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The Tambov Dukhobors in the 1760s

The ostensibly discrete issue of the Tambov Dukhobors in the 1760s feeds into the larger and still unresolved problem of the origins of Russian sectarianism in general and of Dukhoborism in particular, for which key questions remain as to its ideological sources and the time and place of its first appearance. Some are inclined to hold Dukhoborism to have been born in Sloboda Ukraine, others in Tambov province, although most researchers place the time of emergence in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Orest Markovich Novitskii, Dukhoborism's greatest scholar, has stated authoritatively that in 1763 "there was as yet no Dukhoborism in Tambov province, either in reality or in name; there was only Molokanism."[1] Pavel Grigor′evich Ryndziunskii, who discovered in the archives a file on the "Tambov schismatics" dating to 1768–69, did not identify those schismatics as Dukhobors but instead designated them as the "Spiritual Christians" and "Tambov freethinkers" from whom the Dukhobors and Molokans later gradually diverged. He held that the antiecclesiastical movement in that area had yet to take any particular sectarian form and that it was still somewhat pliant in doctrinal terms.[2] Aleksandr Il′ich Klibanov, the famous scholar of sectarianism, dated the emergence of Dukhobor doctrine to the 1760s but did not believe that the sect was formalized at that time, and he was careful to call both the Dukhobors and the Molokans "Spiritual Christians." Klibanov even

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Notes renumbered for this edition.—Ed.

applies the term "Spiritual Christians" to the Dukhobor authors of the famous note presented to Kakhovskii, governor of Ekaterinoslav province, in 1791, although in that very note, the authors themselves indicate that they are called Dukhobors by Orthodox Christians. Klibanov upbraided those historians who portrayed the adherents of "Spiritual Christianity" as "sectarians, heretics, blasphemers of Orthodoxy, hostile to church and state."[3] The implication of this is that Dukhoborism was not formalized as a religious organization with beliefs of its own until the nineteenth century and in the eighteenth was still only a religious movement.

In this article, we attempt to answer questions relative to the time of Dukhoborism's appearance in the Tambov area and to the sect's organizational foundations, activity, and beliefs in the 1760s, the period to which the earliest extant documents on the Dukhobors are dated. In addition to the archival file on the "Tambov schismatics," of which Ryndziunskii made partial use in his book, our article is based on a set of documents relating to the submission of two Dukhobor petitions to Catherine II that were discovered in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts' collection of materials from the empress's cabinet—unique documents that allow us to reexamine certain established notions about the sect. Also used are materials collected in the field during ethnographic expeditions to the Dukhobors of the Caucasus in 1988–90.

The chief difficulty in studying this sect in the eighteenth century is that it did not have any particular denominational designation [*konfessionim*]. Its members called themselves "people of God" and "sons of God." They did not accept the names "Molokan" and "Dukhobor," which had been given to them by Orthodox Christians, until the nineteenth century. To determine the sect affiliation of the "apostates from the faith" that we encountered in the archives and to be certain that they really were those whom Archbishop Nikifor of Slavensk and Kherson called "Dukhobors" in 1788, we compiled a card file containing the names of Dukhobors living in Taurida province, where they had been resettled from 1802 to 1845 on orders from Alexander I.[4] Some of the sectarians who were the subject of official investigations in the eighteenth century, or their children, were still in Taurida in the early nineteenth century.

Unfortunately, space does not permit us to dwell on the ideological sources of Dukhoborism, but the documents at our disposal provide persuasive evidence that it originated among the Orthodox preachers and para-ecclesiastical circles of Right-Bank Ukraine, which had been powerfully influenced by Catholic Scholasticism and Polish-Lithuanian

Socinianism. In the latter half of the seventeenth century, and possibly even earlier, wandering homilists spread the seed of that doctrine across Left-Bank Ukraine and into contiguous provinces. The dissemination was also facilitated by the migrations of people who were then known as Cherkassians (Ukrainians) into territories around Voronezh and Tambov. An examination of the regions of Dukhobor settlement by the mid-eighteenth century—those being Sloboda Ukraine, Voronezh province (especially Tambovskii and Kozlovskii districts [*uezdy*]), and the lands of the Don Host—reveals that, first, those regions contained a Ukrainian presence, and, second, they were populated predominantly by free servitors [*svobodnye sluzhilye liudi*]—independent smallholders [*odnodvortsy*], boyar's sons, and Cossacks. Members of those classifications supplied Dukhoborism with its original social base, although a few Dukhobors were former crown peasants, and a handful were privately owned serfs. In the eighteenth century, the Dukhobor sect was highly localized.

The general consensus is that the first person to preach the Dukhobor doctrine in Tambov province (from 1719 through 1779, Tambovskii and Kozlovskii districts), which was part of Voronezh province, was Larion [Illarion] Pobirokhin, a smallholder in the village of Goreloe. (Since all documents of the time give his surname as Pobirakhin, we use that spelling henceforth.) According to Metropolitan Arsenii of Kiev, there was "a Polish Jew" who had escaped from Siberia lodging with Pobirakhin; other sources speak of a Pole named Semen. [Fedor Vasil′evich] Livanov, who had access to archives that have since been partially lost, even names the year when this individual first appeared: 1733.[5] Disregarding the patent calumnies upon Pobirakhin, in which he is accused of going, along with the "Pole" and other followers, to live in a ravine behind the village, whence he masterminded various acts of robbery and plunder, in all other respects this account seems entirely plausible. The "Pole" could have been a Russian from Poland or Lithuania (to which he had fled or where he had been imprisoned), or a Ukrainian from Left-Bank Ukraine (since Ukrainians, as we know, were sometimes called Poles), or, finally, actually a Pole or a Polish (or Ukrainian) Jew. He was apparently an itinerant preacher who converted Larion Pobirakhin to his faith and who for some time thereafter, together with Pobirakhin, continued his ministry in Tambovskii district. Evidence that Pobirakhin was initiated into the doctrine of the sect by an outsider is found in a legend that is still remembered by elderly Dukhobors.

There once lived a man and his wife, who were childless. Then the woman had a child by a laborer who was in truth an itinerant holy man. The long-awaited child was born, and his overjoyed parents named him Radostʹ [Gladness]. He grew up and worked in the fields like any peasant, but one day the holy man appeared and told him that he should abandon his rustic toil and set out to preach. The holy man instilled into him the psalm "I saw" [Uzrekh], and Radostʹ immediately knew the whole truth.[6] He walked around the village, singing "I saw" at the top of his voice; and the people were amazed, wondering if he had taken leave of his senses. Then he returned home and told his parents to heat up the bathhouse, since he would no longer till the soil but would instead go from place to place, revealing the truth.[7]

Since the Dukhobors reserve the name "father" for God, calling fathers in the flesh by their names or addressing them as *starichok* ["old man"], there is no question that the father in the legend is a spiritual father who passed on the Dukhobor doctrine to the young Pobirakhin. The teacher designated as a holy man in Dukhobor tradition was a transient who evidently moved house frequently. Although the timing indicated by Livanov for the "Pole's" appearance in Tambovskii district cannot be unconditionally accepted, we can state that the doctrine was being actively preached in Voronezh province, including in Tambovskii district, as early as the 1730s and 1740s. Evidence of this is seen in the testimony of a certain Katerina Vypova, who lived in Voronezh and told investigators in 1772 that she had turned away from Orthodoxy and fallen into heresy thirty years before—that is, in the 1740s.[8]

According to a tradition recorded in the early nineteenth century by Pavel Ivanovich Sumarokov in Sloboda Ukraine, in the 1740s an elderly foreigner was preaching Dukhoborism in the village of Okhotchee. He was a retired noncommissioned officer who was loved by many and died in that village.[9] Who was the mysterious foreigner? Perhaps the same "Pole" who preached in Tambov province. He would surely have traveled through more than one district and more than one village in his lifetime, bringing others to his faith and gathering many followers. Or there may already have been a Dukhobor religious organization in Sloboda Ukraine that sent missionaries into neighboring provinces. This thought brings to mind a Dukhobor legend about one of the first Dukhobor leaders, whose name was not documented even in the well-known Dukhobor psalm about "our righteous progenitors" (i.e., the Dukhobor leaders).[10] The man was Edom, a legendary individual about whom no reliable information survives. In the early twentieth century P.S. Vereshchagin, a Canadian Dukhobor, wrote in reply to a question put to him by Vladimir Dmitrievich Bonch-Bruevich as part of his study of sectarianism that Edom was a sage who had had a personal audience with the empress and had demanded that she free the people from bondage. The enraged empress had him put in a *stolb,* a prison cell so small that he could not sit or lie down in it, but he was ransomed by some Englishmen and taken to England, where he founded the Quaker sect.[11] Dukhobors in the Caucasus today still tell how he was apt to "talk your ear off," knew everything and feared nothing, accused the tsaritsa herself of sin, and led his closest followers to the Amur. Even in the 1920s a rumor among the Dukhobors of the Caucasus that Edom was alive and would soon return to them was exploited by a crook to swindle several credulous individuals. That escapade even gave rise to a jingle:

