

# MY WINDOWS ON THE STREET OF THE WORLD

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE DOUKHOBORS

But vain the sword and vain the bow,  
They never can work man's overthrow.  
The hermit's prayer and the widow's tear  
Alone can free the world from fear.

For a tear is an intellectual thing,  
And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,  
And the bitter groan of the martyr's woe  
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

WILLIAM BLAKE, *The Grey Monk* (1794).

IN August 1898 I received a letter from Prince Kropotkin, drawing my attention to an article in the *Contemporary Review* by Count Tolstoy, in which he made a plea for assistance to Doukhobors, who had been, he said, persecuted by the Russian Government. Prince Kropotkin added that he had been personally appealed to on behalf of the Doukhobors, and he asked me to interest myself in them. He explained that an appeal by the Doukhobors to the Empress of Russia had resulted in leave being given them to emigrate, that assistance was necessary to enable them to do so, and advice as to what country they should emigrate. It seemed that the hard lot of the Doukhobors had excited the sympathy of the English Quakers, and that the Quakers had already provided funds to enable some seventeen hundred of them to emigrate from the Caucasus to Cyprus. This experiment had not resulted successfully, many of the people had been laid down by fever almost from the moment of their landing, and they had derived the impression that the climate of Cyprus was not suitable for them.

Kropotkin had visited in 1897 the North-West of Canada, and he thought that probably the conditions there might be favourable to the Doukhobors, who had the reputation in Russia of being good farmers.

I was already aware to some extent of the past history of the

people, principally from the work of Baron von Haxthausen, who devotes a considerable space to an account of their history and the peculiar economic system of their community.<sup>1</sup> I was also aware that some of the Russian peasant dissenting sects had been in the past subject to at least occasional outbreaks of fanaticism, and that in such sects there had been evidences of widespread mental aberration. I therefore wrote to Count Tolstoy, expressing my fears on this score and asking explicitly if it was likely, should the Doukhobors come to Canada, they would as a group permit their children to be educated and would desire to be on friendly terms with the people among whom they might make their new home. To these questions Count Tolstoy answered that the people were not addicted to outbreaks of fanaticism, and that there could be no doubt that they would be law-abiding.

Other inquiries yielded information that the number for whom provision would have to be made would be about seven thousand men, women and children, that they wanted to go to a country where they would be granted immunity from military service and would be permitted to settle in communities. They made no other stipulations. I was informed at the same time that efforts had been made by some Russians in California to induce them to go there, and that the Argentine Republic had also been thought of as a probable field for their emigration. I was aware of their tendency towards communism, but I was not able to ascertain the precise character and extent to which their economic system corresponded to communism in the strict sense.

I should have preferred, before making such a recommendation as my friends suggested, to go to the Caucasus to see the Doukhobors and examine into their situation for myself; but there was an urgency in their case which rendered such a course impracticable. The permission to emigrate given by the Russian Government to the Doukhobors was accompanied with the condition that they should avail themselves of it at once, and the Doukhobors were not unnaturally afraid that if a renewal of the permission had to be asked for it might not be granted. I was therefore obliged to take the assurances of my friends, and to act upon them immediately. Upon receiving these assurances, I placed them, along with all the information I had been able to procure on the subject, before the Canadian Government. After some delay I was able to induce Mr. Clifford Sifton, then Minister

<sup>1</sup> Von Haxthausen, Baron August, *Études sur la situation intérieure, la vie nationale et les institutions rurales de la Russie*. Hanover, 1848 (French edition).

of the Interior, to afford certain facilities for the immigration of the Doukhobors. He arranged, to begin with, for an Order-in-Council placing the Doukhobors in the same category as Quakers and Mennonites in regard to immunity from military service, and he agreed to allow the Doukhobors to settle in communities by utilising on their behalf the so-called Hamlet Clause in the Homestead Acts. I cannot undertake to give in this place a full statement of the complicated controversy that arose out of this rather indefinite undertaking. One fact, however, must be insisted upon, viz., the Department of the Interior was fully aware that the Doukhobors were reputed to be not individualist farmers, that, on the contrary, they practised a form of communism, the precise form of it as carried out in practice not being known. The department knew also that an explicit condition of the immigration was that the people should be allowed to settle in villages.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately after I had concluded negotiations with Mr. Sifton, I received intimation that two families of Doukhobors were leaving for Canada for the purpose of reporting upon the suitability of the country as a field for Doukhobor settlement, and that they would be accompanied by an interpreter.<sup>2</sup> This party arrived in Ottawa in October 1898, and I met the members of it there. They went to the West, and reported favourably upon the country. The upshot was that four steamers were chartered by the English committee in charge of the migration. These steamers went to Batoum on the Black Sea, and from that port brought the Doukhobors to Canada. The first party of about two thousand souls landed at St. John, New Brunswick, in January 1899. The migration was completed by the arrival of the last of the steamers in April of the same year. This was by far the largest individual migration with which the Canadian immigration authorities had had to deal. Too much praise cannot be given for the skill and sympathetic kindness with which they managed the affair. The people had not only to be conveyed from the port of landing, accommodation had to be provided for them, and arrangements made for their maintenance until the opening of spring made it possible for them to settle on the land. They were housed in immigration halls—quite comfortable dwellings—at Selkirk, Winnipeg and Yorkton.

In discussing the settlement of the Doukhobors with Mr. Sifton, I suggested that, if it were not inconvenient from an administrative

<sup>1</sup> Individual settlement as it prevails in Canada is unknown in Russia. Not only the Doukhobors, but all Russian peasants, live in villages.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Aylmer Maude.

## THE DOUKHOBORS

point of view, the people should be settled as near as possible to the northern limits of practicable settlement. The advantage of this plan would be for the Doukhobors that they could establish themselves in the self-contained manner to which they were accustomed, and for the country that the mere presence of a large colony to the north of existing settlement would increase the attraction of the intervening area and contribute to its occupation. This view was taken by the department, and although I did not ask for such an arrangement on behalf of the Doukhobors, nor did anyone else so far as I am aware, an area of about three hundred and fifty thousand acres was set apart for them, other settlers being excluded. This reserved area constituted a magnificent endowment, and had the Government adhered to its original plan and refrained from nibbling away the greater part of the land on one excuse or another, its relations to the Doukhobors would have been based on a sound and creditable foundation. The Government set apart, and afterwards withdrew, the reserve, compromising the influence of its officials over an obstinate and peculiar people, and inducing in their simple minds the notion that government, democratic or autocratic, was conducted in an arbitrary and capricious manner.

When the Doukhobors arrived in 1899 all looked promising. Fortunately, at that moment there was in Winnipeg, as Commissioner of Immigration, a very remarkable personality, W. F. McCreary. McCreary was a man of vigorous and independent character, with great knowledge of the West and experience in dealing with foreign immigrants. He knew their point of view was often different from that of the Canadians, and it was necessary to take this into account in dealing with them; and that in non-essential things elasticity of regulation was indispensable. McCreary was aided in the Doukhobor settlement by John Speer of Brandon, a man of similar character and experience.

Although the Government made no specific grant for the Doukhobor immigration, certain funds were available. A commission of seven dollars fifty cents per head had been customarily paid by the Government to immigration agents and to shipping companies and others who organised immigration. Since the committee by which the Doukhobor immigration was managed refused to accept any remuneration, this capitation commission, amounting to about \$50,000 (£10,000), was available for the expenses of settlement in addition to the resources of the Doukhobors themselves. These resources amounted to about as much more, although they were

not at the disposal of the committee. The latter funds were administered by the Doukhobors themselves. I suggested that a small committee should be appointed in Winnipeg in order to assist McCreary in the distribution of the funds at his disposal. This suggestion was acted upon.

In April 1899 I was asked by Mr. Sifton to go to the North-West in order to see how the settlement of the people was progressing. When I arrived in Winnipeg about the middle of April, I found that the Doukhobors had just begun to leave their winter quarters and to transport themselves to their future homes. I found also that I was endowed with a certain authority which, as a mere volunteer, I had not sought for. Immediately on my arrival there was placed before me a pile of orders for supplies which had been sent down from Yorkton, through which the Doukhobors were passing, to one of their settlements thirty-five miles north of that point. Among these orders were two which puzzled McCreary and the committee. They were for iron bars and leather. The Doukhobors had explained that these materials were required for spades and wagon tires so far as the iron was concerned, while the leather was wanted for making harness. McCreary thought that if they wanted spades, ready-made spades should be sent to them, and that harness could be supplied more cheaply by a manufacturer, while wagons could be supplied made more cheaply than the Doukhobors could make them. Moreover, they had no coal and no forges with which to work the iron. I felt that here was the beginning of a difficulty which might prove a serious obstacle to the success of the Doukhobor settlement. It was evident that the people intended to adhere to their traditional self-contained economy. They had to procure raw materials, but they wanted to make the finished product for themselves. The good sense of this was manifest; but it meant that they would have little or nothing to do with local tradesmen, and that they would keep themselves separate from the community surrounding them. The risk of creating from the outset a public opinion hostile to the Doukhobors was very real. However, I decided that there was also a risk of embarrassing the settlement of the people by any attempt prematurely to alter their habits of life. Whatever view might be held as to the expediency of division of labour and of its importance in social organisation in a relatively densely settled community, the conditions in this case were exceptional, and they had to be met in an exceptional way. I therefore endorsed the orders and the materials were at once despatched. When I arrived at Yorkton two or three days afterwards I found the Doukhobors who were waiting there for

transport to their settlement had received the leather, and they were working hard at their harness in the immigration hall. Had they not had raw material to work upon they must have been idle. Besides, they made the durable harness to which they were accustomed. When I went to the large temporary village which had by that time been built, I found that immediately the necessary houses had been constructed the Doukhobor blacksmiths had made bricks from the clay in the neighbourhood, had made ovens of these bricks, and had made charcoal of which they prepared in anticipation a plentiful supply. So soon as they obtained the leather which had been sent up from Winnipeg they made bellows, and they made anvils from the iron bars. By the time I arrived they had six blacksmiths' forges going, and they had already made about three dozen spades and four wagon tires. It is impossible to believe that these things were not produced more advantageously to the community than if they had been supplied by the factory, since had they not been so produced the blacksmiths and the saddlers would have been idle.

