

ИСКРА
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VOICE OF THE DOUKHOBORS - ГОЛОС ДУХОБОРЦЕВ



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TOIL AND PEACEFUL LIFE

**SONS OF FREEDOM CANNOT BE SLAVES OF
CORRUPTION**

**THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD IS NOT WORTH THE
LIFE OF ONE CHILD**

ГОЛОС ДУХОБОРЦЕВ
VOICE OF THE DOUKHOBORS

ISKRA

VOICE OF THE DOUKHOBORS

The Russian word “iskra”, translates into English as “spark”. As the name of our publication, the word “iskra” symbolizes the inner spiritual “spark” which Doukhobors believe to be the manifestation of God in each human being. In 1945, John J. Verigin (Honourary Chairman of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ — USCC) suggested this name for the official USCC Newsletter (which had been published since 1943), to symbolize and encourage the on-going process of spiritual revival and growth among its readers.

**PUBLISHED BY
THE UNION OF SPIRITUAL
COMMUNITIES OF CHRIST**

**ИЗДАЕТСЯ СОЮЗОМ
ДУХОВНЫХ ОБЩИН ХРИСТА**

MISSION STATEMENT

ISKRA Publication is dedicated to inspiring in its readers spiritual enlightenment, moral and ethical growth, cultural and intellectual development toward the manifestation, in their daily lives, of the Doukhobor life-concept, based on the Law of God and Teachings of Jesus Christ.

“Flame of Truth”: the global significance of Doukhobor Pacifism

Christian Bartolf, Dominique Miething

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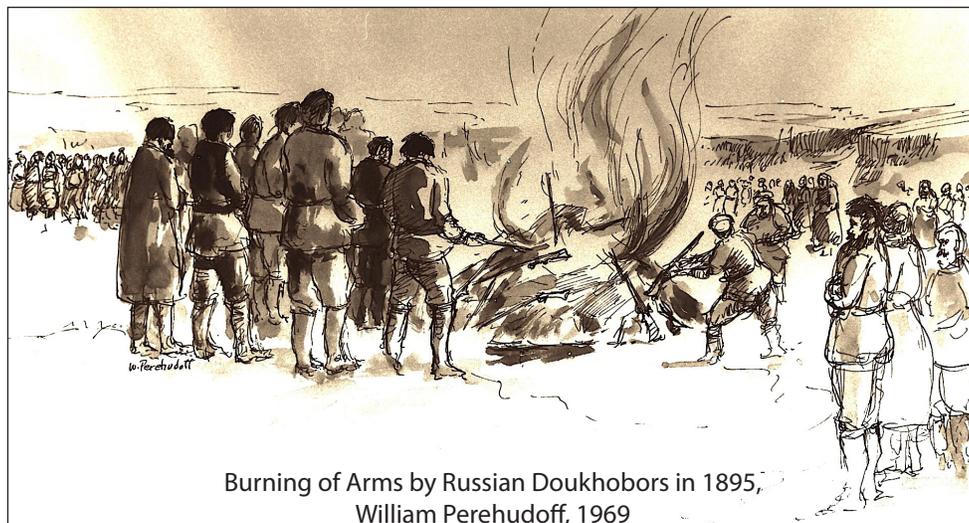
The Doukhobors (Spirit Wrestlers), a heterogeneous group of Christians in Russia and Canada, whose anti-war stance became well known when they organized a Burning of Arms ceremony in 1895, inhabit an undisputed place in the history of the peace churches and religious denominations. We argue, however, that the connection between the Doukhobors and twentieth century pacifists such as Jane Addams (1860-1935), Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), and George Woodcock (1912-1995), deserves more attention. We then aim to raise awareness of Peter Nikolaevich Maloff (1900-1971), who authentically carried on the pacifist spirit of the group as he interacted not only with Gandhi and Woodcock, but also with Alexander Berkman (1870-1936), Dorothy Day (1897-1980), A. J. Muste (1885-1967), and Scott and Helen Nearing (1883-1983 and 1904-1995), among others. We finally highlight some instances of Doukhobor relations with the War Resisters' International and the International Vegetarian Union in Europe during the late-1920s and early-1930s. In all this we draw out “Christ’s law of nonresistance to evil by violence” (Leo Tolstoy) that may be obscured to the public eye, not only because the number of self-identified Doukhobors has continually decreased due to the forces of assimilation, but also because “the scourge of war” (Preamble, Charter of the United Nations, 1945) continues to threaten the survival of life on Earth.

1. The Burning of Arms

At midnight of June 28/29 [O.S.; 11/12 July N.S.] in 1895, about a third of the estimated 20.000 Doukhobors living under Tsarist rule and the patriarchy of the Orthodox Church in Russia, celebrated both the annual Feast of Saints Peter and Paul and the birthday of their spiritual leader at the time, Peter Vasilevich “the Lordly” Verigin (1859-1924). The festivities were held in an unexpected manner: following

a message by Verigin (Verigin 2019, 67) and as a public testimony to their refusal to participate in the military and in war, the Doukhobors systematically coordinated three massive bonfires in the three separate Caucasus districts (Kalmakoff 2019): the first near Orlovka (in Akhalkalaki district, Tiflis Governorate, in today’s Ninotsminda region, Georgia), the second near Terpenie (in today’s Kars region, Turkey), and the third near Slavyanka (in Elisavetpol Governorate, in today’s Gadabay District, Azerbaijan), the birthplace of Verigin himself. At these sites, the Doukhobors burned all their weapons and their conscription notices – the Government, which had extended universal military service to the Caucasus in 1887, considered this antimilitarist protest a treasonous act and hit back with a full-scale repression campaign executed by Cossack soldiers. They banished, beat, flogged, imprisoned, and in many cases killed members of the Doukhobors.

While the Burning of Arms (Bartolf and Miething 2010) was the most sensational culmination of the Doukhobors’ commitment to nonviolence since their first recorded mentioning in the late eighteenth century, it was by far not their first testimony of dissent, for their history had already been characterized by conflicts with the external authorities of church and state. In this regard, the group clearly fits in with the historiography of “Russian sectarian pacifism” (Brock 1972, 442-470) as represented by the Bogomiles, Mennonites, Molokans, Nazarenes, Stundists, etc.



Burning of Arms by Russian Doukhobors in 1895,
William Pehudoff, 1969

The Russian terms *духоборы* (*dukhobory*) or *духоборцы* (*dukhobortsy*) literally mean “spirit wrestlers”. They were used for the first time in 1785 (Woodcock and Avakumovic 1968, 19) as insult and slander by Archbishop Amvrosii Serebrennikov of Ekaterinoslav (1747-1792) and, according to ethnographer and archivist Svetlana A. Inikova, in March 1786, in a report by the Archbishop Nikephoros Theotokis (1731-1800) to the synod (Donskov 2019a, xx). These clergymen claimed that the Doukhobors were fighting against the Holy Spirit, i.e., that their beliefs subverted the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole. Conversely, the Doukhobors until today have accepted the term for themselves by bestowing it with positive ideals. In the words of Vladimir Chertkov (1854-1936), an ardent supporter of the group:

“The foundation of the Spirit-Wrestlers’ teaching consists in the belief that the Spirit of God is present in the soul of man, and directs him by its word within him.

