A Narrative Inquiry into the Discourse of Conflict
among the Doukhobors and Between the Doukhobors and Government

by

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ABSTRACT

In 1899, a group of Russian peasants called the Doukhobors immigrated to Canada, after suffering centuries of persecution in Russia. Soon after their arrival, conflict emerged between these new immigrants and the state over such issues as land ownership, refusal to register births and deaths, and to send their children to school. As positions hardened, a group known as the Sons of Freedom emerged that used nudity, arson, and bombings as their means of protest and retaliation. These practices continued on for the better part of a century.

Numerous unsuccessful attempts were made to address the conflict, ranging from commissions of inquiry to child apprehensions for truancy. Finally, in 1985 an accord was reached among the groups and government that marked the beginning of the end to violence. What enabled this intervention to succeed was the focus of this study.

This study applies a narrative approach that examined the discourse of the Doukhobor groups, government and others to learn how certain perceptions and meanings led to bombings and arson and how co-constructing competing narratives into a new narrative provided a means for change. The analysis is based on transcripts of the proceedings, along with the narrative renderings and epiphanies of those who played a key strategic role in helping the groups reach an accord. Resulting from this study were findings that challenged conventional conflict resolution practices, particularly when applied in an ethnopolitical context.

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Acknowledgement

This is a project that started 25 years ago when I first began working with the Doukhobor communities in the West Kootenay and Boundary regions of the Province. These past five years have been spent making sense of it all.

There are some who I wish to thank for having challenged and inspired my thinking along the way, these include Hugh Herbison and Tom McGauley, who introduced me to Castlegar life and Doukhobor lore thirty-four years ago, Dr. Joseph Schaeffer, whose work in community and communication is truly insightful and cutting edge, and Dr. Marie Hoskins who helped me realize that the narrative constructed postmodern world we live in isn't as scary as some make it out to be.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

> While I pondered what he said, he leaned toward me as if to speak in confidence. 'Let me give you one piece of advice...you can't apply rational thinking to an irrational situation'. [1]

This dissertation examined how the Russian Doukhobor community in British Columbia, who for several decades were victimized by bombings and arson by a group within its community known as the Sons of Freedom, finally reached an accord, bringing an end to years of turmoil. What was significant about this event was that it took eighty years, three Royal Commissions and numerous other failed attempts before an accord was reached. The question was what enabled change to occur that brought an end to these years of turmoil?

Before addressing the question, an historical context is needed to shed some light on how the conflict came to be. However, contextualizing the past has its problems, given the numerous issues, perceptions, beliefs, meanings and narratives that shape how stories get told. Therefore, this is not an attempt to sort through the imbroglio of issues, nor is it an historical analysis. Rather, this overview, drawn mainly from the work of Tarasoff (1963), Reid (1932) and Hawthorn (1952), briefly describes the troubled relationship among the Doukhobors and between the Doukhobors and government.

Historical Overview

The word 'Doukhobor' is derived from the Russian term *Doukho-borets,* meaning 'spirit wrestler'; a term applied in 1785 by Ambrosius, the Archbishop of

Ekaterinoslav, to a group of Russian peasants who left the Russian Orthodox Church (Tarasoff, 1963). Although there are no written records to describe their origin, Tarasoff believes that the Doukhobors emanated from a schism that occurred as a result of changes in the liturgy introduced by the Patriarch Nikon in 1652. Those who left the church were known as the 'Old Believers'; and the Doukhobors were among this group that emerged during that period. However, it was not until mid 1700's when Sylvan Kolesnikoff, from the Ekaterinoslav province, denounced icon worship and opposed other externalities of the church that Doukhoborism took shape (Tarasoff, 1982). It was at this time that many Doukhobors were exiled in an attempt by the Tsarist government to destroy this movement.

The Doukhobors became a communally minded people, sharing all possessions and working for the good of the community as a whole. By 1895 they were practicing vegetarians and their pacifist tenets had led them to a complete break with the military. They dramatically demonstrated their refusal to kill by burning all their firearms. Their refusal to obey Russian conscription laws alienated them from the Tsarist government, which tried to destroy the sect through imprisonment, torture and exile. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Doukhobors sustained themselves with hopes and dreams of a "Promised Land", a place where they could live peacefully with their beliefs.

Peter Kropotkin, a Russian anarchist living in England, suggested Canada as a safe haven. Contacts were made with the Canadian Government, which appeared sympathetic. A group headed by Aylmer Maude, Prince Khilkov, and Doukhobor

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[1] A personal conversation in 1979 with a Sons of Freedom member.

representatives Makhortoff and Ivin, was delegated to find a suitable locality for resettlement.

The Doukhobor plight had become known in Britain through Leo Tolstoy who garnered public support, particularly among the English Quakers, who empathized with the Doukhobor situation. Enough funds were raised through the sale of Tolstoy's book, *Resurrection,* and other sources, to enable the Doukhobors to immigrate to Canada in 1899. Seven thousand four hundred and twenty-seven arrived initially, followed by an additional four hundred and seventeen, who arrived between 1900 and 1920 (Hawthorn, 1952, p. 8). The Canadian government granted them military exemption similar to that of the Mennonites.

The first contingent of the Doukhobors to arrive settled on blocs of land in Saskatchewan. Soon after their arrival, confusion arose when the federal government made it known that granting title required individuals to sign for their land and to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown. Negotiations took place between the federal government and Doukhobor intermediaries, which led to further confusion, as their communal lifestyle discouraged private ownership and swearing an oath was contrary to their notion that their allegiance was to God, and thus most refused to sign.

In 1902, Peter V. Verigin arrived in Canada anxious to cooperate with the government; he convinced all but a small number of families to sign individually for their land, a decision that caused discontent among a number of families. Although the majority believed their leader to be divinely inspired, many began to withdraw from the community to become 'Independents'. As well, a small group made up in

part of discontented families, who called themselves *svobodniki*, meaning "Sons of Freedom", began to show their dissent by protesting in the nude. In 1903, the Sons of Freedom marched in the nude to show their fellow Doukhobors and the authorities that they believed in *real* freedom; however, the authorities thought differently and all were arrested.

Further land conflicts in Saskatchewan arose when a new government decided to remove the 'Hamlet clause' from the *Homestead Act* which enabled the Doukhobors, like the Mennonites before them, to settle and work lands communally. This led Peter V. Verigin to purchase land privately in south central British Columbia. This meant that he could hold land on behalf of his members and do so without having to swear an oath of allegiance.

Soon after, starting in 1908, many made their move to British Columbia. New conflicts emerged with government officials when families refused to register births and deaths with the Department of Vital Statistics and to send their children to school. The Province passed the *Community Regulation Act* in 1914, which placed the onus of responsibility on every member to register births, deaths and to send every school age child to school as well as to comply with the provisions of the *Health Act.* Those who violated this new act were to be fined, and if fines were not paid, community assets could be seized (Tarasoff, 1963).[2] To avert enforcement of this new legislation, an agreement was made by Peter V. Verigin[3], for children to attend schools in their area (Tarasoff, 1963). In 1920, new provisions were made to the *Public Schools Act,* which created rural school districts, affecting the already

[2] This act is currently in the process of being repealed.
[3] Peter V. Verigin was also referred to as Peter 'The Lordly'.

established arrangements with the Doukhobors. If any school declined to live up to these new administrative arrangements, the community could be forced to pay the full cost of the school and teacher's salaries, with seizure of assets included. By 1922, there were eleven schools established, the government having built two with the remaining built by the Doukhobor community. The enrolment population of Doukhobor children was 414, which represented approximately 82 percent of those who would be considered school age children (Reid, 1932). However, a steady drop in enrolment occurred as a result of this government-sponsored schools initiative. In 1923, many schools were destroyed by fire. [4]

There were many other issues and events that led to civil unrest among the Doukhobors. In 1924, a bombing of a Canadian Pacific Railway train killed Peter 'the Lordly' Verigin, (along with eight other passengers), leaving many to believe that the government was responsible for Lordly's death. In 1927, Peter the Lordly's son, Peter Petrovich Verigin, who the Doukhobors called *Chistiakov*, arrived from the Soviet Union to assume leadership of the Doukhobors. During his time in Canada (from 1927 to 1939 when he died) the number of Sons of Freedom rose substantially, while the number of community Doukhobor members decreased.[5] Also during his time, work outside the community declined rapidly, along with sawmill production and other revenue sources of the CCUB Ltd.[6] By 1938, sawmills

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[4] Cathy Frieson (2002) suggests that fire was a common practice among Russian peasants who often used it for purposes of justice or revenge, or to exert social control over those who would violate village norms.
[5] In 1923 there were 5000 paid Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB) Ltd. members. In 1933 there were 3,274 members and in 1938 there were 2,113 members (Bochemuehl, 1968).
[6] The CCUB Ltd. was formed in 1917 to manage the assets and other holdings of the Doukhobor community. The collapse of the CCUB Ltd. was a result of outstanding debts owed to two mortgage companies. When the CCUB Ltd. went into receivership the Province acquired the properties from the mortgage companies to prevent a mass eviction. The Land Settlement Board administered these lands until they were sold back to the Doukhobors in mid 1960s, long after Plenderleith's comments appeared.

fell into disuse as timber resources were exhausted and the last remaining productive mills in the Slocan Valley and Champion Creek were destroyed by fire.

In 1931, the federal government amended the offence provisions for public nudity under the *Criminal Code*, increasing the penalty from six months to three years in prison. Within the year, over six hundred Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were arrested in Nelson for nudity, and sentenced to three years in a makeshift penitentiary on Piers Island, off the coast of Vancouver Island. Their children, 365 in all, were placed into a variety of institutions and care situations during their imprisonment.

In 1939, the CCUB Ltd. went into receivership. Here the provincial government, in an effort to avert a mass eviction, purchased the debt owing to the mortgage holders, thus transferring the former CCUB Ltd. lands to the Crown. The newly acquired Crown lands were administered by the Provincial Land Settlement Board, which charged a nominal rental fee for those continuing to live on the lands.

During the 1940s, efforts to enforce registration for military service led to protests by the Sons of Freedom, with numerous former CCUB Ltd. buildings (now owned by the Crown), being destroyed. A mass meeting of Doukhobors was held December 12, 1943, with representatives from the National Selective Service. By early the next morning the jam factory, general store, packing shed, six box cars, gas station, and a garage in Brilliant (across the river from Castlegar) were destroyed by fire.[7] In January 1944, an unsuccessful attempt was made by twenty-two Doukhobors to burn John J. Verigin's residence at Brilliant at a time when he was

[7] See Appendix A.

reported to be conferring with the National Selective Service in Vancouver.[8] By the late 1940s and early 1950s, approximately 450 Sons of Freedom Doukhobors were in prison.

In August1947, there were a series of blazes throughout the Kootenay area that began with the burning of John Lebedoff's home,[9] where one hundred Sons of Freedom participated in its destruction. This was followed by large numbers of people who, in protesting the possibility of a third world war, burned their own homes. Tarasoff (1963) noted that many of these fires may have been 'sacrificial fires' that were part of an initiation process into the Sons of Freedom. In addition to their own property, two schools were burned, an attempt was made on a hall, and eleven unoccupied houses in a former Japanese internment camp were set ablaze. Also in August of the same year, a number of Sons of Freedom made their way to Shoreacres, where they warned residents to remove all their furniture and belongings and join the cause. Again, numerous buildings and homes were destroyed by fire.

Similar actions were taken by those living in Gilpin. The number of buildings destroyed by fire and explosives numbered in the several hundred (Tarasoff, 1963), including schools, several churches, many community homes, barns, factories, and public works. Throughout this period, one person died in a fire in Krestova, and one man, who was guarding Peter V. Verigin's tomb at the time, was shot in the hand.

Numerous protests were made to authorities to intervene, and in September 1947, Harry J. Sullivan, Judge of County of New Westminster, was appointed

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[8] His residence was burned on April 14, 1950, which led to the conviction of thirty-six Sons of Freedom.
[9] John Lebedoff was one of the self proclaimed leaders of the Sons of Freedom during this period.

commissioner of inquiry. At his first sitting in South Slocan, October 14, 1947, he said

> ...Canadian people are now determined to have a final show-down on this problem. ...We must ascertain, if possible, the cause of this unrest and unhappiness; the causes of this disrespect of their neighbour's rights and laws by some of the Doukhobor people, and with its resulting terrorism and fear of injury to their fellow Christian neighbours.[10]

On January 7, 1948, after three short months, Judge Sullivan decided that he had enough. He noted that a number of schools had been damaged by fire during the three months of his appointment, and concluded his inquiry by calling for "drastic action" to a situation which he described as "a desperate one". He noted that to proceed further was "useless and silly" and not advisable "until the crazy people are put in the mental asylum and criminals locked up in the penitentiary" (Sullivan, 1948, p. 24). [11]

The beginning of the 1950s was a time when bombings and arson were again on the rise. The RCMP became the new Provincial police force in September 1950, replacing the former British Columbia Provincial Police. The Province was entering into an election and talk about the 'Doukhobor problem' was on everybody's agenda. In the spring of 1950, Attorney General Wismer requested the President of the University of British Columbia, Norman MacKenzie, to appoint a group which would carry out research aimed at understanding the Doukhobor situation and make recommendations for its improvement (Hawthorn, 1952). Dr. Harry Hawthorn was appointed director of the research project and editor of the report, in which he

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[10] British Columbia Royal Commission on Doukhobor Affairs, Interim Report 1948.
[11] Appendix "B": Statement of Commissioner at Sittings of Commission at South Slocan, B. C. on 7th January 1948).

describes how the relationship between the groups and government was historically formed:

> Peasant hostility to government found expression in a doctrine denying the right of governments to exist. Their sole purpose, it was held, is dominance for the purposes of exploitation, their sole basis of operations is brute force. (p. 38)

Hawthorn then describes how adjustments toward government had been made over the years:

> ...[T]here is still some ambivalence. Even the Sons of Freedom demand all sorts of welfare and governmental care while denying that government can serve any useful purpose and refusing the registration that could enable welfare to be given equitably. (It might be pointed out that they avoid recognizing this contradiction by the claim that they have been cheated out of the results of their toil by the government). The communities have long sought state protection from the arsonists, even while failing until recently to produce information against them that must have been available. (p. 38)

The effect of government's use of force, he suggested, should not be under-estimated. He observed that many Sons of Freedom regard prison as a virtuous place: "Instead of bringing social condemnation down on the head of the convict, punishment meted out by the government now brings social approval in its train" (Hawthorn, 1952, p. 39). He went on to suggest that government should devise a "specially suited system of detention for those whose psychological compulsion will force them to continue on the violent path they have been following" (p. 39).

During the time of the Research Committee bombing and arson continued. Geoff Andrew from University of British Columbia proposed that a consultative committee be formed with representation from the Orthodox, Sons of Freedom and Independent Doukhobor groups, provincial and federal governments, and law enforcement agencies. From the minutes of the Consultative Committee its members

appeared keen to look for any possibility that could be pursued for the purpose of ending the bombings and burnings - the first key issue was the transmigration of the Sons of Freedom. The committee first looked to another country, Costa Rica, which was willing to take them, but the Sons of Freedom decided not to go. At this point much effort was made to relocate them to another part of the province. In Hawthorn's analysis, he too believed that moving the Sons of Freedom living in Gilpin and Krestova to another distant place was something he supported:

> This is called for in part by the fact that at Krestova and Gilpin at present there is insufficient watered land even for garden use. A place of re-settlement would need to have sources of support other than farming, and there would be some advantage for the members of the USCC and the Independents if it were distant from their localities. ...
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> Migration or change of locality is not ordinarily an advantage in itself in cases of social or individual problem; instead, it is often an attempted flight which makes a solution even more difficult of attaining. In this case, however, it is held that some move, voluntary and perhaps partial, would be justified by the painful and guilty associations which their home localities now have for some Sons of Freedom. Furthermore, it is hoped that the challenge and excitement of the rebuilding and pioneering associated with a move would occupy minds and energies constructively for a time at least, giving opportunity for other influences to work. (Hawthorn, 1952, pp. 46-47)

Underlying this assumption was veiled idealism on the part of the Consultative Committee. Moving the Sons of Freedom from the area assumed that the Sons of Freedom would be willing to move, and that their move would bring peace to the Kootenays. Why the Consultative Committee would assume this is perplexing, given what many people already knew about the Doukhobors living in Saskatchewan; that they were not far enough removed from the situation to be free of arson instigated by those living in British Columbia. Numerous locations were explored at government expense, including Costa Rica, Mexico and Adams Lake,

east of Kamloops. The Sons of Freedom made it clear that they were not interested in leaving the country, while the Adams Lake proposal eventually collapsed, as the City of Kamloops lobbied against such a move.

In June 1952, a coalition government that was named the Social Credit Party was formed under W. A. C. Bennett's leadership. Their approach to the Sons of Freedom was to take a no-nonsense approach. On April 16, 1953, Attorney General Robert Bonner announced his three-point program for solving the 'Doukhobor problem'. His approach focused on a permanent location outside of Canada for those willing to leave, an active program of rehabilitation for those who do not migrate and a firm attitude on taxation and school attendance.

On September 18, 1953, Premier W. A. C. Bennett gave what was referred to as a policy speech in the legislature, providing an historical perspective of the Doukhobor sect referring to both their persecution in Russia, and their early years in Canada. Premier Bennett described the numerous events at the time, including the previous appointment of Judge Sullivan's Commission of Inquiry and the Research and Consultative Committees. "In this entire picture I cannot, of course, take accurately into account the anxiety, inconvenience, and suffering of the people in the Kootenay Boundary area, who must live with this problem" (Bennett, 1953, p. 5).[12] The Premier went on to say that many of the recommendations in the Research Committee's report were being implemented with the exception of appointing a continuing commission on Doukhobors. The Premier felt that this would be best handled internally by a group of Deputy Ministers.

[12] Doukhobors: Excerpt from Premier W. A. C. Bennett's Policy Speech. Given in the Legislature, September 18th, 1953 [Authors own files].

In September 1953, one hundred forty-eight Sons of Freedom Doukhobor adults were arrested for nudity (once again protesting compulsory education), leaving behind one hundred and four children who were made wards of the Superintendent of Child Welfare, and placed into a residential school setting in a former New Denver Sanatorium. Those who were of school age, along with other Sons of Freedom children who were later apprehended by police, were required to attend school in New Denver until parents or guardians signed an undertaking promising to send the children to school. The standoff lasted until 1959.

In the early 1960s, sixty-nine Sons of Freedom were convicted of bombings and arson, and that brought a brief end to the 'reign of terror'.[13] All remained relatively 'quiet' until the early 1970s, when the last of the Sons of Freedom were released from prison, and again, fire ravaged the communities. There were a number of Sons of Freedom trials during this period, including the Crown's attempt to convict John J. Verigin (and others) for conspiracy to commit arson. Unlike the other indicted co-conspirators, Mr. Verigin was acquitted of two of the four charges with a stay of proceedings entered on the remaining two. Following his trial he and other Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) members made numerous attempts to call on the Attorney General to appoint a commission of inquiry.

In March 1979 I was hired by the Ministry of Attorney General to prepare a report on how government might address the Doukhobor situation. This was a challenging time to be working for government as there were numerous Sons of Freedom arson cases before the courts, in particular John J. Verigin's trial, which left

[13] Seventy were initially charged. The 70th was a 19-year-old non Doukhobor woman who was engaged to one of the accused. She was later acquitted of the charge.

the Orthodox community and others in an uproar. The credibility of the Crown was questioned not only by the Orthodox who saw the trial as a 'travesty', but also by the Sons of Freedom who had risked testifying on the Crown's behalf against John Verigin, who they alleged had instructed them to destroy certain buildings.

In May 1979, I submitted to the Attorney General our report - *A Proposal for Community and Government Involvement in Doukhobor Affairs* (Herbison & Cran, 1979), in which we concluded that

> [a]t present the only mechanism government has for dealing with Doukhobor affairs is the criminal justice system. With responsibility for applying and administering the law according to due process, it cannot be expected to deal adequately with a religious-ethnic minority in all the complexity of its emotionally charged relationships. By its very terms of reference, it deals with conflict only after it erupts into illegal acts. It has no mandate to develop an improved social climate in which protest and depredation would not flourish. (p. 2)

Shortly after the report was submitted, I was asked to begin the process of preparing a plan for implementation. On November 13, 1979, at a press conference held in Cranbrook, British Columbia, the Attorney General announced the formation of what became known as the Kootenay Committee in Intergroup Relations (KCIR).

Crux of the Turmoil

The crux of the debate both prior to and during eight years of KCIR sessions, from 1979 to 1987, was the Sons of Freedom claim that their mission was to save Doukhoborism. They insisted that the Orthodox leadership had first nurtured and then instructed them, albeit covertly using oblique messages, to burn and bomb, which they believed was part of saving Doukhoborism.

These allegations were, for the most part, difficult to understand and accept. The Orthodox Doukhobors, in particular their leadership, had denounced bombings

and arson from the very beginning, and had made numerous efforts over the years to differentiate themselves from those that they described as 'terrorists'. They believed that the Sons of Freedom were using this conspiracy narrative as an excuse to confuse the public in order to elevate their own status.

There was also a third group known as the 'Reformed Sons of Freedom', started by Stephan Sorokin soon after his arrival in 1950 The Reformed represented Sons of Freedom Doukhobors who were no longer interested in going to jail for the 'cause'. Many had already spent time in prison, with some having lost their health or their loved ones. All were resentful toward the Orthodox leadership, whom they believed was responsible for disrupting their lives.

Previous Role as Government Representative

I chose to do my research on the Doukhobors, in part because of my previous involvement in designing and implementing the new approach, but also because over the years I found myself wondering what it was about the KCIR process that enabled the bombings and burnings to end. Was it the intervention or were there possibly other reasons?

Role as Researcher

In 2001, my new challenge was to re-enter the community after 14 years as the 'researcher' rather than 'government representative'. My hope was that I would have an opportunity to engage with those I interview in a conversation about the perceptions and meanings they held about each other and government.

Although my role has changed, I still view myself as integral to the conflict, in part because of my previous role, but also because I am forever mindful that I

cannot detach myself from my own history or my biases and beliefs that I have gleaned from those who have influenced my thinking along the way. In this situation, I have tried to maintain a balance between the competing narratives of the community and my interests, biases and beliefs.

Objectives of the Study

Central to this study is the question of what enabled change to occur or what were the contributing factors that brought an end to the bombings and burnings. In pursuing the question my objective is to learn how individuals, in particular those who were key representatives in the Doukhobor communities during the Expanded KCIR sessions (from 1982 and 1987), perceived conflict between themselves and with government. The study examines the discourse of government, the underlying assumptions that were made, in particular, about the Sons of Freedom by those outside the Doukhobor community, and the narratives of the groups themselves to learn how certain perceptions and meanings were formed.

Limitations of the Study

Although Doukhobor history in Canada has evolved over a hundred-year period, my examination focuses on the narrative exchanges that occurred during the EKCIR sessions and later, during interviews that were held on November 15 and 16, 2001 with those who played a key role in representing their groups during this period. Here, I explore with them their conception of conflict, meanings they constructed about the EKCIR process, other Doukhobor groups and government, and epiphanies they noted along the way. My intention is not to rewrite Doukhobor

history but rather to draw attention to a period of turmoil and how the turmoil was eventually addressed.

There is no question about government's role in helping to exacerbate the turmoil throughout their time in Canada.[14] Notwithstanding, my interest is to make sense of the Sons of Freedom and Orthodox narratives that helped inform and shape their actions and views. These include the narratives that helped the Sons of Freedom explain their reasons for bombing and burning, and the narratives the Orthodox used o describe their former neighbors, family and friends as 'terrorists'.

Discourse Narratives of Others

There have been numerous articles, books and theses written to detail historical events. Some attempt to explain the nuances of the Doukhobor conflict from either a Doukhobor or non-Doukhobor perspective. One of the more comprehensive reports on the Doukhobors was *The Doukhobors of British Columbia* (1952), edited by Dr. Harry Hawthorn, which was a study undertaken by the Doukhobor Research Committee in the early 1950s.

Organization of the Study

In chapter 2, I set out the research methods used and the reasons for doing so. In Chapter 3, a review of the literature is presented that describes the philosophical roots that I bring to the inquiry and the discourses of culture and conflict that are used to explain the nature of conflict. In Chapter 4, I present a narrative of my own experience during the period from 1979 to 1982, to serve as a backdrop and to give

[14] See John McLaren (1995b) for an analysis of government's role.

further context for this study. In Chapter 5, competing narratives among the groups are introduced, drawing from the transcripts of the Expanded KCIR sessions held from 1982 to 1987. Chapter 6 describes the events leading up to an accord, including the process of constructing a new narrative. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the interviews with the three key representatives who played a key role in helping the groups reach an accord. Finally, in Chapter 9 I present my analysis and the lessons learned along the way.

Significance of the Study

This inquiry is timely in that some of these past conflict events are now being raised as issues by the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors and examined by public bodies, government policy makers, researchers and the media. So much depends on the response of government and the Doukhobor community to determine whether the future will continue in relative peace or lead to renewed civil, should government resort to practices that are perceived to be unjust.

The inquiry is significant in that little is known about ethno-political conflict, like the Doukhobor case, particularly with respect to social construction of conflict, power, knowledge, history, emotion and change.

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[14] See John McLaren (1995b) for an analysis of government's role.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

Central to this study was the question of what enabled change to occur or what were the contributing factors that brought an end to the bombings and burnings. Steps pertinent to the study started with an examination of the literature on conflict theory to gain insight into how conflict is conceived by theorists in the field. The second step was to review government records and correspondence, policy papers, media reports, as well as research reports, theses and articles, looking for underlying assumptions and ideological views held by government and others about the 'Doukhobor problem'. Some of the key reports included Judge Sullivan's Commission of Inquiry (1948), Dr. Harry Hawthorn's Research Committee Report (1952) and the Minutes of the Consultative Committee on Doukhobor Affairs from 1950 to 1953.

The next step was to examine the one hundred plus transcripts from the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) sessions that were held between 1982 and 1987. This served two purposes: first, to recall the stories that guided the sessions over the five-year period and second, to identify the particular narratives that, for me, helped define and shape the events and issues of significance during that period.

The final step was to interview those who played a key role in representing their groups during the EKCIR. This was my opportunity to explore with them their

perceptions of conflict, meanings that emerged, and the narratives that they recalled that helped define and shape for them the events and issues they found significant.

Participant Interviews

The interviews consisted of open-ended questions using a semi-structured format that served as a framework for capturing participant's stories.[1] These interviews began with recollections of their youth, followed by a detailed description of their involvement during the EKCIR sessions, and concluded with a description of changes they saw occurring at present.

I began by asking them to describe what it was like growing up in their respective communities, given that each lived in a different location and under different circumstances. I was curious to learn what they remembered from their youth about the stories told of other groups. As well, I asked them to recall the 'turning points' or 'epiphanies' that emerged during the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations sessions that illuminated their thinking or challenged their assumptions, views and judgements they once held.[2] Finally, I was interested to learn how they viewed the situation now that seventeen years had passed. Given my previous experience with all of them, I found the semi-structured open-ended question approach allowed for a deeper level conversation to occur. Those interviewed were Jim Popoff from the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) and Fred Makortoff and Steve Lapshinoff from the Christian

[1] Approximately a week in advance of the interviews, I emailed each of them a copy of the questions.
[2] Epiphanies may be a major event or a cumulative experience or transformation that may result from a series of events.

Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors (Reformed), all of whom consented to using their names.[3]

My first interview was with Steve Lapshinoff on November 15, 2001 at his home in Krestova where he lives with Ann Sorokin. Later that day I met with Jim Popoff at the motel where I was staying in Grand Forks and the following day with Fred Makortoff at his home in South Slocan where he lives with his wife Elizaveta and her father. The interviews averaged between four to six hours.

My plan was to follow up the interviews by having all three of them participate in a group interview to discuss any differences there may have been in their perceptions about the events occurring during the EKCIR. After reviewing the interview transcripts, I realized that there were mainly similarities and very few differences in their description of the events. Rather than organizing a joint interview, I therefore asked each of them to comment on my rendering of their stories.

Ethical Considerations

As mentioned above, I discussed with the interviewees whether they wished to be identified in the study. Although each consented to use their full name (see attached Appendix C) I was reluctant to do so at first recognizing that there may be risks for them (and for me), if they were not satisfied with my interpretation or analysis of their stories. I decided to set aside my apprehension, use their full names and instead send them a copy of the chapters for comment. The comments I received

[3] In addition to these three, I approached two Sons of Freedom, who I thought might shed some light based on their involvement as well. In both cases, they declined my request for health reasons.

in return were supportive and helpful in clarifying certain points, which helped me dispel the difficulties I was imagining.

Use of Narratives

The use of narratives has been well established.[4] Anthropologists, like Victor Turner (1980), use narratives to "formulate the processional form" of what he terms 'social dramas'.[5] These dramas are expressive 'episodes' in which certain conflicts within the community are acted out and resolved. This may take the shape of a shaming feast among an indigenous tribe, the confessional within the Roman Catholic Church or a court of law, for example in the British parliamentary tradition. Turner argues that the narratives of those represented in the social dramas provide the community with a variety of pathways for conciliation, reconciliation or for simply gaining recognition within society.

Paul Ricoeur (1970, 1997) views narratives as the structure that undergirds a process of identity formation and, along with those like Michael White and David Epston (1990), suggest that we organize and give meaning to who we are through the storying of our experience. Others like John Winslade and Gerald Monk (2000) introduce narrative as a new approach to mediation practice and through techniques, such as discursive listening, identify underlying discourses embedded within the story. They tell us that narratives are our way of being in the world and, in the telling, narratives create tensions of order and chaos, stability and instability, as well as meaning and ambiguity. Narratives satisfy our impulse to share our experiences,

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[4] In searching through Proquest's Digital Dissertations for 2001, there were 24 dissertations where a narrative inquiry was used and an additional 16 for the first half of 2002.

[5] Turner assumes a basic narrative progression that includes breach, crisis, regressive action and reintegration.

understandings and meanings and, as well, to convey our needs, fear and dreams in our interactions with others.

As cultural beings, we often take for granted that people modify their behaviour to adapt to the setting in which they find themselves. "People are expected to behave situationally whatever their 'roles,' whether they are introverted or extroverted, whatever their scores on the MMPI[6], whatever their politics" (Bruner, 1990, p.48). For instance, logic and linear thinking, generalization and objectification are common practices that influence the way we think and act. This is a culture, not unlike other cultures, where certain structures and rules shape and form our discourse.[7] Bruner (1990) describes this Western or European approach, as 'paradigmatic', where 'facts' are used to verify 'truth', whether we do so through formal logic or legal processes (Bruner, 1990), such as the application of rules of evidence in a court of law.

The alternative mode, as Bruner (1990) posits, is a 'meaningfulness' approach where narratives no longer require verification of 'truth', but rather rely on the verisimilitude of the story, where the story line is the focus rather than the 'facts'. These are narratives of meaning, situated within an individual's experience of a place or event in time, rather than expressions of abstract thoughts or ideas.[8]

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[6] MMPI - Minnisota Multiphasic Personality Inventory

[7] Discourse refers to organized systems of knowledge that make possible what can and cannot be spoken about, as well as how one may speak about it (Adams, 2003).

[8] Narratives are not intended to diminish what one conceives of as 'truthfulness', but rather assumes a social constructionist paradigm where meaning is constructed and negotiated through interactions with others.

The narrative method of inquiry shares some characteristics with oral history and interpretive interactionism.[9] I found that adopting Norman Denzin's (1989) use of 'epiphany' or 'turning point' helped to recognize a change that leads one to view or consider certain situations from a different way of being.[10]

Crisis of Representation

Can researchers capture, as representation, what a phenomenologist might describe as 'lived experience'? This is a question that stems from the notion that the researcher can remain a detached observer, both physically and theoretically. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) tell us that science cannot sustain a critical self-distance without assuming a philosophy, as there are always *a priori* philosophical assumptions that underlie scientific results. Similarly, the researcher by their very presence becomes part of the research setting starting with the choice of questions to be asked of those who are the subject of the research. Here, the issue is not whether we can capture the experience, but rather, how do we bring the individual's experience to research, so that the questions that are asked may be answered with a greater sense of completeness, hence the lessons we learn are made more clear.

Denzin (1998) suggests that the researcher must first recognize his or her own beliefs and how these beliefs shape their perceptions and meanings for interpretation and analysis. This means placing him or her self into the narrative of

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[9] Denzin (1989) describes 'interpretive interactionism' as "the attempt to make the world of problematic lived experience of ordinary people directly available to the reader" (p. 7). This he suggests can be achieved through a variety of means that include open-ended, creative interviewing; document analysis; and personal experience and self-story construction.

[10] Epiphanies, as Denzin (1989) describes, are "interactional moments that leave marks on people's lives" (p.15).

the respondent, so that self-reflection can be used as part of the research process, which, by doing so, removes the illusion of detachment.

Crisis of Legitimation

The crisis of legitimation asks whether positivist terms such as *validity, generalizability, reliability* and *objectivity* continue to apply when a research strategy moves away from the structure of experimentalism to a narrative form of interpretive inquiry. In response, Denzin (1998) suggests that terms such as *credibility, transferability, dependability,* and *confirmability* are more appropriate in this context rather than applying terms such as *validity, generalizability, reliability* and *objectivity* that have a specific use and meaning.

The credibility standard means that an inquiry must be believable to critical readers and, as well, be acceptable to those who provided the information gathered during the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that to enhance the credibility of their research the inquirer may apply one of a variety of techniques, such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity checks, and member checking. My study draws from various sources that include reports and documents, text based narratives and interviews, thus informed by multiple perspectives, creating a triangulation for interpretation and analysis. Throughout the inquiry, I invited colleagues, especially those familiar with a narrative approach, to read draft chapters in order to raise probing questions about methods, emerging conclusions and biases. Their comments, and our discussions, led to new insights that challenged my thinking at

the time. Finally, I shared with the participants the chapters I referred to above, to ensure that I had achieved an accurate rendering of their narratives.

The transferability standard refers to the application of findings in one context to other contexts or settings. I adopted Denzin's (1989)[11] use of 'thick description',[12] which Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest, is a beneficial technique for facilitating transferability decisions.

The dependability standard refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processes used over time. Dependability is a question of whether the researcher has been careless or made mistakes in conceptualizing the study, collecting the data, interpreting the findings and reporting results. The more consistent the researcher has been in this research process, the more dependable are the results. To meet this test I provide an audit trail, using journal notes, transcriptions of interviews and archival notes taken.

The confirmability standard refers to the 'quality' of the results produced by an inquiry in terms of how well the results are supported both by respondents who are involved in the study and by subsequent events that are independent of the inquirer. This means reference to the inquiry in the literature and findings of other authors, especially those that confirm the inquirer's interpretations.

Over and above these standards, the underlying test for me is the degree to which I was able to engage the participants during the interviews. My goal has been

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[11] 'Thick description' was first used by Gilbert Ryle in his book *The Concept of Mind* published in 1949 by Peregrine Books and later used by Clifford Geertz in 1973 in "Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture." In *Interpretation of Culture*. New York: Basic Books.