I was met at Yorkton by Prince Dmitri Khilkov, who had come out to Canada in order to make a report to Count Tolstoy upon the reception and settlement of the Doukhobors. Prince Khilkov is a nephew of the celebrated Minister of Railways during whose régime the Siberian Railway was constructed.<sup>1</sup>

Before the Russo-Turkish War Dmitri Khilkov had been impressed by the pacific views of Count Tolstoy, and had thought of resigning from the army. When, soon after, war was declared, he felt that he could not do so then; but immediately after the conclusion of the campaign he retired. Consistent refusal on the part of the Doukhobors to allow their youth to be conscripted had attracted him, and for some years he had taken a special interest in them. Thus when they emigrated to Canada he arranged to come out in order to see how their settlement was progressing.

On this first evening we sat far into the night talking about Russian and other affairs. Towards midnight we had a visitor. This was a young man of Yorkton, a druggist, who came to say that in the absence of the only doctor he had taken charge of a Doukhobor case. This was the case of a young man who had a suppurating wound in his arm. This wound had been poulticed, but the young Doukhobor, finding the poultice inconvenient, had removed it and refused to allow

<sup>1</sup> The elder Prince Khilkov had spent some part of his youth in the United States. If I am not mistaken he was employed for a time in the Baldwin Locomotive Works at Pittsburg. The younger prince had been an officer in the Russian Army.

it to be replaced. The druggist, with touching confidence in the efficacy of his remedies, assured us that if the young man did not submit to his treatment he must inevitably be dead within forty-eight hours. He pled with Khilkov to go and see the young man and his mother without delay and try to persuade them to replace the poultice. Khilkov told me that he thought the expedition useless; but as the young druggist was conscientious about his case, he had better go. In about a quarter of an hour he returned. "As I thought," he said, "I made no impression upon them. The mother said that if her son was to die in forty-eight hours he would die, poultice or no poultice, doctors or no doctors, and that if he was not to die then he would live whether he replaced the poultice or not. In any case the poultice is more painful than the inflammation. The son took the same view as his mother, and nothing could be done." Unfortunately for the credit of the profession of apothecary, the young man recovered without the application of the remedies of the faculty, and he passed us in the street a day or two after with a knowing and triumphant smile upon his good-humoured and healthy face.

After we had attended to some affairs in Yorkton, Khilkov and I set out upon our drive to the Doukhobor colony. There was very little settlement north of Yorkton. About twenty miles north there was a German farmer called Wolff, and about ten miles north of his place there was a small group of Russian Stundists, a dissenting pietist sect. Otherwise on that trail there was no settlement.

A portion of the funds of the committee was expended in the purchase of horses, more horses were lent by the Government, and altogether several hundred were available. Of these a large number were employed in transporting the Doukhobor families from Yorkton to the Doukhobor villages, a distance of about thirty-five miles. The travellers spent a night on the way at a resting-place provided for them. Early in April a number of Canadian carpenters skilled in the building of log-houses were sent up in advance of the first Doukhobor party to prepare log-houses for them. The system adopted was to establish at one point two large temporary villages. These villages were composed of a few large houses in each of which several families were accommodated. The houses were built of logs luted with clay. In the centre of the floor a large plain stove supplied heat. On two sides of the single room of which each house consisted there were two tiers of bunks, each bunk being about seven feet long and five feet wide. A bunk was provided for each family. Khilkov and I lived in one of these houses for about three weeks. There were in it fourteen

bunks. Deducting the two bunks occupied by us, the twelve remaining bunks were occupied altogether by about fifty persons, rather more than half being youths and children.

The building of houses was soon left to the Doukhobors themselves. Many of them were very handy with the axe and skilful in the choice of timber. The first care was to find clay with which to make sun-dried bricks. These bricks were quickly built into ovens, and by the evening of the second day of the settlement the women had all the necessary means of baking bread. Upon this they lived chiefly until the first crop was harvested. The bread ovens being furnished, the next most important requirement was the bath-house. This was built near a small stream, from which the water could readily be obtained for the purpose of making steam. Then came the forges as I have already described. When we arrived at the settlement, we found all the people—men, women and children—busily engaged in settling themselves in their new homes, although they knew that these were temporary. An important discussion was in progress which threw a penetrative ray of light upon the psychology of the Doukhobors, and showed that, in spite of the pietistic frame of their minds and of their rather ostentatious championship of unadulterated communism, they were men of like passions to other peasant folk.

A large area of land had been allotted to the Doukhobors in three different places—the first, south of the White Sand River, the colony in which we were staying at the time; the second, south of the Swan River at Thunder Hill, about seventy miles north of the first colony; and the third, about thirty miles west of Rosthern, a station on the Prince Albert line of railway. These areas consisted of approximately one hundred thousand acres in each colony. The lands in each colony were given to the Doukhobors *en bloc*; they were left to distribute them as they chose. The people were distributed among the colonies according to their distribution in their original habitats; for example, the people from Elizavetpol went to one colony, the people from the neighbourhood of Tiflis to another, and the people who had been transported from the Caucasus to Cyprus to a third. So far as the distribution within each colony was concerned, they were left to their own devices. Each colony thus found itself in possession of more than one hundred and fifty square miles of country wholly new to them, most of it as yet unsurveyed, without roads, with rare bridges over the rivers, and varying from open prairie to woodlands and swamps. The advance parties of the respective colonies only had reached them, the remainder of the colonists were still in the immigration halls

or were on the trails. The people had a desire to settle in villages, but it was important that the village sites should be carefully selected with due regard to proximity to cultivable land. Such a selection involved time, men and horses, for the area was so great that for the men to walk over it within any reasonable time was impossible, especially since some of the best judges of land among them were old men. A limited number of horses was available, and the horses were required at that moment to transport the people. Moreover, the season was advancing; so soon as the horses had finished their present task it was expedient that ploughing should begin, and for that both men and horses were required. If they did not plough they could have no crop that season, and if they had no crop they would either starve or submit to be supported by the Government or by private benevolence.

Khilkov and I both thought that, since the large temporary villages afforded housing accommodation in the meantime, the most sensible plan would be for the people to break the land in the immediate neighbourhood of these villages and to get at least a crop of potatoes out of it in that season. The agricultural authorities had advised that in the place in question potatoes should be planted about the 21st or 22nd April, and if this were done they should be ready for digging by the end of June. This promised by far the quickest return for their labour. We noticed a large stretch of gently sloping land near the village. In this land there were about forty acres, and we suggested that they should begin at once to plough and plant in that field. This proposal did not meet with unanimous approval. It was decided that a meeting should be held composed of representatives of the twenty-two villages, the people of which composed the population of the two large temporary villages in one of which we were residing.

This meeting was held the following day, which was the 20th April. In order to avoid interruption the meeting was held about nine miles from the villages. We drove out to the meeting-place in waggons early in the morning, and took with us supplies for the day. When the meeting took place we saw in action the *mir*, which had played so large a part in the economic history of Russia. Khilkov and I had made our proposition, which was designed to help them out of a difficulty they evidently were slow in meeting for themselves, and we lay on the grass and listened to their debate. They conducted their discussion in the manner which I afterwards found was the characteristic manner of the Russian village meeting. Each man who spoke shouted in a loud voice, and the affair bore the complexion of a contest in

lung-power. So far as it was possible for Khilkov to gather—and it was not easy even for him to follow them, because they often used peculiar peasant expressions, sometimes corruptions of Russian or Tartar words, with which he could not be familiar—the arguments with which they met our proposition were as follows: The people, they said, wanted to get to the sites of their permanent homes as soon as possible. They did not like to live in crowded houses which were not their own. If they broke and cultivated the field in question, or other fields in the vicinity of the temporary villages, then the permanent villages that might find a place on their sites would have an advantage over other villages, the land of which would have to be broken, not by the whole working force of the community, but by the villagers themselves. I did not gather that they discussed the question of individual ownership at this meeting, although the possibility of it seemed to be present in the minds of some of the speakers. They appeared to consider seriously only the village interest as contrasted with the interest of their community as a whole. The time arrived for the midday meal without a decision on the question. After the meal, the men stood up again and went on with their argument. Towards five o'clock the most vociferous of the orators began to get hoarse, and their voices became high and shrill. Suddenly the clamour ceased without apparent formal reason. One side had shouted the other down, and the defeated side became silent. That was all. There remained no motive for the victors to shout any more. A decision had been reached. I asked Khilkov, "What is it?" "I don't know," he said. "Wait and see."

