

THE OLD BELIEVERS OF BEREZOVKA

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By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

May 1988

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1988)
(Anthropology)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Old Believers of Berezovka

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 261

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes a community of Russian Old Believers in the province of Alberta. In order to introduce this relatively unknown religious minority, the largely ethnographic account presents a picture of the residents' history, economy, kinship, political organization, and cosmology. In view of the great influence of religious views and values on the lifestyle of the Old Believers, particular attention is paid to their 'religious culture'. This realm is examined historically, and attention is drawn to the continued importance of symbols of orthodoxy whose roots are embedded in Byzantine and Muscovite traditions. Especially striking is the interdependence between religious orthodoxy and physical purity, which is indicative of a symbiotic relationship between the home and the church. It is suggested that the lack of priesthood and proper sacraments has been overcome by the local Old Believers owing to the ability to compensate for this loss with an increase in domestic purity. This interpretation of the connection between the core and the periphery of the religious culture leads to the hypothesis that the proverbial 'ritualism' of the Old Believers derives not so much from 'blind traditionalism' as from an interdependence between ritual and dogma whose extent has been unrecognized by most commentators.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following individuals and institutions for their support. My supervisor, Dr. Christopher R. Hallpike, was very helpful in scrutinizing the many preliminary versions of this work and in providing much needed guidance throughout the entire process of research and writing. His duties were assumed temporarily by Dr. Matt Cooper whose critical eye caught inconsistencies which made me think harder. The remaining members of the committee, Drs. Damas, Preston, Shein, and Vallee all offered helpful advice.

While in the field, I was fortunate to be surrounded by many people who were interested in the research and my welfare. I must single out the family of Della and David Goa and my immensely accommodating hosts, Lina and Daniel Plamondon. Among the numerous Old Believers who overcame their traditional distrust and made my work among them possible, I wish to reiterate my indebtedness to Anastasia Reitova and her large family and to Vasily Alekseevich Kuznetsov. McMaster University and the Provincial Museum of Alberta provided much appreciated financial support.

My deepest gratitude is reserved for my wife who bore the brunt of the hardships which accompanied the writing of this dissertation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 1974, the director of Intelligence & Security of the department of immigration dispatched a confidential memorandum to the director general of the Immigration Division in Ottawa, advising that:

Information received from DIO [District Intelligence Officer], Northern Interior District, Kamloops, B.C., concerning a religious sect originating in Russia, namely the "Old Believers". After interviewing certain members of this sect who were apparently travelling in the Kamloops area in an attempt to determine the productivity of prospective farmland in [...] Alberta, the DIO concluded that migration of the sect, numbering 2,000 persons, was imminent.

By way of background it appears that this religious sect bears some resemblance to groups such as the Hutterites of Western Canada in that they met with religious persecution in their homeland, Russia, some years ago. (See for reference, National Geographic, September 1972, p.401). In an effort to maintain their extremely orthodox beliefs and decidedly isolationist attitudes toward the temptations of modern society, (they do not drink, smoke, or practice birth control), the sect has adopted a religious life-style tied to the land to a great extent. With this in mind it is expected that the "Old Believers" sect may move into Canada shortly. Information received indicates that the migration may have started.....

In the summer of 1982, I arrived in one of the two settlements established by the Old Believers in northern Alberta, with the intention of producing the first anthropological study of this latest addition to the 'cultural mosaic' of Canada. This dissertation is the result of that research. It contains my attempt at interpreting the countless bits and pieces of ethnographic data that one receives in the field in such a way as to convey an adequate picture of the cardinal traits of Old Believer culture.

The emphasis on 'cardinal' implies a degree of selectivity which I do not wish to deny. Although I have tried to fulfil the obligation of portraying the people of Berezovka in the standard ethnographic manner,

this dissertation is not an ethnography in the classic sense of the word where each building block of a given society - such as economy, kinship, language, cosmology, and so forth - is treated with the same attention to detail. The subject that I am primarily concerned with is the 'religious culture' of the Old Believers, consisting of the values, beliefs, and ways which shape their understanding of and interaction with the supernatural realm and with fellow human beings. In view of the tremendous influence of religion on the life style of the Old Believers, the concept 'religious culture' applies to a wider field than that of religion in the conventional sense of ritual and dogma, without, however, always coinciding with 'culture' in the comprehensive anthropological sense. Consequently, I do not describe dialects, aesthetic preferences, cooking techniques, and many other 'cultural' traits which are of little or no importance in the context of the more specialized, religious culture.

i. Who are the Old Believers?

The Old Belief emerged as an independent movement in the second half of the 17th century as a result of the 'great schism' or raskol of the Russian Orthodox Church. At its heart was the dispute between traditionalist zealots defending the ramparts of 'holy Russia' and the autocratic patriarch of Moscow, Nikon, whose ecclesiastic reform intended to eliminate differences between Russian and Greek Orthodoxy. The controversy ended officially with the excommunication of the Old Believers in 1666, henceforth designated as 'schismatics' (raskolniki).

The Old Believers were and remain today staunch supporters of the theory of the apostasy of the Greek Orthodox Church, developed by Russian theologians after the reconciliation between Rome and Constantinople in the Florentine Union of 1439. With the fall of Byzantium in 1453, the doctrine of Moscow being the 'Third Rome' gained momentum, helping the formation of a national Russian Church, which was successful in reducing Greek influence over the country's spiritual matters. In 1551, the Stoglav council confirmed Russian Orthodoxy as the sole truly Christian model, and the elevation in 1589 of Moscow's metropolitan to patriarch completed the evolution toward autonomy.

Despite the anti-Greek rhetoric of 16th century Russians, the 'Third Rome' continued to recognize the authority of the four senior patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. Because of the low educational standards attained by Russian ecclesiastics, their national Church depended on Greek scholars for the interpretation of the tradition, translation of theological texts, and dispute settlement. The contradictions in Russian attitudes toward the Greek Church reached a climax in 1652 with the appointment of Nikon as the new patriarch of Moscow. A relatively uneducated but fiercely ambitious person, Nikon was determined to complete the standardization of Russian liturgical books, which had been under way for over a century. Faithful to his creed "I am a Russian... but my faith and religion are Greek" (in Paul of Aleppo 1873:175), Nikon sought advice from the Greeks. This was the spark that ignited the flames of raskol.

One of Nikon's earliest and most controversial changes affected the number and position of fingers employed in the making of the cross sign. While the Stoglav prescribed two fingers, the Greeks adhered to three, and Nikon, after being criticized by visiting Eastern patriarchs (Macarius 1873:418; Paul of Aleppo 1873:174), convened a synod that was to decide which usage should be adopted in future. In fear of Nikon and his Eastern colleagues, the assembled prelates accepted the Greek custom, decreed that future corrections of liturgical texts were to be entrusted to Greek rather than Russian scholars, and smoothed out a number of other differences between the two Churches (Macarius 1873:421).

The authoritarian patriarch - described by one contemporary as a "great butcher over the bishops" (Paul of Aleppo 1873:110) - now began to purge Slavonic texts of Muscovite 'heresies' and to issue 'corrected' editions of liturgical manuals. Vehement protests against the innovations contained therein led to the convocation of yet another synod in 1656. Armed with a letter of support written by the patriarch of Constantinople, urging his junior colleague to excommunicate 'schismatics' who "keep to their own books, their own liturgy, and their own sign of the cross" (Palmer 1873:410), Nikon scored another victory. The synod certified that in addition to the Greek sign of cross, the Russian Church would henceforth employ Greek-inspired versions of the crucifix, the spelling of the name Jesus, prayers recited during the preparation of the Eucharist, and several other ritual details.

At this stage, the tsar intervened. Although the "young monk" Alexis Romanov had shown considerable faith in the patriarch's claim of pushing

the reform for the sake of Russia's political future - presumably to justify its role as the protector of all Orthodox nations (Ammann 1950) - relations between the two rulers began to deteriorate. Angered by Nikon's interference in politics and by his intransigent treatment of the 'schismatics' - who were not without sympathizers in the tsar's own family - Alexis took charge of resolving the conflict himself. Nikon was forced to retreat into a monastery in 1658, and previously banished leaders of the anti-Greek opposition were allowed to return to Moscow (Ammann 1950; Avvakum 1974).

The founding fathers of the Old Belief as a loosely-knit party of Nikon's opponents were for the most part former book correctors who had supervised the standardization of liturgical books under previous patriarchs. Two of them, the archpriests Ivan Neronov and Avvakum, used to be Nikon's allies in the purist "Zealots of Piety" brotherhood, which had striven to protect Russia against harmful cultural influences from abroad (Avvakum 1974). With the exception of the Bishop of Kolomna, Paul, who vanished after publicly disagreeing with Nikon in 1654 (Ammann 1950:273), all the leading Old Believers were members of the lower clergy.

After his return to Moscow in 1662, Avvakum was led to believe that he might soon be placed at the printing office as one of the official correctors (Avvakum 1974:434). The one condition attached to his appointment demanded, however, Avvakum's reconciliation with the Church, which, though no longer ruled by Nikon, continued to act in the spirit of his reform. Avvakum refused, and the tsar imprisoned him in expectation of a Church trial.

The trial took place during one of the sessions of a Church council convened in the spring of 1666. The assembled bishops were instructed to review charges against Avvakum and other 'schismatics' (raskolniki), including Nikon who was accused by the tsar of introducing "ritual innovations" (Palmer 1873:xix). The council excommunicated Avvakum and his followers, approved Nikon's corrections, and recommended his removal from the patriarchal office (Akademiia nauk 1927; Vernadsky 1972(1):257). Since the latter action required the consent of at least two patriarchs, the tsar requested the cooperation of the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch who had come to Moscow in quest of alms (Palmer 1873:xxxiii).

The two patriarchs presided over an impressive assembly of Russian and Eastern ecclesiastics, which lasted from late 1666 until the spring of the following year. The fate of Nikon, who was still nominally Moscow's patriarch, was settled quickly. According to the judgement, he "lived tyrannically, and not meekly as befits a prelate, and...he was given to iniquity, rapacity, and tyranny" (Vernadsky 1972(1):258). Nikon was stripped of his office and banished to a monastery to live as a simple monk. His innovations, however, were confirmed as valid, something that could only be accomplished by nullifying the Stoglav council, which had sanctified many of the 'errors' eliminated by Nikon. Consequently, the judges declared that the signatories of the Stoglav "in their ignorance, reasoned inadvisedly, willfully, without either referring to the Greek and old Slavonic parchment books or consulting the most holy ecumenical patriarchs and discussing these matters with them" (Vernadsky 1972(1):259).