[12] Thick description means to capture the meaning and experiences that have occurred. This includes reports, intentions, history, biography and interactional processes, used to create rich and detailed conditions for interpretation and understanding.

to move the dialogue beyond our past roles, which for me meant no longer being perceived as a government representative, to a deeper level of interaction that I hoped might itself become its own epiphany.

CHAPTER 3

Deconstructing the Literature

There have been numerous articles, books and theses written about the Doukhobors. Some attempt to explain the nuances of Doukhobor culture and conflict from those who are Doukhobor, such as Peter N. Maloff (1950, 1957); Simeon Reibin (1971); Koozma Tarasoff (1963, 1969, 1982); and Eli Popoff (1992). Others who are not include, Maude (1904); Bonch-Bruevich (1909); Reid (1932); Wright (1940); Hirabayashi (1951); Zubek & Solberg (1952); Frantz (1962); Holt (1964); Bockemuehl (1968); Woodcock & Avakumovic (1968); Dunn (1970); Mealing (1975); Yerbury (1984); and McLaren (1995a, b). The most comprehensive study about the Doukhobors was the report *The Doukhobors of British Columbia* edited by Dr. Harry Hawthorn (1952), which was undertaken by the Doukhobor Research Committee that Dr. Hawthorn chaired in the early 1950s. The Doukhobor Research Committee covered a wide selection of subjects related to the Doukhobors, ranging from agricultural practices to psychoanalysis of the Sons of Freedom. All of these materials have contributed in some way to the acknowledgement of the differences between the Sons of Freedom and other Doukhobors with the view that acts of destruction are the sole responsibility of the radical sect.

My objectives for this chapter are two-fold: first, to describe the philosophical foundation of my inquiry and second, to present the key discourses of culture and conflict relevant to the Doukhobor situation. Woven throughout are examples of how certain scholars attempted to understand the nature of conflict.

In pursuing my objectives, I found it necessary to first see how others who had spent time with the Doukhobors described their experience. I began by going back to one of the earliest books written about the Doukhobors soon after their arrival in Canada in 1899. Aylmer Maud wrote, *A Peculiar People the Doukhobors* in 1904.[1] He depicted them for the most part as

> ... an illiterate folk, who seldom put their thoughts on paper. They accepted the decisions of recognized Leaders, one of whom always came into authority as soon as his predecessor died. Through long years of persecution they learnt to conceal their beliefs; and it is impossible to say with certainty and exactitude what, as a community, they have believed at any given moment, though the main trend of their thought, and the matters of practice on which they differed from their neighbours are plainly discernible. (p.5)

The distinguishing trait in their cultural makeup, Maude (1904) tells us, is obstinacy. This obstinacy extends from defending their own doctrine to attacking others who differ from them. Each Doukhobor listens to his or her own internal voice and to voices of others, especially the voice of the leadership. Such voices, Maude suggests, are often expressed in a symbolic form or special code.

Contradictory statements as to what various spiritual leaders meant abound. For instance, that which the leader or his close associate says publicly may not be consistent with what is said to certain members in private conversations. For instance, Maude notes that back in 1902, Peter V. Verigin advocated in public pronouncements compliance with Canadian laws, but many Doukhobors believed that he was merely doing so to protect himself, while in actual fact he was intending the people to continue their resistance. For Aylmer Maude, the notion of 'truth'

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[1] Maude, along with Prince D.A. Hilkoff and two Doukhobor families, came to Canada in 1898 to determine the feasibility of the sect immigrating to Canada. At that time the Canadian government was anxious to attract immigrants (Maude, p.39).

among those he spent time with was a cultural encumbrance that made his role as an intermediary between the Doukhobors and government difficult at best.

Charles Franz (1958) makes similar observations in his dissertation stating "all Doukhobors received sanctioned approval for prevarication" (p. 98). He notes that there were numerous testimonials and confessions presented to Royal Commissions and criminal court proceedings, and concludes that "[t]he validity of these statements... generally has been vitiated by the practice of widespread deceit and falsification toward outsiders" (p. 98). Franz also notes that "secret, deceptive, and aggressive practices have been most highly developed" in their relations with government personnel. Some of these practices have been in the form of numerous nude parades, burnings and bombings, while some were attempts to strip government officials.[2]

Franz no doubt recognizes the challenge that these types of behaviour have for social science fieldwork as a whole. This raises the question as to how does one discern fact from fiction? What is "truth"? How might truth be characterized by those who claim to know "it"? And, what or whose purpose is served by those who search for truth?

For Franz (1962), 'truth' was lost in the cultural and historical landscape in which the Doukhobors lived. The inconsistent truth claims that he discovered became a methodological issue for him and other anthropologists whose search for cultural authenticity was one of their primary functions. Bruner (1990) describes a

[2] Franz suggests that the historical background to this practice is well documented. This is a practice that was carried over from their time in Russia. Although he does not provide evidence of his claim, he likens it to the objections Doukhobors have to census-taking and to the registration of births, marriages and deaths, which he suggests was to avoid Russian police (p.98).

reliance on truth and authenticity as paradigmatical, where the logic of science structures the nature of the outcome, which in effect limits the reliability of the information the anthropologist has for his or her use. My approach was to look, not at the truth so much, but rather at the reasons why the story was told.

Philosophical Base of the Study

There is no question that from a modernist perspective science is the pursuit of 'truth', which contrasts the postmodernist perspective of where a 'truth', regardless of its standing in science, is simply a social construction rather than a discovery. This is not to raise the relativist argument that every belief is as good as every other, but rather that 'truths' are human constructions that are not invincible, as truth claims often differ.

For Berger and Luckman (1966) and, as well, Gergen (2001) the emphasis is on the meanings constructed from the narratives which, when applied to a conflict setting, not only contextualizes the conflict, but aids in furthering our understanding. This is a sharp contrast to a fact finding approach that sets out to prove who is right or wrong, or to a positivist approach that is in search of a singular truth.

Maude (1904), Franz (1958) and Shulman (1952) failed to determine what might have been the underlying reasons the Doukhobors appeared to be 'obstinate', 'deceitful' or 'prevaricators of the truth'; or, why some truth claims remained dominant while others were discounted or marginalized. This led me to realize that a new approach was needed that enabled me to explore beyond the traditional boundaries of a modernist view to the narratives themselves. I also realized that I

needed to focus on the verisimilitude rather than the logic, symmetry and fact base that modernist approach assumes.

This is a departure for those who conceive of narratives as simply literature. "Science has always been in conflict with narratives", as Lyotard (1993, p. xxiii) would attest, without recognizing its own duplicity. For example, if the role of the researcher were examined, we would see that the research report itself was the researchers' own narrative; a narrative which contains the theoretical framework, analysis, findings and conclusions, as well as the researcher's worldview, cultural assumptions, biases and beliefs.

To further my point, I came across a report by Alfred Shulman (1952), a psychiatrist from the Seton Institute in Baltimore, who was a member of Dr. Hawthorn's Research Committee. In his report, *The Personality Characteristics and Psychological Problems of the Doukhobors,* he explained the difficulties that the Doukhobors had in their relationship with one another as well as with the non-Doukhobor population. He told how he applied three different techniques in examining the Doukhobors: (1) life histories, (2) psychiatric interviews, and (3) projective tests. In his findings, he noted that his tests (Rorschach and Murray's Thematic Apperception Test), were of little value because the suspiciousness of the informants impeded him from administering them. Although he did find the psychiatric interviewing to be "profitable", the methods he used to elicit an individual's life history were not. "It was rarely possible to find an informant sufficiently accurate, honest and fluent to talk about himself in a meaningful way" (p.138), Shulman reported. He found that many of the Doukhobor people he

interviewed would "leap blindly to any interpretation that does the faintest of justice to the facts, and cling with a tenacious disregard for reality" (p.144). Rather than focusing on the reasons why this might have been, he concluded that this type of thinking was a form of 'autism', which he suggested created considerable problems in the way people communicate with each other. "Their autism radically interferes with a realistic appraisal of any situation and allows them to substitute naive wishful thinking" (p.144), he claimed.

Shulman's narrative says more about his own meaning constructions as a psychiatrist, than it does about the nature of the Doukhobor conflict. As a counterpoint to this view, Thomas Szasz (1970) argues that 'mental illness' or 'social pathology' (or for that matter 'autism'), are no more than labels conferred on those individuals who were 'different', that is, who did not conform to society's definitions of appropriate behavior. Unfortunately, Shulman's social psychoanalysis does not speak to the reasons why certain people choose to be different or for that matter why all people are expected to be the same.

Another example was a paper presented by Dr. William Plenderleith, Co-ordinator of Special Services for the British Columbia Department of Education, who 'psychoanalyzed' the Sons of Freedom as if they too were a single being.[3]

> ...the Freedomites have had the...frustrating experience of being ostracised from their parent body. This ostracization became an important factor in influencing the Freedomites' attitude toward society. They no longer "belonged" to the parent group. They no longer shared any communal property. They were outcasts, squatting on government-owned land. They were social failures, totally unable to cope with the problem of life in Canada.

[3] Plenderleith, W.A. (undated). *The Freedomite Problem and its Relationship to Public Education.* (Although undated, this paper was written some time after the New Denver Dormitory closed when John Clarkson, the Superintendent of the New Denver Dormitory, was being nominated for an award for his achievement.)

What Plenderleith failed to recognize was that all Doukhobors, not just the Sons of Freedom, were what he describes as "squatting on government property", due to the collapse of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB) Ltd. in 1939. In fact, all of the Doukhobors and Sons of Freedom continued to occupy their former lands, which were held by the Crown from1939 to 1965, at which time they were sold back to the Doukhobor occupants.

Plenderleith extended his 'illness metaphor' to describe how the Sons of Freedom needed to compensate for their feeling of inferiority by making themselves "martyrs to a cause" (p. 4). He asserted that the Sons of Freedom professed to care nothing for material wealth and "let their houses fall into a state of disrepair", doing so because they "craved public recognition of the self-sacrificing part" (p. 5). Both Shulman's and Plenderleith's stories were given a certain prominence because of the positions that they held. Shulman's, in particular, appears to have influenced the British Columbia government to consider ending the cycle of destruction by suggesting that efforts be directed toward the children rather than their parents.

Lyotard (1984) suggested that grand theories, such that Shulman and Plenderleith espouse, were on a decline, as these types of explanations never remained static for long. A narrative approach, on the other hand, considers the "social, moral and political consequences, their practical purposes of knowledge, and their situational impact" (Seidman, 1995, p. 17). This is not to hold up the narrative approach as the saviour of social science, but simply to suggest that in certain conflict situations there is a need to examine both the text and subtext of the story structure.

Discourse of Culture

Culture, like conflict, is an ubiquitous term. What do we need to know about culture to understand the nature of conflict? Or conversely, what do we need to know about conflict to understand the nature of culture? Merriam-Webster (1994) defines 'culture' as "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group" (p. 282). Brannan, Esler & Strindberg (2001), on the other hand, describe culture as "sets of behaviours that are fairly predictable" and are "capable of being presented in generalized and typical patterns" (p. 15). This suggests that members of each culture operate in accordance to a set of social norms, which helps them to know how to interact with one other in different settings.

There are numerous cultural theorists, but Geert Hofstede (1980) in particular was noted for his work on the dimensions of culture which were exemplified through his use of 'individualist' and 'collectivist' that he applied to different nationalities. For instance, in a collectivist setting one might find a set of values, commitments and identifications that are held in common among group members. Whereas, in an individualist setting (like those in the West), values, commitments and identifications were more variable, with group membership being more fluid and less confined to specific set of values.

Applying Hofstede's collectivist notion to the Doukhobors means that the Doukhobors themselves are homogeneous and their collective interests would be commonly held among its members. This may in part be true for some of these early settlers who lived in a village or *Mir* system, however, the moment Doukhobor

settlers stepped foot on Canadian soil, members began to leave the villages to become independents (Tarasoff, 1963).

Although Hofstede's reductionist approach to culture remains popular, Avruch and Black (1991) adopted a different, more relational view of culture. Avruch and Black saw individual cultural experience as being mediated by perceptions and meanings, which they view as socially constructed, differing from family to family, group to group, and nation to nation. They also saw a number of misconceptions about how culture is viewed, and noted that each of these misconceptions had implications for addressing conflict. Some of these included 'culture is a thing' – which they view as the objectification of culture rather than as a property of human consciousness. Another misperception they noted was when 'culture is uniformly distributed across a group' or 'culture is custom' – which presumed that everyone was the same or maintained a certain group identity from the past.

Objectification of culture ignores individual behaviour, while a uniform-distribution view of culture stereotypes behaviour. When culture is viewed as an object or as a category of sameness (collectivist or individualist), the solution to conflict is viewed in a similar metaphorical way. For example, if culture is viewed as an elaborate machine, then we are inclined to view conflict as a breakdown and repairing the breakdown as the solution. If, on the other hand, we view culture as an organism, then the conflict is viewed as a disease, hence the solution is to identify the pathology and apply the correct diagnosis (White and Epston, 1990). Either one of these metaphoric approaches becomes problematic by virtue of the totalizing

effect it creates regardless of whether conflict arises within or between cultures. If we conceptualize conflict using a particular metaphor, the metaphor itself shapes our view of the 'solution', which can narrow, depending on the metaphor, options available for addressing the conflict.

An alternative is to consider a multicultural approach where the commonly held view in dealing with people who are different is to 'get to know their culture'. Getting to know another's culture has been particularly popular goal for governments; however, this created a rather impoverished conception of culture where culture is synonymous with what you cook or wear and where one compares differences between cultures rather than learning about their similarities. Furthermore, knowledge about other cultures does not address ethnocentrism or ideological positions taken by the state that impact certain ethnic groups more so than others.

Another alternative is a 'culture-as-consciousness' approach, which Avruch and Black (1991) used to describe locally constructed common sense. This approach assumes that there is a plurality of views within any identifiable group, whether the group is perceived as ethnic or religious in its constitution. With this approach one might ask – "How is conflict conceptualized among its members or by the parties? What meaning does an event so construed have? What normative weight is given to situations of conflict" (p.31)? These are questions that do not assume uniformity, but rather recognize that within these groups are individuals, with shared meanings constructed about events that they may have in common. My preference is to adopt

this approach as it challenges taken-for-granted assumptions about culture and conflict, which therefore does not assume that a one-solution-fits-all outcome.

Discourse of Conflict

The etymology of the word 'conflict' is derived from Middle English, from the Latin *conflictus* – an act of striking together, as well as from the French *confligere* - to strike together. In Merriam-Webster (1994), 'conflict' is defined as "a fight, battle or war; a competitive or opposing action of incompatibles; an antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons); or a mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands". If we compare the definition of 'conflict' to that of 'discord' we would note that 'discord' is defined as "an intrinsic or essential lack of harmony producing quarrelling, fractiousness, or antagonism" (p. 331).

In comparing these definitions to those of conflict theorists, Tjosvold (1991) suggested that conflicts have traditionally been defined as opposing interests involving scarce resources, goal divergence and frustration. Folger, Poole and Stuttman (1996), on the other hand, thought of conflict as the interaction of interdependent people who perceived incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals.

Pruitt, Rubin and Kim (1994) viewed conflict as a perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot simultaneously be achieved. These conceptions of conflict suggest an economic metaphor that involves a scarcity of resources or a competition metaphor, which involves incompatible goals

or a struggle over value and claims.[4] Conflict definitions based on an economic metaphor works when there are competing interests among groups but do the same metaphors of conflict work when groups share similar principles and beliefs?

Conflict Theories

The interdisciplinary field of conflict studies is laden with modernist notions that attempt to explain the ubiquitous nature of conflict. By way of example, I include frustration-aggression, social identity, self-categorization and human need theories. This is not to suggest that other theories, such as economic determinism, structural functionalist or those related to power and deviance, were not considered - they were. The significance, however, of focussing on frustration-aggression, social identity, self-categorization and human need theories is largely because of their influence on conflict resolution literature. My purpose in presenting these theories is to demonstrate the limitations of these theories when applied to the Doukhobor situation.

FRUSTRATION-AGGRESSION THEORY

Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer and Sears (1939) posited that aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration. Gilula and Daniels (1969) later argued that although frustration was the origin of aggression, aggression is derived from interference with an individual's ongoing purposeful activity. In other words, a person feels frustrated when a violation of his or her hopes or expectations occurs.

[4] Metaphors, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) tell us, provide a sense of clarity or common language to an abstract idea or concept. My proposition is that the metaphors we use when we think about conflict influences how we conceive an intervention.

When frustration emerges, it is acted out in various forms that stem from personal insults or threats to thwarting of basic needs or relative deprivation where there is a discrepancy between one's value expectations and their environment's value capabilities. This was viewed as learned behaviour and to reduce this response one needed to address the factors that caused the frustration. The difficulty with this theory was that it does not address the possibility that aggressive acts may be the result of other factors that have little to do with frustration. An example would be the burning of one's home before setting out to burn someone else's. Where does frustration enter into this act if there are religious or cultural influences at play?

SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Another important development in the field of conflict studies was the creation of social identity theories introduced by Henri Tajfel (1957) and later with John Turner (1986) in the late 1970s. Social identity theory emphasizes the significance of the subject's social situation, in other words, their internally constructed social identity. These theories categorized, identified and compared objects and people by assigning certain identities to help explain their comparative relationship with each other and to their environment. For example, we categorize objects to give them a certain meaning and we do the same when we categorize people, whether we do so by race, ethnicity, class, or religion. Tajfel and Turner suggest that we construct categories of people we choose to identify with because of a perceived sameness or likeness. What follows is the notion of social comparison, which suggests that to evaluate ourselves we need to compare ourselves with others.

An example would be Shulman's (1952) description of the Sons of Freedom group as "those who fit no where else" (p. 166). In his study, there were essentially five reasons why individuals joined the Sons of Freedom. These were 1) individuals who were aggressively bent, who have failed to satisfy their needs, either as a USCC member or an Independent; 2) individuals who were passive, lonely or guilty men who submerged themselves in formless mass of the Sons of Freedom to atone for their wrongdoings; 3) individuals who were pathological characters who would not be tolerated in any society; 4) individuals who were aged and lacked special training and self esteem; and 5) individuals who were emotionally impoverished and constricted. Shulman's description was based on a medical model. In Laura Fruggeri's (1992) *Therapeutic Process as the Social Construction of Change*[5], she suggested that when you change from the medical model to a different paradigm, the medical model on which psychotherapy was developed can be demystified. Hence, the psychoanalytic narrative vaporized into a new narrative.

SELF-CATEGORIZATION THEORY`

Turner (1985) along with his colleagues Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell (1987) reconceptualized social identity theory to what they called the self-categorization theory. This theory was used to categorize an individual's self-concept. The theory postulates that at different times an individual perceives him or her self as unique individuals and at other times as members of groups. Both are equally valid expressions of self. The extent to which we define ourselves at either the personal or social level can be both fluid and functionally antagonistic. For instance, a conflict between self-interest at the personal level and self-interest at the

[5] In McNamee, S. & Gergen, K. (1992). *Therapy as Social Construction*. London: Sage.

group level means we perceive ourselves to a lesser degree as unique individuals. This may help explain the relationship between self and others in a 'Western' sense but does not take into account the cultural context of the individual in relation to his or her family, caste or other cultural variables.

Social identity and self-categorization theories later led to the development in the1970s and 1980s of a generic theory of human behaviour known as human needs theory.

HUMAN NEEDS THEORY

John Burton (1990) has often been credited with the development of human needs theory, as it relates to the field of conflict resolution. Burton's theory, which has been characterized as a cluster of identity needs, examined how individual and group identity was formed and how environment (natural and social) influenced human development. Human needs theory was based on the belief that each individual has basic needs that must be met in order to maintain stable societies.[6]

Burton proposed a cluster of nine basic human needs all people should be able to expect:

1. Consistency in response (learning and behaviour)
2. Stimulation (awakens in the individual the desire to learn)
3. Security (without security the individual will withdraw and will not learn or contribute)
4. Recognition (individual's need for confirmation, approval and encouragement for seeking identity)

5. Distributive Justice (appropriate response or reward)
6. Development and Appearance of Rationality (acting consistently and expecting consistency from others)
7. Meaningful Responses (sincerity with others)
8. Sense of Control (self-defence)
9. Defence of One's Role (role preservation)

There are bold assumptions with human needs theory. For instance, the theory assumes that the causes of human behaviour were socio-biological, not cultural, and that there are certain human needs required for human development and social stability. The presumption is that culture is reduced to an 'overlay' on biologically determined human nature.

There is certain preponderance to this socio-biological explanation of human needs theory for understanding conflict that does not take into account the cultural determinism side of the debate. For example, Bruner (1990) would argue that biology does not cause humans to act but rather serves as "a constraint upon it or a condition for it" (p.21). For example, "[t]he engine in the car does not "cause" us to drive to the supermarket for the week's shopping..." (p.21). I raise this point, not to fuel the old 'nurture versus nature' debate, but as a reminder that whichever position one adopts has within its own framework, culturally embedded *a priori* assumptions that need to be acknowledged.

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[6] The work of Fisher and Ury (1981) is also based on human needs theory although they use the term 'interests' in place of needs. Interests, they suggest, include recognition, security, sense of belonging and control over one's life (p. 48).

Summary of Culture and Conflict Discourses

From the literature, it is clear that when we objectify conflict we create a uniform-distribution view that ignores culture and context and presumes that conflict is resolvable through process-directed models. What is assumed is that *all* conflicts occur because someone's needs are not being met or their goals are being threatened. This suggests that individuals are internally driven with each pursuing a path of self-interest. What this approach does not do is to take into account that conflict might be used to serve other purposes. For instance, there are more functional interpretations, such as Simmel (1955) who suggested that enmities and reciprocal antagonisms are important in maintaining a balance between groups. Simmel argued that this balance is what causes members of one group to be drawn together in solidarity as a result of their common enmity to and rejection of the other group. Like Simmel, Lewis Coser (1956) posited that conflict within a group may help to establish or re-establish unity and cohesion where it has been threatened by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members.[7]

In Yerbury's article "Sons of Freedom and the Canadian state" that appeared in *Canadian Ethnic Studies* in 1984, he furthers Coser's argument by describing the Sons of Freedom as a "revivalist subsect", who

> ...generally place the onus of their problems and distress back onto their individual members: disciples are urged to adopt a pure life without smoking, drinking, lying, fornication and so forth in order to attain new identity, free from sin and ready for the promise of eternal life. Extremist revitalization

[7] Coser (1956) also noted that not every type of conflict is likely to benefit group structure, nor that conflict serves the same functions for all groups. Closely-knit groups, for example, in which there exists a high degree of interaction and personal involvement among its members, have a tendency to suppress conflict. Coser suggested that while there may be frequent occasions for hostility, the acting out of such feelings was sensed as a danger to such intimate relationships. Hence, there is a tendency to suppress rather than to allow expression of hostile feelings.

> processes involve purification rituals of burning material possessions. Such actions serve as a mechanism for temporarily increasing group unity. (p. 49)

Disappointingly, he made no reference as to how he came to this view or for that matter how he arrived at his conclusion that the reason for the conflict continuing is because of government's "[p]olitical opportunism and the unfounded fear of an organized terrorist conspiracy". This he describes as "the prime reasons for the enactment of retrograde legislation at a time when government may have found it advantageous not to interfere with revitalization processes" (p. 66). Unfortunately, his 'analysis' is of little value, as there is no evidence that he has had any involvement with those he writes about. Instead, he perpetuates already published, ill-conceived conclusions, assumptions, and cultural and personal biases of writers and newspaper editorialists on which he has chosen to rely.

Conclusion

In reviewing the literature it became evident that a reductionist approach would not result in an improved understanding of conflict among the Doukhobors. As I am guided by the question as to what enabled change to occur or what were the contributing factors that brought an end to the bombings and arson, I find myself wanting to understand how stories were constructed and subsequently negotiated. This requires a different approach, one that assumes that through story telling meanings and judgments are invoked about others; one that is based on the notion that people organize their experiences in story form to make sense of their lives and their relationships with others.

To a large extent this is a study about how one comes to understand the notion of self in relation to others, using the Doukhobor context as the focal point.

CHAPTER 4

Auto-Narrative

My interest in narratives began while working with the Doukhobor communities back in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as the Attorney General's Liaison for Doukhobor Affairs. When I first began my assignment, certain stories were shrouded in secrecy, while others were like quiet screams for help. I listened to individuals tell their stories about events that occurred many decades before, in detail and with implied precision. Some would recall the words of a former leader at a specific gathering forty or fifty-years prior, as if they had heard the words that morning. Although I marvelled at this ability, dissonance emerged when I thought about how these same stories had, contained within their text, symbolic messages that led to fire, bombings, and nudity.

Before examining the narratives of others, I will start with my own story about how I came to be part of the conflict setting. The following is drawn from journals and notes that I kept between 1979 and 1982. The purpose of my auto-narrative is to provide a background of events that led up to the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) sessions that began in October 1982.

Getting Started

It was March 18, 1979 when I met with Mark Krasnick in Vancouver, a meeting that took place at what was then the new Arthur Erickson- designed law court. Mark was the Assistant Deputy Minister for policy planning for the provincial Attorney General's office. I was 28 years old and had been working for the Ministry

of Attorney General on a short term basis, organizing justice councils throughout the Kootenay region.[1]

Mark asked if I would prepare a report for the Attorney General that would describe how the 'Doukhobor problem' might be addressed differently. Up to then, the Doukhobor situation was considered a policing operation, but for some reason the Ministry was looking for a new approach, one that had not been tried. I wasn't sure exactly what I would do, but I couldn't think of any reason why I would say no to his request. I was young, naïve and confident that I was capable of solving anything. My only request was that I be allowed to hire Hugh Herbison to assist in researching and writing the report. Hugh was a retired educator living in the Quaker community of Argenta. He had worked with the Sons of Freedom Doukhobor community during the late 1940s and early 50s.

It took me no time at all to realize that this was not a good time to be representing government in the Kootenays, where most of the Doukhobors were located. There were numerous Sons of Freedom arson cases before the courts: In one such case, the leader of the Orthodox group, John J. Verigin, was charged with four counts of conspiracy to commit arson, leaving the Orthodox community and others in an uproar. The credibility of the Crown was questioned not only by the Orthodox, who saw the trial as a 'travesty', but also by the Sons of Freedom who had risked testifying on the Crown's behalf.

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[1] Justice councils received their genesis from Justice Development Commission established in 1974. Justice councils consisted of local citizens and members of the justice system whose purpose was to look for ways to address local crime. Before I started working for the British Columbia government, I was the chair of the Grand Forks Justice Council.

The ministry agreed to my request to hire Hugh. The day after he signed on, he decided to reacquaint himself with the Sons of Freedom at a Sunday *sobranya*, or prayer meeting in Krestova a largely Sons of Freedom community. This gathering was held in a hall, a rather rough unfinished looking structure (at least from the outside), situated on a barren piece of land in Krestova.

In the hall, the men stood on one side, the women on the other. Situated between them were articles of faith - a loaf of bread, a pitcher of water, and a small jar of salt. Hugh stood with the men while psalms were sung. During one of the psalms a group of nude women entered the hall through the back door, and remained out of sight until the psalm ended. The women then made their way to where Hugh was standing and abruptly announced that he and Emmett Gulley had taken away their children back in the 1950s, at which point they began removing Hugh's clothes. He resisted, explaining that he had played no part in the government's decision to apprehend their children and send them to the New Denver dormitory, which did nothing to dissuade them from their mission. Hugh hoped the men standing near him would come to his aid, but not one of them moved. Finally, he let the women remove his clothes without further resistance. After he stepped out of his last remaining garment, they nudged him towards the door, with no sign of antagonism or hostility, and handed him his clothes right in front of a reporter from a local newspaper who was waiting outside. The next day Hugh made the morning headlines, while I went back to my office to think about my next move. For some reason, I felt rather exposed and knew I had some explaining to do with my superiors in Victoria.

In April and May 1979, Hugh and I met with different people, looked at old files, and scanned through Doukhobor reports published as far back as 1912. We attended many meetings, observed court trials and met with various Doukhobor and knowledgeable non-Doukhobor people to hear their concerns and to seek their advice.

We had heard numerous accounts of this alleged relationship between the Orthodox leadership and certain Sons of Freedom. I decided to meet with one Sons of Freedom gentleman who had plenty of knowledge and experience with bombings and burnings. He agreed to meet, but only in the middle of a restaurant in the popular Yale Hotel in Grand Forks, a town that had a large Doukhobor population in the area. Already seated, he immediately handed me a book of poems by Walt Whitman and asked me to read one on a certain page and tell him what it meant. This seemed rather peculiar as I knew that he had no more than a grade one education, and as I wasn't prepared to expose my ignorance so early in our relationship, I tactically evaded the question. It took no time at all before I realized he wasn't looking for an answer, but instead went on to explain that the information he received from the leaders to burn or bomb would be an encrypted message, no less difficult to interpret than the poem he had asked me to read. While I pondered his words, he leaned toward me as if to speak in confidence; "let me give you one piece of advice...you can't apply rational thinking to an irrational situation". It took a long time and many trying experiences before his advice began to make sense.

Throughout these intensive five weeks, it became apparent that government policy and practice towards the Doukhobors over most of the eighty years had been

erratic, ranging from indifference to punitive. The criminal justice system was not suited for addressing the complexity of the issues, nor was it the forum for responding to the questions that many Sons of Freedom and others were asking. We found that other forms of intervention, such as commissions of inquiry, were also ineffective in resolving issues.

In May of 1979, I submitted our report to Mark Krasnick recommending that a local group of experienced individuals be appointed, who were willing to commit their time (in this case the next eight years), to assist in unravelling this complex phenomenon.[2]

It was November 13, 1979 when the Attorney General, Garde Gardom, launched the KCIR at a news conference in Cranbrook. About an hour before the announcement, the Attorney General met with his district justice managers from courts, corrections, and crown counsel along with the subdivision commander from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The district managers made it clear to the Minister that they did not want to see any committee established because it would create more policing problems than they currently had. Although their argument was compelling, clearly they misunderstood the nature of the 'problem'. The Minister then met the proposed KCIR members, and it took only a few reasoned comments to convince him that this was no longer a policing problem, and that he needed to act right away before it got any worse.

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[2] Hugh and I had opposed the notion of another commission of inquiry because it meant that someone else would assume responsibility for arriving at a solution for the "problems" Doukhobor people were having with each other and with government. We believed that if the Doukhobor communities were committed, (as they often said they were), in finding an end to bombings and burnings then the tools available under the *Inquiry Act*, especially for compelling individuals to attend, would not be needed.

Immediately following the Attorney General's announcement, and for the next two years, none of the Doukhobor groups seemed at all pleased with having what essentially were their neighbours helping them to settle the turmoil. The Orthodox Doukhobors continued to push for a royal commission, or at the very least a committee with a higher profile than the present members provided. They also wanted to be a full and active member of the committee so they could attend all the discussions and interviews being held.

For me, expanding the Committee was not the issue. Since I presumed that it was simply a matter of time before all groups would participate under the same structure, my concern instead was to give the new KCIR members an opportunity to meet with individual Doukhobors in order to arrive at their own conclusions about what they perceived the issues to be. This approach was to provide an opportunity for those who wanted to meet with the Committee without other Doukhobors being present.

While the KCIR continued to meet, other events surfaced that raised concern. In May 1980, an unexploded bomb was found on CPR rail tracks near Christina Lake. A second bomb was found near the town of Trail, and three boxes of dynamite had gone missing from a location near Rock Creek. It was never clear whether there was a link among the events, but if there was, more trouble was expected.

Also during this time, there were a number of Sons of Freedom women in Oakalla Prison serving out their sentence for arson. The women had staged a

number of hunger fasts during their incarceration. I was asked by the Sons of Freedom to meet with them in order to see if there might be a way to end their fast.

When I would arrive at Oakalla with Peter Abrosimoff (my translator), the Director of the women's prison would take us to an old Quonset hut situated away from the main prison population - for safety reasons (arson). Here, the women had made themselves a home. They grew vegetables in a small fenced garden just outside the hut; inside, they prepared their own special vegetarian meals in the kitchen area, which was furnished with a stove, table, and several chairs. At the other end of the hut, steel frame beds were lined up in a row. A matron would sit at a desk just inside the entrance.

Each time we met with the women, we would enter the hut, they would greet us and then promptly remove their clothes, folding them carefully and placing them on the end of the bed. They would begin with a Russian prayer before we got down to business. Peter and I remained dressed, while the women sat naked.[3] He would translate everything from English into Russian and vice-versa. When the discussion ended, the women would dress and then serve us tea and a bowl of what they called Oakalla borscht, made from the vegetables gathered from their garden. This was a pattern we grew to expect.

One of the last times we visited them in this location, the usual greeting seemed strained and awkward as we entered, followed by a loud whoosh. Without any warning whatsoever, fire erupted around us, with bed sheets and clothes alike bursting into flames. The only entrance to the building was blocked. The matron grabbed the fire extinguisher and blasted the room. When it was over, white foam,

blackened sheets, and clothes lay in a heap on the floor beneath the choking pall of acidic smoke. Through it all, the silent, devilish looks of the naked women remained the dominant image. Without words, the women had spoken. I decided to continue on as if nothing had happened to show them that I was serious about finding a way to end this turmoil.

Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations

The turning point for the KCIR came in May 1981 when Robin Bourne was appointed Assistant Deputy Minister of Police Services for the Ministry of Attorney General.[4] Robin's profile appealed to both the Reformed Doukhobors, who held anti-Soviet views, and to John Verigin and the Orthodox, which was a surprise to me at the time, given their active involvement with Soviet officials and *Society Rodina* since the mid 1960s.[5] The reasons were never clear as to why the Orthodox might be interested in someone whose past was to monitor Soviet activities in Canada. Nevertheless, it seemed that their quest for a higher profile had been met.

Robin agreed to chair what became known as the Expanded KCIR. These were sessions that not only involved all three Doukhobor groups at the same table, but also involved both the groups and the KCIR in designing the sessions themselves. Although this was a new beginning, it was not without its challenges.

In August 1982, John Verigin in a letter to me expressed his concern about who from the Sons of Freedom would be participating at the sessions. This begged

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[3] This, they claimed, ensured that nothing came between them and God when they spoke to Government.
[4] Robin's appointment to the ministry was not without it's' controversy. In his previous role with Solicitor General of Canada, Robin served as the liaison between Solicitor General and the RCMP Security Service, which kept a close eye on Soviet activities in Canada. The Globe and Mail wrote a story about Robin's group investigating left wing organizations across Canada, including labor groups.
[5] Throughout the 1970s, the Reformed had written extensively about the relationship between the Soviets and the USCC and the negative effect they reasoned it to have on Doukhobors as a whole.

the question as to 'why' he was concerned, especially given that the two people he was concerned about were two key individuals who were well-respected members of the Sons of Freedom. One of them was an indicted co-conspirator during his conspiracy trial and the other was his mother, who had spent many years in prison for what she described as the 'Doukhobor cause'. In a letter to the author dated September 25, 1981, John Verigin again expressed concern, this time about the agenda items proposed by the Sons of Freedom. He felt that this session would -

> ...be a circus performance where the criminals and culprits, fanatical zealots will have a 'hey day' with opportunity for the mass media to exploit and further enhance the misconception that fires, arson and terrorism in general, is part of the Doukhobor doctrine.

