

Molokans in America

by

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Foreword

There are numerous reasons why the life of the Molokan people in America deserves to be recorded in a book but the most important, perhaps, is the probability that the third and fourth generation American Molokans are unacquainted with the real reason for their forefathers' emigration from Russia or how they managed to survive as a community for over sixty years in a large city abundantly supplied with various worldly temptations.

It is also possible that they do not know why the United States of America was chosen as a place of settlement in preference, say, to Canada or to South America and how it came about that they chose Southern California instead of remaining on the Eastern seaboard as millions of other immigrants did.

What was their life in Los Angeles like as they clung together in one close knit neighborhood while other nationalities scattered to become assimilated in the local population? Insisting, for religious reasons, on wearing full beards and their peasant clothes in the face of ridicule while other nationalities conformed to local customs; periodically dropping everything to attend the funeral of a relative, a friend or a church dignitary, quitting their jobs twice a year to observe their week long holidays plus three other one day religious observances, they yet managed to support their very large families without public charity or assistance from non-Molokan sources.

To Molokans born and raised since the end of the second World War, this accomplishment may not seem very impressive because the continuous prosperity and full employment of the last 25 years would lead them to believe that it was always thus, but in fact, during the first ten years of their life in America the Molokans were subjected to periods of unemployment when the bread winner of the family considered himself very fortunate if he worked an average of four days a week at \$2.00 per day as casual laborer in a lumber yard. How did they do it?

This book attempts to answer some of these questions. It is a narrative based on personal observations, on notes, letters and documents in the writer's possession as well as on information gathered from many persons who are old enough to have personally experienced the history of the Molokans in America. It is a story of a people who were and are unique among all the ethnic groups in the Los Angeles area.

INTRODUCTION

THE FLIGHT TO THE REFUGE

Prophecies of Efim Gerasimovich Klubnikin concerning the coming of World Wars and their after effects, written in his youthful years in the village of Nikitina, Russia in 1855 or thereabouts.

Pages 636 and 651, Book of Spirit and Life. "Kings will go to war with China. From the time of the war in China, peace will be taken from the earth. There will be powerful wars in the East. From the time of the war in the East the wrath of God will spread throughout the whole earth.

There will be great groaning and crying of peoples, blood will flow everywhere. Great misfortunes and agitation among the peoples; tortures, torment and persecutions. People will fly in all directions; to mountains, caves, forests and to different countries. Separations of father and son, mother and daughter, husband and wife . . . "

* * * * *

“Let us sing loudly a song about the flight to a place of refuge. The Lord has sent His angels with trumpets to all the people; to go, to go on a journey, to remove themselves from worldly worry.

We shall stand firmly on our feet, the Lord will give us His help. He is our joy and our strength.

A herald is flying from heaven, his command is to prepare us for a journey (Pohod). Angels are released to torment and to punish harshly everyone throughout the universe”.

CHAPTER 1

THE MIGRATION

The emigration of the Molokan people from Russia occurred at about the same time that the great migration of other peoples of Eastern and Southern Europe reached its peak. Previous to the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries most of the newcomers to the new world were from Great Britain, the Scandinavian countries and Germany. Most of these, with the exception of the Irish, sought to take advantage of the Homestead Law, enacted in the 1860's to aid in the development of the newly-opened territories in the Middle West and established themselves as farmers in the various states and territories west of the Mississippi River. Comparatively few immigrants from the Eastern or Southern Europe had either the desire or the financial ability to do that.

However, towards the latter part of the 19th century the United States were becoming more and more industrialized. There was great need for laborers in mines, steel mills, rail roads and the textile plants of New England and other industries of the Eastern states.

This development opened up vast opportunities for the poor of Russia, Poland, the Southern Slav countries as well as Italy for a change in their hopeless poverty. In addition there was an opportunity for the Jews to flee from the oppression and periodic pogroms in Poland and the Tsarist Russia as also for the Poles to escape political disadvantages from the same government. The Slavs of the Balkan countries too, sought to make what was for them a quick fortune from the high wages in the mines and steel mills of the United States, a fortune that would enable them to return to their homes and their families and to live comfortably in their old age. The Italians, of course, were trying to escape the hardships of an over-crowded country and, on the whole, had no desire to return to the old country.

Millions flocked to the new world, each for his own reason. Russians, too, came in significant numbers, some for political reasons, some for economical and some for a combination of both.

The Molokans too, decided at about this time to migrate to the new world but not for the same reasons as the other people. They came neither to seek their fortunes nor to find relief from economic pressure or political disadvantages because at that time, and for about a half century before that, in fact since their banishment to Trans-Caucasia in the late 1830's, they were better off economically than any comparable class of people in Russia, Eastern Europe or Italy.

Being sober and industrious, it did not take them very long after their arrival in Armenia, Georgia and other parts of Trans-Caucasia to build villages where none existed before, to cultivate grain fields where none grew before, to establish flour mills along the many streams of the mountainous country and to plant orchards to supplement their food supply. And to supplement their incomes they became freighters during the winter months in a country devoid

of railroads or of any other kind of roads, so that at the end of the century they were quite self-sufficient economically although, to be sure, there were some poor families in each village.

In religious matters too, they were enjoying a fair measure of freedom. No one was compelled against his will to worship God in any manner but his own. Although the Orthodox Church would, from time to time, send their missionaries to Molokan villages to try to reconvert them into the state church, these would be repelled by self-taught Molokan debaters, but no compulsion was used and no one was punished for opposing the views of the missionaries. Although Maxim Gavrilovich was imprisoned at about this time, (1858) it was not for refusing to return to the fold of the Orthodox church but for daring to petition the Tsar's Viceroy of Trans-Caucasia for relief of harassment by the local authorities who were trying at the instigation of the Postoyannaye to put down the new spiritual manifestation of jumping during religious services.

As a matter of fact the churches in the villages and towns were flourishing as never before. Members were loyal to the faith and at peace with one another. There were no back-sliders but many converts from the Orthodox faith. A large neighboring Armenian village, Karakalla, became converted to the Christian Jumpers, most of whom eventually came to America at the same time as the Russian Molokans.

There was much visiting from village to village. The arrival of a group of visitors from one village to another would be a cause for celebration. These visits, in effect, would be Molokan revival meetings. There would be prayer meetings in churches and in private homes at which time there would invariably be repetitions of prophecies of "Pohod" to the Refuge. Token flights to the refuge would be undertaken by marches of the whole Pryguny congregation from one end of the village to the other and back again to the prayer house. These were called "Spiritual Maneuvers". They foreshadowed the eventual flight to the refuge in America. Matters concerning the affairs of the whole Brotherhood would likewise be discussed and settled at such gatherings.

But despite the apparent calm and complacency there was a noticeable undercurrent of a feeling that their settlement in Trans-Caucasia was not permanent. The prophets were frequently moved by the Holy Spirit to remind the people that they should always be prepared to move to a Place of Refuge (Oubezhisha).

The prophet who was the first to utter these words was David Yesseyevich who, as early as the 1830's wrote in his Book of Zion that there would be separation of the Dukhovny Molokans into two groups; Zion and Jerusalem, at which time Zion will be led to a place of refuge and Jerusalem will remain and will be subjected to a period of tribulation. Of Zion he spoke in these words; "The Lord will gather all such in good time from all the countries into a place or refuge where they will be nourished a thousand two hundred and three score days in all serenity and quiet."

This theme was repeated over and over in all the Dukhovny churches throughout all the villages in Trans-Caucasia. Songs, which generally reflect the yearnings and desires of people better than any other media, were composed and sung with fervor, exhorting the people to be prepared for a Pohod to the Refuge. Our present song book is replete with old time songs containing such exhortations. Among the many are the following numbers: No. 3, No. 140, No. 147, No. 149, but the most famous and most popular in its day and very much beloved even now was No. 326; "NE PORA LI TIEBE SION OPRAVLIAV SIEBIA V POHOD".

"Is it not time for thee Zion to prepare thyself for Pohod?
From this terrible menace that is coming so soon
From this northern land it is time for thee to escape,
To a far southern country, a wilderness of peoples,
There is the Refuge for members sealed to be there, etc., etc."

These songs repeatedly reminded the people that there will be a flight to the refuge but not from economic want nor from religious persecution but from a terrible menace that is coming soon, a menace that was to shake the whole world.

No one knew the precise meaning of these prophecies. No one knew the location of the Refuge nor the exact time of the Pohod. There was one youthful prophet however, to whom the Holy Spirit revealed the approximate time of the Pohod but not the place, except in very general terms.

Some time around the year 1852 this youthful prophet, Efim Gerasimovich Klubnikin, who was born in 1842, was inspired to draw prophetic sketches and plans and to write down prophecies of the flight to the Refuge.

In these revelations he was told that at the proper time three certain signs will appear by which he will recognize the time for the Pohod. He wrote these revelations down in his boyish hand and telling no one about them, awaited patiently and secretly for about forty years for their appearance.

On page 638 of the Book of Spirit and Life, among his other writings, there appears this prophecy: "A plan was drawn. On it were drawn the numerals 99 and 44, a rising sun and a window. From that time forth the judgments of God will begin their fulfillment year after year. Angels of God will be released to torment and punish. The nations will groan from their calamities. Soon there will be three signs previous to the flight to the Refuge. 1: The people will gather for prayers in the middle of the night. 2: A light will flash across the heavens at night. It will be seen throughout the whole land. 3: At night time, from the east towards the west, a song will be sung, 'A cry is heard; Behold the bridegroom cometh'. Those who will believe this will make the journey to a far country but the unbelievers will remain in their places."

Efim Gerasimovich was born in the village of Nikitina, in the province of Erevan, (now the capital of Armenia) on Dec. 17, 1842 only two years after his parents, together with many other Molokans, made the arduous journey on foot from Central Russia on orders of the government of Tsar Nicholas the First. Efim was the third child in a large family of five brothers and five sisters.

Of his father he wrote; "My father, Gerasim Karpovitch, lived in Russia in the province of Tambov in the city of Morshansk. My mother, Anna, was also from the same province, from the Village of Algasova".¹ When my father was 17 years old, he was severely punished for his Molokan faith. He was given 180 strokes with birch rods and on the next day again that many, after which he was turned over on his back and given another 180 strokes so that he could neither sit down nor lie down. When he again refused to return to the Orthodox Church the priest ordered the police to bind his head in wooden stocks and told them to tighten the screws more and more until he fainted, after which he was made to stand in the freezing cold for some time and then was sent home". In 1840 his family, together with other families refusing to recant their Molokan faith, were banished to Trans-Caucasia and eventually arrived in Nikitina where Efim was born.

Here the Klubnikin family lived until the end of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878. When the peace following this war was concluded, Russia took over the region around the city of Kars from Turkey, and, desiring to settle the new frontier with Russian People, induced many Molokan families to move there in the years after 1880. Soon quite a number of Molokan villages were established and thriving there, later becoming the center of agitation to migrate to America.

The Klubnikin family settled in the new village of Romanovka. It was there that Efim

¹ This was also the native village of M. G. Rudometkin.

Gerasimovich later saw the appearance of the three signs that he was patiently awaiting for so long.

While he was thus waiting, another event occurred that greatly perturbed the Molokan people throughout Trans-Caucasia. In 1889 the fifty year period of exemption from military service granted them at the time of their banishment from central Russia in 1839, had expired. The Government immediately informed the Molokans, through the leading elders assembled for that purpose, that hereafter their young men of the age of 21 years will be conscripted for a five year period of military service like any other category of the nation.

Although this decision certainly violated the consciences of all the assembled elders, they did not offer any resistance at that time but secretly meant to find ways to evade the order.

About this time Russia pacified the newly conquered territories east of the Caspian Sea (Turkestan) and, being anxious to settle the region around the new border with Russian nationals, offered the Molokans another 10 year period of military exemption to those who would settle there. Hundreds of Molokan families took advantage of the offer, moving to the newly opened territory from Armenia, Georgia and from the region of Kars and establishing a number of thriving Molokan villages there.

Others however, sought a more permanent solution to the question of military service. Conference after conference was called to find a solution to the problem. In the meantime certain events transpired that convinced Klubnikin that the signs he was so patiently awaiting had now appeared. Some time around the turn of the century, in the village of Melikoy and Romanovka, without previous consultation of any kind, people spontaneously began to gather in the middle of the night for prayer services.

At approximately the same time a tremendous flash of light had appeared in the sky. Many people witnessed the phenomenon, awed and mystified by the manifestation, but being for the most part illiterate, they did not note the date nor the hour of the occurrence so that now we are without a written record of the event although many are alive now who heard of it first hand from their parents.²

The third sign also appeared soon after these when in the village of Malo-Tiukma people began to sing a song whose gist was; "Behold, the bridegroom cometh".

Being fully convinced by now, Klubnikin confided his secret to some elders who were closest to him. in spirit and urged them to take measures to leave the country altogether as there was going to be a period of great tribulation in Russia in the very near future.

This gave the needed impetus to those who were seeking a permanent solution to the question of compulsory military service, efforts which in the winter of 1900 culminated in a decision to petition the Tsar's government for a release from the obligation of military service. Four elders were selected to personally present the petition in St. Petersburg. Philip M. Shubin and Ivan G. Samarin were selected from the region of Kars and Simon T. Shubin and Ivan K. Holopoff were chosen to represent the region of Erevan.

The petition as quoted in part from page 749 of the Book of Spirit and Life is as follows "Your Imperial Majesty! In view of our Christian upbringing, the existing compulsory military obligation contradicts the faith that we profess. Our youth are also instructed thusly, but endure it because of fear of punishment for refusal to obey. Sooner or later they will refuse to do so.

² The Los Angeles Times of Sunday, Feb. 9, 1969 contained a dispatch from Chihuahua, Mexico describing a similar phenomena that occurred in Southwest United States and Northeast Mexico the previous day. "A blinding blue-white fireball, believed to be a meteor turned night into day across Mexico and S.W. United States. The light was so brilliant we could see an ant walking on the floor", it said. An American astronomer visiting an observatory in Texas said; "It was extremely bright. We had high clouds in the area but it burned right through. It was several times brighter than a full moon".

Fearing to bear the suffering for refusal on the one hand and not wanting to provoke the government to harsh measures on the other, we ask Your Imperial Majesty to free us from personal military service. If that is impossible, we ask to be allowed to leave the country with our families.”

The delegates after making the long journey to the capital, returned with a negative reply and in the spring of the same year, 1900, the Pryguny chose Philip M. Shubin and Ivan G. Samarin while the Postoyanaye chose Feodor T. Butchneff to go to Canada to survey the possibility of migration to that country, supporting them with signatures representing 1000 people.

Meanwhile Klubnikin took it upon himself to inform the villagers in the Erevan region. Traveling from one village to another, he confided his revelations to elders in that area who, in his opinion, were sympathetic to the cause but being told about others who were not favorably disposed and fearing betrayal as an agitator, he returned to Romanovka and concentrated his efforts in the region of Kars, not neglecting to inform the Armenian brethren in Karakalla that unless they left the country their people will endure far more in the coming period of tribulation than their Russian brethren. This warning was heeded by the majority of the Dukhonvy Armenians and when the time came they followed the latter to America.³

The three delegates meanwhile arrived in Canada and inspected the Doukhobor settlements in Manitoba as well as land in other provinces in the Dominion, at the same time conferring with Canadian government officials in Ottawa who agreed to grant a 100 year exemption from military service to the Molokans. After that they visited several states in the Northwest part of the United States as guests of railroad company officials who had surplus land to sell on acceptable terms.

During their absence another, younger group of men were preparing to leave for Canada on a similar mission but at their own expense. These men—Aleksei Ivanich Agaltsoff, his three nephews, Mikhail N. Agaltsoff, Andrei N. Agaltsoff and Vasili I. Holopoff and Aleksey I. Silvkoff who was not related to the others—were also supported by signatures representing 1000 persons. While the first group was on their return journey, the younger group were leaving for Canada in April of 1900. These were to become the pioneer Molokan settlers in America for they spent about nine months in Canada and then, upon the advice of a Russian traveler whom they met in Winnipeg, moved to Los Angeles where they secured work laying tracks for the newly-organized Pacific Electric R.R. Co. at wages of \$1.75 to \$2.00 per day.

The oldest of this group—Aleksei I. Agaltsoff—after a stay of one year in Los Angeles, returned home. Of the remaining four, Vasili Holopoff decided not to return to Russia while the other three, after an absence of another year following the return of their uncle, returned home with a glowing account of their life in California, its glorious climate, abundance of work for willing hands as compared to severe winters and poorer living conditions in the old country.

It is very probable that the report of these young men had considerable influence in the final decision to make the migration because the report of the three older delegates was not unanimous. Although Shubin and Samarin’s report was highly favorable, Butchneff’s report threw a damper on the whole movement. He reported in effect, that America was not a place for religious people, the climate in Canada too severe and the Doukhobors were struggling hard to survive. His report had a decidedly negative effect on the Postoyanaye and henceforth they ceased their activities in support of the migration.

³ The prophesy concerning the Armenians literally came to pass in the first world war. When the Turkish army marched through the area in 1917, they committed unspeakable atrocities against the Armenian people in all the villages, including Karakalla. For that reason the memory of Efim Gerasimovich Klubnikin is revered among the Armenian Molokans to this day

Some of the Pryguny were also swayed by Butchneff's report. However, this did not stop Klubnikin who continued to warn the people of the coming calamities in Russia, nor did it discourage Shubin and Samarin who redoubled their efforts before the authorities for permission to leave the country en Masse. More petitions were written and presented to the Tsar in St. Petersburg as well as to his Viceroy in Tiflis.

The authorities were decidedly antagonistic to these activities. Nevertheless the resolve to move did not weaken. On the contrary, growing bolder, the elders decided to present a final petition containing these statements; "Your Imperial Majesty! Your rejection of our pleas for freedom from military service and permission to leave the country not only did not weaken our resolve, on the contrary, it strengthened our spirit to continue our efforts until the end ... Therefore we ask Your Majesty that orders be given to permit us to move beyond the confines of Russia. We ask Thee as the Tsar and Sovereign of the people, ruler of the throne of the nation. It is in Thy power to give freedom to those who labor and are heavily laden".

In response to this final plea Philip M. Shubin and Ivan G. Samarin were arrested by the civil and police authorities and confined in jail in the city of Kars as subversive agitators.

When their followers in the near-by villages heard of this they gathered in large groups in Kars and remonstrated before the authorities who, in turn, requested them to disperse pending the disposition of the case by the higher authorities. But the people, although quiet, were firm in their demands for the release of their leaders.

This went on for a few days. Meanwhile, an attorney with a Molokan background was retained to negotiate their release. After spending fifty days in jail in Kars, through the combined efforts of the people and the attorney, Shubin and Samarin were released. After this incident there was no further interference on the part of the government and no preventive measures taken to stop the emigration except that no men of military age were issued passports to leave the country. But this did not deter the emigration because men of that age bracket (21) had no difficulty in crossing the border illegally by being smuggled across the border into Germany by organized bands of smugglers for a certain fee, indeed, a number of men already in the Army deserted their regiments and were likewise smuggled across the border.

Although the government ceased its interference the Pryguny themselves were not yet unanimous in the decision to move. There was strong opposition on the part of very influential elders as well as on the part of some very respected prophets who proclaimed repeatedly that our final gathering place of refuge was not in America but right there near the base of Mount Ararat as foretold in the writings of Maxim Gavrilovich; that although the prophecies of Klubnikin will certainly come to pass, it was their firm conviction that the Omnipotent God will protect Tifis people from harm in the face of all calamities.

The actions of these prominent prophets—Ivan Mihailovitch Butchneff of Malo-Tiukma and Aleksey Semionitch Zadorkin, of Nikitina to name the most prominent ones—influenced a considerable number of sincerely devout people who were strong believers in prophecies but who were torn between their loyalties to the opposing views.

Others were opposed to the emigration because of their attachment to their worldly accumulation; while yet others, themselves influential elders, disliked to subordinate their prestige to a younger leadership for it must be admitted that Shubin, Samarin, Agaltsoff and Klubnikin and others prominent in the movement were in their fifties, too young by Molokan standards to be leading such an important movement.

This debate continued in all Molokan villages throughout Trans-Caucasia and the Trans-Caspian regions for about three years or until the beginning of the winter of 1904.

It was at this time that the testimony of the recently returned brothers Agaltsoff played such a decisive role. Very early in that winter a conference was assembled by the elders of the Kars

region in the village of Novo-Mihailovka where representatives of ten communities were present, including a leading member of the Armenian community of Karakalla, Ardzuman Ivanitch Ohanessian, who was much respected in the Russian Molokan communities.

In accordance with Molokan customs, a three day fast was declared followed by a prayer to God for guidance. After the prayers and during the repast, the brothers Agaltsoff were questioned closely by the elders and guests relative to their life in America. Evidently their testimony was convincing for it turned the tide in favor of the migration.

During this repast there was yet another prophesy, a prophesy which was quickly interpreted by Ardzuman Ivanitch to mean that the migration must begin but it must begin in secret, especially from the authorities. This interpretation was, approved by the whole assembly. Thus the decision was taken to begin in earnest.

On May 1, 1904 the first group of approximately 30 persons left Kars via Tiflis to Batoum where they boarded a steamer bound for Odessa. At Odessa they disembarked and took a train for Bremen, Germany where they again boarded an immigrant ship to New York.

Arriving in New York the group was compelled to split up into two groups because the larger portion lacked sufficient funds to proceed to Los Angeles. The smaller group, composed of Vasiley Gavrilovich, Pondvaroff his wife and four children, his brother-in-law, Ivan Ivanitch Rudometkin; Mihail Rogoff, his wife and two children, proceeded to Los Angeles where, after a period of two months Vasiley Gavrilovich managed to arrange credit with the Southern Pacific Railroad Co. for the passage of the group stranded in New York. The above mentioned 11 persons, led by Pivovarovff, are actually the first Molokans to arrive in Los Angeles for permanent residence. Following this group came other small and large groups, the migration gaining momentum until it reached its peak in 1907.

CHAPTER 2

THE FIRST YEARS

The city chosen by the Molokans for their haven was in many respects ideal for their purpose though they may not have been aware of the fact at the time. Los Angeles in those days was not the overcrowded, smog ridden city it is today. Indeed, by present day standards it could not be called a city but a pleasant, quiet, overgrown town with a population of 102,000 according to the census of 1900. It was a center of a fertile agricultural district populated mostly by elderly people seeking health or a comfortable place of retirement in a healthy, mild climate.

Few, if any, immigrants came here directly from their port of entry. Although there were some foreign speaking immigrants here when the first Molokans arrived, mostly Jews and Italians. These came after spending some time in the cities of the Eastern seaboard, and having heard of the wonderful climate in Southern California, its roomy new towns and cities, fled the crowded tenements of the East and remained here permanently.

But the Molokans, profiting from the two year experience of the Agaltsoff group, were spared these needless trials when they came directly to Los Angeles. Had they by some unfortunate mischance landed in New York, Boston or Philadelphia as hundreds of thousands of other immigrants did and were per force compelled to live in the crowded, unheated, rat-infested slums of those cities, they would have abandoned their place of refuge and fled headlong back to their village homes as fast as they were able to save enough money to do so because such living conditions were simply not for them.

In the first place they could not have endured life in a tenement house where dozens of families of all nationalities lived together. Secondly, it was a positive necessity for them to have a place of worship isolated from crowds of non-Molokans. It would have been utterly impossible for them to conduct their worship, their holiday feasts, their wedding or funeral ceremonies in the prescribed manner. It would also have been impossible for them to conduct prayer services in their own homes as they were accustomed to do because other dwellers of the multi-familied tenements would have forced them to give up the custom.

On the other hand, Los Angeles, being a new city with no natural obstacles to expansion, was able to spread itself, allowing space between houses as well as front and back yards for the use of each occupant. Its houses too, were relatively newer with individual plumbing and in some cases, wired for electricity, which was not the case in the East. All these things combined, permitted the Molokans the environment to practice their religion undisturbed.

After three years or so in Los Angeles, the more enterprising ones were able to purchase their own homes. These immediately proceeded to install in their back yards the typically Russian institution, the "banya" (Russian: bath house), which, for a fee of ten cents were utilized by those who did not possess such a luxury. It was not very long before other families also had the added luxury of a home-made brick bake oven in their back yards where delicious bread was made by the enterprising housewives.

Although during the first years the Molokan families made the utmost use of each house by crowding each bedroom, there was, nevertheless, some houses where a large room was made available for the community as a church and since the houses on either side were usually occupied by Molokan families, there was no disruptive interference from neighbors or from hoodlums.

The section of the city where the Molokans first settled was in a close proximity to all their needs. Lumber yards, cold storage plants and the rail road yards where work was to be found were all within walking distance. The downtown shopping district was not more than half mile away.

The district was bounded on the west by Alameda street, on the East by the river bed, on the South by East First Street and on the North by Aliso Street.

Despite the fact that the gas works, a soap factory and a brewery were located on the perimeter of the area, it was still primarily a residential district, populated mostly by Jews, Mexicans, Japanese and others with a good school in the very center of the area. The Amelia Street School where many pioneer families attended classes became for many Molokan children from 8 to 14 years old the first contact with American culture.

Within the area there was also a church and a settlement managed by a sincere devout Christian, the Rev. Dr. Dana W. Bartlett who was the first American to befriend the Molokans in Los Angeles and who later became a close friend of their leading elders and who was also very helpful to them in many ways and was respected by all who came in contact with him.

This is what Dr. Bartlett said of his very first contact with the Molokan people: "One bright morning in the winter of 1905 as I was walking along the street near the Bethlehem Institute, an institutional church, I perceived many new and strange people, Russian peasants as they later turned out to be. They seemed quiet, industrious, dignified, preoccupied with their own affairs. I talked sign language to them, inviting them to come to my church. In a short time these people became the object of much attention in the neighborhood. Large numbers of Molokans continued to settle on and around Vignes and First Streets converting the district into a veritable Russian village."⁴

⁴ Quoted from "The Pilgrims of Russian Town" by Pauline V. Young.

The Molokans lost no time in establishing themselves in the district. In 1906 they already had their own grocery store and meat market on the corner of Vignes and Turner Streets where real Molokan bread, home baked in their own brick ovens, as well as meat butchered by themselves in local Jewish slaughter houses could be bought.

In 1906 too, through the efforts of Dr. Bartlett, a regular church building located in the center of the district, on Lafayette Street between Jackson and Turner Streets was made available to them. It was quite roomy, with a large vacant lot in the back where, as occasion demanded many samovars were gathered and prepared for the use of the "sobraniya" (Russian: religious meeting).

They occupied this building until 1910. After that time the great majority moved east of the river bed to the district now known as "Flats". The church too was then moved to South Clarence Street address to the building now known as Klubnikins.

When Dr. Bartlett said that the Molokans soon became an object of much attention he knew whereof he was speaking, for it must be said that their very appearance invited attention from various quarters. The men especially, wearing their beards long and clinging to their peasant clothes and boots, their shirts worn outside their trousers and girded like smocks, some even wearing home-made peasant pants, they were radically different from any other newly arrived immigrant seen in America.

The women too, with their black woolen shawls and their vari-colored, bright-hued Sunday clothes, were different from any women on the streets of Los Angeles.

Of necessity, they were compelled to walk daily along East First street, the main thoroughfare adjacent to their residential area. This thoroughfare abounded in saloons and pool rooms with the usual complement of the type of people that frequented such places. These hooligans naturally thought it was a great sport to tease and abuse these strange people, at times going far beyond the limits of innocent fun. The Molokans endured this as long as they could after which the hot-blooded younger men took forceful measures of retaliation. This had the desired effect and they were thereafter left alone.

Fortunately, however, not many people in Los Angeles were of that ilk. The great majority of Americans of that time were kindly, hospitable, church-going, religious people. The principal and the teachers of the neighborhood school in particular, were understanding and sympathetic when their primary grades were filled to capacity with children in peasant clothes and knowing not a word of English. Their problems were aggravated by the fact that their classes were composed of children whose ages varied from 7 to 13 and 14 years.

Of course the older children, those 12 and 13 years of age soon reached the permissible age of 14 to quit school and went to work to help the family bread winner. The remainder were advanced rapidly until they caught up with other children of their age. It must be remembered that the peak year of Molokan immigration--1907--was a year of severe unemployment. Work, especially for men, was impossible to find. It was a little easier for the women to find work, usually in laundries at \$5.00 and \$6.00 per 60 hour week. Other found work doing housework in private homes at 25 cents an hour. Helped out by older school boys who sold newspapers on the down town streets, the women were the sole means of support for many families until the employment for men picked up in the lumber yards as the building boom slowly regained momentum.

There was yet another person attracted to the Molokans and whose appearance among them has since become a fascinating mystery almost reaching the proportions of a legend discussed among the older Molokans to this day, being even honored by a paragraph in one of their more popular songs (song 446, fifth stanza.)

On a summer Sunday morning in 1904, when there were yet only a few Molokan families in Los Angeles, they were gathered together in the house of one of the elders for worship, when

there came to them an elderly American woman of commanding appearance and accompanied by another woman who spoke Russian and through whom the elderly woman proceeded to inform them that she was there to ascertain for herself whether or not they were the people she saw in a vision forty years previously, and who were to be welcomed by her to America with a gift of land in the vicinity of Los Angeles.

She told them further that she journeyed to Canada to see the Doukhobors when they first came there but that they were not the people she was expecting. However, she was now convinced that the Molokans were indeed the people of her vision but she wondered why did it take them so long to get here. Furthermore, the people of her vision were exactly like them in appearance and she pleaded with them not to change their religion nor their appearance in any manner else the grace of God and His mercy will no longer be with them.

The Molokans, wrongly suspecting ulterior motives behind such fantastic story, did not respond with tact or gratitude nor asked for time to consider the matter but were rather careless in their remarks among themselves, one member saying in Russian: "Who is this pork-eater that we should pay attention to her?" When this remark was translated to her, she, being a vegetarian, was extremely hurt and terminated the conversation and left without leaving her name or address or the location of the land she proposed to donate.

Although the whole story sounds unreal, the fact remains that there, are people alive today who witnessed the whole proceedings but who were too young at the time to be duly concerned; therefore they could not provide the necessary details that the story deserves. Nevertheless, the story could not be dismissed, as fiction but will probably remain a fascinating mystery and a subject of conversation for a long time to come.