> Edomushka came passing by,
> Robbed 'em blind, away did fly.[12]

Thus, we can be sure that the Dukhobors thought of Edom as an immortal and exceptional person, a holy man. The strange Jewish name also commands attention: it translates from the Hebrew as "red," and is, as we know, a nickname given to Esau, who was a son of the biblical patriarch Isaac and who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. No Dukhobor heresiarch is likely to have taken that name out of any particular respect for Esau. More likely it is a nickname, assumed in imitation of the biblical hero by someone whose real name was also Esau [Isav] and subsequently converted by his entourage into "Semen." Or he may simply have had red hair. Most certainly, we can only hypothesize, since there is no direct proof on any of this, but, as we see it, the legends of Edom do not contradict the story of the Polish Jew who taught Dukhobor truths in Goreloe.

According to a variant that has migrated from one text on the Dukhobors to another, Larion Pobirakhin was a rich wool trader who lived in Goreloe, and village censuses of 1722 and 1744 do show a Pobirakhin family (P.E. Pobirakhin, his sons Lavrentii and Prokhor, and Osip, the latter's stepson) living in Goreloe.[13] Although Larion Pobirakhin was not registered in that village, it is possible that he stayed illegally for many years with relatives there or actually did camp in a nearby ravine. The Dukhobors have a legend to the effect that in his youth, while building a cathedral in Kiev, Radost′ dropped an ax on his foot, injuring his toe, which inspired the realization that priests and churches were superfluous, since there was no sanctity in them.[14] It is possible that, like many servitors, some members of the Pobirakhin family had moved to the Izium Line,* the southernmost point of Sloboda Ukraine, in the early 1700s, while others, having tried their luck elsewhere, returned to Tambovskii district. In the censuses of 1719 to 1722, the Goreloe Pobirakhins are listed as "wayfaring" [*skitavshiesia*], which means that they were temporarily absent although still registered in Goreloe. Larion could have been in Kiev or traveling around the villages of Sloboda Ukraine, which is where he might have become acquainted with the Dukhobor doctrine and with the preacher in whose company he later evangelized in the Tambov area. It is somewhat surprising that the local authorities did not know, or knew but did nothing about the fact, that Pobirakhin was not properly registered, was paying no taxes, and had no visible means of support. But this, judging from the archives, was not a unique situation. Our notions of the massive searches and the unsleeping watch kept by the authorities over the populace given into their charge in the eighteenth century are patently exaggerated. But it is no less surprising that even the priests, who lived among their flocks, seemed not to notice the new heresy that was spreading through their congregations. In 1745 an outbreak of the "Quaker heresy"—as Khlystism** was called at the time—was again brought to light in Moscow (it had first been discovered in 1733). The commission appointed to investigate sent circulars to all the provinces, instructing the local authorities to track down teachers and adherents of the Quaker heresy in their provinces. In 1746 soldiers made the rounds of villages large and small in Tambovskii district and, under pain of death, took testimony from priests, village officials [*sotskie*], and people of consequence as to the presence of apostates among their fellow villagers but found none whatsoever, although we now know that Khlystism had made its way into Tambov and environs in the first half of the eighteenth century.[15] This priestly "laxity" may, in our view, be imputed to the general disarray in Tambov Diocese, which had, from the late seventeenth century, been ruled successively by the metropolitan of Riazan and the bishop

***Iziumskaia cherta,* named for a string of wooden fortifications begun in 1678.—Trans.

**A sect practicing ritual flagellation.—Trans.

of Voronezh and had not been reinstated [as a separate entity—Trans.] until 1758. The priests had no vested interest in turning up heretics in their own congregations, so they were not particularly enterprising in this regard.

Not until 1763 did the Orthodox clergy notice that Larion Pobirakhin was missing church and failing to discharge his Christian duties. Previously, he had apparently been trying to behave like a pious follower of Orthodoxy, at least on the surface. The Tambov Ecclesiastical Consistory demanded that the Tambov Provincial Chancellery produce Pobirakhin and Rodion Kakhov, a Goreloe smallholder, but the only remnant of the resultant hearing is a title in the archival inventory; the case file itself has been lost. Pobirakhin must never have been found, since in 1764 the provincial chancellery again sent a solider to Goreloe with orders to bring Pobirakhin in so that he could be delivered to the consistory. Only at this point did it come to light that the smallholder Larion Pobirakhin "has no home of his own in Goreloe, and where he now resides they [the local inhabitants—S.I.] do not know."[16] Evidently, after the consistory began expressing interest in him, Larion Pobirakhin went to ground among his coreligionists while still making occasional visits to Goreloe. Documents from a 1768 investigation into the Dukhobors tell us that in 1765 the Tambov smallholder Semen Zhernoklev came to the Goreloe home of the churchman Kirill Petrov to learn the word of God and met Pobirakhin there. All who entered the hut fell at his feet. He sat in the place of honor opposite the doorway and interpreted psalms, and his visitors called him Radost′.[17] His name comes up more than once in investigation documents dating to 1768 and 1769, but, by all indications, he was never found. Metropolitan Arsenii of Kiev, and Novitskii after him, wrote that Pobirakhin was captured, tried, and exiled to Siberia with his family.[18] But there is no record of this in the archives, and the putative martyrdom of this Dukhobor leader in life and death finds no reflection in the sect's religious folklore. M. Kamenev, author of an extensive article on the Dukhobor sect, who traveled to Dukhobor villages in the Transcaucasus during the 1870s and 1880s and spoke with people who allegedly knew Pobirakhin's son, Savelii Kapustin (the next prominent Dukhobor leader), makes no mention of the arrest and Siberian exile of Pobirakhin and his family.[19] The likelihood is that Pobirakhin, having devoted his life to preaching the Dukhobor doctrine and not being properly registered, had no family, and that Kapustin was actually his spiritual son. So, Pobirakhin's arrest and exile to Siberia must be considered as much a myth as the claim that he was a wool trader in Goreloe. We believe that Pobirakhin went into hiding among his coreligionists and continued to lead the sect until his death.

As long as the Dukhobor sect (whose organizational principles and creed we discuss below) was still limited in size, its members could conceal their affiliation to it. To avoid attracting the attention of neighbors, they went to church, had their children baptized, were married in church, celebrated the Orthodox holy days, and allowed priests into their homes. But from the early 1760s on, some particularly zealous proponents of the new doctrine stopped attending church, going to confession, or taking communion, and on occasion might even close their homes to priests.[20] The priests noticed what they were doing, of course, but in the early 1760s they were not interpreting individual instances of impiety as foreshadowing the formation of a new religious organization. In 1764 the Tambov Ecclesiastical Consistory enjoined the provincial chancellery to produce, in addition to Pobirakhin, an array of people, smallholders all, who had committed acts of impiety: F. Fetintsov, from the village of Togolukov, I, Zapasnoi, from the town of Kozlov, P. Lavrent′ev and his wife from the village of Semenova, and from the village of Kuksovo, a group of twelve comprising the Kondrat′ev, Astafurov (misspelled in the records as "Stafurov"), and Novosil′stov families, and the widow M. Erina.[21] But, since some were already deceased by the time the order went out and others were seriously ill or had left the area, the consistory was sent only P. Lavrent′ev and eight from Kuksovo.

