

***Stories From Doukhobor History.* By Eli A. POPOFF. (Grand Forks, B.C. : Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, 1992, 159 pp.) Katya : A Canadiart Doukhobor (Leningrad : TITUL and LenArt, 1991, 124 pp.) Available from USCC, Grand Forks, B.C.**

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hearing the sounds of these people at work and at play than through the research and productions of the children of the ancestors themselves?

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*Stories From Doukhobor History.* By Eli A. POPOFF. (Grand Forks, B.C. : Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ, 1992, 159 pp.) *Katya : A Canadian Doukhobor* (Leningrad : TITUL and LenArt, 1991, 124 pp.) Available from USCC, Grand Forks, B.C.

Eli A. Popoff, born in 1921 on a farm near the town of Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan, has lived first as an Independent farmer and then, being editor of *Iskra* and author of Doukhobor materials, as an Orthodox Doukhobor community activist in the interior of British Columbia. In these two books, the author draws on his personal experiences, on his readings in Russian and English, as well as on interviews with senior citizens in bringing to life the early and current history of the Spirit Wrestlers/ Doukhobors. While he sides heavily with the Orthodox Doukhobors, he makes an attempt to provide understanding from both the independent and zealot points of view.

The first book is a collection of translated articles on Doukhobors which he began in 1954, largely initiated in filling a gap for teaching curriculum materials in Sunday School Meetings. The emphasis is on the positive human interest stories, especially that which glorifies the central leadership line. This line is emphasized because the author considers the Orthodox group, with all its resources (large community centres, the Sunday School program, annual youth festivals, committees, and an Honorary Chairman), to be the central thrust for the survival of the Doukhobor movement.

His target audience is clear. In his own words, he dedicates the work "to all the members of the younger generations of Doukhobors who are seeking a true pathway of life, with the hope that they will evaluate correctly all the worthy ideals and

aspirations of our forefathers and resurrect them within their selves." Using a wide brush, the author shares his thoughts with youth as well as elders with the hope that his writings will help them to rediscover inner strengths of love, justice, peace, equality, and universal brotherhood.

He stays close to historical facts in the first book, but departs to a fictional story in the second book. He deals with the origins and early developments of the Doukhobor movement three hundred years ago, their migration to the Milky Waters Area in 1801, life in Transcaucasia, episodes during persecution in the terrible penal battalion, deadly episodes of life in Georgian exile, exile to remote Siberia and difficult life there, as well as the trying pioneer life in western Canada.

In his second book, the author creates the character, Katya, following her life from her 1930s childhood in the British Columbia Doukhobor settlement of Pladarodnoe Glade, to work in the Okanagan, to marriage and adult life in Grand Forks, then divorce and a new beginning. This is a picture of Doukhobor life through the eyes of a Doukhobor girl and woman, with understanding of the wider Doukhobor family. Her Babushka Fenia is a hero, the carrier of Doukhobor teachings, the intermediary between the generations, a person with natural wisdom, an excellent voice and memory, and with a deep and profound understanding of the Doukhobor spirit of love.

Katya's own sense of self seems to be in a state of tension between the "I" and the "We" demands of the modern world. Fitting the part into the whole became a lifelong struggle — as it has been for so many immigrants who come to the shores of a new country and strive to adjust to both the demands of the new and the pull of the old. As the heroine of the story, Katya has opened the door to both realities by welcoming youth to search deeply into their inner resources and thereby help them answer some of the adjustment problems of their human cross-cultural situations.

Katya's book deserves a better cover than the current one, which shows a blurred ordinary photo of a girl. Because the manuscript was originally prepared for publication in Russia, then in desperation recently transferred to Canadian printers, there is a flaw in the punctuation which uses the Slavic form. However, in spite of these shortcomings, the author needs to be congratulated for documenting and reinterpreting Doukhobor history for the

coming generation; his contributions to the Doukhobor Centennials of 1995 and 1999 will have been significant. I expect the author to provide us with more literary works on the Spirit Wrestlers in the coming years.

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