In addition to their struggle to exist in a strange land, the Molokans very early in their life in America were faced with a problem that has plagued them for many years, even to this day, one which God alone could resolve. The same type of problem had to be faced by all nationalities that emigrated to America but notably by the Jews who also had to struggle with it unsuccessfully for many years who, in the end had to learn to live with it. This problem was intermarriage or assimilation with the local population.

It was 1909 that an event occurred that was so portentous in its implications, for it brought the Molokans for the first time face to face with the problem of intermarriage. A young Molokan girl of about 17 fell in love with an American youth and, without informing her parents eloped with him and married him.

Learning of this, the parents of the girl, helpless in their grief and ignorant of the ways of the new country enlisted the aid of the leading elders and retained a Russian speaking attorney to have the marriage annulled. But of course the sympathies of the public, the police and the courts were with the young couple, especially after the girl informed the court that she fled her home to evade being sold in marriage to a Molokan boy she did not love.

The parents, in answer to that charge, explained that it was a custom among their people to arrange marriage for their children as in the old country, and as there were more Molokan boys of marriageable age in the Molokan community than girls, there was much competition for available girls, and since their daughter was in such a demand, the parents of one suitor offered to reimburse the amount of the girl's passage to America if their son was accepted as a suitor, further explaining that the negotiations were still in the preliminary stage and that there was no intention to force the girl into marriage against her will.

Although the elders and friends supported the testimony of the parents, the court was not convinced and the marriage was allowed to stand.

The newspapers, as usual, made a sensation of the case, playing it up in headlines for about a week before dropping it for other sensations.

The postscript to the story is typical of the many others of similar nature. The parents held back their forgiveness for a long time but eventually relented, but in any case the marriage eventually broke up and the woman returned to the Molokan community and died soon after and was buried without being accorded the full Molokan rites.

This unfortunate incident caused the Molokans to have grave misgivings about their decision to live in the city. But even before this incident the leaders and the people in general realized that a permanent settlement in a city should not be considered. It was bearable as a stop-gap, a place to recuperate, to replenish the pocket book, but under no circumstances as a place of permanent settlement for simple, religious peasants.

In Russia they were accustomed to independent life of a villager who tilled his land, planted his wheat, raised enough potatoes, cabbages, cucumbers and other vegetables for his own use. There he could take time off for his annual holidays and when winter came, he rested for five' or more months until the next spring whereas here, he, as well as his wife and the older children were in a set routine of nine and ten hours at work under the stern and watchful eye of the foreman six days a week, month after month and year after year, begging the foreman for time off for the annual holidays and, more often than not, losing his job for the devotion to his faith. But worst of all, there was no prospect of improvement in the routine.

Some families, especially those who were comparatively well off in Russia, were soon disillusioned with America and returned to their village homes in Russia but, with exception of these few and despite the hardships, the great majority heeded the advice of Klubnikin, and being encouraged by elders who were steadfast in the belief of Klubnikin's prophesy, refused to consider the idea of return but began to look around for other means to escape the drudgery of city life, particularly to found a farming community somewhere, a desire that henceforth was never out of their minds.

Before such a colony was established in the United States, agents for a large tract of land in Lower California, Mexico, learning of the Molokan desire to establish a farming community, contacted them early in 1906 with a proposition to sell them the tract which was called Rancho Guadalupe and on terms within reach of people who were still impoverished from their emigration from Russia.

This tract of land consisting of 13,000 acres was located 60 miles south of the United States-Mexico border, in a pretty valley through which flowed a small stream but which turned into a torrent after a rain storm. The land was capable of producing a good crop of wheat in a rainy year but was also subjected to cycles of dry years in the same manner as other sections of California.

In any case, 50 families were attracted to the proposition to purchase the tract. Led by Vasili Gavrilovich Pivovarovoff and Ivan G. Samarin the land was bought for the sum of \$40,000 and a site was selected for a village in the style of their native Russia, except that, for lack of logs, the houses were built of adobe in the style of Mexico.

Soon a colony was established which was to exist until well into the middle of the century, becoming in time a tourist attraction because of its quaint, old country appearance and atmosphere.

But in founding the new community, they adhered strictly to the age-old method inherited from their forefathers. Thus, instead of each family building a homestead on his own farm for more efficient operation as is the custom in America and other countries, a central site was chosen for the entire community where a village was established.

Each individual was therefore compelled by necessity to transport his implements to his farm periodically to plow and cultivate it and harvest his crops in the summer, camping there for days at a time, coming home on weekends for a visit with his family.

A writer who visited the colony in 1928 had this to say of their farming methods: "The founding of a large village in Guadalupe Valley is indeed contrary to any practical consideration and is to be explained only by the existence of an old inherited juristic notion, too deeply rooted in the minds of those peasants to yield before any environmental influence. Distance from the fields were largely such that men were unable to return to their homes in the evenings but often camped on their lots for weeks. Inconvenient conditions such as are typical for Southern Russia are thus repeated where they could be easily avoided."⁵

It is true that the method was inconvenient and inefficient, but the writer failed to perceive that it satisfied the colonist's hunger for companionship and spiritual sustenance in a strange land amid surroundings inimical to preservation of the brotherhood. It is to be noted that in 1911, when a Molokan colony was founded near Glendale, Arizona, the same method was followed.

There were other examples of extreme allegiance to the methods of the forefathers which are rather astounding:

- (1) The title to the whole tract of land was vested in the names of three trustees.
- (2) No grant deeds or other evidence of ownership were issued to the individual owners. The names of individual owners were simply recorded in a community book, which was entrusted to a person elected for that purpose.
- (3) A government surveyor never officially surveyed the land nor was the subdivision recorded in government archives. Apparently, to save the cost of a qualified surveyor, they chose the method that was used by their fathers and forefathers in Russia. Measuring off a length of rope and using natural and artificial markers, such as large imbedded rocks or trees, they did the job in their own crude manner and proceeded to allot the land to the individual owners.

The allotment of individual parcels was likewise conducted in a very ingenious and typical Molokan manner. To begin with the whole colony of 50 families were divided into 10 family units of five families to a unit. The whole tract of land was then divided into several sections, each section suitable for a certain crop. Thus there was a section of river bottom land; another section at higher level and suitable for raising grain, a hill-side section for raising hay and a section of untillable mountainous land which was left undivided for community use as cattle pasture.

Each section of tillable land was then subdivided into ten parcels for which the ten family units proceeded to draw lots for their share of each category. The family units then drew lots for ownership of their individual parcels according to the need of each family. This method was ingenious but crude, yet the amazing fact remains that, although forms changed ownership through sale and/or inheritance, the markers remained inviolate and despite the absence of deeds and of imbedded surveyor's markers, never in the history of the colony were there any litigation to decide title to a property notwithstanding the fact that there were abundant seed for sowing not only law suits but bloodshed as well. One must marvel at the innate honesty of those illiterate peasants that knew God.

However, the passing of a half a century showed that this method was not only naive but careless as well as dangerous, causing much anguish and worry to the heirs of the original colonists, for their sons and grandsons eventually had to struggle to prove ownership of the land when in 1952 squatters from the city of Mexicali, discovering that no deeds were recorded to

⁵ Oscar Schmieder in "The Russian Colony of Guadalupe Valley" as quoted from the "Pilgrims of Russian Town," page 253.

some of the colonist's land, forcibly settled upon the land and despite the intervention of Federal troops, at times successfully claimed ownership thereto through squatters rights.

This proved to be the straw that broke the back of the first and most successful Molokan attempt at farm colonization in America. After these raids of squatters (paracadistas) all but a very few families immigrated to the United States, and the colony as such ceased to exist.

Another most interesting episode in the Molokan quest for land occurred at about the same time as the purchase of the Rancho Guadalupe. It seems that an agent for a sugar plantation on the Hawaiian Islands appeared among them with proposition to sell them land on the island of Kuwai, northwest of Honolulu.

The proposition was sufficiently attractive for the people to send a delegation to explore the possibility of establishing a colony. Upon their return, however, the delegation, composed of Philip M. Shubin and Mihail Step. Slivkoff, was in complete disagreement, Shubin strongly opposed the proposition while Slivkoff urged a favorable response.

The upshot of it all was that 20 families and ten men whose families were still in Russia, agreed to the terms and sailed for these islands with high hopes. At this point in the episode there are different versions from different people. Some insist that the would-be colonists were deceived into thinking that they were signing a contract to purchase land when, in fact they were signing a contract to work for the plantation for a number of years.

The following account is paraphrased from an article written in 1955 by Yacov Fetisoff and published in San Francisco in the same year by the Postoyannaye Community.⁶

Being one of the would-be colonists, he relates that, among other terms, the company agreed to provide the fare from Russia to the Islands for the families of those ten whose families were still in Russia and to bring them to the Islands not later than June 1, 1906. In addition to the ten families, the company agreed to bring in 100 other families from Russia by that date and at no cost to the immigrants. The names and addresses of these potential immigrants were given to the company and the prospective colonists were notified by their friends on the island to be prepared to join them by June 1, 1906.

But the company stalled and by various means delayed sending the passage tickets to those families until the agreed date. They then notified the would-be colonists that they failed to live up to the agreement, and that the agreement to bring the other 100 families is null and void but they could remain there as laborers if they wanted to.

The colonists would not agree to this and gradually, as finances permitted, they sailed back to the mainland in small groups, the last group arriving in San Francisco late in October of 1906 when that city was still in ruins from the terrible earthquake of April 26, 1906.

Thus, to their sorrow and expense, the Molokans experienced for the first time the sharp practices of American land sharks.

But while these attempts at colonization were occupying the minds of the elders, the people in general were busy with their problems of making a living, of bearing of children, arranging marriages, healing the sick and burying the dead.

The age-old habit of healing the sick without the services of a doctor continued in the midst of an abundance of doctors. The services of their own "lekar", that is, old man or woman skilled in reciting appropriate prayers for any given disease, were thought to be sufficient for any occasion.

⁶ The account of 50th Anniversary of The Postoyannaye Life In America, page 167.

Doctors were called only in the last extremity. It was not until the second generation Molokans had their own families, that the services of doctors became general.

In the matter of births too, it was thought that the services of a doctor was needless and “high falutin’”. As long as several well-known and experienced midwives were available just a short block away, why not use them? It was a financial saving too.

The use of these “babkas” in place of doctors was not entirely abandoned until the 1920’s when the city health authorities insisted that the midwives be licensed to practice, and that they learn to write in order to be able to sign the birth certificates as required by law. Being too old to learn to write, they had to give up the practice but as long as they were able to do so they unselfishly performed their functions at all hours of the day and night, more often than not, without remuneration.

Previous to this insistence of registering births, none were registered; causing many persons thus unregistered needless complications in securing their birth certificates when the need for them became a necessity to get a job during the Second World War.

This disregard or ignorance of the city and state laws in the matter of vital statistics existed also in performing marriages. It was not until ten years or more after coming to America that the required marriage licenses became general at Molokan weddings.

But, the weddings themselves were very joyful occasions. After all the arrangements were made (at this time-1912--the boy and the girl had a lot more to say about their future mates than when they first came here) the trousseau prepared and guests invited, came the day of the wedding. To begin the ceremony the whole congregation as well as the relatives and friends of the groom marched, singing in a procession in the middle of the street from the groom’s house to the home of the bride where part of the ceremony was performed. After this the whole congregation, augmented now by the relatives of the bride, reformed the procession for the return march to the place where the ceremony was to be completed. Since no church building of that time was large enough to accommodate such a large gathering, it was frequently held in a tent temporarily erected on the back yard of the groom’s father or on the lot of a friend or neighbor whose lot was roomy enough.

After the ceremony was completed the newlyweds, together with their invited friends, were seated in some large room adjacent to the tent but separated from the congregation. There they enjoyed their wedding dinner together with their invited boy and girl friends, singing songs of their own choosing and enjoying themselves in the traditional manner of young people, while the congregation was enjoying their own dinner in the tent.

The practice of marching in procession back and forth, sometimes as far away as the Vignes Street area across the bridge to Utah Street area, continued until the police authorities decided that, because of increasing street traffic, it was becoming dangerous. They therefore requested the elders to discontinue the practice and some time around 1915 the wedding processions were abandoned except for the necessary relatives and friends who henceforth accompanied the groom to the bride’s house and from the bride’s house directly to the site of the marriage ceremony.

Of course the use of the automobiles did not become general until the middle of the 1920’s when the Molokan population scattered from the Flats to the various parts of east and south Los Angeles.

The funerals on the other hand, presented their own problems. These were solved in the characteristic Molokan fashion. Unlike present day funerals when all arrangements are left to the undertakers, all work was done and all arrangements were made by the family or by their relatives and friends.

Immediately upon the death of a person, the members of the family bathed the body. If the deceased had been sick for a while before death, all necessary clothing would have been

prepared before hand and the body would be dressed there and then in the new apparel and laid out on benches in the front room of the deceased's home. Meanwhile, friends and relatives of the family skilled at carpentry would build a plain, unadorned, redwood casket. A grave marker of 3x8 red wood plank 8-ft. long would also be prepared. This would be hand-carved with the necessary data prescribed by Molokan customs.

Other friends would see to securing a burial permit and to ordering a funeral car from the local streetcar company. They would also order two or three regular streetcars to accommodate the people for the trip to the cemetery.

But if the death was sudden, women friends would drop their daily chores to sew the needed garments so that the body could be bathed and dressed as soon as possible and Placed in the front room to be viewed and wept over. On the morning of the funeral the body would be placed in the casket and everything was ready for the funeral.

When the moment arrived for the funeral, the body was carried out to the middle of the street where a rug was spread out. A cloth-covered table was placed in the proper position and the casket was placed on benches near the foot of the table while the proper hymn was sung for the rise and resurrection of the deceased. After the usual prayers were recited, the body accompanied by the singing congregation and the weeping relatives and friends, was carried to the nearest streetcar stop.

The casket would then be placed in the funeral car which would also have room for the relatives while the rest of the people would crowd into the specially ordered cars and, following the hearse, would proceed to the place of interment.

During the first five years in Los Angeles the interment took place in the Los Angeles County cemetery-for-the-indigent which was located (and still is) adjacent to the Evergreen Cemetery on East First St. But by 1909 the Molokan population increased to such an extent that there was much grumbling among the younger people that our dead deserved a better fate than to be buried among the county's indigent and undesirable elements and that the Molokans were now numerous enough to afford a cemetery of their own. Consequently they began to agitate for the purchase of a site for a private cemetery.

But the urge to leave the city was so great that there was a strong opposition on the part of the older generation who argued that the Molokans were not going to remain in the city very long, therefore a private cemetery was not needed. Despite this opposition a half-acre site was purchased in 1909 on East Second St. near Eastern Ave. This part of the city was then an unpopulated barley field nearly a mile from the nearest streetcar line. It was at the terminus of the Whittier Blvd. car line near the intersection of Eastern Ave.

As soon as the site was purchased and fenced, permission was secured from the County to remove all those bodies that were buried in the County cemetery to the new location. Approximately twenty or thirty bodies were disinterred and moved to the new site within a week with all due religious ceremony and emotional expression from the bereaved families who took advantage of the occasion to view their loved ones for another and the last time.

Although the distance from the end of the street car line to the new cemetery was very long it did not deter the Molokans from performing the full rites for the deceased as well as to pay their last respects to them. The body was always carried the full distance by relays of pallbearers, followed by the full congregation singing the appropriate hymn the meanwhile. This custom prevailed for a period of 12 years or until the early 1920's when the motor driven hearse replaced the streetcar and was able to deliver the casket to the gates of the cemetery.

Henceforth every Molokan was assured of a burial plot. The Armenian Molokans too, were participants in the undertaking and quite a number of their people were buried there.

But the half-hazard methods that prevailed in the purchase and subdivision of the Guadalupe

Valley Colony were employed here likewise. The plots were neither surveyed nor numbered. No custodian was employed until 15 years after the purchase and the nearest thing to a manager was the keeper of the keys to the gate.

Whenever a death occurred in the community, the family asked for a half a dozen volunteers to dig the grave. These volunteers would ask their foreman for two days off from work, pick up the keys from the keeper and proceed to the cemetery early in the morning by street car and set to work, first selecting a plot that, in their opinion was appropriate. The ground was so hard that with a pick and shovel it took the half dozen men a day and a half to do the job.

It was a custom at the time to dig out a niche in the side of the grave at its bottom, to protect the casket from the weight of the earth, and also, if the deceased had a surviving spouse, to provide a space for the survivor upon his or her demise.

This half-hazard method of selecting a plot later caused some unpleasant complications. In time the cemetery became over crowded and the diggers, acceding to the wishes of the bereaved family, started to dig out the niche unaware that there was already a niche from the neighboring grave containing a casket. Of course they would immediately abandon the attempt; nevertheless, the relatives of the person whose grave had thus been disturbed, were sometimes bitter in their complaints.

CHAPTER 3

ATTEMPTS AT FARMING

After a period of five years in America the Molokan people were, to all intents and purposes, established in their new environment. The American language and customs no longer seemed strange or outlandish. The school children and the younger teenagers acquired a workable knowledge of the English language. The youth were then used by the parents as interpreters in their daily contacts with local stores, schools or employers. Even the older people had by now, learned some elementary words of English. Some of these were even incorporated in everyday Russian. Such words as ORAIT, GOOD-BYE, CARRA, LONDA, SHUZY, HOUSE, FARMA, STREETCAR, PILE (of lumber) BOSS, JOB, MEEESTER, GIMMY, BREAD, etc., and other such simple words were already in every day usage. This helped to some extent to overcome their period of homesickness.

The more enterprising of the men were finding ways to earn a living outside the lumberyards. The earliest self-employment probably was in hauling of manure from the many stables to a railroad siding where it was sold to a wholesaler who, in turn, shipped the commodity to farmers in the outlying districts.

Others hired their teams and themselves to haul sand and gravel to contractors of building projects while yet others tried their luck at commercial fishing off the recently opened Port Los Angeles, now the site of State Beach near Santa Monica. Still others found work in laundries, machine shops, foundries and junk shops.

But in the midst of these activities, consciousness of their obligations to God was deep and sincere. The attendance at churches was regular and complete. Their annual holidays were observed. Everyone dropped all work for the duration of the holiday. The fact that a job would be lost as a consequence did not matter. In the spring of 1911 just prior to "Paskha", the Holy Spirit moved Afonasy Timofeyitch Bezayeff to proclaim to the elders that a three day fast was to be observed. The fast was to be followed by the usual prayer by all Molokans of whatever

congregation, all to be assembled in one place. (By this time there were four small congregations in the area east of the riverbed in addition to the large one.)

The elders decreed that a large tent was to be installed on some near-by vacant lot and that Paskha should be observed together by all congregations after a three-day fast to conform to the command of the Holy Spirit.

A large vacant lot was available on the west side of Clarence Street just south of Third Street. Permission was secured for the use of the lot. A large tent commonly used for revival services was rented from a local sporting goods store which set the tent up on the lot while the Molokans brought in loads of new sweet-smelling pine shavings for the floor and volunteers decorated the tent with real and artificial flowers and boughs.

At the appointed time the solemn festivities were begun in unanimity of spirit and harmony. All congregations were participating, including the Armenian brethren. The presiding elders included Efim G. Klubnikin, Nikolai Ivanovich Agaltsoff, Philip M. Shubin and Vasiley P. Galitzen among others.

Dr. Dana W. Bartlett was invited as an honored guest and asked to bring some friends and representatives from the local government, from the clergy and the local schools whom, in his opinion, were appropriate for the occasion. The group that he did bring was quite impressed with the religious fervor that they witnessed as well as with the novel food and the large number of samovars that were gathered for the occasion.

The following week was the most joyful spiritual observance in the memory of those fortunate enough to be present. Even now, more than a half a century later, living witnesses of the event could not discuss it without emotion. The Molokans in America witnessed nothing like it, before or since that time. Two other such holidays were observed by them later; one in the spring of 1918 and another in the spring of 1921 but neither could approach the first one in spiritual unity and joyful outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

At the conclusion of the migration in 1912 it was estimated that there were approximately 3500 Molokans in Southern California and about 1000 in the San Francisco area. The majority of these were from the Kars district. Fewer in numbers were from the villages in the Erevan district decreasingly followed by the Ashkhabad and Tiflis districts. Only one family—the Golubiffs—came from the Baku area.

Being the majority and having the more prominent elders among their members—Klubnikin, Shubin, Agaltsoff and others—the Kars element dominated the community. But the others accepted this fact as natural and there was no resentment on their part. But by 1909 the community had grown considerably, overcrowding the church building and giving the younger generation an excuse to absent themselves from the services and, what was worse, to find other and very unsuitable means to occupy themselves on Sundays.

The parents of these young men began to worry over the new development and sought means to overcome their, indifference to the church with the result that small groups composed of families originating from the same or neighboring Russian village began to break away from the central congregation.

The first of these was the Ashkhabadskaya which formed a congregation of its own on North Gless St. Then came the Akhtinskaya on N. Anderson St. Then the Voskresenovskaya on Las Vegas St. near the Utah Street school followed by the Darochichagskaya on S. Utah St. Besides the overcrowding there was another strong reason for the break up of the central congregation. This was the growing discontent in the Erevan, and to some extent in the Ashkhabad element to the majority's (Kars) element's refusal to accept Maxim Gavrilovich's new ritual in the church and the funeral services.

The people from the villages of Akhty, Darochichag, Nikitina, Voskresenovka and Delizhan having strong ties to Maxim's native village of Nikitina and being acquainted with his manuscripts in the old country, insisted that at least some of the services be conducted in the new ritual of Maxim Gavrilovich.

Because the great majority of the Kars element whose native villages were quite remote from Nititina, they were unacquainted with them. Since it was 4 years before the manuscripts were brought to America and 7 years before they were published in 1915, the new ritual was strange to them and they resisted its introduction, unwillingly aiding the break up of the central congregation.

After the new congregations branched out on their own, they instituted a practice by which at least one service each week—the Sunday evening service—was conducted in the “New” or Maxim's ritual. Indeed, the Voskresenskaya congregation which was composed of elements from Nikitina, Voskresenovka and Suhoi Fontan and whose presbyter was the much respected elder from the latter village, Ivan K. Holopoff, during the first year of its independent existence used Maxim's ritual in all their services. However when some differences developed over this, the exclusive use of that form of service was abandoned in favor of the once weekly as the others were doing.

Eventually, and in particular after the publication of “The Book of Spirit and Life” in 1915, all congregations, including those from the Kars area, adopted this method, not only because it was different and more lively and added spice to the service but the publication of the works of Maxim Gavrilovich added strength to the position of the Erevan group, making the universal adoption of the new ritual practically inevitable.

Not only was the new service ritual adopted by all congregations but the wedding, the Khstiny and the funeral services according to Maxim's ritual became popular and have been in general use by all congregations throughout America and without modification to this day.

However, there has been a noticeable decline in the use of the “New” ritual in the church service during the last 20 years. Some congregations abandoned it altogether and even the more loyal followers of Maxim Gavrilovich are becoming lax in their zeal.

This tendency could perhaps be attributed to the poor attendance at Sunday evening services, a fact which caused the present day generation of Molokan people to be entire strangers to the new ritual, not knowing the requisite songs nor prayers.

This is regrettable but true. It could only be corrected by a revival of Sunday evening services and by a renewed zeal of the younger leadership.

Following the establishment of the Guadalupe Valley colony, other attempts at colonization continued without a let up. Egged on by land agents, who heard of their hunger for land, the Molokans sent delegation after delegation to Central and Northern California as well as to other parts of the West, seeking a suitable area for settlement. But for some mysterious reason no such area was found. There was always some drawback restraining them from making the move. Perhaps the agents were too greedy or the Molokans were too cautious.

Being strangers in America, they were not aware that there were agencies of the government available to advise them where to seek land and on methods of acquiring it as well as to teach them American ideas and methods of farming.

Be that as it may, it was not until 1911 that the next colony was founded. This was in the Salt River Irrigation basin near Phoenix, Arizona. It was (and still is) an extremely fertile land with an abundance of irrigation water from the recently completed Roosevelt Dam. The land, comprising about 400 acres was bought from a land owner, R. P. Davey, who built a new sugar refinery in the town of Glendale and who was anxious to develop the area as a sugar beet center. The price of the land was \$125.00 per acre.

A group of about thirty families, led by Mihail P. Pivovarov, comprised the nucleus of the colony that at one time numbered more than 100 families. It left Los Angeles in the fall of 1911 and in the spring of 1912 they were joined by another small group that went there directly from Russia.

Although the land was fertile and water plentiful, the colonists had to endure extreme hardships for a time while living in tents with their large broods of children during the rain and the cold of the first winter and the extreme heat of the first summer. They cooked their meals in the open and hauling their drinking water from the town pump in Glendale, two miles away.

In addition to physical privations and hardships endured by the colonists during the first year, they also had to undergo a period of training in a system of farming entirely strange to them. They were accustomed only to raise grain for their own use and by the most primitive dry farming methods in the cold, high plateau of Armenia.

Here in a semi-tropical climate of Arizona they had first of all to learn modern irrigation methods, to plant, cultivate and harvest the crop of sugar beets by machinery as well as to market the crop at a profit. All this had to be learned by trial and error, a costly method at best. Indeed, farmers of many years experience in that valley did not fare too well with sugar beets either, so that many of them began to venture into other crops for more profitable undertaking.

After a couple of years of profitless labor, the Molokans too saw the futility of beet farming. Reseeding their fields with alfalfa, they turned towards dairy farming as a more promising field. Although this meant that the whole family—men, women and children—had to work extremely hard for seven days a week, there was at least a little gain at the end of the month to show for the back breaking work.

The improvement in their material conditions continued slowly but steadily. This allowed them to buy modest houses to shelter them against the extreme heat of the summer and the rains of the winter. At the same time they were becoming acclimatized to the country and its way of life. Their apparent contentment attracted other families from Los Angeles.

By the beginning of the Great War in Europe they were established as a going colony. But the great conflict in Europe revolutionized their life, both spiritually and materially. Spiritually it brought them into conflict with the United States government over the question of military conscription. Materially it raised their living standard to an unheard of heights (up to that time) and then, at its conclusion, shattering their economy and bankrupting them so that the majority had to abandon their farms to return to Los Angeles heavily indebted to their friends and relatives.

Previous to the Great War the cotton production of the United States centered in the southeastern section of the country. The war created such a demand for that commodity that other sections of the nation, including the Salt River Valley of Arizona, succumbed to the lure of the enormously high prices that it brought.

The fever bug of easy money likewise bit the Molokan colony of Glendale. Many families of Los Angeles were attracted by the possibilities of getting rich quickly. In a short time the little colony of 30 families became a good sized Molokan community of over 100 families, many of whom began to sport new automobiles and other symbols of prosperity, a shaky prosperity based on easy credit.

This war boon lasted until the beginning of 1921 when the economic crash that followed the end of the war shut off the supply of easy credit resulting in the collapse of the price of cotton and bankrupting 80% of Molokan farmers. These had no alternative but to return to Los Angeles as best they could, some traveling across the desert with their household articles on horse drawn vehicles. Only about 25 families remained in Arizona to start life all over again.

Despite the existence of these two more or less successful colonies—The Guadalupe and

Arizona—the Molokans of Los Angeles did not cease their quest for land suitable for colonization in other parts of the western states.

At times Klubnikin and other leading elders expressed their doubts about the wisdom of scattering the colonies. These doubts were to a large extent disregarded. The elders did not care to exert their not inconsiderable influence on the people nor did they urge them to join one or the other of the existing colonies. Nor, for that matter, did they themselves care to lead them to any other location but remained in the city until their death. Consequently, small groups began to scatter to various parts of the western states to their eventual detriment.

In 1913 several families moved to the San Joaquin valley near the town of Earlimart, forming the nucleus of future colonies of Kerman, Shafter, Delano and Porterville. In 1914 another group of about 35 families purchased land near the town of Hartline, in Douglas County.

This latter group bought their land from a local land company, which was represented by its head, a former governor of the state. This company, unknown to the Molokans, had an unsavory reputation among the local farmers, a reputation that was proven to be bad at the end of the first harvest season. It was only then, when the time came to settle the yearly account with the company that the buyers realized that their contracts were loaded 75% in favor of the company. It was impossible for them to make a living and make their payments on the land under the terms of the contract. Therefore, they surrendered their claims to the land, each family losing the down payment on the land (\$400.00 per each quarter section of land) plus a whole seasons work for the benefit of the company.

Nevertheless, with the exception of two families who returned south to Arizona, the rest decided to remain in the region because it was an ideal farming country for people with their Russian background.

It was a beautiful and healthy region of rolling wheat land with a mild summer and snow covered winters where temperatures seldom fell below zero. But it had its drawbacks too. Every four or five years there would be dry, rainless and even snowless years and if two such years occurred in succession, the results were serious indeed for the farmers.

In other respects it was ideal for a Molokan community. Farming methods were not too difficult to learn. Instead of ox-drawn wooden plows of Russia, they took easily to teams of six and eight horses to pull a two and three furrow steel plow, and instead of sowing the grain by hand, horses drawn mechanical seeders were used. Harvesting the grain was a little harder to learn but after the first season, and with the help of their American neighbors, they became very adept at it.

As a matter of fact their American neighbors helped them in every way. They were all good, law abiding, Christian people, always willing to lend a helping hand, materially as well as with their experienced advice.

But the biggest attraction of the region for the Molokans was the periodic rest between seasons of work. Thus there was a break between the plowing and sowing seasons. Between the sowing and harvesting and when the grain was threshed and delivered to the grain elevators in town and the winter wheat planted, came four months of complete rest during the winter when the only activity on the farm was feeding and watering the stock. The rest of the time could be devoted to the favorite Molokan pastime of visiting each other.

Little wonder then that the group, despite their small number and several bad years due to drought, would not return to Los Angeles. It was not until the fall of 1921, when word reached them of the imminence of Pogrom that they, fearing to be left behind, returned to Los Angeles. Even then two families were determined to stay on. However, they too, realizing that their growing children would soon have to find their life mates somewhere, returned to Los Angeles the following fall.

* * * * *

In the spring of 1914, following the departure of the Washington group, another good-sized group attempted to found a colony in the state of Utah in a place called Park Valley, in the northwest corner of the state.

This group too was victimized by unscrupulous land agents who induced the Molokans to part with hard earned cash and, in some instances to trade their homes in Los Angeles for bare, marginal land in an and region without sufficient rainfall and no prospect of irrigation. The result was a complete fiasco, causing great financial loss to the would be colonists who were compelled to abandon their land at the end of the first season and to return to Los Angeles, broken in spirit and financially ruined.