Ivan Zapasnoi, who could not immediately be found, was an active member of the sect. A Kozlov smallholder, he had lived for a number of years in the large industrial village of Rasskazovo and worked there in a textile mill owned by one M.P. Olesov, a merchant. When questioned, Olesov testified that "on various dates strangers had come to Zapasnoi's home at night." In 1763 some mill workers intercepted "people of unknown origin—a man with a lass, and a priest, who declared himself to be from the village of Znamenskii in Tambovskii district." It was also determined that Zapasnoi had engaged Olesov and Ia.V. Tulinov, a merchant and factory owner, in conversation about the "congregation of evildoers" [Psalm 26:5]. Tulinov read to Zapasnoi from an annotated Psalter and spoke with him. Before long, Zapasnoi was captured at the Rasskazovo market (where he may have drawn attention to himself by preaching), dispatched to Tambov, tried, and exiled to the fortress of Azov.[22]

Although these isolated instances of apostasy from Orthodox piety were gradually concatenated, they were never thoroughly investigated, and the sect might well have remained under the radar for another decade had not the Dukhobors given themselves away. In 1767 some made conspicuous changes to their behavior, increasing the incidence of their demonstrative refusals to attend church or receive priests in the home. They began openly speaking to their fellow villagers about the futility of venerating manmade icons and stopped blessing themselves with the sign of the cross. Andrei Popov, a smallholder in the village of Zhidilovka (Kozlovskii district), and his household, having previously hidden their devotion to the new faith, suddenly decided not to go to church any more; to have no further truck with the sacraments, religious rites, and prayers; and to stop making the sign of the cross. A. Belousov, a smallholder in the village of Soldatskaia Dukhovka, and his family reached the same decision, also in 1767. Furthermore, when the priest made the traditional Christmas procession around the village, the Belousov family did not approach the cross, declaring that it was a mere chip of wood and that they would kiss only the living God. During Holy Week, in addition to Belousov, his fellow villagers K. Mordovin and D. Burlin also barred the priest from their home and "spoke rashly" as they did so. Again in 1767—during the Easter vigil, when church attendance is particularly high—Ivan and Vlas Suzdal′tsev and A. Kuznetsov, smallholders in the village of Lysye Gory, "uttered indecent words," and Ivan Suzdal′tsev demanded a "new chapbook."[23] By the laws of the time, "blasphemy," which could easily comprise any disloyal statement on a religious matter, was punishable by death, and those who advertised their apostasy from Orthodoxy placed themselves in mortal danger.[24] The impression is that the Dukhobors were being deliberately provocative, to draw the attention of the local authorities and goad them to retaliate, which turned out to be easy enough to achieve. All the above-named Dukhobors were arrested and held for trial, but Ivan Suzdal′tsev, who had been released on bail to the Dukhobors of Tambov, escaped. Meanwhile, on 29 May, Bishop Feodosii (Golosnitskii) of Tambov and Penza, reported to the Synod the discovery of twenty-six sectarians in the village of Zhidilovka and six in the village of Lysye Gory.[25]

The most authoritative representatives of the Dukhobors of Tambovskii and Kozlovskii districts decided to go to St. Petersburg and petition the tsaritsa herself for protection. The six—the smallholders Ivan Suzdal′tsev of Lysye Gory, Fedor Khramtsov of Tambov, Mikhail Plotnikov of Goreloe, Efim Cherenkov of Kozlov, Efim Smagin of Zhidilovka in Kozlovskii district, and Ivan Liubimov, a person of no fixed rank from the Streletskaia settlement in Tambov—set off for St. Petersburg bearing a complaint against the local authorities for oppressing and detaining them.[26] They came, as we can see, from various places and had undoubtedly known each other prior to their journey.

We can only guess how difficult it must have been for the envoys to travel to the northern capital without passports. The exact date on which the petition was submitted for presentation to the empress is unknown, though the presentation was more likely than not made in February 1768. But why had the sect not make itself known until 1768, given that the arrest and exiling of its members had been going on since 1764? We find an answer to that question in paragraph 496 of Her Imperial Majesty's Instructions to the Legislative Commission, which had been widely promulgated in 1767: "Persecution exasperates human minds, whereas consent to believe according to one's own law mollifies even the most obdurate hearts and leads them from inveterate recalcitrance, extinguishing their disputes, which are offensive to the tranquillity of the state and the cohesion of citizens."[27] This was early in the reign of Catherine II, when she was still infatuated with the ideas of the French *encyclopédistes* and doing her best to play the role of an enlightened monarch with a maternal concern for all her subjects. In the same period, Senior Privy Counselor Aleksandr Alekseevich Bezborodko drafted—with the empress's knowledge, of course—a manifesto entitled "On Permitting in the Empire of All the Russias the Profession of Diverse Faiths" [O dozvolenii v Imperii vserossiiskoi svobodnogo razlichnykh ver ispovedaniia].[28] Though the draft was never ratified, it attests to the empress's intention to establish the principle of religious tolerance in Russia. The Tambov Dukhobors, though living far from the capital and illiterate or at best subliterate, quickly caught wind of this new trend. They believed the empress's assurances that they could now legally and openly practice their religion and deemed the chief obstacle in their way to be the local authorities, which were disregarding the tsaritsa's orders. (Such notions of the good tsar and the evil administrators slotted neatly into the framework of the people's traditional attitude toward the power structure.) So what the Dukhobors now needed was a precedent, since the local administrators were holding them in durance vile although the empress herself had set them free, thereby legalizing their sect. Dukhobor activity during that period was based on a script that their leaders had carefully thought through; and it worked, at first.

The success of the venture would depend in large part on the way in which their case was presented to the sovereign. So, on arrival in St. Petersburg, the petition-bearers applied to Ivan Perfil′evich Elagin, privy counselor, secretary of state, and member of Catherine's cabinet.

Of himself, Elagin had written that, having joined the masons in his youth, he had at one time been enamored of Deism, had read a great deal, and had reached an understanding of the meaning of Masonry's symbols and mysteries. Thus "were explained to me many of the parables and words spoken by Jesus Christ, our Savior."[29] Masonry characteristically perceived the Holy Scriptures as a collection of allegories which must not be understood literally but had to be interpreted, and it held this view to be no blasphemy. The Dukhobors' perception of the Holy Scriptures was equally allegorical, except that they interpreted the Scriptures through inner illumination. The cosmopolitan masons championed universal human values over the values of nation and state and did not encourage the reinforcement of national religions that served the political interests of the state. Elagin, the founder and master of Russia's first Lodge of Humility and a seventh-degree initiate, had, as we can see, every reason to support the Dukhobors.[30] But did they know to whom they were appealing for help, or was it a purely random choice? They repeated the same script thirty-three years later, when sectarians submitted a petition to Alexander I via Senator Ivan Lopukhin, also a mason. The question of the link between Masonry and sectarianism remains open and is unlikely to be resolved in the near future.

And so the Dukhobor complaint came into the hands of Catherine II. Although the document itself seems to be missing from the archive, it apparently stated that they were being oppressed for not wishing to attend manmade churches or worship images painted on boards, and preferring instead to attend the holy apostolic church "in the open air" and worship an image of the Holy Trinity not made by people. One of the documents contained a phrase to the effect that the petitioners had come "to ask that they be allowed to present a deputation."[31] Before making her decision, though, Catherine arranged through Elagin to inquire about the supplicants in their places of residence. So, from 5 through 8 March, a cabinet courier made the rounds of their home towns and villages [*vesi*] in Voronezh province, questioning the priests and the local people of consequence about them all. The responses, as might be expected, were highly unflattering: for many years, not one of them had been to church for confession or communion, they went where they would with neither permissions nor passports, and three of them (Plotnikov, Liubimov, and Khramtsov) had no residence (a home of their own and a means of support) in the places where they were registered. Plotnikov had gone off to live in the forest, where he disported himself "ceaselessly with lasses." Suzdal′tsev and his brother caused disruptions in church, while Cherenkov and Smagin had not allowed the priest into their homes for four years. It is obvious that the results of this inquiry were never brought to the empress's attention. Elagin sent the Dukhobors to speak with Bishop Gavriil of Tver (archbishop of St. Petersburg since 1770), whom they did not engage in far-reaching disputes over dogma so as not to put too fine a point on the issue of their attitude to the Orthodox Church. Instead, they presented the matter as a lack of desire to attend, and discharge their Christian duties in, churches whose priests had compromised themselves through misconduct. After speaking with them on several occasions, Gavriil announced that the Dukhobors were not enemies of the Orthodox Church and that it would be desirable to fulfill their request and "permit them in certain parishes to select sober, edifying, and mild-mannered priests, to whom they may confess and from whom they may take communion, and to enjoin the priests of their parishes to perform other offices in their homes and on holy days to go to them without summons for acts of praise and to debar them from besetting their parishioners."[32] Bishop Gavriil's conclusion played an important role in Catherine II's decision regarding the sectarians. What was the likelihood that Gavriil, an experienced churchman with extensive theological knowledge, would be unable to tell what constituted a new sect? He realized, of course, that the Dukhobors were being disingenuous; their answers to only two or three questions made it easy to understand the essence of their doctrine. In fact, twenty-four years later, Gavriil—then Metropolitan Gavriil—wrote, recalling his conversations with the Dukhobors, that their Anabaptist ratiocinations presented a danger to the state because "their opinions not only posit equality but also a choice as to whom to heed and whom to obey. Such thoughts are all the more dangerous in that they may hold attraction for the peasants."[33] It is most likely that, in 1768, His Eminence Gavriil, with his sense of the empress's frame of mind and perhaps after consultation with Elagin, consciously opted not to speak negatively of the Dukhobors.