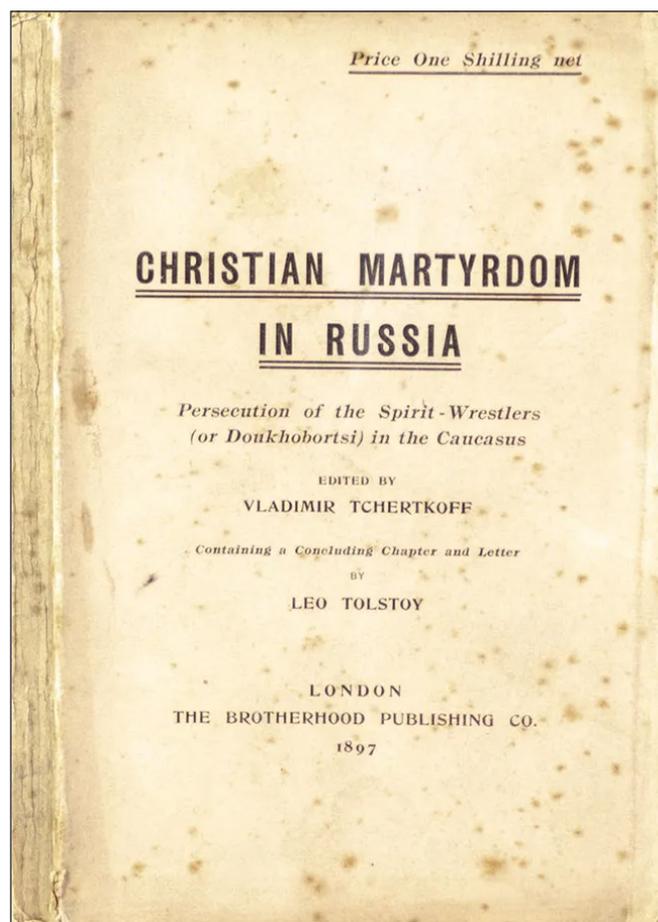
They understand the coming of Christ in the flesh, His works, teaching, and sufferings, in a spiritual sense. The object of the sufferings of Christ, in their view, was to give us an example of suffering for truth. Christ continues to suffer in us even now, when we do not live in accordance with the behests and spirit of His teaching. The whole teaching of the Spirit-Wrestlers is penetrated with the gospel spirit of love.

Worshipping God in the spirit, the Spirit-Wrestlers affirm that the outward Church and all that is performed in it and concerns it has no importance for them. The Church is where two or three are gathered together, i.e. united, in the name of Christ.

They pray inwardly at all times; while, on fixed days (corresponding for convenience to the orthodox holy-days), they assemble for prayer-meetings, at which they read prayers and sing hymns, or psalms as they call them, and greet each other fraternally with low bows, thereby acknowledging every man as a bearer of the Divine Spirit.

The teaching of the Spirit-Wrestlers is founded on tradition. This tradition is called among them the ‘Book of Life,’ because it lives in their memory and hearts. It consists of psalms, partly formed out of the contents of the Old and New Testaments, partly composed independently.

The Spirit-Wrestlers found alike their mutual relations and their relations to other people—and not only to people, but to all living creatures—exclusively on love; and, therefore, they hold all people equal,



Vladimir Tchertkoff: *Christian Martyrdom in Russia. Persecution of the Spirit-Wrestlers (or Doukhobortsy) in the Caucasus*, 1897

brethren. They extend this idea of equality also to the Government authorities; obedience to whom they do not consider binding upon them in those cases when the demands of these authorities are in conflict with their conscience; while, in all that does not infringe what they regard as the will of God, they willingly fulfil the desire of the authorities.

They consider murder, violence, and in general all relations to living beings not based on love, as opposed to their conscience, and to the will of God.” (Tchertkoff 1897, 2-4)

Nonviolence may have always been a core principle of all Doukhobors, yet adherence to it “began to wane” (Brock 1972, 448) under the leadership of Luker’ya Vasilevna Kalmykova (1841-1886) when she allowed collaboration with the military, for example, during the Russo-Turkish War (1877–1878). Such practices came to a halt in the aftermath of a struggle over the legitimate succession of Doukhobor leadership which ensued after Kalmykova’s death, resulting in the split of the community into three parties.

Verigin won over the so-called Great or Large Party (Большая сторона, Bol'shaya storona) of about 7,000 people and subsequently revived older ethical principles, most likely under the growing influence of the ideas of Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), whose rationalistic search for a universal religion based on love and reason between all people and creatures of the world displayed great affinities with Doukhobor practices (cf. "A brief sketch of the foundation principles of the Spirit-Wrestlers written by one of themselves" in: Tchertkoff 1897, 37f.). From 1892 on Verigin requested of his followers to abstain from eating meat, drinking alcohol, smoking, and sexual relations; in 1893, he called for the abolition of private property, the establishment of communes and simple living. When the Russian government ordered its subjects to take the oath of allegiance to the Tsar, Verigin urged his followers to refuse. On Easter of 1895, prior to the Burning of Arms, eleven Doukhobors serving in the army at Elisavetpol became conscientious objectors, an action that the authorities punished by sending them and sixty other Doukhobors to penal battalions or into exile (Donskov 2019a, 368).

There exists some controversy on when exactly and to what extent Verigin became familiar with Tolstoy's ideas and whether Verigin strategically utilized these ideas to garner the famous writer's support (Sanborn 1995; Donskov 2019a, 104ff.). The controversy originates from a Russian language edition of Verigin's letters (Christchurch, Hants, England: Anna Tchertkoff, 1901), more specifically, from the critical introduction penned by an early supporter and scholar of the Doukhobors, Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich (1873-1955). He was the first to expound textual evidence for Verigin's plagiarism from a core document in the history of abolitionism and nonviolent resistance to slavery and war. As Tolstoy's English translator Aylmer Maude (1858-1938) summarizes: "In [1896] Verigin wrote an epistle to his followers (which most of them have since learnt by heart, and to which they attach immense importance), chiefly made up of passages borrowed verbatim from Tolstoy's *Kingdom of God is Within You*; and containing, in particular, one long passage from that book—a quotation of Tolstoy's translation of the *Declaration of Sentiments* which William Lloyd Garrison [1805-1879] drew up in 1838 for a Peace Convention held in Boston." (Maude 1904, 159f.) It is worth noting that in this 1893 book, Tolstoy merely in passing praises "our Doukhobórs [...] who consider that violence, and therefore military service, is incompatible with Christianity" (Tolstoy 1936, 32).

