reference to the beginnings of the Independent Dukhobors (*yedinolichniki*), who broke away from Verigin's leadership and have become increasingly assimilated to Canadian life. Most of the 'Yakutians' eventually joined this group. To-day the Independents are still to be found mainly in Saskatchewan, since they did not accompany Verigin's followers in their move to British Columbia.

them far more liberal and independent. Unlike the 'Canadians,' who were believing that there is no salvation beyond their community, the 'Yakutians' were thinking that every man, whatever his belief may be, can advance on the way of the spiritual perfectionment. The 'Canadians' were thinking Verigin a divine leader, who ought to be obeyed absolutely, and the 'Yakutians' were taking him for a manager only, and fully responsible for all his actions. This diversity of convictions was not dangerous by itself, however, neither to the Doukhoborian Brotherhood, nor even to the Community, but it was dangerous to the principle on which the Community was based.

All the 'Canadians' were awaiting with joy the arrival of their brethren, who had suffered so much for the common cause, but Verigin was dissatisfied with them and his displeasure made all the Doukhobors uneasy. He was well informed already of the indocility of the 'Yakutians' from the letters of his brother Basil and, personally, from his other brother Gregory and his brother-in-law Konkin, who were since [a] few years in Canada (the former had run away from Siberia arbitrarily; the latter had petitioned the Government for liberation and had been released).

The arrival of the 'Yakutians' was a great joy for many families who saw their relatives again after a long separation of ten years. Many meetings were held, new projects were formed, and, after all, when the 'Yakutians' had rest enough, they went to work and began to live the community life. But from the first day already they were told that it is quite indispensable to wait on Verigin. Their relatives were saying to them: 'All our misfortune is over now and we will live a quiet life together, but you should go to see our master. You had been living very long alone and you may have sinned in some way,—by a deed, word, or thought whatever. Go and fall before him on the ground, beg him pardon, and beg him to admit you in the Community. He will admit you, and you will live there as we are. We do not puzzle our brains over anything; we do what he orders and everything is well.'

The 'Yakutians' were very afflicted that their relatives and all the Doukhobors of the Community are in such a pitiful position, but they would not offend them by a direct reply and were answering thus: 'We do not see any necessity to beg for admission. We have been always members of the Doukhoborian society; you wish that we live with you—and we will.' But the 'Canadians' were replying: 'We advise you to see our master anyhow, and you will feel yourselves that there is a divine power in him. No man can see him without fear, and every one trembles who talks to him.' And the 'Yakutians' were answering: 'You tremble not only because you believe him to be a supernatural man, but also because you submitted to him and you know that he is severe and can punish you.'

When shortly after several 'Yakutians' went to see Verigin, he knew already that they came not to submit, but to ask explanations, and ordered not to receive them. The report about the refusal of Verigin to receive the 'Yakutians' spread in all the villages, and the 'Canadians' began to think them great sinners.

'Our master knows everything,' were saying the 'Canadians' to them.

'He knew your thoughts were not sincere when you came to him and he did not receive you. You blame him, but we believe in everything he is saying, whether in respect to spiritual matter or husbandry.'

'Your material state is far from being satisfactory,' were answering the 'Yakutians.' 'All your common property, as factories and agricultural machines, amount comparatively to little, and your indebtedness is greater than all that is worth. Only the property of each village can be counted yours, and there is but very little of it. You are living miserably. Look how weak your children are! Many begin to walk at the age of three years only!'

'It is true that we are living poorly,' were saying the 'Canadians,' 'but we are not looking for riches. We care for the soul only and we believe that there is no salvation out of the Community.'

'There are many bad principles in your Community,' were replying the 'Yakutians.' 'You are quarreling constantly, either at work or at the delivery of goods. You are very intolerant and you cruelly persecute all those that are leaving the Community. We do not see any salvation here.'

VII

At that time all the Doukhobors were talking about the 'Yakutians' only. The old people were listening to the 'Yakutians' with disgust, but many of the young were agreeing and beginning to talk themselves in a similar manner.

Everything the 'Yakutians' were saying was reported to Verigin and he took severe measures to bring them under subjection. 'They are dissatisfied with our food,' he said. 'I will teach them how to appreciate the bread as a gift of God.' And he sent an order to all the villages not to give the 'Yakutians' anything to eat for two days; and, if they do not submit, give them no food for two days more yet; and then, if they will be indocile then, expel them from the Community entirely.