The supplicants were issued travel passes to their places of residence and envelopes containing edicts to be conveyed to the Tambov Provincial Chancellery, the Kozlov Provincial Chancellery, and Bishop Feodosii of Tambov, which stated that Her Imperial Majesty "had bade them be returned to their residences, that they should not be held to blame because they have absented themselves from their homes without official leave and without passports, and that no oppression and no affront be committed against them."[34]

Having received the empress's command, which also declared that the supplicants would be allowed to confess to and take communion from the priests of their choice, His Eminence Feodosii summoned the Dukhobors to give them the news. They had not, of course, expected such an outcome and, judging from what they did next, they also did not believe what Feodosii was telling them. They categorically rejected this grace and favor and let it be known that they wanted a priest consecrated by God, who "shall receive the word from the mouth of God." Feodosii wrote to inform Elagin of this on 26 June, telling him that he had submitted a statement to the Synod to be compiled into a report for Her Majesty and pointing out that the apostates had already seduced many into their faith. He had been particularly astonished by the pronouncements of Kirei Mordovin, a smallholder from the village of Soldatskaia Dukhovka, who was being held by the Tambov Provincial Chancellery. Mordovin had assured his cellmates that no miracles could be expected from any holy relics, since they were made of leather inflated with air and had called St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker a "scoundrel."[35] For its part, the Most Holy Synod forwarded a statement on the Dukhobors to Elagin, also for submission to the empress. But he held up both reports, so that she did not receive them for four months.

Meanwhile, convinced that a positive decision had been reached on their issue, the Dukhobors were perplexed to see that time was passing but the local authorities were still delaying the enforcement of the empress's edict. Meanwhile, their coreligionists languished in prison. They went several times to see the governor, but he always found some pretext to send them away. On one such occasion, an officer confronted them right there on the premises, "asking with foul language what business these schismatics had going to St. Petersburg," beat Mikhail Plotnikov's face bloody, and had Ivan Liubimov dragged out onto the square and "beaten mercilessly with rods, from which beating he, Liubimov, lay for no inconsiderable time." A week later, the Dukhobors again went to ask the governor to release the prisoners, but instead the governor sent them to a court clerk, who demanded a bribe.[36] Rather than complying, they decided to work harder on having the edict implemented. But in the meantime, several of the prisoners died. The Dukhobors were finally forced to pay the sum demanded of them, but that secured the release of only a few prisoners. Seeing that their situation was exactly the same as, if not actually worse than, before the edict had been published, in late July or early August our old friend Ivan Liubimov went with Elistrat Bogatyrev, a smallholder from Lysye Gory, to deliver to A.A. Maslov, governor of Voronezh province, an appeal in which they cited the imperial edict and lodged complaints against the Tambov chancellery for detaining four of their comrades and against the magistracy for confining two Dukhobor merchants.

This placed Maslov in a dilemma. On the one hand, there was the edict, which required him to release the prisoners. On the other, there was the ecclesiastical consistory and Bishop Feodosii, an intransigent individual with whom the secular authorities preferred not to quarrel, who was conducting his own investigation. The governor did not dare cross the bishop. On 7 August Maslov applied to the empress with a request for clarification on what should be done with the apostates, making sure to append an itemization of their crimes. A week later, the Tambov chancellery sent Elagin a comparable report recounting the impudent behavior of the Suzdal′tsev brothers in church (one had fled and thus escaped punishment), the apostasy from Orthodox piety committed by Plotnikov and Khramtsov, and, finally, Kirei Mordovin's improprieties regarding the holy relics and St. Nicholas.[37]

On 28 August 1768 the empress signed an edict that was delivered to Governor Maslov. She had decided to divide the crimes listed in his report into three categories: (1) Kuznetsov and the brothers Suzdal′tsev were to be punished for their "manifest rebellion against the Church"; (2) Bogatyrev, Mordovin, and Belousov had "spoken in an unseemly and audacious manner" against those pleasing to God [*bozhie ugodniki*] and against the cross but, since there was no manifest rebellion in their actions, they were to be sent to St. Petersburg "for an inquiry into the precise error of their ways"; and (3) Plotnikov and Khramtsov, who had come to notice only for their failure to attend church, were to be returned to their places of residence and small military detachments were to be stationed in their villages to keep them under observation.[38] Elagin passed the edict on to the Tambov Provincial Chancellery, once again acknowledging that the supplicants who had done no wrong were not to be mistreated or oppressed but the guilty ones, who had been sentenced to be punished in accordance with the law, would "find no protection whatsoever in the words written herein."[39]

Realizing that they would achieve nothing locally, the Dukhobors wrote a "Most Humble Petition" to Elagin, which was also carried to St. Petersburg, apparently arriving there in mid-November 1768. This was a three-part document: the Most Humble Petition [Vsenizhaishee proshenie] proper; a Declaration [Ob′′iavlenie], in which they expounded their faith; and a list of the affronts committed against them. They were applying to Elagin again as one who had already shown clemency with his "report to Her Majesty on this matter" and who was well apprised of their cause. They wrote that the Tambov archbishop and chancellery, "having received the royal command, are not only not protecting us against affront and ruin but are inflicting on us even further oppression and insolence and intolerable violence, [with] agonizing beatings. Unable to bear such treatment, we are forced by those people again to quit our homes and to divest ourselves of our last meager capital."[40] We discuss the Dukhobor creed in detail below. Here we concern ourselves only with the recitation of the affronts committed against these six individuals living in various locations, which takes up six pages. They complained that drunken priests forced their way into their homes; demanded, after encountering them on the street, that they ask for a blessing and beat them if they refused; wrote false denunciations; and set the Orthodox on them, who then not only beat them but also robbed them, knowing that they could do so with impunity. They wrote that they were being imprisoned and must "for an unknown duration leave our homes and outbuildings and our trades, and some have quit their work on the haymow and other needful tasks, whereby they are deprived of the household they have had for ages, and the standing grain has perished in inclement weather and young children wander without supervision and the livestock is all lost. Each of us, it could almost be said, has been so ruined by the aforesaid insolent treatment that there is almost nothing to eat" and no funds to pay their taxes [*obrok*]. Their merchant brethren, the Dukhobors wrote, had lost "their market, their business, and were altogether deprived of their mercantile commerce." Ivan Suzdal′tsev described how, when he and a few others went to church at Easter, the priest ordered all the congregation to drag them from the church after matins and beat them, and then had them tied to a pillar, where they stood until the liturgy was over. I. Nazarov, a Kozlov smallholder, complained that priests and drunken peasants had broken into their homes and pulled them out; had beaten them, men and women alike; and had dragged them to the church by their hair, locked them in overnight, and in the morning "they dealt those women, married and unmarried, a mortal thrashing with switches right by those churches, lifting up their skirts." Sometimes incarcerated Dukhobors had the right side of their beards and the left side of their heads shaved, just for the sport of it. One may, of course, surmise that all these insults have been much exaggerated, especially since the halo of martyrdom always held a great attraction for these sectarians; and in this instance, it was, in addition, important to present oneself to the supreme power as victims. But the Dukhobors did have written testimonials to most of the instances of violence against them, in the form of petitions listing witnesses, which they submitted, to no avail, to the governor's or provincial chancellery. We may also conjecture that they submitted the petitions to have proof in case the central authorities should ever wish to verify their complaints.