Tolstoy knew about the Doukhobors at least since 30 May 1891 [N.S.] from a letter by Chertkov who informed him about five cases of conscientious objection from within their community. Furthermore, two Quakers, John Thomas Bellows (1831-1902) and Joseph James Neave (1836-1913), "on their way to meet the Stundists in southern Russia and the Doukhobors" (Donskov 2019a, 367) visited Tolstoy on 20 December 1892 [N.S.]. In 1894, Ivan Mikhailovich Tregubov (1858-1931) told Tolstoy of Verigin and the Doukhobors in a letter. On 21 December of the same year, upon meeting with three Doukhobors in Moscow, Tolstoy confirmed his spiritual affinity with them: Vasilij Obedkov, Vasilij Vasil'evich Verigin, and Vasilii Gavrilovich Vereshchagin (cf. on these three: Verigin 2019), who soon would be tasked by Verigin to organize the Burning of Arms. Soon after the event, several Tolstoyans such as Prince Dmitry Khilkov (1858-1914) and Aleksandr Mikhailovich Bodjanskij (1842-1916) conveyed their accounts of the ceremony to Tolstoy. In August 1895, Tolstoy asked Pavel Ivanovich Biryukov (1860-1931) to travel to the afflicted Doukhobor communities and to document the current situation. Biryukov's report ("Persecution of Christians in Russia") was printed in *The Times* (London) on October 23, 1895, on page 4 (reprinted and translated into German in Tolstoi and Birjukoff 1929, 5-33 with a foreword by the last secretary of Tolstoy, Valentin Bulgakov [1886-1966]). A short letter by Tolstoy ("A Russian Religious Sect") prefaced the report and thereby, for the first time, introduced the Doukhobors' plight to "the court of public opinion [...] before the whole world".

Hoping that international publicity would shield the Doukhobors from additional excesses committed against them by the Russian government, Tolstoy, appropriating the title of Biryukov's report verbatim, published a second piece, this time in the November 1895 issue of *The Contemporary Review* (London). If no outside assistance was rendered to the Doukhobors, Tolstoy feared, the authorities would carry their repression to a deadly end so that the examples of conscientious objection, desertion and war-tax boycott were not to be imitated by others in the future: "The nominal Christian, baptized and brought up in Greek orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, might continue to follow violence and murder, so long as he does not discover the deception put upon him. But as soon as he discovers that every man is responsible to God for his acts, and that this responsibility cannot be shifted to some one else or

excused by the oath, and that he must not kill, or prepare himself to kill, then participation with the army at once becomes to him as impossible morally as it is physically impossible for him to lift a ton of weight.” (Tolstoy 1895, 646f.) Ultimately, a true Christian opposes the violence inherent in any human Government, Tolstoy argued, thus voicing a recognizable tenet of Christian anarchism. Tolstoy then turned the Doukhobors’ Burning of Arms into an allegory of moral and political significance:

“Just as in the burning of a pile there comes a moment when the fire which long worked obscurely within, only now and then by flashes and smoke proving its presence, suddenly wins its way on every side with a burning no longer to be subdued, so in the conflict of the Christian spirit with the pagan laws and institutions, there comes the time when this Christian spirit bursts forth everywhere, no longer to be kept under, and every moment threatening to destroy the institutions under which it was buried. [...]

However much wood one throws on the burning pile of sticks, thinking thus to put out the fire, the inextinguishable flame, the flame of truth, will only be temporarily smothered, and will burn up still more strongly, consuming everything heaped upon it. Even though it happened (as it always happens) that some of the contenders for truth become weak in the strife, and yield to the government, that, nevertheless, would not in the least change the position. If today the Dukhobors in the Caucasus should yield, being unable any longer to bear the sufferings which overcome their old men and women, their wives and children, still, to-morrow, there would arise other contenders, ready on all hands, more and more boldly proclaiming their principles, and less and less liable to yield. Does truth cease to be truth because the men who professed it become weak under the pressure of torture? That which is of God must conquer that which is of man.

[...] if we will only have courage and boldly profess Him, soon not only will those horrible persecutions of the body of true disciples of Christ who carry out His teaching practically in their lives disappear, but there will remain no more prisons or gallows, no wars, corruption, idleness, or toil-crushed poverty, under which Christian humanity now groans.” (Tolstoy 1895, 647, 649f.)

This very article, oftentimes mentioned yet never quoted, is of additional importance to the Doukhobors’ story of

survival after the persecutions set in. As James Mavor (1854-1925), professor of Political Economy at the University of Toronto, recalls in his autobiography:

“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.” (Mavor 1923, 1)

2. Anarchist aid, anarchist doubts

The failure of the Cyprus plan necessitated the search for a new suitable home. In July 1898, the Russian anarchist and geographer Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin (1842-1921), who himself had lived in exile in England since 1887, was contacted by a rescue committee which had grown out of the Tolstoyan communities of the Brotherhood Church at Croydon, Surrey, and at Purleigh, Essex, involving, among others, John Coleman Kenworthy (1861-1948), Aylmer Maude, Chertkov, and Biryukov. They “had received full authority from the Doukhobòrtsi to act for them” (Mavor 1899, 8-10) and were excited to discover Kropotkin’s article on “Some of the resources of Canada”, published



Peter Kropotkin, c. 1900
Bibliothèque nationale de France
(Nadar)

in the periodical *The Nineteenth Century* (London). Kropotkin's vivid account originated from his journey to the country between August 8 to October 20, 1897, where he surveyed the vast landscapes and climatic conditions, travelling on the Canadian Pacific Railway from Toronto, Ontario, to Victoria, British Columbia, at the invitation of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (Ivanov 2020, 27ff.). What probably caught the attention of the Tolstoyan committee was one of Kropotkin's observations recorded in Manitoba:

“[...] there is a considerable number of Mennonites, originally Dutch, who came to Canada from South-east Russia in 1874-78, when obligatory military service was enforced upon them. [...] Mennonites prosper everywhere. They were prosperous in Russia, and they prosper in Canada. If they are compelled to emigrate, they send first their delegates, who select the best spots—so they did in Manitoba; and they emigrate in whole villages. They settled in Canada on the distinct understanding that they should receive the land in a block, and be left entirely to themselves; otherwise, they would have gone to the States, to South America, or even to Greenland, to join the Moravian Brothers. They settled in villages, and in these villages they maintain the institutions of mutual support and peace, which they consider to be the essence of Christian religion—a practice for which they have been persecuted for three centuries in succession by Christian Churches and States. [...]

The Mennonites, as is known, refuse to take part in any functions of the State, and especially in military service. Tolstoi's name is, consequently, a subject of deep reverence among them. They also never have anything to do with justice or law. On the other side, they receive no subsidy from the State, and themselves keep their schools. They never pay their preachers, and live under what will be described as an illusion—that if a farmer has the gift to move the hearts of his hearers he may do it, and perform the preacher's duties without being paid for it. With all that, they are not Communists; they recognise private ownership, and those of them who take to trade make fortunes. They have communal mills, but have not yet come to the idea that they might keep communal stores as well.

[...] it is a remarkable fact that amidst that capitalist civilisation some twenty thousand men should continue to live, and to thrive, under a system of partial communism and passive resistance to the State which they have maintained for more than three

hundred years against all persecutions.” (Kropotkin 1898, 503-505)

According to Mavor, Kropotkin, upon receiving the committee's letter, which may have been written by Chertkov (Ivanov 2020, 47), “at once paid a visit to Purleigh and put them into communication with persons in Canada” (Mavor 1899, 10), among them, of course, Mavor himself, who independently corresponded with Tolstoy on the issue of saving the Doukhobors (cf. Mavor 1923, 2; an extensive collection of letters is preserved in the James Mavor Papers at the University of Toronto).

Even with the transport of the Doukhobors to their new home on the prairies of Saskatchewan complete, Kropotkin elicited further assistance for them, through the director of the Geological Survey of Canada, George Mercer Dawson (1849-1901), who gave advice on adequate settlement sites, and through the director of the Central Experimental Farm, William Saunders (1836-1914), who counselled the Doukhobor peasants on local soil fertility and appropriate crops and also provided them with seeds. Thanks to the original source material in Russian archives, we also know that some Doukhobors visited Kropotkin in his Bromley home, and that Verigin himself eventually came to see him when passing through England in 1902 upon his release from exile in Siberia: “Quite intelligent, above all practical, a communalist [...] only he doesn't agree with rebelling, but even so a profound anarchist” (cited in Ivanov 2020, p. 48), remarked Kropotkin.