Having demolished the foundation of 'holy Russia', the council could legitimately excommunicate its last guardians, the Old Believers. This was done, but not without first hearing out their leader, the arch-priest Avvakum, who delivered the following indictment (Avvakum 1974: 441-442):

O you teachers of Christendom, Rome fell away long ago and lies prostrate, and the Poles fell in the like ruin with her, being to the end the enemies of the Christian. And among you Orthodoxy is of mongrel breed; and no wonder - if by the violence of the Turkish Mohmut you have become impotent, and henceforth it is you who should come to us to learn. By the gift of God among us there is autocracy; till the time of Nikon, the apostate, in our Russia under the pious princes and tsars the Orthodox Faith was pure and undefiled, and in the church was no sedition. Nikon, the wolf, together with the devil, ordained that men should cross themselves with three fingers, but our first shepherds made the sign of the cross and blessed men as of old with two fingers.... I am pure, and the dust that cleaves to my feet do I shake off before you, as it is written: 'better one if he do the will of God than a thousand of the godless'.

Together with several other leaders, Avvakum was banished to the northern settlement of Pustozersk and martyred presumably in 1682 (Akademii nauk 1927:xvii).

Instead of containing the schism, the excommunication of the Old Believers fuelled the opposition. In February 1667, a new patriarch of Moscow was elected, but his authority received a mortal blow after the monks of the influential Solovetski Monastery declared their unwillingness to employ the corrected liturgical books and the ritual they prescribed. The monks not only stopped praying for the tsar - an unheard of act of defiance - but they also took up arms in defence of the old faith (Smirnov 1898:104-105). A few months after Avvakum's death, the tsar's own life-guard, the strel'tsy, took the royal family hostage, demanding: "We wish

the tsars to be crowned in the true Orthodox faith, and not in their Latin Roman faith" (Macarius 1873:436). Stenka Razin, who revolted between 1669 and 1671, was believed to have received Avvakum's blessing (Eliasov 1963:302), and Bulavin's army, which fought against Peter the Great, consisted largely of Old Believers (Call 1979:144). The program of Pugachev's large-scale insurrection of 1772-1775 contained plans for the restoration of the old faith (Siegelbaum 1979:230), and as Cherniavsky has shown persuasively, virtually every pre-19th century political protest was inextricably connected with the opposition put up by the Old Believers (Cherniavsky 1966).

Faced with a situation where a 'heretical' movement seemed to threaten Russia's political harmony, the tsars felt the need to complement the anathemas pronounced by the Church with appropriate civil legislation. The 'anti-raskol laws', issued between late 17th and early 20th century, need not be reviewed in detail. They varied in severity depending on the outlook of the government in power and its cultural and political goals (Sobranie . 1858). With a few exceptions, all the legislation intended to integrate the Old Believers into the official Orthodox Church, and failing that, to prevent the 'schismatics' from 'infecting' Russia's masses with their ideology of dissent. In the words of Peter the Great's "Ecclesiastical Regulation" of 1721 (in Cracraft 1982:99),

No schismatic throughout Russia shall be promoted to any dignity, either spiritual or civil, not even to the lowest post of rule and government, lest we put a weapon into the hands of our inveterate enemies, who are always devising mischief against our Sovereign and his government.

The implications of this policy cannot be fully appreciated without realizing that by mid-19th century there may have been around ten million Old

Believers living in Russia (Wallace 1877(2):28; Zenkovsky 1957:52), and by early 20th century perhaps as many as twenty million (Curtiss 1940:137; Zenkovsky 1957:52).

The potential impact of this substantial membership was considerably weakened by a continuous process of sectarian fragmentation. Indeed, the use of the term 'movement' may not be entirely justified for while all Old Believers agreed on their opposition to the reformed Church, a myriad of doctrinal quarrels prevented any type of common political front. The context within which the fragmentation occurred was above all the absence of a formal Church organization with its own hierarchy and priesthood, which posed the considerable challenge of continuing the Old Orthodox traditions without having access to all the institutions traditionally required for Christian life.

The Old Believers were unanimous in rejecting the official Church as uncanonical and the sacraments dispensed through its priests as polluting (Smirnov 1898). This agreement led, nevertheless, to quite divergent adaptations to the new situation. The 'liberal' faction, adhering to the notion that the official Church suffered from the spirit of the antichrist, insisted on the necessity of retaining access to the major sacraments and to the specialists traditionally entrusted with the preparation and administration of these. Without accepting them from priests of the official Church, these so-called popovtsy (priestists) came to depend on fugitive priests, who, having renounced the heresy of the reforms, prepared the spiritual gifts and carried out other liturgical tasks in accordance with the old books. Their more 'radical' rivals, the so-called bezpopovtsy (priestless

ones), rejected this strategy. Prone to interpret the apostasy of the Church as the result of the material presence of the antichrist, these Old Believers avoided contact with any part of the official religious establishment, including fugitive priests consecrated by 'heretical' bishops and 'heretical' ritual. Instead of clinging to all traditions, the bezpopovtsy selected those which could be continued in the diaspora by specially trained laymen.

The short historical introduction helps to understand the goals pursued in this dissertation. As has been indicated, the 'great schism' of Russian Orthodoxy - causing the greatest conflict in its history - erupted out of ritual modifications. Indeed, most scholars are apt to dismiss the changes instituted by Nikon as 'insignificant details', which hardly affected the traditional ritual conduct, and which certainly had no impact whatsoever on Orthodox dogma. As the author of the most recent work on the raskol put it: "It is a curiosity of the first order that not a single dogmatic difference ever arose between the establishment Church and the proponents of the old belief" (Lupinin 1984:112). If this is true - and that may depend on our understanding of what constitutes 'dogma' - then one should try to understand the part played by ritual details in the larger cultural context.

This task is the more pressing because the centrality of faithfully executed ritual acts is not limited to 17th century Russia or to the Old Believers. Countless commentators have marvelled at the 'ritualistic tendencies' of past and present-day Russians, without, however, seeking their roots. To mention just a few examples, George Fedotov points out

the preoccupation in Kievan Rus' with acribia, which he translates as insistence on canonical precision and exactness (Fedotov 1975:182). Paul Miliukov (1942:28) elevates "the formalism of the old Russian religion" to its "cardinal trait", which prevented the Old Believers and the Nikonites alike from discerning the "substance of faith." Under such conditions, religion is said to have become "a set form of prayer formulas, possessing a magic meaning, and the slightest detail, eliminated or changed, deprived the formula of that mysterious force." According to the 19th century traveller August von Haxthausen, "No alteration, however small, in the most insignificant ceremonies, can be justified in the eyes of the masses" (Haxthausen 1972:133), and the widely respected historian of Russia, James Billington, claims the "desire to see spiritual truth in tangible form" as the 'first principle of Russian culture' (1970:9).

The Old Believers of Berezovka have lost nothing of the attention to ritual detail characteristic of their ancestors. My informants' religious devotion is measured primarily - though not exclusively - in terms of their knowledge of 'tangible ritual forms' and their ability to endure their countless repetition as long as possible. However, the attention to outer forms is not limited to religion in the strict sense of the word. It influences diet, appearance, sexual expression, and the Old Believers' perception of the world. In short, the tendency to evaluate reality primarily through one's senses constitutes a very important trait of the local 'religious culture'.

A related issue of considerable relevance concerns the question of why are certain ritual details sanctified as orthodox and others rejected

as heterodox. A mere allusion to 'tradition' is a simplistic solution, for both parties to the schism claimed to use tradition as their guiding principle. Had it been otherwise, the Nikonites would have had no reason to proscribe the adherence to the old forms instead of permitting some extent of ritual variety. What really caused the raskol was the Russian Orthodox insistence on the existence of only a single truly correct tradition, accompanied by the inability of the major players in the conflict to agree on a set of defining characteristics. As part of my examination of the traits associated with orthodoxy and heterodoxy in Berezovka, I call attention to the tremendous importance of what may be referred to as the 'iconic principle'. This term applies to an understanding of tradition as an unbroken chain of exact replicas of a divinely ordained prototype, which should be differentiated from a view of tradition as a strand of several threads of uneven thickness, colour, and texture. What makes the iconic principle so interesting is the propensity to define heterodoxy and heresy not as its opposite - i.e., no chain at all, complete separation between past and present - but rather as its caricature. In other words, the two types of tradition- one exact in an extremely detailed manner, the other approximate - are regarded as polar opposites.

In view of the Old Believers' dependence on and worship of iconic tradition, there is reason to be surprised by their ability to survive without access to the gifts, which traditional Christianity defines as the least dispensable bonds between God and humans, namely sacraments.

The people of Berezovka, although not doctrinal bezpopovtsy, lack priests as well as sacraments in the technical meaning of the Orthodox Church. In more than one way, they resemble the Jews confronted with the problem of the "restoration of the holy" (Neusner 1983:x) after the destruction of the Second Temple. Their 'rabbinic' solution is examined in great detail, because it exposes some interesting parallels with orthodox Judaism where the temple as the original seat of the holy is replaced by the home, and human food substitutes for the sacrificial meal. In consequence of the 'sanctification' of the home environment, purity and pollution have increasingly come to take on a physical dimension, which helps to transform the social barrier between the Old Believers and the outside world into a biological one.

These three cardinal properties of Berezovka's religious culture - attention to outer forms, tradition as a continuation of the iconic principle, and a physiological parallel between orthodoxy/heterodoxy and purity/pollution - are so intertwined that a separate discussion of each theme is not only difficult but unwise. After a general ethnographic introduction in chapter II, the question of what are the sources of orthodoxy according to the people of Berezovka dominates chapter III. The next chapter contains a discussion of religious symbolism employed in church, and chapter V addresses the same topic within the context of home life. The findings presented in the ethnographic part are then compared in chapter VI with historical data indicating some plausible roots of Berezovka's religious culture, and my theoretical conclusions are placed at the end, in chapter VII.

ii. The Material

The ethnographic data presented in this dissertation began to be collected in the summer of 1981, during my first encounter with the Old Believers of Berezovka. I returned the following summer to conduct proper anthropological field work which spanned more than a year. A number of shorter visits between 1983 and the winter of 1986 took me back to Berezovka and allowed me some exposure to the Old Believers in Oregon, Romanovka, and a few other locations. My preparation for the field work benefitted from a number of dissertations concerned with Berezovka's parent congregations in the United States (Sabey 1969; Hall 1970; Colfer 1975; Smithson 1976; Morris 1981).