Undaunted by these failures, other groups and individuals sought their own areas to colonize. The San Francisco community, by that time grown quite numerous, was just as concerned about the insidious city influence on the growing generation as the Los Angeles people. They too tried their luck at colonization, one group attempting a colony east of the city of Redding, in the Mt. Lassen region, while another chose a location near the city of Klamath Falls, Oregon.

However, their luck was no better than that of the Los Angeles groups. They too had to abandon their colonies, some joining the Arizona colony while others concentrated their efforts near the small towns of El Mira and Sheridan, near the city of Sacramento. These small colonies became permanent and more or less successful.

In addition to the Guadalupe Valley and the Arizona colonies, the most notable and the most lasting one was founded in 1915 in Kerman, Fresno County, California. This land was bought from the heirs of one of the biggest landholders of California—The Kerkhoff Land Co. The Purchase price was \$130.00 per acre on easy terms. In some cases the sellers accepted the buyer's modest homes in Los Angeles as down payments on the land. Located in the most fertile valley in the United States, it was not too densely populated at that time, consequently there was an adequate water supply for the whole area.

Immediately upon their arrival they planted young grapevines and some alfalfa as the majority of local farmers were doing at the time. The fact that the San Joaquin valley was not at that time a cotton-producing region was a fortunate happen-stance for them for it prevented them from the total bankruptcy that their friends in Arizona experienced. Theirs was a commodity whose demand was not entirely based on the war, neither was its price regulated by speculation as cotton was, consequently they were better able to withstand the few years of hardships that followed the collapse of the war boom.

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

At a Sunday morning church service on Laffayette St. on October 18, 1910, there was a most significant prophesy uttered through the lips of the most respected prophet of the time, Afonasy Timofeitch Bezayeff.

Suddenly he cried out: "Oh God such a wrath is coming upon the earth!" Taking a glass tumbler, he placed it inside an enameled bowl and spun the tumbler within the bowl at a great speed saying; "Thus will the universe sway". Then taking an iron rod in his hand, he said; "This iron rod is going around the world to crush the kings of the world and all its people". "Oh Lord

God will this come to pass? Answering the question himself he said; "It will surely come to pass". . . ."Will Thy chosen ones be found? again he answered his own question; "Few called ones will be found". Oh Lord my God! Will enough women be found to bind the wounds?" the answer again; "There will be enough".

He then turned to the elders with a question: "Upon whose land am I standing?" The answer was; 'Upon God's land that is in possession of America'. To this he said; "God looks upon this land with a compassionate eye". Then again answering his own questions he said; "Oh Lord my God! Will it reach the west? It will; Will there be any mercy from the south? No. Will there be any protection from the North? There never was and never will be. Behold I see a multitude of ships being moved up-millions, for a battle in the whole world, as it is said; from the east to the west, from the south to the north they axe perishing in great waters by destroying each other. This is called the war of Armageddon".

This prophesy perplexed the elders very much, and the people also for it implied that America too, would be involved in the battle of Armageddon, and the flight to the refuge will have been for naught.

However, after a few weeks of discussion the incident was pushed into the background because of more pressing problems, such as the search for a location of a farming community for which purpose delegation after delegation was appointed and sent out to various parts of California and other Western states.

But this prophecy was not like others. It was urgent. The whole tone of it implied urgency. Only three and half years elapsed when, in the summer of 1914 the whole continent of Europe and even parts of Asia and Africa were aflame with war. Millions of men took up death-dealing weapons and began killing each other without compassion. Thousands of ships were assembled to supply the needs of the war and hundreds of battleships and submarines began sinking each other as the prophecy foretold: "Behold! I see a multitude of ships being moved up for a battle in the whole world."

At this time the feeling of the Molokan people towards the war was ambivalent. On the one band there was rejoicing that the prophecies of Klubnikin and Bezayeff were being fulfilled and they had been delivered from participation therein. On the other hand, there was sorrow for beloved relatives and friends in Russia who were in the midst of the conflagration. And, since blood was thicker than water, their sympathies were with the mother country, the more so when the armies of Russia were being defeated at every turn and its population was already suffering heavy casualties and privations.

The terrible carnage continued as the armies seesawed back and forth month after month in trenches and out of them until the people of the world became inured to it and the news from the battlefields ceased to excite the people of America.

The Molokan people too, settled back into the routine of their lives. But as the months dragged on, German submarines were sinking Allied shipping at such a rapid rate that the latter were facing either starvation or surrender. Not only were the Germans sinking Allied ships, but they were not hesitant about sinking an American ship now and then so that the United States were being gradually forced closer into the war. Consequently, when in March of 1917 when news was flashed around the world of the tremendous upheaval of the Russian revolution and of the collapse of the Russian armies, the Allies knew that they were facing certain defeat unless they could induce the United States to join them. They therefore re doubled their efforts towards that end.

Their efforts succeeded. On April 6, 1917, America declared war on Germany despite the President's previous promise to keep the country out of war. The country immediately began her strenuous preparation to build an army and to transport it to the battlefields of France.

On May 18 a Selective Service Law was passed by the 65th Congress which called every male person between the ages of 21 to 31 inclusive, to register for the National pool from which able bodied men would be drafted for the army.

The passage of this law naturally disturbed every Molokan family because at least one or more member of each family was within that age bracket. For this reason the whole community was stirred up as it had not been stirred up since 1900 when the agitation to migrate to America was at its height.

It also aroused unprecedented feeling of unity in the brotherhood. Meetings to discuss the situation were frequently called by the elders. The young men of draft age in particular, were moved to a great spiritual revival. The churches were all filled to capacity. Emotional and inspiring speeches calling for rebirth of the spirit of the ancestors were the rule. On the whole, the young men expressed their willingness to follow the elders in whatever direction they chose to lead them.

The Selective Service law contained a provision that said; “And nothing in this act contained shall be construed to require or compel any person to serve in any of the forces herein provided for, who is to be a member of any well recognized sect or organization at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate therein in accordance with the creed or principles of said religious organization; but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be non-combatant”.

The problem facing the Molokan community then, was to prove to the authorities that the Brotherhood indeed was a “religious sect or organization at present existing whose creed forbade its members to participate in war,” but it was felt that the Molokans were not sufficiently known in America to be included in the provisions of the law.

To make it certain that they were included, it was unanimously decided to petition President Wilson for exemption from military service as provided by that law. A delegation was elected to present the petition in person. For this purpose the veterans of the negotiations with the Russian government, Philip M. Shubin and Ivan G. Samarin were chosen, the latter was also asked to write the petition.

The petition, dated June 2, 1917, began by summarizing the previous history of the Molokans and their opposition to military service for which reason they left their native Russia, coming to a country “worthy of freedom and peace” where, for the past ten years they supported their families, “not burdening the country”.⁷

The petition further stated that “since a law was, recently passed requiring all males between the ages 21-31, regardless of nationality to register for military service on June 5, 1917, it was felt that it included the Molokans also, which was “prejudicial to our consciences.” They were therefore compelled to notify the government beforehand that because of their religious beliefs, they cannot enter the armies of the country “entrusted to your care”. The petition concluded by stating that there were approximately 4000 members of the faith in the United States, and by asking the President to shield them from possible prosecution for disobeying the Law. Leaving for Washington by train, the two delegates were joined in Phoenix by Mihail P. Pivovarov as the delegate of the Arizona colony. Arriving in Washington they first of all directed their attention to the Russian Embassy for advice and for help in establishing their claim as historic objectors to military service. The Embassy agreed to assure the American authorities of the authenticity of their claims but at the same time gave them a letter in which they explained the provisions of the Selective Service Law, emphasizing the fact that registration did not mean enrollment in the

⁷ See Addenda I, II and III.

army but only a means of identification, also advising them to comply with the law to avoid possible legal action. Following this they presented their petition to the Provost Marshal, General E. H. Crowder who, in accordance with their request, gave them a letter dated June 19, 1917, in which he summarized that morning's conversation with them, expressing his belief that their difficulties with the registration was a result of their misunderstanding of the meaning of registration and assuring them that registration did not mean enrollment in the army but only a means of determining whether or not a registrant was in fact, subject to the draft, further assuring them that in their case it was a means of calling to the attention of the authorities their convictions against participation in war.

General Crowder concluded his understanding of the morning's conversation with the hope that, following his explanations, they were willing to register and that when the facts of their petition regarding the creed and principles of their religion are proven, they will be exempt from all forms of combatant service.⁸ (.)

The delegation then returned home rejoicing in the mistaken belief that they were granted exemption from all forms of military service and upon arrival, advised the brotherhood not to resist the law as it pertained to registration in the face of such assurances from the government. Despite some minor opposition to this report, the young men confidently proceeded to register and, in due time, to fill out the required questionnaires, subsequently receiving their classification cards. After the registration and the classification, the community returned to normal for the time being.

During the following months, however, the government, to finance the huge war time expenditures, conducted several intensive drives to sell war bonds to the population. In the midst of the aroused patriotic fervor, strong pressure was exerted on Molokan men by their employers to participate in the war loans.

The great majority of these men were conscientiously opposed to this form of participation in the war but were unable to articulate their religious objections in English well enough to satisfy their employers and were therefore looked upon as slackers in the war effort.

The elders, with the help of Dr. Dana W. Bartlett, worked out a plan by which a community donation to the American Red Cross in lieu of subscription to the war loans was accepted as satisfactory by the Liberty Loan Committee. Each participant in the donation to the Red Cross received a letter from that organization which showed the concurrence of the Liberty Loan Committee to the arrangement. Thereafter no Molokan was subjected to undo pressure by his employer to the purchase of war bonds or Liberty Bonds as they were called at that time.

Not so in Arizona, however. That colony, by then grown quite numerous, was considerably agitated even before M.P. Pivovarovoff joined the delegation to Washington because one of the local prophetesses was moved by the Holy Spirit to warn the brotherhood to refrain from registering for the draft. Her prophesy was interpreted by the elders of the church that registration was tantamount to receiving the mark of the beast on the right hand and on the forehead as prophesied in the Book of Revelation Chap. 13.

As a result of this prophesy, 34 men between the ages of 21-31 notified the local draft officials of their determination not to comply with the law, at the same time leaving their addresses with the officials, thus showing their willingness to abide by the consequences of their act. The whole colony solidly and cheerfully backed the young men, on occasions demonstrating before the government by marching in the streets of Phoenix and Glendale, singing and jumping in the spirit the meanwhile. The demonstration failed to move the authorities in any way, however. On registration day the 34 men were arrested, released on bail and on August 7th, after

⁸ See Addenda p. 111

a one-day trial, all were convicted and sentenced to one year in the Yavapai County jail in Prescott, Arizona. After serving ten months of their sentence in Prescott (where they were treated very leniently), 28 of them agreed to register. They were therefore released and went back to their farms and their families. But the remaining six were adamant in their refusal to register. These were summarily inducted into the army as non-combatants as the law provided and assigned to the Disciplinary Barracks in Fort Riley, Kansas, where many other conscientious objectors of various denominations and callings who were unwilling to serve in the army in any capacity were already experiencing the rigors of life in a military disciplinary barrack. With these rigors the six Molokans soon became well acquainted.

Upon their arrival in Ft. Riley they were ordered to put on a uniform which, of course, they refused to do. For their constant refusal to put on a uniform and to obey orders they were periodically subjected to some very harsh, not to say cruel, treatment. They were sprayed from high pressure fire hose until they were unconscious, at times hand-cuffed to their cell doors in such a position that they either had to stand on their toes or hang by their wrists for an hour, repeating the process after a short rest.

The reason for the detention of all conscientious objectors in Ft. Riley was due to the delay by the War Department in defining non-combatant service as provided by the Selective Service Act. No one knew for sure what to do with them until March 23, 1918 when President Wilson signed executive order #28 which, among other provisions, defined non-combatant service as service in the following branches of the Army: 1). Medical Corps on the battlefield or in the rear area. 2). Quartermaster Corps such as stevedore companies, the laundry service, labor companies, etc., etc. 3). Engineering service, in the front or in the rear such as rail road building and operation, road building, construction of rear line fortifications, docks, wharves, et., etc.

When this order was issued it also provided, that those who were willing to accept service in the above categories were to be segregated and placed in command of a "specially qualified officer of tact and judgment" who was not to punish them nor to grant them "favours or consideration beyond exemption from actual military service".

No such promises or considerations were made for those who were unable to accept service in any branch of the Army so designated by the President, consequently, the six Molokans, together with many other absolutists were victims of non-commissioned personnel of the camp who tried by every means, legal or otherwise, to break their resistance to wearing the uniform or to army discipline.

However, the War Department was not unaware of the existence of these "absolutists". The Secretary of War, on June 1, 1918 set up a Board of Inquiry whose purpose was "solely to inquire into and determine the sincerity of conscientious objectors". Upon assuming its duties the Board set out to examine and interview every conscientious objector throughout the country. If the Board, upon examination, judged the objector sincere in his claims, it had the option of assigning him either to a farm furlough, to an industrial furlough or to the Friend's Reconstruction unit in France. If, in the opinion of the Board, the objector was not sincere in his claims, it was to assign him to service in the Army. There were many such objectors scattered in the country, consequently a considerable time elapsed before all of them were interviewed. Meanwhile, the harsh camp discipline continued unabated. In due time the Board came to examine the six Molokans. The following is an excerpt from the book "The Conscientious Objector" written by the chairman of that Board, Maj. Walter G. Kellogg, and published in 1919: "The Board found that the Mennonites, the Quakers, and the Molokans presented the most interesting features. The Mennonites comprise the largest class of conscientious objectors; the Quakers perhaps the most admirable. The Molokans undoubtedly, not because of their number,

but because of their novelty, have been among the most perplexing cases of what the War Department has had to deal.”

Describing the six Molokans in particular, Maj. Kellogg says: “The writer found that six Molokans were quartered in one of the western camps. He was told that they were on a hunger strike, absolutely refusing to take food or drink. He was told that this hunger strike was for the purpose of embarrassing the camp authorities, that they were in the base hospital to be forcibly fed. He was asked by the camp authorities how, in his opinion, they were to be treated. He suggested that no attention be paid to their strike except to return them to their quarters and to place food and water within their easy reach and if they did not use the food and if their condition became extremely bad to send them back to the hospital and to consider what other measures to take.”

During his personal examination of them the major found that the Holy Spirit told them not to register and to have nothing to do with the war; that they spent about a year in prison and upon their release they were brought to the camp. He was informed by one of the six who spoke English that they did not wish to embarrass the government in any way. Their reason for the strike was that they were vegetarians and their desire was that they be allowed to prepare their own food in their own way. He was told that they would not take part in the war in any way and would not accept farm furlough as that too was under military control. When Major Kellogg informed them that such refusal would undoubtedly subject them to further imprisonment, they replied that they would rather be shot to death than participate in war. Upon conclusion of his examination, the major stated that he had no alternative but to recommend that they be furloughed to work on a farm and if they refused, to let the law take its course, but he was very favorably impressed by their stand for he concluded his account of them in the following terms: “The few Molokans here who announced themselves as objectors have been most perplexing. Whether the six Molokans truthfully represented their religion is not known, but during the time the Board had them under observation, they appeared to be absolutely sincere and of more than average intelligence. They very probably were good fathers and model husbands whose good citizenship could hardly be questioned until they and their exotic religion were brought plumb against the grim realities of war.”

Subsequent to these interviews with the chairman of the Board of Inquiry and following their refusal to be furloughed to farm work, a deliberate test was made of each one individually by a direct order of a military officer to pick up a rake and clean up the yard. They refused and for that they were court-martialed and were given severe sentences in Federal prison. However, for some unknown reason not all six were sentenced for the same terms: J. D. Conovaloff and F. F. Wren for a period of 25 years while A. F. Shubin, Ivan W. Kulikoff, Ivan W. Sussoyeff and Morris E. Shubin for a period of 15 years, all to serve in the Federal prison in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Happily however, they did not have to serve much of these sentences. The war was soon over and in April of 1919 all such prisoners who were sentenced for violation of the draft law were amnestied by President Wilson and the six returned to their farms and families in Arizona to resume their normal lives.

The conclusion of the war left a feeling of euphoria in the whole brotherhood. It was universally and sincerely felt that God indeed showed His blessing to His people and the flight to the refuge proved itself as Divinely inspired.⁹

⁹ This fact was further proven to them when, after a five year absence of letters from Russia some were brought to America from Trans-Caucasia by members of the Near East Relief Society who were working among the starving Armenians and other people of the region during the war and the subsequent upheaval. One of the first of these letters was received on November 20, 1920 but was written on July 20, 1920 from which the following is cited; “All

And no wonder! Out of an estimated 4,000 members only three members took part in the war and these volunteers for service out of sheer bravado. All the rest that registered for the draft were legally exempt as aliens, having declared themselves in their questionnaires not only as objectors to military service on religious grounds but also as “resident aliens who had not declared their intention to become citizens of the United States”. This was legal grounds at the time to claim, classification of 5-F (aliens who were exempt from military call). This was a more favorable classification than 1-O (conscientious objectors) because, as we have seen, all men so classified were subject to serve in non-combatant capacity, a fact not clearly understood at the time.¹⁰

The 34 Arizonans, too would have been eligible for classification as aliens because naturalize because no Molokans of that time were naturalized citizens. Much misunderstanding and hardship would have thus been avoided.

But such was the will of God. It would be unjust to say that they were willful in disregarding the advice of the Los Angeles elders who went out of their way to urge them to register. They sincerely believed that they were obeying the commands of the Holy Spirit. By their adamant position they became a symbol of Molokan firmness in time of trial. Their fearless and stoic stand in the face of such extreme harshness is a credit not only to them but also to the whole community of the Russian Spiritual Christian jumpers. Of such strong pillars is the church of Christ built.

But the principal motive force behind the flight to the Refuge, Efim G. Klubnikin, was not present to enjoy this feeling of euphoria the fruits of his sixty-year vigil. When the war commenced in 1914, Turkey was not immediately involved. This had some secret spiritual significance to him. Not being able to read the American newspapers, he would frequently and anxiously inquire of those who did whether or not it appeared that Turkey was going to be involved. Whether he was anticipating some further signs from God from the actions of Turkey, we will never know. In October 1914 Turkey did enter the war, but Efim Gerasimovich did not reveal anything about it to anyone. Perhaps he was awaiting further signs. Be that as it may, he passed away on August 5, 1915 without any further word concerning the war. He died suddenly, apparently from a stroke, and was buried with the honors due to a man, who in matters temporal, was meek and poor, but who in spiritual matters was a true prophet of God.

A year after his death, a song whose words were attributed to him, became tremendously popular in the community. Although it was never found among his other manuscripts, trustworthy persons bear witness that Efim Gerasimovich gave a copy of the composition to a prominent singer of the time with a request that the latter adapt an appropriate tune to the words and put it in circulation. It was done as he requested but only after he passed away.

The song, number 308 in the present song book, deserves perpetuation for it is accurately descriptive of the Molokan people’s feelings during the first World War and for many years after its conclusion. The song, in a somewhat liberal translation, is as follows:

are suffering from cold hunger and inflation. Flour is 10,000 rubles a pud (40 pounds) and there is none to buy. Sugar is nonexistent, raisins 15,000 a pud, a horse 300,000 rubles, a cow 250,000 rub. Clothing is made of burlap. In addition to hunger and cold there was terror from the war and revolutions concerning which there were only hints in the letter, apparently from fear of reprisals.

¹⁰ This misunderstanding created a serious problem for a young Molokan, M.J. Bolotin, whose father, previous to the war, declared his intention to become a citizen. Since his children were minors at the time of his declaration, they too came under the same declaration, consequently, when the war came they were unable to claim exemption as aliens. In 1918 the oldest son was therefore ordered to report for induction into the army. Upon his refusal he was arrested and, after a court-martial held in Ft. McArthur in San Pedro, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison despite the intercession on his behalf by the elders. Fortunately he too was amnestied by the President and returned home in 1919.

The voice of God to His chosen people;
To go, to go away on a journey,
From this land to that peaceful country,
To be preserved in safety.

There'll come a wrath upon this land
And violence extremely fierce;
But pity those who're left behind,
To be overtaken by the sword.

They shall call upon their Maker;
Save, Oh Savior these our souls;
That we may not take up this sword
And be not destroyed by it.

The voice will say to them in turn;
I took My peace from off this earth.
But pity only for those people
Who heard the trumpet's sound.

But I'll deliver those people only,
Who always follow me,
And lead them to that promised land
With My almighty hand.

I'll give them an inheritance;
My own, My promised land
Where they'll abide in quiet peace,
And thank Me evermore.

This period indeed, was productive of many other songs reflecting the joy and gratitude of the people for their Divine deliverance from the war and its terrible consequences. Philip M. Shubin gave expression to his feelings in a long and inspiring song that also achieved deserved popularity. It is number 319 in the songbook. Numbers 322, 323, 446, among many others, were likewise composed at about this time. Even a brief study of them will show that their central theme is also praise for Divine deliverance from the world's calamities. These songs show considerable talent on the part of the authors but for lack of space, they cannot be reproduced in this work.

Chapter 5

Post War Problems

The economic collapse following the end of the war boom affected the whole United States with the exception of Southern California which was at that time enjoying one of its population explosions with the resulting building expansions. For that reason all Molokans who returned to

Los Angeles from their abandoned farms were able to find employment at good wages in the local lumber yards and in the building industry as carpenters.

Rapidly paying off their accumulated farm debts, they proceeded to buy or build homes in outlying communities—Belvedere, Lynwood, Huntington Park, Maywood, etc. thus beginning a movement that, in time, emptied the Flats area of the Molokans.

This movement was not entirely beneficial to them, for although it alleviated to some extent the serious problem of juvenile delinquency that was plaguing them at the time, it also disrupted the regularity of church attendance on the part of the young and the old alike, a tendency that was never reversed.

About this time—summer 1921--there appeared in Los Angeles a person who caused quite a commotion among the Molokan people, a commotion that was accompanied by considerable misunderstanding and ill feeling among them. This person called himself “Brother Isaiah” but the newspapers soon dubbed him the “Miracle Man”. Where he came from no one seemed to know and he was not anxious to divulge the information.

A strikingly tall and handsome elderly man of about 70 years, with a long white beard and long hair to match, he conducted a preaching and healing services in a half open stage atop a hill near Lincoln Park. His services were attended by large crowds of curious people and by many sick and invalids hoping to be healed. As is usual in such circumstances, many of these testified to his healing powers, at times throwing away their crutches and walking away unaided.

Hearing of this the Molokans too flocked to the hill top, coming back to spread the news to friends and neighbors. They were so impressed that soon the Molokan community was deep in a debate as to whether or not he was the reincarnation of Maxim Gavrilovich. Others contended that he was none other than the fulfillment of a recent prophesy of Afonasy Bezayeff who, on June 5, 1921, or about a month previous to Isaiah’s appearance, saw a vision of a star in the heavens with a head resembling a lion and with a tail of a horse, so that people would have difficulty in discerning whether it was that or the other. The name of the star will be “Star of destruction.”

In the midst of these debates Afonasy himself urged the people not to accept the healer nor to go to him to be healed but that those who would go would soon be crawling like crabs.

Nevertheless, it was decided in the middle of August to invite him to the old Klubnikin church building to hear him out. He appeared there on a Sunday afternoon all dressed in a white flannel suit and a hat to match the suit.

Without removing his hat, he stood at the side of the table and carried on a monologue lasting two hours. The gist of his talk was to the effect that he, personally, is the man-child born of the woman clothed in the Sun as foretold in the book of Revelations; that the reason he did not remove his hat is that it represents the crown on the head of the woman clothed in the Sun, and that the words coming from his lips is the river flowing from the throne of God and that his body and his arms that are healing the sick is the tree of life astride the same river as described in Revelations 22.

He concluded his monologue by stating that he is now seeking a place to which he must lead his people, a place where the resurrection is to take place, further stating that in his opinion the Molokans are his people and invited some of them to look over a tract of land he had in mind. This invitation was ignored completely.

At the conclusion of his talk he invited all the sick to come forth to be healed. Several seriously sick elderly people and one boy of twelve who was a complete invalid, both mentally and physically, came forward. All the older people announced that they felt better after his manipulations, but alas, several months later all died from their illnesses. When the crippled boy

was brought to him, Isaiah realized immediately that it was a hopeless case and refrained from attempting a healing. The boy too, died shortly after.

Following this performance the Molokans gradually lost interest in him. Although there were a few instances where hopelessly sick people sent their handkerchiefs to him by mail for a blessing and hoping to be healed, but to no avail.

Thereafter the city health authorities prevented him from assembling large crowds in the open spaces and, after being shunted from one place to another, he disappeared without trace not, however, without leaving some spiritual scars in the minds of some Molokans as a result of the debates.

A further and a more serious dissension arose in the Molokan Community in the fall of that year as a result of the world wide concern for the famine stricken people of Russia.

Millions of people were literally starving to death in the Ukraine and the entire southern part of Russia because these two great grain producing regions on which the whole nation depended for its cereals, suffered a complete crop failure for lack of snow and rain during the growing season and, since this region was the scene of the terrible conflict between the Red Bolshevik armies and the white armies of Denikin and Wrangel who were fighting their cruel civil war, all reserves of food were shamelessly destroyed.

Whether or not there were any reserves of wheat in other parts of the country—Siberia or the North—none knew except the heads of the government. In any case, the seven years of the nation's tribulation—wars, revolutions and the civil war—so disorganized its economy that it became an utter chaos and, as a consequence, no foodstuffs were able to reach the affected areas. So the millions were starving as the heads of the nation's government quibbled with other nations—America and others over the terms by which to allow their proffered relief to enter their borders.

At this time a man by the name of Belousoff and a woman known only as "Tovarish Rakhil" appeared in the Molokan community of Los Angeles to organize a famine relief among them. While so occupied, they succeeded in introducing their so-called parliamentary methods of conducting meetings. The meetings were held frequently to discuss means of collecting the relief offerings. This was the leading cause of the dissension.

The leading elders were opposed to the intruders because their methods were in complete variance to the traditional Molokan method of free discussion which was usually followed by a unanimous agreement when all signified their assent by shouting "Blaag Soviet". However, a certain element of the younger generation were ready and willing to accept the innovation, governed perhaps by their sympathies with the communist regime in Russia.

In addition to these reasons, many, perhaps a majority, opposed the whole idea of sending relief to the Soviets on religious grounds. But in spite of this opposition and despite the fact that the opposition refrained from participating, a considerable sum was collected, truck-loads of beans and other foodstuffs were purchased in conjunction with other elements of the non-Molokan, Russian-born population of the Boyle Heights area and on the first week of December, 1921, it was shipped by steam ship to the Volga region of South Russia.

At the same time, the participating faction sent along a delegate, Ivan M. Seliznoff, ostensibly to distribute the shipment properly but also to scout out the living conditions under the new regime and to report the same to his friends in America who were convinced that the new regime was building a workers paradise there.

A few days before Seliznoff left with the shipment, on December 14, 1921, an official of the Near East Relief Society contacted the elders through Dana W. Bartlett urging them to extend a helping hand to Molokans in Trans-Caucasia where a terrible famine was also raging. This appeal could not be ignored for it meant saving the lives of people of the same faith, flesh of our

flesh and blood of our blood, in many instances of brothers and sisters and even of mothers and fathers.

The official was immediately invited to a meeting where he related some awful scenes in which people were dying of starvation in the streets of towns and villages and of typhus that usually accompanies such calamities.

The people were wholly convinced of the truth of his story when he named well known Molokan villages where he was present, therefore his appeal could not be ignored. When he proposed that the Near East Relief Society would duplicate everything the Molokans would contribute, either in money or in food stuffs, they immediately took steps to coiled a fund to purchase clothing and provisions, assessing every able bodied family \$25.00 and urging those who were unable to contribute that much, to give as much as they were able.

All agreed to participate with the exception of the faction that was already sending a large shipment to the Volga region. These refused in the mistaken belief that no Molokans were left in Trans-Caucasia, claiming that all had moved to the Kuban region.

To complicate matters, Afosay T. Bezayeff uttered a prophesy at this time, in effect forbidding aid to any part of Soviet Russia, not even your own flesh and blood saying that, by helping the Soviets we would be nourishing a black horse that will trample us under its hooves in the end.

There followed three months of acrimonious debate, some supporting the prophesy and others just as fervently siding with the decision to send help, basing their stand on Jesus' parable of the good Samaritan and on the 25th Chapter of Matthew, etc. Every gathering of whatever nature was a continuation of the debate, compounding die already bitter feelings in the community. Nevertheless, the collection of funds and the purchase of provisions and second hand clothing continued without a let up during the winter. On March 17, 1922 a large consignment of beans and clothing was shipped directly from Wilmington on the S.S. Kentukian to the Black Sea port of Batum for distribution by the Near East Relief Society to the Molokan people in Trans-Caucasia. Many grateful letters of acknowledgment were later received from those people.

Only a very small minority refrained from participation in this communal act of charity, but even these, with one or two exceptions, privately managed to ship bales of second hand clothing or sums of money to their relatives.

Simultaneously with these charitable activities, the community was deeply concerned with the growing problem of juvenile delinquency. More and more Molokan homes were grieving over the loss of a daughter or a son deserting the home to marry a non-Molokan. Younger children too, were frequently running away from home, seeking adventure elsewhere and eventually becoming wards of the Juvenile court.

Naturally and correctly the elders, parents and every one else blamed the city environment for these evils. Los Angeles at that period of its history was not the small, sleepy city of 1905 but a large metropolis of over 500,000 population and the world capital of the moving picture industry, an industry whose malignant influence permeated every country in the world and every young person therein, not excluding the Molokans. Therefore, the Molokan people sought some avenue of escape from this influence.

Unfortunately, however, there was no unanimity to their efforts. The community was divided into three factions. There was the faction clamoring for return to Russia, believing that the removal of the Romanoff dynasty meant the end of all misfortunes of that afflicted nation. A second group insisted that the proper place to go was not Russia but within the confines of

Turkey or Persia, basing their belief on the prophecies of Maxim Gavrilovich who wrote that the chosen people will gather in the valley between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, while the third and the more numerous group insisted that neither of the above lands were yet ready to receive the chosen people nor was the time ripe for it but that we should seek refuge temporarily somewhere in North or South America.