The men immediately ceased to stand in the formless group in which they had been standing all day, and formed themselves into a long straight line as if they were a company of infantry. We stood up. The Doukhobors then knelt down and touched the earth with their foreheads. They rose, and one of their number, acting as spokesman, intimated that they had agreed to our proposition. The meeting of the *mir* was over. We drove back in the evening to the village. Next morning about daybreak twenty ploughs, each drawn by two horses, broke for the first time the fertile soil of the prairie. In a corner of the field thirty or forty men, with long spades made by their own blacksmiths, began to dig.

They did not always spend so much time in discussion of their village affairs before they acted. On our way to the place of meeting we had to cross a small creek. Over this creek the Doukhobors had thrown a bridge, but a flood in the night had caused damage and we had some difficulty in getting our horses and waggons across it in the

morning. When we returned in the evening the bridge had been repaired. Finding in the course of the day that the bridge was damaged, the men remaining in the village had simply turned out at once and put it in order for our return.

Before I left Winnipeg I had been told that the floods had damaged the line of the Dauphin Railway to Swan River, that the bridges were down, and that no communication with the Doukhobor colony at Thunder Hill was possible by that route. The people had gone in a few weeks before, and supplies had been sent up to them. The delivery of some of these supplies had been prevented by the interruption of communications, and it was feared that the people might be in serious want. I was therefore instructed to endeavour to cross the seventy miles of country which separated the two colonies, and to take with me some waggon-loads of supplies from the South Colony. Soon after our arrival at the South Colony a couple of Dominion land surveyors came in from the north. They reported that the White Sand River was in flood, that ice was being borne in masses by the stream, and that the only bridge was down. They had built a raft and had crossed the river with difficulty. They advised that it would be necessary to take a force of men and to construct a raft in order to get the waggons across. We were considering this information and the arrangements contingent upon it, when two tall Doukhobors came in; one was a man of over sixty years of age, the other was about forty. Standing together at the door with their caps in their hands, they told us that they had been sent to us by the North Colony people. They had surmised that anxiety would be felt regarding them, and they desired to allay this anxiety. They reported that sufficient supplies were in possession of the colony to enable them to subsist until railway communication with Swan River was re-established. These men had traversed in less than forty hours seventy miles of country wholly unknown to them, and had crossed swollen rivers in order to relieve any anxiety that might be felt regarding the colony. Our relief expedition thus became unnecessary.

Among the Russians who, like Khilkov, sympathised with the pacific ideas of the Doukhobors and came to Canada to assist them at the beginning of their settlement, was the engineer Leopold Soulerjitsky. He came in the last steamer which conveyed the Doukhobors from Batoum; unfortunately I had to leave Canada for Europe before he arrived in the North-West. The accounts which I obtained from those who met him show that his practical sagacity was of great service to the Doukhobors during the short time he remained with them. On

his return he wrote a picturesque and penetrative account of his experiences.<sup>1</sup> Since his arrival occurred immediately after my departure, it was very interesting to me to read his impressions. I have already indicated the kind of problems the Doukhobors had to encounter, and the discussions they had among themselves up till the time I left the North-West early in May 1899. It appears from Soulerjitsky's account that after I left them they continued to discuss among themselves the fundamental question of their economic life, namely, whether in the new country to which they had come they should adhere to the communistic system, which in one form or another had been traditional with them for a hundred and fifty years, or adopt the individualist system which they found in existence among their new neighbours. Soulerjitsky describes very vividly many meetings similar to that which I had attended. In these meetings they threshed out this important question. In June the South Colony decided to become individualist; but the conditions in which they were living—in occupation of land held in common, in houses occupied in common by numerous families, using agricultural implements with which they had been supplied for common use, and animals which had been supplied from a common fund—were not conducive to the speedy adoption of an individualist basis for their community.

I became aware afterwards of disputes regarding the division of the common property. Three weeks after they had as the result of long discussion adopted an individualist policy, they had another lengthy meeting and decided to revert to the basis of communism. Although the speeches reported by Soulerjitsky were filled with religious enthusiasm, and although they regarded communism as a peculiarly Christian form of social life, I am convinced that what really determined their adoption of it were practical considerations. Very few of them had any individual property, and those of them who had means in their individual ownership were looked upon rather enviously by those who had not. The possessions of the community were almost altogether common possessions, and the distribution of these among them was certain to provoke disputes in which they would waste their time and their energies. They thus fell back upon communism as the only practicable system for the bulk of the people. Yet a few separated themselves from the Doukhobor community over this question, took out individual homesteads, and established themselves in villages apart from the others.

<sup>1</sup> Soulerjitsky, Leopold, *To America with the Doukhobors*. Moscow, 1905 (in Russian).

Soulerjitsky tells a picturesque story about the confidence of some of the more spiritually-minded of the Doukhobors. There was a small settlement of them at Good Spirit Lake, some twenty-five miles or more north-west of Yorkton. One day Soulerjitsky was standing in the street in Yorkton when he noticed a boy driving a pair of oxen. The boy addressed himself to some Doukhobors, and they pointed out Soulerjitsky to him, saying, "There is the man you want." The boy went up to him and said:

"Leopold Alexandrovitch, I have come from the old men at Good Spirit Lake. They sent me for flour."

*Leopold Soulerjitsky.* "But, my boy, I have no flour; and even if I had, you could not carry it very well on the backs of your oxen."

*Boy.* "The old men said that I would get a waggon to carry the flour—a new waggon with red wheels."

*Leopold Soulerjitsky.* "My dear boy, I am sorry to say that I have neither waggon nor flour."

The boy, looking disappointed and distressed, went to see if he could get something for his oxen to eat.

At that moment Joseph Elkington, the Quaker from Philadelphia, who had gone to Yorkton with funds supplied by the Society of Friends, came up to Soulerjitsky. Soulerjitsky told him the story of the boy. "Where is the boy?" said Elkington. Soulerjitsky hailed a Doukhobor, who shortly returned with the boy. Elkington went into one of the Yorkton stores and bought flour. Then he went to an implement warehouse and bought a waggon. In a short time the oxen were yoked, the flour was loaded, and the boy sat proudly on the waggon with the red wheels. Everything had, after all, occurred as the old men had said. The simple faith of the old men was very fine, but there was a danger of the people falling into the habit of expecting miracles to relieve them from the necessity of producing for themselves.

The task of settling the Doukhobors was greatly facilitated by the opportunity afforded for the employment of able-bodied men upon railway construction, which at that time was going on vigorously in the North-West. Many hundreds of them were so employed; and their wages, a portion of which went into the common purse, enabled the community to get over the first winter more comfortably than they could otherwise have done. Yet the employment of the men was not without its difficulties. On the side of the railway contractors it was found that the feeding of vegetarian labourers was an awkward problem in a country where there were no market-gardens. Supplies of vegetables had to be brought from Ontario at great expense, while

beef could have been procured locally quite cheaply. On the side of the Doukhobors, the absence from their settlements of a large force of able-bodied men while they were establishing their villages was a disadvantage. Nevertheless, on the whole the earnings of the men provided the community with reserves for the winter, while the women and young men and girls graded the streets of the villages and brought the farm-lands to some extent into cultivation.

Five years elapsed before I was able to visit the Doukhobors again. Meanwhile there occurred the "pilgrimage," in which about two thousand Doukhobors, led by Nicholas Zibarov, took part. They abandoned their villages, turned their cattle free on the prairie, and wandered southwards, throwing aside as they went any silver and other metallic ornaments they possessed. They even discarded their leather boots, on the ground that in order to obtain them it was necessary to kill cattle. After leaving their villages, the Doukhobors marched southwards, feeding on Saskatoon berries as they went, sometimes being entertained by the settlers when they reached the settled region. Their numbers were so large that the migration became a real menace; they could not be supported by the farmers, and they could not be allowed to starve. When they reached the railway they were forcibly entrained and taken back to their villages.

I was not able to go to the North-West at the time in order to make personal inquiries on the spot into the facts of the occurrences; but I brought down from the Doukhobor settlements a man whom I knew as a reliable person, one who had not taken part in the pilgrimage. His name was Paul Planēdin. He was a first-rate horseman and driver. In the Caucasus he had enjoyed so great a reputation that when the Tsar or any member of the Imperial family made excursions into the mountains from Tiflis, Paul was chosen to drive the Imperial carriage.