The ethnographic research was fraught with numerous problems. Like my colleagues in Oregon, I was confronted with a wall of suspicion aroused by my 'impure' status and activities attributed to spies. Although my questions were gradually accepted and answered, I was refused accommodation in the settlement and forced to reside some fifteen kilometres away. This affected my ability to scrutinize private behaviour during informal moments and increased my dependence on arranged interviews with willing informants.

The field work was further constrained by the refusal of the Old Believers to discuss certain sensitive topics. As will be made clear in the next chapter, Berezovka is the result of a moment of inattention on the part of the department of immigration, which seems determined to keep the number of Old Believers in this country to a minimum. This desire, and

several other political and religious reasons, has made the people of Berezovka unwilling to disclose private information required for the reconstruction of genealogies or even a count of the population. Combined with the unwillingness of certain persons to talk to me at all, these obstacles have affected the depth of some parts of this dissertation.

Fortunately, those residents who accepted my research and my constant queries proved very patient and reliable informants. With the exception of a few touchy subjects - such as personal economic affairs and illegal activities - they were ready to offer assistance with any aspect of their culture. This group included the spiritual leader, several senior elders, and quite a few younger people. All of the interviews with the older residents and most of those involving the young generation were conducted in Russian without the intervention of a translator.

II. BEREZOVKA

This chapter provides an ethnographic introduction to the community in which the fieldwork took place. It is intended to acquaint the reader with the basic institutions of Berezovka's social life and to sketch briefly a profile of its residents. A detailed account of their religious beliefs and views follows in the next chapter, which explains some of the customs referred to in this section.

i. The Setting

Berezovka is located approximately 250 kilometres north-east of Edmonton, at the boundary of sparsely populated farm land and the boreal forest zone. Its name derives from a large cluster of birches, which line a shallow river along whose banks the settlement is strung out (see Figure 1). The closest outpost of Canadian society, a medium-sized village to be referred to here by the pseudonym Josephville, is situated some fifteen kilometers to the south. It contains a number of commercial outlets, a post office, and a large school where most of the Russian children are enrolled. This is the nearest service centre for the new settlers whose own community does not offer any commercial services. The gravel road that connects Berezovka and Josephville joins a major highway here, which provides easy access to several nearby towns. All these service centres are visited by the Old Believers whenever they need gasoline, farm supplies, spare parts for their vehicles or the attention of a physician.

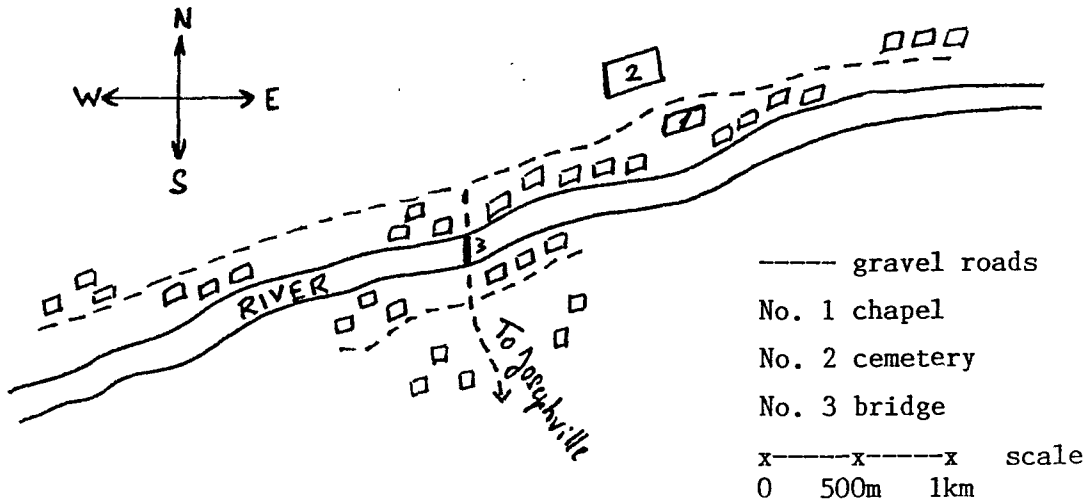


Figure 1. Berezovka settlement

The site on which Berezovka stands was purchased from a local farmer who had used the land for pasture. The first settlers from Oregon pooled their financial resources to acquire thirty acres per family in the original core of the community, situated along the north shore to the east of the bridge. The houses in this section are situated immediately above the river, with narrow strips of farmland extending to the north of the gravel road. The cemetery and the chapel are located in this section.

Subsequent settlers have made private arrangements with owners of land stretching to the west of the bridge while several families chose not to move into the community proper and instead purchased isolated farms or building lots at some distance from Berezovka (see Figure 2). While some may blame land shortage for this choice, others refer to frequent conflicts within the village in explaining their separation from the majority population. Indeed, a frequent excuse used by the 'outer' residents for misfortunes affecting the entire Old Believer community is the belligerence of the 'villagers'.

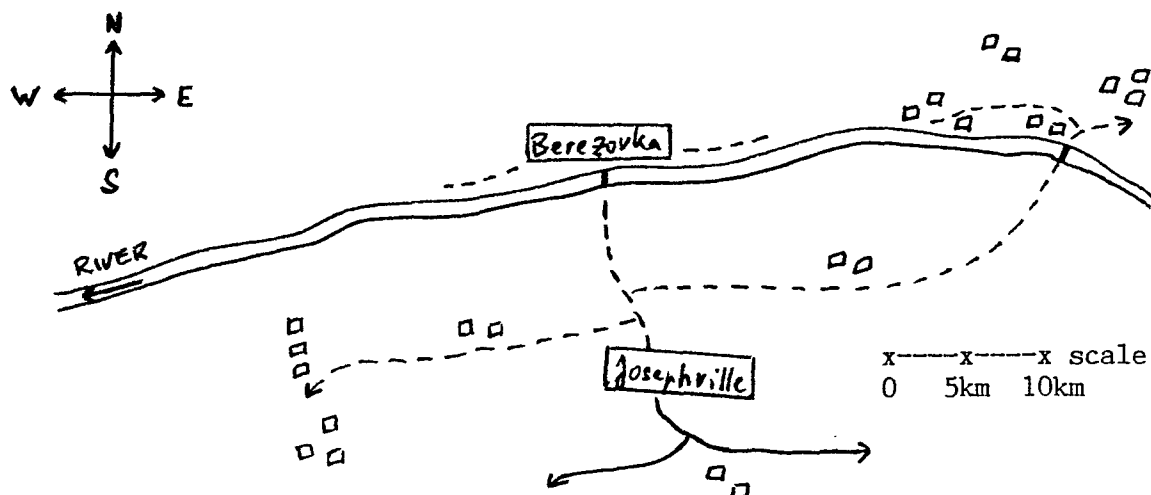


Figure 2. Old Believer settlement pattern

In view of strong local opposition to any type of census-taking, the population size of the entire Old Believer community remains unknown. On the basis of school records and informal enquiries, it seems that approximately two hundred people inhabit Berezovka proper while around one hundred reside on outlying farms as depicted in the above sketch. In order to minimize confusion, unless otherwise specified, the term Berezovka is meant to refer to the entire Old Believer community, regardless of the distinction between the village and the outer settlements. This usage is a departure from local custom where the name Berezovka is rarely employed. Most of the Russian residents seem to prefer the term 'village' (selo) while their Canadian neighbours use half-jokingly the designation 'Little Russia'.

ii. The People

The forty odd nuclear families belonging to the community consist predominantly of children, adolescents and middle-aged adults. With the

exception of some twenty men and women who can be classified as 'old', the demographic distribution clearly betrays the frontier character of the settlement, which attracts young and highly adaptable residents. The consolidation of the pioneering conditions will most likely lead to a gradual modification of the present demographic situation, with more and more older immigrants arriving from Oregon.

The residents make use of a number of self-designations, some of which have created considerable confusion as to their origins. The first newcomers introduced themselves to Canadian authorities and their neighbours as 'White Russians', a term used only in English and never in Russian. While some Old Believers interpret this designation as expressing their opposition to the 'Red Russians' of the Soviet Union, others equate 'white' with political neutrality and indeed indifference to worldly affairs. The name has nothing to do with White Russian ethnicity as it prevails in the Byelorussian Republic.

The term 'Old Believers' (staroveri) and its synonym 'Old Ritualists' (staroobriadtsy) - the former designation prevails in English-language publications, the latter is more popular with scholars writing in Russian - are used exclusively in conversations with Russian-speaking outsiders. However, both are treated as imposed names, which the Old Believers rarely resort to among themselves. In the latter case, informal terms derived from the realm of kinship are preferred, such as 'we' (my), 'among us' (u nas), and 'ours' (nashi). The most strongly preferred formal self-designation is plain and simply 'Christians' (Khristianini). The somewhat archaic Russian term raskolniki (schismatics, dissenters) is universally

detested. A person referring to the residents as raskolniki - as I had done in my first attempts at establishing rapport - is automatically assumed to be an enemy.

The universe of the 'Christians' encompasses all those people who adhere to the same religious practices as the residents of Berezovka. Although there are rumours about isolated communities of 'Christians' in Asia and Africa, everybody tacitly expects the members of these hidden enclaves to speak Russian, a language inextricably connected with proper religious status. Hence the boundary of 'Christianity' tends to coincide with Russian ethnicity and its representatives within and outside the Soviet Union. No one knows how many 'Christians' there are in the ancestral homeland of the Old Belief, but for practical purposes the handful of relatives and whispered-about residents of monastic cells hidden in the Siberian taiga have a symbolic rather than real significance. The importance of co-religionists increases with their proximity to Berezovka, because it multiplies the chance of inter-marriage and co-residence. For this reason, the presence of Old Believer communities in Australia and several South American countries does not evoke by far as much awareness as their sister communities in Oregon and Alaska. Most people have close relatives in South America, and an occasional traveller maintains some semblance of family unity. But such sporadic and expensive visits are a far cry from the mass migrations that take place between Berezovka and the other North American settlements, in order to foster solidarity by means of marital bonds and the types of assistance expected of 'our people'.