At about this time a certain Mr. Tommenotti, an owner of a concession to a large tract of land in Peru, near the Amazonian River town of Iquitos, appeared among the Molokans accompanied by a local land agent who was well acquainted with Molokan aims. They offered to settle a large colony of Molokans on Tommenotti's land at \$3.25 per acre on very easy terms. The proposition succeeded in stirring up considerable interest in the land hungry people, especially after the prophet Afonasy uttered a prophecy in favor of the movement. Meetings called to hear Tommenotti were crowded, but his unsympathetic demeanor and unbending attitude plus his refusal to finance a trip for delegates to the location of the concession reversed the interest against him personally but not against the idea in principle.

At the same time in the midst of the agitation, a prophecy contrary to Afonasy's was uttered by another prophet who proclaimed that "of all those who would migrate to Peru only 10% would be able to return without harm".

Nevertheless, it was agreed to send a delegation of two to Peru independently of Tommenotti. A petition was also drawn up requesting the government of Peru to grant the Molokans a concession of their own to colonize and further asking for an exception from military service as well as an exception from import duties on all farm implements and other necessities for a certain period of time provided the agreement to colonize could be consummated.

A delegation composed of Petro G. Efsayeff and Vasili T. Potapoff was selected and the petition was signed by a large portion of the heads of families. Only those abstained who were bent on returning to Russia.

The delegation left for Lima, Peru in high spirits, hoping to negotiate a tentative agreement with the government in Lima and from there to proceed on mule back across the Andes, to descend to the Amazon River and thence by boat to Iquitos to the location of Tommenotti's tract of land.

But alas! The journey in the high altitudes of the Andes proved too arduous for men of their age. Without receiving anything definite from the Peruvian government, they nevertheless decided to see Tommenotti's land. They succeeded in crossing the summit of the Andes but part way down the Eastern slope, they became disenchanted with the country and decided to return without finding a tract of their own or of seeing Tommenotti's concession. And so this attempt at colonization, like so many others, ended in a dismal failure.

The Molokan community of that time was blessed with numerous personalities of strong character who held the esteem and respect of the people for their moral, spiritual and intellectual qualities. But men with these qualities are generally strong in will power and stubborn in their convictions. Before his death in 1915, Klubnikin's prestige was strong enough to discourage overt clashes of personalities. Following his death the individual most highly regarded in spiritual matters was Nikolai Ivanich Agaltsoff who was considered a sage and was respected as a prophet and a strong moral force. Unfortunately he passed away in 1920, only five years after Klubnikin.

Following his passing the implied leadership was assumed by Philip M. Shubin who, being about 65 years old, was at the peak of his intellectual power. He stood as a bulwark against repeated attempts at proselytizing by neighboring sects, and repelled them with his powerful logic and profound knowledge of the scriptures. Vasili Tikhonich Sussoyeff was also a greatly respected elder, morally and intellectually equipped for spiritual leadership. Many others were

conspicuous for their qualities; Ivan G. Samarin, Mikhail P. Pivovarov, Ivan F. Golubeff, plus a goodly number of younger men who later became heads of congregations in their own right.

Among all these, however, there was a meek and mild mannered individual who took no part in community discussions, who had no pretensions of leadership but who exerted tremendous influence in the brotherhood because he was a fit vessel which the Lord God periodically conveyed His messages to the Molokan Brotherhood. Afonasy T. Bezayeff, although burdened with family misfortunes since his arrival in America (two of his young sons died in an epidemic of diphtheria in the first year of his arrival and he was not allowed to bury them with the proper church services because of the epidemic), he was never embittered but bore his misfortunes cheerfully and labored mightily in the tasks imposed upon him by his Maker.

Being influential however, these individuals 'were likewise stubborn, consequently it was inevitable that in trying to solve the many major issues confronting the brotherhood, clashes of personalities would occur, clashes that eventually resulted in ill feeling detrimental to the well being of the brotherhood.

These issues, in addition to the question of Peru and aid to the famine stricken in Russia were:

1. What did the Russian Revolution mean to us?
2. What or who was or is the Antichrist?
3. When and how will the dead be resurrected?
4. What is the Millennium going to be like and when will it come to pass?

All these issues boiled down to two different interpretations of the Scriptures: literal or spiritual, fundamental or contemporary. Concerning the meaning of the Russian Revolution, it was argued by some who were citing the writings of Maxim Gavrilovich, relying principally on the 19th chapter of Book 8 that the Communists (known as Bolsheviki at that time) were the army of Maxim, fulfilling the will of God because they destroyed the Romanoff dynasty as foretold in that chapter, and scattered its nobility to the four corners of the earth, that they were rapidly eliminating the evil influence of the Orthodox church from the affairs of the Russian State, burning its idols and exposing its holy relics as nothing more than stuffed dummies instead of the marvelously preserved bodies of its saints as claimed by that church.

It was contended by this faction that as soon as the Bolsheviki completed the work of cleansing the Russian land of its idols and false dogmas, they will accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and will receive the Holy Spirit after which we Will return to our fatherland to build the Millennium there.

Other leaders defended the diametrically opposite view. Relying on the 13th chapter of the Book of Revelations, the 10th and 15th chapters of the sixth book of Maxim Gavrilovich and the 16th chapter of the works of David Yesseyevich, they argued that the Bolsheviki were admitted atheists, therefore they could not be doing God's work but rather they were the forerunners of the army of the antichrist who will soon appear in person and, after destroying all monarchies, he will install his false republic and will proceed to force all Christians to accept his anti-Christian doctrines and to persecute without mercy all who will dare to oppose him. That he will gather all foodstuffs of his realm into his warehouse and deny it to those who will refuse to receive his mark on their right hand and on their foreheads.

The faction defending this viewpoint argued powerfully that according to the writings of Maxim Gavrilovich, the true Christians will find a refuge from the persecutions of the Antichrist in the lands bordering Mt. Ararat, or somewhere between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

It is plain therefore, that this latter group of leaders anticipated the appearance of the antichrist in the flesh, in the person of a super-powerful individual who will manage to consolidate the rule of many nations in his own hands, thus becoming a world-wide dictator controlling the world's food supply by which he will hold the people of the world in his power.

The opponents of this view maintained that the antichrist has been active since the beginning of the fourth century A.D. imprisoning, exiling, torturing on the rack, burning at the stake and otherwise persecuting those “which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ which is the spirit of prophesy.”

Do we not see, they argued, that no one religion now has the power to compel others to conform to their doctrine on pain of death? Therefore the powers of the antichrist are being gradually taken away from him and he will soon be confined to a dungeon for a thousand years as the Book of Revelations tells us. The millennium will soon be established on earth for already we see signs of its coming. Have not wars been outlawed by world powers? Is not the sale and manufacture of alcoholic beverages prohibited? Do we not see with our own eyes the phenomena of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on peoples throughout the whole world?

These questions, coupled with question of the resurrection of the dead, were debated and, at times acrimoniously argued for many years. They did not subside nor cease until the death of some of its leading protagonists. Almost always the proponents defending the literal or fundamentalist side of any issue were led by Vasili T. Sussoyeff and Ivan F. Golubiff while the opposite or spiritual concept was usually taken by Philip M. Shubin and Mikhail P. Pivovarovff and others.

These debates were resumed whenever or wherever a group of Molokans were assembled for any occasion, even involving the youngest age brackets. Naturally the proponents of each side attracted their own adherents, either by force of their logic or by their differing personalities. But although they made the meetings very interesting and even exciting, they did not settle anything, for it is quite clear now that on most issues both sides were mistaken to a marked degree.

The incarnate antichrist has not yet made his appearance nor have the communists shown any signs of becoming Christian or of accepting the Holy Spirit. The manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages has been resumed with a vengeance, bringing with it the use of drugs and chemicals far more harmful to individuals and nations than alcohol ever was.

Wars have not been abolished. On the contrary, they are now much more frequent and a hundred times, nay, a thousand times more destructive to life and property. On the other hand no serious attempts were made to find a refuge in the Near East principally because there does not seem to be any there. On the contrary, many Molokan families from Persia have since that time found a refuge here, and a country that had never at that time figured in the debates or even considered as a haven—Australia—is now a home for approximately 25 families who are convinced that it is the second refuge for the Molokan people from the coming holocaust.

Meanwhile, the temporal affairs of the brotherhood proceeded as usual. After the Peru fiasco it was more and more concerned with the problem of juvenile delinquency, a problem that was growing steadily worse. The solution to the problem was still believed to be in a mass removal from the city. Soon another attempt was made in that direction when, in the summer of 1923 a possibility of a colony in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, presented itself.

As usual, a three man delegation made a preliminary survey of the locality, bringing back a favorable report. Following this a second delegation that included Philip M. Shubin, Ivan G. Samarin and a younger man, Markei A. Bogdanoff, was dispatched.

This delegation was accompanied by 15 men who volunteered to drive there in their own cars and at their own expense, showing a serious interest of the community in the proposition. This large group was almost unanimous in their favorable impressions, the delegation even concluded a tentative agreement with the sellers but, alas, the community in Los Angeles would not accept the terms of the agreement and this matter too, was dropped because there was no one to push it.

It was the last large scale attempt made at colonization by the Molokans of Los Angeles. Only a minor attempt was made after that. About a dozen families tried their luck at colonization near

the town of Raton, New Mexico but, because of the great depression that began in 1930, it had no chance of survival and was abandoned after about two years.

Thereafter those who seriously intended to leave the city, did so as individuals, concentrating their efforts in the near-by San Joaquin Valley, California.

But the perplexing problem of juvenile delinquency would not disappear, in fact it was progressively getting worse with each passing year. A study of cases appearing before the Los Angeles Juvenile Courts made by Dr. P.V. Young showed that in 1915 only one Molokan boy was involved in delinquency but in 1918 there were 15, in 1922 there were 26, in 1924 there was 84 and in 1926 there was an astounding total of 130 Molokan boys before the courts, of whom 104 were tried for offences against property, that is, petty larceny, grand larceny, safe blowing and robbery.

A similar study of a two year period between November 31, 1927 and October 31, 1929 showed that 49 Molokan girls between the ages of 13 and 18 appeared before the same courts, 35 of whom were involved in sex delinquency and the rest in lesser offences. Apparently no one was aware of the real seriousness of the problem that these statistics showed. That it was bad every one could see but how bad no one really knew until Dr. Young's book appeared in print. Even then these revelations were so shocking the majority refused to believe them, blaming the author for exaggerating the situation although, with these exceptions, the book presented the Molokans in a very favorable light.

Nevertheless, the only remedies urged by the elders, in addition to an exodus from the city, was an intensification of church programs for the young people, a commendable program as far as it went but, seen at this distance the problem was far more complicated than the brotherhood leaders were accustomed to deal with. Back in the villages of Russia such simple programs were adequate because the problems were simple village offences. Any infractions of Molokan behavior were immediately dealt with by the village elders, usually by having the guilty one punished by having the father administer a whipping to the guilty one in public, a very effective method in a village where the population was 100% Molokan and where the most serious offences were surreptitious drinking and card playing by unmarried youngsters.

But self-administered justice was impossible in a large city and in cases involving violations of state and city laws. Moreover, there was now a language barrier between the parents and the children as well as between the children and the church.

To overcome the barrier, Russian language schools were tried periodically and just as frequently abandoned through lack of attendance and financial support. Only those children attended regularly who needed it the least. The American born Molokan children simply had no interest in the language of their parents and spoke English among themselves exclusively, to the utter despair and frustration of the parents who could not understand them. Neither threats nor cajolery could induce the children to speak nor to read Russian.

It would be a mistake to infer that because the parents could not speak English, they were a group of uninformed or ignorant peasants. The majority subscribed to Russian language newspapers. During the first years (1909-1915) one such news paper—The Tikhi Okean (The Pacific Ocean) -- was published in Los Angeles by a political émigré by the name of Anton Sherbak. He was of the party of Social Revolutionaries and enjoyed a good reputation among the Molokan people. But there were not enough Russian speaking people in Los Angeles to support a newspaper so he moved his paper to San Francisco in 1915 where he continued to publish until the Revolution in Russia when he returned to the Soviet Union.

But the Molokans continued to subscribe to the Russkaie Slovo from New York and which was published in Canada. These newspapers kept them well informed concerning world events.

In addition to newspapers, many Molokan men and even some women were well read in the works of Lev Tolstoy, Dostoyevski, Gorky and other well known Russian writers. Translations of Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" as well as Stowe's "Uncle Toms Cabin" were also well known to them.

But the book with a religious theme that enjoyed the widest popularity and even reverence among the elders previous to the publication of The Book of Spirit and Life in 1915, was a book on a mystical subject written by a German writer, Stilling-Jung. Its title in the Russian translation was "Ugroz Sviet Vostoka" but in German it was "The Menace of the Eastern World", which was published first in 1813. It dealt with a religious subject which was interpreted by some Molokan elders as a prophetic book concerning God's chosen people, their wandering from place to place in Europe and finding eventual haven in the Near East.

The book was widely quoted in debates and discourses to support the belief that the Molokans must eventually find a haven in Persia or Turkey. Only one copy of the book was available in the community. It was evidently the property of Philip Mihailovich but it was borrowed back and forth by so many people that it is now black with age and use.

However there was a small portion of Molokans who refrained from reading any and all literature, strictly obeying the injunction of Maxim Gavrilovich who instructed his followers that all books except the Holy Scriptures were "poisonous", and should not be read. But the children, because of the language barrier, were not aware of this and in their own minds believed that their parents were backward, therefore, they drifted farther and farther away from the influence of the home. After school hours many boys would walk uptown to sell newspapers or to shine shoes on the main streets of the city, at the same time learning the ease with which small trinkets could be filched from the department store display counters, bringing them home to brag about to their friends and also acquiring other evil habits from non-Molokan boys and men on the down town streets, frequently returning home too late in the evening to absorb Molokan home atmosphere.

Other boys, who were not so occupied after school hours, would find attractions and adventure in the near-by river bed, in the freight yards and other mysterious and interesting places that had to be explored; while yet others were ordered by their parents to take their home made wagons and bring back fire wood from surrounding warehouses or freight yards for the family cooking and heating stove. These juvenile occupations, although helpful to the economy of the household, were, by their very nature, detrimental to their habits because the local environment where such activities took place, was not morally healthy.

It must be admitted that the children were not always to blame. Many parents neglected their offspring, perhaps on the mistaken theory that life of a youngster in a city was not much different than life in a village, therefore, if the parents grew up into good Molokans there was no reason that their offspring could not do just as well. In addition to the city streets, alleys, warehouses, and railroad yards, there was the far more insidious influence of the local and downtown moving picture theater to which the teenagers flocked on Saturday night and Sunday afternoons. The stories that the children absorbed from these moving pictures undermined the influence of the home more effectively than the city streets because they glamorized the girl who fled her home and eloped for "love" and excited the adventurous instincts of the boys by portraying a bandit or an underworld character as a hero.

So the strict morality of a Molokan home was gradually supplanted by the loose environment of a city street; the parental influence by the moving picture drama, the father image (for the boy) was being supplanted by a cowboy hero, and the mother image for the girl by the so called heroine of a society drama. At the same time the simple and sometimes drab furniture of a Molokan home appeared at a great advantage (especially to the impressionable eyes of a young girl) when compared to the luxurious home of her heroine as depicted in the picture drama.

But the unsophisticated parents did not know this. Very few of the older Molokans ever saw the inside of a theater or a picture show. They were entirely absorbed in earning a living for the family. In the evening the mother was too busy with her washing, ironing or sewing and even baking while the father rested from his hard day at the lumber yard, the junk yard or other physically exhausting labors and was too tired to devote much time to his family which generally was a large one; eight, ten and more children in a family was not uncommon at the time. Sundays, of course, were devoted to the church, again leaving the children to their own devices.

And so this vicious spiral continued its upward course. The neighborhood was rapidly acquiring an unsavory reputation. The police authorities appealed to the Molokan elders for cooperation in combating the problem and the elders countered by a petition on Sept. 27, 1924 to the District Attorney to clean up the neighborhood of bootleggers, but to no avail. It was not until the Molokans began a process of decentralization by moving to outlying communities that any improvement could be noted. In 1927 the total number of boys appearing before the juvenile courts fell to 109, in 1928 the figure rose again to 122 but in 1929 the number fell to one half of the 1926 level; only 65 boys were apprehended and appeared for a hearing in the courts.

This process of decentralization was not a conscious act on the part of the brotherhood to improve the situation but, conscious or not, it did a considerable amount of good by eliminating the local moving picture show, the well known corners and the adjacent, convenient and tempting area known as "the Oakes lot" as an assembly point for adventurous forays for the boys. The City Parks and Recreation Department also helped by utilizing part of the Oakes lot as a neighborhood playground.

The most decisive act to combat the problem, however, was taken by the rising new generation of community leadership who came to America as young boys and girls of school age and who were now fathers and mothers of growing children themselves, for it was now over 20 years since the first group arrived in America.

These young men and women as a rule came from the better oriented families, hence they were better able to withstand the lures of city streets. After a short period in local schools they secured work permits and a few years later married at the proper Molokan age of 19-20 years to girls of similar backgrounds. By 1925-1926 they were mature young men with recognizable talents, many of whom were occupying responsible positions in business enterprises other than lumber yards or similar exhausting jobs of their fathers, consequently they were acquainted with both sides of life of teenagers in a large city and were not unacquainted with ways of combating their problems by more practical means than their fathers.

In 1927 a group of these young men being gathered at a friend's house for dinner, began the customary discussion of the problems foremost in their minds, namely; how to retain the loyalty of the Molokan children to their church. In contrast to other such discussions, this one resulted in a decision to take active and practical measures towards the desired goal. About a dozen were present and all signified their willingness to participate by subscribing to a fund for establishing a young people's center and agreeing to issue a call for others to join in the undertaking.

The idea caught on. Many others signed up and the group formally organized itself by securing a charter from the State of California as a non-profit organization, choosing the name "United Molokan Christian Association."

A program was developed for conducting a bilingual Sunday school services for smaller children in which qualified singers taught the children Molokan songs in Russian and other qualified persons conducted classes to teach the Molokan religion in both the Russian and English. A concurrent program was developed for a mid-week assembly for teenagers which was also to be bilingual in the same manner as the Sunday school. Neither of these programs were designed as a church in the ordinary meaning of the word but rather as a place where the children

would become better acquainted with Molokan background, traditions and beliefs and also as a meeting place for teenagers of both sexes with marriage as the ultimate goal.

A vacant store premises in the "Flats" area was rented to begin with and the idea proved itself as sound and feasible immediately by a full attendance of youngsters of all ages.

This fact encouraged the organized group to purchase an old house in the center of the community, on South Utah Street. The house was remodeled to accommodate up to 300 children at a time and soon an adjoining house was bought to accommodate smaller children.

By 1932 the U.M.C.A. was growing beyond expectations. At 9 A.M. every Sunday, car after car would drive up to the front of the building to discharge a group of well dressed, happy young kids who would fill up the assembly hall to capacity while their proud and beaming parents would sit along the side-line benches to hear the children sing the traditional Molokan songs and recite their lessons in either Russian or English.

The majority of elders wholeheartedly approved the new approach and gave it their moral support by frequently attending the meetings, speaking words of encouragement at both the Sunday morning and the Wednesday evening services. The juvenile courts and the police department too were heartily in favor of it, recognizing in it a powerful influence to combat delinquency and showing approval with a visit from the presiding judge of the juvenile court to the Wednesday evening service, being accompanied by a large retinue of probation officers, their wives and other interested persons.

On the other hand, there was a strong and active opposition from the minority of the brotherhood who objected on the grounds that, 1. The meetings were not conducted in the traditional Molokan way, that is, the children were not trained to kneel while praying nor were they encouraged by word or example that jumping in the Spirit is likewise traditional part of the service; the services were merely opened and closed by reciting a prayer in a standing position. It was contended that such conduct was a radical departure from the faith of the Spiritual Christian Jumpers and should be stopped. 2. Since we were children of God and in matters spiritual subject to His laws only, a charter from a temporal state to conduct church services was not necessary, in fact it would be a violation of the tenets of the faith. Furthermore, they strongly objected to some clauses in the articles of incorporation, in particular the inclusion of the word "club" as an activity of the organization, etc., etc.

Notwithstanding these objections, the U.M.C.A. continued to make progress. Whether or not its influence slowed down the practice of intermarriages with non-Molokans is still a moot question because nobody has ever compiled any statistics on the point. Moreover, despite the fact that the Wednesday evening services attracted capacity crowds, there were still hundreds of teenagers of marriageable age who were not reached by its efforts because of lukewarm attitude on the part of many parents.

However, the incidence of juvenile delinquency fell off markedly from the disgraceful figures of 1926, and continued to decline. Although no systematic study of the problem was made since Mrs. Young wrote her "Pilgrims of Russia Town" a recent interview with Juvenile authorities elicited the information that the Molokan youth are no longer a concern of that department, that despite the large increase in Molokan population, only two or three boys were in the custody as of March 1968.

In addition to the results described here, the work of the U.M.C.A. stimulated the efforts of those parents whose sincere convictions restrained them from participation in the organization. These chose their own means to indoctrinate their children in the Molokan religion by their own methods, such as conducting a midweek and a Sunday afternoon church service in the traditional manner and also initiating a system of singing classes or Spevkas in individual homes.

All in all, and despite the ill feeling between the two opposite approaches, their efforts succeeded in improving the morale of the Molokan youth and increased their awareness of their background and knowledge of the doctrines of the Molokan faith with one important exception, namely; neither side was actively concerned about indoctrinating their young boys and men in one of its principle tenets—objection to military service. Hence, when the Selective Service law was passed by Congress in 1940, very few young men were prepared to cope with it.

It was believed by some that the terrible conflict of 1914- 1918 was the final Armageddon, therefore, future wars were not likely and if by some chance wars should occur, America would not be involved in it. Furthermore, in the unlikely event that America would be involved, our young men will not be called because we were recognized as religious objectors in the last war and exempted from the draft, therefore, we should not be unduly concerned about it now.

This was an incredible theory in view of the constant sword rattling of Mussolini in the decade between 1923-1933 and also the obvious intent of Hitler to start a war of conquest after he assumed power in 1933.

Others contended that the war of Armageddon is surely coming but that we must prepare ourselves to escape it by a flight to a second refuge, this time within the confines of the Mohammedan countries of Turkey and/or Persia where we will be protected from harm by those nations. For that reason people with these views endeavored by every means to indoctrinate their children with their convictions and neglected to prepare them for a possible war in which the United States would be a participant. That war came sooner than anyone anticipated.

But before that war came, the world, including the United States, had to endure a terrible economic crisis that began in the fall of 1929 and continued until the beginning of the greater crisis of the second World War.

* * * * *

It is not the intent of this writer to delve into the causes and effects of that economic crisis except as it affected the Molokan people. It will be sufficient to note here that after the great stock market crash of October, 1929, the factories throughout the whole country began laying off their employees by the thousands, consequently, people who failed to lay aside a nest egg for a rainy day during the preceding boom years were soon reduced to the level of indigents depending on their more fortunate relatives or on public charity for their daily bread.

A common occupation for many of those unfortunate unemployed during the first year of the depression was to sell apples on the main streets of the cities to the more fortunate ones who were still employed, thus to eke out a living for themselves and families.

As the months dragged on the conditions grew worse and there was no relief in sight. It was not until the spring of 1933 when, following the elections of the previous fall, the new administration began to develop programs of relief through public works programs and through other measures, when many of the 15 million unemployed were gradually put to useful work, thus reversing the cycle of economic depression.

It was during these three years and the following seven years of the depression that the ingrained Molokan habit of hard work and thriftiness proved itself. In the first place the majority of families owned their own homes free and clear of encumbrances, eliminating one cause of hardship and worry. Secondly, in spite of the half idle factories, stores and other establishments, sanitation of the city had to be maintained and this work, shunned by other nationalities through false pride, was not below the dignity of Molokan men, so that many of their families were comfortably fed and clothed by the lowly rubbish route.

Other families, lacking this means of support, were maintained by the women of the family who, leaving the children with their men folk, were able to find work either as janitors in the downtown office buildings or as seasonal workers at the local walnut packing plants that were operating day and night shifts during the six months of the walnut harvesting seasons of fall and winter of each year.

Thus, the Molokans managed to survive comfortably by hard work and thrift during a most difficult decade. With very few exceptions they were able to stay off the relief rolls or the public works projects, a feat that was matched perhaps only by the oriental population of the city.

* * * * *

The year 1932 was also memorable to the Molokans because it was in the beginning of that year, namely, on January 9, 1932 that the beloved and respected leader, Philip M. Shubin passed away at the age of 77. He passed away after an illness lasting about three months.

This distinguished man whose role as a leader was foretold by a third party to Philip's mother before his birth, devoted most of his adult years to the service of God and to the Molokan brotherhood. He was its spokesman before the rulers in Russia and was twice arrested there for agitating the emigration to America.

Notwithstanding the arrests he persisted in his determination and became the dominant personality in urging the Molokan people to heed Klubinkin's prophesy. Upon arrival in America he, together with Klubnikin, exerted his influence on those who were becoming disillusioned with America to have patience during the first difficult years, in fact, urged other young men whose parents were still in Russia, to write to them to hurry their departure before it was too late.

During his 27 years in America he was the outstanding speaker and orator of the brotherhood with a wide acquaintance among non-Molokans, not infrequently taking a choir of singers to Pentecostal church meetings where he preached and explained the Molokan reasons for their migration. It was his wisdom, his profound knowledge of the scriptures plus his wide knowledge of Russian literature that enabled him to repel the periodic attempts by leaders of neighboring denominations—Baptists, Pentecostals, etc.—to proselytize the Molokan people and whenever Molokan children became enmeshed with the law the parents immediately turned to Philip Mikhailovich for counsel which was always forthcoming.

His wise counsel prevailed in most major decisions of the time, especially during the first World War when he boldly counseled the young Molokans to comply with the registration requirements of the draft law but to demand exemptions as conscientious objectors through the regular legal channels.

(It was said of him that as a young man in Russia he undertook a trip to Tiflis to shop for various household necessities but that while there he met a man who had a trunk full of Russian literature to sell so instead of the household necessities Philip Mikhailovich spent the largest portion of his allotted funds for the books and to the utter dismay of his wife he came back home with only a few of the necessities but as a proud owner of a trunk full of books.)

For these reasons, and despite the serious and sometimes stormy opposition to his liberal religious views, he was mourned by all factions of the brotherhood and his funeral was the biggest in point of attendance than any precious funeral of that time, in fact it called forth a good sized article in the Los Angeles Times.

The old building of the Melikoiskaya Church—the largest one available—was much too small for the occasion. To accommodate the overflow a tarpaulin was stretched over the entire

back yard area where additional tables were set up and a public address system was installed to enable those seated outside to hear the proceedings of the service.¹¹

CHAPTER 6

APPEARANCE OF NEW LEADERS

The passing of Philip Mihailovitch removed a steadying and uniting influence from the brotherhood. It could be safely asserted that after his death the brotherhood was never the same again. No one was able to take his place as the expounder of beliefs, traditions and doctrines to this day. His death came at a time when his prestige was needed as never before. It was a time when a new generation of leadership was beginning to assert itself.

It must be borne in mind that, like Philip Mihailovitch, who passed away at the age of 77, his contemporaries, the leading elders of the various congregations—those who with Philip Mihailovitch, were responsible for the migration to America were of his age and older, therefore, they were not as vigorous as formerly in holding the reins of the brotherhood, consequently, their leadership was being challenged by the next age group, a challenge which they resisted with resulting friction.

It was this challenge to older leadership—plus the desire to find ways and means to control the needless, and at times, acrimonious debates during church services that, in the summer of 1932, prompted the Salimskaya congregation (Vasili T. Sussoyeff, presbyter) the Karmolinovskaya or Bechanakskaya congregation (Nikifor A. Uraine, presbyter) and the Alshanskaya congregation (David P. Meloserdoff, presbyter) to combine into one large congregation with a hold new concept in Molokan church government, a concept that eventually caused a major reshuffle of church membership affecting not only the congregations of Los Angeles but also all the congregations in the outlying communities—Arizona as well as the San Joaquin valley.

The three united congregations comprised a total membership of over 500 families. This, large membership, of course, required a large building, so it was decided to purchase a site on East Third Street, between Bodie and Pecan Streets, where, in late summer of 1932, building operations were begun on a large handsome building for which a sum of money was enthusiastically subscribed.

While the building project was advancing, a detailed set of by-laws to govern such a large membership were being worked out. During this phase of the project Afonasi T. Bezayeff was moved by the Holy Spirit to utter an unfavorable prophesy concerning the whole new development. Other prophets too, were active in opposition. Ivan W. Sussoyeff predicted that dire consequences will result from the union of the three congregations, that they will abandon some principal tenets of the Molokan faith. All these predictions caused a considerable stir and endless discussions in the community, both pro and contrary.

Nevertheless, the construction was progressing without a let up and the by-laws were being readied for approval. In February of 1933 it was nearing completion and Sunday the 26th of February was designated as the day of dedication. It was decreed that the first day of the assemblage was to be attended by the membership and their families only.

¹¹ This innovation caused such an unfavorable reaction and criticism that it distracted from the solemnity of the occasion and was never tried again.

The appointed day turned out to be one of those beautiful, pre-spring February days that Southern California is noted for. The day was warm. The sun was shining brightly as each individual congregation assembled at their old premises; The Selimskaya on S. Pecan St. The Alashanskaya in the rear building on S. Utah St. and the Karmalinovskaya on E. Third St. directly across the street from the new project.

Each group was to regulate their departure so as to arrive at the new church building at eleven o'clock sharp. Saying their final prayers at the old locations, each group marched through the middle of the streets with their respective presbyters in the lead holding the Opened Bible in their hands while the choir was singing the designated psalm (Psalm 121 "I rejoiced when they said unto me: 'Let us go unto the house of the Lord'.")

All three groups arrived in front of the new building simultaneously singing the joyful psalm with men and women waving their hands aloft in spiritual joy. They were met at the entrance by those appointed to prepare the feast with the traditional bread and salt and, after an appropriate remark by the leading elder, all entered the building, maintaining strict decorum as to age and rank.

No guests or non-members were present during the festivities of the first Sunday's service. The official dedication was to take place the following Sunday. For this event invitations were sent out to all the local congregations as well as to all Molokan communities in other cities and towns.