I started to sense that John J. Verigin was having second thoughts about getting to the bottom of whatever he thought the problem was that he had been pushing government to resolve.

Mary Malakoff, a key member of the Sons of Freedom, also started to seem edgy. She announced two weeks prior to the sessions that she was not going to participate unless certain key individuals, namely John Lebedoff, Anton Kolesnikoff, William Mojelski, Stephan Sorokin and the Reformed group all participated.[6] Clearly, more preparatory work was needed.

When the first session was finally held October 28, 1982, it was in the banquet room at the Fireside Inn in Castlegar. In the room, there were about thirty or so people sitting around an open square. At the table were members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canadian Pacific Railway Police, and mayors from the local municipalities, representatives from the federal and provincial

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[6] File correspondence of October 18, 1982.

governments, six out of the initial eight KCIR members[7] and the representatives from the three Doukhobor groups. Sitting outside the square was many from the Reformed and Sons of Freedom community, observing the events as they unfolded.

In planning these sessions, the groups agreed that an oath or affirmation should be administered, albeit on a volunteer basis, to give the session's structure and credibility among the Doukhobor people. A court recorder documented the sessions with transcriptions made available to the groups prior to each session. The chair would instruct each witness that protection could not be provided under the *Canada Evidence Act,* should the witness desire to give information that might be self-incriminating. Finally, there was no special status given to any member, including the KCIR core members.

Everyone agreed beforehand that the subject of the initial session was the issue of fire and security from the threat of arson. The questions the Committee sought answers to included - how its use began; how its continued use was encouraged; and, what must be done to stop its use. For the next four years, witness after witness described his or her experience as a former bomber and burner.

Conclusion

The initial design of the KCIR was a core group of largely non-Doukhobors (with the exception of Peter Abrosimoff who served as translator). I knew that it would be difficult to find balanced views or common ground within the core group as no one, with the exception of Peter Abrosimoff, had prior dealings

[7] Three of the original members had retired from the Committee, including Hugh Herbison.

with the Sons of Freedom or the Reformed group.[8] The core group was selected because of the skills they brought to the situation – two had training as anthropologists, one was a former superintendent of schools, two were psychologists and one was a local clergy.

The first two years were frustrating for the KCIR as they continued their efforts to learn more about the nature of the conflict, while trying to find ways to ward off verbal attacks from John Verigin who was not happy with their role. While Mr. Verigin continued to pressure the Attorney General to establish a commission of inquiry, meetings were arranged during this period by the KCIR, between Mr. Verigin and Sons of Freedom representatives.

During this period, the Sons of Freedom did not seem overly concerned about the membership of the KCIR. They were looking for any opportunity to tell their story and to question John Verigin, as there was much confusion surrounding the recent trials and his intermediaries that led many to question. The Reformed, on the other hand, were content with the way things were, which meant that when issues arose they would circulate one of their communiqués. This angered the USCC enough so that they pressed government to do something about the 'hate mail' they and others were receiving. Government did nothing, as they saw this as a civil matter between the USCC and Reformed.

By the end of the first year, Hugh Herbison was the first to feel the effects of the pressure and for health reasons decided to resign. Later, about the time the

[8] Peter Abrosimoff's association with the Sons of Freedom and Reformed was due to his role as a court translator and, as well, when he was a member of the Consultative Committee in1950. Given his background and knowledge, during the early years of the KCIR the Sons of Freedom sought him out on a regular basis to share their views of what was happening.

Expanded KCIR was about to meet for the first time, Doug Feir, the former Superintendent of Schools in Grand Forks, decided he had enough. Peter Abrosimoff and Ted Bristow, a United Church minister, continued on for the first two years of the EKCIR. This left the two anthropologists Derryl White and Mark Mealing and the two psychologists Ron Cameron and Mel Stangeland to carry the brunt of the work. In May 1983, Peter Abrosimoff was replaced by Jack McIntosh, an archivist from the University of British Columbia (UBC) who had lived in the Kootenays, was familiar with the Doukhobor special collections at the UBC library, and could speak and write Russian as well.

The challenge for me during these first two years was to keep the Attorney General focussed on continuing with the KCIR, in midst of all the pressure. The other challenges were to keep the Reformed Doukhobors informed, in the hopes that they may change their mind and agree to join the other groups and to maintain a balance among all the groups without being perceived as supporting one group over another.

The turning point for the Reformed and the USCC was when Robin Bourne was introduced to their groups. Robin, as the new Assistant Deputy Minister for Police Services, provided an element of leadership credibility, which was missing up to then. I worked with Robin and the groups over the next several months to create a structure acceptable to the groups, and one that the ministry would support.

Notwithstanding all the pressure, the upside for the first two years was that the KCIR used its time to interview different people on their own without the groups present. They also used this time to access archival materials looking for

evidence that would provide new insights to the stories they had been hearing. By the time the Expanded KCIR sessions began, the core group had amassed a fair collection of archival materials from the University of British Columbia, as well as from the provincial archives in Victoria and the federal archives in Ottawa, which proved of benefit when it came time to make their presentation to the Expanded KCIR a few years later.

CHAPTER 5

Competing Narratives

For decades, the Orthodox Doukhobors had been demanding that government rid their community of the Sons of Freedom to end the terrorism. The Sons of Freedom argued that the Orthodox leadership encouraged, if not instructed, them to burn and bomb. The purpose of this chapter was to examine the discourse and narrative exchange that took place over a five-year period, drawn from the transcripts of proceedings of the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR).

The sessions were held approximately three to four times a year. During each session the groups presented witnesses who told of their experiences of being either a victim or someone involved in burning and bombing. Between each session, a smaller planning group, made up of KCIR members and key representatives from the groups met to discuss the key issues that arose during the session and to plan for the next.

In reading through the EKCIR transcripts, I realized that what was missing was the pitch and accent of the voices, the amusing moments and the self-deprecating humor of jokes told by community members during the breaks. The other missing piece, I might add, was the one 'event' that brought the Doukhobor people together as one, was the deep rich resonating a cappella tones that surged through every one of us the moment the Doukhobor people began to sing. Initially,

singing was not a part of the EKCIR sessions, but somewhere near mid-point in the process, when discussions had reached a certain intensity, one of the Doukhobor delegates suggested that a traditional hymn be sung by those present. This had an amazing effect in altering the tone of the discussions, which was then used on different occasions, in particular when discussions went awry.

Prior to the first session (held October 28 and 29, 1982), the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) circulated to the participants a written brief, titled *The Thorny Pathway,* which had been prepared for a prior meeting they had with the Attorney General. The brief described how the Sons of Freedom had victimized the Orthodox, and how their leader, John J. Verigin, was later victimized, as the report indicated, by the justice system. The report described Mr. Verigin's trial as a "totally unwarranted humiliation" that was based on "on false charges of conspiracy brought on by self-confessed terrorists and arsonists who are still free and at large" (p.10). The report stated that all of the property that was destroyed was the act of the same terrorist faction and concluded that -

> all of these actions point to the inept way in which the terrorist problem has been handled in the Kootenay and Boundary areas by the authorities directly concerned with the situation. Their method of approach to this problem also shows lack of understanding of the facts relating to the terrorist activities in these areas and also their lack of knowledge about the peaceful and productive history of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ membership and its leadership.

The brief also described numerous efforts the Orthodox had made trying to convince government of their need for a Royal commission to solve the Doukhobor problem. Their underlying concern was to find some form of relief to the escalating insurance costs and for the twenty-four hour watch they had been maintaining on all of their community holdings, including Mr. Verigin's home. The brief represented

what the USCC believed were the 'facts', which as they indicated, were for others to disprove.

Finding an Audience

The first session of the EKCIR began with John Verigin asking, on behalf of his organization, for everyone to trust them. He said that the USCC "record would show that we are deserving of your trust", which he added, "is a matter of life and death" (p. 11).

Mr. Verigin's comments were conciliatory at times, noting that those who had been responsible for their acts had suffered through their incarceration. He said that although fire was used to destroy firearms at the 'burning of the arms' in Russia in1895, the use of fire in Canada has never been part of Doukhobor philosophy or practice. His conciliatory tone soon dissipated when he associated the use of fire as an "act of either a mentally deranged person or a religious fanatic who seeks the achievement of his own or their own aims..." (p. 27).

Following Mr. Verigin, Fred Makortoff, representing the Reformed Sons of Freedom[1], suggested that bombings and arson were not the sole responsibility of the Sons of Freedom, but instead involved what he referred to as 'community' members, meaning that he believed Orthodox members had played a part as well. Mr. Makortoff said that he planned to approach the sessions by having the Sons of Freedom describe their involvement in the burnings and bombings and the reasons for taking part.

[1] The 'Reformed Doukhobors' stood for the Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors.

Mr. Makortoff asserted that "a Doukhobor's life is an act of faith in the leadership" and that their dependence on their leaders "virtually precluded their thinking in definite terms about their future" (p.15).[2] This meant that the Doukhobors didn't question who or what they were because everyone believed that "the leaders knew what they were doing as they held divine wisdom in these matters" (p.15). He described the Reformed as those who had participated in bombings and burnings and who "were a constant source of embarrassment to fellow Canadians". "Ideas of this nature," he added, were "embedded so deeply and held so fiercely"; noting that none of what they did was for personal gain (p.17).

Unlike Mr. Verigin's opening comments that appeared directed to the non-Doukhobor members at the table, Mr. Makortoff's comments seemed to speak to Doukhobor people in general, asking that they judge for themselves the information presented -

> Let us all strive to maintain objectivity and a sense of purpose. Only then with our shared views as brushes and colours, adding one to the other, can we hope to paint a picture of the reality of the situation we all wish to understand. This painting may not necessarily agree with any one view and if viewed through coloured glasses to some may appear stark or harsh. We are not here to crucify anyone nor to manufacture heroes. If, in our commonly held view, any group or individual appears in the relative terms of good or bad, then so be it. (p. 18)[3]

Mr. Makortoff described the EKCIR forum as 'the round table' that everyone had been waiting for, which was a reference to stories that had been told in the past about a gathering that would be held to account for all the suffering that people had endured. In describing this event he noted a word of caution suggesting that Doukhobor people had witnessed similar events, such as commissions of inquiry,

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[2] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

where outsiders sat in judgment, which in all cases worsened the problem rather than bringing it to a resolve.

In concluding the opening remarks, the chair described his role as facilitative rather than authoritative, and indicated that he would ask for everyone's advice from time to time about whether he was "being too arbitrary or too lenient or fair or unfair" (p. 24). Overall, the chair managed to set a tone that remained consistent throughout the next five years.

Alter-Narratives

The first witness presented by the Reformed Doukhobors was Nick Nevokshonoff, who spoke in Russian about a rash of fires that destroyed a number of schools one evening in 1924[4]. He said that there were times when "not only the Sons of Freedom...were involved in the act of fire... [but there were] different times when people from other groups, community people, members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB) and also the independent farmers took part" as well (p. 31).

> [In] 1924, in one night, schools burned [in] all the settlements of the members of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood. Seven schools in this district and the burning of these schools, they were dispatched with by the members of the Community people themselves without any Sons of Freedom taking part. This happened at Easter when the teachers were all away at home. In every district there were members elected for one year as trustees in regards to the community affairs. They were called elders. There was one elder that was elected that was the head of all the other elders. The one that was serving without being changed...From time to time he went throughout the villages...overseeing the activities of different villages. Coming through the villages just before Easter...told every elder of the village, at a certain time of the night at Easter that a school must be burned. (p.31)[5]

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[3] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).
[4] The burning of the schools occurred prior to the CPR train explosion when nine people were killed including Peter 'the Lordly' Verigin.
[5] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

Nick Nevokshonoff said that he remembered the names of all the elders and their helpers. He believed that the fires were the result of people retaliating for the way they were treated by government, suggesting that all Doukhobors perceived schools to have a militaristic attitude, with flag raising, queuing and marching, and other similar activities being practiced, which their faith opposed. To illustrate the point, Mr. Makortoff read from one of the Doukhobor psalms sung by all the groups:

> Question: Why do you not attend English schools and learn grammar? Answer: Schools prepare children for killing and wars. All your educated children do not live with their parents and do not respect them. We are striving to learn in the school of God's nature, which gives us knowledge of the godly beauty of the universe, in order to love the world, which is created by God for our joy. At the same time, we, together with our parents, are striving to gain sustenance for our flesh from the soil with our own labours ... I think the fact that the majority of elder Doukhobors are illiterate speaks for itself. (p.62)[6]

This, he suggested, meant that all Doukhobors share similar beliefs.

He also read from a newspaper clipping from May 17th, 1923 that referred to some Doukhobors families having been fined $300.00 for not sending their children to school and a letter that was sent by Samuel Verishagin, who was responsible for all matters pertaining to education in the CCUB. In the letter to the Provincial government it said, "We cannot guarantee that the schools will not be burned" (p. 64).[7] This was a letter that many believed Peter V. Verigin had instructed Mr. Verishagin to write.

John Verigin accepted that it was Peter V. Verigin's instructions that led to the writing of the letter. He also accepted that the letter infers that Peter V. Verigin "... cannot guarantee that schools will not be burned," but no where does it suggest,

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[6] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

Mr. Verigin concluded, that "Peter V. Verigin was launching a campaign of burning schools" (p. 64). In response, Mr. Makortoff stated that "[b]y Peter Verigin's own words, there [were] perhaps twenty, maybe thirty Sons of Freedom then. Means of getting about were difficult; the roads weren't what they are now" (p. 67) and the Sons of Freedom did not have access to transportation. His conclusion was that the elder appointed by Peter V. Verigin would know who was involved because he was the only one with transportation who could travel between the communities. Although there were gaps in the evidence, it did raise new questions.

At the end of the first day, John Verigin appeared impatient and felt that listening to these stories should be left to historians to pursue. "If we are going to look into the history...I think we're going to... be here for too long and no one of us wishes to do that" (p. 70). He suggested that "as true Christians, or possibly as true Doukhobors, let all of us together give ourselves a commitment [that] no matter who was responsible in the past for these fires...we recognize that it is wrong and we don't want...to commit arson any further" (p. 70). He proposed that if everyone signed a declaration there would be no further need for arson and the matter would be settled. The Chair, however, was not convinced that signing a declaration would end the turmoil, suggesting that there was still more to learn.

It was unclear as to why Mr. Verigin, who had been asking for a Royal Commission for a number of years, thought that listening to one witness was all that was needed for bombing and burnings to end. Mr. Makortoff reminded Mr. Verigin that the Doukhobor people have for many decades been "talking about a promised time and a 'round table'" (p.15). This he added, was the time "when all their

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[7] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

loyalties and trust in their leadership and all their suffering would be accounted for" (p. 15).[8]

Many believed that the Verigin leadership held the key to the 'truth'. They assumed that since he had demanded such a forum this meant that the time had come for the truth to be told, which for the Sons of Freedom meant that their role of saving 'Doukhoborism' would be recognized, if not explained, once and for all.

The next Sons of Freedom witness was William Stupnikoff who talked about living in Saskatchewan in the 1930s, when four men from British Columbia came to him and others to explain why there was a need to destroy schools. One of the men was Peter N. Maloff, who was considered a close associate of Peter Petrovich Verigin (Peter V. Verigin's son), whom they called *Chistiakov.*[9] Mr. Stupnikoff explained, using symbolic language, the link between Chistiakov and the Sons of Freedom, referring to 'God's law as 'green lights' and government's law as 'red lights'. He said he was taught to believe that the red lights were forced upon them, using Mr. Nevokshonoff's reference to the burning of schools as an example. 'Red lights' meant that they had to "remove it from its place" (p. 97). 'Removing the trouble' meant destroying a building or some other structure that presented a 'problem' to the Doukhobor people.

Cryptic and Symbolic Language

Cryptic and symbolic language that was used to convey messages was a topic of discussion throughout most of the sessions. For example, on day two of the first

[8] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

[9] Peter Petrovich Verigin arrived in Canada in 1927, three years after his father was killed in the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) train explosion that killed eight other people as well. The train explosion resulted in an investigation that was never concluded.

session, the discussion drifted from the presentations to Alex Gritchin, one of the USCC executive members, who had worn a red shirt to a recent gathering where some Sons of Freedom members had been invited. Olga Hoodicoff, a Sons of Freedom member, said that Alex Gritchin knows that red, whether worn as a shirt, tie or something else, was taken by the Sons of Freedom as a signal to burn. She asked Mr. Gritchin why he wore a red shirt that evening. He explained that it was simply a gift and nothing more, which led to an exchange between Mr. Gritchin and Mark Mealing, a KCIR member.

The issue was whether the shirt-wearing act was done intentionally or not. Although there was no way to determine what Mr. Gritchin's intention was at the time, the incident left Mark Mealing to question the reasons why he would wear what he did.

Mr. Mealing:	We've heard continually ...heartfelt complaints of USCC members and executive members that the Sons of Freedom are wrong, they include criminals, they include psychotics, they are a very small part of the Doukhobor population, less than one percent. They are on the wrong path, they are not to be trusted, as you said.
Mr. Gritchin:	I didn't say not to be trusted.
Mr. Mealing:	No, what you said was that anything may be twisted and taken as a signal. And I'm really concerned that nevertheless, members of the USCC, in their executive positions, knowing that anything may be misinterpreted, put themselves in a position privately as well as publicly where such interpretations may be made. If you know that the Sons of Freedom have a certain feeling about a red pen or a red shirt, why in heaven's sake wear it when you go to meet them? And why go to meet them wearing that?
Mr. Gritchin:	It was given to me as a present and there's nothing wrong with that, to wear a red shirt. And I was never told not to wear one.
Mr. Mealing:	You were not told not to wear one, Mr. Gritchin, but you know yourself and you've just said that such things may be interpreted.

Mr. Gritchin: After this incident, yes, when she told me. Now, damn right, I'll never wear it in front of her. (pp. 16-17)

Olga Hoodicoff continued her questioning of the USCC, this time asking why the USCC sent a letter to the Sons of Freedom in August 1972[10] (while they were camped outside of Agassiz Mountain Prison), with a red peace dove on the letterhead, which she said was usually blue. Mr. Verigin explained that it was a mistake made by the company from which they ordered the letterhead, rather than an intended act by the USCC.

When the Committee asked Ms. Hoodicoff whether she thought Mr. Verigin had the ability to place a curse on her, she replied that he did. In response to whether he had the power to place a curse on her now, she replied that he does. "Was she concerned about giving her story to the KCIR, knowing that he still had the power?" she was asked. "Yes", she answered, but she wanted her involvement in the burnings to come to an end so that "her children don't have to go through what [she] had been going through and what [her] mother has been going through [all these years]" in silence (p. 17).[11]

Polly Chernoff, who spent many years in prison for setting fires, told the Committee that she and other Sons of Freedom women "sacrificed not only their material possessions but the best part of their lives to keep the name Doukhobor alive" (p.14)[12]. She said that she received messages from Peter Legebokoff, a former editor of *Iskra*, in the form of parables that were included in the body of the publication. These were parables that others would not understand as they were

[10] In a later report there is a discrepancy as to whether the year is 1971 or 1972.
[11] EKCIR transcripts (December 9, 1982), Vol. IV.
[12] EKCIR transcripts (February 19, 1983).Vol. XI.

intended for specific individuals, mostly Sons of Freedom members. She also received messages, some of which were type written, while others were written by hand. The hand written messages were usually signed P.L., which she believed stood for Peter Legebokoff. To give credence to her story, Fred Makortoff read out one of the messages Ms. Chernoff had received.

> It is time to begin work, enough sleep. It is time to rise and start singing a hymn. It is time to rise brothers, the hour has come to repair the home of David. Walk out onto an open road saying that you, your children will be meeting you in tears. Do not be thieves. Just thank the star. It is time. It is time. May God help you. (p. 69)[13]

Mr. Verigin asked why Ms. Chernoff assumed that the messages were from the Orthodox Doukhobors as a whole. She said that Mr. Legebokoff, who played a prominent role as editor of *Iskra*, would be representing the larger community as well. But she admitted she did not have any evidence to back up her story. Mr. Verigin then asked, "... are you trying to suggest to me that without any rhyme or reason, Peter Legebokoff singled you out, Polly Chernoff, [and] could [you] possibly explain what relationship or what association with Peter Legebokoff did you have outside of these letters". "I never spoke to him and I never spoke to you", she replied (p. 53.).[14]

Further confusion over the intent of messages was highlighted when Sam Konkin described a time when John Verigin came to visit the Sons of Freedom in Agassiz on March 7th, 1973. He said that Mr. Verigin told the "Freedomites" that "we have land for you...but you must be ready for the land and the land will be

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

ready for you" (p. 36).[15] Mr. Konkin said that the Sons of Freedom well understood what Mr. Verigin had in mind. He was telling them to start making trouble, which he said meant bombing and burning. At the time, many of the Sons of Freedom did not want further trouble because they had spent time in prison, some lost their families, while others their health. "Besides", Mr. Konkin added, "they had very little to burn in Agassiz as they were living in tarpaper shacks" (p. 36). When Mr. Verigin left, the Sons of Freedom decided to send a delegation to his home to tell him that they did not want any further trouble but they did need land for people to live. However, Mr. Konkin added, he refused to meet with them. Soon after the delegation returned to Agassiz Mr. Konkin said that was when he sent them the letter with the red peace dove. Mr. Konkin concluded that to the "Sons of Freedom, red dove was the signal from Verigin to start trouble" (p. 37).

Doukhobor Lands

The issue of Doukhobor land was an ongoing issue for the Sons of Freedom, especially those who were living in 'tar-paper shacks' outside of Agassiz Mountain Prison. In a letter they sent to John Verigin on November 2, 1971, concern was expressed that Mr. Verigin had not welcomed the delegation that went to meet with him, but also that their toil and suffering was not being recognized, especially when it came to land. "We believed you that land should not be bought or sold, when the Canadian government intended to sell it to us, and if not to us then to non-Doukhobors" (p. 56). The letter goes on to state -

> We fulfilled everything, burned homes on these lands in order to stop the selling and buying of community lands. Not only once, you have stated that if we buy community land into private property, it is finished for the community

[15] EKCIR transcripts (December 8 & 9, 1982).Vol. III.

> and Doukhoborism. Now we hear that John J. bought more land than anyone else, alone. (p. 56)

By the mid 1970s, resentment was starting to mount against John Verigin, which over the next few years resulted in the Sons of Freedom giving statements to the RCMP alleging John Verigin's role behind the scenes.

Retaliation for Peter 'the Lordly's' Death

At the December 1982 session, Sam Konkin explained that the Sons of Freedom believed that the government had killed Peter V. Verigin in 1924 in a Canadian Pacific Railway train explosion. He and other Sons of Freedom were told that if they sent their children to school or purchased former Doukhobor lands[16] they would have the "blood of Lordly Verigin" over them. "Bombing and burning were a means of purifying and making you worthy", he said. When asked what he meant by this he said he was told that "if you believe in your leader and you do what he tells you...he will save you" (p. 66).[17] He suggested that following orders was considered an act of selflessness, which would lead to some form of redemption later on.

At the session held in February 1983, William Hremakin read a statement about his involvement in bombings since the 1940s. Mr. Hremakin was the person the Sons of Freedom would go to for dynamite. He was twenty years old when he was 'appointed' and said he was unable to refuse. Mr. Hremakin (who was ninety-four years old in 1982), like Mr. Konkin, explained that bombings were the result of the government having killed Peter the Lordly Verigin in the train explosion in 1924.

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[16] In 1955, Judge Lord was appointed commissioner to dispose of the former Doukhobor lands. One of his recommendations was to sell the former lands to the Doukhobors at a nominal fee.

[17] EKCIR transcripts (December 8 & 9, 1982).Vol. III.

Mr. Hremakin said he was told that the Doukhobors were to "erect a pillar of fire from the ground up to heaven" (p. 53).[18] Although he didn't elaborate as to what this meant, he assumed that it was his role to comply with whatever instructions he received. One example he described was the burning of the Doukhobor jam factory in Brilliant on December 12th, 1943. He said he received instructions to torch the building from John Zbitnoff, who told him that the instructions were being passed to him from the 'highest', in this case referring to John Verigin. When asked why it was necessary to destroy this building, he said John Zbitnoff told him that "government wants to make this factory a soldier's hospital or a war-warehouse" (p. 54).[19]

There were other occasions throughout the sessions where both cryptic messages and Lordly's death were used for some intended purpose. For example, Mary Astoforoff, a Sons of Freedom member who had spent many years in and out of jail, made mention at the December 1982 session about the Doukhobor museum across from the airport in Castlegar.

> ...out of the holy community which was under the leadership of the holy prophet and Saviour Peter the Lordly, they created an icon, museum, but his truth, love, trample under their feet ...he who is building the museum, he is bringing suffering on the Doukhobors...For it is said, this museum is condemned to fire. (p. 17)[20]

The museum was set ablaze a short time later and Mary Astoforoff was one of two Sons of Freedom women arrested at the scene, where she and others were standing naked waiting for the police and fire trucks to arrive. Why was the museum a target, especially after all these years? What happened over those past few months that may

[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

have led to these women thinking that the museum was now an "icon" that needed to be destroyed? The Sons of Freedom were looking for answers from Harry Voykin, who operated his restaurant next to the museum. Many of the Sons of Freedom who had been invited to his restaurant thought he might have something to do with this particular fire. The two women who were arrested were not saying anything other than the water had been turned off before they arrived, which they claim resulted in a much larger fire than intended. This led to more confusion and more unanswered questions.

Curse of Seven Generations

Although the EKCIR learned that many of the bombings were in retaliation for Lordly's death and a number of burnings were in reaction to government's policies, such as enforced schooling, some remained unexplained. For instance, John Savinkoff, a Sons of Freedom member from Gilpin, at one session read a statement about those he knew to be responsible for destroying the Grand Forks Coop and post office, Stephan Sorokin's trailer home, and the Grand Forks and Brilliant Cultural Centers during mid 1970s. He admitted to being the one who organized the women to burn Sorokin's home, which he claims, was done for the salvation of all Doukhobors. However, he alleged that it was at John Verigin's instructions that these fires were lit and that if he had not carried this out, he claimed, he would be 'cursed' for seven generations.

Mr. Savinkoff never said where or when he received his instructions from John Verigin. He did say, however, that his son and Peter Astoforoff met with John Verigin at a restaurant in Grand Forks where John Verigin described himself as the

[20] EKCIR transcripts, (December 8 & 9, 1982).Vol. III

'head' and Peter Astoforoff as the 'manager'. Peter Savinkoff, who is his son, was described as the 'worker'. He said his son was told by John Verigin that whatever Peter Astoforoff tells him or others to do, they are to ensure that the work is carried out, which they did, thus implying that they destroyed the Grand Forks Coop, Grand Forks Cultural Center and former post office,[21] without explicitly admitting it.

Many of the Sons of Freedom participated in bombings and arson, not because of Lordly's death or government policy necessarily, but because of their fear of being 'cursed' by the leadership. John Verigin described this as an excuse conjured up by the Sons of Freedom that had no place in Doukhobor culture, adding that the curse was introduced simply to confuse the weary listener.

Intimidation

Not all of the burnings were the result of instructions received; sometimes the need to set fire was an individual's way of saving Doukhoborism or for some greater need. Polly Chernoff, a Sons of Freedom member, talked about all of the suffering that goes on in this world and her strong desire to help end it. The Sons of Freedom saw themselves helping to relieve the suffering through their own sacrificing. In 1962, while she was in prison, the prison doctor told her that hunger fasts (which were common occurrences among Sons of Freedom inmates) were ruining her health (p. 32).[22] This is when she decided she had enough of fires and prison. She no longer had any involvement. And then in 1975 fire ravaged their garage and she almost lost her children.

> Somebody tried to set it up ... as though I [was responsible]. That night, thank goodness that my husband was so mad at me that he wouldn't go to

[21] Mr. Savinkoff's testimony was discounted during John Verigin's trial.
[22] EKCIR transcripts (February 19, 1983).Vol. XI.

> bed. He just sat there reading papers. And so I went to bed...And when he came to bed, our daughter-in-law came screaming that there was a fire. Well ... it wasn't only the garage, it was a workshop that they built, a new workshop and there were a couple of rooms there for my husband's mother
>
> and her son to live with us. And our son and our son-in-law had windows and doors and everything for a house in there; and it was...packed full. [The room] was so small that anything that was good, you know, we had in there. Everything went up in flames. Then we came out. The garage that we were living in, it was catching fire. And thank goodness she knew what to do. She says, "You take...all those clothes off the line and dip them in water and hand them to me". As soon as the wall starts smoking, she'd put...these blankets over and by that time the rest of the blankets would be smoking. So, she'd dip those and that's how she saved [the building]. And two of the children were right under...that wall. If it weren't for her, we'd all have been gone... (pp. 27-28)[23]

Ms. Chernoff said that for about a year her daughter-in-law slept in her jeans because she was afraid that it might happen again. Ms. Chernoff knew that the fire was a warning that she needed to continue her involvement. "So, when this happened, I says, I'll go back to jail, I don't care, even if I'm not well. I'll rot in jail so they wouldn't touch my children" (p. 32). So she went and burned again.

Soon after she returned from jail she was pressured to continue the burnings, but decided she did not want to go. Soon after her son had built his house, which was located nearby, one of the rooms where the children were sleeping was set ablaze. She could hear the dog barking outside their door and when she opened the door to let the dog in "he just flew down to their house and showed me just where this fire was" (p. 32). This time it was right under the kid's bedroom.

> I tried to wake them up and I couldn't... And so when my husband saw that I didn't come back, he came out and of course, you know, they put out the fire. The jar melted and there were footsteps there and the police came and they didn't do nothing about it...To this day, we have every night several times a night, we get up and walk around the house. (p. 32)

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[23] EKCIR transcript (February 19, 1983). Vol. XI.

When Ms. Chernoff told her story, there was an unsettled eeriness in the room, as if her story was not for us to hear so much as it was for her husband John, who sat off to her side. Was this her atonement for all the years she had dedicated herself to 'the cause'? And would her story be the final break she needed from having to continue her involvement? The short answer is that, since 1980, she has not participated in any further acts, nor has there been any further destruction to her own or her son's home.

Intimidation between Sessions

There were occasions when intimidation of witnesses was reported to have occurred between EKCIR sessions. For instance, on May 31, 1983, Robin Bourne reported on two matters that had been brought to his attention. The first occurred when two individuals approached the wife of one of the witnesses, Sam Konkin, and stated to her that "Sam had a good business and a good life and perhaps he shouldn't talk so much" (p. 4).[24] Also, someone telephoned Mr. Konkin to tell him that the May session of the EKCIR was cancelled (which was not true).

The second matter involved John Verigin and an allegation he made that Mr. Elasoff, whom he presumed was the same Mr. Elasoff who was a member of the Reformed Sons of Freedom, had been in Grand Forks and was heard to say 'I'm going to kill Verigin'. The chair of the committee reported that soon after the matter was raised, Mr. Elasoff took it upon himself to swear an affidavit indicating that he had never made such a remark. Mr. Verigin confirmed that it was not the same Mr. Elasoff, and apologized for the problem he caused.

[24] EKCIR transcripts (May 31, 1983). Vol. XIV.

On another occasion, John Savinkoff, a witness for the Reformed, in giving testimony, asked the chair if he could question Peter Astoforoff, who was reading a prepared statement for Mr. Savinkoff - the chair agreed.[25] Mr. Savinkoff asked Peter Astoforoff if John Verigin had asked to meet with him before the session. Mr. Astoforoff said he had. "And, [when you met with him], what did he ask you to do?" Mr. Savinkoff inquired (p. 20). "He asked me so I would say that I had falsely accused him, and so I would say before the people that he had not instructed me" (p. 20). "Is it the truth that he did not instruct you or is it the truth that he did instruct you?" asked Mr. Savinkoff. "He was asking me so I would say he did not instruct me," he replied (p. 20). Nothing more was said by Mr. Astoforoff or Mr. Verigin.

Refurbishing the Historical Record

After three sessions and having heard witnesses from the Reformed and Sons of Freedom groups, it was time for John Verigin and the USCC to make their presentation. John Verigin began by reminding everyone that "the USCC delegation represents the greatest number of people in relationship to the other groups present" (p. 21)[26] and that the USCC has suffered from years of terrorism. He suggested that the Sons of Freedom had a "May day in presenting and repeating evidences, testimony of hearsay innuendoes, allegations and everything" (p. 22). He indicated that the media added "insult to injury" for his members when the media reported that the "leaders should share the blame for these fires being perpetuated from the start" (p.22).[27]

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[25] EKCIR transcripts (February 19, 1983). Vol. IX.
[26] EKCIR transcripts (June 1, 1983).Vol. XVII.
[27] During the sessions there were two media reporters that were given permission to observe, one was from the Vancouver Province and the other from the Vancouver Sun.

> ...Never had Peter Lordly, never had Peter Chistiakov, never had I, in the sense of leaders of the Doukhobors, gave any instructions to burn or to bomb. And we'd like this to be clearly understood that the previous record and testimony that was given, it was the testimony, as I said, of allegation, secondhand, third-hand; sometimes and we still are waiting if the onus is that a person is innocent until proven guilty, we are still waiting for evidence to show to that effect...please don't swallow hook, line and sinker the information that was presented because it still has to be verified, corroborated. (p. 23)[28]

Mr. Verigin again seemed more interested in addressing the non-Doukhobor people who were present, in particular the mayors representing the four surrounding municipalities. He read from *The Thorny Pathway* report that he presented on the first day of the proceedings in October 1982, highlighting the overall concerns of the USCC about the years of terrorism. He described the USCC's need for protection from the terrorists and from the hate literature that had been circulating. He mentioned some concerns his organization was having with regard to education, 'land claims', government grants, pensions, social welfare, and their need for security from destruction and intimidation because of mounting insurance costs. He concluded that the USCC had lost confidence in the RCMP and therefore a Royal Commission was needed to end the terrorism.

Following Mr. Verigin's presentation, he called Lucy Maloff, the wife of Peter N. Maloff a respected Doukhobor philosopher, as a witness to tell her side of the story concerning statements made at earlier sessions by Sons of Freedom witnesses. In her statement (read by her son), she told the committee that her husband had been portrayed as Peter Chistiakov Verigin's "faithful stooge, his right-hand man, in carrying Verigin's message to the Freedomites" (p. 17), which she claimed was not true. She said she recalled the words of Peter P. Verigin, who in

[28] EKCIR transcripts (June 1, 1983).Vol. XVII.

many of his speeches and public appearances chastised the fanatical acts of the Sons of Freedom. "He warned the Doukhobors to steer clear of such elements and provocateurs, hiding as wolves in sheep's clothing amongst the Sons of Freedom" (p. 17). Ms. Maloff described her husband as an idealist, a life-time vegetarian who corresponded with Mahatma Gandhi in India; John Haynes Holmes, a Community Church Minister in New York; A.J. Muste, a world-renowned pacifist and idealist and Rabindranath Tagore, one of India's great poets. She denied that her deceased husband had participated with the Sons of Freedom in nude parades or arson.