Since Berezovka and Romanovka are the smallest North American 'Christian' communities, their dependence on the co-religionists in Oregon and Alaska makes them vulnerable to every innovation introduced in the U.S. congregations. One could almost describe the relationship in terms of the metropolis/hinterland model invoked in discussions about U.S. - Canadian relations. Canadian Old Believers are, on the whole, more isolated, conservative and introverted than their U.S. counterparts, many of whom have begun to embrace at least a few of American libertarian values. Increasingly, the residents of Berezovka see themselves as the last guardians of undiluted orthodoxy, which must be protected not only against attacks waged by outsiders but also by 'progressive' relatives south of the border. This feeling, whose religious roots will be exposed further below, has accentuated the traditional Old Believer tendency to confront problems with a siege mentality, accompanied by the growing inclination to restrict the boundary of 'Christianity' to the immediate vicinity of Berezovka.

The opposite of 'Christians' are 'worldly people' (mirskie), or, to use a designation employed in colloquial speech, 'pagans' (pogany). The latter term is derogatory and refers to undesirable conduct in general, especially when it involves transgressions of dietary and sexual purity rules. A 'pagan' is barred from worshipping, eating, and having sexual relations with a 'Christian'. While members of the two categories do of course interact at school, in stores, and, to some extent, at work, the civility that underlies these encounters is not supposed to change into intimacy. Those who cross the unmarked line

between necessary and excessive contacts with the worldly society run the danger of being accused of 'mixing up' (pomieshchanie), a condition leading up to the next stage of total separation from the 'Christian' world.

The seriousness of 'mixing up' notwithstanding, occasional forays into the 'anti-culture' of the host society carry no excessive negative value. Although television, radio, and similar audio-visual machinery are rejected as 'pagan' inventions encouraging 'mixing up', even very pious Old Believers are likely to find interest in a television program beamed into a hotel room or the home of a worldly neighbour. Similarly, virtually every young member of the community who owns a vehicle insists on state-of-the-art stereo equipment, and his spare evenings may be spent in the movie theatre of a nearby town. There seems to be, however, a tacit agreement that the limited immersion in the popular culture of the outside world may not be tolerated within the boundaries of Berezovka. The community is regarded as a sanctuary whose climate would be corrupted by contact with worldly affairs. One of the basic rules guarding the residents' isolation is their unconditional refusal to allow a 'pagan' stranger to live in their midst.

The emphasis placed upon the differentiation of the 'Christians' from their 'pagan' neighbours can be detected in every aspect of life, ranging from appearance to diet and language. Without dwelling on separate components of the dichotomy - which are elaborated in great detail further below - it is useful to sketch its cardinal properties as defined by the Old Believers (see Table 1).

<u>Cultural traits</u>	<u>'Christians'</u>	<u>'Pagans'</u>
religious orientation	Christ	antichrist
sexual behaviour	chaste	promiscuous
food preferences	pure	impure
appearance	traditional	confusing
home environment	neat/clean	chaotic/dirty
work habits	diligent	lazy
education	applied	theoretical
language	Russian	foreign
conduct of children	disciplined	spoiled
sign of masculinity	forcefulness	meekness
sign of femininity	meekness	forcefulness
deviance	drinking	drugs
destiny	heaven	hell

Table 1. Correlates of the Christian:pagan dichotomy

The contrasts indicated above have a certain utility as stereotyped attributes designed to maintain social solidarity within the Old Believer community. Beside the far more complex specifically religious distinctions, these comprehensive stereotypes serve as an easily understood summary of the main reasons for maintaining a separate cultural identity and thus for rebuking transgressions in the direction of 'mixing up'. But although ethnocentrism permeates an Old Believer's interpretation of the Christian:pagan dichotomy, that dimension is complemented by a considerable degree of self-criticism and insecurity vis-a-vis the pagan 'opponent', qualities rarely noticed by outside observers. It is the tension between self-glorification and self-deprecation which leads to a deeper understanding of Berezovka's cultural character.

This tension can be observed in the willingness with which some of the residents expose the shortcomings of their lives. They frankly point out the reasons why the settlement does not resemble the oasis of piety which it had been envisioned to become. 'There is too much strife here and worldly competition', these critics admit, without exempting themselves from the accusations. At the same time, virtually no effort is made to attain more ideal conditions either through a public call for reform or a re-assessment of the goals formulated in accordance with religious orthodoxy. Instead, the inability to live up to traditional 'Christian' expectations is accepted as inevitable.

The kind of life the Old Believers feel obliged to use as a model may be designated as 'monastic asceticism'. The reasons for this choice and the exact components of this life style are discussed in subsequent chapters and need not be reviewed here. But it is important to realize that many people feel burdened by the self-denial expected of them. It is not uncommon to express desire for carnal pleasures during periods of cleansing, such as fasts. And although Berezovka has a few older residents who do fulfil traditional monastic requirements, the average Old Believer is likely to admit that his body receives more attention than it should. A middle aged widower, for example, attributes his status not to religious considerations but to the difficulty of finding a spouse in a community consisting mostly of relatives. 'It would be better for my soul to remain single', he asserts, 'but whenever I see a woman, my body burns with desire.' Similar explanations are supplied for deviations from dietary rules observed during fasts.

The competition between spiritual and physical satisfaction seems so marked in Berezovka because its residents have a very earthy, and indeed, 'carnal', character. Daily life revolves around rich food, sufficient sleep, work in fresh air, and the warmth of human companionship. Natural urges of the body, such as belching, breaking wind and smacking, are expressed freely, and the erect penis of a sleeping infant evokes laughter rather than embarrassment. One's speech is spiced with natural metaphors and punctuated with four letter words. Marriage occurs early and universally, because sex is a prized 'commodity'. Although these carnal desires are expressed within a larger context of ascetic-like prayers, fasts, wakes and similar acknowledgements of a supra-human force, this dimension of life appears more as a control mechanism imposed by an external agent than as an internalized inhibition against carnal excesses. An interesting characteristic of this condition is the remarkable ease with which the Old Believers go from the 'spiritual' into the 'carnal' state. A long church service inevitably leads to an elaborate meal, and, aided by a considerable amount of alcohol, to a prolonged sleep. Not surprisingly, paradise is portrayed as a land of milk and honey where all needs will be satisfied without any work.

Recollections of old residents reveal the gap between the ideal and the reality of monastic asceticism to be a part of the historical experience of local Old Believers. But old-timers and their descendants agree that the gap has been widening at an alarming pace since their arrival in North America over twenty years ago. Virtually everybody

acknowledges that formerly exceptional concessions to worldly society are being incorporated into the local culture as its regular ingredients. Several pious elders pointed out to me the role of material possessions in Berezovka's social stratification system. Unlike in the past, they claimed, when a man was judged on his diligence and devotion to God, social status today is measured increasingly in terms of car and truck models, home appliances, and similar symbols of the surrounding consumer society. Consequently, the argument goes, religious services are poorly attended and shorter than they had been in the past, because today's Old Believers are unwilling to sacrifice personal comfort.

This verdict is not dismissed by younger residents as the fabrication of senile minds. They accept responsibility for embracing worldly values which their ancestors had fought against, and the justification is once again individual weakness. But unlike the traditional tension between spiritual and physical demands which is accepted as an inevitable element of Old Believer Christianity, its modern extension is seen as being caused not merely by the weakness of human nature but above all by a worldly culture catering to that weakness. Hence while the people of Berezovka blame themselves for bridging the gap between the realms of Christianity and paganism, North American society at large is held responsible for providing the incentives. This view seems to underlie the repulsion combined with fascination expressed by the Old Believers in their dealings with the outside world, a world literally saturated with forbidden fruit.

iii. Historical and Geographical Origins

Berezovka is a conglomerate of three groups of Old Believers whose distant history is shrouded in mystery. It is relatively easy to piece together the life histories of living residents and some of their immediate ancestors, but the reconstruction of more distant, pre-20th century roots is an extremely difficult undertaking. There are several reasons for this. Most of the older residents have had their lives disrupted by traumatic political upheavals resulting in forced migrations, violent deaths and arrests of parents, and other forms of family displacement. Such factors have had a negative influence on the ability of informants to reconstruct their genealogies and to be knowledgeable about their own distant past.

A second influential cause derives from a well established tendency to select only those family traditions which support the 'official' local version of Old Believer history. This selectivity, which prevails not only in conversations with outsiders but within the community as well, has become exaggerated in consequence of a recent schism whose roots go back to the early 19th century. The analysis of this event in the next chapter provides an opportunity to examine Berezovka's 'prehistory' in greater detail. Here, I would like to limit the depth of the described past to the 20th century.

The smallest and least influential of the three local groups are the Turchane, or 'Turks'. This component consists of two nuclear families and three or four wives of men belonging to the dominant group. What has

been said about their relatives in Oregon applies in equal measure to the 'Turks' of Berezovka: "[they] have virtually no tribal memory, very few oral traditions regarding their past and no collective consciousness of their geographic or historical origin in Russia itself" (Biggins 1985:8). With the help of detailed inquiries conducted in Oregon (ibid.) and scattered references in several historical works, the picture that emerges is one of considerable fluidity and fuzzy boundaries separating a considerable number of groups referred to today collectively as Turchane. Their ancestors seem to have arrived in several Turkish locations via Dobrudja in today's Romania on a number of occasions between late 18th and late 19th century (Kelsiev 1866; Piepkorn 1977; Call 1979). Prompted by epidemics and the threat of inbreeding, all of Turkey's Old Believers left between 1962 and 1963 for the Soviet Union (Shamaro 1964) and the United States (Piepkorn 1977) respectively. The 224 persons choosing the U.S. were initially established in New Jersey and New York, but most went on to Oregon upon hearing about the arrival of their co-religionists from other parts of the world.

The second of Berezovka's local groups consists of the Sintsianty whose membership only slightly exceeds that of the 'Turks'. Their name derives from the Chinese province of Sinkiang which offered them refuge following the Russian Revolution and Civil War. Originating most likely in the Russo-Polish border region, the ancestors of this group seem to have migrated in the 18th century to today's Kazakhstan and adjoining regions in Central Asia (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930). Their sojourn in Sinkiang came to an end with the turmoil created by the Chinese Communist

Revolution, which prompted an exodus to Hong Kong in the course of the 1950s. Here they met with members of the third, the largest, local group, namely the Kharbintsy. Named after the city of Harbin in Manchuria, the latter also crossed the border with China soon after the Revolution, escaping from their traditional territories in Trans-Baikalia and the Far East.

In spite of the considerable distance between the ancestral regions of the Kharbintsy and Sintsianty, research conducted in the first decades of this century reveals remarkable cultural parallels, which would have aided their co-existence from the 1950s on (Selishchev 1920:69-70; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:12). This assumption is confirmed by members of both groups who remember their first meeting in Hong Kong. With the assistance of several Christian organizations, a piecemeal exodus came under way, with various destinations in Australia, New Zealand, and several South American countries. Berezovka's residents chose South America from where the migration continued to the U.S. state of Oregon in the early 1960s (Tolstoy Foundation 1972; Wigowsky 1982).