This order afflicted all the Doukhobors. 'My God! what times!' were saying the 'Canadians'. 'To starve our brethren who had been suffering for our cause. And we are calling ourselves Christians of the Universal Brotherhood yet!¹⁶ It was never so before when the late woman-manager was living.' And others were replying:

'It is not our business,
 Christ is sitting on the throne
 And is creating all alone.'

(This old Doukhoborian saying is alluding to the Doukhoborian leader himself.)¹⁷

¹⁶ The title Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (*Khristianskaya obshchina vsemirnago bratstva*) was first introduced as the official designation of the sect by Verigin in a letter of 2 September (O.S.) 1896 (*Pis'ma . . . Verigina*, Letter 35, p. 92). Their previous designation as Dukhobors, he told his people, had not been 'understandable for outsiders'.

¹⁷ According to a letter received from Mr Peter Maloff (Malov), of Thrums (British Columbia): 'There are many meanings to this allegorical proverb,' that is, besides the obvious one of leaving decisions to the leader who incarnates the Christ spirit.

In each village a meeting was held and the 'Yakutians' were informed of their destiny. The question of the children was raised. Some were saying that some bread could be given to them; but others were saying that if it could be given, it would be said so in the order, but as nothing is said about it, it means then that it cannot be given. A whole week passed in deliberations. At last in some villages all the provisions were taken away from the 'Yakutians,' and they were compelled to leave the Community; but most of the Doukhobors, in spite of the fear of Verigin, could not be decided to do it and did not execute Verigin's order.

Then Verigin sent another order, that all the 'Yakutians' ought to give up all their money to the cash-office of the Community. And again meetings were held and the money was requested from the 'Yakutians.' Most of them answered that they have no money; others gave their money up; and some said that they have some money, but will not give it up, because they know Verigin wants to force them out from the Community and they will need it then.

In one village a 'Yakutian' was called to the meeting and asked if he has any money. He answered that he has some twenty dollars. 'Then give it up to the cash-office,' said the elders to him. 'Who is living in the Community should have not one cent at home.' 'Well, I will give up my money,' he answered, 'but only if you give up yours to the last cent also.' 'We have not any,' said the elders. 'We are living long since without money already.' 'How so, you have no money? I know he has some,' replied the 'Yakutian,' pointing at a man at random. The man got troubled and, thinking it is really known he has money, said that he has some, indeed, but he knows others have money also. And thus the truth was revealed, all were ashamed, and there was no more question about money in that village.

By little and little, and in consequence of such severe measures, almost all the 'Yakutians' were obliged to part with their relatives again and leave the Community. An elderly man was thus expelled by his own family from the very village where Verigin was living. He was a 'Yakutian' and they were 'Canadians.' He hired himself out somewhere as a workman, but fell ill and came to his family again. They were willing to keep him until he gets better, but Verigin did not permit it, and he was expelled again, and his family has no right to see him any more.¹⁸

VIII

All these events troubled the Doukhobors and caused some discontent in the Community. Verigin ordered then Ponomarev and Zibarov—the former leaders of the libertine movement—to go through all the villages and to pacify the people. They started each in another direction.

When Zibarov came to the village where I was living, all the villagers

¹⁸ Malov, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–86, also deals with the antagonism between the 'Yakutians' and Verigin that commenced immediately on the arrival of the 'Yakutians' in Canada towards the end of 1905. As part of the process of emancipation from Verigin's influence that took place during their exile in Siberia, most 'Yakutians' had partly abandoned the sect's newly adopted vegetarianism and teetotalism. When he ordered his followers to hold back food from the refractory 'Yakutians' for three days, Verigin is said to have remarked: 'And so the Yakutians have lost their taste for bread' (*op. cit.*, p. 85).

assembled in one house, and he addressed them thus: 'Brothers and sisters! Our master is very afflicted that there is a commotion among you. Many are displeased with the food, clothes, and all the order he has established himself. Do not you know that unruliness leads to perdition? Our master has great pity of you, and he sent me to warn you that the day of judgment shall come from one minute to another. You had been waiting whole years for it, but only minutes are left now. Behold! better repent of your sins and pray to God.' And he said afterwards: 'There are many unbelievers among you. Here are the "Yakutians," our former brethren, who do not believe in God Himself, and our master is advising you even not to speak with them.'