Following her statement, she was asked by Fred Makortoff if her husband had ever spent time in jail. Ms. Maloff said she and her husband were sent to Piers Island, off Victoria, in 1932 for opposing the war. Mary Malakoff, a Sons of Freedom representative, pointed out that all of those sentenced to Piers Island were convicted of nudity and not for opposing the war, (given that none existed nor was foreseen at the time). Ms. Maloff explained that both she and her husband were innocently taken, along with the rest who were sentenced to Piers Island. Her comment created an uneasy stir among the Sons of Freedom present.

When asked whether her husband had any connections to the Sons of Freedom, she replied that he had no association with them as they lived some distance away. Derryl White, one of the core KCIR members, read to her a passage from a paper written by Peter N. Maloff in 1950, titled *A Report on the Doukhobors*, prepared for the Dr. Hawthorn's Research Committee, and asked her to clarify what her husband might have meant. In his report Peter Maloff said that the surprising part about the Orthodox Doukhobors was that they were "pointing an accusing finger

at the Sons of Freedom for the same work they themselves started and maintained for many years".

> This moral cowardice of the former community members is nothing less than betrayal of the Doukhobor cause. Their life is full of contradiction and this continuous shifting from left to right and vice versa, whenever it suits their purpose, this shifting back and forth in regards to Doukhobor ideology has a profound influence on the Sons of Freedom movement because of such shifting, they either give a substantial support to Sons of Freedom or prompt them to the extremes. (pp. 28-29)[29]

After parts of the report were read to her, Lucy Maloff said that she did not think her husband would write such a thing. Jack McIntosh, who worked as an archivist at the University of British Columbia in the Doukhobor special collections' section, drew to her attention that the paper was part of a collection of his writings they had on file. The question was how was it that she was not informed about her husband's writings or about his knowledge and relationship with the Sons of Freedom? For example, in his *In Quest of a Solution (Three Reports on Doukhobor Problem)* that he wrote in 1957, he talked about his years of experience with both the Orthodox and Sons of Freedom. Here, he states that the "Doukhobors themselves did much to create the problem" (p. 17),[30] thus arguing that they could not regard themselves innocent of the violence that had been occurring. He eventually isolates himself from all the groups, noting in his second report, *An Open Letter Addressed to all Concerned with the Doukhobor Problem*, "my voluntary alienation was because the Doukhobors in general are not telling the whole truth" (p. 14).[31]

After listening to Lucy Maloff's exchange with members of the Committee, what became evident to me was that her statement was written by someone else and

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[29] EKCIR transcripts (June 1, 1983).Vol. XVII.
[30] Ibid.

that her responses to questions were intended to craft a certain impression that was different from those who knew Peter Maloff or other members of her family. For example, when asked if her son was in jail for nudity in 1944, she claimed he was not, at which point Mr. Makortoff produced a news article describing her son's arrest. It was not clear whether her refusal to acknowledge her husband's relationship with the Sons of Freedom was of her own making or someone else's.

Creating Dissonance to Effect Change

In the June 1983 session, Fred Makortoff commented that he had observed positive changes occurring at recent sessions, noting that the changes were subtle but important as they were, from his observation, changing the perceptions that some members had about the other groups. However, these noted changes did not last long. At the beginning of the next session, held in July 1983, whatever changes had occurred were no longer evident. The Sons of Freedom were focussing on the Reformed as the reason for havoc among Sons of Freedom members, rather than on the Orthodox leadership.

Fred Makortoff tried to divert the discussion back to the USCC by openly questioning the Sons of Freedom strategy. He reminded the Sons of Freedom about Peter Astoforoff admitting that he was asked by John Verigin prior to an earlier session to change his story. Mr. Makortoff asked Peter Astoforoff why he was no longer pursuing the USCC leadership.

> We've had a witness presented here by the Sons of Freedom, one Harry Voykin, whose testimony was very contradictory. And we're wondering if, for instance, Harry Voykin's testimony, if that had been pursued, it would

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[31] Ibid.

> throw a great deal of light as to why Mr. Astoforoff's mother at this point in time is throwing up with blood and is on her death bed. (p. 36).[32]

Clearly, his comments were intended to provoke the Sons of Freedom, especially Peter Astoforoff, to speak out. The response Mr. Makortoff had hoped for, however, was not forthcoming, at least at the time.

Later that day, an exchange took place between Sam Konkin and Peter Astoforoff about a story that Mr. Konkin had told about meeting Peter Astoforoff in Kamloops. After listening for awhile, Mr. Astoforoff said that Mr. Konkin had made up parts of the story and wanted to know who put him up to it. The chair asked Mr. Astoforoff if he was "playing some sort of game with Mr. Konkin". Mr. Astoforoff, now riled, explained that he was offended by Mr. Makortoff's earlier comments that insinuated that the Sons of Freedom "...are the cause of mother [Mary Astoforoff] being in jail and suffering now and spitting blood, because we will not bring Harry Voykin and question him" (p. 89)[33]. Mel Stangeland saw this as an opportunity to ask Mr. Astoforoff about Mr. Verigin's previous denial that he ever instructed him to burn.

> The only time that I received instructions from Verigin was...when the U.S.C.C. Hall was burnt and when there was an attempted arson on the post office. I past on those messages to the boys that I had received them from Verigin, but no other messages. I was never involved with dynamite. (p. 92)[34]

Robin Bourne asked whether or not these were the instructions he had actually received, which he replied, "From Mr. Verigin, yeah..." (p. 99).

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[32] Mary Astoforoff dies a short time later from complications while on a hunger fast.
[33] EKCIR transcripts (July 13, 1983).Vol. XXII.
[34] Ibid.

This led to an exchange between Peter Astoforoff and John Verigin about Peter Astoforoff's allegation that Mr. Verigin had instructed him to destroy various buildings. In this exchange Mr. Verigin attempted to 'cross examine' Mr. Astoforoff.

Mr. Verigin: When and in whose presence...were these instructions given?

Mr. Astoforoff: These instructions I heard from you was after you and I spent several hours in the beer parlor at the Grand Forks Hotel. I suppose we could get about fifty witnesses that were there to attest to the fact that you and I sat there drinking beer. After a few beers, you got into my truck and you asked me to take you home or I asked you if you had a ride and you said, no. I don't know which exactly. We got into my truck, my pick-up, which was red by the way and you got into it. And away we went. I was taking you home...Just across the cemetery, as we were driving up, the U.S.C.C. cemetery, you said, "Well, now you have to listen, this and this and this." In fact, you name three buildings. It was either your house, your personal dwelling, the U.S.C.C. –

Mr. Verigin: ...Would you please recollect exactly the words or expression that I used to you? Exactly what words?

Mr. Astoforoff: It happened a few years ago. I have it in my statement, if you want the exact words, I'd have to read the statement.

Mr. Verigin: This statement, you introduced into evidence at the trial against me?

Mr. Astoforoff: That's right. Those were the exact words, but I'm saying I got from you instructions to burn down one of the three buildings. Later, I had – I had instructions from you, you say, the cultural center and I say, "There isn't one in town that I know of." And ...you say, "Yes there is." So, I didn't know what building you meant until I relayed the message to Mr. Savinkoff. I guess at his place. And he says, "Take a look at the [news] paper...The post office is slated to be a cultural center and that must be the building he meant."

Here, Mr. Verigin, in his effort to clarify the situation, had now given reason to believe that he had met on at least two different occasions with Mr. Astoforoff.

Mr. Verigin: Mr. Chairman, he's referring to two different circumstances, as I understand. One was by the cemetery –

Mr. Astoforoff: In my pick-up.

Mr. Verigin: - on my pick-up. Now, where was this other incident about the cultural center, which is supposedly the post office?

Mr. Astoforoff:	John Pankoff's service station that's the one that was right across from the Grand Forks Hotel.
Mr. Verigin:	John Pankoff's service station?
Mr. Astoforoff:	I think it was.
Mr. Verigin:	May I correct you? Your memory seems to be very hazy. You see, John Pankoff never owned a service station.
Mr. Astoforoff:	It was Peter Pankoff. (p. 109)[35]

The exchange went on for some time. Mr. Verigin, in questioning Mr. Astoforoff about the details about the meeting, wanted to know if there was anyone present when this exchange took place in Pankoff's garage. Mr. Astoforoff replied that Peter Pankoff was present. Mr. Verigin then asked how close Mr. Pankoff was to where they were having this discussion. Mr. Astoforoff, recognizing where Mr. Verigin was heading with his question, replied that Mr. Pankoff would not have known what was happening because both he and Mr. Verigin had been drinking for quite awhile and they were speaking in riddles. Mr. Astoforoff added "You don't give instructions when you're sober because you don't have an excuse" (p. 106). Mr. Verigin abruptly ended his line of questioning. "Well, for the record, Mr. Astoforoff, the Court, having heard your testimony, disregarded it and as a result thereof, I was found not guilty of your allegations" (p. 106).

Jim Popoff asked Peter Astoforoff if the instructions that Mr. Verigin allegedly gave might have been based on a misunderstanding, resulting from the inebriated condition. Mr. Astoforoff replied, "It's kind of late to ask that question now, Jim, because if I went ahead and went through with it, I must have stopped to think about it and looked at the possibility as to whether I had my head straight or not" (p.117).[36]

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[35] EKCIR transcript (July 13, 1983). Vol. 22.
[36] EKCIR transcript (July 13, 1983). Vol. 22.

Mr. Astoforoff's exchange with Mr. Verigin and Jim Popoff segued into questioning the role of USCC intermediaries, in particular of Harry Voykin and Joe Podovinikoff, who had arranged meetings with the Sons of Freedom in early 1980. The Committee learned that most of the meetings took place at the CEC Restaurant, operated by Harry Voykin, which was located next to the Doukhobor museum in Ooteshenia. The Sons of Freedom who attended the meetings wanted to know what role Mr. Voykin was playing when he gave them what they considered to be 'instructions' to burn or bomb. Peter Astoforoff told one such story about Sam Shlakoff, a Sons of Freedom member, who was one of the people Harry Voykin had been sending a message to requesting a meeting at his restaurant.[37] Although Peter Astoforoff told the story, the story was about Sam Shlakoff, who was sitting nearby.

> ...this is the information I got from Sam. He says, "I wonder what the hell is going on with that Harry or his head, because he keeps asking for Hremakin. I bring Hremakin there. He sits there looking at him and he doesn't ask him any questions". He says, "We leave. And then the next few days, [Harry asks us to] bring Hremakin. So, I bring Hremakin and nothing happens, he just sits there looking at Hremakin. What is going on?" So, we start looking into this mystery, as we call it, and it turns out that Hremakin has another meaning in Russian, *hremet* (phonetic), to make noise. And also, Hremakin means that he is the person that is associated with dynamite, because this is what his role was amongst the Doukhobors. So, we had to come to a conclusion, when he asked for Hremakin and Hremakin is there and he won't ask him no questions and that next day he's phoning again, "Sam, bring Hremakin." So, it was the other Hremakin that he wanted and this is what our people around Gilpin understood that this was the Hremakin you were asking for all the time. (p. 64)[38]

Harry Voykin, who was also present in the room, was no clearer in his response. He said he never phoned Hremakin or spoke to him while he was in his restaurant. He claimed that he did not talk to him because Hremakin might be up to something.

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[37] Mr. Shlakoff confirmed the details of the story.
[38] EKCIR transcripts (July 14, 1983).Vol. XXIII.

"Did you ever feel that it was your role in your community to kind of keep things stirred up and going?" asked Mr. Astoforoff. "Never, never. I have enough problems looking after myself, and my own, without looking after others", he replied (p. 65).

As bewildering as the Hremakin story was, Fred Makortoff, in summarizing what he had heard, said that it was becoming more and more evident that there was an official view behind which there were unofficial activities. He added that this was not new information as many of the old Sons of Freedom had already described how the whole Doukhobor structure had been assembled, starting with Lordly and then Chistiakov, and continuing with John Verigin. He said he had no reason not to believe them as he had known them most of his life. "Now, either they're lying or their heads are scrambled... [and] one of the best ways to get their heads unscrambled is to have this thing out in the open" (pp. 69-72).[39] Mr. Makortoff said it was difficult to believe that the entire group of Sons of Freedom people, generation after generation, "could keep this boiling all by themselves, without some emphasis or reinforcement from outside", meaning Orthodox leadership (p. 72).

Surprisingly, Mr. Verigin was in general agreement with Mr. Makortoff. Without explaining why and without elaborating on any of the particulars, he shifted the discussion to the notion that it was time to sign a declaration to put an end to bombing and burning, which I saw more as a diversion than a segue into a discussion about declarations. Mr. Makortoff made the point that "for those like Peter Astoforoff's mother, who is throwing up blood right now and on her death bed, we will have a hell of a time trying to convince her that there weren't messages"

(p.73).[40] Peter Astoforoff added that one's perception of his leader could not simply change overnight.

> To a person less evolved spiritually, [John Verigin] may be saying one thing and then another to another person that is aspiring for other things in life, the same speech could mean something else. What I am trying to say is that you get different meanings out of the same text. (pp. 78-79)[41]

He added that "...each leader happens to have an agent or a middle man, such as I was," pointing out that this was so that the leadership would not be implicated directly. As a solution, he proposed that "the only thing they have to do is quit being agents or sending out messages" (p. 80).[42]

Speeches of Peter P. Verigin

Jack McIntosh, who served as Russian translator for the KCIR, found at the University of British Columbia a number of speeches by Peter P. Verigin (Chistiakov), which he introduced as part of the KCIR presentation. In his presentation he indicated that Mr. Verigin had referred to a collection of speeches that Chistiakov wanted preserved, with the remainder to be purged from the file. Mr. McIntosh thought that ignoring speeches, simply because they no longer were to be included as part of the collection, raised many questions, especially when it came to understanding Chistiakov's role with the Sons of Freedom. As an example, he read from notes taken from a speech presented by Peter P. Verigin in the village of Brilliant, dated January 27, 1929 -

> The speech began on the topic of the Freedomites: 'behold our Freedomites. They are the rousing bells which will wake us up Not the bells that ring and can be hear only around a church, but cannot be hear further away. The

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[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] EKCIR transcripts (July 14, 1983).Vol. XXIII.
[42] Ibid.

> Freedomites ring out so that they are heard for thousands of miles. Listen, this spring, we shall send out the young people to preach. They will ring out to the whole world. Even bones, which lay in the grave for a thousand years will shudder in the ground. The Freedomites are the head with the horns, the farmers the tail and the Community (Doukhobors), the Community people the belly filled with filth. The Freedomites are thirty-five years old; such the master can trust. He can put them onto a binder, place the reins in their hands and they can work. But Community Doukhobors are fifteen years old and the farmers only three. The master cannot entrust a binder to such people because they have not grown up. They may let go of the reins, wreck the binder and kill themselves. The Freedomites are worthy'... (pp. 32-33)[43]
>
> At the end of the speech 'Chistiakov unleashed thunder and lightening from his lips and began to feed the Freedomites with solid food, i.e., began to heap vulgar abuse upon them. Many were horrified and backed away from the Freedomite idea'. (p. 36)[44]

The reaction by John Verigin to Mr. McIntosh's presentation caught many of those present by surprise. In what was clearly an angry tone, he first wanted to know what Mr. McIntosh's role was on the Committee (even though Mr. McIntosh had been with the Committee for some time), at which point the chair intervened to explain. Mr. Verigin reiterated that Peter P. Verigin had "selected speeches and letters that were to serve as guidelines for future generations". "I do not believe that Mr. Chistiakov had two different policies, one for the government and another for his close...or intimate or followers..." he said (p. 43).[45] By removing the speech from his collection, which implies the speech never existed, Robin Bourne wondered what effect this might have had on someone like Mr. Nevokshonoff who was present at the time the speech was delivered.

Jim Popoff suggested that if one were to study all of Peter P. Verigin's speeches and other writings that he recommended one would see a consistent

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[43] EKCIR transcripts (July 15, 1983).Vol. XXV.
[44] Ibid.
[45] EKCIR transcripts (July 15, 1983).Vol. XXV.

ideological pattern throughout. "You cannot talk about a double meaning because his words had a single meaning for him" (p. 54). Peter Astoforoff argued that Chistiakov states in the speech that some have been trained to see "different meanings, in accordance to your level of spiritual development", adding "[i]t is obvious why this speech is not one of the selected speeches because the selected speeches were intended for fifteen-year-olds" (p. 55),[46] implying that the speeches intended for the Sons of Freedom were the ones that were purged from the collection.

This exchange illustrates how important it was for the USCC to maintain a certain narrative consistency. What is not accounted for in his story is the underlying message that the Sons of Freedom held on to for their own purpose, whether spiritual, political or otherwise, that justified the years of destruction. Jim Popoff concluded that history clearly shows that the Sons of Freedom systematically misinterpreted what Chistiakov said, albeit choosing his words carefully. Mr. Popoff acknowledged that he accepts the possibility that the Sons of Freedom may have interpreted what he had to say on a higher level, adding that a misinterpretation of a single sentence or simple act has led to the death of thousands in countries like the Soviet Union. "We cannot turn back all the pages of history and we cannot definitely ever define what was inside Mr. Verigin's mind (p.57).[47]

The first USCC witness to appear at the October 4th, 1983 session was Peter Popoff, the former head of the Doukhobor Research Committee, a group that had formed in the mid 1970s to document Doukhobor experiences. Mr. Popoff read a

[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

statement that indicated that his Committee members, mainly Orthodox, some of whom were present at the EKCIR sessions, along with a few independent Doukhobors, were deeply disturbed by presentations made to the EKCIR by members of the Sons of Freedom and Reformed. He said

> ...We are very disturbed mainly because the two above mentioned groups persist in their intentions of involving by fabricated and twisted evidence, as found from their presentation at the symposium, innocent people including the traditional Doukhobor Spiritual Leaders. Their concerted attempts to shed responsibility for their own acts by making it appear someone else is responsible, has caused great concern to many.[48]
>
> This conspiracy has caused a serious division inside the over-all Doukhobor society, with a terrific financial burden on many. But to the USCC especially, in matters of security, insurance, property, etceteras, not to mention the adverse publicity and the denigration of the Doukhobor public image. (p. 14)[49]

Peter Popoff added that there were two instances where fire was used publicly, with the approval of the members. The first was in Russia in1895 at the 'burning of the arms' and the other was in the 1920s, in Verigin, Saskatchewan, which was also where firearms were destroyed, which begs the question as to why they still had firearms. Other than these two events, he claimed there were no other times that involved the community in setting fires. Peter Popoff said that the Doukhobor Symposium found no evidence of any instruction or justification for destroying other people's property or causing other people to suffer. He cited numerous examples from speeches that both Peter the Lordly and Peter Chistiakov gave to support his findings. He concluded saying that "no one has accepted this challenge to prove that arson, violence and destruction of other people's property are

[48] Doukhobor Research Symposium was held during mid 1970s.
[49] EKCIR transcripts (October 4, 1983).Vol. XXVII.

part of the Doukhobor faith and philosophy and no one was able to disprove the facts cited above" (p. 22).[50]

Strategically, the USCC needed to find a way to bring the EKCIR back to what was essentially their dominant story. I assumed that the USCC was feeling pressured by those not participating in the sessions, who were hearing stories about what was said at the sessions. One can also assume that many Orthodox and Independent members who were not in attendance might have been wondering why it was that the Sons of Freedom and Reformed stories were being given any consideration at all.

Following Peter Popoff's presentation, Peter Astoforoff asked, "Do I understand you correctly to mean that some of your people are starting to doubt or starting to believe that perhaps maybe orders did come from leaders?"

Mr. Popoff:	Well, that's what is being said and that's why this presentation.
Mr. Astoforoff:	Okay. Further, you state that you cannot find the documented proof that leaders gave orders or something to that effect. Is that correct?
Mr. Popoff:	That is correct.

Mr. Astoforoff pressed him on what he meant by "documented proof", asking whether his own statement that he gave in court where he said that he received instructions from John Verigin would qualify as "documented proof". Peter Popoff said that his comment was referring to former Verigin leaders' rather than John Verigin, in particular Peter Petrovich Verigin.

Mr. Makortoff asked Peter Popoff why the Research Committee rejected a presentation by Nick Nevokshonoff, noting that he is a trustworthy man and that the

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[50] Ibid.

purpose of the Research Committee was to examine Doukhobor history. "Why was he not allowed, if you were after the truth?" Mr. Makortoff asked. Peter Popoff, who chaired the Symposium, explained that Mr. Nevokshonoff's presentation would arouse a lot of hostility among the members. Mr. Makortoff responded, "there was nothing vulgar...about it...he even refrained from mentioning the names of the people involved so as to avoid any unpleasantness to their grandchildren..." (p. 53).[51] "As you probably are aware ...we have a rule for the symposiums that unsubstantiated accusations of any person, dead or alive, [are] not acceptable. And this is what he was trying to do," Mr. Popoff replied.

It was apparent that the Research Committee had attempted to maintain a certain story line about the Doukhobor history. Denying the possibility that other stories might be valid, they further marginalized the other groups, which in the end left the Sons of Freedom and Reformed more determined to counter these views through other means.

Negotiating Stephan Sorokin's Participation

By the October 1983 session, Stephan Sorokin had returned from Montevideo, Uruguay, where he had lived off and on since the early 1950s. Prior to the October session, the Sons of Freedom had erected a tent village on empty land across the road from the Castlegar airport, to serve as a protest camp for the Sons of Freedom who were demanding Mr. Sorokin's participation at the EKCIR sessions. I met with the Sons of Freedom at the protest site to see if there was anything I could do to assist in bringing this matter to an end. After having spent the better part of an hour with those at the camp, I went to see Stephan Sorokin and members of the

[51] EKCIR transcripts (October 4, 1983).Vol. XXVII.

Reformed to discuss with them the Sons of Freedom concerns. Mr. Sorokin and his close confidantes spent a good part of the time discussing the motives of certain people, recalling that prior to his departure to Uruguay there had been an attack on his residence by Sons of Freedom members. The question being discussed was whether Mr. Sorokin's refusal to attend would give further fodder to the Sons of Freedom and USCC to attack his credibility. Although his health was poor, he indicated that he would attend and I returned to the camp to inform them of his answer.

I sat with them in the tent for an hour or so listening to the various people discuss Mr. Sorokin's reply. There were approximately thirty to forty people present. It was late in the day and as the sun set the tent became darker until I could barely make out who was speaking. After they talked for awhile they asked if they could deliver their answer to me later in the evening at my hotel. I agreed and left. About midnight, I noticed a piece of paper under my door with their response. In short, they agreed to end their protest.

I noticed sadness as they went about their business of removing the camp. My impression was that the protest camp was the first time in many years that they had come together for a common purpose, and that there was something about participating in such a gathering they didn't want to leave.

Stephan Sorokin – the Hawk

The session with Stephan Sorokin started off rather unevenly, as it was difficult to coordinate the translation between Russian and English with Mr. Sorokin, who was not used to the proceedings. Mr. Sorokin was provided with a list of

questions before the meeting, some focusing on his identity as *Yastrebov* (the Hawk) a name that he was either given or assumed, depending on who you were talking to, and the impression it created for many Doukhobor and Sons of Freedom people.[52] Mr. Sorokin explained that when he arrived in the Kootenays John Lebedoff took advantage of the occasion by bringing Mr. Sorokin to the Sons of Freedom and introducing him as the long lost leader. Mr. Sorokin said, "Lebedoff was behind all the terrorism from Verigin. Here, I immediately took action so he [Lebedoff] would be vanished from Krestova and then he was put in jail" (p. 19).[53]

The symbolism of the 'hawk' was very important among all the Doukhobors as it symbolized the long lost leader Peter Verigin III, who was living in the Soviet Union at the time, who was considered the next in line to Peter Petrovich to assume the leadership of the Doukhobors. The USCC were concerned that Mr. Sorokin was exploiting the situation by taking advantage of the Sons of Freedom by pretending that he was the long lost leader. Much of the exchange that took place between Mr. Sorokin and the USCC was about this matter.

Other Sons of Freedom Leaders

John Lebedoff was another prominent Sons of Freedom 'leader' during the 1940s and 50s, who appeared before the EKCIR. He was viewed as an intermediary between the Verigin leadership and the Sons of Freedom and who, as mentioned above, was the one responsible for introducing Mr. Sorokin, as the long lost leader *Yastrebov,* to the Sons of Freedom in 1950. When he appeared as a witness, he read a statement denying any involvement in burnings and arson, which ran contrary to

[52] *Yastrebov* was the name given by the people to Peter P. Verigin's son who was still living in the Soviet Union. However, it was learned later that he died before ever making it to Canada.

the views of those who were with him at the time. Many were looking forward to insights he might shed on his role during that period. Instead, he added very little to help understand why the fires continued as they had, which was a disappointment for many.

Mike Bayoff was a self-acclaimed 'leader' within the Sons of Freedom movement. He was a tall man with long white hair, who wore mainly white and carried with him a collection of papers he was always ready to present when called on. During the sessions he sat as an 'independent' Sons of Freedom. Other than occasionally asking people to speak louder, he sat quietly waiting for his opportunity to present.

The ad hoc Planning Committee, made up of representatives from the groups, myself and members of the KCIR core group, finally agreed for Mr. Bayoff to make his presentation at the January 1984 session. His whole presentation consisted of him reading numerous pages from Simma Holt's book, *Terror in the Name of God*, which described how he assisted the police in unraveling the secrecy surrounding the numerous bombings that took place during the 1940s and 1950s. Other than these few passages, no new insights were gained.

Conclusion

The sessions began with the USCC making it known that they were the law-abiding group, who had endured years of victimization at the hands of the 'terrorists' and further victimization at the hands of the justice system when John Verigin was arrested. Being the victim for them meant that they had to endure the cost of

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[53] EKCIR transcripts (October 4, 1983). Vol. XXIX.

buildings being destroyed by fire along with the additional costs of insurance and guarding of their properties.

The Sons of Freedom also endured the loss of their homes through fire, albeit at times by choice. For those who spent time in jail, many lost their health from fasting and their families from years of incarceration. The role of the Sons of Freedom, however conceived, was part of a complex web of beliefs, oblique messages, black work, culture, secrets, salvation, sacrifice, intimidation and fear. Although all of the parties longed for an end to the years of turmoil, no one was willing to compromise their beliefs, nor discontinue their activities until change was evident. A change for the USCC meant no more guarding, rebuilding or high insurance costs. A change for the Sons of Freedom meant emancipation from the religious/cultural burden they saw themselves carrying.

Bringing the groups together meant finding the right person to chair the process. Robin Bourne personified this role, as he was, first, an outsider to the area, which seemed to have its own cache. Second, he was a senior bureaucrat in government who had a prior history in Soviet affairs,[54] although controversial at the time, and third, he was someone who demonstrated an interest in helping to address the long-standing issues between the groups and government.

The success of the first session was due in part to the groups having input into designing the rules of engagement. However, another important consideration was Robin Bourne's role in maintaining decorum of respect and fairness to ensure those who were willing to speak about their experiences did so knowing what to expect.

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[54] His prior history was set out in numerous articles by the *Globe and Mail* during the 1970s.

My role in the beginning was to shuttle back and forth between the groups until an agreement was reached on the structure and rules of engagement. After the first session, now that the groups were committed to continue, I spent my time addressing matters arising from the session, which included intervening in hunger fasts and mitigating conflicts that arose, or looking through archival sources in Victoria and Ottawa.

CHAPTER 6

Constructing a New Narrative

Since the first EKCIR session, John Verigin had on a number of occasions proposed that a declaration be signed by everyone to end the bombings and arson. Such a declaration would be one of faith rather than one resulting from a conclusion to the question of why the turmoil continued for so long. The question some were asking was if they were to agree to sign a declaration would this be perceived as an endorsement of Mr. Verigin's leadership, and if so, a dismissal of whatever role and influence the Verigin's might have had with the Sons of Freedom in the past? The challenge for the groups was deciding whether to accept such a proposal on faith or to continue listening to the testimony of those who had been involved.

It was during the May 2, 1984 session, when Fred Makortoff asked John Verigin if he remembered meeting with W.A.C. Bennett in 1972 in Grand Forks, where he said he could furnish fifty names of people that were insane and fifty names of hardened criminals. Mr. Verigin replied "that the record would indicate...those who were involved in these acts...can be identified...through [a] doctor's observation... whether they should be considered as criminals or ...need medical attention" (pp.18-19)[1]. He indicated that he believed that providing such a list would make it easier for the police and the community to know who to be concerned about. At this point tension in the room became noticeable.

[1] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.

John Ostricoff, a Reformed member, reminded Mr. Verigin that he was asking everyone to forget the past. "How can you forget the past if you are looked on as either mentally insane or a criminal who should be put away" (pp. 22-23)?[2] Jim Popoff intervened to say that if they were to reach reconciliation there would no longer be a need for such a list. However, this added, rather than lessened, the tension in the room. John Ostricoff, now notably angry stated, "The USCC members [are] denying the fact that these principles were mutual principles. You're [also] denying the fact that these [Sons of Freedom] were the front army people that went out and defended these principles" (pp. 23-24).[3] "Why", he asked, "is the USCC denying its role" (p. 24)?

Jim Popoff explained that there were thirty thousand people of Doukhobor background in Canada and that less than one percent might agree with Mr. Ostricoff's theory that bombing and burning was a legitimate front line activity. "I don't agree with it and I don't see why I have to buy that theory before you will be willing to stop burning and bombing", he said. "The reason for all the bombing and arson was because the principles, such as not buying land, were those of Chistiakov", Mr. Ostricoff argued, "and these principles were instigated by these leaders, through his front army people here that went out and fought for their lives towards that and lost their wives and kids and everything else" (pp. 24-25).[4]

Jim Popoff, in an attempt to diffuse the situation, claimed that "no one abides by principles perfectly". Returning to the point, John Ostricoff argued that the USCC was using their majority argument as their defense.

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.

> You built yourself a shield, you've used it and now you're turning back in another sense and accusing us, because we cannot accuse you, because we're uneducated. You didn't send us to school and things like that, they were prohibited, otherwise Peter the Lordly's blood would fall upon us with such fear. We grew up with such fear like this to understand this. And here you say that there was no such a thing taking place like that. (p. 26)[5]

Fred Makortoff said that after two years of hearing witnesses it was clear that the USCC were not willing to acknowledge the Sons of Freedom's role and observed that over the past few months a rage was starting to build among the Sons of Freedom members. He again explained that the Sons of Freedom were "the vanguard, the ringing bells, the guys that made noises far, far away. We were the guys that did this, sacrificed many things" and "it takes a lot of jam to go and do something like that and have a whole pile of misfortune staring you in the face and still go and do it" (pp.29-30).[6] He added that everyone was promised that someday there would be an accounting of all that had happened. In other words, people were told that there was a grand scheme or purpose for all the bombings and burnings at the time.

The underlying issue for Jim Popoff was the "false stigmatization of the true Doukhobor ideology... [This was] where we have to listen to the TV and hear about Doukhobor violence when violence has nothing to do with Doukhoborism." Adding, that "it takes a lot of jam to take all that shit and still say: Look man, let's get together and be human beings together and let's not hurt each other" (p. 30).

After a lengthy exchange, Robin Bourne recapitulated the main points by saying that it was the Sons of Freedom view that there was a very clear direction

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[4] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

coming from the Verigin leadership, that they were expected to burn and bomb in the interest of upholding the Doukhobor principles. He turned to John Verigin at this point -

> What you're being asked to admit, Mr. Verigin, is the responsibility of the Doukhobor leadership for the direction, either obliquely or directly, for the actions...taken by the Sons of Freedom. (p. 33)

Robin knew that the USCC were adamant in stating that they had never counseled burnings or bombings. However, he also knew that the opportunity for reaching an accord would rest on Mr. Verigin's acknowledgement of the Sons of Freedom role. The pressure was clearly on Mr. Verigin to decide how far he would go in his willingness to construct a new narrative that would include, rather than exclude, the Sons of Freedom. Clearly, his preference was to ignore the Sons of Freedom and instead have everyone sign a declaration to end the bombing and arson. Robin, in his attempt to deconstruct Mr. Verigin's logic, said -

> You're condemning the Sons of Freedom to their own responsibility for these acts forevermore. And I don't think that's acceptable to them. I think the Reformed who call themselves Reformed because they have pledged not to take part in violent activities, but a great many of them did take part in violent activities when they were Sons of Freedom, also feel that unless their perceptions that these activities, going back to the early days, were in part anyway, the responsibility of the leadership, that they also will be condemned to having taken part in violence. (pp. 43-46)[7]

Robin Bourne concluded that he was not suggesting that Mr. Verigin was guilty of anything, but rather that if he wanted an end to the burnings and bombings he would need to 'do the right thing' and acknowledge their past role, in order to move beyond the present impasse.

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[7] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.

Jim Popoff replied that he already acknowledged that the Sons of Freedom have suffered more than the USCC. However, his comments quickly went sideways when he suggested that their suffering came about because of their "perceived beliefs" (p. 41)[8]. This led to Fred Makortoff challenging Jim Popoff on his use of the phrase "perceived beliefs".

> [This] sort of puts the onus on the person that saw this erroneously. That there was something wrong with the guy's head and he sees with square eyeballs or something, I don't know. (p. 43)

Mr. Makortoff reminded everyone that the Doukhobors had developed an 'oblique language' over time. The Sons of Freedom knew what the language meant and where it came from. As for it being a perception, Mr. Makortoff pointed out, people had already learned their lesson that it was better to verify the message first, if there was any doubt.

Fred Makortoff added that it was easy to talk about the past, forgetting that what was being left out of the discussion were the emotions that people felt. "They don't have the capacity to manipulate words easily, they feel frustrated" (p. 41).

> Doukhobors are a peculiar kind of people. They can sit in the meeting hall there, where we had people sitting on the same bench where one guy made a statement on the next guy and he's done five years in the slammer for it. The guy was completely innocent, he was never there. The guy did it to save him so that he could go to the mother Russia, see. And both of these guys are sitting on the same bench singing praises to the Lord. It's difficult to find that in other societies. (p. 41)

Robin Bourne saw this opportunity to again ask Mr. Verigin if he had given any further thought, "as the current member of the Verigin leadership, to acknowledge any responsibility or blame for the depredations that were caused by the Sons of Freedom. I'm not asking you personally, but I'm asking you whether the

[8] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.

history of the Verigin leadership is prepared, through you, to acknowledge that they bear responsibility for some of these acts" (p.51)?[9] John Verigin replied –

> I'd be admitting to a falsehood. The true facts as I know, being a living example of the so-called Verigin leadership, if I am regarded as such, is to this; I swear before you as before God, never have I given any instructions to anybody and in that manner to say that I have been responsible for a commission of an act that was committed by somebody who chose to misinterpret me, would be tantamount to give credence, credibility to these actions... what I'm seeking is this – I want to assure everybody present that today and tomorrow, nobody has to fear that there will be any instructions, directly or indirectly, verbally, writtenly [sic], orally, to commit such actions. (p.51)[10]

Although the day ended in a positive tone, over the next five months the relationship among the groups soured. During this time the pressure remained on John Verigin and the USCC to acknowledge that the Sons of Freedom were encouraged in their activities by Chistiakov.