Several factors ranging from population pressure to the desire for cultural isolation prompted a search for a frontier-like setting outside Oregon, and three such locations were identified in Alaska and Alberta. The subsequent migration of a small segment of the Oregon-based congregations was spearheaded by a group of Kharbintsy who founded the settlements of Nikolaevsk in Alaska and Berezovka in northern Alberta. A similar colonizing effort by the Sintsianty led to the establishment of Romanovka also located in Alberta.

The historical events shaping the identity of the two 'Chinese' groups remain engraved in the minds of their older members who consider the period between the Russian Civil War and the emigration from Hong Kong as the beginning of the 'New Age' of their branch of Old Belief. The following account narrated by a woman in her sixties and her daughter serves as a fairly representative example of the tribulations experienced by the 'Chinese' residents of Berezovka. It begins in late 1920s in a village near Novosibirsk:

The Reds were victorious. They won over the Whites, they beat them, they arrested them, they sent them off. The parish priests were also taken away. There was this priest who was summoned, they called this meeting of sorts. So the priest went through the village,...begging forgiveness for any offences, as is our Christian custom. When he came to where the Reds were,...they started stoning, stoning him. He already fell, he was groaning, they nearly finished him. Then a Red came along, took a long bayonet and stabbed him to put him out of his misery.

And the Reds kept on beating everybody. The Reds won and the Whites retreated. And the Reds took power in their hands and started closing churches, burning icons, doing abominations. Once they came to our house, we had icons, and they found a Book of Psalms. "You are a good woman", they said. These people were not smokers, but they ripped a few pages out of the book, rolled cigarettes and started smoking, just so - to defile the book. And they did abominations on icons and everything, those Reds. And so we decided to go abroad, it became impossible to live.

The churches were all closed, the crosses were all taken away, together with the icons and everything. Then they made a youth centre, those Soviets, they danced there, they made a club of the church. We had prayer gatherings. If there was a small child, we would baptize it secretly; or marriages were performed so that no one would know. If they found out, they would have killed the priest.

When this Revolution started, they began "weighing-out", like they would come and demand a certain measure of grain, then they would come back and claim they had been cheated, and they would demand a tax. Then they came and demanded all the livestock, so they led off all our livestock. Then they came and broke his [her father's] mill and took his barn, and then they said, "You haven't got anything? How come? A nice fellow like you!" And they arrested him and took him away together with many well-to-do farmers. He got sick, and they let him out. He came home, got sick again and died. We were left alone with my mother. The two of us then left for Amur Region - we had nothing to live on, the Soviets took everything.

The narrator and her mother escaped to north-eastern Mongolia and settled down in a community of other Old Believer refugees. The girl got married there and bore several children before moving on to Manchuria. One of her daughters resumes the account:

When I was born,...I was born in Mongolia, I remember a little, there were Cossacks, Tungus and Mongols there. Then we moved to our own people, father's relatives, farmers who lived there before and moved here afterwards. Here we lived well. Father wasn't much of a hunter, he was a carpenter, a cooper, a housebuilder, he made carriages and sleighs, he made boots, tin dishes and wooden ones. He could do all this.

The Russians always lived in their own settlements. The Chinese had their own, and the Russians had their own. They didn't want to speak Chinese; they all knew the language well but didn't care to speak it, not like now when everyone speaks English.[Describing the fluidity of the communities] People were living, they would go hunting, they would go quite far and make arrangements:"Let's live where there is game!" They would gather, look over the place, and if it's suitable for a settlement, they would pack up and go there, they would build, cut timber - they could cut all the timber they needed. The Chinese would mill the lumber - they would hire Chinese for it.

One could hunt wherever one wanted, they could kill all the game they wanted. They could sell it. They would live here for a while, then move to an even better place, further away. There, they would build again, and the old place was then occupied by the Chinese....Before the war, as far as I remember, we were children and liked everything. What did children need? Everybody would gather at home, it was warm, we weren't hungry, we had cows and milk and meat. Anything that was planted grew well, no matter what you would put in the ground....

The war started quickly, or rather suddenly. One day we noticed war planes flying, and we see fires here and fires there. We were in the field cutting the wheat. Father said:"Go, fetch me some water." I went to the spring, and a woman was harvesting nearby. And we saw the Soviet advance unit - three soldiers on horseback. They rode up to us and asked:"Are you Russians?" And the woman said, "we are"."Ah, you speak Russian - you see, we finally caught up with you! You ran away from Russia, and now we caught up with you!" So we talked a little. When I returned, father asked "Who rode up to you?" I explained, and he immediately put down the scythe and told mother:"Take good care of the children, I won't survive this, things don't look good. Whatever happens, be together." So we went home, and by then the troops were riding in. They had already occupied the cities and were now covering the villages. They started to alter the railway tracks to match the Soviet trains. I was a young girl. I saw how people were hiding during the fighting with the Japanese in our village. There was a squirmish under the mountain. I saw how many dead there were. The Russians

picked up their soldiers' bodies, the victors. The Japanese were left laying around. Here the dogs would tear up pieces, here there would be a head or a skull, a hand or a knee may be sticking out of the ground. The summer was over and we would go to the woods looking for mushrooms; we would see corpses here and there, all decayed. Lots of people died.

Although the settlement pattern in Manchuria did indeed allow for small groups of families to move freely from place to place in search of game, these economic activities were seasonal and did not involve all the immigrants. By mid-1930s, the majority of the Kharbintsy had moved into a number of communities whose agricultural resources were supplemented with hunting. All these settlements, called Romanovka, Colombo, Selenkho, Chipigu, and Mediany, were located approximately half-way between Vladivostok and Harbin, near the city of Mutankiang. Two Japanese sources indicate a combined population of approximately 250 for Romanovka and Colombo (Fujiyama 1942; Fukuda 1942), and one may deduce from this that the numerical strength of the Kharbintsy probably did not exceed around five hundred souls. There were much larger Old Believer settlements in north-western Manchuria, but their residents belonged for the most part to a different branch. All five of the 'ancestral' communities were abandoned because of changes brought about by the Chinese Communist victory. Some of these changes are mentioned in the continuation of the above narrative:

[After the war] the Chinese demanded that we take Chinese citizenship and be like the Chinese: have all their rights and be punished like them if we do anything wrong. They clamped down on cutting timber, if they find green wood in your house, you go to jail. Or if you kill some game, you will be held liable. Everything became stricter. You got prosecuted for everything, everything became organized. If you kill anything, you have to hand it in to the Hunters' Union, to the authorities, and they'll pay you something, but there were no more independent hunters. They started to chase everyone into collective farms. The Chinese were really torturing their own people. They forced them to carry lumber, pull the plough - twenty people would pull it: nineteen hitched and one would walk behind. They would move so slowly! And they would plough all the fields, you couldn't

see the end of them, everything would be black. These were all the people who were convicted of being against the regime. They would carry wood in the winter, so much of it, so much. They would be loaded up the sledge like a truck, and they would pull and pull. Some were sick, at the end of their strength, one would fall, couldn't walk any more. Soldiers would shove him aside, and he would die right there. The same with ploughing; if he runs out of strength, they'd push him out of the way, they would beat him, and if he can't get up, they would drag him aside, and he would die there. Well, our people would never live like that; the Russians cannot live like the Chinese. Whatever they would order, we would be doing it their way, the Chinese way. How could we live like that? That's why we decided to leave.

My father, and many other men, was forced to return to Russia where he died. But many went back voluntarily. My husband's sister left, she didn't want to, but her husband went, and she couldn't stay behind. Many went to Russia on their own. The consul [from Harbin] would go around, trying to talk people into returning. He would go from house to house, saying "Please, come to Russia, things are good there. Here, on foreign land, things won't be so good." So some went back. They went back and worked, many of them died, I don't really know for what reason. But who survived live there. But they don't seem to brag much about it.

Those Kharbintsy who were determined not to return to the Soviet Union spent several more years searching for acceptable alternatives, all of which included a journey to Hong Kong. Some were lucky enough to get the necessary documents which enabled them to make the trip legally; others had to travel under a cloak of secrecy. Having finally assembled there, the people aiming for South America were loaded onto an old freight ship and taken on a voyage full of surprises:

We met blacks for the first time in Africa. There were also some in Hong Kong, but here it was different as we landed [in Mombasa]. The men landed first and they knew about these black people, but we didn't, they didn't tell us anything. So we went, and we got into town, they are running around, and I was walking and carried little [her son] in my arms. So there we are walking, looking, everything was so different, so interesting. And all the people who looked after the city, they were all in skirts, everybody wore skirts, soldiers on guard duty are in skirts. They weren't eating with a spoon but with their hands from the bowl into their mouths. So we were walking, and our little girls saw these blacks - I had two girls - and they started crying so hard that I couldn't pull them away. They don't even want to look. "The devil", they shouted, and "this is the devil, this is the devil!" And then I look and see this one running

towards us. First I didn't notice, but then I hear the noise, that was him running and everything was rattling. I looked up - he was so close. So I turned around to run, but there was a store right here with a large window, so I ran right into the glass, but I didn't break it. So then we walked around a bit, and these blacks are sitting around with their music, all over the place, and wherever they went, they took their music along. I don't know why they like music so much. We walked around a while...the boat stayed there for six days.

And then they started loading up the ship, and we were observing them. They work, they work, and then they sit down in the hold, you know how deep it can be, and they look up. The sailors would bring them cookies or candy, they throw down a box, as if they were dealing with a pack of dogs, and they would grab it like animals. It was scary to look at them; it was horrible. They would come on board after we have eaten and eat in an awful hurry from the garbage. They were very hungry in Africa.

When we came to Brazil - I gave birth to six children there - they took us to a place in the forest and made us cut cordwood, short pieces, that's what they wanted us to do. So my husband and I were cutting, every family had to do so much, and everybody was cutting. So we cut a whole bunch. There was no place to build, nothing but forest, there was no room and lots of people. So after a while, we started saying, "How can we live in these conditions?" There is no place to plough, no place to plant crops. Finally, we bought some land when we came to Santa Cruz, received one tractor per settlement and started cultivating. As we lived there, we needed fertilizer, we had to irrigate, there were worms in cows and chickens, everything kept dying...So an advance group went to America [U.S.] and then started calling their people, and so one after another, quite a few went to America.