I had staying with me at the time Captain Dietrichs, brother of the Countess Olga Tolstoy, whose name appears elsewhere in these reminiscences. Dietrichs and Planēdin generally spoke in Tartar, because both were familiar with that language and because Planēdin's peasant Russian was not so easy for Dietrichs to understand. I had, therefore, to rely chiefly upon Dietrichs' translation of Planēdin's account of the pilgrimage. I kept Planēdin with me for a week and got much information from him. I gathered several things of importance. First, that the Doukhobors had been accustomed in Russia to leadership, and that in Canada they had had no natural leaders. Second, that they had suffered themselves to be misled by some of the Russians who had joined them from Russia after they came to Canada. Third,

that the pilgrimage did not originate exclusively in religious excitement, but largely in a feeling that the climate was too severe for the people, and that if they made a demonstration the Government would remove them to a milder region. Fourth, that the necessity of their taking homesteads individually, and of their taking the oath of allegiance in order to do so, was beginning to be talked of among them.

The history of the Doukhobors has never been fully related. I cannot in this place pretend to give it; but the following account has been derived from various sources, chiefly from personal conversations with Doukhobors.

The original leader of the Doukhobors in the middle of the eighteenth century was Kapustin, a sergeant in the Russian army who had become a pacifist, and who, or his immediate followers, had become infected with one of the numerous heresies which for many centuries have clung to the peasants' minds in Eastern Europe. The particular heresy upon which the Doukhobors appear to have built their rather indefinite creed is Ebionitic Gnosticism. The special point in this heresy (I use the word in contrast to the formally sanctioned doctrine of the Greek Orthodox Church) accepted by the Doukhobors concerns the nature of Christ and the transmission of this nature to those who are truly one with Him. Thus all Doukhobors who have engaged in the spiritual struggle, and have conquered the inferior passions, have become Christs, and they are as truly sons of God as Jesus Christ was. After Kapustin there came a succession of leaders, and about the beginning of the nineteenth century the leadership came to be concentrated in one family. From about 1865 to 1885 the leadership was in the hands of a woman belonging to this family, whose name was Kalmakova. For these twenty years Kalmakova held undisputed and autocratic sway over about twenty thousand Doukhobors, who were living under a more or less communistic system in the Caucasus. These people had come from every part of Russia. They were not united originally by kinship, although they afterwards intermarried among themselves. The ostensible reason for their union in a separate social group was common religious belief. But there was another reason, which in the case of some adherents underlay the religious reason, the latter being only used as a cloak. This was the operation of the law banishing to the Doukhobor communities established in the Caucasus all persons who professed to be Doukhobors. The object of this law was to prevent the growth of schism by immediately removing schismatics, and segregating them in frontier places where they could not influence the general population. Before the emancipation

of the peasants in 1861, the banishment of a peasant from the estate to which he was ascribed meant in effect manumission. When he was banished he really became a free man within the area to which he was banished. There was thus an inducement for peasants to become, or to pretend that they had become, Doukhobors, because the mere profession of the faith of a Doukhobor meant manumission and relative freedom. Thus many peasants joined the Doukhobor communities who did not share the spiritual exaltation of the genuine Doukhobors, and who, therefore, adulterated the tone of the communities to which they did not really belong, either by character or by faith. In 1861, the accession of such doubtful elements ceased as an effect of the manumission of all peasants; but there still remained in the Doukhobor communities the pretenders and their descendants.

Either because the Doukhobor communities were not exclusively composed of sincere adherents of the gospel of non-resistance to evil or because of ineradicable combativeness in the characters of even the most convinced pacifists, there were incidents in Doukhobor history in which, under the influence of conviction of great wrong, they did not hesitate to exact dreadful reckoning. For example, about the year 1893, some Doukhobor villages in the neighbourhood of Tiflis were raided in the night by a lawless band of Kurds. This band carried off the Doukhobor cattle. In their customary quaint manner, the Doukhobors sent a message to the Kurds saying that no doubt on account of extreme poverty the Kurds had found it necessary to steal the cattle; but now that they had the stolen cattle, the Kurds were no longer poor, and therefore the Doukhobors expected that the Kurds would leave them in peace. The Doukhobors sent down to the market of Tiflis and bought cattle to restock their herds. No sooner had they done so than the Kurds made another raid and stole the cattle a second time. Another message was sent expressed in imperative terms. The Kurds were told that while in the first instance they may have had the excuse of poverty, this excuse could not avail them for the second offence. The second raid was carried out, not because the Kurds were poor, but because they were bad. They must not attack the Doukhobors again. Yet the Doukhobors replenished their herds for the second time. The foolish Kurds were oblivious of the fact that even sheep will turn on their enemies on occasion. They made a third raid. The Doukhobors sent no more messages, but collecting a sufficient force, armed to the teeth, they surprised the Kurdish village in the night and killed every man, woman and child.

This incident was related to me by the magistrate of the district in which it occurred. I asked him what action he took. "None at all," he said. "The Kurds got what they deserved."

The Doukhobors were not immune from the internal disputes and intrigues from which all religious and other groups suffer. In the middle of the eighties such intrigues drew upon the Doukhobors the attention of the Russian Government, through an appeal made to the Government by one of the parties into which the Doukhobors had come to be divided.

As a passive agent in these transactions there appears early in the eighties a young man named Peter Verēgin. This young man belonged to the ruling family, the family to which the leader Kalmakova also belonged. From his birth, Peter Verēgin had been looked upon with peculiar veneration by the Doukhobor community. His mother was reputed to have borne him miraculously.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning of his career he was thus regarded as a man apart—as one to whom the canons to which the Doukhobors were accustomed did not apply and to whom unusual respect must be paid. Verēgin had been brought up under the patronage of Kalmakova, for she destined him as her successor in the Doukhobor leadership. Verēgin was married when he was about twenty years of age. Kalmakova was unmarried. Though sexual irregularity appears to have been always extremely rare among the Doukhobors, the irregularities of Kalmakova were well known by them. Kalmakova, although by no means young, conceived a violent attachment to the young Verēgin, and by virtue of her autocratic power took him into her house, compelling him to leave his young wife. The young wife did not take this meekly; she went boldly to Kalmakova, who was a woman of violent temper; Kalmakova became enraged and, in the presence of Verēgin and his wife, died in an apoplectic fit.

The Doukhobor community then split definitely into two parties, the seeds of disunion having existed in a subordinated fashion under the later years of Kalmakova's rule. The division was in effect upon the question of acquiescence in the requirement of the Russian Government that the Doukhobors should render military service. None of them wanted conscription; but some were disposed to allow their young men to undergo it rather than encounter the consequences of refusal. The communities were unequally divided—about three-fifths of the people belonged to the party of compromise, and the remainder

<sup>1</sup> The details of the legend are not important. They were derived, no doubt, from one or more of the myths about the births of heroes and prophets. The important fact is that about twenty thousand people believe, or affect to believe, in Verēgin's miraculous birth.

to the small party, or the party of recalcitrance. The latter ostentatiously burned their weapons with which they had previously been armed in order to protect themselves against the Kurds and other hostile tribes, and announced their intention to refuse their young men for conscription, at the same time declaring Peter Verēgin as their leader.

The Government, through the local authorities in the Caucasus, took energetic steps so soon as the period for calling up the young conscripts arrived. They sent a force of Cossacks to the Doukhobor villages in which the members of the recalcitrant party resided, and demanded surrender of the youths. The psychology of the Doukhobor is peculiar. He objects to violence, but his passive resistance has little to distinguish it from force. The Cossacks found that the people of several villages had congregated, and that they had put their young men, together with their women and children, into a large granary. This granary was surrounded by the entire able-bodied population, carrying in their hands long straight scythes, sickles, and bill-hooks, presenting the appearance of a *cheval-de-frise*. When the Cossacks drew up before this obstacle, their officers renewed their demand for the surrender of the conscripts.

"We will not surrender them," said the Doukhobor spokesman.

"Then we will have to take them by force."

"In that case," said the Doukhobor, "you will have to come against our scythes and you may cut yourselves."

The Cossacks were so greatly outnumbered by the peasants that they decided to retire, although of course they might have fired into the Doukhobor mass. Had they done so it is not improbable that they would have been cut to pieces to the last man.

They returned later strongly re-enforced, took Peter Verēgin prisoner, sent the young conscripts into penal battalions, and for that time reduced the Doukhobors to submission.

Verēgin was sent to the Kola Peninsula. There he spent some years, living in his own house with a Doukhobor man-servant, his maintenance being defrayed by the Doukhobor community in the Caucasus. I am indebted to Peter Verēgin himself for an account of his life at Kola. The peninsula has come into prominence since the opening of the harbour in winter by means of ice-breakers, and through the construction of the railway which connects with the Russian railway system. It also came into prominence during the war, for it was the scene of a campaign between the forces of the Entente and the Red Army.

In 1886 Kola was an insignificant settlement; practically the only inhabitants were the military commandant with a few soldiers, the custom-house officer of the port, and Peter Verēgin. The two officers and Verēgin formed a small but intimate society. The customs officer was married, and both he and his wife were on friendly terms with Verēgin. The extreme loneliness of the place and the idleness of the life in a little-used port seem to have preyed upon the mind of the customs officer, for he spoke to Verēgin one day in a tone of so great despondency that Peter thought it advisable to mention the conversation to the wife of the officer. About a month later the customs officer came to Peter's house, evidently in a state of great excitement.

"I can endure it no longer," he exclaimed.

"Wait a moment," said Peter. "Let me get a bottle of wine." He went to the door of his room to call his servant, and on turning round the officer had disappeared. Peter went at once to his bedroom, the door of which was ajar, and there he found standing by his bed the customs officer, holding a revolver picked up by him from Peter's dressing-table.