On the following Sunday the new building was overflowing with the invited guests. Large delegations arrived from all outlying communities. Each brought a monetary contribution to help defray the building cost. A large group of local government officials arrived with the mayor of Los Angeles at its head.

Many came from sheer curiosity for it was the first event of its kind that the Molokans of America were to see. New songs were composed for the occasion. A long introductory speech was given by Mikhail P. Pivovarov, one of the principals in the unification. Following the traditional prayer ritual, guest speakers arose to wish the new congregation the richest of spiritual blessings.

The membership of the remaining three congregations, the Prokhladnaya, Akhtinskaya, and old Romanovskaya were sharply divided in their attitude towards the new congregation. A majority were in sympathy with it while a good sized minority vehemently opposed it and refrained from attending the dedication ceremonies, basing their opposition on the prophesy of Afonasy Bezayeff who said that the new congregation will be divided into three groups and giving each group a derogatory appellation, further saying that their presbyters, the well respected Vasili T. Sussoyeff and Nikifor A. Uraïne, will soon shed tears of repentance. In addition to these there was the prophesy of Ivan W. Sussoyeff who predicted that the new congregation will eventually reject many ordinances of, our forefathers.

The position of those who were opposed to the new group was strengthened when the by-laws of the United congregation were revealed during the dedication ceremonies.

These by-laws, among other things, provided that the affairs of the congregation were to be governed by several committees. One of these was to look after the church property, collect dues, etc., while another, which was to be called the "Dukhovny Komitet", was to oversee the spiritual affairs of the congregation, to settle disputes between members, to deny any recalcitrant member access to church sacraments pending his reconciliation, to appoint proper members to responsible church positions and to maintain order and harmony during services etc. The by-laws also specified that the presbyters and elders were obliged to abide by the decisions of the Komitet in all such matters.

This was a clear departure from the traditional Molokan church rule for it made impotent the authority of the presbyters who were subject, as it were, to the orders of the komitet, whose members as a rule, were young and inexperienced in spiritual matters.

Another innovation that weakened the authority of the presbyters and elders was the rule by which the chief speaker was elected annually for a term of one year, in effect demoting the senior speaker and his colleagues and thus depriving the presbyters of one of their traditional duties, that is appointing the speakers as the need arose. This was the rule that was expected to control the acrimonious debates in the services.

It was claimed by the proponents that such rules were necessary, in fact, indispensable for governing a large congregation and that by relieving the presbyters of the above mentioned minor but onerous duties, they would have more time to minister to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

Be that it may, it was an innovation, one that was unanimously accepted and approved by the whole congregation and to which the presbyters acquiesced, albeit reluctantly.

However, these new rules planted another seed of discord throughout the whole Molokan brotherhood. To some they appeared as a panacea for all its ills. Elect a Komitet and there will be nothing but harmony in the church henceforth. To others they were anathema, a worldly innovation and were to be resisted at all costs. Eventually all these arguments led to a permanent division in the Prokhladnoye church, in the old Romanovskaya and in the Akhtinskaya congregations. The Arizona congregation, small as it was, also split up and remained divided for several years, while those in the San Joaquin valley, although physically undivided, were not entirely of one accord

For several years the feelings were so strong that there was very little fraternization between the two sides. But with the passing of the years it was shown that laws were only as strong as the will of the people to obey them. It was also shown that a strong presbyter was able to veto the komitet if he felt that the latter's acts were contrary to common sense or to the traditions of the church.

It was also being realized by both sides that the brotherhood at best was not so numerous nor so strong that, divided, each side could stand up against the onslaughts of the world, that there were problems requiring common, united action for their solution. Especially was this true when in 1940, as a result of the expansion of the European war into a world wide conflict, the United States Congress passed the Selective Service Act requiring all men between the ages of 18-45 to register for military service.

This was one problem that required concerted action of the whole community to uphold its position as religious conscientious objectors.

CHAPTER 7

THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The outbreak of the war in Europe on September 3, 1939 did not at first excite the Molokan people because it seemed that the country would remain aloof from the conflict. Immediately upon the commencement of hostilities in Europe, the government of United States declared its neutrality. There were many powerful political leaders and groups in the nation who were vociferously insisting that the United States must not become involved in that war under any circumstances. The President himself assured the American mothers that their sons would not be sent overseas to fight a war.

Furthermore, after Germany conquered Poland in September, 1939, the world was lulled by the so-called Phony war of the winter 1939-1940 into a belief that the war will terminate soon and without much further bloodshed. So the American public, including the Molokans, remained unconcerned.

But this was quickly changed from complacency to frenzy in May 1940, when Germany in a quick thrust attacked France, Belgium, Holland and Denmark and, after defeating these nations and driving the English army that came to the aid of France out of France, began preparations for invading England.

It was then that the government of the United States began its frenzied preparations for possible confrontation with Hitler. Among other measures of preparation, Congress passed, in September of 1940, a Universal Selective Service law, providing for compulsory military service for all men between the ages 18-45.

But while the law was being debated by Congress, the Molokan concern was expressed by groups of appointed individuals in weekly conferences called for that purpose.

The discussions at these meetings clearly showed that the question of religious objection to military service was neglected by the brotherhood during the past 20 years or since the end of the first World War. No serious effort was made during that time to indoctrinate the younger generation in that phase of our religion on the assumption, perhaps, that the last great war was the final one and on the further assumption that in the unlikely event of a war occurring, our boys will be automatically exempt from military service, for the conviction was still unanimous that the United States constitution forbade the induction of religious objectors into the armed services against their will, and, since the Molokans were recognized by the United States government in 1917 as historic objectors to military service, they would therefore be exempt automatically.

During the course of these conferences every one looked for guidance to Ivan G. Samarin, the much respected elder and the sole surviving veteran of previous negotiations with government officials. Mr. Samarin reminded the conferees that in 1917 when the brotherhood decided to petition President Wilson for exemption from the law, it at the same time filed a proclamation with the county clerk's office advising whom it may concern that the Molokans of America were objecting to military service on religious grounds. This proclamation, he said, was published in legal publications of the county and recorded by the County Clerk in the county Hall of Records but, because of the pressure of time at the time of signing, only 259 heads of families were able to sign the document, therefore, Mr. Samarin was of the opinion that the signatures all heads of Molokan families should now add their names a similar document. For this purpose he urged that each congregation register the names of its members in membership books which would then be proof to the authorities of authenticity of a person's claim to exemption from the draft on the same basis as their fathers in 1917. As the actual terms of the proposed new law were not yet known, every one was still in the dark concerning the actual requirements to be demanded from the objectors, however, several congregations did as he suggested.

Simultaneously with these discussions the local Society of Friends (Quakers) were also concerned about the proposed law and were likewise holding periodic meetings in their meeting houses in Whittier and Pasadena which were addressed by visiting Friends from the east who were in close touch with the congressmen in charge of framing the law.

An invitation from the Friends in Whittier to the Molokans to attend their meeting was gladly accepted by several younger, English speaking Molokans. Those who attended these meetings learned that according to the terms of the proposed law, a registration in church membership books will be far from adequate proof of the genuineness of a person's claim to a conscientious objector status, consequently, Mr. Samarin's suggestions were mostly disregarded.

But when the Selective Service and training act became an actual law, the Act in its entirety was published in all the local newspapers and its terms became available to all who cared to study them. Of course everyone did, including the Molokans, therefore it was then unanimously decided by all congregations that a more serious approach to the question should be attempted.

It was further decided to do as the fathers did in 1917, namely to address a petition to President Roosevelt asking him to exempt the Molokans from compulsory military service in like manner as President Wilson did in 1917.

For this task the brotherhood again turned to Ivan G. Samarin, begging him to compose the petition as he did so many times before. Without hesitation and in spite of his advanced age (he was 83), he did not refuse and wrote two petitions; in one of them he incorporated his contention that the government should be reminded that there are now many more Molokan people than the 259 families who signed the proclamation in 1917. The other, addressed to President Roosevelt requested exemption from military service for all Molokan young men.

Having prepared the petitions, the previous custom was followed and three delegates were chosen to present them in person to the authorities in Washington as was done by the brotherhood in, 1917.

It was seen, however, that most suitable men fell into the category of middle aged individuals who were not fluent in the English language. It was then decided that the wisest and most practical method of election was to submit four names from the older men from whom the brotherhood would select two as delegates and also two names from the younger, English speaking men from whom one was to be elected to go as the delegation's interpreter.

But this was easier said than done because all factions had to be satisfied since all were participating in the deliberations. But although all were participating, not all were willing to abide by the results of the balloting. Some believed that that would be a departure from Molokan tradition while others feared that the results would be a foregone conclusion in favor of the "Big Church" because of its large membership, therefore, these abstained from voting although they were present at ballot time.

The results of the balloting showed that David P. Meloserdoff and Waiter P. Shinen were elected as the delegates and William J. Pavloff as interpreter but because Pavloff was absent from the city at the time of departure to Washington, John K. Berokoff, who received one vote less than Pavloff, automatically took the former's place as, the delegation's interpreter.

The delegation was instructed to contact the local officials of the Selective Service before departure for Washington in the hope that the same results could be obtained locally, namely: that by showing them the letter of Gen. Crowder written to Shubin, Samarin and Pivovarovoff in 1917, exemption from military service could be secured locally but the local officials in the person of a Lt. Black replied that they had no authority to grant a blanket exemption to anyone and suggested that National Headquarters should be contacted, therefore, the delegation departed for Washington on the night of Soodny Dien, on October 9, 1940, returning on October 19 with a written report signed by all three members.

On the evening of one of the last days of Kusha a capacity crowd gathered in the Big Church to hear the report. The report, included herewith, explains the results of the trip better than anything that could be written now, therefore, it would be superfluous to add to it at this time.

THE REPORT

Beloved brothers and sisters!

Being selected by you for such a vital mission and through your prayers, we completed our trip. We now have the honor to submit to you the results of your trust.

At the time of our departure we set before ourselves the problems of your charge. We decided that our primary purpose was to present the petitions to the three branches of the government, but also to discuss with the head of Selective Service and to get an explanation from him to those questions which the officials of the Selective Service in Los Angeles, Lt. Black, was unable to explain.

In the first place we applied to the Post Office, General Delivery and received three letters of recommendation from a friend of Mr. Shinen to three congressmen and one to Chairman Flynn of the Democratic Party of America. We presented one of these letters to Congressman Ford who, in turn wrote us a letter of introduction to Lt. Col. Hershey, the head of Selective Service. We then went to the office of Congressman Kramer who was not in his office at the time.

Having in our possession a good letter of introduction from Congressman Ford to that particular office which most concerned our mission, we decided to go there immediately.

In the afternoon of our first day in Washington we went to the office of Lt. Col. Hershey who received us pleasantly and courteously. Presenting our petition to him, we asked him to explain that part of the law which the officials in Los Angeles were unable to explain, namely, how will those be dealt with whose conscience forbids them to participate in war activities?

To this we received the following explanation: By Presidential order each Local Board was sent the following instructions: Every case that might cause a misunderstanding or doubt in the minds of the Board concerning the induction or the exemption from the draft of a registrant, must be decided in favor of the registrant.

He explained further that when the Local Board will be examining the questionnaire that will be completed by every registrant whose turn will come up by the lottery, it must first look into all possible causes for exemption before examining the question of conscientious objection. For example; if a registrant is married or has dependant children, mother, father etc. or if a registrant is an alien or is employed in a vital government job, he is to be exempted on those grounds; but if no such grounds exist then the question of conscientious objection is to be dealt with. He remarked that this is done to forestall any possible grumbling in the nation against conscientious objectors.

To our question: Nevertheless, how will those be dealt with who will be found to be religious objectors, he replied; "The law says that they are to be placed in work of National Importance but what is "work of National Importance" has not yet been determined and that Congress has not yet allotted money for that purpose." He then told us that concerning this matter he is conducting talks with representatives of the Quakers and Mennonites and that he suggested to them that they establish a central committee of all the so-called Peace Churches so that he would not have to deal with 10 or more different representatives but with only one. He suggested further that we confer with Paul French, the Quaker representative.

Following this conference with Hershey we immediately took a train to Philadelphia to talk with French, for we were told that he was there at that time.

Arriving at their headquarters in Philadelphia we discovered that he was not there but we were received by another, Ray Newton with whom we conferred for about 1-1/2 hours. He revealed to us their plan that they were about to propose to the government and asked us for permission to take a copy of our petition to the President to which we assented with pleasure.

He told us that Paul French is more familiar with that proposal than he was and gave us the address in Washington where we could find French in the morning.

We returned to Washington the same night and in the morning we met this man. After our conference with him we asked his advice on how best to present our petition to the President.

Following his advice we set out to the Executive Office of the White House where we presented our petition to the President's secretary, General Watson. We were advised that for

some time past the President was not receiving petitions personally from anyone but that our petition would reach him quicker if it is presented to him through his secretary. At this time we gave them the letter of recommendation that we had to Chairman Flynn in which was a statement that these People (the Molokans) were not communists. This letter made a good impression on the President's secretary. He promised to reply to our petition on that same day.

From there we went directly to the War Department and appeared in the office of the Secretary of War. After reading our petition to the Secretary, they affixed their stamp to it and returned it to us saying that we must take it to the Selective Service office of Lt. Col. Hershey. After this we decided to await the arrival in Washington of Dr. Dykstra, the newly appointed head of Selective Service whom, we were told, we could see on Friday, October 18.

Returning to the hotel we there met the Mennonite representative, Henry Fast, who informed us that they are working on the conscientious objector matter closely together with the Quakers. That same evening we received a telephone call from the White House informing us that our petition has been acted upon and that it was forwarded to the Selective Service where it properly belonged, the caller further told us that all our negotiations on that matter should be conducted with that office. In reply to our inquiry as to when Dr. Dykstra will succeed Col. Hershey, we were told that Col. Hershey will remain as Dykstra's assistant and that all such matters will be handled by Col. Hershey.

We then decided that on the following day, October 16, we will present the third petition—the copy of the petition to the President—to Col. Hershey and after receiving a reply from him we will return home.

In the meantime we received by airmail a letter of recommendation from Pauline V. Young to a friend of hers, a Justin Miller who was a justice in the United States Appellate Court. In the morning we went to the office of this judge but he could not receive us personally. Instead, he informed us by letter that being a member of a Court which might be called on to decide cases involving conscientious objectors, he could not compromise his position by receiving us personally but that in his opinion he could be of more valuable service to conscientious objectors in the event such cases should reach his Court for a hearing.

From there we again proceeded to Hershey's office and, presenting our third petition to him, we requested a reply in writing which he courteously agreed to give us. He also gave us a sample of a special questionnaire for conscientious objectors which the latter will be required to complete. He also agreed to write to all the Local Boards in Los Angeles concerning our petitions. After this we decided to return home.

Concerning everything above set forth, we submit the following summary:

1. We presented all three petitions to the proper departments.
2. The question of what is "Work of National Importance" and where the conscientious objectors will be placed is not yet determined. It is now being worked out by the government in conjunction with the Quakers and Mennonites.
3. Brought our concerns to the attention of the three departments of the government; the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial, in other words: to Congressmen, to the War Department and to the Department of justice.
4. We received from Hershey the special questionnaire by which we could acquaint our young men before hand with its contents and prepare them for proper answers.

We add herewith an account of money expended on the trip:

Railroad, Fares	\$448.50
Hotels	8.00
Telegrams	5.88
Taxis	6.45

Food	<u>28.95</u>
Total	\$497.78

Signed: David P. Meloserdoff
Walter P. Shinen
John K. Berokoff

The delegation returned to Los Angeles in the middle of the Kusha festivities, having been gone 10 days. In addition to the report, it brought back a letter from Col. Hershey in which he outlined in detail the complicated process by which each registrant claiming to be a conscientious objector was to be classified, plus the special forms that they will be obliged to complete.¹²

On the evening following the delegation's return a large crowd assembled in the "Big Church", tensely expectant to hear the desired word that all was well and that no mother was to worry about her sons being enrolled in the armed forces.

The reading of the report, together with the comments of the delegates and explanations of Hershey's letter and of the special form, (form 47) was a disappointment to many who were steadfast in the belief that the rulers in Washington knew all about the Molokans and that they were quite cognizant of the Molokans' exemption from military service in 1917. But the majority of the younger and the middle aged people were not so sanguine and received the report with proper understanding of the circumstances.

The people of this age group, who were either born in the United States or were young enough to attend school here knew that it was fantastic to assume that any group could receive such blanket exemption, they knew that the affairs of the nation are regulated not by men but by the constitution and the laws made in accordance with that document, which meant that all laws were applicable equally to everybody. They knew also that no one in authority, not even the President, had the power to grant special concessions or exemptions to any individual or any group and that Congress itself could not pass such a law because it would raise such a storm in the country that it would jeopardize the position of all conscientious objectors in the country and, in any case, be quickly declared unconstitutional.

But even this younger age group was unable to grasp immediately the complicated process of classification and of the various appeals and investigations incidental to the process. In point of fact it was more than a year after this that the whole procedure of appearance before the Local Boards, the Appeal Agent, the investigation by the FBI and the appearance before the Hearing officer and, at times, an appeal to the Presidential Appeal Board, was mastered, and then only by the advisors appointed for the purpose.

Meanwhile, as Hershey told the delegation, no one knew what the Work of National Importance Under Civilian Direction was to be. The Local Boards bided their time pending instructions from Washington but at the same time discouraging potential COs by misrepresenting facts of the proposed program being prepared for them by telling the potential C.O. that he personally would have to support himself while in camp etc., etc. So things quieted down for a while. The only action taken by the brotherhood at this time was to appoint an advisory council to help the registrants with their problems.

This body so appointed functioned for the duration of the war and for about ten years thereafter. (It functions to this day under a different set-up.) It was named originally "The

¹² See letter in the Addenda pp. V and VI

Molokan Advisory Council for Conscientious Objectors” but later shortened to “The Molokan Advisory Council.”

On December 17, 1940 the secretary of this advisory council received the following letter from Paul French, the executive secretary of the recently formed “National Council for Religious Objectors” in Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C.
December 13, 1940

Dear Mr. Berokoff:

Would you feel it would be any advantage to you to have a closer affiliation with the National Service Board for Religious Objectors than you now have? I am having some stationary printed and I thought if you wished a closer association, I would include the name of your organization on the letterhead.

Cordially Yours,
Paul Comly French

The Advisory Council, which was then composed of Nick Eropkin, chairman; Peter F. Shubin, vice chairman; John W. Samaduroff, treasurer; W. J. Pavloff and John K. Berokoff, secretaries, having no authority to commit the brotherhood to such collaboration, sought more detailed information before submitting French’s proposal to a mass meeting, therefore, on December 20, 1940, the secretary wrote him as follows:

Dear Mr. French:

There is no doubt in our minds that a closer association with your Board will be very advantageous to us. There is some doubt in our minds, however, whether we are strong enough financially to assume the obligations and duties of a closer collaboration.

Can you go into more details for us by return mail?

Without wasting any time, Paul French wrote back the following on Dec. 26, 1940: “A closer association would not involve any particular financial responsibility on your part. When the National Service Board was established, the Mennonites, Brethren and Friends agreed that each would pay one third of the cost. Whatever is contributed by other groups is deducted from the total cost and these three organizations pay the balance. If you felt that \$5.00 per month was a reasonable contribution, that would be perfectly acceptable to us; or if you felt that you were unable to commit yourself to any contribution, that, likewise, would be acceptable. We are solely interested in seeing that all religious groups concerned about the conscientious objector have adequate representation in Washington.”

Upon receipt of this letter, the Advisory Council, recalling Hershey’s statement to the delegation that he did not like the idea of dealing with each Peace Church individually but preferred that all of them form one organization to represent them all before the government, decided to submit the matter to a mass meeting of the brotherhood for a decision.

The following week a mass meeting attended by about 500 persons openly discussed French’s proposal. It was explained by the Advisory Council that without a doubt many problems will be faced by the community as a whole as well as by its individuals in the following months, perhaps years, requiring representation in Washington but that inasmuch as the Molokans will be unable to maintain their own regular representative there, the National Service Board will be able to represent them instead.

After a full discussion, the proposal was accepted unanimously and a sum was collected as an initial contribution to the National Service Board. The contribution was forwarded to the National Service Board and henceforth the name "Molokan Advisory Council" was included in the letterhead of that organization.

At the same time the meeting was informed that in answer to the Council's inquiry concerning Work of National Importance, Mr. French replied on December 2 that the question is still in the discussion stage, that there was nothing definite as yet about the program.

But it seemed quite certain that the Quakers, Mennonites and the Brethren are agreed to operate and pay for the maintenance of camps to which conscientious objectors will be assigned to work in National Parks, in Soil Conservation and Forestry Division for which they will receive no pay.

It seemed likewise certain that, although these three church groups will accept assignees from any other church body, they will expect each church group to defray the costs of maintaining their members as far as possible, therefore, if the Molokans are to be assigned to such camps, they must be prepared to carry their share of the load.

This proposition was accepted also. It was further agreed that every family in the brotherhood was to contribute one dollar per month for the support of any and all Molokans assignees to these camps, the sum to be administered by the Advisory Council. A large sum was enthusiastically collected on the spot at the same time receiving the blessing of the Holy Spirit through the prophets of the church.

However, this spirit of cooperation continued for only a brief period. It should be noted that, although the mass meeting filled to capacity the largest of the community meeting houses—the Big Church—the number of people actually was relatively a small portion of the Molokan community. The majority were indifferent, believing that somehow, someone will see to the welfare of their sons. The slow pace of the draft program, especially the slow pace of the program of Work of National Importance, added greatly to this general apathy.

The nation was starting the program of training of recruits entirely from scratch. Camp grounds had first to be acquired and located, barracks had to be built, personnel for training the recruits had first to be trained, etc.

On a smaller scale but no less complicated was the preparations for the conscientious objectors. It will be recalled that Hershey told the Molokan delegation that congress failed to provide funds for the operation of the conscientious objector program, consequently the Selective Service System was compelled to finance it from a special fund at the disposal of the President. For this reason the assignment of C.O.'s to work of National Importance, or Civilian Public Service camps as they were henceforth to be known, was delayed for ten months following the first registration, during which time the government was refurbishing the old, abandoned CCC camps scattered throughout the various mountain ranges of the country. Consequently, the first Molokans did not report for work to the C.P.S. camp until June 23, 1941 although they received their classification in December of 1940.

This delay was fortunate for the individual concerned for it eventually shortened his stay in camp by six months but it led the Molokan community to believe that the Advisory Council was being deceived, that there will never be any such program for the C.O. and eventually all their boys will be drafted into the armed forces. This belief was strengthened because many boys, unknown to their parents were already accepting the draft, indeed, were volunteering for the service. For this reason the enthusiasm shown previously for the C.O. program was gradually being eroded. The parents of those who were already in the service saw no further need to contribute to a fund from which they would not benefit personally.

Up to the time of the Pearl Harbor incident about 250 Molokans filed claims of objection to military service. About two-thirds of these were married, therefore exempt from the draft. Part of the balance entered the armed forces as non-combatants. Of the rest, three were in the C.P.S. camps and the remaining were in the various stages of processing their claims. Perhaps twice as many refused to claim a C.O. status and were either inducted or were volunteers in the armed forces.

At the same time, and especially after the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the attitude of the local draft boards became extremely antagonistic towards all C.O.'s. By placing all sorts of obstacles in the way of the registrant's claim for a C.O. classification, they compelled each one to appeal to the state Appeal Boards which meant that the registrant had to submit to an investigation by the Department of Justice through the agency of the FBI who thoroughly checked the claimant's school and police records, questioned his school teachers, his employers and neighbors, his friends and enemies, his relatives and his church elders and, if his record disclosed a minutest infraction of Molokan rules, he would be denied the proper classification, thus forcing him to make the difficult appeal to the Presidential Appeal Board, or failing there as it sometimes happened, to submit to arrest and to a trial in the Federal Courts. These procedures further complicated matters for the Molokan community as it was probably meant to do. As a matter of fact it caused some grumbling among the members because the complicated processes delayed considerably the time such claimants were ordered to report to camp, meanwhile his presence at home incited unfavorable curiosity and suspicion in the minds of his neighbors.

As a rule members of the various Local Boards were entirely unfamiliar with the Molokans and their religion. Although they all knew of a large colony of Russians in their midst, they assumed that these were all Orthodox Russians or White Russians that they heard so much about, consequently, letters of inquiry were being received from many of them asking for information, for literature or pamphlets etc. concerning the Molokan religion. As no such literature existed, extemporaneous replies and explanations were sent out by the Council to each inquiry.

In March of 1941 Harold Stone Hall, secretary of the local branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation asked for a statement on Molokan history to which a three page reply was sent reciting briefly the Molokan background, its history, reasons for emigrating to the United States and their present attitude to war. Mr. Hull replied on April 11, 1941 thanking the Council for the material and adding; "I very much appreciate your fine letter of April 4 in which you send the excellent statement on Molokanism. Paul Comly French of Washington, D.C. again asked us to send it to him, so we are getting it off by air mail. I hope that he will be able to put the material to good use in Washington so that people in Selective Service headquarters will understand more of the position of your faith."¹³

Meanwhile, facilities for Work of National importance were made ready to receive the C0s and the draft boards began slowly to assign them to the various camps throughout the country. One camp was opened in the San Gabriel mountains, near the town of Glendora, California, to be operated by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers).

According to a rule laid down by the National Headquarters of the Selective Service, a registrant could not be assigned to any camp located less than 150 miles from his home, consequently, only those Molokans living either in Arizona, Oregon or in the San Joaquin Valley were eligible for assignment to the Glendora camp. Residents of Los Angeles and vicinity had to be satisfied with camps farther north.

Soon other camps were opened; one in Cascade Locks, Oregon; one near Coleville and another near Placerville, California.

¹³ See Addenda pp. VI-D, VI-E and VI-F.

On June 23, 1941 the first Molokans assigned to the C.P.S. arrived in the Glendora camp. Two months later another two arrived in Cascade Locks. By April 30th, 1942, six more were working near Placerville. By June 30, 1942 there were a total of 14. Gradually the number grew until eventually the total assignments reached a top figure of 88 in various C.P.S. camps in California and other places.

While these fortunate ones were being assigned to the camps, other Molokan C.O. claimants, just as sincere as the others, were compelled by the whims of the draft boards to go through the process of a Federal court trial to prove the sincerity of their claims because the Boards would not, on some minor pretext or other, grant them the desired classification.

The majority of Molokan families, however, were indifferent to these and other similar matters not affecting them personally. Only when a son was ordered to report for induction into the armed forces was a family disturbed. But after a time most families were reconciled even with that.

Following the invasion of Russia by Hitler's army in June of 1941, many persons devoted their energies to the collection of funds among the Molokans for the purchase and shipment of medicaments and clothing for the relief of Soviet Russian civilians. This was done in conjunction with organizations officially sanctioned by the government of the United States.

The participation of the brotherhood in this work was not unanimous. Many individuals did not take part in it and one Los Angeles congregation as a whole (the Old Romanoffskaya) a part of the Arizona and a part of the Kerman communities refrained from this activity, basing their stand on the prophesy of Afonasy Bezayeff in 1921, which forbade participation in Russian relief during the great famine there. Nevertheless, in April 1943 it was announced by the group working in the relief that over \$16,000.00 was collected for that purpose.

About this time also—late in 1941 -- a 17 acre site for a new cemetery was purchased on East Slauson Avenue, as the old one on Eastern Avenue was filled to its utter capacity. A non-profit corporation was organized to hold title to the land and to operate the cemetery.

A workable set of by-laws were adopted by which every Molokan was eligible to all the privileges of membership in the Cemetery Association by a payment of \$5.00 per person, young or old. The full sum was soon collected by these means and the \$15,000.00 was paid off.

A plan was adopted whereby, among other provisions, no mounds were to be permitted over the graves but the grounds were to remain level permitting the planting and maintenance of a grass lawn. In addition, the grave markers were to be of uniform size on which the inscriptions were to conform to specific Molokan form and style.

But these provisions were too radical for some members of the brotherhood. It was asserted by this faction that elimination of the mounds was a further departure from the ways of the forefathers, that the earth of any given grave was not to be hauled away to another location but should remain on that particular grave, consequently, these formed another group to purchase a small plot of ground adjacent to the old cemetery on Eastern Avenue at its western end. Thus there are two cemeteries serving the brotherhood that is otherwise of the same faith.

In other respects the life of the brotherhood proceeded in routine fashion. The following is an expert from a contemporary diary: "Even as in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. These words could well apply to us at the present time. The Molokans are disturbed individually as each family loses a son to the armed forces, but, collectively there is little change. Weddings and other doings in churches every Sunday. Every one is working and making money. Money is plentiful although prices on everything are skyrocketing. Sugar will be rationed next

month. It is planned to issue one pound per person per week. But for the time being there is enough of everything for all weddings, baptisms, funerals etc., in spite of threatened rationing.”¹⁴

However, there was a big fly in the ointment. Letters began to arrive from the boys in the services telling of the terrible ordeals in New Guinea and from other far away and unheard of places in the Pacific Ocean and from North Africa and Italy. News also arrived of the death of a Molokan boy in the battle of the Island of Kiska. As time went on, other news of the death or wounding of Molokans came from the various fronts so that at the conclusion of the war, there was a total of 7 dead and over 40 wounded from all causes of the war in various fronts and in the states.

Just prior to Pashka, 1943, the following communication was sent to all boys in the services by the First United Church on Lorena Street.

“Dear Brother,

The Holy Ghost, descending upon one of the members of The Russian Molokan Christian church, announced that a day of prayer and fast should be observed for all young men and boys in the services.

To fulfill this announcement, the brethren of the church decided to observe a three day fast commencing on Wednesday, April 5 and ending Friday evening April 7, (Lord’s Supper) of this year.

Saturday, April 8th will be the first day of our 7 day Easter. Sunday, the second day of Easter, will be observed as a day of prayer. At twelve o’clock noon, Pacific Standard Time a prayer (Psalm 91) will be dedicated to all boys and young men in the services for the safekeeping and returning to their homes and families.

You are urged to kneel down and repeat this prayer which is printed herewith on the same day and same hour as above mentioned, wherever you might be.”

Unfortunately there is no way to ascertain how the service men reacted to this concern of their church and what if anything would have happened if the church, to be true to its principles, would have urged them to drop their arms and refuse to shoot them thenceforth.

