

CONTEMPORARY HYMNS

I have designated as 'contemporary' all those hymns composed by Doukhobors in Canada since their arrival in 1899. This does not include the historical hymns concerned with events that took place in Russia prior to emigration. A surprisingly large percentage of the religious material sung by the Doukhobors has been composed in Canada. One tends to forget that the social ideals and upheavals connected with the migration released an unprecedented fund of creative energy, first on the prairies in the early years of the century and later in British Columbia. In fact, the migration with all its attendant behavioural directives from the leader Peter V. Verigin—the bans on alcohol and tobacco, the reverence-for-life concept, vegetarianism, non-violent demonstrations—all these came to fruition in Canada and represent the greatest single contribution to Doukhobor social evolution in the long history of Doukhoborism. The contemporary hymn has documented the psychological climate of the Doukhobor social evolution in Canada better than any sociological study could hope to do.

Musically, the contemporary hymn displays no special characteristics that set it apart from other Doukhobor-composed hymns. It still continues the same Russian tradition shared by historical, transitional, and sectarian hymns.

The Night Is Dark

(Record 2, Side 1)

PEA 277-1686

Sung by the U.S.C.C. Youth Choir
Grand Forks, B.C., July 21, 1963

Moderate ♩ = 68

Ночь тем-на и бу - ри ро - ко - тан - ье, На - ру -

[sole] 3 3 3 [tutti]

ша - - - ет ти - - - ши - - - лы по - кой;

The musical score consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics and piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal and piano parts. The tempo is marked 'Moderate' with a quarter note equal to 68 beats per minute. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line includes dynamic markings '[sole]' and '[tutti]' and triplet markings over the first three notes of the first phrase.

Слы - шен пла - - - ч и го - - (о) рь - кое ры -

да - - н - (и) - ье, Это пла - - - - чет

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (lunga)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (lunga)

вер - ный на - - - род мой. вал.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (lunga)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (lunga)

Ночь темна и бури рокотанье,
Нарушает тишины покой;
Слышен плач и горькое рыданье,
Это плачет верный народ мой. } (2)

И с мольбою с берега чужого,
Смело сдвину я свою ладью;
Сердце чуткое щемит тревога,
Затянул я песенку пою. } (2)

И под звук своей любимой песни
И под рокот плещущей волны,
Я плыву из этой мутной плесни,
В край свободной, светлой стороны. } (2)

В край родной, где мне все родное,
Я забыть отчизну не могу,
Только там найду душе покой я,
На родном, высоком берегу. } (2)

Только там, а здесь я на чужбине,
Тяжко, долго я в тоске страдал;
Торопись же, лодка, поскорее,
Выноси меня девятый вал! } (2)

Translation:

The night is dark, and peals of thunder
Disturb the calm of nature's peace;
Lament and bitter weeping is heard,
My faithful people mourn and weep. } (2)

With a prayer in my heart from this strange shore
Courageously I launch my little boat;
My heart predicts hardships, but with outward bravado
I begin to sing a song. } (2)

To the uplifting strains of my favourite song,
On the lap of the waves as I glide along,
I am carried away from this corrupt world of care
To freedom's shore, joyful and fair. } (2)

To my Fatherland where all is dear to me,
 I cannot forget my Fatherland;
 It is there that I shall find rest for my soul } (2)
 On native shores on high.

Only there is my home, here I am a stranger
 Enduring long and weary sufferings;
 Hasten onward, my skiff, quicker; } (2)
 The wave that brings new eras, reach your crest!