*Peter Verēgin.* "What are you doing there?"

*Customs Officer.* "I am going to shoot myself, Peter, I cannot endure life any longer."

*Peter Verēgin.* "Won't you then kiss me a farewell?"

So saying, Peter took a step forward and kissed the officer, at the same moment seizing both the officer's hands. As he tightened his grasp the revolver fell on the floor. Throwing the officer backwards upon the bed, Peter picked up the revolver.

*Peter Verēgin.* "You are a fine fellow. You know that I am sent here by the Government. You pretend to be a friend of mine. Yet you come here to kill yourself in my house. Do you not see that suspicion must rest upon me and that it will be supposed that I have murdered you? What do you think of yourself?"

*Customs Officer.* "I am very sorry, I did not look at it in that light."

*Peter Verēgin.* "Well, what is to be done, do you really want to die?"

*Customs Officer.* "Yes; I am tired of this place, tired of everything."

*Peter Verēgin.* "Then, as I will be in any case blamed for killing you, I had better shoot you myself. Stand up and close your eyes."

The officer did so, and Peter raised his revolver. He fired into the ceiling, but the officer fell back on the bed, muttering "Thanks, I am dying."

*Peter Verēgin.* "You are doing nothing of the sort. You are not wounded at all. I missed you that time; get up. I will take care not to miss you again. Stand up."

*Customs Officer.* "Oh no. I cannot go through this a second time."

*Peter Verēgin.* "You do not want to die, then?"

*Customs Officer.* "Not now! Not now!"

*Peter Verēgin.* "Then go back to your wife, ask her to pardon you, and behave yourself like a reasonable man."

For some reason, probably because in spite of the remoteness of Kola, Peter was able to maintain correspondence with the Doukhobors in the Caucasus, the Government decided to send him to Siberia. He was dispatched there about 1888, and there he remained at Obdorsk until the customary period of banishment—viz. fifteen years—had expired. In 1900 he was free to go; instead of going back to the Caucasus, he decided to go to Canada and join his people there. During the whole period of his banishment Peter had contrived to keep in touch with his people. Special couriers were frequently sent from the Caucasus to his remote quarters in Northern Siberia, and his letters were circulated among the Doukhobors before the migration to Canada and afterwards. A selection of these letters has been published.<sup>1</sup> They were addressed to the Doukhobors by a young man very imperfectly educated, who had passed the greater part of his mature life in exile in remote and isolated regions. He had read without guidance, and thought almost without contact with other minds. His native powers might be even commanding, but his knowledge of the world was almost a negligible quantity. His letters bear the impress of his mode of life. They are filled with abstract reflections. The ideal world which he had constructed for himself had little correspondence with reality. His physique, powerful and energetic, and his character, reserved and detached, fitted him for command, and he was accustomed from childhood to be treated with deference and to be obeyed by his people. Yet his acquaintance even with them was limited, for he had been separated from them since his twenty-first year. In his exile he had read much of Tolstoy, whose pacifism and hostility to commercialism harmonised well with the traditional points of view of the Doukhobors. One of Verēgin's ancestors had deliberately cut himself off from his Russian surroundings, had become a Doukhobor, and had handed over to the community his property, which was reputed to be very large. Verēgin had thus by heredity and by training been

<sup>1</sup> At the Free Age Press, Christchurch, England (1901), by Vladimir Tchertkoff (in Russian).

placed outside of the influence of progressive society, and he found nothing new or strange in Tolstoy's points of view. The implications of these points of view attracted him. With the perverse logic of the Russian mind he set himself to work out to their legitimate conclusions the principles he had derived from his Doukhobor ancestry and from his reading of Tolstoy. Killing was an offence against moral sense, therefore no living thing must be killed. Cattle should not be fed for slaughter and should not be kept in slavery. He was a magnificent horseman, but he looked upon his horse as his friend and companion and not as his slave. From his point of view a large part of the constitution of modern society, little as he knew of it, was based upon the exploitation and use of metals—the railway which contributed to the breaking up of the village system and to the destruction of the self-contained life of the village community could not exist but for the exploitation of iron, and the system of modern finance was based upon the exploitation of gold. These and other metals were obtained by mining, and mining as he knew it was effected by means of convicts or by men whose labour was exploited either by compulsion or by means that differed not at all from compulsion. Thus men who desired to lead a spiritual life must cease to prey upon animals, and at the same time cease to prey upon one another. Animals must be liberated and metals as well as men must cease to be exploited. These reflections were set forth in his letters to the Doukhobors, and they had due effect upon them. The conclusions they represented corresponded with the ideals of Doukhobor tradition, and they had been formulated for them by their hereditary leader. Moreover, his miraculous birth, his long exile on their account, the great strength of body and mind with which they had heard he was endowed, combined to cause him to be envisaged in their minds as a heroic figure representing to them the embodiment of their aspirations.<sup>1</sup> It should therefore not be counted strange that they attached importance to every word of his letters, and that they should be inclined to carry into practice without compromise even the most inconvenient and disturbing of his conclusions. To the effect upon the simple minds of the Doukhobors of the letters of Peter Verēgin I am inclined to attribute the pilgrimage. There were subsidiary causes, but I do not believe that these would have been effective but for the letters. Among these subsidiary causes were those mentioned above as having been detailed to me by Paul Planēdin. No doubt

<sup>1</sup> Thus confirming Wundt's hypothesis of the psychology of hero-worship to the effect that the hero is the projection of desires and aspirations. Cf. Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie*, vol. ii. pt. i. (Leipzig, 1905), p. 48.

the motive that they might compel the Government to give them a place of settlement which was subject to a milder climate had some force. Without cattle it was impossible for them to make their living on the northern prairies, and Peter their leader had pointed out to them that the keeping of cattle involved the slaughter of them for food, if not by themselves, then by others. Therefore they must seek a climate in which they could grow fruit, or other such crops.<sup>1</sup> The propaganda of some of the Russian so-called helpers of the Doukhobors had possibly also something to do with the organisation and character of the pilgrimage. Alexander Bodyansky, a small Russian proprietor, had either left Russia voluntarily or compulsorily because of his opposition to the Government, and had gone to live in England. He had attached himself to a small group of Tolstoyans who lived at Purleigh in Essex. There Bodyansky had developed certain eccentric habits, going about barefooted and hatless for some reason or for no reason. This did not matter in a settlement where eccentricity was not unusual, but outside of it these habits were likely to be conspicuous. One day Bodyansky received a communication from the Russian Consul in London to the effect that he had inherited some money, and that this money had been sent to the Consul and would be paid to Bodyansky upon personal application. Bodyansky immediately set out for London, habited as he was without hat or boots. It would have been wholly against his principles to go by rail, therefore he walked. His long white beard and peculiar appearance attracted attention as he went barefooted through the East End of London, and the girls coming out of the factories at their dinner-hour amused themselves at his expense. The police interfered and escorted him, passing him on from one policeman to another until he reached his destination at the Russian Consulate. Here he demanded to see the Consul. A clerk in attendance told him that the Consul was engaged, but that he would see him soon.

*Bodyansky.* "That will not do, I must see him at once."

*Clerk.* "It is impossible; but if your business is urgent, perhaps I can attend to it."

*Bodyansky.* "No, you cannot. I am required to see the Consul personally; but I can tell you what my business is."

Producing the Consul's letter, he continued, "I want to tell the Consul that I do not believe in inheritance, and that I do not want this money."

<sup>1</sup> A large migration of Doukhobors to Southern British Columbia took place later. There they have engaged successfully in fruit cultivation.

*Clerk.* "What, then, is the use of seeing him?"

*Bodyansky.* "That is my affair." He became so turbulent that he had to be turned out of the office.

This eccentric old man made his appearance shortly afterwards in the Doukhobor villages at the very moment when they were disturbed by the letters of Verēgin, by the requirement on the part of the local authorities that they should register their births, marriages and deaths, and that they should send their children to school, and by the requirement on the part of the Ministry of the Interior that they should enter individually for their homesteads and at the same time take the oath of allegiance. The requirements of the authorities were merely those to which everyone submitted without question; but to the Doukhobors they presented the aspect of requiring complete abandonment of their principles. It was true, as I have indicated, that these principles had not been very clearly enunciated by them, and that they had by no means been invariably adhered to in their past history; but when they were called upon, as they thought, to sacrifice them under external pressure, the spirit of martyrdom was aroused, and they began to regard themselves as the victims of a new persecution undertaken against them by the Canadian Government. In this attitude towards the authorities they were strongly encouraged by the newly arrived Bodyansky. He knew nothing about the conditions of life in Canada; he only knew that the Doukhobors objected to some governmental regulations, and for that reason he was with them heart and soul. He drew up protests for them, and did everything he could to encourage them.