But this is pure conjecture. The boys in the service were there in the first place because they were not sufficiently indoctrinated in the tenets of Molokan religion. There were instances in which some Molokan boys were unable to explain to the army authorities what religion they belonged to, whether it was Protestant, Catholic or Jewish and had to write to their parents for that information as it was essential in the event the boy became a casualty on the battlefield.

Fortunately, however, there were many Molokan boys who not only refused induction into the armed forces but were willing to serve a prison sentence for their belief against military service. In March 21, 1942, three such men were arrested by the FBI for their refusal to be inducted when their draft boards ordered them do so.

They were released on bail and ordered to report to the Federal court of Judge Hollzer for arraignment on April 13th at which time, upon the advice of an attorney, they pleaded “Nolo Contendre”, in other words they would neither admit guilt nor defend themselves but placed themselves on the mercy of the Court. The judge accepted their plea and referred their case to the probation department for a pre-sentence investigation and recommendation and continued their case until the 27th of April.

¹⁴ At the annual U.M.C.A. picnic of 1943, 750 lbs. of meat was prepared and consumed. At this time also, \$300.00 was collected for the Russian war relief

The probation officer assigned to the case initiated the investigation by an interview with the mother and a father of two of the accused and at the same time expressed a desire to learn more of the Molokan background from its leaders. Whereupon a large group of elders, headed by the veteran Ivan G. Samarin, presented themselves at the Federal Building for a meeting with the probation officer and with a representative from the United States Attorney's office. Mr. Samarin was the principal spokesman for the group through an interpreter.

Mr. Thaddeus A. Davis, chief Federal Probation Officer, through his deputy, Mr. Meador, wrote a full report of the meeting and filed it with Federal judge Harry Hollzer who was trying the three Molokans. A copy of this report is included herewith verbatim because it tells the story of the meeting completely and truthfully.¹⁵

Evidently this report made a favorable impression on Judge Hollzer because, in passing sentence upon the three young men, he stated from the bench that there was no doubt in his mind about the sincerity of the Molokan faith although there might be some doubts about the sincerity of the boys, nevertheless, on May 18, 1942 he released the three men on a five-year probation on condition that they be assigned to work in forestry or agriculture on the same terms as men in CPC camps.

This incident was the beginning of a sharp difference in the community concerning the financing of the C.P.S. camps. On the one hand there was the indifferent attitude of the part of those whose sons were enrolled in the armed forces. These backed out of the program entirely, feeling no need to finance other people's obligations. On the other hand there was a small but vociferous faction that took the position that no one need to report to the C.P.S. camps at all, that if a Molokan men took a firm stand they would be exempt from both the armed forces and the C.P.S., claiming further that the brotherhood's acquiescence to the camp program itself was a betrayal of the brotherhood and maintaining that position even after the arrest of the three described above and of others who were arrested later following their refusal to report to the C.P.S. camps.

Others, whose sons did report for work in the camps, objected to helping the financing of the camps on principle, asserting that since the government drafted the men it should feed and clothe them, consequently, these boys were maintained in the camps partly by the Quakers, Mennonites and Brethren and partly by the supporters of Molokan Advisory Council.

This opposition, plus the indifference of the rest of the community, deeply undermined the efforts of the Advisory Council to carry the Molokan share of the C.P.S. financial load. With each passing month it was deeper and deeper in debt to the three operating denominations.

The following statistics illustrate the progressive worsening of the situation. As of Sept. 15, 1941 the American Friends Service Committee expended \$194.70 to maintain three Molokans in their camps while the Molokan Advisory Council was credited \$130.30 as their contribution, leaving a deficit of \$38.40. As of April 30, 1942 the Council contributed \$1,350.60 for 9 boys in camp, leaving a deficit of \$36.82. Six months later, October 30, 1942 the Council was still able to keep its head above water, being in arrears only \$428.97 after contributing \$2,911.85 for maintaining 17 boys in camps. A year later, however, as of October 30, 1943 the "unmet responsibility" as the operating denominations so tactfully termed this debt, rose to \$1,303.11.

And so it went from bad to worse. At the end of February, 1944, this unmet responsibility grew to \$3,676.22 with 33 boys in camps and on December 6, 1945, three months after the close of the war and while the camps were still six months away from final liquidation and while there was still 53 Molokans in camps, the Advisory Council received a final consolidated statement from The N.S.B.RO. which showed that the estimated cost of maintaining Molokan boys in

¹⁵ See Addenda p. VI-A.

camps of the three denominations amounted to \$38,244.48. The Advisory Council was credited with contributing a total sum of \$21,200.92 towards their responsibility, leaving a balance of \$17,023.56 of unmet responsibility.

Shortly thereafter a representative of the N.S.B.R.O. traveling through Los Angeles, asked to meet with the Molokan people. A special meeting was arranged by the Advisory Council where he personally explained the set up by which the operating denominations—The Friends Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Committee and the Brethren Service Committee—financed the camps and urged the Molokans to liquidate this unmet responsibility, or as much of it as they could.

He was politely but unequivocally informed that, in order to preserve the harmony in the brotherhood, it was inadvisable to call for donations for this purpose at this time. Following this unpleasant information, the three denominations apparently decided to write this debt off for they never mentioned the matter again.

* * * * *

The great war was coming to its close with the surrender of Germany in May, 1945, and was concluded on September 1, 1945, by the surrender of Japan. Thereupon the populace began a clamorous demand for demobilization of the armed forces and for release from economic restrictions imposed for the duration of the war.

The government was responsive to this demand of the people so that by January 1, 1946 the armed forces were 50% demobilized, but, because of the late start of the C.P.S. program, the camps were not being liquidated at the same rate as the armed forces. As of January 1, 1946 only three Molokans were discharged from the camps. The camp assignees were becoming more and more restless every week.

In November of 1945 the Molokan Advisory Council took over a branch Mennonite C.P.S. camp near Three Rivers, Calif. to be operated and financed as a Molokan camp exclusively. This operation was continued until April 30, 1946 when the Three Rivers camp was abandoned and the boys were moved to the Glendora camp which was now being operated by the government. This relieved the Advisory Council of further financial responsibility but in turn caused a serious headache for all concerned from another direction.

Moving to a government operated camp, the boys came in contact and under the influence of a few radical non-Molokans who induced the former to join them in a work strike to reinforce their demand for a more rapid discharge of the assignees as well as for reasonable wages for their work. After a month of idleness in the camp, the government moved in on them and on May 29 arrested 41 of the strikers, 21 of whom were Molokans. Bail was provided for most of these by the Advisory Council while the rest of the Molokans were bailed out by other individuals and the non-Molokans were taken care of by other agencies.

The government was not in any hurry to prosecute them but instead, promised immunity to those who returned to work. Soon 10 Molokans returned to work and were being discharged by turns. Eventually 22 strikers were indicted but even these were released with suspended sentences. On this sour note ended the Molokan participation in a program that started out five and a half years previously with great enthusiasm and selfless altruism.

Following is a summary of Molokans who were classified as conscientiously opposed to both combatant and non-combatant military service:

88 were assigned and ordered to report to C.P.S. camp. Of them, 11 were reclassified into other categories before reporting to camp. Five refused to report to camp because of religious convictions. Two reported to government operated camps. Eight were discharged from camps

because of physical disabilities while working in the camps. Three walked out of camps for religious reasons. Three enlisted in the armed services while serving in camps. 46 remained in the camps for the duration of the war and until the liquidation of the camps in the spring of 1946.

In addition to these there were 35 who failed to get the proper classification of 4E but who refused to report for induction and were arrested and tried in the Federal Courts. Of these, 13 were released by the courts on probation while 22 served terms in Federal prisons varying from one year to three years.

There are no records of those Molokans who served in the armed forces as conscientious objectors but it would be safe to guess that of all Molokans in the armed forces, 50% were serving in the Medical Corps.

At the end of February, 1945 the Advisory Council compiled and circulated an accounting of total sums collected from the entire brotherhood and the amount contributed by each contributing congregation. Following are the totals as shown by the accounting:

The First United Molokan Christian Church (Big Church),	\$ 7,506.52
Arizona Church (Morris Gozdif, presbyter),	4,009.88
Samarin Church,	1,852.95
The Old Romanoffsky Church,	1,425.71
Women's Auxiliary of The U.M.C.A ,	1,691.00
Kerman Church, (Nazaroff),	875.00
Prokhladnoye Church (Melikoyskaya),	523.20
Arizona Church (Ivan J. Treguboff, presbyter),	422.00
Shafter and Delano Churches combined,	271.39
Oregon Church (W. S. Dobrinin, presbyter),	194.00
Armenian Molokan Church,	127.00
San Francisco Church,	87.00
U.M.C.A ,	78.00
Sunday Afternoon Young People's Church, (Melikoyskaya Branch)	47.25
Akhtynskaya Church (Mihail M. Galitzen, presbyter),	40.00
Jack W. Sussoyeff Church,	12.00
Miscellaneous Sources,	<u>1,200.00</u>
	Total, \$20,363.00

It will be noted that the amount remitted to the operating denominations is \$837.90 greater than the total collected by the Council from the contributing churches. This sum, as well as the maintenance of the special Molokan camp in Three Rivers after November 1, 1945, plus the periodic contributions to the headquarters of the N.S.B.R.O. for its upkeep, was made up by the individual contributions of parents of boys in the C.P.S. camps.

Meanwhile, during the final years of the war and for some time afterwards, at any gathering of the elders the conversation inevitably drifted towards the meaning of Klubnikin's prophesy depicted in his drawings on pages 698 and 699 of *Dukh i Zhizn* which show a rising comet-like sun with a figure 99 below it and on the same page a picture of a dove sitting atop a fruit tree for which a partial explanation is given by him on page 638 saying: "A plan was drawn. Figure 99 and 44. A window and a rising sun. Henceforth the judgments of God will be fulfilled year after year with great events among the nations".

It was agreed by all that the figure 99 represented the year 1899 at which time the world's tribulations began with the Boxer rebellion in China and continuing without abatement to this day. But there was a sharp difference of opinion about the meaning of the figure 44 and the dove. Some contended that it represented the year 1944 when, according to their belief, the great war will come to its end and the dove of peace will settle on the tree bringing peace that will be lasting and will lead towards the Millennium. Others were strong in the belief that the year 1944 will witness the actual appearance of the Antichrist who will bring further tribulations to the faithful.

These discussions continued with varying degrees of intensity between events of local importance and interest. The news from the war fronts varied periodically from hopeful to desperate, but, towards the end of 1944 it was apparent to all that the end was not too far away. This view was confirmed when the three principal allies—Great Britain, Russia and the United States—called a conference of associated and neutral nations to formulate plans for the post-war world. Delegates of 40 nations assembled in San Francisco on April 25, 1945.

This conference, which was to become the parent of the United Nations, gave the Molokan elders another subject of debate to determine its significance in the light of the prophesies of the Book of Revelations and of Rudometkin and Klubnikin.

These discussions were temporarily suspended when a prominent newspaper columnist attending the conference in San Francisco, wrote a sympathetic article about the Molokans when he learned from a Turkish newspaperman, a Mr. Yalmans, of a group of people in San Francisco called the Molokans, who, for many years, were desirous of migrating to the nations of the Near East.

When the article was brought to the attention of the Los Angeles elders, many were excited and immediately sought ways and means to talk to the Turkish Ambassador who was attending the conference.

About a dozen men, all from the faction advocating such migration, formed a voluntary delegation and on May 25, 1945, left for San Francisco to confer with the ambassador regarding such a possibility.

Three days later the delegation returned to report the following as quoted from a contemporary account: "The delegation came back and reported that they talked with the Turkish Ambassador to whom they were introduced by the newspaperman, Yalmans. They asked the ambassador if it was possible to secure permission to immigrate to Turkey. He replied that it was possible but when they asked about exemption from military service he was very emphatic in denying such a possibility, informing them that the constitution of Turkey does not exempt any group or individuals from military service which was compulsory for everybody".

The ambassador expressed a mild surprise at the group or any group who would want to leave the United States, especially California, to live in the Near East.

So the delegation returned to Los Angeles without any results and thereafter no further efforts were made in that direction.

CHAPTER 8

AID TO BRETHERN IN IRAN

Although there were differences in the brotherhood regarding various policies and attitudes towards their own problems and towards the world in general, these were but healthy signs in the life of the brotherhood for they kept the membership alert for any infraction of basic Molokan

doctrines. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said that he was not surprised that there were divisions among them because such divisions offered an opportunity to bring out the most skillful among them to the end that heresies may be prevented or corrected.

The fact of the matter is that, in spite of stresses and strains, that the Molokan edifice was subjected to during their adjustment to their life in America, the structure remained intact and functioned as a unit in most matters affecting the brotherhood especially during the two world wars and the great depression.

This was proven again when, late in February of 1946, word reached Los Angeles from a large group of Molokans in Iran (Persia) who were begging for assistance to immigrate to America. It was known previously that they were there but nothing was known of their living conditions or how many there were. It was also known that in early 1930's when the Communist government in the USSR was using all means to force the peasants into collective farms, many Molokans fled across the neighboring borders of Iran and Turkey seeking escape from persecution for refusal to join the collective.

In 1938 a tearful plea was received from a group of these refugees who were stranded in Syria after wandering back and forth between Turkey and Syria begging for a refuge of these governments. At that time a financial response was made to their plea but after the outbreak of the second world war nothing more was heard of this group until 1945 when a young Russian Baptist couple, with their children, arrived in Los Angeles from Iran and contacted a Molokan family whose address they brought from the latter's relatives in Iran.

This young couple told of many Molokans living in Iran including those who were at one time stranded in Syria but who eventually found refuge in Iran. Their story was convincing because they named families who had close relatives in Los Angeles. Nothing was done about it at the time, however, because it was not known that they wanted to come to America, in fact it was assumed that they would not because, as it was previously mentioned here, there was still a hope in the hearts of many that our imminent refuge was to be either in Iran or Turkey.

But when this word reached Los Angeles in February, 1946, everyone was surprised to learn that a large group of our own flesh and blood was living in Iran for more than a decade and were now anxiously, in fact desperately trying to immigrate to the United States.

The message came via a long letter from one of their members who claimed that he was writing on behalf of the whole group living in Teheran, stating also that there were many other families living in farming villages in Northern Iran, near the south coast of the Caspian Sea, who are also desperately anxious to leave Iran. It was a well-written letter and touched the hearts of all listeners causing an immediate reaction in the community. A sum of \$4100.00 was quickly collected for their relief and a meeting of elders was held to discuss the best means of assisting them.

On March 20, 1946 the elders invited the young Russian Baptist who arrived a year before to give his views on the letter and the best means of assisting them and on the responsibility of the writer of the letter. Upon his suggestion, a letter was dispatched air mail with a small sum of money and with a request that the money was to be distributed to the most needy families, preferably to widows and orphans and at the same time asking for further information on their immediate needs and the most advantageous means of assistance—whether in food, clothing or money.

On May 30th a reply arrived urgently pleading, not for food or clothing but for help in their efforts to immigrate to America, stating that life in Iran was becoming unbearable for several reasons: 1. Work was very scarce and whenever a job was available, the population was very fanatical and discriminated against them in favor of a Muslim. 2. The economy of the country

was corrupt so that nothing could be done without payment of a bribe, hence, if one had not the money to pay the bribe his pleas of any nature were disregarded. 3. Life in the farming villages was likewise difficult in that the most fertile lands were in possession of rich landowners who preferred to rent it to the Muslims and the land allotted to the Molokans was very poor and in an unhealthy, mosquito infested, malarial region along the south coast of the Caspian Sea where many Molokans died after settling there in the first years in Iran.

But the main reason for their anxiety was the fear that the USSR will return to occupy Iran permanently and force them to return to face the consequences of their flight from Soviet justice.

This letter changed the picture for the American Molokans altogether. It would have been comparatively simple to collect a sizeable sum of money for the purchase of food and clothing and shipped to them as it was done in 1921 for the famine stricken in Russia, but, it was extremely difficult to initiate a mass removal of approximately 500 persons of all ages to the United States at a time when millions of refugees and displaced persons in the liberated portion of Europe were clamoring for admittance to America.

The admittance to the United States was limited by law to a certain quota per year for each European nation, a law that favored the nations of Western Europe against those of Eastern Europe. Since the great majority of displaced persons were from Eastern Europe, a special law was passed to permit entry into the United States of 250,000 of them but this law was not applicable to the Molokans in Iran, they had to apply under the quota limits of the old law. By this law the allowable quota for people of Russian origin was very small in ratio to its population. It was so small that the Molokan applicants in Iran were told that they would no doubt have to wait at least five years for their turn to enter the United States. Complicating this obstacle was the fact that some applicants were born in the region of Kars which, since the close of the first world war, became Turkish territory, therefore, those Molokans born there had to come in under the Turkish quota, which was practically nil.¹⁶

There were no organizations in America working to aid refugees in Asia similar to the one sponsored by the combined religious bodies of the United States which was very active in the relief and emigration of displaced persons of the European war. Neither was the organization called "The Tolstoy Fund" which was organized by the daughter of the celebrated writer, Leo N. Tolstoy to aid refugees of Russian origin, available to people in Asia, therefore other means of bringing them to America had to be found.

It must be admitted that our people in Iran were persistent. In the end, the personnel of the American consulate in Teheran, almost in self-defense, suggested that their only salvation lay in finding individual sponsors in the United States who would sponsor their admittance under a special rule by which they could enter either as mechanics and artisans in special fields where help was scarce or as farmers specializing in raising scarce commodities. Fortunately for them, the Molokans in America were at that time able to absorb such applicants, having among their members farmers raising cotton or grain which were then scarce commodities and also owners of various factories that could claim a need and scarcity of mechanics of all sorts.

Soon relatives and friends in America were busy preparing the necessary forms and mailing them to Iran for processing by the consulate in Teheran where, after the usual delays due to the regular red tape, visas were finally being granted for entrance to the Promised Land.

A slow but steady procession of Molokan families were soon arriving in Los Angeles and San Francisco, some by plane all the way, others who hoped to economize on their passage, flew to

¹⁶ See Addenda pp. IX, X, XI, XII and XIII.

Italy where they boarded a steamship at the cheapest rates to New York and then by autobus to the Pacific Coast.

The very first family to arrive in Los Angeles, however, came by a roundabout way that took them overland through Iran east to Karachi, Pakistan, where they boarded a coast-wise steamer to Bombay, India where they found passage on a freighter which brought them all the way to Los Angeles, making calls at many ports between India and America, a voyage of approximately three months. But that was the only family to take this difficult route.

As could be imagined, the arrival of the first few families were events of great dramatic interest and considerable emotion. Meeting with relatives one did not ever hope to see until a year or so ago and then suddenly sitting down to a traditional Molokan meal together with them 10,000 miles away from the backward Asiatic nation which was your inhospitable home for 15 years, amid surroundings that seemed like a dream to you, was a scene that only a skilled dramatist could portray.

The stories of their lives that these first arrivals told, differed only in some minor details from those told by later arrivals.

As they sat late into the first night of their arrival, relating the horrors of the wars, revolutions, civil wars and famines they survived; of the persecutions, exiles and executions of their loved ones and finally, of their flight across the high mountain range with their small children towards an unknown fate in neighboring Iran, their listeners, through their tears, could only thank their God for their own preservation from a similar fate.

As each new arrivals told their stories of terror, the impression grew in the minds of their American brethren that these people were exceptionally hardy to survive their adversities and, either courageous beyond belief or foolishly desperate to even attempt the flight across the high range of mountains along which lay the border between the USSR and Iran, knowing as they did that the border was constantly patrolled by soldiers of both nations, guarding against the very thing they were attempting to do.

In fleeing their homes, many were able to evade arrest only by the narrowest margin, only after being forewarned by people who had inside knowledge of the plans for their arrest and exile to concentration camps by the Soviet secret police. In every case they were in such a hurry that they could take nothing with them except the clothing in their backs and as much hard bread as they could carry with them.

Walking at night and hiding in the mountains to sleep and rest during the day, all who were hold enough to make the attempt succeeded in avoiding detection and capture.

Although all of them were eventually stopped by the Iranian border patrols, they were not betrayed to the Soviets but instead, the patrols delivered them to their superiors whom, in turn delivered them to their district chiefs. Most of the refugees were eventually brought to the city of Mashad, footsore and hungry, although they were occasionally fed by the more kind-hearted of their captors.

In Mashad the Iranian officials deliberated on whether to deport them back to the Soviet Union to avoid friction with their powerful neighbor or to transport them in small groups to the interior of Iran and settle them among a fanatical and, at times, inhospitable population.

Fortunately for them, however, divine deliverance came to them in the person of a Molokan family that had moved to Iran in less troublesome times several years earlier and who were already well established in the city of Mashad, who knew the Iranian language and were acquainted with their ways as well as with some of their officials.

This Molokan family—the Tihonoff family—were somehow appraised of the predicament of their refugee brethren. They immediately went before the local government officials and begged

them not to ship the refugees to the interior but to allow them to settle as a group in some nearby farming area.

The Iranian people, like most people of the Muslim faith, were unsympathetic towards Christians whom they called unclean infidels because of the latter's propensity for the use of pork meat which is unclean to a true Muslim and also because the majority of Orthodox Christians venerate images of saints and display the cross on their houses of worship. The Tihonoffs knew this antipathy of the Muslims well therefore they set about convincing the officials these refugees were different from most Christians and very similar to the Muslims in their objection to the use of pork or veneration of images or the cross.

Apparently these explanations satisfied the officials for they relented in their attitude and permitted them to remain together in the vicinity of Mashad where they secured work in construction of a sugar refinery being built by a European contractor.

After a time the Shah of Iran gave them permission to settle in villages of their own near the south coast of the Caspian Sea in the province of Mazandaran where the majority of them lived until the migration to America while some moved to the capital city of Teheran, working as day laborers or truck drivers.

Their trials were not over yet, however, for at the outbreak of the war between Germany and the USSR the Soviet armies occupied the northern part of Iran (where the Molokans were living) to protect their southern flank from unfriendly armies, bringing terror into the hearts of people who thought that they were free from fears of the midnight knock on the door and its terrible consequences. But here they were again facing that probability. With such a probability they were forced to live for another three years or, until these armies returned to the Soviet Union at the conclusion of the war.

But although the armies were gone, there was no guarantee that they would not be back for a permanent occupation, so that the minds of the refugees were never entirely free of the thoughts of that possibility, therefore, they began to search their collective minds for avenues of escape, fasting and praying for divine guidance the meanwhile.

Possibilities were open to them for emigration to South America and Australia. Indeed, many non-Molokan refugees in Iran took advantage of these possibilities and immigrated to these countries, but God, through His servants the prophets, told the Molokans in Iran to expect help from their American brethren, therefore, they turned their eyes and thoughts away from those continents and concentrated their efforts on the United States. They succeeded so well that, five years after making their first contact with Los Angeles, every Molokan living in Iran with the exception of several persons who forfeited their right to be called by that name, were in America, praising God for their deliverance and expressing their heart felt gratitude to their relatives and their spiritual brethren for their assistance.

As indeed they should because the brotherhood in Los Angeles and the several farming communities of Arizona and the San Joaquin valley as well as the Postoyannaye in San Francisco, were never so unanimous or so generous as in the response to their call. It is more than likely that no Molokan family in America refrained from participation in their emigration, either by sponsoring a family, (which meant that the sponsor obligated himself for the welfare of the family he was sponsoring for a period of five years) by financial assistance in their transportation or by giving them employment upon their arrival.

As each family arrived they were taken to the various congregations to be greeted in the traditional Molokan manner with the holy kiss—prayed for and given a sizable monetary donation for the start of their new life in America, with every member contributing voluntarily according to his means. In addition, furniture, kitchen equipment and clothing, especially for children, was generously donated.

Practically in no time at all following their arrival, they were absorbed into the Molokan communities of America. The majority were of the Pryguny, therefore, these chose to live in Los Angeles, but a considerable number were of Postoyannaye and most of these chose to live in San Francisco with their co-religionists there and, it must be said, that they revitalized that church which was, prior to their arrival, threatened with slow death by anemia.

Fortunately for all of them, their arrival in the United States, coincided with the most prosperous period in that nation's history. Jobs were available at good wages to anyone willing to work. In fairness to them it must be said that they immediately proved themselves to be a hard working, enterprising and thrifty people. Within a few years they paid off the debts incurred in their emigration and were well on their way towards economic independence as home owners and owners of income properties, in many instances operating small businesses, of their own.

In spiritual matters too, they immediately became a part of the brotherhood, conforming in all things with the doctrines of the Molokan Faith.

About ten years later, however, a very small group of them, deviated from the doctrines of the brotherhood, attempting to introduce the observance of feast days that were abandoned by the Spiritual Christian Jumpers a hundred years ago as not authorized by the Scriptures, such as Christmas, Epiphany, Annunciation, Ascension, etc.

In March 1959, the leader of this minute faction, after refusing to heed the pleas of all the presbyters of Los Angeles to abandon the innovation, decided to branch out on his own with about two dozen young couples as followers. A few years later this man left the United States for Australia where he now resides, to all intents and purposes becoming a non-Molokan.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

The sympathetic response of the Molokan community to the pleas of the brethren in Iran proved that the natural instinct for works of charity is much alive in the brotherhood; that the community could co-operate freely and willingly if the cause appeals to the basic Christian feelings of the people. Differences would occur only in the interpretation of basic Molokan doctrine and then only if it is subject to a two-fold interpretation

The two issues that once so disturbed the harmony of the community—the U.M.C.A., and the Komitet—have been modified by time and experience to the extent that the entire brotherhood was able to adjust itself to them.

The Komitet—that bone of contention that once so disturbed the harmony of the brotherhood and which at one time was considered as indispensable to church government—has been abandoned as needless by all congregations of the entire brotherhood except the “Big Church”, who originated the idea in 1933. The last of the smaller congregations to give it up was the San Marcos congregation which abandoned it in 1960 at the suggestion of all presbyters of Los Angeles who perceived that it was a cause of friction in that congregation.

It could not be denied that there are numerous individuals in the brotherhood who are still opposed in principle to the Komitet and to the U.M.C.A., but these two innovations are no longer the causes of stormy controversy that they once were. The U.M.C.A. during its 40 years of existence has proved itself as a valuable and flourishing Molokan Youth Center where each Sunday morning up to 25 classes of children of both sexes and various ages (3 to 16 years) are taught the rudiments of Molokan religion, Molokan songs and prayers. Wednesday evenings are

devoted to the older teenagers where they too, learn to sing and pray in the Russian language, and where those of marriageable age meet, become acquainted and often engaged to be married.

In addition to the U.M.C.A. other active Molokans have developed a novel but effective method of indoctrinating its youth. In the last 30-35 years they have been bringing small groups of teenagers of both sexes together of evenings in homes of these youngsters for singing classes conducted by middle aged church activists where, in the midst of Molokan social environment, they teach Molokan singing, its background its traditions and the advantages of marrying within the Molokan faith.

However, this two-fold activity has only partially solved the problems of Molokan American life whether it is in the city or on the farms. (The Molokan farmer is now in such close communication with some large city that its temptations are fully as strong for their youth as for the youth of Los Angeles. Woodburn and Gervais, Oregon are only 30 minutes drive from the great city of Portland, so is Fresno to Kerman and Phoenix, Arizona to the farmers of Glendale.)

It is true that juvenile delinquency has disappeared as a community concern, but the great problem of dope addiction that has afflicted the nation has not entirely bypassed the Molokan community. It is a problem that individual families understandably try to keep to themselves so that the community as a whole does not know how seriously it has been affected by it. It is known, however, that Molokan boys and girls have been victimized by the curse. It is a certainty also that the problem of intermarriage with non-Molokans is still with us but whether or not in a greater or lesser degree than forty years ago, no one knows for sure as no statistics are available.

It appears, on the surface at least, that the problem is not a bit lesser but the community is more or less reconciled to it. Forty and fifty years ago when it first became a serious problem, such an event became known and lamented by everybody in the community. Now, however, one hears of it months after it occurs and dismisses it from his mind as of no concern to him.

Indeed, many second generation Molokan American parents whose children intermarry are not too unduly concerned either, because their own attachment to the faith of their fathers is not very strong. Their attitude towards their religion, is one of indifference.

It follows, therefore, that the cause of the above two problems of the community lies basically in this attitude of indifference. But this attitude towards any problem, be it religious or political, is the most difficult to overcome. We could only hope that the recent revival among the teenagers—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—might reawaken this lukewarm attitude of the parents and start a revival among them also.

At the present time (1968) there are no basic issues in the brotherhood that would tend to disturb the harmonious fraternization between the seven congregations of Los Angeles and between the eight congregations of the farming communities. Of these latter there are three in Kerman, California, one each in Shafter, Porterville and San Marcos, California, one in Glendale, Arizona and one in Woodburn (Gervais) Oregon.

An exception could be made of one small congregation in Los Angeles which remains aloof from the other principally over the old question of the Komitet and over the recently accepted custom of the other congregations of placing the bodies of deceased within the walls of houses of worship for funeral services. Up to 35 years ago it was the custom to leave the bodies in the homes of the deceased but such premises became too small when more and more friends and relatives felt it a duty to the departed to remain with the body late at night so the custom was instituted to bring it to the houses of worship for the funeral services.

But there was some objection to this new custom, based on the Mosaic law that it makes the premises unclean for eight days, therefore the premises are unfit for services for that length of time. In addition the objection was raised that by placing a dead body in such close proximity to the church kitchen when food is being prepared there, it violates the laws of hygiene as well.

These objections are disregarded. however, and it is now an accepted custom in all congregations but the one mentioned here.

* * * * *

The question of return to the country of its origin that once so agitated the community is now a dead issue, perhaps because the original proponents of the scheme have mostly passed on and the rank and file of the brotherhood is now composed of second and third generation Molokan Americans who, being born in America, have no blood attachments to Russia. A second and important reason lies in the fact that during the last ten years many of those who were born there and who are now responsible elders of the brotherhood, have visited their birthplace, saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears of the conditions of religious life of their brethren in faith, did not like what they saw and lost any desire they might have had of returning to their fatherland.

The question of seeking eventual haven in the Near East has also been practically abandoned for the same reasons. The principal proponents of that belief have likewise passed on. If any of the younger generation still adhere to that belief they are not actively propagating it. That question may not be dead but it is certainly lying dormant.

But a prophecy did occur in the Arizona congregation in 1963 that had a remote connection with the question of a haven in the Near East. That prophecy created a tremendous stir in the entire Molokan community. According to that prophecy the Molokans must immigrate to Australia and settle near the city of Ararat, Victoria, near the great city of Melbourne.