Being convinced that they were in the right, the Dukhobors asked that their faith and the prayer and worship they performed "in accordance with the Holy Scriptures" be attested, "and ere the appointed attestation of faith, prayer, and worship shall be accomplished, to admit a freely elected deputation of our brethren, preferably those who shall so desire and such as was previously admitted regarding matters agricultural . . . but for the insolence and affronts committed by the aforementioned priests and others we desire to seek no reparation from them, since for those offenses the Lord God shall judge them in the next world."[41] This refers to deputies being sent to the Legislative Commission, where they could speak in defense of their faith, apparently with hopes of influencing in their favor the new laws being drafted. This was an unprecedented act of audacity on the sectarians' part.

The second petition was brought to St. Petersburg by Ignat Bolychev (a house servant of V. Tulinov, a Voronezh merchant), Ivan Nazarov, Ivan Suzdal′tsev, and Mikhail Plotnikov. While the author of the Declaration of Faith is unknown, it is possible that Pobirakhin himself had a hand in it. It was later rewritten in many copies and served as a kind of instruction booklet for literate Dukhobors.

On 10 October, well before the Dukhobors arrived in St. Petersburg, Vedeneev, a deputy to the Legislative Commission from Tambov province, had received a denunciation from the priests and people of Kozlovskii district, which stated that several smallholders in the village of Zhidilovka (the Smagin, Popov, Tarabukin, and Panin families and Nelida Shul′gina, a single woman), the Zavoronezh settlement in Kozlov (the Chernenkov and Suslov families), and the village of Ranino (the Rozhnov and Butskii families and the family of E. Mzhachii) had abandoned Orthodoxy and joined a sect as yet unknown. Vedeneev promptly forwarded this message to the commission, where it came into the hands of Prince Aleksandr Viazemskii, the procurator general, who had also received the report from the Tambov Provincial Chancellery through Elagin. This is where matters took a bad turn for the Dukhobors. Elagin could not postpone making his report to the empress beyond 19 November. Having briefly laid out the essence of the Dukhobors' first petition, Archbishop Gavriil's opinion of them, and the reason for their second journey to St. Petersburg, he also conveyed Bishop Feodosii's directly contrary opinion, attaching his letter and a note from the Synod, as well as the gist of the Tambov chancellery's 14 August report. He added nothing of his own opinion, instead giving the empress the opportunity to get to the bottom of this convoluted affair for herself. Her Imperial Majesty ordered the supplicants sent to Viazemskii, which was done on 25 November.[42] They were detained by the Senate, and in early December, on Viazemskii's orders, they were dispatched under guard to Governor Maslov in Voronezh, who was to conduct an investigation and deal with them in accordance with the imperial edict of 28 August.[43] But even before the four Dukhobors reached Voronezh, Governor Maslov had dispatched four of their coreligionists to St. Petersburg, as the empress had ordered. In addition to Belousov, Mordovin, and Bogatyrev, whom she had mentioned by name, the governor, in a fit of bureaucratic zeal, sent Liubimov, too, and with him a concise exposition of the men's antiecclesiastical statements and deeds. Maslov wrote that eighty-one [per original, but the numbers that follow add up to eighty—Ed.] of "those schismatics" had been discovered: eight in the city of Tambov, forty-one in the villages of Tambovskii district (nine in Kuksovo, ten in Soldatskaia Dukhovka, seven in Goreloe, eleven in Lysye Gory, and four in Malaia Talenka), four in the city of Kozlov, and twenty-seven in the villages of Kozlovskii district (twenty-five in Zhidilovka and two in Ranino).[44]

Belousov, Mordovin, Bogatyrev, and Liubimov were questioned on 30 December 1768 by Prince Viazemskii himself, in the presence of Archimandrite Platon. They all said that they had fallen away from the Orthodox faith "the year before this," and that they had done so because a priest in their village had read "divine books" that said not to worship anything manmade and not to attend church. Mordovin testified that he had abandoned Orthodoxy six years previously on the instigation of Kirill Petrov, a visiting churchman from Goreloe. The others were evidently referring to Petrov also, although they did not mention him by name.

Viazemskii concluded that "of those religious apostates, he more than the rest was adamant in his errors. . . . He, Petrov, by his tortuous exegesis of the Holy Scriptures has seduced some away from the true path and has brought them to his own error."[45] He ordered Governor Maslov to send to St. Petersburg the sacristan Kirill Petrov—whom Bishop Feodosii of Tambov had already admonished without success and whom the ecclesiastical consistory was holding under guard, as teacher of the sectarians. Maslov commanded that Petrov be brought to him in Voronezh and sent him on under guard to the procurator general in St. Petersburg, where he was interrogated on 14 March.

Kirill Petrov was undoubtedly one of the chief Dukhobor teachers. He was a sacristan's son; and his brother, Kiprian, was a priest in Goreloe—one, moreover, who had written denunciations against the Dukhobors. Kirill Petrov was literate, knew the Holy Scriptures well, and could cite it to confirm the validity of the Dukhobor doctrine. He testified that six years previously, he had been performing his Christian duty but then had read in the Psalter that one must not attend manmade churches or worship icons; that only sinners attended manmade churches, where the priests came to blows; and that the real church was the assembly of the holy. He read the Psalter to others and "at the bidding of the Holy Spirit, he also interpreted the same."[46] He may well have read certain other books to his coreligionists. He traveled around the villages preaching the doctrine, and he welcomed Pobirakhin into his home, where Dukhobors gathered to pray.

The sociopolitical aspects of the Dukhobor doctrine were the first to come to light during the interrogation before Viazemskii: it emerged that this brotherhood practiced communal ownership, meaning that each could take from another whatever he lacked. Petrov announced that he obeyed only God; that the law existed for the lawless, not for those who lived by God's commandments; that man was made by God in His image and likeness, with absolute authority; and that he did not wish to serve any tsar.[47] In entering their decision on this matter, Archimandrite Platon and Prince Viazemskii indicated that the sectarians not only did not submit to the Church but also disobeyed secular law. Their common ownership of property was appraised as a desire "to avoid the labors and the husbandry that falls to their lot as settlers and to be instead parasites." It was decided to conscript them into military service, that being the most reliable way of potentially restoring them to Christian piety.[48] Catherine ratified the procurator general's decision.

What happened to them after that? On 26 March 1769 all five were sent to the Military College, with the injunction "to keep unwavering watch over them, that they remain not in idleness and that they may not depart from the service." The college dispersed them to five separate Baltic garrisons, assigning them to nonfield duty there. But military inductees, as we know, took their oaths in church, and the garrison commanders immediately had problems with the Dukhobors, especially since they had not known in advance who was coming to them or why. Already in early April Ivan Liubimov, who had been posted to the Kronstadt garrison, "declared that he did not wish to be in the service of Her Imperial Majesty or to go to church or celebrate the divine liturgy, but he did desire to pay his poll tax." He was again sent to be questioned by the Senior Commander's Chancellery in St. Petersburg, where he confirmed his unwillingness to swear the oath and to attend church. The Military College had him returned to his post and instructed that he be "dealt with unsparingly for his obstinacy, in accordance with military regulations."[49] The same orders were circulated to the garrisons to which the other Dukhobors had been sent. Unable to bear the mockery and the beatings, Liubimov ran away from Kronstadt in January 1770, going to St. Petersburg, where he hid for a time without a passport under the name of Grigorii Uklein. But his irreverent attitude toward icons was noted, and he was handed over to the police, who passed him on to the Synod. There he admitted his sect membership and was again admonished by Archimandrite Platon. But he never renounced the sect, was apparently returned to the garrison, and thereafter was lost to history.[50]

In late September 1769 Artemii Belousov ran away from the Vyborg garrison, explaining at the first St. Petersburg picket post he reached that he had fled because of the "beatings inflicted on him for failure to attend church, which had caused his health to weaken." He wanted to submit a complaint to the Military College. The college ordered him to be cudgeled and sent back.[51] We have no information on the other Dukhobors, but, judging from the sparse materials on Liubimov and Belousov, it may be assumed that they were beaten to death, although some may have managed to escape.