Apart from the more or less debatable grounds for the pilgrimage, and apart from the more or less sane counsellors of it, there was in it an element of insanity and there were present as active forces in it several persons who were without doubt positively insane. There is in all communities a number of unbalanced people, and in so large a community as that of the Doukhobors there were in the nature of things several lunatics. These were excited by the general disturbance and were active in the pilgrimage. The more extreme manifestations which characterised the pilgrimage were due to the presence among the pilgrims of probably the whole of the unbalanced people in all of the communities. Out of a total of about eight thousand, one-fourth, or two thousand persons, took part in the pilgrimage. Before the pilgrimage took place, the Doukhobor women carefully stored their linen and other belongings in their houses. Perhaps some of them had a shrewd idea that they would

return to them. Return they did, and ere long the communities settled down to their customary peaceful and laborious life.

The settling down of the communities was greatly facilitated by the arrival of Peter Verēgin. The moment of his arrival marked a distinct change in the Doukhobor atmosphere. In many ways the leader was less of a Doukhobor than any of them. He at least could read and write, accomplishments which hardly any of them possessed or even approved. Verēgin immediately set about the organisation of the communities. He gave their business affairs a legal status by forming the Doukhobor Trading Company, arranged credits, made large purchases of horses, cattle and agricultural machinery, even introduced steam-engines, and generally infused intelligent activity into the whole enterprise. He put a stop to the fantastic adventures of the Doukhobors in social idealism, and directed their energies into the concrete problem of providing a sound economic basis for life of any kind. Yet he did not modify their communist basis. On the contrary he intensified it, made it more practical and thorough, and dominated it with his own remarkable personality. Soon after his arrival he came east to see me in Toronto. I derived a very favourable impression of him. I found that he had a shrewd and able mind, and that he was fully aware of the faults and weaknesses of his people. He had no other thought, so far as I could discover, than to serve them to the limits of his own powers. The devotion of his life to their interests seemed to be taken for granted. He must often have been provoked and discouraged by the *bêtises* of his people, yet he never revealed to me any impatience of them.

In 1904, while I was engaged in the study of the North-West for the preparation of my Report to H. M. Board of Trade, I lived two or three weeks with the Doukhobors, most of the time being spent with Peter in his house at Verēgin, which had become the capital of the Doukhobor "empire," as one of themselves called the community.

I went in the first instance to Swan River to visit the Thunder Hill colony, which I had been prevented from seeing in 1899 by floods. Although farther west my movements were again impeded by floods, the Dauphin line to Swan River was in passable condition. We passed through great swamps without difficulty. The Dauphin line was originally built by Messrs. MacKenzie and Mann; indeed, it was their first railway enterprise. The line was constructed by means of bonuses obtained from the Provincial Government of Manitoba. These bonuses were given on the ground that the line was proceeding towards Hudson

Bay, and the amount payable on account of them was to be determined by the distance traversed by the line in the direction of the Bay. I arrived at Swan River about one o'clock in the morning, and found Nicholas Zibarov waiting for me. He had been sent by Peter Verēgin to meet me. It will be remembered that Zibarov was the leader, if there can be said to have been a leader, of the pilgrimage of 1902. After two years Zibarov had become quite normal. He was a good driver and a resourceful man. I had been told about his extraordinary memory. He had recited to someone the whole of the Apocalypse in the old Slavonic Scripture. It is needless to say that he could neither read nor write. I did not expose myself to any of Zibarov's feats of memory. I had other matters to think of at that time; but I found him quite intelligent on farming affairs. He came for me in the morning about seven o'clock, and we set out on our drive of about thirty miles to the Doukhobor Northern Colony. Much of the trail was through swampy land. With great thoughtfulness the Doukhobors had sent out a gang of men, who had spread branches over the moister places in order that I should be able to make the journey in moderate comfort. Yet at many places in the trail we came upon sloughs in which there was deep mud. In one of these sloughs I noticed a strange movement in the mud, and discovered that this movement was produced by the nose of an animal sunk almost completely in the slough. We alighted from the waggon, and Zibarov with great dexterity threw a rope over the head of the creature, although only his nostrils appeared above the mud. The rope was pulled taut round the horns. After working with it for about half an hour, we succeeded in extricating the animal, a year-old heifer, from its predicament, and we left it to get clear of the adhering mud as best it might. These northern prairies were singularly destitute of animal life. The only creatures we saw were prairie chicken, of which we aroused a great number from time to time.

The Swan River Valley is very fine from a scenic point of view, and in the spring usually very wet. The date was about the 20th April, and the weather was extremely cold. I had taken a heavy fur coat with me, and found in addition the *borka* or cloak of thick felt, provided for me by the thoughtfulness of the Doukhobors, a source of comfort. In due time we arrived at the first Doukhobor village. Here there lived William Archer, who had gone from the Purleigh Tolstoyans to the Doukhobor settlement to teach the children. He had known a little Russian before he came to Canada. Archer was very enthusiastic, but somehow he did not get on well with Peter Verēgin. He had written,

no doubt with the best intentions, but with doubtful wisdom, letters to the Department of the Interior, in which he had given an unfavourable account of Peter's activities. He was thus naturally looked upon by Verēgin as a kind of spy who was reporting upon his affairs without being fully informed of them. Verēgin, having been shrewd enough to discover what Archer was about, did what any other gentleman would have done, he simply let Archer alone, and did not trouble himself about him. Archer frequently visited me in Toronto, and I had arranged to spend a few days with him. I found him living alone in a comfortable log-house divided into three rooms, one living-room and two bedrooms. A large box-stove for burning wood occupied the middle of the floor. When I arrived I was chilled, in spite of my thick wraps, and I therefore asked Archer to reinforce his wood fire. This he did to such purpose that in a few minutes the temperature of the room by my pocket thermometer was 104° F.<sup>1</sup> I found the village in which Archer lived, although the most northerly of the Doukhobor villages, quite prosperous. The people were in good spirits, and were adjusting themselves cheerfully to the country and the climate. They had now been five years in their new quarters.

After a few days among the villages of the Thunder Hill colony, I was driven to Fort Pelly by Zibarov. Fort Pelly is an old Hudson Bay post, and here also there is the post of a free trader in furs. It is not possible to buy furs in a Hudson Bay post. The furs collected by their factors must all be shipped to London. The free traders have no such rule. I therefore bought a few musk-rat skins, which were the only furs available at that time. In both stores I found many bales of these skins ready for shipment. As always at such posts, a few Indians lingered over their bargains about furs or supplies. At Fort Pelly I found waiting for me my old friend Paul Planēdin with a change of horses for the second thirty-five miles of my journey, for Fort Pelly was exactly half-way between the settlements. Zibarov's team had been a good pair; but Paul's was magnificent. He brought Peter Verēgin's superb black stallion which he customarily rode and a black gelding. The horses were perfectly mated, and both very powerful and handsome. Paul was an admirable driver, the carriage was the best that could be procured for prairie travel. Nothing was wanting for a rapid and luxurious journey. Early in the evening we drove into the village of Verēgin. There I found Peter installed in a comfortable house. He received me with great cordiality, and his servant, who had been with him in Siberia, valeted me in the quaint Russian fashion

<sup>1</sup> A few years later poor Archer was burned to death in this very house.

of which I had had experience in Russia, standing beside me as I washed and pouring the water over my hands in a half-oriental manner. I had many things to discuss with Peter, and many troublesome questions to settle if possible. Among these were the homesteading question, with its accompaniment of the oath of allegiance, which bulked largely in the Doukhobor mind, and the question of maintenance of roads.

While I was in Winnipeg I was told by the Commissioner of Immigration that four Doukhobors had been arrested for arson and after trial had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and that one-half of that period had been served by them in the penitentiary at Stoney Mountain, near Selkirk. These men had given much trouble to the authorities because they had made a hunger-strike. One of them had died in prison, and the other three were ill. The Commissioner told me that he thought the men were sufficiently punished, and that if Peter Verēgin petitioned for their release they would be liberated. He asked me to ascertain Verēgin's attitude towards the men, and to get such a petition from him if possible. I had to go to Regina on other affairs, and I took the opportunity of asking Colonel Perry, the Commissioner of the North-West Mounted Police, for further details of the case. He told me that the arson for which the men were sentenced consisted in their burning the cotton sack of a reaping machine. He said that Peter Verēgin had reported the occurrence, and that a Mounted Policeman had been sent up to the colony to investigate. He found that the men were rather unbalanced, and that they had conceived a dislike of agricultural machinery. The policeman told Verēgin that technically the crime of arson had been committed, and that the punishment for arson was three years' penal servitude. He pointed out that the particular offence for which this severe punishment was usually imposed was the burning of barns or of houses for fire-insurance money, and that the burning of a piece of cotton, although technically arson, was hardly to be regarded as a very serious offence. He advised Verēgin to overlook it, and to try to persuade the men to be peaceable members of the community. Verēgin said that these men had been a great trouble to him, that they were a menace to good order in the colony, that they had been guilty of an offence against Canadian law, and that they ought to be punished. He insisted upon their arrest, and demanded that they should be taken to Regina in chains as an example. The officer arrested the men and took them to Regina, not, however, in chains. When the case came before the Court in Regina Verēgin appeared to prosecute. There was no question of the guilt of

the men, but the judge appealed to Verēgin in terms similar to those employed by the policeman. Verēgin refused to yield, demanded the full penalty prescribed by the law, and said that he would not be answerable for the good order of the Doukhobors if crazy persons who took proceedings of that kind were not punished. The judge felt that he had no option and sentenced the men to the full term of three years. Colonel Perry also told me that a short time before my visit he had had a communication on the case from Ottawa to the effect that a complaint had been made by the Russian Foreign Minister to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, on the ground of information supplied to him, that men belonging to the Doukhobor colony "had been tortured" in prison. This complaint was conveyed by the British Ambassador to the Foreign Secretary at London; he passed it on to the Colonial Secretary, and it was forwarded by him to the Governor-General of Canada, who had handed it over to the Premier, who had sent the correspondence to the Commissioner of Mounted Police for report. The Commissioner also told me that during the period which elapsed between the accused men being sentenced and their being forwarded to the penitentiary they had refused to obey the regulations of the prison at Regina in respect to the cleaning of their cells and that they had refused to eat and drink. He had ordered that vessels containing water should be hung about their necks, and they succumbed to the temptation to drink. Abstention from food had also been conquered by similar means. He understood that the authorities at the penitentiary had been obliged to resort to similar expedients in order to save the lives of the men. He thought that Verēgin had behaved with great harshness throughout the case. Armed with this authentic information, I was prepared to discuss the affair with Verēgin; but I thought it expedient to allow him to introduce the subject if he thought fit, rather than introduce it myself, unless his silence about it made it necessary for me to initiate discussion. I had been several days with him, when one evening he said:

"There is a sad affair I want to speak to you about. Four Doukhobors have been for a year and a half in the penitentiary at Stoney Mountain. They have been tortured there, and one of them has died. The others may die also."

*James Mavor.* "That is very sad. If you will give me a letter to the Minister of Justice I will do what I can to induce him to liberate the men, and then perhaps their lives will be saved."

Verēgin made no answer. He rose and walked up and down his room for several minutes, while I sat silently waiting.

*Peter Verēgin.* "No, I cannot do that. If these men are liberated they will come back here, and they will infect others with their craziness and make my task of managing the people more difficult."

*James Mavor.* "As for that, you are more competent to judge than I am. I must tell you if you ask for their liberation they will be liberated, I can guarantee that; but if you do not ask for their liberation, they may have to remain where they are until they die or until the expiration of their term. In any case you are responsible. I know about the complaints of "torture," and I know what these mean. There must be no more of them."

Peter made no remark; but after that evening there were no more complaints. The position of Verēgin was a very difficult one; but there was no justification for his attempt to shift upon the shoulders of the Canadian authorities responsibility for action which he had himself initiated. I did not ask him if he had sent the complaint to St. Petersburg. He must have been aware of the representations; but I am under the impression that he did not originate them.

While I was staying with Peter, a man came one day to arrange with him for the employment of four or five hundred Doukhobors in the construction of the permanent way of a new railway line which was to pass through the Doukhobor lands. This man represented the contractors for the line. We were talking of indifferent things when the arrival of the man was reported. Peter made no haste to see him, in spite of my remark that the man was waiting.

"Let him wait," said Peter.

After a while he said to me:

"Come out. We will see this man."

When the man had stated his case, Peter refused to allow the employment of the men excepting upon a contract providing for payment per cubic yard of the material moved.

"How much, then?" asked the man.

*Peter Verēgin.* "Twenty-seven and a half cents per cubic yard."

*Man.* "That is too much. We will give you twenty-five cents."

*Peter Verēgin.* "Twenty-seven and a half cents is the price. Do you want the work done?"

*Man.* "Well, I suppose we will have to pay that."

*Peter Verēgin.* "Good morning."

Thus the contract was made, and the five hundred men went to work. I asked Peter why he had held out for the amount he mentioned.

*Peter Verēgin.* "Because that is the amount the contractor is getting for the work. I do not intend that he will make any profit out

of us. He had to pay what we fixed because he could get no other labour in the country."

In spite of his want of knowledge of English, Peter's information about the affairs in which he was interested was always extensive and exact.

Shortly before my visit Peter had purchased on account of the Doukhobors a large area, about ten thousand acres of land, immediately to the east of the Doukhobor allotted lands. The projected railway ran through this property. It was necessary for the promoters—the Canadian Northern Railway Company—to purchase the right of way, and it was also expedient to purchase land for a town site. When Verēgin was approached about this, he offered to sell the company forty acres for their town site and the railway station, on condition that the station should be placed, not in the centre of this area purchased, but on the edge of it, in order that the growth of the projected town should take place on the Doukhobor property as well as on that purchased by the railway.

I have already indicated a certain vacillation of the Doukhobor attitude towards the economic foundation of their society, and shown how the urgent necessity of their case forced them to retain the elements of communism entailed upon them by the conditions of their migration. This vacillation was the result partly of the absence of leadership, and partly of the presence of disintegrating elements in their social group. These disintegrating elements soon made themselves evident. Defections from the main body began at once. Those who were individualist by temperament, and who had somehow or other been able to secure some individual resources, took out homesteads and set up for themselves. There have been persons in all communist societies of whom Ananias and Sapphira were the types.

When, however, Peter Verēgin's masterful hand began to exert its influence, and it did so immediately upon his arrival, such concealment of individual resources became more difficult, and therefore defections became more rare. Peter found himself strongly supported by the women. Under communism, the woman is no more and no less economically independent than the man. She can go to the communal store and obtain food and clothing for her household, or at least the raw materials from which these are made. She has no domestic debt, and she is not under any fear that her children will want for bread if her husband is unemployed or if he dies. If her husband is engaged on distant work, she does not depend upon him for the punctual remittance of an allowance. If her husband dies, she draws the provision for her family and herself, just as she did when he was alive. The

Doukhobor husband who became infected with individualism was free to leave the community if he chose; but if he left it, he had to take his family with him. His wife could no longer draw from the common stock. Separation for individual life could alone be carried out easily by the unmarried, and only a certain number of these left the community. Altogether the non-community Doukhobors probably number about one-fifth of the total, while the community Doukhobors number about four-fifths.

The practice of communism within the community was very simple. All produce went into the common stock. The Doukhobor wheat all went to the Doukhobor elevators, the Doukhobor cattle were sold and the proceeds were deposited to the account of the Doukhobor Trading Company. Purchases of leather, textiles, tea, sugar, etc., were made wholesale, and these commodities were placed in the Doukhobor stores for delivery as demanded by the households requiring them. So far as I am aware, the spirit of the people was in general such that everyone worked as hard as he could and made no effort to dispose fraudulently of goods which he might obtain on demand from the Doukhobor stores. Yet by some means the people had small sums of money in their possession. I am not aware how they obtained these sums, probably it was found to be wise not to be too meticulous in demanding of the men working outside the community the whole of the balance of their wages in excess of their own subsistence.

Apart from the raw materials I have mentioned, little was brought into the community from the outside. Their houses were usually furnished in the simple manner of the Russian *izba*; such furniture as they had was made by themselves of timber cut by themselves. There was in one of the Doukhobor villages a peasant who had acquired skill in making wooden clocks, and he spent most of his time making clocks for all of the colonies. Men and women worked in the fields together, and they adhered to the pleasant Russian custom of marching in groups from the village to the scene of their labour, singing as they went.<sup>1</sup> The earliest risers began to patrol the village street singing a hymn to the rising sun, and their voices aroused the others. When the band was completed, the workers marched away, their voices gradually becoming more distant. They returned in the evening in the same manner.

On the occasion of my first visit to the Doukhobors in 1899, I had expressed a desire to attend the religious service which they held on Sunday morning. I neglected to ask the hour at which it was held,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 384.

and my friends did not arouse me. When I was ready to go I found that the service had been held at daybreak. In 1904 I determined to make no such mistake. I rose at daybreak on my first Sunday morning with Peter Verēgin and went to the service. It was held in an upper room of one of the houses in the village. Everyone stood, the men on one side of the room, and the women on the other. No one presided. The service consisted in the singing of hymns and in recitation of the old Slavonic Scriptures. Nothing was read. I cannot say how accurately the Scriptures were rendered; but there was evidently a traditional rendering to which they adhered, for there was no hesitation in correcting a mistake or in supplying an omission. Everyone present took part in the recitation, even the youngest—both male and female. The service lasted about an hour and a half.

On the evening before my departure from the village of Verēgin, the villagers were good enough to come to Verēgin's house and give me a serenade. The following day Verēgin and I drove to the crossing of the White Sand River, the bridge being down. We waited while Paul Planēdin swam the horses across and while the waggon was being taken over on a raft. The population of the village turned out to say good-bye, and sang to me while I was waiting and while I was crossing the river. The scene was instinct with primitive life. Paul drove me to Yorkton with his magnificent horses, and from thence I went on other affairs.

I have mentioned these incidents for the purpose of illustrating the shrewdness and practical sagacity of Peter Verēgin, and his ability to manage Doukhobor affairs. His disinterestedness being beyond question, only time was necessary to permit him to organise his people and to direct their energies towards very ample material prosperity. As they became more prosperous, it was reasonable to expect that they would become less inclined to be influenced by eccentric propaganda.

Unfortunately the Ministry of the Interior permitted itself to be influenced by political considerations imposed upon it by local interests. It deprived the Doukhobors of the greater part of the land originally allotted to them on the ground that they had failed to comply with the homestead law, and it induced on the part of the Doukhobors a distrust in the good faith of the Government.