According to this prophesy this Ararat and not the Biblical Mt. Ararat as prophesied by Maxim G. Rudatnetkin, was to be the actual refuge of the Molokans from the coming holocaust. Furthermore, the Molokans had but four years from the date of the prophecy to comply with the prophecy.

Inspired by that prophesy, the younger members of the brotherhood stirred up a strong and active agitation for a move to that country, so strong in fact, that a delegation of three was sent to Australia by a part of the community to explore the conditions there.

The delegation returned with a favorable report but recommended that any future settlement should be made not near the city of Ararat but in Western Australia, near the city of Perth, suggesting, further that the migration, to be successful, should begin with a sufficiently large group to form a self-sustaining colony and should also include recognized church elders to guide the young settlers.

Following the return of the delegation, two well attended mass meetings were held which resulted in a decision to hold a three day fast and a prayer for divine guidance in which every congregation of the Molokan brotherhood in America participated.

These meetings and the prayer that followed showed clearly that the sentiment of the community was sharply divided in a ratio of approximately 3 to 1 against the migration, those favoring it being exclusively of the young category. Practically all elders strongly opposed the idea on various grounds but principally on the grounds that a prophecy involving such a vast migration should be confirmed by other prophets and should have scriptural basis as well. As no such scriptural basis could be found and no confirming prophecy occurred, the elders were unanimous in opposition.¹⁷

Notwithstanding this opposition, a group of eight families with their infants and small children comprising 32, persons in all, sailed for Australia on September 9, 1964, receiving a real

¹⁷ See Addenda P. XXI

heart warming send off at the dock where nearly 1000 well-wishers, friends and relatives assembled to sing encouraging spiritual songs of farewell as the steamship Oriana pulled away from the dock.

Later, other young families from Arizona, Los Angeles, Fresno and Oregon sailed to join them but, unfortunately, not in sufficient numbers to form a nucleus for a successful Molokan community, and, although the small group of settlers were hopefully anticipating the arrival of many others and optimistically set about establishing themselves in their new environment, not many came and events proved that their hopes were based on wishful thinking. After three years and a half ten families returned to America and by their return, caused others to doubt the future success of the whole venture.

The Australian venture brings our story of the Molokan community in America to its seventh decade. The late years, and particularly the last decade, has witnessed the most radical change in the nation's history, a complete metamorphosis, in fact.

Upon their arrival here in 1904, the Molokans were met by two prime examples of American religious environment and background—Dana W. Bartlett who befriended them in the name of Christian ethics and the mysterious woman who saw them in a vision forty years prior to their appearance in Los Angeles.

The State of California at that time was a sparsely settled agricultural area with only one large city, San Francisco, which alone of all the cities of the West Coast, had a reputation for wickedness. Indeed, the economy of the whole nation was based on agriculture where the large majority of the population derived its livelihood from the soil, forming a class of people noted all over the world for its industry, sobriety, honesty and sound Christian morals.

Riots or disturbances of any kind were unheard of. Crime, although not unknown, was not rampant. Use of habit-forming drugs was known only to readers of lurid fiction. Smoking and drinking by the female sex was rare and never in public. The atmosphere was not polluted by industrial fumes nor by fumes from the internal (infernal?) combustion engine. Permanent compulsory military service existed only in the minds of some planners of future wars, if at all. In fact, it was an ideal refuge for pious and industrious peasants that our fathers and grandfathers were. It is indeed regrettable that God in His wisdom did not lead our forefathers to California when the woman of mystery first saw her vision sometime in the 1860's for then they surely would have settled in some available agricultural area which was at that time so easy to find and, perhaps, would not have later succumbed to the lure of city life.

But now, in the midst of a turbulent and over populated city which is morally corrupted by its wealth and physically by its smog, its youth surrounded and assailed on all sides by innumerable temptations, by alcoholism and viscous drugs, by smutty literature and entertainment, by crime and immorality comparable to Sodom and Gomorrah, beset by periodic wars, blissfully ignoring the possibility of a nuclear war, its leaders lulled by comforts of affluence, the Molokan brotherhood continue their complacent lives. It is indeed very likely that they were unaware that, together with millions of others, they were on the brink of complete extinction in 1963 by nuclear missiles during the confrontation of the U.S. with the USSR over the latter's installation of long range ballistic missiles in Cuba.

Whether they were or not remains a moot question but one thing is certain; the great majority of Molokans, elders and the rank and file, are indifferent to the same probability of a future confrontation notwithstanding the fact that the Los Angeles area, due to the concentration of aircraft and other military industries within its confines, plus the vast naval installations in the harbors of San Pedro and Long Beach, is bound to become a prime target for inter-continental ballistic missiles against which, all authorities agree, there is no defense.

But in the nature of things it is very difficult for the contemporary leadership to take the initiative in the direction of a movement to leave the United States. The leadership is now composed of the remnants of those who were born in Russia, who were brought to, this country by their parents as young children, who actively participated with them in the hardships of the first difficult years in America and who have now reached a period of life where they would like to enjoy their declining years in tranquility, rightfully praising God for delivering them and their parents from calamities of the past half century.

It would be unjust to expect them to, do otherwise but it would not be unjust to expect them to encourage the emerging younger leadership to take up the reins in the search for a second refuge in some remote corner of the world, away from the world's turmoil and its temptations, to the end that the brotherhood would not disintegrate in the great megalopolis that is Southern California and that the labors of their fathers and forefathers would not have been in vain.

ADDENDA:
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS RELATIVE
to the
FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS

Addenda I

ADVERTISEMENT
TO WHOM THIS MAY CONCERN

At a meeting attended by 259 Russian Spiritual Christians (called Jumpers) which took place on the 28th day of May, 1917 at the house of Ivan G. Samarin, No. 122 S. Utah St. city of Los Angeles it was resolved to have recorded with the County Clerk of Los Angeles County, California, a certain resolution drawn up by this meeting of 259 Russian Spiritual Christians.

Ivan G. Samarin, Nikolai I. Agaltsoff, Rodion T. Kulikoff and Vasiley Z. Vedeneff were empowered by the meeting to sign this notice.

The following is the wording of the Resolution:

RESOLUTION

May 28, 1917

In view of The fact that we, Russian Sectarrians, Spiritual Christian Jumpers, from different parts of Trans-Caucasia, having with great difficulties and sacrifices of our savings, left our birthplace in the first decade of the present century only for our religious convictions which do not admit military service or carrying of arms, making a home for ourselves in this peaceful and free country.

Wherefore, with enthusiasm we herewith witness: that all of us living in Los Angeles, California, and other places, cannot on the strength of these religious views, enter any existing armies, including the conscription of recruits in United States which begins, as the newspapers say, on the 5th of June of this year, provided that that is to affect us also.

We are all Russian tillers of the soil and our aim is to establish ourselves here on farms in preservation of the sacredness of religion. Though a few of us were able to realize our desires, others were compelled to live for a while in the city by the lack of funds to buy land and farming tools.

The signatures of the heads of families follows.

Addenda II

PETITION

To His Excellency, The Hon. Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of North America:

A petition of the Colony of Russian Sectarians Spiritual Christian Jumpers living in Los Angeles, California and other parts of the United States:

We have the honor to report to you that we are Russian farmers, followers of the faith of Spiritual Christian Jumpers, which forbids military service and carrying of arms. For the sacredness of which, upon refusing military service, our forefathers were persecuted by the authorities of the Tsars. Living through very much bitterness and bearing on their shoulders heavy burdens, they were subject to tortures, to mortal corporeal punishment by the rod, the knout, the cudgel etc. as well as confinement to forts, prisons, monasteries and mines; they were exiled from the beautiful parts of inferior Russian to Siberia, to dark Asiatic Trans-Caucasia and other places, shedding much of their innocent blood from the iron shackles and hand-cuffs.

Upon The introduction of military service in Trans-Caucasia, we were compelled to leave our birth places, our cultivated fields, our homes and households, coming in the last decade to America, to a country worthy of peace and liberty, obtaining here for ourselves and families, a livelihood by the hardest kinds of labor, not burdening the country.

Judging by the general registration of the 5th of June of this year, it seems as though we unnaturalized foreigners must also participate in the military obligations now introduced here. But even the inclusion of our names in the military rolls is prejudicial to our consciences.

By virtue of the above we consider it necessary to notify you betimes that according to our religious convictions we cannot enter into The army of the country entrusted to your government, and to escape the possible future performance of which as well as prosecution for refusal, we ask to be exempted from its participation.

Herewith we append a resolution adopted by our community on the 28th day of May of this year.

The number of followers of this religion in America is approximately four thousand souls of both sexes, including children.

Delegates Ivan G. Samarin and Philip M. Shubin

June 2, 1917.

Addenda III

WAR DEPARTMENT

Office of the Provost Marshal General
Washington

June 19, 1917.

Messrs. I. G. Samarin, M. Kolpokoff¹⁸ & Philip Shubin:

Gentleman:

Your personal call at the office this morning and the statements of the petition which you handed me this afternoon leaves me in no doubt that such complications as has arisen in connection with the registration of members of your society is due to a misapprehension of the requirements of the Selective Service law. Registration is not enlistment in the Military Service. It creates in and of itself no obligation to perform any military service. It is the means provided

¹⁸ M. Kolpokoff was the Arizona Molokan delegate Mihail P. Pivovarovff

by law whereby liability or nonliability to combatant military service is revealed. In your case, it is the means of bringing to the attention of the authorities your claim of membership in a sect opposed to military service and the bearing of arms. This fact being ascertained as provided by law your exemption from all forms of combatant service would follow.

I understood at our morning conference that with this explanation you were willing to register and I gave you assurance that the facts as stated by you would exempt you from combatant military service. This letter is sent at your request in order that it may appear in writing just what understanding was reached at our conference this morning.

Very truly yours,
O. H. Crowder
Provost Marshal General.

Addenda IV

To Honorable Henry L. Stimson,
Secretary of War, Washington, D.C.

By

The Colony of Russian Christian Molokan Spiritual Jumpers, a religious sect, of Los Angeles, California.

WAR DEPARTMENT
Oct. 15, 1940
Secretary's Office

PETITION

In the month of June, 1917, The organized Brotherhood of Molokan Christian Spiritual Jumpers of Los Angeles, California, filed their petition with the President of the United States, praying for exemption of their young men from military service, for religious reasons.

Said petition was signed by representatives of 259 families only, because the special meeting for that purpose, was called on short notice, and all of the members of the organized Brotherhood therefore did not have the opportunity to be present.

We consider it necessary to inform you and whom ever it may concern, that with the increase during the last 23 years, the colony of Russian Christian Spiritual Jumpers, a religious sect, at the present consists of approximately 1500 families, numbering 10,000 persons.

Among our people there are a great many farmers, most of whom reside at or near Fresno, California, and other places.

Should it be requisite, we will furnish the names of all the heads of our families.

We respectfully submit the above stated facts and pray that you order that the names of the petitioners herein, be added to the original petition of the 259 families heretofore filed in June, 1917, as hereinabove stated.

Dated at Los Angeles, California, September 21st, 1940.

Respectfully submitted,
Moses Holopoff, 4340 Michigan Ave. L.A. Calif.
Moses E. Voloff, 1255. Gage St., L.A.

Addenda V

National Headquarters
SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM
21st Street and C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

October 16, 1940

David Miloserdoff,
Walter Shinen,
John K. Berokoff.

Gentlemen:

Receipt of the petition of The Colony of Russian Christian Molokan Spiritual Jumpers is hereby acknowledged, and it is hereby noted that similar petition were received by The President and by the Secretary of War.

Pursuant to our conference of this date I shall herein endeavor to briefly summarize the portions of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 and the regulations issued thereunder applicable to conscientious objectors.

It is my understanding that you have no complaint with respect to registration, realizing that all conscientious objectors within the age limits should register.

Subsequent to registration, the registration cards will be delivered to the respective local boards of the residences of the registrants. After the national lottery, which determines The assignment of order numbers, questionnaires will be sent by the local boards to the registrants. At first the questionnaires will be sent only to registrants having the lower order numbers. On page 6 of the questionnaire appears a section with respect to conscientious objectors which is designated as "Series X.—Conscientious Objections to War." Such portion of the questionnaire provides an opportunity for conscientious objectors to make claim for exemption.

In addition to making a claim by properly executing Series X of the questionnaire, the conscientious objector should also execute Form 47 in substantiation of his claim. Such form should be obtained from the local board and after execution should be filed with it.

The local board will proceed to classify the conscientious objector in the same manner as other registrants. If the conscientious objector is classified into a deferred class, there will be no need to pass upon his claim of conscientious objection. However, if the conscientious objector is not classified into a deferred class, but would, except for his conscientious objection, be classified into Class I, the local board will pass upon such claim.

In passing upon such claim, if the local board finds that the claimant is by reason of his religious training and belief conscientiously opposed to combatant service in which he might be ordered to take human life, but is not conscientiously opposed to noncombatant service in which he could contribute to the health, comfort and preservation of others, the claimant shall be liable for non-combatant service only. However, if the local board finds that the claimant by reason of his religious training and belief is opposed to both combatant and noncombatant service, the claimant shall be liable only for assignment to work of national importance under civilian direction under such rules and regulations as may be later prescribed. If the local board does not make either of such findings and does not allow the claim, the claimant will be classified in Class I and remain liable for combatant service.

If the claim has not been allowed, in whole or in part, and if the claimant is dissatisfied with the decision of the local board, he will upon request have an opportunity to appear in person before the local board, at which time he may discuss his classification and point out the class or

classes in which he thinks he should have been placed. If after such appearance the local board does not alter its decision and change the classification, the claimant may appeal to the board of appeal. If the question of conscientious objection is the only point involved in the appeal, the board of appeal will transmit to the Department of Justice the records and all other evidence transmitted to it by the local board. The Department of Justice will then make an inquiry and hold a hearing, at which time the claimant will have an opportunity to be heard. Should the Department of Justice be of the opinion that the claim is justified, it will recommend to the board of appeal either that the claimant be assigned to non-combatant service, or that he be assigned to work of national importance under civilian direction. Otherwise, the Department of Justice shall recommend to the board of appeal that the claim be not sustained. Upon receipt of recommendation of the Department of Justice the board of appeal will determine The question after giving consideration to the recommendation of the Department of Justice.

I appreciate your interest in this matter and your desire to cooperate in carrying out and complying with the Act and regulations. I hope that the above summary will satisfactorily serve your purposes. For complete details of the procedure you should refer to the exact language of the Act and regulations, copies of which are enclosed herewith.

Your very truly,
LEWIS B. HERSHEY
Lt. Col., Field Artillery,
Executive.

Addenda VI

April 17, 1942

United States District Court
Southern District of California
1431 Post Office Bldg.
Los Angeles, California

Honorable Harry A. Holizer
Judge, U.S. District Court
Federal Bldg. Los Angeles, California

Dear Judge Holizer:

Your Honor will recall that on last Monday's calendar, there appeared the names of three young men charged with violation of the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940, in that they had failed and refused to enter the services of the armed forces of the United States after having been instructed to do so by the legally constituted Selective Service Boards.

In the course of the Probation System pre-sentence investigation conducted by this office, it was discovered that these three defendants were members of the Molokan Church. It was asserted that the chief tenet of the faith of that organization was a strict prohibition against the killing of a human being and, consequently, the bearing of arms. My officer felt that a greater knowledge of the church and its background would be necessary if a true picture of training and belief of these youths was to be presented to the courts. Viewing the probability that a great many young men of the Molokan faith would eventually be presented as defendants in similar

cases, it was thought best to meet with the leaders of the Molokan Church and gain definite, accurate information as to that institution.

Through the mother of one of the three defendants, a meeting was arranged in the Federal Building of the heads of the six Molokan Congregations. Before this was done, my officer informed Mr. Lambeau of the United States Attorney's Office of the proposed exploratory meeting and asked that an assistant United States attorney be present in order that no statement from the Probation Officer could be presented to the Molokans which would give them an idea that the meeting was judicial or quasi-judicial, or of any legal bearing on the cases at issue. Mr. Lambeau assigned Mr. Duni to attend the meeting, and this was arranged. Also, before the meeting was opened my officer informed your honor of the meeting and its purposes.

Inasmuch as too many persons representing the six churches of the Molokan faith were present at 10:00 A.M. April 16, 1942. to be accommodated in any room of the Probation Office, it was arranged that the meeting be held in the Grand Jury room in this building.

Probation Officer Meador explained to the group through it's own interpreter the reason for asking those present to attend. He stated that he wished to learn the history of the sect; it's tenets; the reason The members of the group came to the United States; and any other facts which might give light to Your Honor and the other judges of this District who may sit in judgment on cases covering the religious scruples of members of the Molokan faith.

The information given at this meeting is as follows.

In Los Angeles there are six congregations of the Molokan Church. These churches have no real central authority but are supervised by leaders elected by the entire memberships of churches, and who meet together from time to time to take up matters affecting all of their members. The only reason for having six congregations is to locate them in centers of Molokan population and to avoid having too many persons in one edifice at the services. Their ministers are not salaried; in fact, laymen preach many of the services, and often preaching duties are rotated among elders and leaders of the congregations. The service in four of the churches is conducted in the Russian language, but in two, part of the time and in one church all the time, services are conducted in English for the younger more Americanized attendants. The Church does no proselytizing, maintains no missionaries, does not have a hierarchy or governing officials.

During the seventeenth century in central Russia, an English doctor at St. Petersburg (presumably a Quaker) became acquainted with certain influential Russians and interested them in his religious views; one tenet of which was against bearing arms. Not only the officials, but their servants became interested, then convinced, and commenced the spread of these doctrines. From this small beginning, the sects of Dukhobors and Molokan sprung.

It is said that a delegation of Molokans petitioned Catherine the Great and that she exempted their members from military service for 99 years. After that time, they were again conscripted into the army or suffered punishment. In about 1830 the Czar moved the Molokans into Trans-Caucasia, and they lived there approximately fifty years under military exemption. Then, again, the conscription and punishments were restored.

Just prior to the year 1900, a group of three Molokans were sent to Canada to investigate the desirability of immigrating to that country. They were offered military exemption for 99 years, but the climate was thought to be too severe, and they were told of Southern California in the United States, which had no compulsory military service, and they investigated. They returned to Russia and gathered together groups which immigrated to Los Angeles, San Francisco, the San Joaquin Valley, Ensenada, Mexico, and Mexican points as well as two locations in Arizona.

It is believed that there are now about 10,000 Molokans in the United States. At that time it is also asserted that Argentina offered military exemption to this sect for 99 years, but they preferred the United States.

During the war in 1917 numerous members of this sect refused to bear arms and likewise to purchase liberty Bonds; however, in lieu of such purchases, they made corresponding donations to the American Red Cross. Those who refused induction in that war were jailed and most of them were held in prison until after the Armistice.

Upon the direct question as to whether or not the Molokans would serve as stretcher bearers, truck drivers for the Army, or similar capacities they informed us that they could not do so, but that they would till the soil, do fire prevention work, forestation or anything else for the United States that did not have any connection with killing or aid to killing.

At the conclusion of the meeting which lasted approximately one hour, it was the thought of Mr. Duni and Mr. Meader, that these persons spoke for the entire Molokan sect; that the history for more than two hundred years attested their sincerity in their belief against bearing arms and against conflict; that they would do their patriotic duty in any other manner and that there was no attempt on the part of their church organization in the line of subversive activities.

In the belief that many cases concerning Molokan men will come before the courts in this district, it is desired to mimeograph a sufficient number of copies of this document to supply one in connection with each separate case. This plan was outlined to the Senior Judge who stated that if we believed that the group who met with us spoke for the entire body of Molokans, such program would have his approval in that it might save duplication of labor and of time in succeeding cases. We do believe as outlined above, therefore will take the action to which I refer.

Trusting that this information will provide a broad background of information for Your Honor and the other Honorable Judges of this district, I am

Respectfully yours

Chief Probation Officer

Addenda VII

April 4, 1942

Mr. Harold Stone Hull
544 East Orange Grove Ave.
Pasadena, California

Dear Mr. Hull;

In answer to your communication of March 26 to our Mr. Eropkin, asking for a statement on the Molokan history, etc., we herewith submit a brief outline of the origin of Molokanism and its reasons for emigrating to America, as well as its mode of life here in California.

Historical research does not give any definite date or place of the origin of Molokanism. Apparently, it followed in the general European reformation of the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. The Russian Encyclopedia is the authority for the statement that Molokanism originated in the last half of the 18th century, in the central provinces of Russia, adding that the first official use of the word "Molokan" occurred in 1765.

The Molokans themselves, being of poor and illiterate peasant stock in a backward nation, have no written records of their origin, but Non-Molokan writers ascribe Their origin to an English surgeon (presumably a Quaker) who while traveling in Russia on business was able to

spread the word among peasants and artisans who later themselves proceeded to be good missionaries.

From Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, we learn that Molokanism was originally a simple Christianity marked by anti-Ritualistic opposition to the state church. The Russian Encyclopedia adds that “the Molokans teach the evasion of those laws which in their opinion are contrary to the Holy Scripture as for instance the laws of military service and the taking of oaths”.

Like other dissident sects of that period, the Molokans had to endure cruel persecution for their beliefs from the Russian church and State. They sought to alleviate such cruelties by petitions to the Tsar, but were only partly successful.

In the year 1839 they were given permission to settle in the then wild frontier countries, such as Siberia, Armenia, Georgia, and Crimea. Together with this permission they were given an exemption from military service for a period of 50 years.

Our immediate ancestors chose to settle in small villages throughout Trans-Caucasia, where in short space of time, by their industry and thrift they were, able to establish a standard of life far above the surrounding native population.

Upon the expiration of the 50 year period the government again forced military service upon our people. Whereupon the elders began to seek other places of refuge. Many different places were suggested and tried, but none proved to be satisfactory.

In the year 1900 when the Dukhobours—who were living in neighboring villages—and who were having similar difficulties—were settled in Canada, our elders sent a delegation there to determine whether they too could find the same refuge.

Upon the return of the delegation with a favorable report, a determined effort was made to secure from the Russian Government a further exemption from military service. Failing in this, they tried to secure permission to leave the country “en masse”. This was also denied them. It was then decided to move to America in small groups.

In 1903, three Molokans, without families arrived in Canada. The climate there, seemed too severe for them. While there they met some Russian political refugees, who told them that the same freedom from compulsory military service, and the same opportunities to make a living exist in the United States as in Canada. They further recommended Southern California as an ideal place.

The three Molokans immediately departed for Los Angeles. Following them came other groups, small and large until 1912, at which time there were about 4,000 of us in Southern California.

In coming to America we had no intention to live in cities, but having expended all of our resources in getting here we were forced to stop in cities to recuperate.

Unfortunately, however, the temptation to remain in the city became stronger as the years went by. Although many efforts were made to settle the whole group on farms, none proved successful. However, there are a number of successful small groups living on farms in California, Arizona, and Oregon.

When the United States entered the last war in 1917 the Molokans again bestirred themselves towards securing exemption from compulsory military service.

In June of that year they sent a delegation of three men to Washington, D.C. with a petition to President Wilson in which, among other things, it was stated that, “even the inclusion of our names in military rolls was prejudicial to our consciences”.

In answer to this petition Provost Marshal General Crowder, in a letter dated June 19, 1917, gave them the same status as conscientious objectors as the Friends, Mennonites and other historic peace churches. Notwithstanding this fact, seven members of our faith were given

sentences of 12, 15 and 25 years for draft evasion in the last war. Happily they were released soon after the end of the war.

In September of 1940 after the passage of the present selective service act, the Molokans, realizing that the act as it relates to the conscientious objector is so complicated that the average Molokan boy affected by the act could not secure the full benefit of the law decided to elect an advisory council to assist any Molokan registrant seeking its advice.

The present duties of the Advisory Committee is to maintain contact with the National Service Board, to raise funds for the maintenance of assignees in C.P.S. Camps and act in a general advisory capacity to the whole Molokan group on C.O. matters.

At the present time there are approximately 10,000 Molokans in the United States. Some of them are farmers many are laborers, the majority are artisans, mechanics and truck drivers.

The majority are either native born or naturalized American citizens and many more would apply for naturalization if they were not deferred by their objection to taking an oath and by the knowledge that citizenship would be denied them unless they were willing to take arms to defend the country in time of war.

In Los Angeles, there are six branches of the Molokan church. There are also branches in Shaffer, Kerman, and San Francisco, California, as well as Glendale, Arizona and Shedd, Oregon.

The tenets and services in all these branches are identically the same. The services consist of singing of Psalms and songs, reading of the scriptures, prayer, and exhortations and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit as recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts, called jumping.

The sole reason of having six different branches in Los Angeles is that upon arrival in America, each regional group desired to remain under the pastorate of the man who was their pastor back in the village at home. This system continues until the present time, although there is a marked tendency towards unification which has resulted in one branch becoming much larger than the others.

In conclusion I would like to quote from an author who has made a 5 year study of the Molokans in Los Angeles. Pauline V. Young in the "Pilgrims of Russian Town" says, "Molokanism is both a system of thought and a way of life. The Molokan is a man of prayer and in His most ordinary acts closely associates sacred with secular attributes. To the Molokan active in faith, distinction between the two is unknown. Belief and act are inseparable."

Trusting that this short resume would be Sufficient, I remain,
Yours sincerely,

Addenda VIII

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Office of the Assistant to the Attorney General
Washington (25)

April 20, 1944

Mr. John K. Berokoff, Secretary
Brotherhood of Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers
335 South State Street
Los Angeles, California

My dear Mr. Berokoff:

This acknowledges your letter of April 20, 1944, signed by yourself and ten other ministers and elders of the Brotherhood of Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers with reference to the hearings conducted by the Hearing Officers of this Department in conscientious objector cases involving members of your sect.

At the outset, I wish to assure you and your associates that this Department has always recognized the Molokan Church as a "Peace Group" sect, and the tenets of your religion with regard to participation in war are well known to all officials of this Department engaged in the administration of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

I desire to point out, however, that membership in the Molokan Church or any other religious denomination does not necessarily qualify a Selective Service registrant for exemption as a conscientious objector. The state of the individual registrant's conscience, rather than his affiliation with any particular denomination, is the question of fact to be determined in deciding whether or not he shall be exempted as a conscientious objector.

While the members of the older generation of Molokans may be conceded to adhere strictly to the principles and teachings of their religion, it has been found that many of the younger members professing membership in the Molokan Church have so far deviated from the strict requirements of their religion that they have been found wanting in the "religious training and belief" which would warrant exemption as conscientious objectors.

I wish to assure you, however, that this Department is as concerned as the elders and ministers of your church about this particular problem and I feel quite certain that Hearing Officers Williams, Hartke and Files will make every effort to decide Molokan cases coming before them with the utmost consideration and fairness. Of course, each case must be decided upon its individual merits.

The matter has been called to the attention of the Hearing Officers involved, and I have no hesitation in assuring you that you will receive the sympathetic understanding of any one of these Hearing Officers if you desire to make representations to them concerning any particular case which may be referred to either of them in the future.

Very truly yours,

James P. McGranery
The Assistant to the Attorney General

PETITION FROM THE MOLOKAN BRETHERN IN IRAN
to
PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN
and
SUPPORTING COVER LETTER
from the
LOS ANGELES ELDERS

Addenda IX

September 14, 1947

To His Excellency, Harry S. Truman,
President of the United States,

White House,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Enclosed herewith is a petition of our friends in Iran which we are forwarding to you at their request. We also enclose an English translation of the petition which too, was made at their request.

In forwarding this petition we are not unmindful of the fact that the President of this nation is occupied with far more important matters than the affairs of a small group of foreign refugees in far off Iran, but the desperate plight of these brothers in faith compels us to take the presumptuous step of trespassing upon your valuable time.

Since the close of the recent war, many of us individually and our whole Molokan Community collectively, have been frequently receiving urgent and pathetic pleas for help from these unfortunate people. Their letters to us are, naturally, written with less restraint than the enclosed petition, hence their description of the life of a small group of Christians amidst a fanatically Mohammedan population is far more graphic and inspirational of pity.

We as the more fortunate members of the same religious faith, did not remain unresponsive to their pleas. On numerous occasions sums of money were collected and forwarded to them for their immediate needs. Indeed, some of us who have relatives among the petitioners have made applications through regular Immigration channels for their admission to the United States, and provided funds for their passage as well, but until now only two families were thus admitted.

The suffering and privations of these refugees as narrated to us by the two recently arrived families intensified our concern for them many-fold, that is why we join them in their pleas. Cannot some ways be found to facilitate their admission to this country?

It seems that most of these people were born in a part of old Russia (the Province of Kars) which had been acquired by Turkey after the first World War. Consequently, a ruling has been made by either the Consulate at Teheran or by the Immigration authorities in Washington, that they must seek admission not under the Russian quota which is large, but under the Turkish quota which is very small. We respectfully submit that this ruling is unjust and creates an unnecessary obstacle in their path towards admission. Cannot this obstacle be removed by permitting them to file under the Russian quota?

As naturalized and native-born citizens of the United States, as residents and tax payers of this country for over forty years, we vouch for the integrity, industry, and collective temperance and character of these petitioners. Furthermore, we can assure you, Mr. President, that they are entirely free from any subversive elements, and if admitted, they will not become a burden upon any private or public institution for their subsistence, but that they will become law-abiding, self-supporting citizens of this great nation.

Respectfully submitted by the undersigned Pastors and Elders of the various Molokan churches in California and Arizona:

DAVID P. MELOSERDOFF
3064 E. 4th Street,
Los Angeles, Calif.
JOHN K. BEROKOFF, Secretary
3365. State St.

Los Angeles, California
ALEX A. VALOV
3300 Opal Street

Los Angeles, California
MIKE V. GVOZDIFF
2842 East 7th Street

Los Angeles, California
WM. J. SEMENOFF
423 N. Townsend Street

Los Angeles, California
J. D. CONOVALOFF
Route 3, Box 292
Phoenix, Arizona

Addenda XI

From:

Ivan Davidovitch Tickhonoff, and
Ivan Feodotovitch Boldereff.

Delegates of the Spiritual Christian Molokans, residing in Iran.

To His Excellency Harry S. Truman,
President of the United States of America.

PETITION

We are Spiritual Christians—Molokans, numbering approximately 300 souls. By profession we are farmers, cotton raisers, cattle raisers, dairymen, and some mechanics. We have fled the Soviet Union and came to Iran in the early 1920's.