Kropotkin's judgment of Verigin was consistent with his earlier idealizations of the “the peace-loving Dukhobórs” (Kropotkin 1899, 313) and the “immense advantages” of their “semi-communistic brotherly organization” (Kropotkin 1899, 216) that he had already noticed in the 1860s while serving as military officer with the Amur Cossacks in east Siberia. Years later, Kropotkin reaffirmed the Doukhobors' example as confirmation of his own ideal: a cooperative, decentralized, and federated economy. The following segment attests this, and from Kropotkin's allusion to British Columbia we can infer that he must have written it after 1907, i.e., when Verigin began purchasing many acres of land near Grand Forks, the Slocan Valley, and at Castlegar, in preparation of moving a considerable number of Doukhobors away from the prairies:

“Setting aside the question of religion and its role in the organisation of communist communities, it would

suffice to mention the history of the Doukhobors in Canada to show the *economic* superiority of communist labour compared to individual labour. Arriving penniless in Canada and forced to inhabit a part of the province of Alberta which was still uninhabited and cold; their wives, for lack of horses, hitched twenty or thirty of themselves to the plough whilst all the middle-aged men worked on the railroad and paid all their wages to the community—the six to seven thousand Doukhobors knew how, in seven or eight years, to achieve prosperity by organising their agriculture and their lives with the aid of modern machinery, with American harvesters and balers, threshers and communal steam mills.

[... They have just bought, moreover, land on the shores of the Pacific in the British Columbia province of Canada where they established their *fruit-growing colony*—which these vegetarians much missed in the province of Alberta, where apple, pear, cherry, etc., trees do not provide any fruit—the flowers being killed by frosts in the month of May.]

Here we have a federation of about twenty communist villages, where each family lives in its house while the work in fields, etc., is done in common and each family takes from the communal stores what it needs to live. This organisation, which has been maintained for some years by the religious idea of the community, is certainly not our ideal; but we must however recognise that from an *economic* point of view the immense superiority of communist work to individual work and the absolute possibility of adapting this work to the modern demands of agriculture with the aid of machines are fully proven.” (Kropotkin 2018, 157-159, emphasis in the original).

Indeed, Kropotkin was not the only intellectual to project his own political creed onto the Doukhobors: another example is Kropotkin’s first biographer, George Woodcock (Adams and Kelly 2017). Together with the Serbian-Canadian historian Ivan Avakumović (1926-2013), he co-authored the seminal study *The Doukhobors* in 1968.

Woodcock’s engagement with the Doukhobors turned into a life-long concern, leading him to develop a far more nuanced view of the group’s internal complexities and ideological schisms in the face of their overall negative treatment as a small minority in Canadian political discourse, “revealing how incomplete our democracy has been and how narrow the limits of our tolerance.” (Woodcock 1992, 200)

In one of his autobiographies Woodcock recalls that his interest in the Doukhobors was first kindled by his father’s “nostalgic recollections of life in Winnipeg” in the first decade of the twentieth century, when sensationalist press reports unfairly identified the Doukhobors as a whole with a splinter group called the Sons of Freedom or Freedomites (*svobodniki*), which first appeared in 1902 and today still exist in the collective memory of Canada because of their nude protest marches and arson attacks:

“I realized that the Doukhobors were something more than nudist shovellers of snow when I began to read Tolstoy and Kropotkin, who regarded them as admirable peasant radicals and Nature’s anarchists. The Doukhobors’ anti-militarism appealed to my own pacifism, and I accepted Tolstoy’s impression of a libertarian sect which took its Christianity neat and turned its settlements into utopian communes. To meet the Doukhobors had been one of my aims.” (Woodcock 1987, 6)

He would, in fact, do so many times during the remainder of his life. Still under the influence of Kropotkin, Woodcock similarly idealized them in his earliest pamphlets published by Freedom Press in London (*Anarchy or Chaos*, 1944; *The Basis of Communal Living*, 1947). Soon, however, he would state more precisely that it was the Doukhobors’ ethical renunciation of violence and war, and their insistence on the primacy of the individual’s conscience that would continuously inspire him. Residing in England as a conscientious objector during the Second World War, Woodcock stressed the necessary consistency between means and ends for achieving social progress, naming the Doukhobors as one example for the viability of nonviolent resistance:

“The history of Lenin’s destruction of the anarchists, of Trotsky’s massacre of the libertarian sailors of Kronstadt, of Stalin’s persecution of the Doukhobors, show how far the Russian revolution has deteriorated by participation in violence and the consequent development of a militarist system inevitably inimical to real freedom. [...]

The record of non-violent struggles, of the Indians against the British Raj, of the Doukhobors in Canada, of the Danes against the Nazis, give hope that a self-disciplined movement of non-violent action may bring great achievements in the removal of injustice and the establishment of a classless social order of real liberty, equality and fraternity. This seems to me the only realistic

way towards social revolution. All appeals to violence are romantic and dangerous, for they can only lead us back to tyranny and fear.” (Woodcock 1947, 59 and 61)

Woodcock’s knowledge of the Doukhobors was nourished by repeated personal meetings with community members in his own native Canada to where he returned in the spring of 1949. Trying out the genre of travel writing, Woodcock related these encounters made during his journeys through the Kootenays of British Columbia in his book *Ravens and Prophets* (1952), some of which he also recollected in his autobiography *Beyond the Blue Mountains* (1987).

One episode is particularly revealing, because it gave the writer an opportunity to reflect on what peace historian Peter Brock termed “the strange blend of religious anarchism and theocratic autocracy” (Brock 1972, 446) prevailing within Doukhobor communities despite their principled rejection of church and state authority. In August 1949, on Vancouver Island, Woodcock met with the leader of a Freedomite community at Hilliers—Michael “the Archangel” Verigin (1883-1951), a relative of Peter V. Verigin. Woodcock described the seemingly omniscient status that most community members ascribed to their leader and the concentration of power in Verigin’s hands and admitted: “I abandoned my earlier illusions that these were natural anarchists. I recognized theocracy when I saw it.” (Woodcock 1987, 13). The authoritarian cult, for which Tolstoy forty years earlier had criticized Peter Verigin (Donskov 2019b, 210 and 215-286), placed the Doukhobors at odds with the anarchist ideals of freedom from coercion and domination: “Tolstoy’s letters, indeed, show him turning from a somewhat naïve and misled admirer of the sect as an example of Christian anarchism into a critic of the theocracy that its leaders practised in real life, the kind of mental evolution everyone who has had close contact with Doukhobors has undergone. ‘How is it that you have turned from a martyr for the truth into a despot?’ he shouted at Peter the Lordly when the latter returned to Russia on a visit in 1907 and called at Yasnaya Polyana.” (Woodcock 1989, 114)

Woodcock, making use of his longstanding connection with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), aimed to dispel misconceptions about the Doukhobors. In 1966, for instance, at the height of the American

movements for civil rights and against the war in Vietnam, he produced a seven-part series on the cultural and social roots of “Civil Disobedience”, narrating each of the 30 minutes episodes into the microphone himself. The fifth talk dealt with “Russia: Tolstoy and the dissenting sects”, followed by a discussion with professor Avakumović of the University of British Columbia (Queen’s University Archives [Kingston, Ontario, Canada], George Woodcock fonds, Sound Recordings, CBC Ideas series: Civil Disobedience, files f51-f57; see also Woodcock 1966, 48f.). A decade later, Woodcock wrote and spoke the script for the two-part television documentary entitled *The Doukhobors: The Living Book / Toil and Peaceful Life* (1977).