Verēgin met this new condition with his usual sagacity; he purchased for the Doukhobors a large area of land in British Columbia, and transferred about one-half of his people there gradually. In their new quarters they found themselves in a more genial climate than they had experienced in Saskatchewan, and they began to cultivate

fruit on a large scale. During the war they contributed a considerable quantity of jam made in their factories as a free gift to the troops; although, true to their principles, they did not volunteer and they claimed the immunity from conscription to which they were entitled by Order-in-Council.

The war, however, had certain reactions upon the Doukhobors. The people of Canada felt a grievance. They had been conscripted, and the Doukhobors, the Mennonites, and the Quakers had not been called to serve. They were exempt by law; but the justice of such exemption began to be called in question. Thus when the allotment of lands to soldiers who had borne their part in the war came to be made, envious eyes were cast upon the Doukhobor lands, and some of these were actually surveyed with a view to their compulsory purchase by the Government for the purpose of bestowing them upon the soldiers. The propriety of giving military grants is one question, the breaking up of settled and productive communities in order to provide these military grants is quite another question. Fortunately the design was not carried into effect, and the Doukhobors were left in possession of the lands purchased by them.

Racial, social, economical, or religious *enclaves* are always troublesome to communities in which they are found. They form separate communities within the larger community of the nation. The occupants of *enclaves* have a tendency to define for themselves the boundaries of their "rights," and to regard as oppression any attempt on the part of the nation or of the State as administrative organ of the nation to define their "rights." Thus the "rights" of the nation as a whole and the "rights" claimed by a community within it may be quite irreconcilable. Instances of recurring quarrels, with chronic discontent and occasional rebellion, abound in every country, but especially where the *enclave* has well-defined territorial separateness from the territory of the State as a whole. In many countries the *enclaves* have through lapse of time and other causes lost or abandoned their character of separateness; in other countries the *enclaves* have maintained their "independence," and have sometimes secured formal recognition of this "independence." Where a true *enclave* exists—that is, where a territory occupied by a people historically distinct is completely surrounded by the territory of the nation of which in certain aspects it is regarded as a part—there are a few unimportant cases of the maintenance of formal independence.<sup>1</sup> There are innumerable

<sup>1</sup> As, for example, the Republic of Andorra in the north of Spain, the Republic of San Marino in Italy, and the Republic of Monstrelet, south of Liège in Belgium.

cases where the *enclave* is not recognised, and where there are more or less continual struggles either for partial or complete autonomy. Such struggles took place between the Swiss and the Austrians, between Bohemians and Austrians, between Finlanders and Russians, between Irish and British, and between French Canadian and the majority of the colonists of English descent in the American colonies.

In these historical cases long antecedent circumstances had determined the existence and the character of the *enclaves*. The areas and the people concerned had been formally annexed to or included in the larger political unit by dynastic changes or by conquest; in either case the desires of the people having been slenderly or not at all considered.

In the *enclave* with which we are specially concerned at the moment, namely the Doukhobor colony,<sup>1</sup> the conditions had been wholly different from those present in the European cases. The people migrated voluntarily; so far as the country to which they migrated was concerned, there had been no compulsion of any kind. When they entered the country they were assumed, and rightly assumed, to have satisfied themselves that the people among whom they elected to settle were people with whom it was possible for them to associate in matters of common interest, and that the laws of the country were such that they could obey without violation of principle.

While the assumption of knowledge on the part of the new-comers of conditions in Canada was perfectly justified, it was, nevertheless, too generous an assumption. It implied that to certain words the same meaning was attached by everyone; or at all events, that to such words as liberty, law, sovereignty of the people, kingship, oath of allegiance, the new-comers attached the same meanings as those customarily attached by the older residents of the country. Precisely the contrary was the case. Indefinite as were the conceptions on both sides, they did not cohere. That which was taken for granted by one side was regarded as contravening the most sacred obligation on the other. Such divergent attitudes of mind remain divergent in the same degree as the strength of character or the obstinacy of the peoples concerned. In so far as these attitudes depend upon racial characteristics they are very permanent, and therefore assimilation of races is an incredibly slow process. A thousand years have elapsed since the last important migration of people to England, yet the English people are even now not fully assimilated. The people of countries like the United States are not assimilated to any appreciable degree. Hard

<sup>1</sup> The Mennonite colony is a similar *enclave* in Canada.

knots are above all difficult to assimilate; and there are many hard knots in America—both in Canada and in the United States. The Doukhobors and the Mennonites may yet be found to be knots no harder than the French Canadians or the Germans, and much less hard than the Jews, the Chinese, or the Negroes.

While the problem of the process whereby the Doukhobor community may come to be absorbed in the general Canadian community is important, not less so is the light thrown upon the system of equality or complete commensalism by the adoption of this system on the part of the Doukhobors.

In their case equality has been successfully, although no one can say permanently, established. What were the conditions which rendered establishment of equality possible, and what have been the economical and moral consequences?

1. The *primary* condition which furnished the first Doukhobors, those of 1750, with an impelling motive towards equality was the glaring inequalities with which they were surrounded and by which some of them materially profited. They decided not to attempt to mend the society of their time—a society of which bondage was the distinguishing feature—and to leave it not individually but in families. The cardinal condition in the case of the Doukhobor system of equality was and is the presence of it as a protest within the shell of an unequal society.

2. The *second* condition is segregation of the group.

3. The *third* condition is territorial isolation.

4. The *fourth* condition is common racial origin, intrusions of alien blood being all remote, and no addition otherwise than through natural increase of the population being permitted.

5. The *fifth* condition is a language not merely common to the group, but distinctive of it and cardinally different from the languages of the surrounding peoples.

6. The *sixth* condition arises naturally and inevitably out of the preceding conditions, and its character is determined by them, namely, a common religion, distinct from any of the religions professed by surrounding peoples.

7. The *seventh* condition is comparative innumerousness of the group practising the system of equality in comparison with the surrounding population.

8. The *eighth* condition is the presence, material equality notwithstanding, of a leader who on occasion may act decisively as dictator. This man or woman (for the Doukhobors have had experience of

leadership by both) must have the capacity of recognising disintegrating influences and the energy to stamp them out. Such a dictatorship need not be pervasive, but must, in a moment of crisis, be effective.

The observed effects upon the Doukhobors are as follows:

1. Strength of group-feeling, contingent partly upon the imminence of external pressure, moral and material, from the surrounding population.

2. Absence of a feeling of social (including national) solidarity in the sense of recognition of membership of a wider community than their own distinctive group.

3. Feeling of finality. For the Doukhobors, the good end is already attained. Why learn? Why read? Why write? Why exercise the mind? What is regarded by the external world as progress is an illusion. When the daily means of life are secured, as they may be by common labour, striving for more is unnecessary, luxury being sinful.

From the point of view of comparison of economical conditions, it is not easy to relate the system of equality as practised by the Doukhobors to the inequality of the society surrounding them and living under similar physical circumstances. In the case of the Doukhobors we have to deal with uniformity, in the case of the surrounding society with averages, or with minima or maxima.

I have gone carefully over the accounts of the Doukhobors, organised as they have been by competent external accountants, but I have not been able to find any exact method of comparison between the productivity of the Doukhobors and that of similar numbers of the general population in their neighbourhood.

It must be realised that the Doukhobor economic system is not absolutely self-contained. The Doukhobors depend alike for a portion of their supplies and for marketing their surplus products upon the organisation of a society founded upon inequality.

The Doukhobors did not establish themselves without aid from the State, and from banks and other institutions which from their point of view are objectionable. They conduct their business by means of typewriters, telephones and other inventions which could not have existed had their polity been universal. The Doukhobors are thus, in spite of their ostentatious separation from the external world, essentially associated with it. For themselves they may enjoy such advantages as are incident to uniformity of well-being, apart from variation of seasons, but they also enjoy the advantages of conveniences that have been produced for them and others by means of the

system of inequality. Yet the Doukhobors are reluctant to sustain their share of the cost of these conveniences. They are willing to build bridges for themselves within their own territory, but they see no reason why they should assist in providing the roads extending over unoccupied spaces by means of which alone these bridges can be rendered useful excepting for purely local needs. They avail themselves of the education obtained by some of their people, yet they object to the education of their children on the ground that education is sometimes harmful, and that it weakens family discipline and family ties.

The effect upon the surrounding society of this attitude towards what this society regards as social obligation is unfavourable to the Doukhobors. Not merely do the conditions which have been enumerated tend to separate the Doukhobors from their neighbours, but their relative, though not complete, self-containedness and their frugality prevent them from patronising the retail dealers and thus from entering in any organic way into the life of the communities surrounding them.

The Doukhobors take no interest in Canadian politics, and yet find themselves in more or less continual conflict with the Dominion Provincial and Municipal Governments. They frequently appeal from what they regard as human law to what they call the "Law of God"—this law being, of course, their own interpretation of what they conceive to be a law superior to the laws of the country they live in.

The efforts of the Doukhobors towards the simple life—of equality, piety, frugality, and utter reasonableness—have involved many people who have, in one way or another, been brought into relations with them in extreme complexity.

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