I inquired Zibarov then why does he think that the 'Yakutians' do not believe in God, and he said: 'They do not know God, because they do not acknowledge Christ in His second advent, and who do not know Christ—do not know God.'¹⁹

'And under what appearance is concealed Christ you are acknowledging?' I inquired.

'It is of no use to direct you,' he answered, 'because you are an unbeliever.' And addressing all the assembly, he said: 'I will not relate you also about the advent of Christ; you ought to know who is Christ and when His advent was. If you will murmur and listen to apostates, he will say: "Be damned!" and will abandon you. It will be like a lightning that flashes from the east to the west,—as it is written in the gospel,—and you will be lost then.' He addressed the women afterwards and said: 'And you sisters are requested to persuade your husbands to stay in the Community. The salvation is only in the Community and out of it, whatever good the actions of men may be, they are nothing before God. Be faithful! as the day of the general destruction of the infidels is near.'

'And how about the Quakers then?' I inquired. 'They had helped us so much, but they do not belong to the Community. Are their deeds worth nothing and they shall be lost?'

'They may believe in Christ yet and unite with Him,' he replied.

'And if they do not?'

'They shall perish as the other sinners then.' And addressing all the assembly he said: 'All the offerings of the Quakers were for our master's sake and according to his will. If not he, nobody would give us a bit of bread, and we would be lost.'

After both preachers visited all the villages, the murmur ceased and the Doukhobors commenced to pray and to wait for the end of the world; and some pious women were even not undressing themselves and their children, when going to bed, to be quite ready for the last judgment. They were thinking that sometime, at night, Christ will come and take them—His faithful people—to a lonely and safe place; and, in the meantime, a universal confusion will follow and all the infidels will perish in a general, mutual slaughter; and the earth will be left empty and will be granted to the selected people; and the life will be free and easy then.

¹⁹ An obvious reference to the belief that Verigin was a reincarnation of Jesus Christ.

IX

In the last years there have been but little changes in the life of the Community.

As the Doukhobors of the Community had not been willing to accept the Canadian subjection, the Government took a considerable part of their land from them, leaving them only fifteen acres to each person, and declared that this land also is granted for a temporary use only.²⁰

The community principle has been more strengthened yet. Thus, in many villages, common kitchens and dining-rooms have been established. But the material state of the Community has not improved. The indebtedness has not diminished, though the Doukhobors are still working zealously and living the most frugal life. They are nourishing themselves very poorly, as before. They are gradually abolishing all the animal food. They ceased to keep chickens and to eat eggs. Most of the cows had been sold and only a few have been left in each village. At the same time neither the variety nor the quality of their vegetable food has improved, and in the last year they have been obliged to eat the distasteful bread of frost-bitten corn. Consequently their health condition is far from being satisfactory.

The education is still arousing but little interest in the Community. The schools are neglected and most of the villages, now, have no schools at all.²¹

Verigin is still remaining the absolute director of the Community, as all those that are dissatisfied with his management are compelled to abandon the Community, leaving him a faithful majority. The belief in his divine origin, which is very common yet, and the usual devotion of the Doukhobors to their leader, are considerably strengthening his position.

As an example of the humble submissiveness of the members of the Community to their leader, the case of the village Pokrovka can be cited. At the beginning of the community life the inhabitants of Pokrovka had no luck and for two years they were giving to the common cash-office less money than the other villages. Verigin called them idlers and gave to their village a new denomination—Nedokhvatnoe, i.e. 'The Insufficient.' They were bearing this disgraceful name for [a] few years, during which they were endeavoring to correct themselves, and they succeeded soon to give up even more money than the others, but they were still called by their

²⁰ Under the Canadian homestead law, which was based on the Dominion Lands Act of 1872 and its subsequent amendments, each male Dukhobor settler over eighteen had been granted 160 acres of land, provided that at the end of three years he would apply individually to the government for final title. Since under Verigin's direction the Dukhobors as a body refused to make individual application, on the grounds that the land was communal property, they were finally deprived in mid-1907 of all but fifteen acres each. However justifiable from the legal point of view and understandable psychologically, this action of the government, which deprived the Dukhobors of much of the results of their hard work on the land over the previous seven years, has served to embitter relations between them and the government down to the present. See Mavor, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 32.