Bishop Feodosii, meanwhile, was continuing his investigation in Tambov province. On 24 March 1769 he reported to the Synod that 232 sectarians of both sexes had been discovered, including some who had been interrogated as long ago as 1765. They were all obstinate in their error and refused to renounce the sect.

But let us return now to Suzdal′tsev, Nazarov, Plotnikov, and their leader, Ignat Bolychev, who had been sent under guard from St. Petersburg to Voronezh in early December 1768, so that Governor Maslov could conduct his own investigation. The first to speak with them was Bishop Tikhon of Voronezh and Elets. Then, six weeks later, twice-weekly interrogations began, attended by the deputy governor. The four not only refused to repent but even demonstrated "no little severity, obstinacy, and incivility and, to conceal their teachers," some of them declared that they had taught themselves the new faith, "alleging that they had read it themselves in books, some purportedly having heard it in church, while the thought came of itself to others and they accepted it into their minds."[52] Also involved in this was one Stepan Kuznetsov, a crown peasant from Vitiug township [*volost′*] who had been arrested prior to the launching of the investigation into Bolychev and his comrades. In the course of the questioning, and evidently on the demand of His Eminence Tikhon, Kuznetsov, Bolychev, and a certain Matvei Gavrilov composed "A Note on the Substance of the Sect" [Zapiska o soderzhanii sekta], which duplicated, with only negligible omissions and distortions, the Declaration that the second Dukhobor deputation had submitted to Elagin in St. Petersburg.[53]

The Synod referred the matter to the Senate, which was already considering the case of the Tambov heretics. On 20 May the Senate resolved to replace the death penalty for male apostates aged fifteen years and up (to an advanced age) with military service in the fortresses of Azov and Taganrog. To prevent communication, boys from five to fifteen were to be distributed among the garrison schools and after graduation would be sent to the regiments. The sectarians' property was to be sold at auction and the funds thus raised sent on to their present location. Wives who persisted in error were ordered to follow their husbands as soldiers' wives; widows and unmarried girls were parceled out to Orthodox families, to be led from their error and then married off. Children of both sexes below the age of five were to be sent to Moscow's Foundling Home. Almost four months later, the empress made a minor revision to the Senate's decree, and, instead of being sent to the orphanage, the children were to be allotted to peasants on crown and monastery lands.[54]

What happened to Ivan Bolychev we do not know, but the names of Ivan Suzdal′tsev, Mikhail Plotnikov, and Stepan Kuznetsov, all of whom continued to preach the Dukhobor doctrine, recur in later documents. Suzdal′tsev served as a soldier in the fortress of Azov until he became too old, after which he was forced to stay there as a free settler, apparently without the right to leave his domicile. In the early nineteenth century, when the Dukhobors were being resettled in Molochnye Vody [in what is now southern Ukraine—Ed.], they appealed to Alexander I for the return of their exiled coreligionists, including those who had completed their sentences in the fortress of Azov. Among these were Ivan Suzdal′tsev, his wife, and daughter; he was eighty-nine years old.[55] Plotnikov was assigned to the Vologda Infantry Regiment stationed in the Azov and Taganrog fortresses, with which he served three years before being sent to the Dneprovka Line for another three years. He reached the upper age limit in 1775 but remained, at his own request, as a sentry on the line, where he continued his missionary activities.

Stepan Kuznetsov served first with the Vologda Regiment and then with the Bakhmutov Regiment in Azov and in the fortress of Rostov-on-Don. His wife accompanied him. (As part of his sentence, he had had to give up his son, who was placed in a battalion school.) While in the service he often absented himself, returning to Voronezh province. He also continued to preach the Dukhobor doctrine. In 1786 he reached the age limit and registered as a townsman [*meshchanin*] in Novomoskovsk in the Ekaterinoslav vicegerency, although he was really living with his family in the settlement of Bogdanovka, where several Dukhobors lived and where our old friends Ivan Zapasnoi and Timofei Astafurov had settled when their sentences were over. Not far away, in Novoselitsa, lived the retired pikeman Iuda Smagin, from the village of Zhidilovka in Kozlovskii district, his sentence now completed. The influx of new strength served to reinforce the popularization of Dukhoborism in the Ekaterinoslav vicegerency.

The repressions suffered by the Dukhobors in 1769 affected the upper echelons of the sect and its most active members. But the general membership in the eighteenth century cannot readily be tallied, since, after the unsuccessful attempt to legalize it, the Dukhobors went far underground. In 1768 and 1769 Bishop Feodosii discovered 232 adherents of the new doctrine in Tambovskii district alone, which number admittedly included their family members and children. But there were without question far more Dukhobors than that in Tambovskii and Kozlovskii districts.

As documents attest, Dukhobor homilists were active in the province, and possibly outside it, in the 1760s. They knew their coreligionists well, even those living in other districts. The home of an authoritative Dukhobor drew Dukhobors from the entire vicinity. Judging from the roles played by its various members in the sect and by the caliber of their answers under investigation (even though everyone was trying not to reveal the whole truth), the Dukhobors may be divided into two groups: the teachers and homilists, headed by Pobirakhin, who had a thorough knowledge of the dogma; and the rank-and-file members who had been accepted into the sect even though their knowledge of the doctrine was less profound. There was also, of course, a sizable group of sympathizers, who were familiar with the external distinctions between Dukhoborism and Orthodoxy but had not yet joined the sect and had not been initiated into its mysteries. Like the aforementioned Zhernoklev, they were invited to the prayer meetings, taught the psalms, and gradually inducted into the mysteries of the sect. (There may even have been a rite of admission.) Those who repented and returned to the bosom of the Orthodox Church belonged, as a rule, to the category of the uninitiated.

Documents from the 1760s indicate that the Dukhobors routinely visited their brethren in prison. They brought "alms" in the form of food, stood surety for them, and whenever possible paid bribes to have them released, all of which required money. Resounding through the responses of Mordovin, Belousov, and Petrov under questioning is the idea that in their brotherhood "there is with them neither separation nor reckoning in anything, and he who has need takes as if it were his own, without let or hindrance."[56] The most likely expression of "communal property ownership" was a common treasury funded by member donations. Kamenev also recorded the assertion of elderly Dukhobors that Kapustin, following Pobirakhin's example, had collected money to help imprisoned, exiled, and impoverished Dukhobors.[57] That social capital was maintained and managed, which meant that this sect had not only a clear organization but also an economic foundation for its activities.

Since in this period the sect had still to give itself a specific name, one rightly wonders how Dukhobors from different areas recognized each other in circumstances where secrecy was at a premium? After all, in their repudiation of the external trappings of worship, the Dukhobors and Molokans had much in common; mistakes could easily have been made. But the Dukhobors had passwords. In *The Dukhobor Book of Life* [Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev], Bonch-Bruevich recorded several passwords that he had collected in 1899 and 1900 among Dukhobors recently settled in Canada. One of these, "Likundar nash, slovo, delo-lik-dar nash,"[58] was known to the Voronezh Dukhobors in the early 1770s, but they pronounced it somewhat differently, as "Rekundar nash, slovo i delo, rek dar nam."[59] Bonch-Bruevich added a note containing information given to him by elderly Dukhobors, to the effect that if a Dukhobor thought a coreligionist unknown to him was nearby, he would call out the first part of the password and the other would be expected to complete it. The Tambov Dukhobors surely knew that password, too. Also, during a conflict with a priest in the Lysye Gory church in 1767, Ivan Suzdal′tsev pronounced "the unknown words 'pir er.'"[60] In the list of incomprehensible words deciphered by Canadian Dukhobors on Bonch-Bruevich's request there is one—*piriber*—that sounds rather like what Suzdal′tsev said, and it meant "needless fame."[61] There is no doubt that Suzdal′tsev's words, meaningless as they were to outsiders, were a coded signal to his coreligionists who were also in the church at that time.