In one of his very last articles, posthumously published, Woodcock revisited his fascination with the “anarchist connection” revolving around saving the Doukhobors from persecution, an endeavor which attracted not only luminaries such as Tolstoy but additional likeminded Russians such as Leopold Antonovich Sulerzhitsky (1872-1916) and “the doctor Alexei Ilyich Bakunin, who was a nephew of the redoubtable Michael Bakunin, the leading theoretician of anarchism before the appearance of Kropotkin.” (Woodcock 1995, 98). Sulerzhitsky and Bakunin accompanied the Doukhobors on the Lake Huron, one of the two steamships chartered between December 1898 and May 1899 en route to Canada (Sulerzhitsky 1982, 56f. and 76; Donskov 2019, 89, 275 and 342).

Today, thanks to meticulous research on the international network of supporters, we have a better understanding of just how much effort was required by Tolstoyans in Britain (the committee members named above), Hungary and Germany (Eugen Heinrich Schmitt), the Netherlands (Johannes van der Veer) and Sweden (Jonas Jonsson Stadling) as well by the fundraising efforts of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in England and the United States to make possible the historic migration of 7.500 Doukhobors from Russia to Canada in 1899. Since this story has been chronicled by contemporaries, supporters and eyewitnesses (e.g., Bienstock 1902; Elkinton 1903; Tolstoy 1998) and by scholars (e.g., Donskov 2019a), we continue with shedding more light on certain aspects of the global significance of Doukhobor pacifism in the twentieth century.

~ *To be continued in the next issue of ISKRA.*

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Christian Bartolf, Dominique Miething

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Part 2

3. Global Significance

In 1899, Chertkov published a new edition of his *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*—the “handbook for the campaign” (Alston 2014, 207). The American Peace Society had favorably presented the publication of the first edition in its journal *The Advocate of Peace* (Vol. 59, No. 11, December 1897, pp. 264-267) and ran sales advertisements in all subsequent issues until December 1902. The new edition now included an introduction by Mavor, specifically addressing an American and Canadian audience, not only to inform about Doukhobor pacifist convictions but to generate empathy for the persecuted and to solicit additional monetary support. To this end, Mavor provided contacts to local committees in Winnipeg, Philadelphia, and New York City. Active in the latter city were, among others, these renowned Tolstoyans: William Lloyd Garrison Jr. (1838-1909), Ernest Howard Crosby (1856-1907), and Jane Addams, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate of 1931 and founder of the famous social reform project Hull House in Chicago (Mavor 1899, 14), and, according to Sergei Lvovich Tolstoy (1863-1947), quite possibly also Henry George Jr. (1862-1916) (Tolstoy 1998, 349; Donskov 2019a, 343).



Friends of the Doukhobors, 1899

Standing (from left to right): Sergei L. Tolstoj, Anna de Carousa, Leo A. Soulerjitsky. Seated (from left to right): Sasha Satz, Prince Hilkov, W.R. McCreary, Mary Robetz

Doukhobors / Library and Archives Canada / C-018130

Addams served as one of the Vice-Presidents of the American Peace Society since at least June 1900. In her acclaimed book *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), in which she insisted that a “negative peace” (Addams 1907, 23), i.e., the mere cessation of warfare, must be complemented by the establishment of social justice so that a lasting peace may be realized, Addams noted:

“The Doukhobors are a religious sect in Russia whose creed emphasizes the teaching of nonresistance. A story is told of one of their young men who, because of his refusal to enter the Russian army, was brought for trial before a judge, who reasoned with him concerning the folly of his course and in return received a homily upon the teachings of Jesus. ‘Quite right you are,’ answered the judge, ‘from the point of abstract virtue, but the time has not yet come to put into practice the literal sayings of Christ.’ ‘The time may not have come for you, your Honor,’ was the reply, ‘but the time has come for us.’ Who can tell at what hour vast numbers of Russian peasants upon those Russian steppes will decide that the time has come for them to renounce warfare, even as their prototype, the mujik, Count Tolstoy, has already decided that it has come for him? Conscious as the peasants are of religious motive, they will meet a cheerful martyrdom for their convictions, as so many of the Doukhobors have done. It may, however, be easy to overestimate this changed temper because of the simple yet dramatic formulation given by Tolstoy to the nonresisting spirit.” (Addams 1907, 230f.)

The notion that Addams’ understanding of “Non-Resistance” (Maude 1904, 65ff.) differed from Tolstoy’s own requires closer scrutiny. For our purpose here though, it suffices to state that the Doukhobors’ resolute pacifism earned her admiration and encouraged the policy of later organizations such as the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, presided over by Addams since 1915, which in their 1919 resolutions advocated the abolition of military conscription and of the right to declare war (*ius ad bellum*).

With the world public still under the impression of the Salt March from the Sabarmati Ashram to Navsari (today: Dandi), Gujarat, India, between 12 March to 5 April

1930, Addams felt it necessary to remind Americans of Gandhi's indebtedness to "Tolstoy's masterly exposition of the doctrine of non-resistance" (Addams 1931, 1485) that had significantly contributed to the invention of the concept of "satyagraha" (Sanskrit: satya: "truth", āgraha: "firmness", "persistence"). Gandhi, in his first autobiography *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1928), went to great lengths in explaining the underlying principles of this new concept and the perceived need for a new terminology:

"Jesus Christ indeed has been acclaimed as the prince of passive resisters but I submit in that case passive resistance must mean Satyagraha and Satyagraha alone. There are not many cases in history of passive resistance in that sense. One of these is that of the Doukhobors of Russia cited by Tolstoy. The phrase passive resistance was not employed to denote the patient suffering of oppression by thousands of devout Christians in the early days of Christianity. I would therefore class them as Satyagrahis. And if their conduct be described as passive resistance, passive resistance becomes synonymous with satyagraha. It has been my object [...] to show that Satyagraha is essentially different from what people generally mean in English by the phrase passive resistance." (Gandhi 1928, 180)

Gandhi does not specify where exactly he learned of the Doukhobors in Tolstoy's works. They certainly were not explicitly named in their famous exchange of letters between 1 October 1909 and 7 September 1910, and whether the passing mention in *The Kingdom of God*—a key influence (Gandhi 1927, 322)—was sufficient, we cannot be sure. Nevertheless, the abundance of references to them in Tolstoy's essays before the turn of the century would have provided ample opportunity—e.g., in his essay "Two Wars" (October/November 1898) or when Tolstoy nominated the Doukhobors for the first Nobel Peace Prize (Bartolf 2018) in "Nobel's Bequest. Letter Addressed to a Swedish Editor" (August 1897).