²¹ For instance, Malov, *op. cit.*, p. 327, relates that his parents were expelled from the Community in 1905 for sending his elder brother to a primary school. Compulsory education came in Saskatchewan only in 1916. Refusal to accept government schooling, along with the land problem and opposition to reporting vital statistics, were the chief causes of friction between Verigin's followers and the Canadian authorities until the war brought further difficulties, stemming from the sect's fervent pacifism.

new name, however. They decided then to beg Verigin himself for another name, but as nobody had boldness enough to personally talk with him, a petition was written which was beginning thus: 'Our merciful Lord! great is thy holy grace,—have pity upon us! Show us your mercy, though as small as a poppy seed,—deliver us from thy chastisement and grant to our village a Christian name. We will endeavor by all means to have no more defects . . .' and so on, on several pages. Shortly after the petition had been presented to Verigin, he came to Nedokhvatnoe himself, very contented, and said to the villagers that he gives them another name: their village shall be called henceforth 'The Intercession of the Holy Virgin,'—what expresses in Russian, but more solemnly, the first name of the village—Pokrovka.²² When the villagers heard Verigin granting them this great favor, they fell to the ground and thanked him.

X

Though the Doukhorian Community has a semblance of solidity, she is precarious in reality, however. The life in the Community is so ungrateful, that in spite of all the devotedness of the Doukhobors to the Community, a certain feeling of dissatisfaction is almost general. Even John Mahortov²³—the well known Doukhorian patriarch—is getting pessimistic now. He has been a great admirer of Verigin and used often to say maliciously, amid a numerous assembly, while tapping Verigin on the shoulder: 'I know well who is Christ.' But now, being very old already, he is saying to the Doukhobors, in a fit of frankness: 'Beg him to give you liberty. There is no success in it.'

And so, in fact, Verigin has to take particular measures to hold the Doukhobors in the Community. He is inspiring them with the great idea of a single Doukhorian community, which he compares to the Ark of Noah, saying that as then all the men had perished and only [a] few remained, so it shall be also now. He is endeavoring to isolate the members of the Community from the influence of all the other Doukhobors²⁴ and wants to have them all in one place—in the chief Yorkton colony. Thus he compels those members of the Community, who are living in the remote, but very fertile, Prince Albert colony, to remove on some poor lands in the Yorkton colony, in spite of all the serious loss by this removal. He is profiting by the loyalty of the women, who are generally more attached to the Community than the men, and gave them recently a still greater liberty of action, by granting them solemnly full equality of rights. He is

²² There are many villages in Russia called Pokrovka. The name derives from the feast of the *Pokrov*, celebrated in the Russian Orthodox Church on 1 October (O.S.) in honour of a 12th-century miracle when the Virgin Mary is said to have extended her veil as a protection over the city of Constantinople at a time of danger—hence the connection with the idea of protection or intercession. I am grateful to Father John Meyendorff, Professor at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Crestwood, New York) for this information.

²³ Ivan Fadeyevich Makhortov was then over ninety. For an account of his twenty-eight years in the Russian navy, when he saw active service during the Crimean war, see Elkinton, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–61. Dukhobors at that period had dropped their objection to military service—at least in practice.

²⁴ I.e. the Independents.

advising them to abandon their husbands if they are 'unbelievers', but, as it is not always possible to subdue the husbands in such a manner, divorces are very common.

In spite of all these measures, however, the Doukhobors are more and more leaving the Community, and the total number of individual 'farmers'—as they are called²⁵—is over one thousand already. They are living either in their old homes, in the villages, or on their own homesteads, and are generally more successful than the members of the Community.

There is reason to suppose that the Doukhoborian movement has not quite ended yet, as new complications are possible, on account of the unstableness of the Community and her forced terms with the Canadian Government.²⁶ But it can be said already that the movement has not been without good results. The Doukhobors embraced some principles with the aid of which they may become a worthy people. Something is done already. There is neither theft nor drunkenness among them. There is much poesy in their peaceful villages, where elks and prairie-chickens are coming unmolested. But, of course, there is no perfection, and much is to be done yet.

²⁵ The Independents were in that period sometimes known as *farmari*.

²⁶ See note (20) above.