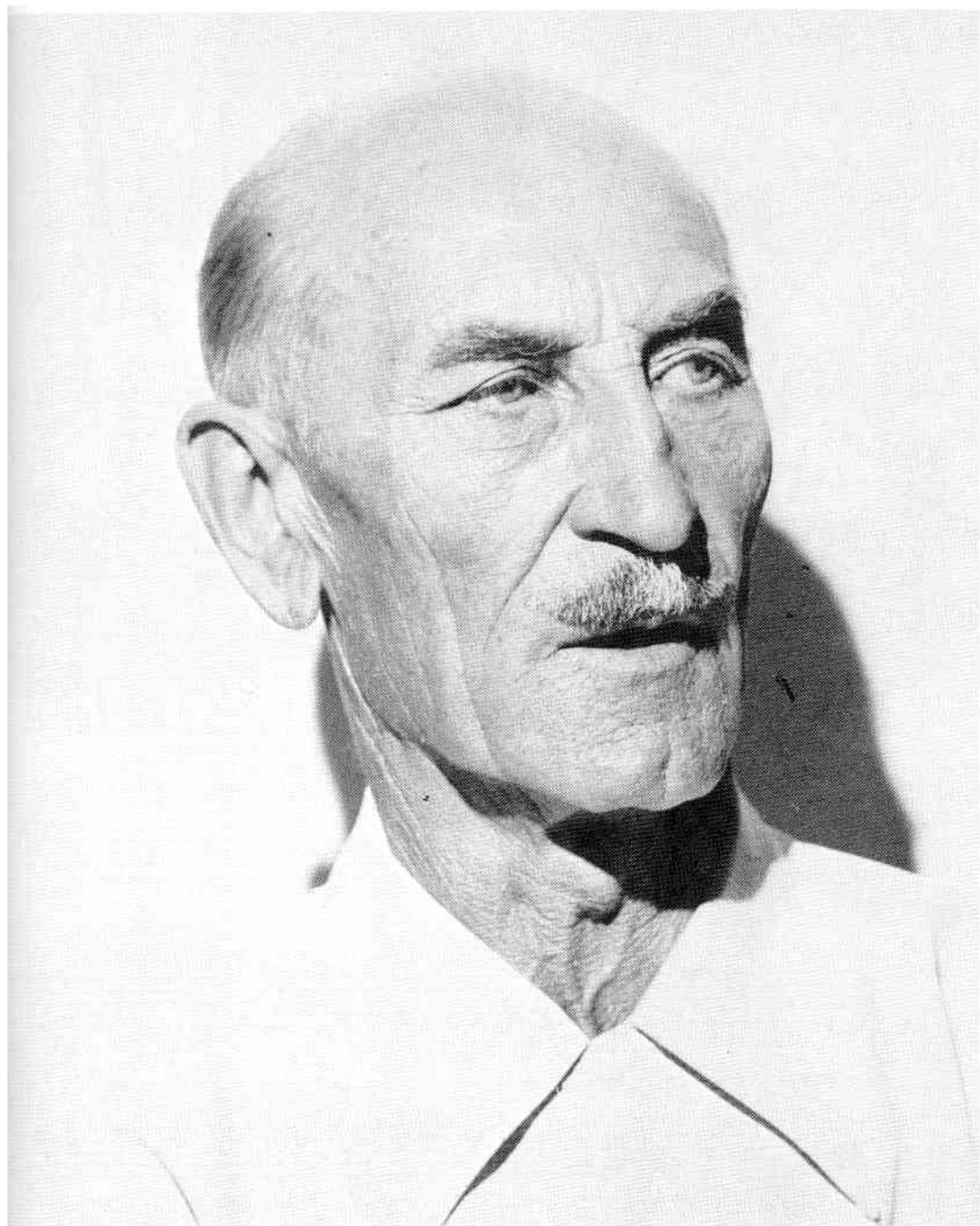
Composed by John F. Sysoev, 1930's

DATA:

The late John F. Sysoev (died February 1967) was the most talented and prolific of contemporary Doukhobor poets and hymnists. He composed more than one half the contemporary hymns sung by Doukhobors in the Grand Forks and Brilliant areas of British Columbia. Although not a Doukhobor leader in the formal sense, he nevertheless contributed much to contemporary Doukhobor oral literature and music, and in this sense one may compare him to earlier figures like Pobirohin and Kapustin. However, Sysoev's work was primarily reflective and inspirational, rather than didactic. To my knowledge, there are no young Doukhobor poets of Sysoev's talent and insight to inspire the younger generation of Doukhobors in their quest for a viable set of values to guide Doukhoborism in the contemporary world, as Sysoev had done for the two previous generations.