The Soviet Government had been pursuing all religious people. As a result of this, many of our brethren in faith perished from tortures, in prisons and in exiles, many were forcibly separated from their families, wives from their husbands, and infants from their mothers.

However, nothing they could do caused us to be afraid. They could not quench in us our faith in the living God, for we were guided by the word of God as it is written in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, Chap. Eight, Verse 35: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecutions, or famine or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Even as the Saviour himself hath said: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."

Suffering from harsh and cruel tribunals, many of our brethren fled from city to city and from village to village, until some decided to escape to countries where people still confessed their faith in the Almighty Creator.

Over dangerously steep and rocky mountains and cliffs, carrying our beloved children on our backs, not infrequently leaving them behind, frozen to death in the snow, without clothing or any means of subsistence, we finally crossed the border into Iran which is adjacent to the Soviet Union. But alas! our reception here was not hospitable owing to the religious fanaticism of the people. The Government would not permit us emigrants to settle where we could more easily make a living for our families, instead directed us, for the most part, into tropical and malarial

regions where many of us died of various tropical diseases. Existing from the very beginning of our emigration under the severest kind of living conditions, having no means of livelihood, neither property nor any land fit for cultivation, we are doomed to perish here.

Reading in the newspapers where your Excellency, as a religious Christian, upon taking the office you prayed God to grant you wisdom to govern the people as he hath granted to Solomon the King of Israel. We could now clearly discern as could all the peoples of the world, that God did invest your mind with that wisdom and love towards humanity so that now all religious people of the world turn their face towards you, Mr. President.

This is further attested to by the letters of our Brethren in faith who since 1904, have been living in the United States of America in the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Fresno and other communities of California and Arizona.

In view of everything set forth above we, elders and children alike, humbly beg you, Mr. President, on our bended knees, turn your merciful gaze upon us who are weary because we have suffered much, have been persecuted for the Word of God and for the sake of righteousness. Take us under your protection and permit us to enter the confines of the United States of America, where we could be useful to your country and where we could praise and worship our God in peace and happiness.

May the words of our lord Jesus Christ be fulfilled by you, for He hath said: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me": Matthew 25, Verse XXXX.

Our brethren in faith who live in the United States and who number approximately 15,000 persons, will vouch for our dependability and love of labor.

(Signed)

IVAN DAVIDOVITCH TICKHONOFF
IVAN FEODOTOVITCH BOLDAREFF
City of Teheran, Iran
July 21, 1947

Addenda XIII

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Washington

In reply refer to
VD 811,111 Quota/9-1447

October 15, 1947

Mr. John K. Berokoff
Molokan Advisory Council
335 South State Street
Los Angeles, California.

Sir:

I have by reference from the White House your communication of September 14, 1947, and its enclosures, concerning your interest in the visa applications of persons born in the Province of Kars.

It may be explained that for quota purposes the law requires that nationality be determined by

the country of the alien's birth. Persons born in territory which has been transferred from one country to another, such transfer having been recognized by the United States, shall be considered to have been born in the country to which the territory was transferred. The United States has recognized the transfer of the Province of Kars to Turkey and, consequently, persons born therein are chargeable to the Turkish quota.

Very truly yours,
H.J. L'Heureux
Chief, Visa Division

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE MOLOKAN COMMUNITY ON FEBRUARY 18, 1945
AGAINST PROPOSED ENACTMENT OF PEACE TIME MILITARY CONSCRIPTION AND
LETTERS TO THE CHAIRMEN OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICE COMMITTEE AND
THE HOUSE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEES INCLUDING REPLIES FROM ABOVE.

Addenda XIV

March 4, 1950

Molokan Advisory Com
John K. Berokoff, Sec
335 5. State St.
Los Angeles 33, Calif.

House Armed Services Committee
Hon. Carl Vinson, Chairman
Washington, D.C.

Gentlemen:

The undersigned members of the Molokan Spiritual Christian Churches in Los Angeles and vicinity are deeply concerned regarding the Proposed new Selective Service Bill H.R. 7442. Individually and collectively we feel that compulsory military training is not a solution to the present world crisis. We feel that a large military establishment in the age of the atom bomb and other hellish weapons is altogether superfluous. Solutions based on Christian and humane principles should be sought by responsible government officials. We therefore earnestly urge that present plans for compulsory military training be abandoned.

Furthermore as religious objectors to war and military training in any form, we earnestly urge that in the event the proposed new bill is to be considered, provisions for conscientious Objectors as embodied in the Selective Service Act of 1948, (Section 6, J) be restored in its entirety.

Very sincerely yours

Addenda XV

May 5, 1945

Hon. Andrew May, Chairman

House Military Affairs Committee,
House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a resolution passed by delegates of our several churches at their meeting on February 18th of this year. This resolution expresses the unanimous sentiment of our people on this subject.

I shall be very happy to send you any additional information on the Molokan people that you may desire.

Very truly yours,
John K. Berokoff, Sec.

Addenda XVI

June 6, 1945

Hon. Clifton A. Woodrum
House Office Bldng.
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a copy of a resolution passed by delegates of our several churches on February 18th last. The Resolution expresses the unanimous sentiment of our people on the post-war plans for military conscription. I would be very happy to furnish any further information on the Molokan people that your committee may desire.

Very truly yours,
John K. Berokoff, Sec.

Addenda XVII

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it has come to our attention that the Congress of the United States of America has before it a proposal to enact a bill to initiate permanent peacetime military training in the United States and,

WHEREAS, the United States of America has existed as a nation without peacetime compulsory military service since its beginning and,

WHEREAS, this has been a vital factor in attracting to the nation the best of human elements from the four corners of the world, enabling it to grow and prosper beyond the dreams of its most far-sighted founders, and

WHEREAS, permanent military training will tend to breed a professional military class which, by its nature, is bound to be undemocratic and in direct contravention to the intents and desires of the founders of the nation and framers of its Constitution, and

WHEREAS, the Brotherhood of the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers, known as the Molokans, has as one of the principal tenets of its religious faith, objection to military service of any kind, in peacetime or in war, and

WHEREAS, The Molokans have, on numerous occasions, made this tenet known to the various governments of the United States of America, notably in a petition to President Woodrow Wilson in June of 1917 and in a similar petition to President Franklin D. Roosevelt in October of 1940, as well as in subsequent communications to various officials of the Federal Government. Therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Brotherhood of the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers, comprising in its entirety approximately 10,000 persons residing in the states of California, Arizona and Oregon, through the representatives of its several branches in meeting assembled at Los Angeles, Calif., do again make known to whomever it may concern, our unalterable objection to military service and to urge the lawmakers of the nation to refrain from passing any legislation for the establishment of permanent military conscription, which, in the long run, will certainly be detrimental to the nation's welfare, and further be it

RESOLVED, that the Brotherhood of the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers, through its representatives, do again inform whomever it may concern that, in the event that legislation is passed establishing permanent compulsory military service in the United States, if is our intention to abide faithfully by the tenets of our religion in respect thereto, and further be it

RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution, together with copies of the Petitions to President Wilson and President Roosevelt, be forwarded to the Chairman of the House and Senate Military Affairs Committees, to Senator Sheridan Downey and Senator Hiram Johnson and to each member of the California delegation to the House of Representatives. Dated at Los Angeles, California, February 18, 1945.

David P. Miloserdoff
William Semenoff
Moses E. Valoff
Mike Gvozdiff
J. Konovaloff
John Berukoff
Peter F. Shubin
Wm. J. Samarin

Addenda XVIII

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SELECT COMMITTEE ON POST-WAR MILITARY POLICY
Washington, D.C.

My dear Friend:

Your communication relative to Universal Military Training has been received and will be filed with the Committee on Post-War Military Policy.

The Committee has conducted open public hearings on the broad general policy of Post-War Military Training. A full opportunity has been given for the presentation of the views of those who favor and those who oppose this policy.

Your interest in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,
Clifton A. Woodrum
Chairman

Addenda XIX

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.
May 9, 1945

Mr. John K. Berokoff, Secretary,
Molokan Advisory Council,
335 South State Street,
Los Angeles, California.

Dear Friends:

Received your letter of April 23rd and the resolution attached thereto. I am glad to have the information regarding the beliefs of the brotherhood.

The question of compulsory military training will come before the Military Affairs Committee soon for decision. I do not know what form of military training will be adopted by Congress. Regardless of the type of training decided on, however, I believe provisions should be contained therein which would grant to conscientious objectors immunity from such military training. I will personally offer such an amendment when the proper time arrives.

With the present tenor of public opinion, I believe some type of compulsory military training will be passed and it is my opinion religious groups such as yours, Seventh Day Adventist, the Friends, and other similar groups would do well to concentrate your influence on making sure such a provision of immunity is contained in the measure, rather than expending your influence fighting against the proposal of compulsory military training.

I would appreciate your views on the thoughts I have outlined.

Most sincerely,
Chef Holifield, M.C.

Addenda XXI

A STATEMENT OF MOLOKAN ELDERS CONCERNING EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

OCT. 2. 1964

The Molokan community of Los Angeles as represented by the elders of the various churches deem it advisable at this time to acquaint the American public with their position relative to the recent reports that a mass emigration to Australia is contemplated. It is considered timely and

appropriate at this time to state that the Molokans of the United States hold no grievances against anything or anyone pertaining to their life in America. Being a small, little known Christian Protestant sect, holding to convictions considered strange or old-fashioned by some, such as wearing of beards, observing of Mosaic dietary laws, conscientious objection to military service etc. we have at all times been treated with courtesy, consideration and fairness in our dealings with local people, local, state and Federal authorities. The Molokan people are unanimous in considering America as a holy refuge from the evils that befell the world since 1914. It is true that when the Molokan leaders of the previous generation led our people to America from Russia in the first decade of the present century they did so in response to a revelation received by a youthful prophet in the middle of the previous century. At that time it was foretold that our sojourn in America would not be a permanent one. However, the duration of our stay here was not disclosed.

The small group of our people who sailed recently to Australia, did so not because of any economic or political reasons but to an inner response to a prophetic revelation that the time of our sojourn here, as foretold by previous prophets, has ended. It is not true however, that a mass emigration to Australia or to any other place, is being contemplated now. The majority of our people believe that a further confirmation of the recent revelation is necessary before an emigration of such magnitude, entailing as it does, privations and hardships, is or should be attempted.

Signatures

INQUIRY OF PROF. ARTHUR PIEPKORN OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY OF ST. LOUIS,
MO. CONCERNING MOLOKAN DOCTRINES AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES FOR
INCLUSION IN HIS PROPOSED REVISION OF A BOOK "THE RELIGIOUS BODIES OF
AMERICA"

AND

REPLIES BY JOHN K. BEROKOFF AS AUTHORIZED BY MOLOKAN ELDERS AT A
MEETING ON NOVEMBER 1966

Addenda XXII

CONCORDIA SEMINARY
Lutheran - Founded 1839
801 De Mun Aye., St. Louis 5, MO.

5 November 1966

Mr. John K. Berokoff
337 South State Street
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Berokoff:

The Reverend Harold J. Sherk of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors referred me to Mr. John Slevin for information about the Molokan Advisory Council. In reply to my letter he in turn referred me to you.

The occasion for my interest is that I have been asked by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, to prepare a new and completely revised edition of the late Frederick E. Mayer's "The Religious Bodies of America".

I should like to make the new edition of this reference work as complete, as accurate, and as authoritative as possible. For that reason I write to ask you for such information as you can give me on the doctrinal basis, the history, the worship, the distinctive practices, the geographic distribution, and the overall membership of the Molokan Advisory Council.

If there are any books, pamphlets, or magazine articles that provide this information, I should be grateful if you would give me the titles and tell me where I can obtain copies and, if you have this information, what they cost.

I look forward to early word from you. For your convenience I enclose an airmail reply envelope that requires no postage.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Carl Piepkorn

Professor of Systematic Theology

Addenda XXIII

Los Angeles, Calif.
337 S. State St.

November 14, 1966

Mr. Arthur C. Piepkorn
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Mr. Piepkorn:

I have your letter of Nov. 5th in which you request information concerning the Molokan Advisory Council. I presume that actually you are seeking information about the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers rather than the Molokan Advisory Council because the Molokan Advisory Council by itself is not a religious entity. It was only an arm of the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers. It was organized by the parent body in 1940 to counsel and assist young Molokans in their problems as conscientious objectors during the Second World War and the Korean War.

The Molokan Advisory Council was affiliated during that period with the National Service Board for Religious Objectors but shortly afterwards, due to slow-downs in the draft calls, it ceased to exist. However, we continue to cooperate with that body on an informal basis because, like other members of that organization, we too are known and recognized as a historic peace church, therefore we sympathize with their work and avail ourselves of their service from time to time.

I am afraid that I could not supply you with detailed information on our history in this letter. For that data I would refer you to the Encyclopedia Britannica 1913 edition. See the article on "Molokans". You might also consult F. C. Conybeare's "Russian Dissenters" published by the Cambridge Press in 1921.

It is also difficult to do justice in a letter to our doctrine and form of worship. We have recently published an English translation of some of the works of our founders. The title is "Selections from the Book of Spirit and Life" There you will find some, although not complete but authoritative explanations of our doctrines and form of worship. It could be purchased through the writer at \$5.00 per copy plus postage. But if you would prefer, I could mail you some excerpts from that book at no cost.

At this time I will limit myself to the following remarks: A non-Molokan visiting our church services would probably say that our form of worship is unsophisticated or even primitive because we try to adhere strictly to the form prescribed by the founders of our denomination who were, for the most part, peasants, artisans and small merchants in Russia.

Our church interiors are entirely bare. The only furniture is a table covered by a white table cloth on which are placed an opened Bible, the New Testament, our prayer book and a book of spiritual writings of our founders called "The Book of Spirit and Life".

The table is surrounded on four sides by plain benches. Those benches on three sides that are immediately next to the table are occupied by leading elders. Towards one side of the table the first three or four benches are occupied by the male chorus while the opposite side on the first bench sit the prophets. The benches in back of these are occupied by the younger members and children.

The fourth side, facing the end of the table and completing the quadrangle, is occupied by the women with the most respected elderly women sitting on the front benches.

Our regular church service begins with everyone sitting, and, while the congregation is assembling, we sing psalms and other passages from the scriptures and from the Book of Spirit and Life. In between the songs our elders read and preach from the scriptures and deliver homilies.

After about an hour of this, at a signal from the presbyter, the benches are removed and the prayer service begins. This consists in singing an appropriate song while everyone approaches by turns and places an offering on the table. Following this the presbyter leads in prayers while the congregation is all kneeling.

About four prayers are recited when everyone rises. At this time we perform the ceremony of the holy kiss which we call the communion. Everyone beginning with the assistant presbyter, kisses the presbyter and stands alongside of him followed by others who kiss the presbyter and others standing in the line. This is followed by everyone until the whole congregation, old and young, male and female, participates in the holy kiss. This is done while the chorus is singing an appropriate song such as the last five verses of Romans 8, 35: "who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" etc.

After this ceremony another prayer is recited with all kneeling following which the chorus sings several joyful spiritual songs. But we consider that the service has not reached its fullness unless there is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit which activates and moves at least some of the members in joyful spiritual jumping.

The service is concluded with another prayer by the presbyter, this time all standing.

I believe that this answers your request for the form of worship and distinctive practices. In addition to this our men wear beards and are required to wear a distinctive shirt at church services. This is a long shirt resembling a smock worn outside the trousers belt and girt with a thin tasseled cord. The women too are required to wear a distinctive dress and to cover their hair with a shawl.

Our doctrines in brief are similar in many respects with other protestant denominations. We believe in God and His Son Jesus Christ. We believe that He was born of the virgin Mary, that He died for our sins and arose on the third day, ascended to heaven and now sits at the right hand

of the Father. We believe that He will return again to judge the quick and the dead and will reign with His chosen ones for a thousand years on earth. We believe in praying and conducting services for the dead and adhere strictly to the Mosaic dietary laws and we believe in the sanctity of the marriage vows.

As for the geographical distribution, originally we are from the southern part of Russia. Before the Communist revolution the Molokans were very numerous in that area, perhaps over a hundred thousands but no one knew for certain as our ancestors were strict in their belief against taking of census. There are many of our people there even now although the Soviets managed to lessen their number considerably by one means or another.

In the United States, to which our fathers brought us in the year 1904-1912, there are now approximately 12 to 15,000 of our denomination. The largest majority are located in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles. About 50 families reside in San Diego county, perhaps 50 families around the San Francisco area and a large number are in farming communities in The San Joaquin valley. A small group of 30 or 40 families around Salem, Ore. and a similar number near Phoenix, Arizona. In addition to these a small group of our people recently emigrated to Australia and are living there, some in the Perth area and some near Adelaide.

We appreciate your efforts in compiling accurate presentation of our denomination.

Sincerely yours,
John K. Berokoff

Addenda XXV

CONCORDIA SEMINARY
Lutheran - Founded 1839
801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63105

22 November 1966

Mr. John Berokoff
Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers
337 South State Street
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Berokoff:

Thank you very much for your prompt, helpful, and detailed answer to my request for information about the Molokan Advisory Council.

I enclose a check for \$5.50 herewith to cover the cost of one copy of "The Book of Spirit and Life, plus postage.

You will, I trust, pardon me if I ask some additional questions, particularly if in my ignorance I ask one or the other question in the wrong way.

In your letter you state that at your services there are on the table an opened Bible, The New Testament, your prayer book, and "The Book of Spirit and Life." I take it that there are four books on the table. Is this correct? Is only the Russian edition of "The Book of Spirit and Life" placed on the table, or may the English edition that you are sending to me be substituted? Is there an English edition of your prayer book available? If so, what is the price? If not, can you give me (in Russian, if you prefer, which I am able to read, although with some difficulty) the full title of

your prayer-book, the place where it was published, the publisher or printer, and the year of the current edition?

I take it that there are still members of your church body in the Soviet Union. Have you received many new members by immigration in recent years? Have many of your people immigrated back to the Soviet Union since the November Revolution? (I ask this question because about ten years ago some 2,500 members of another group of Russian dissenters, the Doukhobors of Canada, did return, to the Soviet Union.)

This leads me to ask another question. Do all the members of your church-body belong to the same group, or are they divided into different movements? (Here again the question is prompted by the fact there are three kinds of Doukhobors, the Conservative or Orthodox Doukhobors, the Independent Doukhobors, and the Sons of Freedom.) From a German source I have information that several groups withdrew from the main body of Molokane in the Soviet Union and persisted at least until 1959 -- the "Gemeinsamen" (as my source calls them), the New Molokane (who ultimately joined the Gospel Christians, and the Subbotniki. Are any of these groups represented in the United States or Canada?

In your letter you refer to the presbyter. Do you have any persons who exercise oversight over the presbyters, that is, persons who would be comparable to bishops, superintendent, or (as among us Lutherans) district presidents with responsibility for a state or the major part of a state?

About how many churches or groups presided over by a presbyter are there in your denomination in The United States and Canada?

Do you use Russian exclusively in your services or is English also used?

What is the official title of your church-body in Russian?

Do you receive many members through conversion from other church-bodies or from a status of no church-membership at all? Do you lose many members to other church-bodies or to unbelief? Over the period since World War II would you say that your church-body has grown or declined in size? What in your opinion are its prospects for the future?

I am sure that some of my questions are answered in "The Book of Spirit and Life." If they are, please do not put yourself to the trouble of answering them in a letter. Again, if you regard any of these questions as improper, please feel free to disregard them.

After I receive "The Book of Spirit and Life" I may have a few more questions, and I hope that you will let me put them to you.

I do have one question that does not pertain to the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers, but in which you might be able to be some help to me. As I have indicated, I know about your church-body and about the Doukhobors. Otherwise I know of no church-bodies of Russian origin (except, of course, the three Russian Orthodox bodies and the colonies of "German-Russian" Lutherans) in the United States and Canada. Do you by chance know of any other bodies of Russian religious dissenters who have transplanted their church-life to this country or Canada (such as, possibly, the Popovcy, Bezpopovcy, Pornorzy, Imjaslacy, Nozdychency, Liudi Bozii, the New Israelites that followed Vasilij Lubkov, Skopcy, the Osnoynoe zveno Christa, or Jenochovey)?

Gratefully yours,

Arthur Carl Piepkorn

Professor of Systematic Theology

Los Angeles, Calif
November 29, 1966

Mr. Arthur C. Piepkorn
Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, MO.

Dear Mr. Piepkorn.

Herewith are answers to your inquiries concerning the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers. I will answer them in your chronological order.

1. It is true that there are four opened books on the table as I wrote you and only the Russian version of the Book of Spirit and Life is allowed on the table. An English translation of the Prayer Book is included in the "Selections from the Book of Spirit and Life" a copy of which I am mailing you under a separate cover. If, however, you prefer to have the Russian version of the Prayer Book, it could be purchased from the publisher, Mr. Paul Samarin, 944 Orme Ave; Los Angeles, Calif. 90023. I do not know its present price but I am sure that it is not over \$2.00. It was last published in 1959. Its title in Russian is "Molitvenik".

I would like to call your attention to the slight difference in the order of the church services as I described them to you and the one you will find in the Prayer Book. The latter form is called "The New Ritual" or "Maxim's Ritual". It is used on special, solemn occasions and usually at the Sunday evening services. It was prescribed and written by one of our revered leaders, Maxim G. Rudometkin while he was confined in prison in the latter half of the 19th century while the former is in more general use by all Molokans everywhere. Its authorship is attributed to the original founder of the Molokan faith, Semion Uklein. It is approximately 50 years older than the other.

The other Services in the Prayer Book, marriages, baptismal and funeral are followed to the letter in all churches in the United States except the Postoyannaye.

2. There are still many of our people in The Soviet Union although their freedom is curtailed to a great extent. None of them have immigrated to the United States since the revolution, likewise, none of us had returned there since then and very few have the desire to do so.

I believe that your information concerning the 2,500 Doukhobors returning is incorrect. There had been negotiations to that end but I am sure no such large group had returned although some individuals might have done so. You might check with a friend of mine, a well known Doukhor, Mr. Peter N. Maloff, Thrums, B.C., Canada.

3. With the exception of a small group of 75-100 families in San Francisco who are of the Postoyannaye, a branch of Molokany, all of the various groups in Arizona, California and Oregon belong to the Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers. In all of these some minor doctrinal differences could be found but no outright divisions. A member of one congregation could and does freely move from one congregation as is convenient for him. As for "The New Molokane" group in the Soviet Union, we have none here, in fact, we have never heard of them.

4. There are no bishops etc. in our denomination. Each individual congregation is entirely independent and is free to select its own presbyter and elders as it deems necessary. Whenever a problem arises that concerns The entire brotherhood, a meeting of presbyters and elders is called upon the initiative of one or another presbyter and an endeavor is made to arrive at a common understanding. Of course it is natural, as in any other group that the word of some elder carries more weight than others.

5. There are at present 15 churches presided over by a presbyter in California, Arizona and Oregon. There are none in Canada.

6. The Russian language is used exclusively in all services except in the Sunday schools and in the young people's meetings. These are conducted in both languages.

7. The title of our church body in Russian is: Dukhovnaye Christiani Pryguny.

8. During our 60 years in the United States only a very few members were accepted from other church bodies or from non-church individuals. These were accepted primarily through marriages with other members. This is mainly due to the fact that our services are conducted in Russian which, as you know, is not the easiest language to learn.

9. I hesitate to express an opinion about our future prospects. The majority of our people believe that the power and authority of the Antichrist is already visible. This belief is based on the book of Revelations as expounded in the Book of Spirit and Life. It is believed that that power will assert itself more and more in the future, therefore, the future of all church bodies, including our own, will depend to a large extent on how well we will be able to stand up against his authority.

The present world-wide trend towards indifference to religion has affected us no less than others. The general euphoria created by the extraordinary prosperity has brought about a complacency that is disturbing, and since it is well known that adversity tends to bring a person to God and to the church, it is possible that a sudden reversal in material prosperity might bring about a change in the people's concern for their souls.

10. Do we lose any members to other denominations? Yes. The Jehovah Witnesses and the Pentecostal groups have made some inroads into our membership but since World War II our membership has grown because of the "population explosion".

11. As for other Russian Dissenters, I know of only one minute group that has recently immigrated to the U.S. from China via Brazil. They are settled in a farming community in Woodburn, Ore. about 35 miles from Portland. They are of the Old Believers or Starovery faith but whether they are of the Popovfsy, Bezpopovfsy or Whatever, I do not know. You might write to a friend of mine who is their neighbor and who knows them very well, in fact he and others of our faith sponsored their immigration to the U.S. His address is: Efim Podgornoff, Rt. 1, Box 33, Gervais, Ore.

12. The latest information available here is that the New Israelites who followed Lubkoff to Uruguay no longer exists as a religious body. To all appearances they have become assimilated in the local population.

If I could be of any further assistance do not hesitate to write.

Sincerely yours,

John K. Berokoff

Addenda XXIX

CONCORDIA SEMINARY
Lutheran-Founded 1839
801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, MO. 63105

27 December 1966

Mr. John K. Berokoff
Russian Molokan Spiritual Christian Jumpers
337 South State Street
Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Berokoff:

Two weeks of active duty for training in the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, at Washington have put me that much behind with my correspondence.

Thank you very much for your helpful response to my request for assistance in revising the late Frederick Emanuel Mayer's "The Religious Bodies of America."

The information you have given me is exactly of the kind for which I was looking. Can you (a) summarize briefly for me the differences between the Postoyannaye branch of The Molokany and the main body that you represent and (b) give me the name and address of some leader of the Postoyannaye group in San Francisco?

As the actual rewriting of the book proceeds, I hope that I may turn to you again for such help as I may need.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Arthur Carl Piepkorn
Professor of Systematic Theology

Addenda XXX

Los Angeles, Calif.
337 S. State St.

January 4, 1966

Mr. Arthur C. Piepkorn,
Concordia Seminary,
St. Louis, MO.

Dear Mr. Piepkorn.

I have your letter of Dec. 27 in which you ask me to summarize the differences between the Postoyannaye and the Spiritual Jumpers.

As you no doubt know from your researches both groups were members of one large body who were commonly called Molokany but who called themselves the Spiritual Christians.

In the 1830's there was a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit among them, moving many of them to prophesy, to speak in tongues and to joyful jumping during church services. This manifestation was accepted by many as divinely inspired but rejected by the majority as having no value in the services.

Naturally they soon split up into two different bodies; those who rejected the new manifestation called themselves "Postoyannaye" meaning "Constant" and those who accepted it added the designation "Pryguny" to the name "Spiritual Christians".

In separating, both groups retained the same form of worship, the same prayers and sang the same psalms and other passages from the scriptures. However, the Pryguny began to compose and sing spiritual songs to more lively tunes than the psalms which the Postoyannaye rejected as not divinely inspired.

Both groups adhered to the original doctrine to worship no images or ikons or the virgin Mary and the saints neither the symbol of the cross. Both interpret water baptism spiritually and both observe the Mosaic dietary laws and honor the same founders mentioned on pages 32 and 33 of

my translated book, but the Pryguny added others to this list who were leaders in the separation such as Rudometkin, David Yesseyevich and others.

Both groups originally observed the same holidays such as Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ascension. However, in the 1860's, upon the urging of Rudometkin from his prison confinement, the Pryguny gave these up as inventions of the Ecumenical Councils and substituted in their stead the Passover, the Pentecost, the day of Trumpets, the day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, but we attach a different significance to these holidays than The Israelites did.

We commemorate the Lord's last supper on Passover night and feast the following 7 days in honor of His resurrection. We observe the Pentecost in honor of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the day of Trumpets in anticipation of the call to last judgments; the day of Atonement we observe by fasting 24 hours in anticipation of the great judgment day and we feast eight days during the Feast of Tabernacles in honor of the soon-coming Millennium. The Postoyannaye do not observe any of these except the Pentecost.

The Postoyannaye still hold to the old form of worship that I described to you in my first letter but occasionally nowadays they sing spiritual songs borrowed from the Pryguny, and of course they rejected the new form of Rudometkin's ritual out of hand

At the present time there is considerable commingling between the two groups here in California. Visitors from either group are welcomed in either church services and young people occasionally intermarry without hindrance. I do not know how it is in the Soviet Union.

I am not acquainted with any of the leaders in their group in San Francisco but The name and address of their presbyter is Mr. Timofey A. Razvaliaeff, 1094 De Haro St., San Francisco 24.

I hope that this summary will be helpful to you.

Sincerely yours.

PHOTOGRAPHS



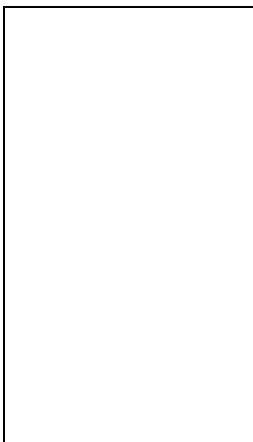
Members of the old Selimskaya congregation proceeding along E. Third Street to a meeting with two other congregations to form the First United Church (Big church). The two white-suited and white bearded elders holding the scriptures are, on the left: Vasili Tikhonitch Susoev and next to him: Foma Stepanich Bogdanoff. 1933. Photo Courtesy of Morris M. Beliakoff.



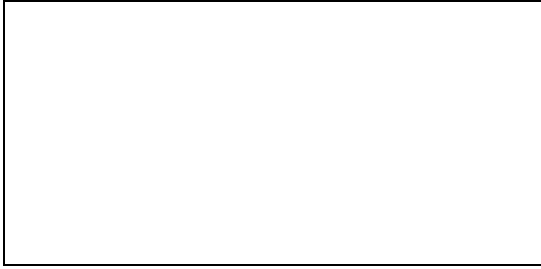
View in front of new building of First United Church on E. Third Street as members enter for the first day's dedication ceremonies. Photo Courtesy of Mr. And Mrs. John A. Kotoff.



Lumber yard in Wilmington showing many Molokan men among other unloading lumber-carrying ships in 1914. Photo Courtesy of James A. Samarin.



Brother Isaiah, the so-called miracle man who caused a considerable stir in the Molokan community in 1921. Photo Courtesy of Vasili R. Kulikoff.



A funeral procession approaching First Street from N. Gless Street. Third from left in front row is Afonasy T. Bezayeff and next to him holding handkerchief to face is Philip M. Shubin. 1909.