At the Planning Committee meeting on June 18th, Peter Astoforoff said that the Sons of Freedom were not going to support any proposal in which the Sons of Freedom looked like "Mr. Black", while other groups looked like "Mr. Clean".[11] Mr. Astoforoff's position was that the Orthodox need to accept that Chistiakov and John Verigin conveyed to some people information that led to "acts" being committed. John Verigin asked how he could approach an average USCC member, especially one who had spent time guarding or had helped pay for the reconstruction of the USCC centers, and ask them to accept reasonable blame for all that has happened. Peter Astoforoff acknowledged that it would be very difficult for John Verigin,

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[9] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

however, the Sons of Freedom would not give a commitment of any kind until somebody shared responsibility for the so-called 'black work'.

At the August 8th planning committee meeting, Peter Astoforoff again repeated that the problem the groups were having was that everyone was too concerned about having a clean image while at the same time disowning those who were responsible for the acts. He suggested that the groups quit blaming each other and try to look at the problem objectively. He characterized the acts of depredation as a "form of zeal" that erupts spontaneously and suggested that what was needed was to understand how to control the zeal so it does not erupt into another violent act. The debate continued late into the evening.[12] At the September 10th planning committee meeting, the 'zeal' reached its pitch when Mr. Verigin arrived inebriated, leaving the KCIR members wondering whether it was worth their time continuing with the process.

The next EKCIR session, held in October 1983, began on a low note. In Robin Bourne's opening comments, he stated that since there had been no tangible result from the past eight sessions, he was proposing three options for everyone to consider. His first option was to end the proceedings and let people go back to what they were doing. His second was to have Robin and I replaced with another representative from government and his third was to design a new project that would not involve government, but leave the discussions to local people to figure out.

While everyone considered his comments, it was now the KCIR's turn to make their presentation. The presentation began with a letter written to Peter

Makaroff, Q.C., who served as legal counsel to the Doukhobor community, by W.A. Soukeroff on March 14, 1962, who stated

> Verigin Sr. [Peter V. Verigin] definitely pursued a policy opposed to assimilation. No matter what people say, we are all witnesses to the fact that he was afraid that, having provided education to his flock, he would either lose them or it would facilitate normal assimilation of the Doukhobors with his life around them. To his methods the Freedomites added their stubbornness, and were merely upholding ancient behest and aspirations.
>
> Even if he did not give his blessing to terrorism, Peter Petrovich uttered very much what was unclear to the people and forced them to conjecture. His favorite analogy had to do with cleaning potatoes, as he put it; "I will clean them and feed the skins to the pigs". Another analogy was the example he would always cite of the hen under which most of the eggs were spoiled and he was compelling the chicks to peck their way out so as not to die in the shell. He also established the frequency of Doukhobor migrations, defining it to be every 40 years, and insisted that the Doukhobors had outlived their stay in Canada, and must take action; the first step – breakfast – was the rejection of the church and icons, the second – dinner was the burning of arms. The third step, he declared would be taken in Canada, and would be the final supper, but he did not say clearly what specifically had to be done.
>
> And so, all of these obscure sayings, given the Freedomites' naïve faith, even unto death and loss of self, and their zeal to see to it that his words, which they now call "prophesies", were not in vain, have compelled the Freedomites to offer themselves as scapegoats, by means of burnings and bombings goading the government into expelling them from Canada, thereby providing a reason, as they put it: 'we won't leave without a reason.' (pp. 53-54)[13]

Other prominent Doukhobor people who kept a watchful eye on the situation over the years were presented. One was from P.K. Reiben who, at the time, was the representative of the Independent Doukhobors in the Union of Doukhobors of Canada. He wrote an 'open letter' to the Union of Doukhobors of Canada August 15th, 1947, where he made a number of claims, one of which suggested that the disintegration of the Doukhobor society was the result of the manner in which the Doukhobors were structured, which he believed led to unbearable oppressive

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[12] EKCIR transcripts (October 9, 1984). Vol. LVII.

conditions of communal life and to "unbridled despotism of the leaders and their henchmen" (p. 46).[14] Reiben claimed that "[a]lmost all the entourage of former leaders were themselves involved in this black work, and hence, fearing their own skin, they have zealously concealed this secret" (p. 48).

Jim Kolesnikoff, a USCC member who had remained quiet throughout most of the sessions, thought it was conceivable that the Doukhobors did behave in a very erratic and inexplicable manner. He said that it would be beneficial for the Doukhobors to understand some of the "deep rooted causes for this behavior" (p. 5),[15] citing for example materials from archives, especially those that had not been made available before. At this point, numerous archival topics were raised as possibilities. I was concerned that this discussion was now heading in a new direction, without first finishing what was started. My sense at the time was that whenever an issue got close to a conclusion or resolution, the discussion would rematerialize into some other issue, or end in a series of personal attacks. I reminded everyone that we were addressing perspectives not looking for causes, and I suggested that we finish discussing the role of Chistiakov first before moving to another topic. Everyone agreed.

Robin Bourne used the opportunity to revisit the question as to whether the Orthodox Doukhobors were prepared to acknowledge that some of Chistiakov's statements and actions might have been "misinterpreted", leading some to believe that bombings and burnings indeed had their place. John Verigin replied that

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[13] EKCIR transcripts (October 9, 1984). Vol. LVII.
[14] Ibid.
[15] EKCIR transcripts (October 9, 1984). Vol. LVIII.

"Chistiakov and even Lordly could have been misinterpreted or contributed to a development of a certain kind..." (p. 19),[16] however, he added that both have been dead for some time and that he himself has been blamed for similar statements. He challenged anyone to attribute responsibility to him. The chair again asked Mr. Verigin if he was prepared to admit that some of his statements (and actions) could have been misinterpreted. Mr. Verigin replied

> I would like to know exactly what statement and where could there be possibly a misrepresentation, because the basic issue, burnings and bombings, I have always stated – they are not compatible with the Doukhobor principles of faith. I have always stated openly that, I don't believe anyone that says that he's got instructions from me to do this. And I challenge anyone to prove otherwise. (pp. 19-20)[17]

Mel Stangeland, a KCIR member, decided it was time to respond to Mr. Verigin's challenge, by referring to a Planning Committee meeting of September 10th, 1984 that left the KCIR members wondering whether what they were doing was worth the effort. This was a meeting that Mr. Stangeland chaired, where a number of Sons of Freedom, Reformed and USCC members were present. Mr. Stangeland reported that Mr. Verigin arrived at the meeting intoxicated and from the moment he arrived had been disorderly and difficult to manage. When he did speak, Mr. Stangeland added, he spoke in Russian to the Sons of Freedom, which led Mary Astoforoff to stand up and set on fire a $20.00 bill and when she finished burning the money, she disrobed. At this point Mr. Gritchin, who drove Mr. Verigin to the meeting, offered to take Mr. Verigin home. "On his way out of the hall, [Mr. Verigin] made a point of going over to Mrs. Astoforoff and standing quite close to her and spoke to her in Russian, and then turned around and shook hands with Mr.

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[16] Ibid.

Savinkoff – Peter Savinkoff, who is a self-confessed arsonist – who had burned down the community center in Grand Forks. And those were the only two people that he made any kind of statement to or gave any real attention to on his way out of the hall" (p. 25).[18] Mr. Stangeland concluded by saying that "if a person is really concerned about not creating misunderstandings and confusion, those are not the kinds of actions that are going to contribute to peace in the Kootenays" (p. 26). Mr. Verigin responded –

> Mr. Stangeland, at one point you say that I was an intoxicated person. Then I would say then if that is an illustration to take into account, maybe that explains why in my eyes at that particular moment I only saw Mrs. Astoforoff and this Peter Savinkoff. Would that not be a human explanation for my behavior? (p. 26)[19]

Mr. Stangeland said he wasn't looking for an explanation, but simply pointing out what he and others saw. This was "an open and friendly discussion between you and two Sons of Freedom, one of whom had just disrobed and burned the money in the presence of the meeting" (p. 26).[20]

Following this exchange, the KCIR resumed its presentation. I read a letter addressed to the Honorable Hugh Guthrie, K.C., Minister of Justice in Ottawa, from the Attorney General of British Columbia, the Honorable R.H. Pooley. The letter was dated January 17, 1932.

> ...There can be no doubt in the world that Peter [P.] Verigin knows exactly what is going on and from what Secret Service people tell us, he is fully advised as to contemplated actions. The files of the RCMP would illustrate to you that our information is of an authentic nature, because it was our police who learned that it was the intention of the Doukhobors to destroy property in Saskatchewan and blow up some of the elevators. The RCMP were

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[17] Ibid.
[18] EKCIR transcripts (October 9, 1984). Vol. LVIII.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.

> immediately advised by wire and they were able to frustrate the contemplated dynamiting, which was planned to take place within forty-eight hours. And now we are advised of the intention to destroy several more schools.
>
> ... I want to impress upon you – subject to what the members of the RCMP may think – our view is that the situation would be very much improved if an ultimatum should be delivered to Peter P. Verigin, that if these outrages are not stopped he will be deported. Let me remind you that Peter Verigin was the man who stated at a Doukhobor gathering that bridges would be blown up, and we all know that several attempts have been made to do that very thing since he made that statement. (p. 7)[21]

The RCMP pursued the matter further. Eventually an aborted attempt was made to have Peter Petrovich Verigin deported back to the Soviet Union.

I also read from an RCMP report that referred to a 'Special Agent 878', who was spending time with both Peter P. Verigin (as a translator) and two Sons of Freedom leaders named Peter N. Maloff and John Perepelkin. In a meeting that the agent attended with John Perepelkin, the agent learned that the Sons of Freedom were becoming agitated because they heard that Peter P. Verigin was going to remove the Sons of Freedom from their lands to create a separation between them and the Orthodox. This information resulted in many Sons of Freedom homes being set ablaze and an irrigation pipe dynamited. Special Agent 878 said in his report that those responsible were not Sons of Freedom, but rather 'communal Doukhobors', which was the term applied to Orthodox members. His information seemed to fit what some others already knew.

The KCIR concluded its presentation in October 1984 by stating that if the parties were to move beyond the impasse a joint statement was needed that redefined Chistiakov's role. Surprisingly, everyone agreed. Mel Stangeland said that he and Mark Mealing had prepared a draft statement for the Committee to consider. He

explained that they used a letter by W.A. Soukeroff as the basis for their draft. The statement described how the Sons of Freedom movement grew in numbers from 1927 to 1938 during the leadership of Peter P. Verigin and that although Chistiakov did not publicly advocate terrorism, his sayings, parables and speeches created confusion in the minds of the people, to such an extent that some of these utterances served as the foundation for acts of violence.

The groups decided they would review the draft over lunch. Later, when the session resumed each group acknowledged that the draft statement 'safely' described this period without offending any of the groups in particular. Some changes were proposed by John Verigin, which led to a discussion over certain words that were offered. When it became clear that a new draft was needed to reflect the changes, the groups agreed that Mel Stangeland and Mark Mealing be left to work on it while the Sons of Freedom made their presentation.

The Sons of Freedom presentation was a deep contrast to the previous discussion about Chistiakov's role, as if the previous discussion had not taken place. Accusations and counter accusations were once again being made this time concerning Stephan Sorokin's role and how Mary Malakoff had been assaulted, presumably by the Reformed. In midst of the melee, Jim Popoff and John Verigin proposed an "interim draft reconciliation pledge". Jim Popoff explained that the USCC executive was putting pressure on Mr. Verigin and his delegates to account for the time they had been spending at these sessions over the past two years. The chair asked that the document be set aside for discussion on the last day. This meant

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[21] EKCIR transcripts (October 10, 1984). Vol. LX.

that two initiatives were now underway - the Chistiakov statement and the Orthodox proposal for reconciliation.

Crafting Language and Meaning

Mel Stangeland and Mark Mealing presented their new draft of the statement describing Chistiakov's role, at which point negotiation over the wording of the document then unfolded. Notably absent during this exchange were the accusations and counter accusations. It was as if two years of intense wrangling over beliefs, positions and accusations were for naught. The careful crafting of language continued on into the evening, until finally -

> Dr. Mealing: 1. The Freedomite movement grew rapidly in the years 1927-1938, during the leadership of Peter P. Verigin. The Sons of Freedom arose within the Doukhobor community and yearned for a leader whose role, purpose, methods and values would satisfy their radical hopes.
> 2. Peter P. Verigin did not publicly advocate terrorism.
> 3. Peter P. Verigin commonly used sayings, parables and teachings that created confusion in the minds of people, including Doukhobors, Government Officials and Police and this allowed them to construct their own interpretations. Some of these interpretations remain to the present day a foundation for acts of violence.
> 4. Leaders and members of all Doukhobor groups shared antipathy to Government, a common concern about principles or ownership, and fear of assimilation and the loss of Doukhobor principles.
> 5. Factionalization grew because of the various degrees to which individual Doukhobors were willing to act in this common struggle. 7.
> Mr. Verigin: 6.
> Dr. Mealing: That's right. I can count, but not this late at night - 6. We, representatives of the Christian Community & Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors, of the Sons of Freedom, and of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ –
> Mr. Bourne: The meeting is adjourned. Let's shake hands. (pp. 50-56)[22]

Fred Makortoff started the next morning by offering his thoughts about the previous evening's session, which appeared to match what others felt as well.

[22] EKCIR transcripts (October 10, 1984). Vol. LXIII.

> I think yesterday has restored some confidence in the process for everybody. I think it has also indicated a wise choice of a way to proceed, this matter of focusing on an area. This focusing should be pursued and continued, in the hope of gaining more agreements as to events and the circumstances surrounding events. And in this way we can – there is enough background information over the last eight sessions, where everybody has a general idea of what is happening... We're pleased with the agreement. There is a lot more that we would have like to see, but in the interest of achieving some agreement, we're quite prepared to live with that. (pp. 2-3)[23]

There was a renewed confidence felt by those in the room. Later in the day the chair brought back for discussion the "interim draft reconciliation pledge" that Jim Popoff had introduced the night before. In raising the 'pledge' for discussion, the chair was hoping that the same approach introduced by Mel Stangeland and Mark Mealing might be adopted. In other words, even thought this statement was a product of the USCC, the chair did not want to see the discussion reduced to personal attacks as he had seen on numerous occasions. The draft statement began with a preamble that described the role of the individual Doukhobor in his service to his or her faith. The statement ended with a commitment to end bombings and burnings, recognizing that such acts have no role in the Doukhobor movement.

Although most felt the statement sounded conciliatory, there was a sense of caution about proceeding too far until there was time for the other groups to mull it over. Peter Astoforoff indicated that putting signatures on a piece of paper does not require much effort, adding that living up to the words on the paper was the challenge. The chair asked that I meet with the groups between sessions to find a way to craft an accord statement to end the bombings and arson that everyone could live with.

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[23] EKCIR transcripts (October 11, 1984). Vol. LXIV.

The chair concluded by suggesting that the decision as to whether to continue with the EKCIR would be left to the Attorney General to decide. His recommendation, based on the advice from the groups and the progress that had been made at this session, was to continue for the time being.

Negotiating an Accord

The next session wasn't until April 1985, so there was time for me to make my way back and forth between the groups to seek agreement. I used Robin Bourne's comments at the end of the October session as leverage.

When I met with the Reformed, they felt the sessions were valuable and wanted to see them continue. I raised with them the notion that an accord could speak to their desire about continuing the process, and at the same time include "reconciliation" language such that the Orthodox was proposing. They agreed.

The USCC also wanted to see the sessions continue, however, they needed to demonstrate to their membership that progress was being made. The Sons of Freedom, on the other hand, were ambivalent about signing any document. They were willing to give their word to end their participation in bombings and arson as long as they were not receiving instructions from the leaders.

There were a number of events that occurred during this six month period, including the death of Stephan Sorokin, who died a month after the October 1984 session. Also, a week prior to the April 1985 session, a bomb was discovered along the railroad tracks near Grand Forks, and two Sons of Freedom women were arrested for breach of their parole, after they set their home ablaze in Gilpin.

Signing the Interim Accord

During this period between sessions, I decided to meet with all of the parties individually to discuss the draft USCC reconciliation statement. The Reformed Doukhobors saw this as an opportunity to push the Province to commit to the continuation of the EKCIR process and to see how committed Mr. Verigin was about ending the turmoil. They indicated that before they would sign the statement, John Verigin would need to sign a declaration stating that he would not instruct anyone to commit further acts of arson and bombings. I relayed this information to the Sons of Freedom in Gilpin and then to Mr. Verigin, Jim Popoff and other members of his team.

The Sons of Freedom response was that they wanted to wait and see the final draft. When I introduced the terms proposed by the Reformed to the USCC, Mr. Verigin agreed, to the astonishment of his members, that he would sign a declaration. Jim Popoff volunteered to draft the declaration statement, which I then delivered to the Reformed. The Reformed were uneasy with the wording, thus redrafted it, which I took back to the USCC. After two more visits, the groups finally settled on the wording. I arranged a Planning Committee meeting for February 19th, which was the first time since October that everyone would be in the same room.

At the Planning Committee meeting the groups seemed relieved that an agreement had been reached. This they saw as an historical occasion; although the question that I presumed was on everyone's mind was how long the agreement would hold. The language that they agreed to the 'Interim Accord' read –

> 'We, the undersigned hereby state: (1) That we condemn any or all bombings and arson of the past, present and future; (2) That to the best of our ability we

> will try to deter those who still wish to continue in such acts of violence; and (3) That we promise to continue our participation in a co-operative process involving all three Doukhobor groups, namely, the USCC, the Sons of Freedom and the Christian Community of Reformed Doukhobors along with representatives from Government and the Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations so that every effort can be made to understand the reasons for the years of suffering in order to insure that the suffering along with the bitterness and strife, will not continue into the future'. (pp. 24-27)[24]

The Declaration that Mr. Verigin signed read –

> 'I, John J. Verigin, honorary chairman of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, hereby declare: (a) That I will not curse anybody to commit acts of violence; and (b) that I will not instruct or counsel anybody to commit criminal acts such as arson and bombings. I hereby sign this document in good faith'. And it was signed and dated the 19th day of February 1985 at Castlegar, British Columbia...(p. 27)

Although the Sons of Freedom members were kept informed throughout this process they chose in the end not to sign. The reason, they indicated, was that they were withdrawing formally from the EKCIR because of threats they had received and a recent fire that had taken place at the residence of one of their members. They did, however, agree that they would abide by the spirit of the accord.

Jim Popoff wanted stated for the record that curses had nothing to do with Doukhoborism.[25] He also stated that a previous draft of the declaration presented by the Reformed read: (a) "That I will not curse anybody to commit acts of violence as of now". Mr. Popoff pointed out that "as of now" implied that Mr. Verigin had cursed somebody in the past, whereas in the signed Declaration the phrase had a line through it indicating that the words were omitted, with the correction initialed when the document was signed. However, copies of the document had already circulated through the various communities. The problem was that in the circulated copies the

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[24] EKCIR transcripts (April 16, 1985). Vol. LXVIII.
[25] EKCIR transcripts (April 16, 1985). Vol. LXVIII.

"as of now" phrase was still visible, without the change being noted. The conclusion was that the blue ink did not show up on the photocopy, which did not sit easily with the Orthodox representatives. In defense, the Reformed said that they provided a copy to an independent Doukhobor who took it upon himself to make additional copies for circulating among the communities. A debate ensued until Robin reminded everyone that progress had been made.

Conclusion

After two years of ongoing EKCIR sessions, it was now evident that the previously dominant narratives no longer held certainty. The question was what it would take to convince the USCC, in particular John Verigin, to accept that his grandfather Peter Petrovich Verigin may have had a part in promoting and encouraging Sons of Freedom activities.

When Mel Stangeland and Mark Mealing presented a draft statement acknowledging the role that Chistiakov played with the Sons of Freedom, the willingness of the USCC to discuss the statement was the first sign that long held positions were negotiable. Agreement on this contentious issue meant that there was a possibility of an accord on the one key issue of bombing and burning. How far John Verigin was willing to go to reach an accord was put to the test by the Reformed who made it conditional that Mr. Verigin would need to sign an undertaking that in effect would neutralize the 'power of the curse'.

Conflict theories, be they frustration-aggression, social identity or human needs theory, may have their place in providing an explanation for some aspects of this conflict. For instance, one could argue that frustration might have led to acts of

nudity or to someone setting fire to a building. Similarly, an argument could be made that mass burnings were the result of individuals choosing to identify with the Sons of Freedom, which in turn meant that nudity and burning of one's home was a right of passage. What conflict theories ignore is how individuals come to act in certain ways through certain cultural influences or beliefs or through the interpretation of language and symbols.

Resolving the turmoil did not mean isolating issues as one might do in a mediation practice. Rather, it meant finding opportunities to merge parts of the competing narratives into a single story, narratives that not only acknowledge but also define what being a person in the world of the Doukhobors or Sons of Freedom meant.

CHAPTER 7

Capturing Experiential Meaning

> ...[M]eaning is derived through the structuring of experience into stories, and that the performance of these stories is constitutive of lives and relationships. As the storying of experience is dependent upon language, in accepting this premise we are...proposing that we ascribe meaning to our experience and constitute our lives and relationship through language. (White & Epston, 1990, p. 27)

My objective was to capture the experiential meanings of three key individuals who played a significant role throughout the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) years, but who in particular, were instrumental in helping to achieve an accord. I began the interviews (November 2001), by asking them to describe how they came to view the other groups, especially during their earlier years. I was curious to know whether the storying of childhood experience would shed any light on their involvement during the EKCIR.

Those interviewed were - Fred Makortoff, Jim Popoff, and Steve Lapshinoff. Mr. Makortoff served as spokesperson for the Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors (Reformed) and Mr. Popoff for the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC). Steve Lapshinoff, who was also a member of the Reformed, played an important role in providing a research focus from which all the groups benefited. All three interviews described in varying detail what it was like growing up in three distinctly different Doukhobor communities within the Kootenay-Boundary region.

Mr. Popoff was raised in Grand Forks amidst other Orthodox families. Mr. Makortoff grew up in a Sons of Freedom family in Shoreacres, which consisted of a

mixture of Sons of Freedom and Orthodox living in the same small village, located between Castlegar and Nelson. And, Mr. Lapshinoff was raised in an exclusively Sons of Freedom community called Gilpin, located approximately eight kilometres east of Grand Forks.[1]

Reconstructing Childhood

Of the three interviews, Steve Lapshinoff had the least to say in describing his childhood. I felt at times as if part of him was still in hiding. Not to presume that he has issues with authorities, but his quiet demeanor suggested that his experiences may have been somewhat insular compared to that of Fred Makortoff or Jim Popoff. Steve Lapshinoff said that for the most part what he remembered about growing up was his fear of fires and stories about government.

> The government was bad. The government has done this and the government has taken the land away, jailed the people for nothing...So you are brought up with those things. The police were your enemy. When growing up you had the fear of any stranger that would come in there that you didn't know. You would go away and hide.

There was an underlying sense of fear that permeated the Gilpin community. Sometimes it was generated by authorities, but also, as Mr. Lapshinoff pointed out, "from your own people, never knowing whether or not you are going to be burned out." When some asserted their will over others in the Gilpin community it was

[1] Gilpin was a community created in mid 1930s by the City of Grand Forks and the Provincial government for Sons of Freedom returning from Piers Island. In 1932, over 700 of Sons of Freedom had been convicted for nudity and sentenced to three years on Piers Island. Piers Island was commissioned as a penitentiary by the federal government for the sole purpose of housing the Sons of Freedom during their incarceration. On their return to the Kootenay Boundary area a number squatted on Crown land outside of Grand Forks, given that they no longer had a place to live. This annoyed the local town's people, including local politicians. It was here that an arrangement was made with the provincial government to buy the Knight and Harris properties on the Kettle River east of Grand Forks, across the river from the highway, making it difficult to get into and out of most of the year. Those who were squatting on Crown land were taken by truck to this new location and told they could live there without having to pay rent or taxes. They

supposedly for the benefit of all, but still this generated fear. For instance, there was a time when several people came to his grandmother to ask if she would sacrifice herself (meaning burn herself to death) in public as a protest against authorities.

> So it will elevate the suffering of other people that something tragic happens in the community then the government apparently goes back not as harsh. Those were some of the things. She was told that she being a widow, she didn't have anything. She had two sons but aside from that she had no other ties and if she sacrificed herself it would be to the good of the community.

Growing up in Gilpin was confusing for a Sons of Freedom child to comprehend, with some family members in one group, isolated from the other group as he was.[2] He remembered that he was not allowed to visit relatives, even those close by who were members of the USCC, although he said that his grandfather, who was a devoted USCC member, did manage on occasion to visit Gilpin.

For Jim Popoff who lived in Grand Forks, his childhood recollection was more of curiosity and wonderment, a sharp contrast to the fear and rejection experienced by Mr. Lapshinoff. Grand Forks was a community where at least fifty percent of the population was Doukhobor. Everyone was aware of the Sons of Freedom, always suspecting their involvement when a bridge or railway line was destroyed. However, Jim Popoff remembered that in 1951 when the railway bridge east of Grand Forks was dynamited, it was once again widely assumed that the Sons of Freedom were responsible. In fact, he recalled it turned out later that it was one of the few cases where the Sons of Freedom were not involved. Notwithstanding, this explosion not only damaged the metal girders, but also broke windows for several

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considered land to be God's land that was not to be bought or sold. The community built homes, steam houses and planted large gardens to sustain those who remained there.

[2] The USCC had introduced a non- fraternization policy with the Sons of Freedom which meant that USCC members were not to be seen in the presence of the Sons of Freedom.

city blocks, rattling others for at least a mile around, waking everyone up. Incidents like this created suspicion within the Sons of Freedom community that there was a conspiracy by government or the non-Doukhobor community directed against them.

Fred Makortoff spent his youthful years living in Shoreacres, where Orthodox members lived alongside the Sons of Freedom in a relatively organized and peaceful way. Living next door to each other meant that each year the land needed to be reapportioned in order to ensure that there was enough agricultural land to meet the requirements of the whole community. For instance, if somebody died prior to spring it was reasoned that the family no longer needed the same amount of land to use, therefore their piece would be added on to someone else's whose needs had increased that year.

> It seemed to work fairly well; it would be a heated discussion sometimes and sometimes it would be jokes and laughter - people coming together. By ten or eleven o'clock in the morning they would have it hassled out except for some measurements that they would have to verify and check, and that sort of thing. In the afternoon everybody would go and traipse around while they do their measurements, verify what's happening from the year before.

Although being a Sons of Freedom family growing up in Shoreacres had its challenges, a sense of community among all the members seemed to prevail.

Politics of Education

During the 1940s and '50s, Sons of Freedom families kept their children at home rather than sending them to school. In September 1953, one hundred forty-seven Sons of Freedom adults were arrested for nudity at a *polatka,* or tent village, several kilometres up the Slocan Valley. There were one hundred-four children left behind. These children, as well as a few remaining parents, were transported by bus

to an old sanatorium in the small town of New Denver. Many remained there until their parents signed an undertaking that they would send them to school. This stand-off continued for six years.

During that time other Sons of Freedom children who were not attending school were apprehended by the RCMP, taken before the local magistrate to determine whether they would be made wards of the state, and if they were, they were then taken to New Denver to join the others. Steve Lapshinoff remembers hiding from authorities during this period.

Whenever there was a warning that the police may be heading their way the children in Gilpin would immediately head up the mountain behind their settlement to a cabin that Pete Cazakoff built. The cabin was located near the American border, which was a few miles from where they were living. Mr. Lapshinoff, who was about nine or ten at the time, remembered staying there for as long as a month and a half. He estimated that about thirty or forty children from Gilpin were also affected, which would have made the logistics of finding a place for them to sleep or food for them to eat rather challenging.

Mr. Makortoff was one of the Sons of Freedom children apprehended by the RCMP in March 1954. The five years that he spent at the New Denver Dormitory, he suggested, was not as traumatic as some had experienced. Before he was apprehended he had learned to read Russian at home, as his grandfather had an extensive library that he maintained. During his stay at New Denver, school officials described him as bright and articulate with adults as he was with other students.

Although he claimed he adjusted well, the downside for Mr. Makortoff was that five years of his life were taken from him.

Jim Popoff attended public school in Grand Forks and was raised in a family that embraced knowledge and new ideas. His father, Eli Popoff, was a noted historian who wrote about Doukhobor life and culture. His home was a gathering place for scholars and others who came to learn about the Doukhobor people and their confusing politics.

While attending school there were certain events that left a strong impression not only on him but on the whole community. One such example was when Mr. Popoff's childhood friend, Betty Lebedoff, was taken to New Denver by the police. "The police drove right past our place and Betty was sitting in the back with her doll and her head pressed against the window." For Mr. Popoff and others, this left a feeling of detachment and confusion, as they, like most, were unaware of the politics of education that was being acted out between the Province and the Sons of Freedom at the time.

Sons of Freedom Rite of Passage

Fred Makortoff recalled many visitors to his home, but in particular a visitor who dropped by the house on occasion, whom he referred to as "old Arishnikoff," a relative who often traveled with Chistiakov to Mexico. "He was an engaging story teller who had been to places and done things that were totally fascinating." His wife (who was Mr. Makortoff's great aunt), was what he described as a "peculiar lady," a "die hard Sons of Freedom" who would "gather the girls together, especially

around [shelling] pea time...and she would tell them stories" about her experience as a Sons of Freedom. These were "legendary type [stories], some magical moments."

He remembered that she was one of two women back in the late 1940s that would go up to the highway or railway tracks and undress, which inevitably caused a commotion. This was her way of protesting; for what purpose no one was clear. She was finally arrested and spent time in jail. Fred Makortoff remembered that this was seen as her initiation rite for "when they would come back, having paid their dues, they now entered the warrior society." As he suggested, "if you have hunted your lion you have done your thing," a metaphor that seemed rather ironic for a pacifist culture.

Story telling provided the cultural fabric that gave the Doukhobor people their identity, linking people to past events and locations. Listening to stories was where one would learn about "the old battles and how who said what had meaning." A key figure in most stories was Chistiakov and his relationship with the Sons of Freedom. His words had 'power' that gave reason and purpose to those who were looking for their place in the world. Fred Makortoff listened to the many stories about Chistiakov, realizing later the stories that people told were without context to events occurring at the time. His curiosity enabled him to discover more about the past, which proved valuable later when the EKCIR sessions were held.

Jim Popoff's childhood friend, Betty Lebedoff, returned from New Denver in 1958, and attended school in Grand Forks with her friends. In 1962, Betty's parents were planning to join the trek to Agassiz, but she did not want to go. The day the trek passed through Grand Fork, Jim Popoff remembered hearing the Russian voices

singing as they trekked up the main street of town passing in front of his school. He estimated that there was somewhere between eight hundred and a thousand people participating in the trek as they passed through the area.

> I remember that a lot of us ... acknowledged the fact that we felt a powerful draw because the singing was something we could relate to. We even knew some of the people personally. And we could just feel the ambiance, [the] irrational, as we knew it was...

Jim explained that the singing was so moving that you could "sense the kind of inner motivational forces that were driving this thing, even though they were not obviously properly balanced or tempered by other processes that should have been in existence."

The 'inner motivational forces' that Jim Popoff described, Fred Makortoff called 'fervor', which was something he often witnessed.

> I remembered watching people. [Some] got undressed; I never did like that energy. It was one of those ones where it was not focused, it was an erratic energy. It drove people into some kind of frenzy. At any rate I remember that they lit a fire, people throwing things in the fire, people throwing money into the fire to indicate that they weren't into this materialism.

This was a different type of energy than what Jim Popoff experienced. This energy was unbounded, invasive, driven by 'politics' as well as by faith.

If one could locate a common energy shared by all Doukhobors it would be their singing that gave the culture its identity and, with its resonating tones, spirituality. The a cappella voices were rich and harmonic. The psalm was the voice of the people that faded away during the years of turmoil, only to resurface again during the EKCIR.[3]

In Search of Identity

The ongoing interest by the media in the Doukhobor situation and the growing concern by their non Doukhobor neighbours created a demarcation between the Orthodox and the Sons of Freedom that led to a division between family members, similar to what Steve Lapshinoff previously described. As the media generated more and more attention about the burnings and bombings, the USCC started a policy of non-fraternization to ensure that there was no mistaking the law abiding Doukhobors from the 'terrorists'.

For many, the Doukhobor identity was no longer being defined by a belief system, a culture or tradition but instead by media images depicted on the evening news. Jim Popoff recalls that for much of his childhood:

> The dominant reality of our Doukhobor identity was the terrorist activity and it permeated our lives in every respect. People even when they didn't legally change the spelling of the last names, informally did so. Kids in school would start spelling their names with v's and ov's just to make it less obvious that they were connected. People would give false names when they would go to work in the Okanagan.

Presumably, changing the endings of their name meant that non Doukhobors would no longer recognize who they were.

Blurring of Identity

Fred Makortoff remembered hearing stories from his grandfather and others in the community about some members of the Orthodox who were also members of the Sons of Freedom.

> [Some of them] had participated in some of the acts, particularly in the forties. There would be stories about who said what and it would be almost legendary type of stories, somebody did this and somebody did that, and

[3] Jim Popoff indicated that the Doukhobor participants' singing at the EKCIR was one of the first epiphanies of the process.

> somebody just went and sacrificed themselves [sic] for that to achieve this end.

He recalls that during the 1940s the common cause for both the Sons of Freedom and the Orthodox was the Second World War. The war effort created a lot of hostility in the broader community between the Doukhobors, who remained behind because they were granted military exemption, and non-Doukhobors. This occurred mainly during the years of conscription, but also when the war ended and the veterans returned from Europe. Many veterans thought that the former Doukhobor lands, which had become Crown lands, should be theirs for the choosing, even though the Doukhobor families were still occupying the land.[4] This led to protests, as well as burnings and bombings that some of the Sons of Freedom believed involved both the Sons of Freedom and Orthodox.[5]

Introducing Stephan Sorokin

The beginning of the 1950s was a time when bombings and arson were again on the rise. The RCMP became the new Provincial police force in September 1950, replacing the former British Columbia Provincial Police. The Province was entering into an election and talk about the 'Doukhobor problem' was on everybody's agenda. At the same time, the Research Committee was undertaking its examination of Doukhobor life and a Consultative Committee on Doukhobor Affairs was organized that brought the groups together in an attempt to address immediate concerns.

This all happened at the same time that Stephan Sorokin arrived in the Kootenays. There was skepticism about his newfound role. The Sons of Freedom

[4] The lands that the Doukhobor people once owned became Crown land in 1939 following the collapse of the CCUB Ltd.

took to him right away when John Lebedoff introduced him as *Yastrebov*. He was considered by many to be an opportunist and by others as the long lost leader. As he waded into the melee everyone watched to see what he would do.

One of the major functions of the Consultative Committee was to find a new location for the Sons of Freedom as it was believed that this would bring peace to the Kootenay Boundary region. The irony was that it was not the Sons of Freedom who found a new home, but rather Stephan Sorokin who located himself in Montevideo, Uruguay where he lived off and on for the next thirty years.

Fred Makortoff recalls the first time he saw Stephan Sorokin. He described him as a man that had a certain charisma and aura about him, which he thought, was unusual.