In the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, there are additional instances of the Indian lawyer's praise for the Doukhobors' non-cooperation with the military and their rejection of private property, two in 1920 in Gandhi's newspapers *Navajivan* and *Young India*, and one in a letter to Rameshwari Nehru (1886-1966) dated July 14/16, 1941. We draw attention, however, to the only case of direct interaction with a member of the

Doukhobors: an exchange of letters between Gandhi and Peter Nikolaevich (Nicholas) Maloff. On 20 April 1928, Gandhi, writing from Sabarmati Ashram, expressed his gratitude to Maloff for sending him a book compiled by Alexander M. Evalenko (1861-1934): *The Message of the Doukhobors. A Statement of True Facts by 'Christians of the Universal Brotherhood' and by Prominent Champions of their Cause* (New York: The International Library Publishing Co., 1913). Gandhi encouraged him to continue the correspondence: "I shall feel deeply interested in whatever you may write to me about the condition of the Doukhobors in their new home", he wrote in response to Maloff's account of the Burning of Arms, before answering to an apparent request: "I am sorry I do not keep any photographs of myself. I am editing a weekly newspaper called *Young India* of which I send you the latest issue. I shall be interested also to know more about the new leader [Peter Petrovich "the Purger" Verigin, 1881-1939] who has just come to you from Russia." (Gandhi 1970, 245f.)

Peter "Pete" Maloff was born during the Doukhobors' first winter in Canada, on January 14, 1900, in Buchanan, Saskatchewan, to parents who had witnessed the Burning of Arms (Maloff 2020, 26; Tarasoff 2002, 45-49). Since the biography of "Pete" Maloff, peace activist, historian and, as he came to regard himself, independent Doukhorbor, has not been comprehensively researched, we highlight selected information provided by his granddaughter Vera (Maloff 2020), and collage them with our own findings.

According to an obituary letter written by his son, Peter "Petya" Maloff (1923-2013), dated January 1, 1972, his father died on October 22, 1971. This letter, sent from the Maloff's hometown Thrums, British Columbia, was published in *The Catholic Worker* (Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, February 1972, p. 7) and addressed to the newspapers' founding editor, Dorothy Day: "You will recall your visit with us here several years ago. You were at my parent's place, Peter and Lucy Maloff. Father has been a subscriber to The Catholic



Pete N. Maloff, c. 1960s

Worker for many years.” Setting Peter Maloff on par with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in their shared commitment “to fulfil and bring to realization the commandment “Thou Shalt Not Kill”, the obituary ends: “After his visit to Hiroshima, Auschwitz and the Peskerov cemetery [Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery] in Leningrad, he vowed more than ever to continue the struggle to bring about the ‘golden age,’ so that man would ‘turn his swords into plowshares.’ Together with A. J. Muste he addressed the manifestation for peace at Suffield, Alberta in 1966, and another one in Manitoba Peace Gardens in 1968.” A photograph of Pete Maloff standing next to pastor and activist Abraham J. Muste (1885-1967) is documented (Maloff 2020, 231f.). In 1960/61, Maloff travelled to Europe, Russia, India, and Japan: “My main purpose of the trip was to attend the Tolstoy Jubilee in Moscow and Yasnaya Polyana.” (Maloff 1963)

A testimony to Maloff’s visit on 22 January 1961 to the detonation site of the atom bomb in Hiroshima is the following (Maloff 1961):

“HIROSHIMA

(A Prayer of a Doukhobor)

Hiroshima, the prostrated, the ghastly, the pitiful Hiroshima, I stand before thee in humble contrition. My heart is heavy with remorse and shame. I cannot help feeling personally guilty for this ignoble act, for I know that no blind force of nature caused this devastation. It was done by the hand of man. I care not what nationality, race or creed was the man who dropped the diabolical bomb on this city. All I know is this, he was a man, my brother. I should have been my brother’s keeper, but I failed him. I was too selfish, too smug and complacent and did not care what my brother was doing. Perhaps I helped him, inadvertently, in his depredations by my silence and apathy. And now, he has sunk to the lowest of depths of iniquity.

O, God, why hast Thou let Thy children stoop to such depravity? Hast Thou forsaken us completely? It must be so, and I admit that we merit Thy neglect. I admit that we have been an utter disappointment to Thee. We have turned away from Thy righteous path. We have violated Thy sacred laws and commandments, and know not what love is. And now the spectre of Hiroshima stares at us in the future, and our hearts are cold with fear. But if the righteous law of Karma and retribution overtakes us, we shall not complain, for we know that

Hiroshima is well nigh unpardonable.

But if, in spite of Hiroshima, there is left a tiny spark of compassion in Thy heart for us, poor mortals, O, God, please help us. Show us the way of salvation. In the name of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, show us how we can redeem ourselves to be worthy of Thy Fatherhood. Save us, dear God, save us from ourselves, save us before we turn the whole earth into one vast Hiroshima. Amen.”

Pete Maloff spent many years in Oregon and California during his youth and early adulthood. He had moved there with his parents in 1912, but they decided to return to Canada in 1917, where they were still exempted from military service during the First World War as conscientious objectors. To them, this return seemed prudent after Maloff’s arrest in 1917 during a labor struggle and strike action when a police officer threatened to register him with the American military. In 1923, he was lured back to California with his wife Lucy “Lusha” Hoodicoff (1902-1996), not least because of “the opportunities for him to meet philosophers, writers, peace activists, spiritual leaders and dedicated vegetarians” (Maloff 2020, 39-45) such as Ilya Lvovich Tolstoy (1866-1933) and the anarchist John William Lloyd (1857-1940), a gay rights activist (see Kissack 2008) with whom Pete critically discussed the problems arising from the concept of “free love”. Noteworthy is Pete’s involvement with the Tolstoyan Fanny Bixby Spencer (1879-1930), author of *The Revolution Non-Resistant* (1919), *The Jazz of Patriotism (an Anti-War Play)* (1920) and *The Repudiation of War* (1922). Spencer gave a copy of the latter to Maloff as a gift when she received him at her home at Costa Mesa.

We can learn about these encounters also from Maloff’s book *Dukhobortsy: Ikh istoriia, zhizn i bor’ba* [The Doukhobors: Their History, Life and Struggle] (Thrums, BC: self-published [printed by J. Regehr, North Kildonan, Manitoba], 1948), which covers the years until the mid-1920s. He dedicated this book:



Peter Maloff: *The Doukhobors Their History, Life and Struggle*, 1948

“To all spiritual heroes, known and unknown, champions, heralders and martyrs, who perish on crosses, scaffolds, stakes, and in prisons, the participants of the past and present great historical procession—struggle against folly, hypocrisy and universal evil—militarism. To all future pulsing hearts of world conscience, the vanguard and builders of universal brotherhood of all human beings in the world [...]” (cited in Maloff 2020, 252)

By the early 1960s, Maloff was working on “my second volume which will include Doukhobor current history up to 1940. And perhaps my third volume will cover the rest.” (Maloff 1963). He has translated the first volume into English, but never published this manuscript of more than 600 pages, today kept in some British Columbia libraries and university archives (e.g., University of Victoria Archives, Fonds AR051: “Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations”). Historians have consulted the Russian original as an important source (e.g., Brock 1964; Woodcock and Avakumovic 1968; Klibanov 1982; Androsoff 2011). For want of a complete bibliography, we can mention that the University of British Columbia library not only stores four numbers of a literary magazine he edited: *Dukhoborcheskii rassvet: prosveshchenie literatura i zhizn': organ svobodnoi mysli* (1954-55), but also *In Quest of a Solution: Three Reports on Doukhobor Problem* (2nd ed. [Canada: Hall Printers], 1957). His granddaughter (Maloff 2020, 223) also informs us of the existence of *Maloff's Research Library, an Anti-Militarism and Vegetarian Idealism Newsletter* (1967).