John Sysoev also composed the music for *The Night Is Dark*. More accurately, he composed the melody; and in traditional Doukhobor fashion all the various choirs and congregations who sing the hymn experimented with the different voice parts until a suitable, and more or less permanent, harmonic matrix was established. This was done by ear, of course, without the use of musical notation or the services of a musical 'arranger.' Sysoev composed the oral text and melody, and the people themselves created the choral setting according to traditional Doukhobor practices. Although it was composed in the 1930's, *The Night Is Dark* reveals a musical style that originated with the old Russian Doukhobor hymns.

The text itself is a revealing document. Composed at a time when all the prairie and British Columbia Doukhobor communities were at a low ebb, it records the spiritual despair of a sensitive man, caught up in this 'corrupt world of care,' who longs for the beginning of the 'new era' for which Doukhobors have been working and praying for centuries.



John F. Sysoev, Doukhobor poet and hymnist



Annual Children's Sunday School Festival, where children from the various Orthodox Doukhobor communities perform psalms and hymns learned during the preceding year. Grand Forks, British Columbia, 1963

We've Concluded Our Assembly

(Record 2, Side 2)

PEA 331-3132

Sung by assembled congregation
Verigin, Sask., June 26, 1964

Moderate $\text{♩} = 69$

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics in Russian and piano accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Moderate' with a quarter note equal to 69 beats per minute. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. Dynamics include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and performance directions like *[solo]* and *[tutti]*.

mf $\text{♩} = 69$

[solo] *[tutti]*

Мы о - - кон - - чи - - ли со - бран - - ье И до -

mf

мой пой - - - дем, Все бла - - ги - - е нас та - в -

ле - - нья в серд - це мы возь - - - мем. Все бла
 ги - - е нас та - в - ле - - нья в серд - це мы возь - -

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

мам. Ми-р-но, ти- - хо, ми-р-но, ти- - хо, Мы до-

REFRAIN

REFRAIN

мой пой - - - дем, Все бла - - ги - - е нас - та - в -

Musical score for the first system, featuring vocal line and piano accompaniment in G major. The vocal line consists of a single melodic line with lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves: the right hand plays a simple harmonic accompaniment, and the left hand plays a bass line.

ле - - нья В серд - це мы возь - - мем. Все бла -

Musical score for the second system, continuing the vocal line and piano accompaniment in G major. The vocal line continues with lyrics. The piano accompaniment continues with the same harmonic and bass lines.

ги - е нас-тав - ле - -нья В серд - це мы возь - - мем.

Мы окончили собрание
И домой пойдём,
Все благие наставленья
В сердце мы возьмем.

ПРИПЕВ:

*Мирно, тихо, мирно, тихо,
Мы домой пойдём,
Все благие наставленья
В сердце мы возьмем.*

Дай, Спаситель, нам желанье
И собрания посещать,
И Ученье выше знания
В себе возвышать.

Будем ждать мы до собрания,
Чтоб опять прийти,
Чтоб услышать наставленья
Как себя вести.

Translation:

We've concluded our assembly
And we'll all go home.
All the good lessons we have learned here
We shall carry in our hearts.

*Calm and peaceful, calm and peaceful
We will all go home.
All in good lessons we have learned here
In our hearts to assume.*

O Saviour, grant us the will
To attend these assemblies;
Let Thy teachings be an ensign
Rising above all.

We shall wait until the next assembly
In order to meet again,
To hear all the good instructions
How to conduct ourselves.

DATA:

This contemporary hymn is the most popular of a small group of benedictory hymns used to close *sobranya* (meetings). It is generally supposed to have been composed on the prairies some time in the 1930's. Though sung in the typical Doukhorbor choral style, the music seems to me to have been derived from, or influenced by, a hymn of non-Russian origin, possibly an interdenominational hymn from another sect.

The musical transcription is derived from a rendition recorded in Verigin, Saskatchewan. However, another version, recorded in Grand Forks, B.C., was of better technical quality, and this was used on the enclosed record (Record 2, Side 2). Compare the B.C. recording with the Saskatchewan transcription and notice how the larger B.C. choir was able to add extra harmonic parts both above and below the principal inner melody. Despite the recent Doukhorbor tendency to gather in formal 'choirs,' traditional spontaneous gatherings of variously gifted individuals, which still occur, make each performance of a hymn or psalm unique and unreproducible.