> You could sense that there was something in him that had some sense of mission or purpose. I couldn't quite say what it was. There was a sense of new beginnings and this is where we are going with a new leader and that kind of stuff's happening.

In 1970, when Mr. Makortoff returned to the Kootenays with his wife and children, after having lived in Vancouver, he encountered Mr. Sorokin shortly after they arrived. At the time Fred Makortoff was busy building a water system. Mr. Sorokin walked up to him and said, "I need a person, come with me." Mr. Makortoff said, "We got a dam that we need to finish up." Mr. Sorokin said, "No, no the elders can finish that. We have other things we got to do." He went on to work for Mr. Sorokin for the next ten to twelve years. This was a time when there was turmoil between the Sons of Freedom and those who were trying to change. However, it was also a time where there was a sense of new beginnings taking place among the

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[5] No known Orthodox member was ever charged for such acts, with the exception of John Verigin, who

younger families. Stephan Sorokin's mission was "not to allow any of the old thinking and radical types in there," which proved to be a constant struggle.

Jim Popoff had an earlier experience with Stephan Sorokin when he arrived in Grand Forks in the spring of 1950. Prior to his arrival, Mr. Sorokin had spent a few days in Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan. On his arrival out west, Jim Popoff remembered that Mr. Sorokin was introduced as a guest from the Ukraine, "who spoke a few words and sang a few songs" at the USCC youth festival that spring. Jim Popoff's grandfather, who was chairman of the USCC Executive Committee, was often tasked with hosting guests who came to stay, but this time was unable to oblige, so his son-in-law, Eli Popoff [Jim's father], was asked to host Stephan Sorokin. Although Jim Popoff did not remember much about the man or his politics at the time, he did remember "the spats, his white and black shoes, his cane that was partly white, and his shiny beard." He also recalled that it may have been his friend Jim Kolesnikoff's uncle, Anton Kolesnikoff, who later became "a henchman of Sorokin's," who came to the Popoff home and picked Mr. Sorokin up and took him to Gilpin for his first encounter with the Sons of Freedom.[6] From this time, in 1950 Mr. Sorokin established himself among the Sons of Freedom as the 'spiritual' leader, and John Verigin was subsequently viewed as their 'material' leader by some of Stephan Sorokin's followers.

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was acquitted of those charges.

[6] At the meeting in Gilpin, John Lebedoff, who had become a self-proclaimed leader of the Sons of Freedom, told Stephan Sorokin that he was invited to a large gathering that was to be held in Krestova. John Lebedoff had already prepared the people in Krestova by telling them that he was bringing to them the missing leader, Peter Verigin III, or *Yastribov* [Russian for hawk], as they called him. This is where the Sons of Freedom came to believe that the long lost leader had been found, and now was there to provide them with spiritual guidance.

To this day Stephan Sorokin remains a controversial figure. Some believed he helped the Sons of Freedom change their ways, while others maintained that he was an opportunist who used the Sons of Freedom to serve his own interests.

Influence of the Soviets

Whatever role Stephan Sorokin may have played among the Sons of Freedom, he went to great lengths to convince the Reformed that the Soviet influence among the USCC was something they needed to be deeply concerned about. Fred Makortoff recalled:

> There was a definite fear, as we could see the USCC moving to a reengagement with mother Russia. And a reengagement, in fact a moving back there as part of the prophecies that the Doukhobors are one day suppose to do that. Nobody knows when that is going to happen, and is this the moment? Maybe we should be ready.

One might argue that the relationship between the Soviets and the Doukhobors made a lot of sense. The Soviets wanted to keep in close contact with compatriots' abroad, through *Society Rodina*, as they had done back in the 1920s, when they had invited 2,500 Saskatchewan Doukhobor families to return to the Soviet Union to assist with their collective farming experiment.[7] The Doukhobors, on the other hand, had kept the prophecy alive that they would eventually return to the Soviet Union, so the relationship continued to build.

No one knew exactly what to expect with this closer relationship, although the Reformed were quick to note that a cultural pervasiveness was starting to occur. It began with friendship engagements between the USCC and Soviet officials,

[7] Peter Lordly Verigin convinced the majority not to return to Russia, and only about 200 went, nearly all of which had returned to Canada by 1929. Peter Lordly's intercession against the move led to later speculation that the Soviets may have been involved in the CPR train explosion that killed Peter Lordly Verigin and eight other passengers.

followed by a barrage of literature. Here, the Reformed noticed that the singing began to change to reading musical scores. This change, Fred Makortoff suggested, was a worthwhile "cultural experience for the USCC folks...because they learned singing by notes." These cultural changes were also a concern to some USCC members, because musical accompaniment, such as a piano for Soviet performances, was now allowed at the USCC community center in Grand Forks, and this had been unheard of before.

The one change that riled many people, in particular the Reformed was the sudden departure of Peter Legebokoff, the former editor of *Iskra,* a USCC publication. Fred Makortoff recalled:

> The thing that broke everybody's back was when John [Verigin] began going over there, more and more...He was a big heavy drinker at the time. You could see that [the Soviets] were assuming more and more control till he fired Peter Legebokoff. And we realized at that time, 'Holy smokes this is serious business.' They really got him because Peter Legebokoff was an innocent individual, very deeply religious man and wouldn't hurt a fly kind of guy. But he tried to go through *Iskra* to place the futility of and stupidity of both the Soviet and American positions. They reamed him out. John was the mouth who was told to fire the guy and he did, from Moscow. And we went, 'Oh, oh, oh not good.'

The concerns the Reformed had about the Soviet influence on the USCC were widely circulated through their communiqués. Some of the source material that they drew from, especially from the Canadian League of Rights, was spurious and sensational. Jim Popoff did not know Fred Makortoff or Steve Lapshinoff before the EKCIR sessions. Somehow that didn't seem to matter to the Reformed as his name was often mentioned in reference to his role as editor of *Mir* and *Iskra.* Both publications were referred to by the Reformed as "KGB organs" and to Jim Popoff

as a KGB agent under some other disguise, who was under the orders of John Verigin, who was a well-known KGB agent.

Locating the Narrative

After Mr. Makortoff relocated his family to the Kootenays in 1970, he took an interest in both national and international politics, looking for answers to some of the questions he was asking himself at the time. Questions such as

> Why are we different? Why do we need to be? What was it that was making us special? Or were we just another silly bugger sect defining themselves for some other reason; are we in fact different from anybody? And if so how?

When he spoke to the elders he noticed that the stories were like events, without a reference point or link to circumstances occurring at the time. So he organized what he referred to as a 'research party' and went to the *Nelson Daily News* to read everything he could find. His plan was to set out, in historical sequence, the stories that people told, creating a framework that he could use for analysis. He went through all the newspapers at *Nelson Daily News* and the *Trail Times* looking for reports about the Doukhobors during the Chistiakov era.

During this same period, Jim Popoff, along with friends, started a new publication called *MIR*. His interest in his own history sparked him to branch out and meet some of those who were seen as outsiders, to seek their views as well. One of the first people he interviewed was Joe Podovinikoff, who was seen by many in the USCC as controversial, as his name more than anyone (besides Sorokin), epitomized everything the USCC disliked about the Sons of Freedom. Joe Podovinikoff had been the "eloquent propaganda spokesman" for the Sons of Freedom and Reformed, whose writings had denigrated the USCC and its leaders.

But when Mr. Popoff interviewed him, Mr. Podovinikoff had already cut his ties with the Reformed group and was soon to become a member of the USCC, where he assumed a prominent position in that organization, which for many, both within the USCC and the Reformed, was looked on with disdain.

Power of the Curse

In 1978, John Verigin was charged with four counts of conspiracy to commit arson. During his trial, many of the Sons of Freedom witnesses who were responsible for bombing or burning community centers, post offices, and other locations, said they did so under the threat of a curse. Mr. Verigin and his legal team denounced the 'curse' as something that was primitive and superstitious, and generally foreign to being a Doukhobor. Mr. Verigin's defense counsel, Harry Rankin, argued that the Sons of Freedom used the 'curse' as an excuse to give legitimacy to their actions.

The issue of the curse was raised on numerous occasions throughout the EKCIR sessions. During the interview, Jim Popoff described the 'curse' as "an out growth of a peasant illiterate culture," one that has roots in superstitions of centuries past.

> In our USCC Sunday schools...and it was also discussed in our extended family with my grandparents and great grandparents, we were told that there had been, a century ago, a family that had been particularly active in working against the interests of the leadership during the time of Peter Lordly in Russia. Some of his followers were saying 'Petushka, look at what these guys are doing to you, and how can that stand?' And he answered that it won't stand, because...'these people will bring on themselves with this activity seven generations of bad luck, they bring a curse on themselves'.'

He explained that the "rationalistic segment of Doukhobor society always viewed the concept of a 'curse' as a more primitive form of saying "what goes around, comes

around," in other words, "bringing karma on themselves that they are going to have to deal with for future generations." A common Russian expression, "if you are really upset with a person, [is] 'May you be cursed thrice'," or 'May you be cursed for seven generations', would be considered a "serious kind of medicine." Mr. Popoff concluded that he "was not aware of any instance of any of the Verigin leaders...placing a curse on somebody" -

> ...but I know of instances when people who were among their supporters might have said something like, 'you're working against Peter Verigin – 'You are going to be cursed for seven generations.' So, to some people, the association with the leader represented a power to curse somebody.[8]

An acknowledgement of the curse was raised during the final negotiations leading up to the Interim Accord. Fred Makortoff and the Reformed pushed for John Verigin to sign a declaration stating that he "would not curse anybody to commit acts of violence," (p. 27),[9] which many Sons of Freedom believed he had the power to do. Jim Popoff said that by 1984 John Verigin knew that people needed to move beyond the old notion of the curse, if any form of conciliation was to be achieved. He said he also knew that the only way to achieve this was for him to sign a declaration that he would not curse anybody to commit acts of violence. Hence, the declaratory statement proved to have meaning, as the curse was never mentioned again.

Institutionalized Leadership

Jim Popoff suggested that, historically speaking, Russian people in general had difficulty adopting democratic institutions and therefore Doukhobor leaders

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[8] Although some might think that the notion of a curse is 'primitive', if not foreign, to North American culture, one only needs to be reminded of the significance of 'mortal sin' within the Roman Catholic Church.

played an important role in providing spiritual guidance to their followers, who exhibited many of the Russian social and individual tendencies.

> The Doukhobor people believed in the Christ spirit living in every human being and later Chistiakov used the metaphor that even when you accept spiritual leaders it's not in the sense that they shine the light and if they go out it is dark. It is in the sense that each of the regular members is maybe a 45 or 100 watt bulb and leaders are 300 watt bulbs but it's all the same energy going through all of them. And so Doukhobors just adjusted to this...

Leadership only became a powerful institution when people believed that leaders had a special power. The irony is that the Sons of Freedom, whom Chistiakov described as the most spiritually enlightened, were the most leader dependent of all the groups. This was evident in part when they accepted certain individuals as leaders by the strength of what they thought the individual could offer from the stories he or she would tell, whether these stories were cast from dreams or elucidated by the company they kept, usually meaning the Verigin's. The Verigin leadership, as Jim Popoff suggested, was institutionalized in part by circumstances.

> It's like the queen bee concept in a hive. The queen bee starts out like any other bee but they feed her all this stuff that makes a bigger bee out of her - that way she is able to eat five times her weight in food and produce five times her weight in eggs every day. Well, the same thing here. Once you develop an institution then you feed it in terms of supporting it, in terms of giving individuals within that institution certain prerogatives, and a certain kind of prestige and aura.

Following Mr. Popoff's metaphor, the pressures to maintain the level of responsibility in the public eye was enormous, to such an extent that it took its toll on each of the Verigin's, including John J. Verigin.

> I think John Verigin ...sometimes may feel bothered that he did a less than perfect job. That he could have done better if he didn't resort to escapism and alcohol at times. A lot of people say that if he didn't have this escapism and alcohol, he might have committed 'Hare Kari' thirty years

[9] EKCIR transcripts (April 16, 1985). Vol. LXVIII.

> ago because he was dealing with an almost impossible situation. People were expecting things out of him, demanding things from him, imposing things on him, accusing him of things, all of which were contradictory to each other and coming from fifty different directions. John Verigin was in fact instrumental in helping to bring about many of the necessary solutions to existing problems. [10]

Following the EKCIR sessions, John Verigin had managed to address his lack of sobriety and has remained in a sober state ever since.

Conclusion

The challenge of growing up as a Doukhobor during the turmoil years was made more difficult due to the image that was cast and recast by media reporting. Jim Popoff knows from his travels and from attending university what it was like to be part of a culture that is spurned by the outside world. For Steve Lapshinoff, his world may be smaller but was no less complicated by distorting images. The spurning that he experienced came from relatives, neighbors, and others within the Sons of Freedom, as well as from people in other groups.

Fred Makortoff's experience was different from the other two, but like the other two, he was genuinely curious about his own identity and what it meant to be Doukhobor. He exercised his curiosity by exploring beyond the boundaries of his own experience to assemble the stories he had heard into some form of relational pattern that linked to the past.

A quality that was evident with all three was their interest to learn. Unlike many in their group who lived in an insular world built on stories that they told each other, all three were never satisfied, as the desire to learn appeared at times to take

[10] See J.J. Verigin interview in *Iskra*, No. 1918, pp. 75-78.

precedence. This leads to the question as to whether there were other qualities evident in helping groups address conflict.

Jim Popoff noted that there were certain people who he felt a respect for who helped him during the EKCIR to understand the nature of the problems being discussed: he mentioned Olga Hoodicoff and Polly Chernoff, because of the risks they took in telling their story to the Committee. Or, Fred Makortoff and Steve Lapshinoff who challenged his assumptions and perceptions, not maliciously but in a respectful manner, or others like John Ostricoff, "who was also able to make concessions...call a spade a spade, and a heart a heart when it was required." These are human qualities that are not discussed in the conflict literature and yet without some demonstration of these qualities, it can now be reasoned that the likelihood of reaching an accord would have been more difficult. This was evident, as we learned, after Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff left the sessions.

CHAPTER 8

The Turning Points of Meaning

Merriam Webster (1994) defines 'epiphany' as a "sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something" or an "intuitive grasp of reality through something...such as an illuminating discovery." Denzin (1989) suggests that an epiphany may occur as a result of a major event or from cumulative experience. The objective of this chapter was to identify epiphanies or turning points of Fred Makortoff, Jim Popoff and Steve Lapshinoff that occurred during the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) sessions.[1]

Throughout the interviews, I noted certain events that were common to all three. For example, everyone agreed that the EKCIR was designed to encourage discussion of stories and enable assumptions to be challenged each time they met. Another example was the recognition of the importance of meanings, especially when it came time to construct a new understanding about Peter Petrovich's role among the Sons of Freedom. Two other common events for both Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff were the death of Mary Astoforoff and the end of their involvement at the EKCIR sessions.

The interviews provided me with new insights about the challenges that each group faced at different times throughout the EKCIR. For Fred Makortoff, I learned that the challenge for him and the Reformed was at the beginning when they were

[1] The sessions were recorded and transcripts of the proceedings were distributed at the end of each session. Between sessions, meetings were held where the transcripts were read aloud in a public gathering. This helped to orient members to the Committee's role and function..

trying to decide whether or not to participate in the EKCIR. For the Reformed, the uncertainty was whether the process would be manipulated by government or whether John Verigin would "get his way" with the non-Doukhobor representatives, which in the end he concluded that the process withstood being influenced by any of the groups.

For Jim Popoff, the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) struggle was toward the end of the sessions when they were deciding how badly they wanted the accord. The challenge for John Verigin was to explain to his members, who had spent many years guarding their communal properties, the need for an accord and declaration.

Structure of Engagement

Jim Popoff, Fred Makortoff and Steve Lapshinoff all agreed that the EKCIR played an important role in manifesting a change in the patterns of communication between the Sons of Freedom, Reformed and the Orthodox communities, enough so that an end to the bombings and arson became possible. The EKCIR structure allowed each of the Doukhobor groups an opportunity to tell about their experiences with burnings and bombings in a mutually constructed arrangement.

Fred Makortoff believed that the structure of the expanded KCIR suited the Doukhobors' need for a consensual approach, which he added fit the cultural makeup of the Russian *Mir*. He thought that the structure was "official enough" to remind everybody that this was not simply a "meeting of the commons."

> I immediately sensed that this is something that could work. It had the psychologists there, the police were there, [and] the mayors were there. It had all the elements brought together to succeed. So then it depended on where we go from here.

Mr. Makortoff explained that the initial expectations and attitudes that many had of the EKCIR were drawn from their experiences with Judge Sullivan's Royal Commission in 1947, which he described as being 'very hierarchical'.

> This is what people were used to and had no reason to expect anything different. You came and it was done to you and you left. They did what the hell they wanted anyway. If it comes out good, hey fine. If not, well we knew that anyway.

Both Fred Makortoff and Steve Lapshinoff thought that the EKCIR created what was termed a 'neutral place', rather than a 'huge wall', which Fred Makortoff euphemistically described as "something [one] threw rocks over trying to hit somebody on the other side." "Now you could bring all of the stuff to the 'table', he said, which provides a quality of difference when you are fighting an enemy that's got eyes." "We are in a mess. Let's define what this mess is. What are the components of it and see if we can find solutions to it," which indicated how apprehensive everybody felt when the sessions began.

As the sessions were recorded and transcripts of the proceedings were distributed at the end of each session, this, they said, gave the sessions a sense of importance and helped to inform those who had not attended.

> One of the things I enjoyed was that there was a record of who said what; all of a sudden when you say something it somehow counts. We come from an oral culture and to our people it made a huge difference because we are no longer trading our own stories. Our own stories have now become black and white. They are no longer oral stories; they are no longer malleable either. You see what I mean. In an oral culture, in an oral tradition, an oral way of being the way we were, you could create the same experience, you could create different kinds of meanings.

Mr. Makortoff described the 'table' that people sat around as a placeholder of the past. "The moment of truth," he suggested, "occurred when stories were told that

were only known among certain people." What was significant was that "the words spoken could not hide as they were now part of a transcript of what people said."

Although the record became a repository of individual narratives, most people didn't understand much of what was occurring at first. Fred Makortoff said that many initially saw the sessions as semi-legalistic, which left many people confused. It took two or three sessions before they began to sense a difference from what they had expected.

The conundrum for Doukhobor people, given their dismal historical relationship with governments (both in Canada and Russia), was that they were being asked to tell their stories with government present. As Mr. Makortoff recalls, participating in a forum with government created a "sense of betrayal, particularly because some of the stuff that was going to be discussed involved leadership and leadership roles."

> ... you're going to say that your leader's an asshole, what the hell does that make you? This is your brightest and your best? That takes a lot of courage. And to break with a tradition of closed-mouthed-ness where you don't divulge these secrets with your family, with your friends or even with them at the USCC, particularly with them at the USCC, then why do you need to tell this to government. What good does that bring to either the USCC or us?

In other words, it took a great deal of courage for people to come forward and relate their experience. One example he highlighted was when Polly Chernoff made her presentation. Not only was her story eloquent, but it took "enormous guts" for her to say the things she did, when she described how she was forced to continue with burnings to ensure the safety of her family, even though she was jeopardizing her health in the process.

> When that kind of revelation happened the whole session took on an earnestness and seriousness that ...helped define, yes this is serious business folks. We are going for it. It's going to happen. That brought a lot of the other people out of the woodwork that were going to sit back and watch....Hmmm. Maybe it is time to say. A lot of people came forth.

Challenging Assumptions

Fred Makortoff was cognizant of his own balancing act in representing the Reformed group, especially between those who wanted revenge and others who recognized these sessions needed to serve a higher purpose.

> I convinced most of them that we need to be seen not as the Gauls attacking Rome, so to speak... [I]f you are going to do it you got to do it in a logical fashion and you got to particularly come from a whole different side, if you are coming from a side of vengeance it's not going to work and if it's a principled action then [we] cannot loose. But if it's a non-principled action, if it was becoming one of hate, I will get that son of a bitch, because I spent time in jail, or that vengeance kind of thing, you are going to be seen for what it is that is a cheap trick and none of this is going to work.

He said that many people remembered the prophecy about "a big round table where a lot of stuff was going to come out... a day of reckoning, if you will, of this whole Doukhobor problem." This gave the sessions a sense of status that had not been experienced before.

"Things are going to get paid attention to and things need to be said and where words are going to count." However, for the process to truly work, people needed to feel that there was a higher level plan - one that did not favor any one group. As he recalled, it had to be "a big round table where everybody could see everybody and there was enough firepower around the table in terms of personalities and responsibilities," which he indicated meant that there was accountability for what people said.

The challenges facing Mr. Makortoff was that he assumed that by telling his side of the story there would be an instant recognition about what the problem is and what was needed to resolve 'it'. The situation wasn't as straightforward as he had thought. One of his first epiphanies occurred during the initial session when he realized that telling his side of the story was not enough to convince others who were listening. For instance, he recalled Mr. Nevokshonoff's story about Peter 'the Lordly's' involvement in the burning of schools.

> I was challenged about that immediately by John [Verigin who] said no such thing, you haven't proven anything. It's all hearsay. At that point I realized, 'Oh, oh, this is going to be long, drag out type of an affair'.

As Mr. Makortoff learned, this was an exercise not about story telling so much but learning about positioning the story. Positioning the story meant that the story was part of a sequence of stories that had its place in raising the consciousness of the listener.

Negotiating Meaning

Proof that the process was working for Mr. Popoff came when the first EKCIR agreement was reached about Chistiakov's role among the Sons of Freedom during the 1930s. Although John Verigin denied there was ever a relationship between the Sons of Freedom and Chistiakov, confusion arose when some of Chistiakov's 'unofficial' speeches were presented by the KCIR.[2] These were the speeches that Chistiakov (on his deathbed), told those who were with him that he wanted removed from the files.

[2] A collection of Chistiakov's speeches were discovered in the Special Collections Section in the Memorial Library at UBC.

Although the speeches had certain meanings for everyone, parts of his speeches were meant only for those whom Chistiakov described as 'more highly evolved'. These were the people he referred to as the 'Sons of Freedom' who, as he suggested, "cannot be slaves of corruption." Statements such as these reinforced the notion among the Sons of Freedom that they had a prescribed role in helping to save Doukhoborism. However, for John Verigin to agree that there could be different interpretations in some people's minds was a significant departure the position he had been maintaining all along.

Jim Popoff admitted that he was surprised at the willingness of John Verigin to acquiesce in such an important and arguably one of the most contentious issues that had separated the Sons of Freedom from the mainstream Doukhobors for years.

> I remember we were all surprised that John Verigin 'signed' a statement that included the idea that not only did [Chistiakov] make statements that could have been misinterpreted, but one of the points ... is that he [Chistiakov] should have been aware that they could have been misinterpreted, and therefore ... held partly responsible for allowing statements that could have misinterpreted to go out to the people. And I thought Jeez, John Verigin's willing to sign it! That is really much further bending backwards than we ever expected him to do. And as a result of that, you know, by that point things were beginning to go more smoothly down the highway...

In Pursuit of an Interim Accord

All three agreed that the key epiphanic event was the signing of the Interim Accord. Jim Popoff described the challenges the USCC went through both internally and at the EKCIR sessions.

> At that time when [John Verigin] presented [the notion of an accord to the USCC] in the early eighties, we had just gone through the trial.[3] We hadn't finished paying off the debts connected with some of the burnings and bombings and the trials and all the rest of it. The people are saying 'What?'

[3] John Verigin's trial in 1979.

> 'We haven't even paid off all the debt; we still owe $275,000 for rebuilding the centre'.

John Verigin argued with his members that they had to do this. "It's better for us in the long run. It's better for everybody, because if we hold these recriminations we are only going to perpetuate the very situation." He knew that he needed to address the ongoing tension once and for all.

> The USCC members were accused by the Sons of Freedom of being holier than thou; of being the self-righteous ones, saying we're the good guys and you guys are the bad guys. And certainly I grew up with that feeling that there were good Doukhobors and bad Doukhobors and the good Doukhobors were the USCC. Well I later became aware that some of the Sons of Freedom were brought up the same in thinking that they are really the only good Doukhobors because they are the only ones willing to put their heads on the line, and believing that USCC members had sold half of Doukhoborism down the river and they just think they're the good Doukhobors...

Jim Popoff described Mr. Verigin as being very clear with his members about the intentions of an accord by arguing that they needed to find a beginning point and common purpose with the Sons of Freedom and Reformed. As Mr. Popoff explained, Mr. Verigin's approach to the other groups was to say -

> We are not talking about who is holier than thou. In your own way you thought you were suffering for the cause. We don't agree with your way. But we grant you that you've got the right to be wrong in your own way...We come together on a common point that we want to have Doukhoborism that doesn't involve any bombs, any burnings, any of this stuff and let's start clean from this point. So he presented this memorandum of reconciliation somewhere in '83 as I recall.

Mr. Verigin had many doubters who questioned his sincerity to end the arson and bombings. The Reformed in particular believed that the only way to test his resolve was to see if he was willing to sign a declaration stating that he would not

curse anyone. After a long discussion with his members John Verigin agreed. According to Mr. Popoff

> J.J. had to actually sign a statement to say that he is not going to curse anybody, which he was willing to do despite the fact that he had never cursed anybody before, or wasn't planning on cursing anyone after, and didn't believe in that curse - as I don't believe in it, and a lot of other Doukhobors don't believe in it. But he did that because he was aware that some people do believe in powers of curses and still do today in the twenty-first century, never mind in the twentieth.

Testing the Interim Accord

An epiphany for Jim Popoff was learning that the Interim Accord was being taken seriously by the Reformed. The USCC received a call at their office one day (back in either 1995 or 1996) from the Reformed who informed them of two Sons of Freedom women, out on parole, who managed to slip away from those 'supervising' them. The USCC decided that the women might target Fruitova School, which had recently been renovated. Why they presumed it would be the school was never made clear.

Two watchmen were immediately posted at the school to guard the building throughout the night. Soon after the watchmen left the school the next morning, two women appeared and set fire to both their clothes and the building, which was extinguished by a neighbor who witnessed the commotion. Although there was some damage to the building, Jim Popoff was pleased with having being notified in advance by the Reformed, which raised his hopes about the accord.[4]

[4] When the matter was raised at the next ad hoc planning session, members of both groups chastised the individual who was suspected to have driven the women to the school.

Mary Astoforoff's Death

Approximately a year after the accord was signed in 1984, Mary Astoforoff, Tina Jmaiff and Mary Braun were on a hunger fast at a Matsqui federal prison. Mrs. Astoforoff developed complications during the fast and was rushed to a nearby hospital where she died a short time later. I managed to contact Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff by telephone to discuss whether a joint effort should be made by all three groups to talk the other two women out of continuing with their fast. The thought at the time was that given their deteriorating health, they too might not last that long. Jim Popoff remembered receiving a call from Fred Makortoff, later in the day, who driving through Castlegar on his way to Vancouver, asked him if he was going to join them.

> I said, 'I can't just go off like that, you know.' And they said we have room for one person and you are the person and you should come along and it will be an opportunity for us to prove in practice that we can work together and so on and so forth. So I phoned J.J... He says 'If you are willing to do it, I think you should do it.' But he says 'You are not going as an official representative of the USCC because we don't have time to get their approval, we probably wouldn't get the approval from the people.' And he says, 'If it is successful we will praise you. If it's not successful and there is some kind of catastrophe, then you are on your own.'

They traveled to the coast together, staying in the same room and eating in the same restaurants. They succeeded in talking the two women out of fasting and returned home as friends.

Reifying Change

After the accord was signed everyone agreed that the next key issue was an explanation of the death of Peter the Lordly Verigin, an issue that led to years of retaliatory destruction. A joint research committee was established, comprised of

representatives from each of the groups and the KCIR. Their role was to search through archival sources for information that would shed light on the investigation and for possible theories as to why this incident may have happened. My role was to assist them in accessing materials that had remained restricted for the past sixty years. As Fred Makortoff recalls, this was a new beginning because it no longer pitted one group against the other, but rather established an approach that was mutual and exploratory in nature.

> It was a stroke of genius creating that [research] committee that was neutral in a sense and [whose purpose was] to dig at stuff together. That gave us some thinking and talking time [with each other].

To assist the new research committee in their work, two workshops were arranged at the University of British Columbia for the new research committee. One was a communication workshop followed by a second session on research techniques. The communication workshop proved important as the groups had an opportunity to learn about perception and meaning, which offered new ways for the representatives to engage with each other. All of these efforts continued to foster new relationships between the groups. The down side was that their efforts separated them from their own communities who were not prepared to accept change so readily.

Relations between the groups continued to build over the many weeks and months as they read through archival materials.[5] Although reifying change among the group representatives worked very well, it created problems within their respective communities. For instance, as the groups continued to work together, a concern within their own constituencies started to surface as stories began to

[5] Copies were made and a special collections file cabinet was purchased for Selkirk College in Castlegar where the documents were kept. Other documents were gathered from the RCMP and federal archives.

circulate. Some were accusing their members of being used by the other groups, while others were quietly applauding the change.

Dénouement

Both Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff left the EKCIR in 1986. The turning point for Mr. Makortoff was soon after Mr. Sorokin's death when he met with his members to discuss the role he was expected to play at the EKCIR sessions. He explained to them that his loyalty had been to Mr. Sorokin, who he indicated was supportive of the direction that he was taking. However, he went on to explain to them that he would have trouble speaking on their behalf, as he might not agree with what they were asking him to do. Some understood what he meant while others remained baffled, wondering if he was asking for money. At this point he realized that he had to make a decision as to whether to continue or not.

> I said, 'Look folks. I can't go where you want to go with this stuff.' 'I cannot in my heart of hearts support some of the ideas that are here. They are yours. They are very dear to you, you need to speak to them, you need to illustrate them, and you need make the necessary arguments for that position. I can't and I won't do that for you because I don't believe that way'.

Once he made his decision to resign, rather than telling his community first, he decided to let everyone know at a Research Committee meeting where representatives from all the groups and government were present. As Mr. Makortoff indicated, it was at this point that he became *persona non grata* within his group.

The next time that Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff were together was at an event held at the USCC community center in Brilliant, following an EKCIR session. During the session, as Jim Popoff recalls, John Verigin would slip into the bar during the breaks, which was across the hall from where the session was being held. On the

last day of the session, Mr. Verigin invited everyone to a luncheon at the USCC hall in Brilliant. This would be the first time the Reformed and Sons of Freedom had been invited to a USCC function. Some of the Sons of Freedom attended but the Reformed declined the invitation. Fred Makortoff, on the other hand, who was no longer representing the Reformed, was willing to make the gesture. However, by the time he arrived at the center and heard what state Mr. Verigin was in he was less comfortable about being there. When he entered the hall he saw Jim Popoff, Robin Bourne, Mark Mealing and me conversing about the day's session. He approached us, to note his concern about being there

> 'Look here's the situation. John is in his cups. He's torqued right out. And he's going to stand up, and it's his home turf, his ball park and he will go out there and rant and rave in front of his own folks and he is going to say silly, stupid things. I am not going to be able to let him, if I'm just sitting there, and then who the hell am I. I'm going to stand up and counter, saying, 'what the hell do you think you are doing?' And it's an embarrassing thing to do that to a person who has invited you over for a meal at his place. So I would rather not engage in this whole bull shit. Why would I be going and embarrass him in front of his folks and create an ass out of my self...

Jim Popoff who understood Mr. Makortoff's position said -

> I will make you a deal that if he starts saying something untoward, something off line there, we won't embarrass him or anything but you have a right to stand up and walk away and I will stand up and come with you. And by us both walking away I think there would be a fairly loud statement made around – you are out of line again and you are losing it.' A lot of folks would see that without having to rant and rave back and create an argument.

Surviving the meal without fanfare or embarrassment was the least of Mr. Makortoff's worries that day and for a long time after.

> When we got back here to the Settlement (where we lived at that time), whoa there was a hullabaloo. I betrayed the community. I was a turncoat. I went into John Verigin's pocket; all of that kind of stuff...

> They were afraid of me because I was a sharp tool that could be used for or against them. So they began the discrediting process as quick as possible because they didn't know what was happening there as I was sitting next to Jim at their cultural center, when I wasn't even at the KCIR meeting. They were immediately afraid and their first reaction was to immediately discredit them - an interesting strategy. It is useful in groups like that and people use it all the time.

He decided he had enough of the "back-stabbing" that went on among the Reformed members. A short time later, he and his family moved out of the New Settlement.

Jim Popoff's departure from the EKCIR by the end of 1986 was not as eventful as Mr. Makortoff's had been. Mr. Popoff explained that he had assumed additional responsibilities as editor of *Iskra* and executive assistant at the USCC office. In view of all this, he had difficulty spending sufficient time with his young family, which he hoped he would be able to do if he dropped some of his commitments, such as the EKCIR.[6]

The coincidence was that they both left about the same time. I presumed that both communities could not reconcile the notion that progress had been made and relationships were beginning to form with those from the other group, which I imagined many community members had a difficult time accepting.

As the EKCIR continued to meet during this period, other events occurred. There were numerous pleas on behalf of family members and the Sons of Freedom community to help those who had been imprisoned for arson. Many believed that if the women were allowed to participate in the sessions they might support the efforts that were being made to end the burnings and bombings. A joint request was made by all three groups to the Corrections authorities to release the women into the care

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[6] During the interview Jim Popoff indicated that he had also received considerable pressure from John Verigin to stay on, but it was clear that the process had taken its toll emotionally.

of their families, with the support of the communities. In each case, when the women were released, whether to Gilpin or Krestova, the community assumed responsibility for their care and safety, which in the end proved valuable as it brought the groups together for a common purpose. Overall, their participation in the sessions did not add further light to the matters under discussion. Instead, they were intent on continuing with the fires even though they were no longer able to convince others to join them.

The last session was held in September 1987. At the end of the session, I advised Robin that the EKCIR had made about as much progress as could be expected. Without Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff participating, the sessions were not nearly as constructive as they had been during previous sessions. Overall, I believed that there had been too many changes for the communities to absorb all at once and that time was needed for community members to reflect on what had happened.

Conclusion

The turning points helped provide context and add new insights to some of the events that took place during the EKCIR years. The structure of the sessions seemed to work best when the groups were directly involved in the design and planning of the sessions. The sessions enabled the groups to challenge the expectations each had of the other and in so doing, were able to reach a point where a statement about the role of Peter Petrovich Verigin was constructed. From here, a new relationship among the groups emerged, first, when a collective decision was made to respond to the death of Mary Astoforoff and, later, reinforced when

opportunities were created that allowed them to work together toward a similar goal or outcome.

The sessions came to an end when it became clear to the Province that there was no further progress to be made. This was not a joint decision by the groups, but rather one made by the chair after Fred Makortoff and Jim Popoff left, when it became evident that relations between the groups during the sessions were starting to deteriorate. The assumption made was that the groups needed time to accept the changes that had occurred.

CHAPTER 9

Summary and Conclusions

The objective of this chapter is to provide an analysis of the literature, the narratives of the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations, and the meanings captured in the interviews that were held. On review, two essential themes emerge. The first focuses on the narrative construction of identity, using the construct of the 'terrorist' as an example. The second theme focuses on narrative meaning and conflict and how this may apply to the conflict field.