But when we came to America, the children started going to school right away, so the kids were studying. During this time they would get hold of bad books, and they would come back from school with nothing to do. There were no settlements there in Oregon. You can't buy suitable land for building a settlement. The Turks have one of sorts, but it's in the city just the same. You can't keep much of anything. The children step out the door, and they are in the city. One step and they are in the store. So our people made up their minds to leave, when we started to hear about drugs, some started smoking stuff and do damage. So people became apprehensive and started to look for a place to go to. We had come from far away, but it was still crowded.

The desire of the Old Believers to resettle in Canada goes back to the early 1960s. A memorandum written by the deputy minister of immigration in August 1964 reveals that the New York - based Tolstoy Foundation intervened on behalf of "in excess of 1,300 persons" residing in Brazil and 44 persons in New Jersey who had arrived from Turkey the year before.

The deputy minister characterized the applicants and their chances of adapting to Canadian conditions of life in the following manner:

With very few exceptions, all of the people represented are farmers, fishermen, or practitioners of some rural occupation, and in the Foundation's own words, "intellectually very primitive, with small knowledge of world events or politics." By our standards, it is most unlikely that these people could be regarded higher than semi-skilled labourers. They are unfamiliar with our farming methods.

These people face more or less the same difficulty; namely conflict with the governing officials in their country because of their religious practices and their refusal to integrate into the community at large. These groups want to migrate as a colony and settle as a colony. With this in mind, I cannot see that our allowing them to immigrate would solve anything; indeed, it would add to their problems. They would only be in a country whose language they did not speak, and whose ways they did not understand; they would be impoverished and would soon experience the strong pressures for general conformity which characterize North American society. I have not the least doubt that migration would be bad for them and bad for us.

In my opinion, the Tolstoy Foundation should be informed that there is absolutely no hope of Canada accepting the Old Believers or similar individuals as immigrants. Should even a few Old Believers be allowed admission, I am quite sure we would be faced with interminable problems. The Provincial Governments of the Western Provinces are experiencing some difficulties with the Hutterites and Doukhobors and I think that any decision to allow religious sects similar to the Old Believers to Canada would be viewed with considerable alarm by the provincial governments concerned, as well as the general public.

In the course of a year the Department receives frequent requests similar to the present. Each of these is carefully examined to determine its merits. Where it appears that certain individuals in the group could comply with admission requirements, we inform the representatives of the group that we are prepared to consider individual applications. This though is offering unwarranted encouragement as these people will usually only move and settle as a group and, therefore, even if we approve a few applications the persons concerned are not apt to separate themselves from their group. Moreover, if a few are accepted and do come forward, they in time become eligible to sponsor their relatives, who in turn can sponsor their relatives with the possibility that a colony is established and thus, we have facilitated what we originally refused - group settlement. I strongly recommend that a uniform policy of refusal be adopted towards individuals, who because of their way of life, are unwilling, or unable, to conform with the general social pattern and integrate with the community at large. I cannot recommend the admission of people who will not identify themselves with the larger interests of the country and this is a concept apparently alien to these people. However, in fairness to those individuals who are willing to separate from the group, I fully subscribe to continuing our current practice of considering individual applications, each on its own merits.

Following this negative verdict, almost ten years lapsed before the department of immigration was again confronted with the Old Believers. In January 1974, an officer of the Canadian Immigration Centre in Edmonton informed his district office of a phone call he had received from a land owner in northern Alberta who wished to ascertain whether a number of potential business partners would be allowed to enter the country as permanent residents. The purchase involved twenty-eight quarter sections of land that would be acquired by thirty-two families of "White Russians" from Oregon, said to be planning "to establish a colony in that area." The caller was advised that the officer was "not aware of the subject and that [he] was unable to say whether or not [...] members of this group would be admissible to Canada at this time."

The telephone call prompted a review of several recent applicants for permanent residence who happened to have Russian names and reside in the vicinity of Josephville. The file disclosed the presence of nine families containing fifty-seven persons, with adults ranging in age from fifty-one to fifteen. All had arrived between September and October 1972 and applied for landed immigrant status under the "Independent Agricultural Settler Program". Further investigation drew attention to several visitors bearing similar names and criss-crossing northern Alberta "en route to Alaska." A memorandum from the district office in Edmonton to the assistant director general of the Prairie Region in Winnipeg, dispatched in February 1974, recalls information received from the Canada Manpower Centre in Grande Prairie in September 1973, indicating that "five non-immigrant males had approached him [the local officer] for an extension of their

non-immigrant status in Canada for the purpose of completing removal of crops from their fields". These were located in two separate areas of northern Alberta - the future sites of Berezovka and Romanovka - and were said to belong to some twenty families living in Oregon. The officer in Grande Prairie was told "that some \$ 200,000 had already been spent acquiring property in the [two] areas and that an estimated \$ 1,000,000 would be available for transfer to Canada if all the families would be permanently admitted."

The district supervisor in Edmonton indicated to his superiors in Winnipeg that there was no legal or practical reason why the Old Believers should not be admitted as landed immigrants even if they desired to set up a colony or commune. The assistant director general of the Prairie Region appears to have concurred but requested directives from the director general of the Home Services Branch within the department of immigration in Ottawa. The request, dispatched in February 1974, reads:

[....] It is considered you might be interested in the information provided concerning the emigration to Canada of the various individuals as well as the suggestion that this may be the forerunner of a larger movement which might result in a considerable number of members of the Old Believers Sect proceeding to the same area.

[....] On the face of it, there appears to be nothing illegal about the entry of the individuals mentioned in the Edmonton office memorandum. However, we feel it would be advantageous if you could provide our offices, possibly by means of a comprehensive but concise memorandum, giving background information regarding the Old Believers and the Department's policy position regarding the emigration to Canada of members of the Sect in any large numbers.

The acting director general replied in April 1974. His answer contained a summary of the department's past experiences with the Old Believers - gained via the Tolstoy Foundation - and his decision on their present status.

The second half of the message reads as follows:

Their case was studied in 1964 and a decision was reached that their mass migration was contrary to departmental policy. This decision was based partly on past experiences, e.g., the difficulties experienced by such groups as the Hutterites and Doukhobors. It was the department's opinion that the establishment of ethnic and cultural enclaves or communities separate and distinct from the community at large was undesirable.

The department notified the Tolstoy Foundation that we could only justify the migration of people whom we had reason to believe would attempt to identify themselves with the larger interests of the country. The "Old Believers" history over the last 200 years spoke against this. The department pointed out that wherever these people settled they would encounter the same difficulties stemming from their determination to continue as an anachronistic element in the general population of the host countries. Their insistence on maintaining their own customs and to congregate in homogeneous areas created a nearly impenetrable social barrier between them and the rest of the community. This was further aggravated by differences in language, dress and educational attitudes.

Also, particular attention was given to the occupational qualifications of these people. Across the board farming was the main characteristic. With this in mind and the unfamiliarity with Canadian farming methods and climate, the prospects for the "Old Believers" looked bleak. This information was relayed to the Foundation in 1964. Their Director at that time concurred with our policy.

Therefore, in summary, it should be pointed out that it is not departmental policy to encourage large scale movements of any group into any one specific area, as we wish to avoid the creation of separate ethnic or cultural ghettos through immigration. However, in fairness to those individuals who are willing to separate from the group the department will continue its current practice of considering individual applications, each on its own merit.

[Handwritten P.S.] In order that we may be kept informed of developments in the movement of "Old Believers" to Canada it would be appreciated if the DA Edmonton would, through your office, report whether a colony is being set up and the number of immigrants involved and likelihood of future movements. Also from where are the immigrants coming.

While the country was buzzing with the just-announced slogans of multi-culturalism, the Old Believers were sneaking in, one by one, determined not to arouse the government's suspicion of "separate ethnic ghettos" being created in the wilderness of northern Alberta. Within a few years, the unstated quota for Old Believers was reached, and immigration from Oregon has been reduced to a trickle of 'family-reunion cases'. The cold

reception and rapidly changing living conditions in Alberta have left their mark. Weighed down by the countless rules and regulations enforced even in Canadian semi-wilderness by various servants of the state, the people of Berezovka may one day resume their search for a new Manchuria. In the words of an elderly female informant:

When we came here, there was hardly anybody around. But now, they are building everywhere. And I don't know how it will be in the future. Is it going to continue like this? We don't want to see our children getting into mischief or challenge the authorities. We try that this wouldn't happen; we are trying to move further into the woods, where we will find more trees, as they say. The more people there are, the more difficult it is for the children. You can buy anything, anywhere. I don't know what God has ordained. We trust in God. What He will give us, so it shall be. We have been wandering and wandering. After the end of the war, this is our sixth residence! We travelled in China, we moved twice in Brazil, then to America, from America to Canada and so we move on and on, through the world.

iv. Community Organization

It will have become clear by now that Berezovka's residents put tremendous value on freedom. Countries, regions, historical epochs, and national characters are assessed on the basis of how much volnost' (freedom) they allow. The desire for volnost' is correlated with ethnicity, allowing to poke fun at the regimented German, Chinese and any other national deemed to be deprived of freedom. While it is an unquestioned belief that Russians require more freedom to thrive than other peoples, one must be careful to take into account the context in which this concept applies. Volnost' as it is understood locally pertains to what may be called 'freedom of action', examples of which would be unhampered hunting and fishing, absence of building restrictions, lack of interference in local education, and so on. This

realm does not include 'freedom of thought' as it is understood in a liberal democracy. An Old Believer is not free to think what he wants nor to read whatever he may deem interesting. Such tendencies are referred to as volnodumstvo (freethinking) and correlated with agnosticism. The mind, which is associated with the soul and the heart, belongs to God and must be receptive to the Holy Spirit. The body, on the other hand, is under direct personal control, and it is through this medium that one enjoys liberty. The 'freedom of action' is of course limited due to God's demand for tangible, that is, physical, sacrifice, as it is displayed in fasts, sexual abstinence, endless prayers, and other demonstrations of obedience to a higher authority. The point here is that the sacrifice offered to God is that much greater because it affects the highest personal value an Old Believer strives for.

The distinction between 'freedom of action' and 'freedom of thought' can be usefully related to the distinction between Berezovka's political and religious organization. Unlike the latter - described in greater detail in the following chapter - which is well defined and rarely challenged, the former, civil authority structure, is fragmented, acephalous, and bordering on anarchy. From the viewpoint of the provincial government, 'Little Russia' is an assemblage of farms, which lacks any type of municipal status and thus, despite its reasonable size, is deprived of representation on the various councils that shape local politics. This situation fits well with the Old Believers' perception of themselves as apolitical people. They profess lack of interest in elections, local politics and other 'worldly matters' and consider the lack of representation an asset rather than a drawback.