Pete Maloff was arrested at least four times for his commitment to peace. For example, in August 1929, he led a demonstration through the city of Nelson, British Columbia, against the use of land taxes for military purposes—one of their banners read: “We are followers of Christ, therefore we cannot serve two masters. We cannot pay taxes on which firearms and ammunition are constructed.” Maloff was sentenced to six months hard labor at Oakalla prison, near Vancouver (Maloff 2020, 66-69). At that time, Maloff still identified with the Sons of Freedom for their advocacy of animal rights, communal ownership, and nonviolence. Maloff clarified that he “never condoned arson and bombings” committed by the so-called Freedomites, and eventually became an “Independent Doukhobor”. The extremists retaliated, he himself “suffered three attacks of this nature. On of them quite serious.” (Maloff 1963)

Various documents confirm Pete Maloff's association with the Sons of Freedom between 1928 and 1939. For instance, Maloff published a two-page “Call of the ‘Sons of Freedom’ from the Universal Christian Brotherhood (Doukhobors) [16 September 1928]” in the Zürich journal *Neue Wege* (New Ways), edited by the Swiss religious socialist Leonhard Ragaz (1868-1945). The “Call” attacked several causes of war: materialistic greed, the Church's collaboration with the military, and the indoctrination of children with the false notion of nationalism at state-run schools:

“Some of our brothers who have had a few morgen of land in Thrums and Grand Forks (British Columbia) today renounce this land and give it to the workers of all humanity. On every such land there is a poster with the following inscription: ‘Sons of freedom, this land is a gift from God for those who want to work on it. This land is forever free of taxes, which are used for the preparations of war, it can neither be bought nor sold.’” (Maloff 1928, 488, translation CB/DM)

As Maloff stated in his call, the notion of sacrifice for one's own ideals played a significant role in the transformational struggle for a better world, thus anticipating the above-mentioned protest march.

A second example of Pete Maloff's association with the Sons of Freedom is his correspondence with the well-known Russian-American anarchist Alexander Berkman (1870-1936), archived in the Alexander Berkman Papers, Folder 18: “Doukhobors – Sons of Freedom. 1929-1930, 1932” at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. How exactly this contact to Berkman, one of the founders of the No Conscription League in 1917 along with Emma Goldman (1869-1940), was facilitated, we do not know. While Maloff had initiated the letter exchange, asking Berkman to publish documents related to the Canadian government's practice of forcibly taking away children from the custody from their Sons of Freedom families (cf. some of Maloff's letters on this are to be found in the Doukhobor collection (MsC-121) at Simon Fraser University Special Collections and Rare Books [SFU]), he could not continue due to his incarceration at Oakalla prison. A friend by the name Anatol Fomin, Porto Rico, British Columbia, continued the string of letters, providing Berkman with Maloff's new address behind bars. Fomin hinted at “certain repressions there and in consequence Peter and 5 others were ‘put down in the basement.’”

The Maloff-Fomin-Berkman correspondence elucidates the precarious reputation of nonviolent resistance—especially when couched in religious terminology—in the mind of an avowed atheist and perpetrator of revolutionary violence such as Berkman. On 12 November 1929, he opined that even Gandhi has come to “realise the ineffectiveness of non-resistance.” Fomin then accused Berkman of “INTOLERANCE” towards Doukhobor spirituality in his reply dated March 24, 1930, while the Salt March was still unfolding, and retorted that this “present advance of Mahatma Gandhiji and his followers is definite proof that Gandhi never abandoned his policy of non-resistance.” Finally, Pete Maloff himself answered again on 23 February 1932, his tone conciliatory:

“Although we use different methods in our struggle for the goal, but our foundation is the same. I deeply believe that if you will look deeper into the fundamental causes of our movement, you will agree that we are the closest friends and co-workers on the path of liberation of man from the bondage of slavery.”

With the National Resources Mobilization Act of 1940 in effect, Maloff refused to register and was subsequently imprisoned in Nelson, British Columbia, for several consecutive three months-terms and later placed under house arrest. Maloff was beaten and rumors circulated that the Warden would try and transfer him to the “Essondale Insane Asylum” or even stage Maloff’s suicide:

“The only cause for this threat was my alleged stubborn resistance to registration on [grounds of] conscientious objection to war, which according to the representatives of this democratic civilized society, was an influence on others to follow my example” (as cited in Maloff 2020, 228).

Because of the intervention of John Haynes Holmes (1879-1964) from New York, Unitarian minister, and co-founder of the Anti-Enlistment League in 1915 and the American Civil Liberties Union in 1920, the torture stopped (Maloff 2020, 157). Some of the correspondence between Maloff and his long-time friend Holmes is preserved in the John Haynes Holmes Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

While Maloff’s granddaughter concludes that it was Pete’s “fourth and final time in jail that broke him” (Maloff

2020, 155), citing the convincing account of his poor health and the hardship forced upon his family during his imprisonment, a still defiant Pete spoke to the public in October 1941 after a recent release:

“I came out fairly well, my spirit is unshakeable. Family are all well and vibrating with courage . . . We must face reality courageously and bear the torch. It may be a dim one and at times it flickers seriously, but we should not despair, for our main attention must be directed to saving the light, even if it is dim, because only light will brighten the darkness that has enveloped mankind.”

This testimony comes from Maloff’s letter to Ammon Ashford Hennacy (1893-1970), shared in *The Conscientious Objector* (New York), Vol. III, No. 5, October 1941, p. 7, a monthly newspaper published by the War Resisters’ League, edited by Jay Nelson Tuck (1916-1985).

Scattered written evidence of Maloff’s involvement with a network of humanists and pacifists such as the ones named above exemplifies the need for more research. Additional leads bolster this, for example: a) Maloff corresponded with the socialist economist Scott Nearing before he and his wife, the violinist Helen Nearing, both outspoken vegetarians, came to stay with them in Thrums: “The Nearings lived a simple life, and his ideas and your grandfather’s were alike” (Maloff 2020, 238), states Elizabeth Maloff, Pete’s daughter; b) Lucy Maloff named the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) as one of her husband’s correspondents (Cran 2006, 61); c) Maloff congratulated the work of British anarchist-communist Guy Alfred Aldred (1886-1963), editor of several journals out of Glasgow (cf. Maloff’s letter in *The Word*, Volume XIII, Issue 4, February 1952).