Narrative Construction of Identity

White and Epston (1990) suggest that we cannot have direct knowledge of the world but rather what we know is gained through experience that we construct into stories. It is through the storying process that meaning is ascribed to the experience by the teller. The challenge for those who are in search of facts or truth is when the story is more a creation of the storyteller than a depiction of his or her experience.

Discerning 'truth' from 'fiction' can be problematic, as experienced by Maud (1904), Shulman (1952) and Franz (1958). In this study, confirmability of a story is based on how well the story held up to scrutiny during the EKCIR sessions. For instance, Lucy Maloff denied that her husband had a relationship with the Sons of Freedom or her son had ever spent time in jail. Similarly, Harry Voykin denied

sending messages to the Sons of Freedom and yet invited them to his restaurant. In both examples, the issue of confirmability was addressed by the groups themselves.

DECONSTRUCTING THE TERRORIST

Using the construct of the terrorist as a focal point, I draw on Jurgensmeyer's (2001) use of 'worldviews', 'cultural context' and 'community of support' as my framework for analysis. My aim is to deconstruct the notion of the 'terrorist', by examining the Doukhobor and Sons of Freedom worldviews and how the Sons of Freedom, in particular, came to adopt certain beliefs over others; the circumstances that influenced the nature and direction of the community (cultural context); and, as well, those outside the Sons of Freedom group that offered some form of recognition or moral justification to the group's endeavors (community of support).[1]

My contention is that individual acts of terrorism, especially those that are cultural or religious based, do not occur in isolation. These acts, as Jurgensmeyer (2001) suggests, require an "enormous amount of moral presumption for the perpetrators...to justify the destruction of property..." (p. 11). My assumption is that these acts are not frivolous, meaning that there is an internal conviction and social acknowledgment, within the Sons of Freedom group. My question is - are these acts also receiving the stamp of approval from a legitimizing authority, such as the leadership provides.

WORLDVIEW

There are four hundred plus years of history that helps form the worldviews that were held by Doukhobors living here in Canada. In an attempt to reduce this

[1] The word terrorism comes from the Latin *terrere*, "to cause to tremble," which is used in a political sense to mean an assault on civil order, most often by a disenfranchised group.

history into an abstract representation, there are certain distinguishing qualities that can be made about the Doukhobor faith generally that are distinctive from other groups.[2] First and foremost is that they are Russian speaking – and their tenets include being vegetarians, pacifists, living a communal lifestyle and maintaining the belief that the spirit of God is within each individual. Some distinguishing principles, more pronounced on their arrival than practiced today, were their refusal to swear an oath of allegiance, own land individually, register births and deaths or to participate in military-like exercises, whether these exercises were held in a community or in a school. Along with these principles include the significance of certain symbols of faith common to all members, the most notable being bread, water and salt, which are symbols that represent the basic staff of life - a 'toil and peaceful life'.[3]

There are other symbols that have become known along the way, the first being the symbol of fire. Cathy Frieson (2002) suggests that fire was a common practice among Russian peasants who often used it for purposes of justice or revenge, or to exert social control over those who would violate village norms. Then there are the covert symbols used to connote fire and bombings. Some of these symbols include the color 'red', whether worn as clothing, used in a logo on a letterhead or as expressions - such as "erecting a pillar of fire from the ground up to heaven" that Mr. Hremakin reported he was told. Some symbols or cultural practices have evolved over time and may not be practiced to the same extent. Whatever the

[2] There were other Russian speaking groups with similar belief systems. These include the Molokans, Raskolniki (Old Believers), and Mennonites.
[3] See Eli Popoff's description http://www.doukhobor-homepage.com/beliefs_fundamental_bread.html

case, all of the tenets and symbols represent the defining features that made up in part the social identity for the Doukhobors and Sons of Freedom.

The identity of the Sons of Freedom as 'terrorist' was used to distinguish those who were involved in fire and bombings from others that were law abiding, presumably the Orthodox and other Doukhobors who were non aligned. Fred Makortoff told the EKCIR that not all Sons of Freedom were involved in these activities (even though all were at some point branded as terrorists), as some spent time in prison for crimes they never committed. Furthermore, distinguishing the Sons of Freedom from the Orthodox or others, during certain times, was made more difficult as there was no membership list to indicate who belonged to the Sons of Freedom, unlike the USCC who updated their list each year.

The USCC frequently used the term 'terrorist' to describe the Sons of Freedom, although at times used in conjunction with other descriptors, such as "insane" or "hardened criminals" (p. 18).[4] The backdrop to these views is the USCC's long history of denouncing bombings and arson and their numerous efforts over the years to differentiate themselves from this radical group. Blurring of identities became problematic for the USCC and other Doukhobors when the media described the Sons of Freedom activities as the 'Doukhobor problem', and where images of arson, bombings and nudity were transmitted worldwide. To counter these media images, innumerable efforts were made by the USCC to distance themselves from the 'terrorists', while pressuring government to take action against these people.

[4] ECKIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.

The outsider's view of the Sons of Freedom provides additional support to the Orthodox. For instance, Dr. Shulman (1952) describes the Sons of Freedom as 1) individuals who were aggressively bent, who have failed to satisfy their needs, either as a USCC member or an independent; 2) individuals who were passive, lonely or guilty who submerged themselves in a formless mass of Sons of Freedom to atone for their wrongdoings; 3) individuals who were pathological characters who would not be tolerated in any society; 4) individuals who were aged and lack special training and loss of self esteem; and 5) individuals who were emotionally impoverished and constricted. In other words, they are a group of people who did not conform and who were essentially outcasts of society and of the mainstream of Doukhobor faith.

Another example is Dr. William Plenderleith (undated) who describes the Sons of Freedom as outcasts who were ostracized by their parent body (USCC). He believes that no longer belonging to the community shaped their attitude toward society. "To compensate for this feeling of personal inferiority, they set themselves on a plane that made them feel superior" (p. 4), which led them to become martyrs to a cause. "Soon they discovered that the best way to achieve public recognition was to employ anti-social, attention-getting devices, such as dynamiting, arson and nude parading" (p.5). Following these anti-social practices, Plenderleith concluded, "the fanatical Freedomite was able to exalt himself to a stage where he could assume a cloak of superiority and moral righteousness" (p. 5). These 'expert' views, along with others, helped shape public policy for years to come.

The Sons of Freedom worldview was their belief in the Doukhobor principles, in particular those espoused by Peter 'the Lordly' Verigin. These were considered to be principles in common to all Doukhobors and their claim was that it was their mission to save 'Doukhoborism', which meant to counter those who were undermining these principles.

Most of the USCC had a different view of the situation. Their view was that the Sons of Freedom were the radical fringe that had very little to do with the Doukhobor faith. The Reformed, on the other hand, accused "[t]he USCC members [because they were] denying the fact that these principles were mutual principles"... and that the Sons of Freedom "were the front army people that went out and defended these principles" (pp. 23-24).[5]

Over the years, there were many that had influenced the Doukhobors, including the Sons of Freedom, but none as important as the Verigin leaders. Although there were occasional references to the Sons of Freedom by Peter 'the Lordly' Verigin, we know that the group was relatively small in number during his time. However, this was not the case when Chistiakov arrived in Canada in 1927, when the Sons of Freedom numbers grew significantly (Tarasoff, 1962). Chistiakov appears to have introduced a different approach, viewing them not as terrorists but as the vanguards of the Doukhobor faith. An example of this is in a speech he delivered in the village of Brilliant, on January 27, 1929

> The Freedomites are the head with the horns, the farmers the tail and the Community people the belly filled with filth. The Freedomites are thirty-five years old; such the master can trust. He can put them onto a binder, place the reins in their hands and they can work. But Community Doukhobors are fifteen years old and the farmers only three. The master cannot entrust a

[5] Ibid.

> binder to such people because they have not grown up. They may let go of the reins, wreck the binder and kill themselves. The Freedomites are worthy'... (pp. 32-33)[6]

Although this speech was one of a number of speeches that John Verigin said were purged from the collection (at Chistiakov's request), this raises the question as to why Chistiakov reasoned, at such a late point in his life, that these speeches should be purged after he was gone. Was this a form of redemption or was he influenced by his grandson, John J. Verigin, who recognized the confusion his speeches may cause after his death? If it was John Verigin mitigating confusion, why did the USCC continue with slogans in *Iskra* (their official publication), such as the 'Sons of Freedom shall not be slaves of corruption'? By its appearance, it was seen as a signal to the Sons of Freedom that their role was to protect Doukhobor principles was still being acknowledged, if not affirmed.

Chistiakoff's speeches and the symbolic references have an existential meaning for the Sons of Freedom, which conceivably explains how it is that they viewed themselves differently from other Doukhobors. By referring to them as the 'ringing bells', Chistiakov sets them apart, implying that they were more spiritually evolved. Notwithstanding their special status, they were still rebuked and chastized by him and other Verigin leaders in public. This public chastizement demonstrated the leader's interest in perpetuating a particular view about the Sons of Freedom that became the dominant discourse. Whatever the truth might be about Chistiakov's role, the truth had somehow become lost in the blurring images of their history.

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[6] EKCIR transcripts (July 15, 1983).Vol. XXV.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The cultural context defines the circumstances that influenced the nature and direction of the community. Without question, the most invasive influence on the Doukhobors was the policies and enforcement actions of government. Governments were perceived as secular bodies whose mission was to destroy Doukhoborism, through enforced schooling, the loss of land in Saskatchewan in the early 1900s and in British Columbia in the late 1930s, and the 1924 CPR train explosion. In each of these examples government was seen as responsible and, in the case of the 1924 CPR train explosion, government and CPR were held to account through decades of bombings.

The cultural context was defined by a disjuncture between what the Orthodox and Sons of Freedom were told by the leadership. For instance, we note from the Sons of Freedom that they were told not to buy land, even though the Orthodox did. The Sons of Freedom were threatened that they would have "the blood of Lordly Verigin" over them if they sent their children to school, yet the Orthodox sent their children to school. The Sons of Freedom were chastised in public, yet in private they said they were encouraged to "continue their efforts to remove the dark clouds over them" or "erect a pillar of fire from ground up to heaven" (p. 52).[7]

The context was influenced by the introduction of radio and later television. Television created strange and frightening images of fire and nudity that made it difficult for those growing up Doukhobor to seek or maintain their own Doukhobor

[7] EKCIR transcripts (December 9, 1982). Vol. IV.

identity.[8] For Jim Popoff this meant being tormented by the repeated images of nudity, fire and destruction, which added to the ethnocentric views of the public and constant mockery by his peers. This also meant that the Doukhobors were no longer defined by their beliefs but instead by media narratives, which led to John Verigin imposing a 'non-fraternization policy' among his members to ensure a clear distinction was made between those who were terrorists and those who were not.

The Sons of Freedom were physically removed from the Orthodox community, yet, as mentioned above, distinguishing between those who were Sons of Freedom from those who were not was often challenging because not everyone practised nudism or committed acts of arson or bombings. An example of this occurred in the 1940s and 1950s when the story was told that the jails were the means of fulfilling the Doukhobor prophesy of returning to the mother land. Hundreds of Sons of Freedom were imprisoned during this period, many for crimes they did not commit. One such example, noted by Fred Makortoff, was when he described two Sons of Freedom gentlemen who were sitting together on the same bench, both having spent time in prison, but one fellow spent five years in prison for a crime he did not commit. The other fellow sitting with him had him convicted "to save him so that he could go to the mother Russia" (p.41).[9]

The cultural context included Sons of Freedom intimidating other Sons of Freedom, like Polly Chernoff who spoke about her home being set ablaze by someone, with her grandchildren trapped inside. She reasoned that the fire was set

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[8] Although television generated its own interpretive images, the media were also used by the Sons of Freedom to deliver the message of tyranny and oppression they were experiencing at the hands of government, especially during the 1950s and early 60s.

[9] EKCIR transcripts (May 2, 1984). Vol. L.

because she had refused to continue burning for reasons of ill health. Other examples were Steve Lapshinoff's grandmother who was asked to sacrifice herself in order to get government's attention and Mike Bayoff, who shot a guard in the hand when he and others were out to destroy Lordly's' tomb in March 1944.

What kept the Sons of Freedom continuing their involvement in burning and bombings is difficult to say. Fred Makortoff believes that someone in a leadership role had to be privately encouraging them to continue, given that they were not receiving support publicly. The reason why they continued committing these acts and enduring the suffering that resulted may have been based on an expectation within the community that someday everything would be explained. As Fred Makortoff pointed out, "Doukhobor people have for many decades been talking about a promised time and a 'round table'" (p.15), which he added, was "when all their loyalties and trust in their leadership and all their suffering would be accounted for" (p. 15).[10]

For the USCC to continue its dominant narrative, certain meanings and understandings needed to be sustained among its members and with the public-at-large. The division between the Orthodox and Sons of Freedom had to be seen as unequivocal if the USCC wished to elicit outside support from the non-Doukhobor community or from government. This meant that the Sons of Freedom had to find alternative ways to 'get their message out' about the way they were being treated, not by government alone this time but also by the USCC leadership, as reasoning with other Doukhobors had proven futile. The media and the trials became the venues.

[10] EKCIR transcript (October 28, 1982).

However, the non-Doukhobor public did not appear interested as they had already developed an unsympathetic view, given the many years of destruction and turmoil.

Up until the late 1960s, the Sons of Freedom fervor was directed toward government. After the release of the men from Agassiz Mountain Prison in the early 1970s, the fervor turned more to toward John Verigin, as many were looking for answers to their imprisonment.

By 1983, after continuous denials by the USCC, the Sons of Freedom took the position that they were not interested in being seen, as Peter Astoforoff remarked, like "Mr. Black," while other groups looked like "Mr. Clean." If the Orthodox wanted a declaration or statement of reconciliation they would have to acknowledge the Sons of Freedom role.

COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Was there a 'community of support'? There were many stories that suggested that there was demonstrable support by some outside the Sons of Freedom group. Nick Nevokshonoff, for example, explained that it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for the Sons of Freedom to destroy all the schools in one night. The Sons of Freedom, he argued, were too small in number and had no means of transportation that would enable them to travel to where each of the schools was located.

Peter 'the Lordly' Verigin acknowledged the Sons of Freedom role in a letter that was sent to the Minister of Education by Samuel Verishagin in May 1923. Although Mr. Verishagin's signature was on the letter, it was widely known among community members that the letter was dictated by Peter Verigin. The letter stated

that "[w]e cannot guarantee that the schools will not be burned." For the Sons of Freedom and Reformed, this meant that Peter Verigin had endorsed the actions of the Sons of Freedom, albeit if the Province continued its campaign of enforced schooling. John Verigin, on the other hand, argued that Peter Verigin was not endorsing their actions, but simply indicating that he could not guarantee that something would not happen because the Sons of Freedom were beyond his control. Whatever view one might hold, the Sons of Freedom served a political purpose at the time, even if only as a means for cautioning government about its aggressive educational policies.

Anther example of community support was Peter N. Maloff's relationship with Chistiakov and his liaison with the Sons of Freedom. More recently, there was the liaison of USCC executive members, such as Harry Voykin, who on occasion invited the Sons of Freedom to his restaurant. An example was when Harry Voykin asked Sam Shlakoff to bring Hremakin to his restaurant. When Mr. Hremakin arrived at the restaurant Mr. Voykin ignored him. The Sons of Freedom reasoned that asking for 'Hremakin' meant that Harry Voykin was not interested in the old man but in finding dynamite, as Hremakin in Russian was *hremet* (phonetic), which meant 'to make noise'.

There was also John Verigin himself who admitted having contact with certain Sons of Freedom members. For instance, he admitted that he corresponded with and visited those who were living in the tent village at Agassiz Mountain Prison. Years later, he talked to Olga Hoodicoff who went to his home to confirm whether the instructions she received from John Savinkoff were correct. On other

occasions he met with Peter Astoforoff. Mr. Astoforoff claimed that on two of these occasions he had been instructed by Mr. Verigin to destroy certain buildings. Although Mr. Verigin acknowledged that he had met with those mentioned, he 'swore' that he never instructed or counseled them to burn or bomb. In fact, he made the case that these same stories had been discounted as evidence at his trial.

In regard to former leaders, Mr. Verigin was adamant that there was no evidence to link Chistiakoff to what Sons of Freedom members were alleging. One can only presume that he believed that there was no documentation to support their claim. Furthermore, he knew that he had the support of the general public, Doukhobor people generally, and federal and provincial politicians who later conferred on him the Order of Canada and the Order of British Columbia. Knowing this, why did he change his mind and agree that Chistiakov played a significant part in helping to shape the Sons of Freedom?

Perhaps the reasons were, firstly, the witnesses that the USCC presented raised more questions than answers. For instance, Lucy Maloff appeared revisionist when she was not able to accept what others already knew when she was asked about her and her husband and her son ever being arrested. Another instance was when a paper that her husband had written was read aloud and she claimed that he did not write it. Similarly, Peter Popoff, another USCC witness, could not adequately explain why the Doukhobor Research Symposium would not accept the school-burning story of Nick Nevokshonoff, even though Mr. Nevokshonoff was well respected, with no hidden purpose or motive.

Secondly, Mr. Verigin's use of alcohol was becoming more and more problematic. Peter Astoforoff said that he received instructions to destroy certain buildings when he and Mr. Verigin had been drinking. Another example occurred at the September 10, 1984 KCIR Planning Committee meeting when Mr. Verigin's conduct raised questions among the KCIR, and the Doukhobor groups, about why he chose to interact as he did with certain Sons of Freedom members. One was Mary Astoforoff who had set fire to the Doukhobor Museum in Ooteshenia and the other was Peter Savinkoff, who was one of the indicted co-conspirators at Mr. Verigin's trial.

Thirdly, what Mr. Verigin did not reckon was that there was documentation on file at the University of British Columbia, in particular the speeches of Chistiakov that Mr. Verigin thought had been purged from the collection, but had been donated from others who kept them. In addition, there were reports in the Provincial and Federal archives of correspondence by the community's lawyer Peter Makaroff, Q.C. and numerous reports by the RCMP that also tie Chistiakov to the Sons of Freedom.

Mr. Verigin could have maintained that in all cases the evidence was circumstantial. However, if his purpose was to end the conflict, his interactions with certain Sons of Freedom members allowed some to wonder aloud what his intentions really were. We know that whatever was said between Mr. Verigin and the Sons of Freedom resulted in the Sons of Freedom claiming one thing and Mr. Verigin denying it. So why did he continue to engage with them? One possible reason is that they depended on each other to justify certain ends. The Sons of Freedom needed direction, purpose and moral support to function and Mr. Verigin needed to

stop the assimilation of his members into the mainstream non-Doukhobor community. In situations of this type, Simmel (1955) would suggest that reciprocal antagonisms are important in maintaining unity. Was Mr. Verigin using the attention he was receiving (as a victim) to prevent the membership in his community from further decline, e.g. via intermarriage?

The relationship between the Sons of Freedom and the USCC was as much familial as it was political and my contention is that neither of them knew how to extricate themselves from this long history of cultural entanglement. Mr. Verigin had become burdened by his reliance on alcohol and the Sons of Freedom were looking for recognition and meaning to counter the accusations and for any sign or symbol that reinforced the notion that there was a connection between them and the USCC. Perhaps, in midst of all this turmoil, Mr. Verigin was in search of a *deus ex machina* to rescue him – a role that the KCIR would eventually assume.[11]

In the end, Mr. Verigin, by acknowledging the possibility that Chistiakov had encouraged the Sons of Freedom to be "the vanguard, the ringing bells, the guys that made noises far, far away" (pp. 29-30)[12], began the removal of a cultural burden.

Narrative Meaning and Conflict

Much has been said about narratives as they relate to the Doukhobors. The question is how might deconstructing narratives enhance the conflict resolution field? On review, conflict is *not always* about interests or human needs (Burton, 1990; Fisher & Ury, 1989) or unattainable goals (Tjosvold, 1991; Folger, Poole &

[11] *Deus ex machine* is Latin for 'god from the machinery'. The term refers to the convention in ancient Greek drama in which a god was lowered by a crane to unravel the plot (Macmillan Encyclopedia, 2001).
[12] EKCIR transcripts (July 15, 1983). Vol. XXV.

Stuttman, 1996; Pruitt, Rubin & Kim, 1994). Nor do all people simply act out their aggression because they are frustrated (Dollard, Miller, Mowrer & Sears, 1939; Gilula & Daniels, 1969), as the conflict literature might suggest. Rather, competing interests, needs or goals are a subset or abstract of an interaction between two or more individuals. The notion of interests, needs and goals emanate from a psychological discourse that has been decontextualized to serve a rational, linear thinking, and problem solving framework for conflict resolution. I am not suggesting that frustration, interests and unmet goals do not lead to conflict. I contend that it is not only differences in interests or goals that lead to conflict, but also through judgments made from meanings that emerge during interactions, that may be shaped in part by one's worldview or conceptual framework.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Fiske and Taylor (1991) have found that when people encounter an ambiguous situation, a certain framework of beliefs, emotions, and experiences influence how one conceptualizes and interprets the event. For instance, when the EKCIR was examining the events that led up to the 1924 CPR train explosion that killed Peter the Lordly Verigin I found myself confronted by the argument that the Canadian government assassinated Lordly. Although this was one of a number of theories presented during the EKCIR, no matter what disconfirming evidence was provided, the Sons of Freedom were not to be convinced. Why? First, they had already reasoned among themselves that government and the Canadian Pacific Railway were the likely saboteurs, given government's previous history with the Doukhobors. Second, since no charges had been laid and access to these files had

[12] EKCIR transcripts (July 15, 1983). Vol. XXV.

remained restricted there was a belief that this case was part of a government cover up. These story constructions are culturally-embedded that contain metaphoric representations that shape perceptions and meanings. These same story constructions helped the Sons of Freedom justify the bombings that were directed towards properties owned by government or Canadian Pacific Railway over a fifty-year period.

METAPHORIC LANGUAGE

Fiske and Taylor (1991) and others like, McNamee & Gergen (1992), suggest that an individual constructs their conceptual framework through language. In language, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) suggest that metaphors are the means of providing a sense of clarity to an abstract idea or concept, as metaphors are grounded in human experience of time, space and physical objects. David Leary (1984) describes metaphor as the "giving of one thing or experience to something else, on the grounds of some proposed similarity between the two."[13] So, for example, when a 'conspiracy' metaphor is used, the metaphor is language drawn from an array of experiences and beliefs common to both the individual and the surrounding group or culture. Thus, the 'conspiracy' metaphor patterns one's perceptions as well as organizes how one conceives the situation that he or she encounters. Phrases such as "bringing them to their knees," "out maneuvering them" or metaphors of 'war or 'competition' is language that shapes the social identity of the self in relation to the storying experiences that one has of the other.

[13] Leary, D.E. (1984). 'The role of metaphor in science and medicine', Paper presented as part of the Program for Humanities in Medicine Lecture Series at Yale University School of Medicine, October 19th.

Shulman (1952) who applied a 'diagnostic' or 'disease' metaphor to the Sons of Freedom best illustrated the impact of metaphorical concepts. He concluded that the Sons of Freedom were suffering from "autism [that] radically interfered with a realistic appraisal of any situation... allow[ing] them to substitute naïve wishful thinking" (p. 144). As autism was considered 'incurable', it meant that nothing further could be done with the adults; therefore, the only possible solution was to acculturate the children, an initiative that was undertaken by the British Columbia government a short time after Shulman's report was released.

MEANING-BASED APPROACH TO CONFLICT

What can we learn from this inquiry that informs our understanding of conflict?

1. The importance of analysis in understanding the conflict dimensions.

   There are many possible ways to view a conflict situation, each of which invites a different approach to intervention. The question is what does one need to know before deciding to intervene. Although the conflict literature is replete with conflict resolution models, there is little in the way of analyzing complex conflict situations.

   One attempt at analysis is Alex Grzybowski's and Stephen Owen's (2001) framework for conflict analysis. Essentially they identify the parties, the issues and their interests without acknowledgement or understanding of the role of culture and its context, or how differing worldviews influence 'communities of discourse', in the competing narratives that underscore the conflict. Analysis should set out the nature of the problem, 'who owns it', power imbalances, the

pretext and who supports (and does not support) its continuation. The analysis should provide a basis on which to decide whether an intervening process is required, and if so, what direction the intervention might take.

Analysis or meta-analysis may be all that is needed for participants to gain insight into the nature of the conflict. Should an intervention be required, the next step is to decide whether to impose or co-create a structure of engagement. What is clear in this case is that there were no advantages to imposing a structure on the Doukhobors. Such structures had been imposed, but without 'success'. How the structure is designed is especially important in complex historical and culturally-bounded conflict situations, particularly where there is a perception of a power imbalance or power differences between the conflicting groups. Involving the participants in the design process may enhance support and increase the likelihood of the participants assuming responsibility for its progress.

2. Designing a structure for presenting conflicting narratives.

The question is what considerations should be given to the design of the 'table' or room to accommodate the participants during the intervention process? Should there be observers? What rules or expectations might there be for those observing? Should the sessions be recorded and transcribed?

If the conflicting narratives have an historical relevance or there is a need to circulate stories to others, then creating a transcript or public record is a consideration. If assurance is needed that the stories be truthful (rather than imagined), an oath or affirmation or some other culturally manifested means should be considered.

When a story or testimony is presented in a structured setting there may also be a need for negotiations outside these sessions, on matters that arise.

3. Determining the role of the intervener.

The intervener role ideally acts with an 'authority' conferred by the participants. In conferring authority, the implied expectation is that participants do so with a willingness to suspend their disbelief to allow the process to unfold. This means that the participant's and intervener's roles are well understood and agreed to at the outset. This also means that the intervener assumes responsibility for ensuring that the process is consistently applied throughout. If conditions allow, the intervener acts as both a participant-observer and participant-facilitator, where judgments are suspended and *a priori* assumptions or solutions are not imposed.[14]

4. Asking analytical questions about the conflict narratives.

Asking analytical questions assists the participants to reflect on aspects of their stories and the meanings that stories create. The key role for the intervener is to assist participants to become conscious of the discourses that are foundational to their views and how discourse and cultural influences shape the conflict narratives that they tell.

This consciousness may be achieved by viewing the conflict narratives as meaning-based, exploring the underlying assumptions on which meanings are created, thus allowing the parties to 'expand the conversation' toward new

[14] This in no way implies or suggests that such a role is 'neutral', 'objective' or 'detached'. An intervening role usually becomes part of the conflict by virtue of assuming a presence in it.

possibilities that may not have been previously aired. This is quite distinct from viewing these narratives only with respect to their truth claims.

5. Changing the metaphorical concepts

The use of concepts such as 'terrorist' or 'conspirator', or language that connotes war or competition influences certain perceptions that impede understanding or change. Substituting metaphors, such as 'journey' or 'path', or metaphors that connote working or traveling together, helps participants align their perceptions, which in turn increase the likelihood of achieving mutuality or a common outcome.

6. Reifying change in language and perception

Changing the metaphor is the first step toward changing the perceptions of the participants. The next step is to identify opportunities for altering the interaction circumstances, such as encouraging participants to work on issues together. In the Doukhobor situation, having the groups involved in joint learning sessions or joint research sessions, enabled new patterns of communication to emerge.

7. Conflict is not for 'resolving' but for recognizing differences

Focusing on narrative meaning helps to understand the assumptions and differences in perceptions and meanings and how these differences came about. Understanding is enhanced when participants recognize the subtext to their views and how, through certain cultural influences, these views are adapted and maintained.

8. Conflict viewed strategically and creatively

Co-creating a structure of engagement creates consonance among the participants. However, there may be times when an impasse emerges. At this point, perturbing the process can create strategic advantages that assist the parties to move from their current position. One example took place during a EKCIR session when the chair raised concern over the lack of progress, hence he imposed a time frame as a pressure point for a decision. This shifted the responsibility for the process from the chair to the groups themselves. By his creating dissonance to force the issue, the participants had to conduct a meta-conversation among them to determine whether there was commonality in what they hoped to achieve.

9. Certain human qualities may be needed for reaching an agreement

There are certain demonstrable qualities that are important for an intervention to reach a mutual agreement or outcome. These qualities include being curious rather than judgmental, and acting trustfully and respectfully. For instance, Jim Popoff said there were certain people whom he thought helped him to understand how they came to view the situation as they did. By way of example, he mentioned Olga Hoodicoff and Polly Chernoff, who trusted who they were enough to tell their story, even though they were at risk in doing so. He also mentioned Fred Makortoff and Steve Lapshinoff who challenged Mr. Popoff's assumptions and perceptions, not maliciously but in a respectful manner. The KCIR members, me and Robin Bourne, he indicated, acted on our curiosity by querying the parties to explain how they came to hold certain views. These are human qualities that are not discussed in the conflict literature and yet without

some demonstration of these qualities, it can now be reasoned that the likelihood of reaching an accord would have been much more difficult to achieve.

10. Achieving understanding versus agreement

In the end, an accord or agreement is an abstract and symbolic statement, and nothing more, unless a common understanding is achieved. Understanding is created through shared meaning and, in competing narratives when new insights emerge. An effective intervention process is one that "break[s] up our sense of certainty that we know all that can be known about what we mean, or even more dangerously, that we know what someone else means" (Winslade and Monk, 2000, p. 141).

Conclusion

What is apparent from this study is that for the past eighty years certain stories were told that were used to explain one group's relationship with the world ('real' Doukhobors), while dismissing others (terrorists). The crux of the debate was the Sons of Freedom claim that their mission was to save Doukhoborism and, in doing so, that they were acting on behalf of the leadership. The Orthodox, on the other hand, insisted that these people were 'mentally deranged' and that their actions had nothing to do with being Doukhobor. However, when the competing narratives were aired at the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations, the distinction between identities became less clear, but the need to clarify and affirm identities became paramount as more stories emerged. Through negotiation of language a new narrative was constructed, hence a reaffirmation that enabled negotiations for reaching an accord to begin.

Once an accord was reached, reifying the new relationship among the participants was a gradual process that started with the groups agreeing to work together on common issues, the first being the 1924 train explosion. However, notwithstanding good intentions, the process of change is difficult to gage or measure. For instance, during the interviews in 2001, Steve Lapshinoff (and his partner Ann Sorokin) said that it has taken at least a decade for change to be noticeable. They talked about recent changes taking place between the Sons of Freedom, Reformed and the USCC, now seventeen years after the accord was signed. John Verigin, who gave up drinking shortly after the EKCIR sessions ended, was now retired from the day-to-day operations of running the USCC, leaving the work to his son John Verigin Jr., whose desire it was to see the groups unite. Through his efforts, and the efforts of many from each of the groups, progress has been made where the groups are interacting with each other more and more.

A recent example occurred about a year prior to the interviews (2001), when the Krestova men's choir, made up of Reformed and Sons of Freedom members, was invited to perform at an annual USCC youth festival held in Grand Forks. This was the first time the Krestova choir had accepted an invitation to sing in a USCC community hall. After their initial performance, a request was made for both the Krestova[15] and USCC choirs to sing together on the same stage. "It was a moving event," Fred Makortoff recalled, adding that John Verigin Jr. helped foster this new beginning.

[15] Krestova was a centre of residence for many of the Sons of Freedom.

All three spoke enthusiastically about the event and the numerous changes that were taking place. Fred Makortoff said that a sense of unification was starting to permeate the communities, which he described as a "feeling that has finality; [one] that addresses and speaks to a large inner part of the individual. It is what people have hungered for, for a long time."

They also spoke enthusiastically about the new 'Tri Choir', made up of members from all three choirs, that was organized soon after their festival performance. The men get together every week, in each others hall, on the understanding that politics would not be discussed. Fred Makortoff describes the experience as 'almost euphoric'. "The split that used to happen out of Krestova isn't there anymore", although he admits that "the old war horses still emerge once in awhile but they are talked down."

Jim Popoff recalled that when it was decided that the two choirs would attempt their first joint rehearsal, the groups agreed that they would hold it at the USCC cultural center in Brilliant.

> The members of the Brilliant Cultural Center, some of who kicked those same men out of that yard a mere ten to twelve years ago, met them on the front steps and there was a hundred percent shaking of hands with every person before they walked in... This was an emotional scene. All mature men were there, but there was a few teary eyed looks ... because they felt the impact of the moment.

He added that "this was a turning point, a milestone in Doukhobor history".

Although there is considerable work left to be done to achieve reconciliation with government or to help repair the psychological trauma for those who spent time in the New Denver dormitory, work toward repairing fractured relationships among family members within the various Doukhobor communities is clearly

underway. As Fred Makortoff suggested, people hungered for this for a long time and for the Doukhobor people there was no better way to begin a process of change than by merging voices together in accord.

As I ponder this further, perhaps 'choir' is the metaphor for addressing conflict and change. Choir is a place, but it is also a gathering of people. It has structure, history, tradition, commonality, and cultural influences. Yet, it is also subsumed by narratives, has its own discourse, and requires discipline and practice for harmony to be achieved. For the Doukhobors, choir is their past that has finally found its beginnings.