The internal organization of the settlement rests in the hands of the heads of individual households who enjoy unrestricted autonomy in the running of their affairs. The 'house manager' (khozyain), assisted by his wife (khozyaika), has undisputed authority over all members of the household, and this right is guarded with great determination against any outside interference. Even the religious leader, who may have to become involved in internal affairs impinging on spiritual matters, is extremely careful not to create the impression of curtailing the volnost' of the household elder.

Every household head automatically becomes member of a council (sobor) whose responsibility is the adjudication of religious issues and the election of a spiritual leader and a number of other officers (stariki). With the increased contact between the Old Believers and outside authorities following their exodus from China, there has been a tendency to use the sobor as an advisory body in civil matters affecting the entire community. Its members elect annually a mayor (starosta) and a secretary (sekretar) who may be called upon by outside agencies in need of dealing with a 'community representative'. However, since the office of the mayor has merely an advisory role, and since its occupant almost invariably lacks the ability to communicate in English, no binding agreement can ever be reached in this manner. There are grounds to suspect that the mayor's ineffectiveness is welcomed by the other members of the sobor who can rest assured that their individual autonomy will not be eroded.

In practice then, the mayor limits his involvement to calling meetings of household heads (sobranie) interested in a given issue - such as local

education, which is used as an example further below. Should the participants agree on a course of action, something that happens rather rarely, their resolution is still not binding for the community at large. Even when it is supported by most residents, any collective action remains voluntary and may be opted out of by the families of dissenting elders. This is entirely misunderstood by federal and provincial government officials, social workers, and school board representatives who refer to Berezovka as a 'colony' and expect to encounter elders with the type of authority prevalent among the Hutterites.

The primary reason for the inability to arrive at a community-wide consensus in other than spiritual matters is the clear unwillingness of most residents to surrender their volnost' to unrelated people. Although it lacks the size and most of the institutions associated with the concept 'kinship polity' as defined by Meyer Fortes (1949), the political structure of Berezovka cannot be divorced from the realm of kinship. Moulded by geography and recent history, the web of kinship underlies virtually all of the important local factions, which rarely cooperate.

The most divisive influence stems from the separate backgrounds of the three 'local groups', the Kharbintsy, Sintsianty, and Turchane. Unlike in Oregon, where these segments constitute separate congregations, and, at least in the case of the 'Turks', separate communities (Colfer 1975; Morris 1981), Berezovka unites them in a single congregation and community. This could only be accomplished in the expectation of the two weaker groups' subordination of their interests to those represented by the stronger founders of the settlement, the Kharbintsy. Although the

linguistic and folkloristic distinctions separating primarily the Chinese and the Turkish contingents have been waning under the impact of inter-marriage and daily contact, both of Berezovka's minorities have retained the awareness of distinct identities. This may be at least partly caused by the heavy-handed insistence of some of the majority leaders on Berezovka being the property of the Kharbintsy where members of the other two groups are tolerated as mere guests. This attitude is reinforced by the refusal of the dominant population to visit the Sintsianty of Romanovka, which is the closest Old Believer community, insisting that the latter come to see them (which rarely happens). Completely in tune with this attitude, the main thoroughfare running through the old core of Berezovka is referred to half-jokingly as Kharbinskaya, pointing out the origin of its residents. The two Turkish households and most of the Sintsianty are located outside the settlement.

The tensions existing between the three local groups are magnified by further divisions within the separate 'tribes'. Although virtually all the members of a given segment are interrelated by multiple links, only relatively close kinsmen can determine with certainty the nature of these bonds. And since close consanguinity coincides to a considerable degree with historical residence patterns, one can detect another level of 'local groups' which derives from membership in the different villages in China, and to some extent in Brazil. Although these boundaries are less clearly drawn, it can happen that a person expresses disapproval of a neighbour's action and concludes, "after all, those people used to

live in Colombo!" Invariably, because the members of these intimate groups are closely related, they form clusters of residences separated from other, also interrelated clusters, thus continuing these ancestral divisions. Of course, there are many other issues which, as anywhere else, can give rise to animosity and factionalism. But the point being made here is that whether conflict develops out of jealousy, fear, anger, envy or piety, the social lines drawn by the followers of the opponents will most likely coincide with the existing boundaries separating close kinsmen from distant ones and 'strangers'.

The inability of Berezovka's residents to overcome divisions deriving from their 'kinship polity' was demonstrated most poignantly in a crisis triggered by the introduction of Russian language instruction at the school in Josephville. Since their arrival in Alberta, the Old Believers have been worried about the gradual erosion of their children's ability to retain the mother tongue. From time to time, the option of a private school or at least of a Russian curriculum at the Josephville school would be brought up at a meeting, but political ignorance and fragmented community support prevented any real action from taking place. Eventually, my presence in Berezovka served as a catalyst for exploring the issue jointly with the provincial department of education. Under pressure from Edmonton as well as Berezovka, the local school board finally budged and agreed to experiment with limited Russian language instruction for the Old Believer children. Ostensibly as a sign of cultural tolerance, the school board made the Old Believers responsible for locating a certified teacher who was to design and carry out an appropriate curriculum.

The first step after this landmark decision was taken by some inhabitants of 'outer' Berezovka whose children do not attend the school in Josephville. They distanced themselves from the project, declaring it the responsibility of the 'villagers'. The latter began scouting for a suitable candidate, and, with my help, a list of qualified persons was drawn up. When they arrived for 'interviews', I had to take them from house to house, searching for 'spokesmen' able to communicate to the candidates what kind of education the community was interested in. Only a few elders were located, and their comments made it clear that a consensus as to the type of curriculum desired did not exist and probably would never exist. After the departure of the confused candidates, I was given to understand that neither of them was found suitable because of properties ranging from being Jewish to being Doukhor.

At this stage, when the chance of locating an acceptable teacher was becoming dimmer and dimmer, one of the junior Kharbintsy elders arrived with an acquaintance by the name of Yuri R. A middle-aged Soviet refugee, Yuri sported a wild untrimmed beard, a huge cross around his neck, and an Ontario teaching certificate. Within a few days, he had met with the school board officials and all the elders, displayed Russian language books and other instructional tools, and seemingly persuaded everybody of his ability to set up a viable program. In the meantime, I had completed the field work, and Yuri, by now a teacher at the Josephville school, moved into my former quarters.

Several months into his very successful teaching career, Yuri bought a house built and formerly occupied by a member of the Turchane. At this

point, several voices were raised against his presence in what was considered 'Russian territory'. The opposition gathered momentum after Yuri had been seen taking notes during a religious service, which gave rise to fears of his being a Soviet spy. This suspicion was supported by the previous owner of Yuri's house who had become entangled in a legal suit stemming from an alleged breach of contract. The former owner received assistance from the other Turkish household and from several in-laws. Several members of this 'opposition party' beat up Yuri, vandalized his home, and began to intimidate the teacher's supporters, all of them core Kharbintsy. The explosive situation began to spill over into religious services, which were disrupted by shouting and verbal attacks as the community threatened to fall apart. Prompted by Yuri's enemies' refusal to allow their children to attend the Josephville school as long as he remained on its staff, the school board discontinued the Russian program and dismissed its teacher.

During my several visits between the end of the field work and the winter of 1986, I was able to appreciate the degree of animosity generated by this affair. After Yuri's dismissal, several families continued to support him by paying for his services as a private tutor. With time, however, this group has grown smaller and smaller, eventually including only the closest relatives of the teacher's initial sponsor. For these people and their less courageous allies, the decline of the 'teacher party' is seen as a clear sign of the harmful influence upon Berezovka of the "Turkish bandits."

v. Kinship

The Old Believers distinguish between natural kinship, which is modelled after biology and coincides with the incest boundary, and spiritual kinship, which is shared by all 'Christians' who uphold the tenets observed in Berezhovka. Both realms are expressed in the concept of nashi, which translates as 'our people'. Depending on its context, this term may designate the wider universe of pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy, or it may apply to the more narrow category of natural relatives.

The extension of sentiments prevailing between natural kinsmen to the wider realm of spiritually related 'our people' is achieved formally by the use of the intimate pronoun TY (thou) and, especially when children address adults, by the use of diminutive forms of kin terms, such as diedushka (grandfather), babushka (grandmother), tiotka (aunt), and diadushka (uncle). The distinction between the informal pronoun TY and its formal counterpart VY (you), which is employed between strangers, is justified in a religious proverb which draws attention to the singularity of God as opposed to the multitude of demons (besy). This pronominal usage thus reinforces the distinction between the followers of God and the followers of the devil. Since all Old Believers possess a patronymic middle name, older persons can be shown respect by addressing them with both of their names without resorting to the 'pagan' VY. This usage is known as velichenie.

Natural kinsmen are gained through consanguinity (rodstvo), affinity (svoistvo), and godparenthood (kumstvo). The boundaries of the kindred are drawn in accordance with canon law, which delineates the circle of

relatives who are excluded from sexual relations and marriage. The rules adhered to in Berezovka make this boundary coincide with the seventh degree of consanguinity and the sixth degree of affinity and godparenthood. These degrees are reckoned in 'steps' (stepen) that separate two relatives from the closest common ancestor. For example, full siblings are separated by two steps - each is one step away from the parent - first cousins by four, second cousins by six, and so on. The eighth degree of kinship coincides with third cousinship, which is the closest degree of consanguinity tolerated in marriage.

As can be gathered from Table 2, the terms applied to consanguines reveal properties of the Eskimo system of cousin terminology. They are virtually identical with modern Russian usage, which emerged in the course of the 18th century (Friedrich 1963). One interesting feature is the retention of the old term nianka (from nianchit, i.e., to nurse) for the oldest sister who commonly acts as a surrogate mother. This is also the only term that doubles up as a term of address between members of the same generation.

The affinal terminology (Table 3) contains a number of archaic designations, which are, however, intelligible for speakers of modern Russian. The bifurcation that used to distinguish pre-modern Russian terms from their English counterparts (Friedrich 1964) has been largely retained, placing the local terminology between that of medieval and modern Russia. The affinal designations are frequently employed in address, and the terms svat/svata (literally, 'matchmaker') are widely exchanged between in-laws belonging to the same generation.