We conclude our brief sketch of Maloff’s life with a final return to Woodcock’s autobiography, because out of his typewriter flowed a carefully crafted literary portrait that rooted in the early 1950s when George and Inge Woodcock (1917-2003) toured their new home province British Columbia:

“On our fourth and last winter journey we hitchhiked into the Kootenays for meetings with the Doukhobors that had been arranged by Peter Maloff. Peter was one of the few intellectuals among his people, and I had been corresponding with him

while I was still in England. We had stayed a day with him previously, and now thanks to him we were able to go as trusted strangers to Gilpin, a village of the Sons of Freedom which we reached by a precarious little box of an aerial ferry cranked by hand over the rocks and rapids of the winter-swollen Kettle River.” (Woodcock 1987, 23)

Since the flow of biographical details dries up at this point, the source had to be found in the original account of Woodcock’s meeting with “Pete M.”:

“He immediately made us welcome, and began a flood of questions about England, the English radical movements, and people like Fenner Brockway and Runham Brown whom he had admired in the past. He was an impulsive, awkward man, given to quick, clumsy movements, to hesitant insights and sudden fits of enthusiasm. He spoke in a flowery kind of English, packed with slightly outmoded superfluties and literary clichés, which one often encounters among people who have learnt English as a foreign tongue and have become familiar with it largely through reading poetry and the writings of idealists. It was, indeed, a little like a spoken version of the English which men like Kropotkin wrote.

During that evening and the following morning we talked with Pete about his own life and ideals. He classed himself as an Independent Doukhobor. At one time, during his boyhood, his parents had left the movement and lived in the United States, and this had taken him away from the narrow environment of the community and enabled him to learn a great deal he would otherwise have lost. He had come to appreciate literature and, while never discarding the main Doukhobor philosophy, he had learnt that there were other men who had similar conceptions and expressed them in new ways which broadened his own insight into social and religious problems. After a time he had returned to the Doukhobors, had been an active Son of Freedom, but always he had fought against the narrowness which often afflicted his fellows. He had found their anti-literary prejudices a particular source of annoyance. Some of the orthodox, as well as many of the radicals, believed that books were useless, almost a diabolical device, and that all knowledge should come to a man from within. He thought that this was an idealistic belief which might have some relevance if men were really free, but that at present books were a way of

conserving human wisdom of transmitting useful thoughts, of developing the mind and helping it to shed the prejudices which were a bar to spiritual and moral development. He thought the same of education. He agreed with the other members of his sect that education by the state should be resisted, since it instilled militaristic and slavish thoughts. But he did not agree that children should be brought up as illiterates, and he had been careful to educate all his own sons and daughters, so that they would have access to books as well as being able to earn their living in a practical manner.

In recent years he had tended to stand aside from the Doukhobors because he felt that none of their factions—Orthodox, Independents, Sons of Freedom—was adhering to the true and radical Doukhobor teachings. He had made it his task to write history of the Doukhobors, and had tried to analyse the events of the past in such a way as to show the errors which had led to the relative decline of the movement as a moral force. He had paid for the publication of the book out of his own earnings as a truck gardener, but very few Doukhobors had bought it, and many of them particularly among the orthodox, had subjected him to insults and even to threats of legal action for the criticisms he had made of the errors of the past.” (Woodcock 1952, 114ff.)

Maloff’s dismay about some Doukhobors’ prejudice against intellectual labor and the use of technology for the welfare of all reaches us as an echo of Tolstoy’s fundamental criticism of Verigin’s own “stubborn resistance to books” (Tolstoy to Verigin, 14 October 1896 in: Donskov 2019b, 225-229). Moreover, Maloff’s interest in Fenner Brockway (1888-1988), first chairman of the War Resisters’ International (WRI) since 1926, and Herbert Runham Brown (1879-1949), the organization’s leading Secretary since 1923, himself one of the estimated 20,000 British conscientious objectors during the First World War, reminds us how the Doukhobors’ defiance of war is historicized as a role model for the WRI (Prasad 2005, 45). In fact, some Doukhobors have associated with the WRI since the 1920s (cf., for example, the 1925-1932 correspondence from the CCUB members and War Resisters International at SFU; Koozma J. Tarasoff’s participation in the 1957 WRI conference in London).

Valentin Bulgakov, not a Doukhobor himself, served as a member on the WRI’s International Council from

1928 until 1934 (Prasad 2005, 462) and related the antimilitarist efforts of the Russian Doukhobors to a German-speaking public, first through his writings (Bulgakoff 1928), then in person at the 8th Congress of the International Vegetarian Union in July 1932 at Eden Colony, a fruit growing cooperative settlement near Oranienburg, Germany. Here, Bulgakov gave an address on Tolstoy and Vegetarianism, in which he remarked on the Doukhobors:

“I bring forward this example only to show how potent indeed is the message when it arises from deep conviction. Tolstoy fires the spirit of Werigin, and Werigin, in turn, is likewise able to inflame the hearts of thousands; the result being a new social order, with its accompanying influx into the public opinion and the public conscience. We of the present day lack faith in the inner worth and spiritual powers of mankind! Ought we not, as an International Vegetarian Union, to enlist ourselves as part of the great movement for the abolition of war?” (Bulgakov 1932)

More conscientious objectors such as the Quaker Corder Catchpool (1883-1952) attended this conference along with other sympathizers of the Doukhobors such as the Swiss social reformer Werner Zimmermann (1893-1982), who had drawn inspiration from their nonviolence and cooperative settlements in British Columbia. The conference was organized by Karl Bartes (1879-1962), who in 1931 took over the editorship of the Eden Colony’s journal *Edener Mitteilungen*. Since then, this monthly featured articles on the Doukhobors, more than a year

in the run-up to the conference. For instance, a two-part essay by Biryukov on “The economic order of the Doukhobors in Canada (April and June 1931, Vol. 26, No. 4 and 6), and two contributions by Bartes in August and September 1931.

A delegation of six Doukhobors (photograph: Bartes



Left to right: back row - Fedor Vanjoff, Gabriel V. Vereshchagin, Simeon Gritchen; front row - Anastasia Vanjoff, Luba Vereshchagin, Agafia Gritchen

1931a, 136) from Brilliant, British Columbia: Fedor Vanjoff, Gabriel (“Harry”) Vasilevich Vereshchagin, and Simeon Gritchen, accompanied by their daughters: Anastasia Vanjoff, Luba Vereshchagin, and Agafia Gritchen, visited Eden Colony on 14 July 1931. They were passing through Germany on their way to assist Doukhobors still living in Russia, more specifically those who pondered escape from governmental repressions to Canada. Vereshchagin led the delegation—imbued with the spirit of his late father, one of three main organizers of the Burning of Arms—in their attempt to enter the Soviet Union, which would last for nine months, but the Russian authorities never granted their entry. They left Germany on 21 January 1932 from Bremen to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

A photograph encapsulating the legacy of Doukhobor pacifism was taken during the delegation’s stay in Berlin, Germany (printed in Bartes 1931b, 151 and Bartes 1931c, 15). Seated on the left is Gabriel V. Vereshchagin, a relative of the famous Russian anti-war painter Vasily V. Vereshchagin (1842-1904). Seated on the right: Valentin Bulgakov. Both are posing under a bust of Immanuel Kant, author of the famous treatise “Perpetual Peace” (1795). The bust’s location was at the “Siegesallee” (Victory Avenue), commissioned by German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1895—the same year as the Burning of Arms.



Bust of Immanuel Kant, Gabriel V. Vereshchagin (left), Valentin Bulgakov (right) at Siegesallee, Berlin, 1931

“[...] Do we think to overcome this worldwide crisis by using the same old outworn methods: bigger armies, navies, air force, hydrogen bombs, poison gases and all our other confused values. I myself doubt it! I stand for creative intelligence which was distinctly distilled in the unchanging truth of that one cosmic law: ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill!’” (Maloff 1968, 7)

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