The communication among sectarians living in various villages and districts of Voronezh province, their coordinated action in preparing and submitting petitions, their well-thought-out script and central leadership, their communal treasury and mature methods of maintaining secrecy all attest to the existence of an organization. Another feature, inherent to any kind of sectarianism, also characterized Dukhoborism at the time—their sense of an elect status [*izbrannost′*], their introversion and haughty isolation from the rest of the populace. The Dukhobors did not conceal the fact that the Orthodox did not care for them and mockingly called them "saints." They believed that the Orthodox disliked them because, unlike the rest, they adhered to the true faith and lived according to the Commandments. The peasant commune, seeing that the Dukhobors "eschewed such evil matters, hated it that we sought no friendship with them in drunkenness and would have no ties of kinship, godparenting, or matchmaking with them."[62] Under investigation, some Dukhobors declared that, because they had made themselves humble and gentle, they were free of sin and would obey only God.

By that time, the Dukhobors had a fully developed order of worship. At their meetings, they sang psalms, the teacher/homilist would interpret them, and at the end of the service they would sing again, bow twice to one another, kiss one another on the mouth, and bow a third time. We do not, unfortunately, know how they bowed. At the prayer service described by Zhernoklev, the Dukhobors approached Pobirakhin and bowed to the ground, but that could have been an exception rather than normal practice. When modern Dukhobors bow, they give each other a friendly handshake and, while it is possible that the rituals have undergone some outward change, their essence remains the same: they are worshipping the Holy Trinity (through the triple bow) in man.

But what was the sect's doctrine in the 1760s? An answer to this question—though perhaps not as exhaustive as one would wish—is found in the responses given by Dukhobors under questioning, in their voluntarily compiled Declaration of Faith, and in the observations of the Orthodox who lived alongside them.

Judging from their frequent citing of the Gospels, Dukhobor teachers were thoroughly familiar with them, or at least with passages that confirmed their doctrine. In any event, they did not reject the Gospels, although they did interpret them in their own way. In addition to the New Testament, they also read and interpreted the Psalter and other religious books. All Dukhobors were familiar with aspects of the doctrine that distinguished them externally from Orthodoxy. They declared that nothing manmade could bring salvation, and for that reason they did not attend church, did not venerate the cross, and did not bow to icons. One must bow to the Lord God not physically but in spirit and in truth (inwardly, that is). The Church of the Living God is the assembly of the faithful, since the human body is the temple of God's Spirit and the human soul is God's Image. The cross on which the Lord was crucified has no holiness in it, and veneration should be given to the Word of the Lord, for which he was crucified. There must be no bowing to "boards" or to "chips of wood" but only to man.

The Dukhobors did not believe in the holiness of relics and did not worship those pleasing to God or the Mother of God, stressing that they would honor and yield to them but would not worship them.

They recognized none of the sacraments, which again were the work of men's hands. They rejected church baptism, saying, "they were baptized by the Word in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit," having accepted His Word as their cross. They did not believe in the Eucharist, announcing that wine comes from the grapevine and does not turn into Christ's blood any more than bread, which is made of wheat, turns into His body. They did not consider a church wedding a sacrament and, as we read in written reports from priests and laypeople, they disdained legal matrimony. They maintained that a "suitor should choose his bride out of love and, having accepted her before witnesses, should live with her according to God's law," which means that even then [in the eighteenth century—Ed.] they had a matrimonial ritual that has remained essentially the same to this day.[63]

The Dukhobors rejected the need for a priestly intermediary to intercede between God and man and held that confession must be made to God alone, since He and no other could grant remission of sins. God was their only teacher. Only from God could one receive the "holy, divine, immortal, and life-giving mysteries." They also said, however, that they wanted a priest of their own choosing, who would be consecrated by God, and to receive from that priest the immortal mysteries of Christ. A Dukhobor "priest" was a universally accepted conduit of God's will. But the question of whom they considered their leaders unfortunately went unexplored. The investigators were not interested in this subject, and the Dukhobors themselves never spoke openly about it at any later time. But, judging from the way that Pobirakhin was honored at that prayer service, it is entirely possible that even then they deemed their leader to be a new Christ, in whom God—an essence that could not by definition be personified—was made flesh.

The Dukhobors did not keep the [Orthodox] fasts but did have a proscription against eating pork, and they refrained from the use of strong drink. The Orthodox faulted them for their failure to observe the holy days, although it is, admittedly, unclear whether that nonobservance was expressed only in their refusal to participate in drunken banquets and other revels or in their continuing to work on those days.

As the smallholder Andrei Popov from the village of Zhidilovka, who may be categorized as a Dukhobor teacher/homilist, stated under investigation, "It is written: God the Father is memory, God the Son is reason, God the Holy Spirit is will."[64] That understanding of the Holy Trinity as indwelling in man in three qualities that are exclusive to man (memory, reason, and will) is encountered repeatedly in the Dukhobor psalms found in *The Book of Life* and is one of the foundation dogmas of Dukhobor doctrine. But where could it have been "written"—where could Popov have read it or had it read to him? We turn now to the works of Dmitrii Tuptalo, a famous Ukrainian preacher, who became the metropolitan of Rostov late in life and after death an Orthodox saint. We shall compare a passage from his *Chronicle Recounting Acts from the Beginning of the World* [Letopis′, skazuiushchii deianiia ot nachala mira] and a psalm recorded in 1841 from the dictation of Dukhobors then living in Taurida province.

> *Dmitrii of Rostov*
> The soul is the image of God, since it has a threefold power but a single nature. The powers of the human soul are: memory, reason, and will.

> Memory is like unto God the Father, reason is like unto God the Son, and will is like unto God the Holy Spirit. And as in the Holy Trinity, there are furthermore three persons, however not three Gods but a single God, so also it is in the soul of man, where there are furthermore three essences, or, as it may be said, powers of the soul, however not three souls but one soul.[65]
>
> *Dukhobor Psalm*
> For the soul is the image of God. Through it we have a threefold power and a single nature. The powers of the human soul are memory, reason, and will. In memory we resemble God the Father; in reason, God the Son; and in will, God the Holy Spirit. As there are in the Holy Trinity three persons, in a single soul there are three powers of the soul, a single God.[66]

Interestingly, Ian Belobodskii, from the city of Slutsk in Lithuania, had been condemned in 1681 as a heretic by an ecclesiastical council in Moscow for making similar pronouncements.[67]

Under interrogation, Kirill Petrov articulated the idea that God had made man in his image and likeness, with absolute authority—an idea that we also find in Dmitrii of Rostov's *Chronicle* and in the same Dukhobor psalm.[68]

> *Dmitrii of Rostov*
> God created the soul in his likeness, "with absolute authority, with reason, and immortal, a companion to eternity and conjugate with the flesh."
>
> *Dukhobor Psalm*
> God "created an incorporeal soul for man in his likeness, with absolute authority, with reason, an immortal companion to eternity in conjugation with the flesh."

It is entirely evident that the Dukhobor homilists in the Tambov area knew the writings of Dmitrii of Rostov and had already composed a psalm that borrowed from his works.

Psalms from the Psalter and the Lord's Prayer were read and sung at Dukhobor prayer services. Zhernoklev, after returning to Orthodoxy, testified that in 1765 some eight people gathered in Kirill Petrov's home and sang, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee" (from Zechariah 14). That text was considered a psalm, and as such it persists among the Dukhobors to this day.[69]

In the early 1770s four psalms, undoubtedly also known to the Tambov Dukhobors, were copied from the dictation of Voronezh sectarians in the course of an investigation.[70] This is proof that they already had a collection of psalms, although we cannot say how extensive it was.

Those who have heard Dukhobor psalms being sung nowadays know that this is characteristically done in a specific way, with the mouth almost closed and the vowels drawn out, making it impossible to understand the words. The Dukhobors explain this as the way in which their forebears tried to conceal the essence of their doctrine, as set forth in their psalms, from outsiders. Orthodox Christians who happened to hear Dukhobors singing in the 1760s have left a written account of their impressions: "in a strange, diabolical voice they utter innumerable cries and certain verses unheard for long ages."[71] There is thus no doubt that at that time the Dukhobors had already developed their unique psalm-singing style.

Finally, one last detail of interest, noted by those with Dukhobor neighbors: their women, married and unmarried, did not wear earrings or braid their hair. Dukhobor women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also wore no ornaments and had what was to Orthodox eyes an unusual hairstyle that was the same for women and for girls.[72] This means that among the Dukhobors, female dress had ceased to be only a marker of ethnicity and had become, rather, a denominational marker. The Dukhobors were striving to separate themselves even outwardly from the Russian Orthodox. This, plus the fact that the Dukhobors did their best to distance themselves from the Orthodox in their everyday behavior, proves that they had a denominational self-concept.