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APPENDIX A

A Survey of Bombings and Burnings - Doukhobor and Sons of Freedom Communities

1940 – 1983[1]

DATE	INCIDENT
1940	
May 23	Cooperative Growers Exchange in Robson, B.C. destroyed by fire
Oct 5	Store in Shoreacres destroyed by fire
1942	
Nov 11	Grain elevator in Brilliant destroyed by fire
Dec 9	Sawmill at China Creek destroyed by fire
1943	
Apr 15	Krestova School damaged by fire
Sep 5	Bomb found in Slocan Park School
Dec 12	Jam Factory in Brilliant destroyed by fire
Dec 13	General Store in Brilliant damaged by fire
Dec 13	Doukhobor meeting house & packing shed damaged by fire
Dec 13	Gas station in Brilliant damaged by fire
Dec 13	Garage in Brilliant damaged by fire
Dec 13	Six CPR box cars in Brilliant damaged by fire
Dec 26	Packing shed near Castlegar destroyed by fire
1944	
Jan 31	Attempt made to burn J.J. Verigin's residence in Brilliant
Feb 6	CPR train station at Appledale destroyed by fire
Feb 6	Gilpin school damaged by fire
Feb 6	Krestova village #5 damaged by fire
Feb 10	Krestova school damaged by fire
Mar 3	Verigin's tomb – guard shot in hand
Jun 3	Verigin's tomb damaged by explosion
Jun 7	Second attempt to dynamite Verigin's tomb
Jul 29	Verigin's tomb destroyed by an explosion. Two guards assaulted

[1] Survey compiled from RCMP files – Nelson Subdivision in 1983

1945	
Jun 7	Four Krestova dwellings destroyed by fire
Jun 7	Krestova #2 village destroyed by fire
Jun 7	Krestova #4 village destroyed by fire
Jun 7	Goose Creek dwelling destroyed by fire – woman died of burns
Jun 17	Highway bridge over Slocan River damaged by explosion
Aug 3	Pass Creek water system damaged by explosion
Sep 2	Mike Bayoff dwelling destroyed by fire
1946	
Apr 21	Doukhobor community hall near Grand Forks damaged by fire
May 12	Doukhobor hall in Grand Forks destroyed by fire
May 12	Doukhobor hall in Thrums destroyed by fire
May 12	Doukhobor hall in Passmore destroyed by fire
May 12	Garage & store in Perry Siding destroyed by fire
May 12	Doukhobor hall in Perry Siding destroyed by fire
May 12	Doukhobor hall in Claybrick destroyed by fire
May 14	Goose Creek store & bathhouse destroyed by fire
May 15	USCC dwelling destroyed by fire
May 17	Doukhobor community hall in Glade destroyed by fire
Jun 11	Doukhobor community hall in Shoreacres destroyed by fire
Jun 12	Brilliant water pipeline bombed
Jun 29	Doukhobor community hall in Brilliant set fire 150 Sons of Freedom
Jun 30	Krestova #2 village destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Krestova #4 village destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Krestova #5 village destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Three Krestova dwellings destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Mike Bayoff dwelling burned by owner
Jun 30	Krestova sawmill & 5 houses destroyed by occupants
Jul 21	Sons of Freedom hall in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Jul 21	Five homes in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Aug 1	Shoreacres dwelling destroyed by fire
Aug 8	Peter Maloff's storage shed & barn damaged by fire
1947	
Mar 13	Grand Forks Golf Club damaged by fire
Apr 16	Grand Forks log storage shed damaged by fire
May 11	Grand Forks Russian school & seed storage shed damaged by fire
Jul 21	Verigin's tomb damaged by explosion
Jul 25	Water pipeline in Brilliant damaged by two explosions
Jul 29	Shed burned in Slocan Park & Koch Siding

Jul 30	Doukhobor community hall in Glade destroyed by fire
Jul 31	Glade school damaged by explosion
Aug 6	John Lebedoff dwelling destroyed by fire by 100 Sons of Freedom
Aug 7	Mike Bayoff dwelling burned by owner
Aug 8	Passmore dwelling burned by owner
Aug 10	Krestova #3 village destroyed by fire
Aug 10	Sproule Creek school & teacherage destroyed by fire
Aug 10	Krestova dwelling destroyed by fire
Aug 12	School at Erie destroyed by fire
Aug 12	Goose Creek chicken coop destroyed by fire by 100 Sons of Freedom
Aug 12	Multiple dwellings destroyed by fire
Aug 13	Krestova dwelling destroyed by fire
Aug 13	Farmers Exchange building destroyed by fire
Aug 13	Krestova #1 village destroyed by fire by 100 Sons of Freedom
Aug 14	Krestova grain elevator destroyed by fire
Aug 15	Winlaw school attempted arson
Aug 15	Two Goose Creek dwellings burned by owners
Aug 16	Two Krestova dwellings burned by owners
Aug 17	Shoreacres hay barn burned by owner
Aug 17	Shoreacres blacksmith shop burned by owner
Aug 17	Flour mill in Krestova destroyed by fire by 30 Sons of Freedom
Aug 18	Shoreacres chicken coop burned by owner
Aug 19	Shoreacres dwelling burned by 150 Sons of Freedom
Aug 20	Blewett chicken coop destroyed by fire
Aug 22	Two Shoreacres dwelling burned by 60 Sons of Freedom
Aug 23	Shoreacres #3 village destroyed by fire
Sep 7	Gilpin barn burned by owner
Sep 8	Five barns in Krestova destroyed by fire
Sep 9	Four barns destroyed by fire in Gilpin & one in Salmo
Sep 10	Three barns destroyed by fire in Gilpin
Sep 11	Shoreacres dwelling destroyed by fire
Sep 11	Gilpin barn destroyed by fire
Sep 14	Shoreacres dwelling destroyed by fire
Sep 23	Two vacant former Japanese schools near Slocan City destroyed by fire
Sep 23	Buddhist temple in Japanese camp in Slocan City destroyed by fire[2]
Oct 5	Shoreacres #2 village destroyed by fire
Oct 9	Shoreacres dwelling destroyed by fire
Oct 10	Taghum planer mill destroyed by fire
Oct 14	Grand Forks barn destroyed by fire
Oct 14	Grand Forks auto destroyed in Krestova
Oct 18	Glade barn destroyed by fire
Oct 31	Hill Siding school in New Denver – attempted arson

[2] This list represents burnings and bombing where Sons of Freedom members were alleged to be involved. No explanation was provided as to why certain buildings or monuments were destroyed.

Nov 19	Fruitova school near Grand Forks – attempted arson
1948	
Jan 6	Blueberry school destroyed by fire
Jan 7	Robson community church – attempted arson
Mar 20	USCC building destroyed by arson
May 26	Krestova meeting house destroyed by fire
Jun 6	Dwelling destroyed by arson
Oct 23	Peter Maloff attempted burning of a truck
Dec 3	Slocan Park dwelling – attempted arson
1949	
Mar 23	Slocan Park dwelling – attempted arson
Apr 17	Verigin's tomb dynamited
Apr 24	Tarry's school destroyed by fire
Apr 24	Grand Forks warehouse & store destroyed by fire
Apr 24	Grand Forks packing house & storeroom destroyed by fire
Jun 6	Anglican church in Hilliers destroyed by fire
Jun 6	CPR station in Oliver – attempted arson
Jun 19	Rock crusher plant in Bonnington destroyed by fire
Jun 25	Roman Catholic church in Rutland destroyed by fire
Jun 25	Glenmore irrigation district office destroyed by fire
Jun 25	Glenmore railway bridge destroyed by fire
Jul 9	CPR station in Shoreacres – attempted arson
Jul 16	CPR station in Osoyoos – attempted arson
Oct 24	West Kootenay Power & Light line dynamited near Castlegar
Nov 18	CPR tracks & switch at Kinnaird – dynamite attempt
Nov 21	CPR culvert near Glade – dynamite attempt
Nov 29	CPR right of way near Taghum damaged by explosion
Dec 4	Krestova dwelling destroyed by fire
Dec 6	Goose Creek dwelling destroyed by fire
1950	
Apr 4	John Verigin's residence in Brilliant damaged by fire
May 14	CPR bridge dynamited east of Grand Forks
May 21	CPR shelter station in Poupore - attempted arson
Jun 3	CPR passing track in Shoreacres dynamited
Jun 17	GNR bridge near Nelson – attempted arson
Jul 8	Bridge in Salmo – attempted arson
1951	

May 27	CPR tracks dynamited near Rossland
Jun 30	CPR tracks dynamited near Castlegar
Jul 14	West Kootenay Power & Light power line dynamited in Poupore
Aug 12	CPR tracks dynamited near Gilpin
Aug 26	Five transmission poles dynamited in Trail
Dec 11	Community hall in Gilpin destroyed by fire
1952	
Jan 28	USCC Doukhobor hall in Brilliant destroyed by fire
Feb 9	GNR wooden trestle near Grand Forks destroyed by fire
Jun 14	Planing mill near Brilliant destroyed by fire
July 28	Pipe factory in Kinnaird destroyed by fire
Aug 2	Castlegar high school destroyed by fire
Aug 31	Dwelling in Castlegar destroyed by fire
Sep 8	USCC community hall – attempted arson
Sep 10	GNR bridge dynamited
Sep 28	Store & residence in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Oct 11	Barn in Grand Forks destroyed by fire
Oct 29	Appledale hall destroyed by fire
Nov 1	Krestova hall destroyed by fire
Nov 25	Gilpin garage, 2 autos & bathhouse destroyed by fire
Nov 29	Power pole in Taghum dynamited
Dec 24	Power poles in Blewett dynamited
1953	
Jan 5	More power poles in Blewett dynamited
Apr 11	Three houses in Appledale destroyed by fire
Apr 11	Two houses in Appledale – attempted arson
Apr 11	Five houses in Perry Siding destroyed by fire
Apr 11	Two buildings in Shoreacres destroyed by fire
Apr 12	Two buildings in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Apr 13	Appledale hall destroyed by fire
Apr 13	Two dwellings in Glade destroyed by fire
Apr 17	Three dwellings in Krestova destroyed by fire
May 25	Power pole near Nelson dynamited
Jun 14	Fifteen houses & Doukhobor hall in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Jun 14	House in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Jun 14	House in Appledale destroyed by fire
Jun 14	House in Perry Siding destroyed by fire
Jun 14	Eight houses in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Jun 14	Four houses in Krestova destroyed by fire
Jun 27	House in Krestova destroyed by fire
Jun 27	Two houses in Winlaw destroyed by fire

Jun 27	Two houses in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Dwelling in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Jul 21	House in Krestova destroyed by fire
Jul 21	Four houses in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Jul 30	Dwelling in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Aug 5	Dwelling in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Aug 6	Two dwellings in Krestova destroyed by fire
Aug 16	Dwelling in Krestova destroyed by fire
Sep 5	CPR rail line near Carmi dynamited
Sep 8	CPR rail line near Boundary sub. dynamited
Sep 12	Two dwellings in Krestova destroyed by fire
Sep 12	Two dwellings in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Sep 13	Dwelling in Glade destroyed by fire
Sep 15	Eight dwellings in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Sep 20 – Nov. 23	Numerous unexploded bombs were found attached to power poles & rail lines throughout the Kootenays
Dec 25	Emmett Gulley's house – attempted arson
1954	
May 1	CPR track dynamited near Appledale
May 1	Two power poles dynamited near Boundary sub.
1957	
May 5	Power pole dynamited near Glade
Apr 8	Dynamite found on rail line near Brilliant
1958	
Dec 17	Gas pipeline near Thrums dynamited
May 11	Power pole dynamited between Nelson & Salmo
May 25	Power pole dynamited near Rossland
May 25	Power pole dynamited near Taarry's school
May 25	Greyhound bus depot in Nelson – explosion in locker
May 27	John Lebedoff's home in Wyndell destroyed by fire
May 28	Dwelling in Wyndell destroyed by fire
Jun 7	Gas pipeline damaged by explosion
Jun 28	Unexploded bomb found on Kelowna ferry
Jun 28	Similar unexploded bomb found in beer parlor Allison Hotel in Vernon
Jul 21	Power pole near Nelson dynamited
Aug 14	Post offices in Osooyos, Oliver and Vernon were dynamited
1959	

April 30	Unexploded bomb found on power poles, railway tracks
Jun 30	Unexploded bomb found on power poles, railway tracks
Oct 18	Unexploded bomb found attached to porch of Judge Evan's neighbor
Oct 19	Railway line near Thrums dynamited
1960	
Jan 27	RCMP building in Nelson dynamited
Mar 5	Unexploded bomb found in building supply store in Castlegar
Apr 2	Department store in Castlegar dynamited
May 30	Planer mill in Brilliant dynamited
Jul 2	USCC hall in Grand Forks – attempted arson
Aug 25	CPR tracks near Thrums dynamited
1961	
Jan 1	Dwelling in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Apr 3	CPR tracks near Grand Forks dynamited
Apr 14	Grain elevator in Wynndel dynamited
Apr 14	Unexploded bomb found at Anglican church in Wynndel
Apr 14	Power poles near Castlegar dynamited
Apr 16	Eleven vehicles owned by Sons of Freedom destroyed by fire
May 5	Unexploded bomb found in Trail post office
May 6	Department store in Trail – explosion in fabric department
May 6	Power poles in Shoreacres dynamited
May 6	CPR tracks near Appledale dynamited
May 7	CPR tracks near Grand Forks dynamited
May 23	Dwelling in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Jun 6	Auto destroyed by fire in Winlaw
Jun 11	Auto destroyed by fire in Pass Creek
Jun 11	Power transformer near Grand Forks dynamited
Jun 17	Dwelling in Taghum – attempted arson
Jun 25	Three empty homes in Krestova destroyed by fire
Jul 3	Community hall in Gilpin destroyed by fire
Jul 30	Steps at Verigin's tomb damaged by explosion
Jul 30	Unexploded bombs were found at Pass Creek & Ooteshenia halls
Sep 2	Incendiary devices found attached to dwellings in Rasberry Village
Sep 17	Barn destroyed by fire in Rasberry Village
Oct 21	Sawmill in Trail destroyed by fire
Oct 26	Barn in Grand Forks damaged by explosion
Nov 22	Power poles in Genelle & Slocan Park dynamited
Nov 22	Winlaw hall destroyed by fire
1962	

Jan 4	New Denver dormitory dynamited
Jan 26	Unused Roman Catholic church in Appledale destroyed by fire
Jan 27	Power pole in Appledale dynamited
Feb 1	Power pole near Tarrys school dynamited
Feb 4	Nelson courthouse – attemtped arson
Feb 16	Two power poles near Perry Siding dynamited
Feb 16	CPR tracks near Appledale dynamited
Feb 16	Vehicle carrying dynamite exploded killing 1 & injuring 3 others
Feb 25	Dwelling in Krestova destroyed by fire
Mar 6	Transmission line pylon near Kootenay Lake dynamited
Mar 31	Power pole near in Shoreacres dynamited
Apr 17	Gas line near Billings dynamited
Apr 24	Gas line near Glade dynamited
Apr 25	CPR tracks near Winlaw dynamited
Apr 28	Gas line near road to Gilpin dynamited
Jun 7	Sons of Freedom inmates in Nelson set several fires to building
Jun 8	Thirty-eight dwellings in Krestova were destroyed by fire
Jun 8	Dwelling in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Jun 8	Nine dwellings in Shoreacres were destroyed by fire
Jun 9	Three communal villages in Glade were destroyed by fire
Jun 10	Thirteen women entered JJ Verigin's home – attempted arson
Jun 15	Four dwellings in Gilpin were destroyed by fire
June 16	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 19	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 22	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 23	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 24	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 25	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 26	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
June 27	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
Jul 4	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
Jul 7	Dwellings were destroyed in Krestova, Goose Creek, Winlaw etc.
Jun 30	USCC hall in Grand Forks damaged by fire
Jul 17	BC Gov't ferry (MV Chinook) in Tsawwassen was dynamited
Jul 19	Twenty-nine dwellings in Winlaw destroyed by fire
Jul 29	Hotel in Kelowna dynamited
Sep 2	Commencement of Sons of Freedom trek to Agassiz – 700 participated
Sep 9	Kettle Valley bridge near Grand Forks dynamited
Sep 16	Bulk oil plant in Grand Forks dynamited
1963	
Oct 1	BC Hydro power pylon near Matsqui dynamited

1964	
Feb 12	Meeting hall in Krestova destroyed by fire
Oct 19	BC Hydro power pylon outside of Agassiz Mtn. Prison dynamited
1970	
Mar 4	Dwelling in Agassiz destroyed by fire
Mar 4	Second dwelling in Agassiz destroyed by fire
Jun 28	JJ Verigin residence destroyed by fire
Aug 30	Krestova hall (under construction) destroyed by fire
Nov 27	Five women threatened to destroy S. Sorokin's residence in Krestova
1972	
Jan 1	Russian People's Hall in Vancouver damaged by explosion
Mar 22	Dwelling in Vancouver damaged by explosion
May 16	Mike Bayoff's home in Krestova was destroyed by fire
1973	
Jun 1	Dwelling in Grand Forks destroyed by fire
Jun 30	Dwelling in Goose Creek destroyed by fire
Aug 6	House in Castlegar damaged by explosion
Aug 20	Russian People's Hall in Vancouver damaged by explosion
1975	
Mar 30	USCC hall in Brilliant destroyed by fire
Dec 7	Food coop store in Grand Forks destroyed by fire
Dec 19	Lodge in Chase destroyed by fire
1976	
Oct 17	Memorial site at Farron (1924 CPR train explosion) was destroyed
Dec 4	Hall in Appledale – attempted arson
1977	
Jan 9	Passmore community hall – attempted arson
Sep 21	USCC community center in Grand Forks destroyed by fire
1978	
Jul 28	Old post office in Grand Forks – attempted arson

Sep 19	Dwelling in South Slocan – attempted arson
Sep 23	Anna Markova residence in Brilliant – attempted arson
Dec 21	Dwelling near Castlegar – attempted arson
1979	
May 12	S. Sorokin residence in Krestova – attempted arson
May 13	Dwelling in South Slocan – attempted arson
Jun 9	Chernoff residence in Krestova – attempted arson
Sep 30	CPR tool shed in South Slocan was destroyed by fire
1980	
May 25	CPR train bridge near Grand Forks dynamited
May 25	Bomb discovered on CPR tracks near Genelle
Sep 26	Micro wave tower in Crescent Valley dynamited
Nov 6	Unexploded bomb on railway tracks near Robson
1981	
Apr 26	Restaurant in Oooteshenia – attempted arson
Jun 28	Unexploded bomb found at Verigin's tomb
Jun 29	Ooteshenia hall – attempted arson
Jun 29	CPR train tracks near Grand Forks dynamited
Oct 4	Unexploded bomb on railway tracks near South Slocan
Oct 5	CPR train tracks near Grand Forks dynamited
Oct 27	Two unexploded bombs on railway tracks near Farron
1982	
Jun 5	Dwelling in Krestova destroyed by fire
Jun 10	Hall in Pass Creek – attempted arson
Oct 10	Doukhobor museum in Ooteshenia damaged by fire
1983	
	Nil

APPENDIX B

General Interview Questions

- Describe what it was like growing up in your community.
- When you were young what were the stories about community life that you remember hearing?
- What events during that time do you still look back on fondly?
- What events during that time did you find troubling?
- As a member of (Sons of Freedom, Orthodox or Reformed Sons of Freedom), what stories do you remember telling each other about the other Doukhobor groups?
- Are there any particular stories that stand out more than others?
- Prior to the establishment of the Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (KCIR) describe your relations with members of the other group. What events during that time helped shape your perceptions of your relationship within your own group and with members of the other groups?
- During the EKCIR a number of different topics were covered over a five-year period. What topics, events or issues still stand out?
- How would you characterize these events and what meaning did these events have for you and others in your group?
- What normative weight was given to certain stories over others?
- How did some stories lead to bombings and burning?
- During the EKCIR what were the events that led up to the signing of the accord?
- How was the accord perceived and understood by other members of your group at the time? How is the accord perceived today?
- What changes, if any, have occurred in the community since the accord was signed?

- What would you consider the positive features to be of the EKCIR process? What were the negative features?

- What aspects of the EKCIR process do you think contributed to a change in relations between the groups and with government?

- Describe your present relations with members of the other groups. What efforts are being made to maintain positive relations with other groups?

APPENDIX C

University of Victoria
Faculty of Human and Social Development

Dear

You are being invited to participate in a study titled "A Narrative Inquiry into the Discourse of Conflict Among the Doukhobors and Between the Doukhobors and Government". Gregory J. Cran, who is a graduate student in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria, is conducting the research. This research is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. You are being invited to participate in this study because of your former role as a key representative of the Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors at the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) sessions held between 1981 and 1987.

The purpose of this research project is to learn how you and others as participants during the EKCIR sessions conceptualize conflict, both then and now.

The inquiry will examine

- the discourse of government, in particular its analysis of the "Doukhobor problem", to identify the underlying theoretical assumptions being made about conflict and public policy as it affected Doukhobor culture/religion;
- the discourse of the Sons of Freedom, Reformed Sons of Freedom and Orthodox Doukhobors to see how perceptions and meanings were formed through the narratives that were told; how these narratives led to accusations and counter-accusations, as well as to the actions and counter-actions taken; and how through the EKCIR process the discourse of conflict changed, which led to an accord; and
- the lessons that will inform others about how to address similar conflicts in the future.

Research of this type is important because little is known about what might be referred to as ethnopolitical conflict, especially conflict between ethnic groups and between ethnic groups and government that occurred over several decades. This inquiry will see whether conflict and intervention practice can be better understood by "deconstructing" the narratives and the narrative process of those involved.

As I mention above, you are being asked to participate in this study because of your key role at the EKCIR sessions. If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will be voluntary and will include approximately 2 hours of your time. The interview(s) may be held in a location suitable to your choosing. As a follow up to your interview, you may be invited to participate in a group interview session. This session will bring

together those interviewed. Should you agree to participate, your participation will also be voluntary and will involve an additional two hours of your time.

If you have any questions you may contact me at (250) 356-2207.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Yours truly,

Gregory J. Cran
Researcher

APPENDIX D

Human Research Ethics Consent Form
University of Victoria
Faculty of Human and Social Development

Letter of Informed Consent

You are being invited to participate in a study titled "A Narrative Inquiry into the Discourse of Conflict Among the Doukhobors and Between the Doukhobors and Government". Gregory J. Cran, who is a graduate student in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria, is conducting the research. This research is part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The research is being conducted under the supervision of Frank Cassidy, Ph.D. If you have questions you may contact Mr. Cran by calling (250) 356-2207, or you may contact Dr. Cassidy at (250) 721-8060.

The purpose of this research project is to learn how you and other key representatives during the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR) sessions (from 1981 and 1987), conceptualize conflict, both then and now.

The inquiry will examine

- the discourse of government, in particular its analysis of the "Doukhobor problem", to identify the underlying theoretical assumptions being made about conflict and public policy as it affected Doukhobor culture/religion;
- the discourse of the Sons of Freedom, Reformed Sons of Freedom and Orthodox Doukhobors to see how perceptions and meanings were formed through the narratives that were told; how these narratives led to accusations and counter-accusations, as well as to the actions and counter-actions taken; and how through the EKCIR process the discourse of conflict changed, which resulted in an accord and dissolution of the conflict; and
- the lessons that will inform the conflict literature about how to address similar conflicts in the future.

Research of this type is important because little is known about what might be referred to as ethnopolitical conflict, especially conflict between ethnic groups and between ethnic groups and government that occurred over several decades. This inquiry will see whether conflict and intervention practice can be better understood by "deconstructing" the narratives and the narrative process of those involved.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your role as a key representative at the EKCIR sessions. If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will be voluntary and will include approximately 2 hours of your time. The interview(s) may be held either in you home or in a suitable location of your choosing. If

you do decide to participate, you are not obliged to answer every question and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation.

You may be asked to participate in a group interview with other former members of the EKCIR. Similarly, your participation will be voluntary and participants will be asked to treat confidentially the identity of the other participants.

The potential benefit of your participation in this research is to inform the research community, policy makers and others about new ways to understand the nature of intergroup conflict and conflict analysis, and ways by which long standing conflicts may be resolved.

Your full name or other identifying information that you provide during an interview will not be disclosed, other than with your permission. Permission to use your full name, first name or pseudonym will be a choice that you will need to make. You should be aware though that given the nature of a group interview, anonymity cannot be guaranteed and anonymity might be compromised from the interviews quoted.

You understand that excerpts from your written transcripts and tape-recorded verbal communications with the researcher will be studied and may be quoted in a doctoral dissertation and in future papers, journal articles and books that may be written by the researcher. The interview data will remain in the possession and control of the researcher and will not be released to anyone without your permission. The data will be retained for a period of five years. Following this period the files will be deleted electronically and paper files shredded.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice President Research at the University of Victoria (250-721-7968).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

I grant permission to use one of the following:

_____ My full name. _____My first name only. _____ Only a pseudonym.

A COPY OF THIS CONSENT WILL BE LEFT WITH YOU, AND A COPY WILL BE TAKEN BY THE RESEARCHER

APPENDIX E

DOUKHOBOR GROUPS AND THEIR REPRESENTATIVES

The following is a list of leaders and their representatives who participated in or were referred to during the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations (EKCIR).

Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) [referred to as Orthodox or Community members]

> **Peter Vasilievich Verigin** (*Lordly*) – was the first leader of the Doukhobors in Canada who died in the 1924 CPR train explosion.
>
> **Peter Petrovich Verigin** (*Chistiakov*) – assumed the leadership of the Doukhobors after the death of his father. He arrived in Canada from the Soviet Union in 1927. He died of cancer in 1939.
>
> **John J. Verigin** – assumed leadership of the Orthodox group while the community waited for Peter Verigin III (*Yastribov*) to appear. After hearing that Peter Verigin had died in the Soviet Union, John J. Verigin assumed full responsibilities in 1962 as the Honorary Chairman of the USCC.
>
> **John J. Verigin Jr.** – has now taken over the administrative responsibilities for the USCC from his father.

Representatives of the USCC during the EKCIR include: Jim Popoff and his father Eli Popoff, Alex Gritchin, Jim Kolesnikoff, Jerry Seminoff, Joe Podovinikoff[1] and Harry Voykin. Other USCC members mentioned during the sessions were Peter Legobokoff and John Zbitnoff.

Sons of Freedom

There have been a number of individuals who have assumed a leadership function over the years. These include:

> **John Lebedoff**
> **Michael Verigin** (the Archangel)
> **Stephan Sorokin**

Those who participated in or were referred to during the EKCIR were Mary Malakoff, Peter Astoforoff, Mary Astoforoff, Tina Jmaiff, Mary Braun, John Savinkoff and his son Peter Savinkoff, Sam Konkin, Olga Hoodicoff, Sam Shlakoff, Mike Bayoff, Sam Konkin, Nick Nevokshonoff, William Hremakin, William Stupnikoff, Polly and John Chernoff,

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[1] Joe Podovinikoff was a member of the Sons of Freedom, Reformed Sons of Freedom and in his later years he was a member of the USCC.

Lucy Hoodicoff, Pete Elasoff, John Perepelkin, Peter Slastukin, and Anton Kolesnikoff and William Moojelski, who were active during the 1950s and 60s.

Christian Community & Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors [referred to as the Reformed or CCBRD]

> **Stephan Sorokin**[2] – although he assumed a leadership role of the Sons of Freedom soon after his arrival in Canada in 1950, his aim was to reform the Sons of Freedom, which led to the formation of the CCBRD.
>
> Those who represented the CCBRD were Fred Makortoff, Steve Lapshinoff, Mike Cherenkoff, John Ostricoff, and William Podovennikoff.

Independent Doukhobors

Those who were not associated with the above groups but were mentioned or participated as well include: Peter N. Maloff,[3] Lucy Maloff, Peter Makaroff, Q.C., P.K. Reiben, John Bonderoff, and Peter Popoff

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[2] Sons of Freedom claim Stephan Sorokin as their 'spiritual leader' and John J. Verigin as their 'materialist leader'.

[3] He, along with his wife Lucy Maloff became Independent Doukhobors in their later years.

APPENDIX F

Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations
List of Non Doukhobor Representatives from 1982 to 1987

Robin Bourne	Chair, Ministry of Attorney General (Provincial)
Gregory Cran	Attorney General Liaison for Doukhobor Affairs
Derryl White	KCIR
Mark Mealing	KCIR
Mel Stangeland	KCIR
Ron Cameron	KCIR
Ted Bristow	KCIR
Peter Abrosimoff	KCIR - Translator
Jack McIntosh	KCIR[1] - replaced P. Abrosimoff in May 1983
Audrey Moore	Mayor of Castlegar
Mayor S. Sugimoto	Mayor of Grand Forks
Chuck Lakes	Mayor of Trail
Joel Vinge	Corrections Branch, Ministry of Attorney General (Provincial)
Ernie Schmidt	Corrections Branch, Ministry of Attorney General (Provincial)
Jim Bartlett	Corrections Branch, Ministry of Attorney General (Provincial)
Donna Levin	Special Projects, Ministry of Attorney General (Provincial)
Ian Cameron	Ministry of Education (Provincial)
Frank Bertoia	Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing (Provincial)
Dick Roberts	Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing (Provincial)
Supt. Tedford	RCMP Nelson
Insp. Gertzen	RCMP Nelson
Sgt. Tetrault	RCMP Nelson
Supt. Cairns	RCMP Nelson
Insp. Dempsey	RCMP Nelson
Supt. Eggett	CP Railway Police
H. Vroom	CP Railway Police
Inv. B. Bennett	CP Railway Police
Carlos Charles	Solicitor General, Canada
Peter Oglow	Justice of the Peace

[1] Hugh Herbison and Doug Feir were former KCIR members who left prior to the start of the EKCIR.

APPENDIX G

Rules of Procedure for the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations

The following "Rules of Procedure' were approved by the ad hoc Planning Committee in July 8th, 1982 for use during the Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations.

Chairman: Robin Bourne

1. The Chairman will be in charge of the proceedings. All statements and questions are to be passed through him.
2. The usual rules of courtesy are to be observed. No speaker shall use his [or her] turn to make a long speech. The Chairman may stop any speaker who does not confine his [or her] remarks to the question under discussion. Each speaker must be allowed his or her right to speak without interruption.
3. Should there be any cause whatsoever for disruption, the Chairman shall call a recess to allow for the matter to be resolved. Should the disruption continue, it will be left to the discretion of the Chairman to adjourn the meeting indefinitely.
4. Proceedings will be in English, but any person requiring translation or explanation of statements should so inform the Chairman.
5. The subject for the first meeting shall be the issue of fire and security from the threat of arson. The question is to be discussed under the following headings:
    a. How its use began
    b. How its continued use was encouraged
    c. What must be done to stop its use
6. Presentations on this topic may be made by any of the groups attending this meeting.
7. A written summary of each presentation and a list of witnesses shall be provided to the Chairman at least a week before the meeting date.
8. The opening presentation by any group shall be made by a single individual chosen by that group. Witnesses may then be called to provide details.
9. Prior to each witness providing information to the Committee, the Chairman or his designate, shall administer the following oath to the witness called: (A loaf of bread, slat and a jug of water is placed before the witness) "Do you swear before these symbols of your faith: bread, salt and water, that the evidence you shall give to this Committee touching the matters in question, shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?", or "I solemnly promise, affirm and declare that the evidence given by me to this Committee shall be the truth and nothing but the truth."
10. After each presentation, members of the Committee may ask questions of the speaker to clarify statements or to ask for further information.
11. Where there is a disagreement on any subject, the Chairman may permit further statements by the group.

12. Any or all members of the Committee will be asked to offer their suggestions for action which will help resolve the issue at hand that leads to the elimination of arson and threats of violence in the Kootenays.
13. The Chairman will formulate a statement summarizing the discussion on each issue, the conclusions that were arrived at, and the action agreed upon to resolve the particular issue. This statement may serve as a 'contract' between parties.

Further to these rules, an additional rule was added by the Chairman that he inform the witness that protection cannot be provided under the *Canada Evidence Act,* should the witness desire to give information that might be self incriminating.

APPENDIX H

Glossary

KCIR	Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations was established in November 1979.
EKCIR	Expanded Kootenay Committee on Intergroup Relations was launched in October 1982.
USCC	Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ was registered as a society in 1957.
CCBRD	Christian Community and Brotherhood of Reformed Doukhobors were former Sons of Freedom who, starting in the 1950s, chose to follow Stephan Sorokin.
CCUB Ltd.	Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood Limited was incorporated in 1917 and continued operation until 1938 when it went into receivership.
Society Rodina	formerly the Committee for Cultural Relations with Russian Descendants Abroad.
Piers Island	Commissioned as a federal penitentiary from 1932 to 1935 to house the 570 Sons of Freedom who were sentenced to three years for nudity.
Agassiz Mtn. Prison	Opened in July 1962 to house approximately 70 Sons of Freedom sentenced for bombing and arson.

Doukhobor Research Committee

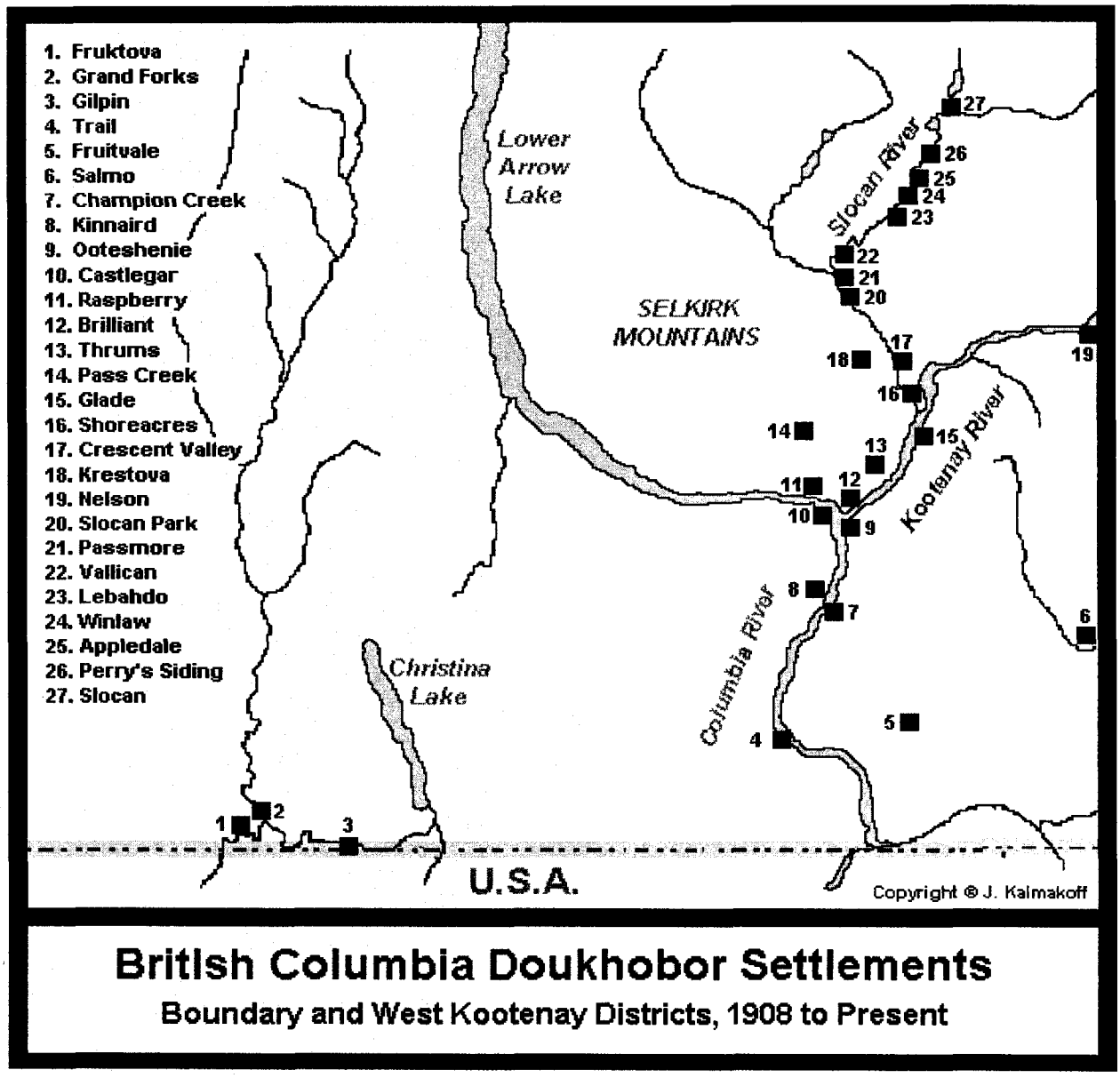
The Committee was formed in 1950 after the collapse of the Sullivan Commission in 1948. The Research Committee was chaired by Dr. Harry Hawthorn from the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Consultative Committee on Doukhobor Affairs

The committee was chaired by Dr. Geoff Andrew of UBC. The Committee comprised of representatives from the Doukhobor communities, governments and the RCMP.

APPENDIX I

[1]



British Columbia Doukhobor Settlements

Boundary and West Kootenay Districts, 1908 to Present

[1] Permission to use provided by J. Kalmakoff.