What we have before us, then, is not an amorphous religious movement but a fully formed religious organization with a distinct structure, a mature dogma, a confessional praxis, rituals (religious and familial), behavioral norms, and even distinctions of dress. It is evident that the sect did not emerge in the early 1760s, although the Dukhobors did try to convince the authorities [in December 1768—Trans.] that they had fallen away from Orthodoxy "the year before this." We believe that Dukhoborism as a sect, rather than just a religious doctrine, arose in Tambov province several decades before the events described herein and that the young Pobirakhin and the person identified only as Semen were instrumental in its creation. As for Dukhobor doctrine, it was, in our opinion, brought into the Tambov area in finished form, where it found fertile soil in a class of petty servitors who had lost their liberty and whatever negligible privileges they had previously enjoyed.

Notes

1. O.M. Novitskii, *Dukhobortsy: ikh istoriia i verouchenie* (Kiev, 1882), pp. 29–30.

2. P.G. Ryndziunskii, "Antitserkovnoe dvizhenie v Tambovskom krae v 60-e gody XVIII v.," in *Voprosy istorii religii i ateizma* (Moscow, 1954), p. 159.

3. A.I. Klibanov, *Narodnaia sotsial´naia utopiia v Rossii. Period feodalizma* (Moscow, 1977), p. 230.

4. There is a consensus of opinion in the literature that the name "Dukhobors" was given to these sectarians by Archbishop Amvrosii in 1785, but first, Amvrosii was not appointed archbishop until 1786, and second, the first archival instance of the word *dukhobortsy* is found in a report made to the Synod by Archbishop Nikifor of Slavensk and Kherson on 18 March 1786 (RGIA, f. 796, op. 67, d. 189, l. 1).

5. Arsenii, mitropolit Kievskii, "O molokanskoi i drugikh sektakh v Tambovskoi eparkhii," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* (Kiev), February 1875, p. 154; F.V. Livanov, "Tambovskie molokane i dukhobortsy," *Vsemirnyi trud* (St. Petersburg, 1864), p. 245.

6. This is one of the most important Dukhobor psalms, which includes Christ's Beatitudes "Uzrekh mnogo narodu," in *Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev* [(St. Petersburg, 1909], Psalm 184).

7. Materials from an expedition to the Kazan Dukhobors (1988).

8. N.G. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty* (Sergiev Posad, 1914), p. 41.

9. P.I. Sumarokov, *Dosugi krymskogo sud´i ili vtoroe puteshestvie v Tavridu* (St. Petersburg, 1803), pt. 1, p. 43.

10. *Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev,* Psalm 310.

11. State Museum of the History of Religion [GMIR], f. 2, op. 7, d. 22, ll. 2–2 ob.

12. Materials from an expedition to the Kazan Dukhobors (1989).

13. Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts [RGADA], f. 350, op. 2, d. 3496, l. 70 ob.; d. 3501, ll. 659–59 ob.

14. Materials from an expedition to the Kazan Dukhobors (1989).

15. RGADA, f. 447, op. 1, d. 824.

16. Ibid., byvshee delo 269, d. 502, l. 3.

17. "Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii raskola v XVIII v.," in *Chteniia v Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh* [OIDR] 1889, bk. 2, p. 38.

18. Novitskii, *Dukhobortsy: ikh istoriia i verouchenie*, pp. 29–30; *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii* (Kiev), 1875, bk. 2, p. 155.

19. M. Kamenev, "Dukhoborcheskaia sekta," *Missionerskoe obozrenie* (St. Petersburg), 1904, no. 12, p. 190.

20. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, ll. 280–81.

21. RGADA, f. 447, op. 1, dd. 507, 515, ll. 1, 8–8 ob., 27, 60–60 ob., 21.

22. Ibid.

23. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 29, 24, 3, 2–2 ob; f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, l. 280 ob.

24. Sectarian "blasphemers" were tried under paragraph 1, Article 1, of the Law Code, which provided for execution followed by burning of the body; under paragraph 3, Article 1, of the Military Law Code, which ordered that "blasphemers"

be beheaded; or under paragraph 16 of the Ecclesiastical Regulations, which stipulated that a "blasphemer" be declared anathema. In practice, though, the death penalty was usually commuted to penal servitude and/or exile to a monastery.

25. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* p. 4.

26. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 29, 24, 3, 2–2 ob.

27. *Nakaz Imperatritsy Ekateriny II, dannyi Komissii o sochinenii proekta Novogo Ulozheniia* (St. Petersburg, 1907), p. 134.

28. RGADA, f. 18, op. 1, d. 332, l. 1.

29. I.P. Elagin, "Zapiska o masonstve," *Russki arkhiv,* 1864, vol. 1, p. 602.

30. "Masonstvo v Rossii v XVIII i XIX vv.," *Russkaia starina,* 1882, no. 9, pp. 535–36.

31. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, ll. 280–82.

32. Ibid.

33. Russian State Historical Archive [RGIA], f. 797, op. 87, d. 32, l. 1 ob.

34. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, ll. 284, 288, 298–99 ob., 294 ob.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 2–2 ob., 3 ob., 10–14 ob., 4–4 ob., 5.

38. Ryndziunskii, "Antitserkovnoe dvizhenie," pp. 169–70.

39. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 2–2 ob., 3 ob., 10–14 ob., 4–4 ob., 5.

40. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, ll. 290, 295 ob., 297 ob., 294, 295 ob., 296, 302–3.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 16–17, 21, 27 ob., 47, 49–49 ob., 53 ob.–54.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ryndziunskii, "Antitserkovnoe dvizhenie," p. 178.

48. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 16–17, 21, 27 ob., 47, 49–49 ob., 53 ob.–54.

49. Russian State Archive of Military History [RGVIA], f. 8, op. 4/93, d. 58, ll. 2, 7, 9.

50. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 58–58 ob.; Ryndziunskii, "Antitserkovnoe dvizhenie," pp. 186–87.

51. RGVIA, f. 8, op. 4/93, d. 58, ll. 14–15.

52. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* p. 14.

53. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, ll. 291–92; Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* pp. 4, 54–56.

54. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* p. 27.

55. State Archive of Odessa Oblast, f. 1, op. 219, d. 3.1803, l. 92.

56. Ryndziunskii, "Antitserkovnoe dvizhenie," p. 174.

57. Kamenev, "Dukhoborcheskaia sekta," p. 193.

58. *Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev,* p. 35. [This phrase was explained to Bonch-Bruevich as meaning "The gift (*dar*) of our (*nash*) face (*lik*), of man, consists in word (*slovo*) and deed (*delo*); by a man's words and deeds we shall know him; by word and deed we endow or disgrace ourselves and others. Word and deed should be together—they are near kin."—Trans.]

59. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* p. 44.
60. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, l. 280 ob.
61. GMIR, f. 2, op. 7, d. 568, l. 1.
62. RGADA, f. 10, op. 1, d. 506, l. 292.
63. "Akty, otnosiashchiesia k istorii raskola v XVIII v.," p. 38.
64. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, l. 28 ob.
65. *Sochineniia sv. Dimitriia mitropolita Rostovskog*o (Moscow, 1827), vol. 4, p. 14.
66. "Zapiska o dukhobortsakh, obitaiushchikh v Melitopol′skom uezde Tavricheskoi gubernii," *Trudy Kievskoi dukhovnoi akademii,* 1876, no. 8, p. 417.
67. *Chteniia v OIDR,* 1884, bk. 3, p. 236.
68. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 49 ob., 6 ob.
69. *Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev,* Psalm 107.
70. Vysotskii, *Materialy iz istorii dukhoborcheskoi sekty,* pp. 50–53; *Zhivotnaia kniga dukhobortsev,* Psalms 108, 94, 249, 273.
71. RGADA, f. 7, op. 2, d. 2287, ll. 49 ob., 6 ob.
72. S.A. Inikova, "Osobennosti kostiuma kavkazskikh dukhobortsev," in *Dukhobortsy i molokane v Zakavkaz′e* (Moscow, 1992), p. 99.