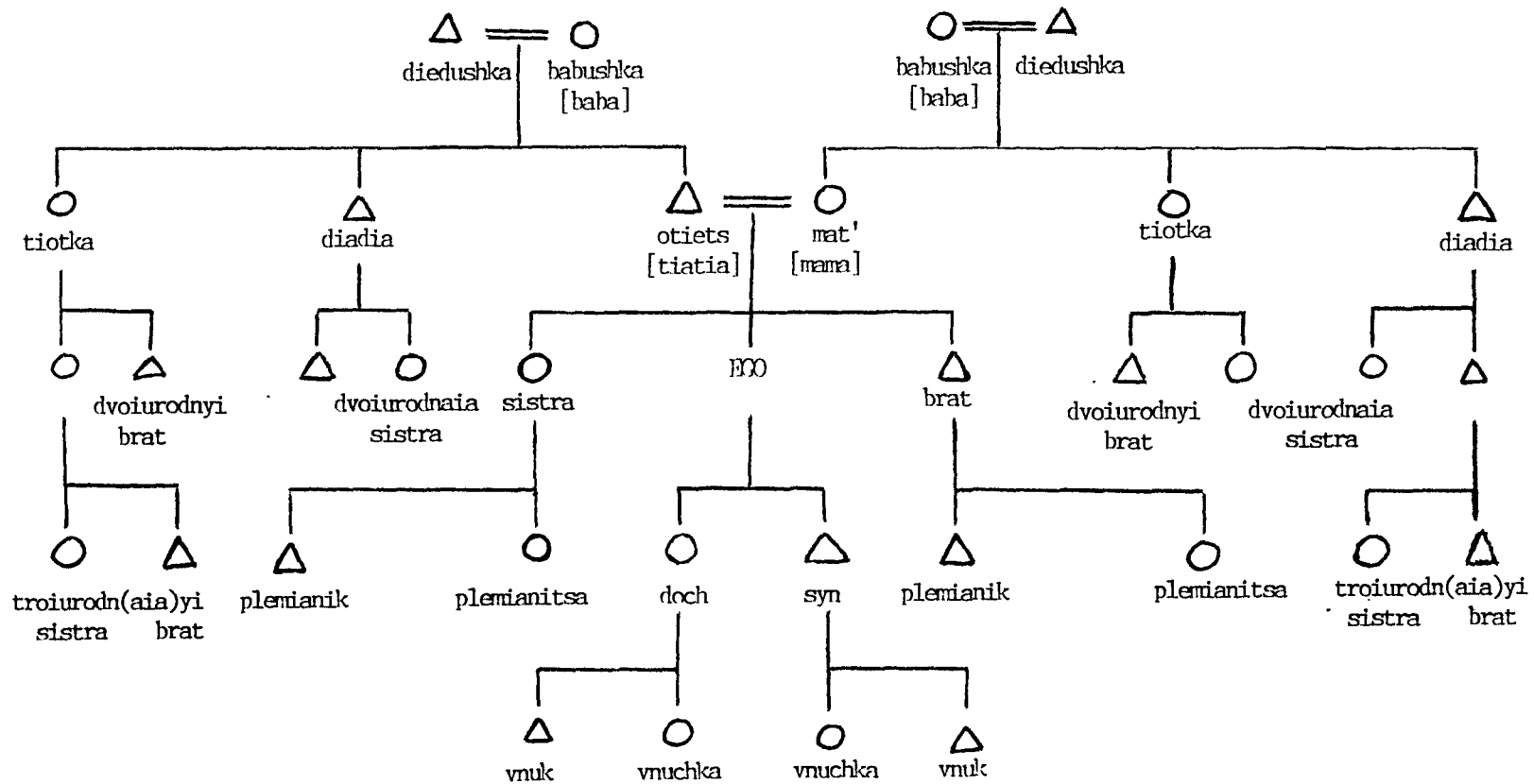


Table 2. Consanguineous kinship terminology, with terms of address in [].

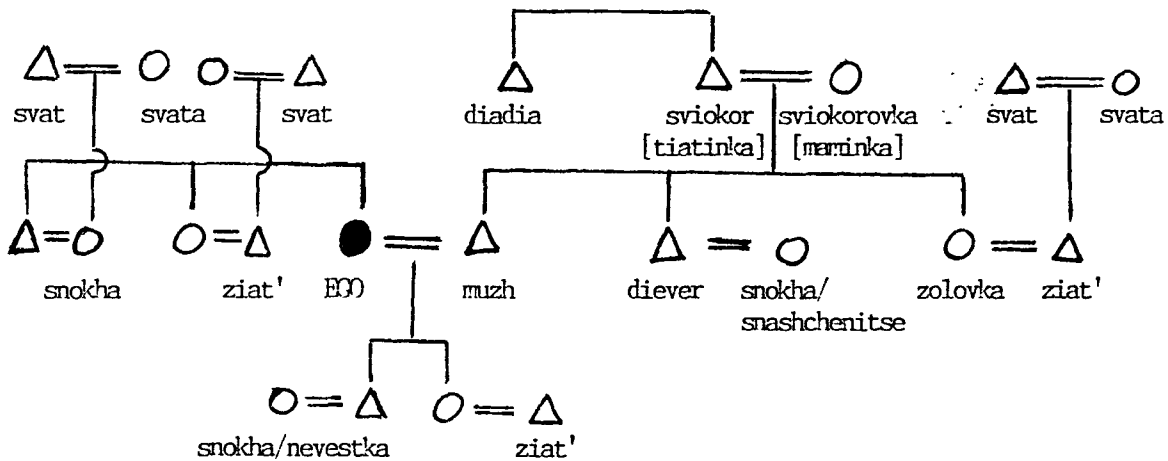
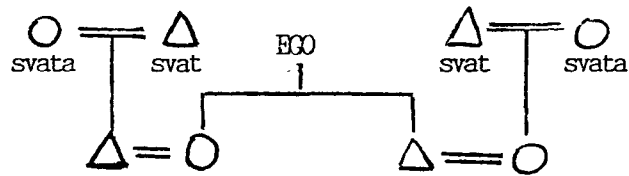
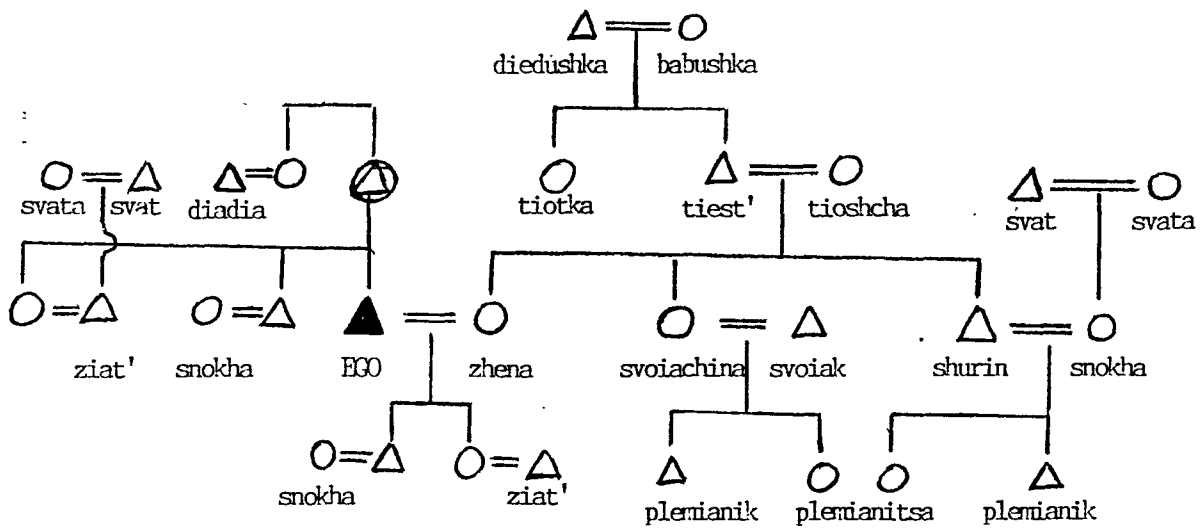


Table 3. Affinal kinship terminology

The richness of the affinal terminology expresses a complex pattern of interaction between relatives by marriage and a differentiation of several roles within this category. The importance of in-laws derives in no small measure from the local residence pattern, which is strictly virilocal, with a strong preference for joint families reminiscent of the Slav zadruga (Halpern 1967; Pesheva 1971). The bride, usually between fifteen and seventeen years old and very likely from Oregon or Alaska, finds herself surrounded by strangers and exposed to considerable expectations from different types of in-laws. During the first year of their marriage, the newlyweds occupy a room in the groom's parental home, without having any influence on the running of the household. This is the responsibility of the mother-in-law (sviokorovka) whose task it is to 'break in' the newcomer. The tensions that invariably build up between the young woman and her parents-in-law must at all costs be contained, because the newlyweds' future independence cannot be attained without the good will of the groom's parents. The ideal meekness of the daughter-in-law is reflected in the artificial sweetness of the terms maminka (diminutive of mama) and tiatinka (diminutive of tiatia).

The bride is also under the command of her husband's oldest remaining sister who acts as her mother's right hand. The term by which she is referred to by the bride - zolovka, which can be loosely translated as the 'evil one' - expresses the conflicts that are expected to dominate this relationship. On the other hand, the term for husband's brother's wife, snashchenitse, derives from snosit' and indicates mutual endurance and solidarity. Similar to the co-wives in a polygynous household, the three, four, or even five and more daughters-in-law that reside in a given cluster of households find

each other's company of great significance for their ability to pass through the first years of marriage as peacefully as possible. Very often, the zolovka establishes a good relationship with this informal support group and receives her first reliable advice on matters pertaining to sex and marriage.

The extended parental household (dvor) includes unmarried children, the newlywed couple, and when such relatives are alive, widowed grandparents. This 'large family' (bolshaia semia) is in a constant process of segmentation (dielenie) called forth by the separation of married sons and their wives. This developmental cycle continues until the youngest son marries and gains control over the parental household, including his aged parents. Although the secession of newlyweds has always taken place, older informants recall extensive joint families of five and more married brothers all living under one roof, a characteristic of Siberian Old Believers reflected in the literature (Vlasova 1980). The joint families of Berezovka are much smaller, and households containing more than two nuclear families are exceptional.

Nevertheless, the tendency of married sons to move into a separate dwelling as quickly as possible does not destroy the cohesion of the large family. The new residences - today most likely to be trailers - are usually located in the immediate vicinity of the ancestral dwelling, which continues to serve as the focal point (see Figure 3 and Table 4). These clusters of agnatically related families constitute the political, economic, and emotional heart of the community.

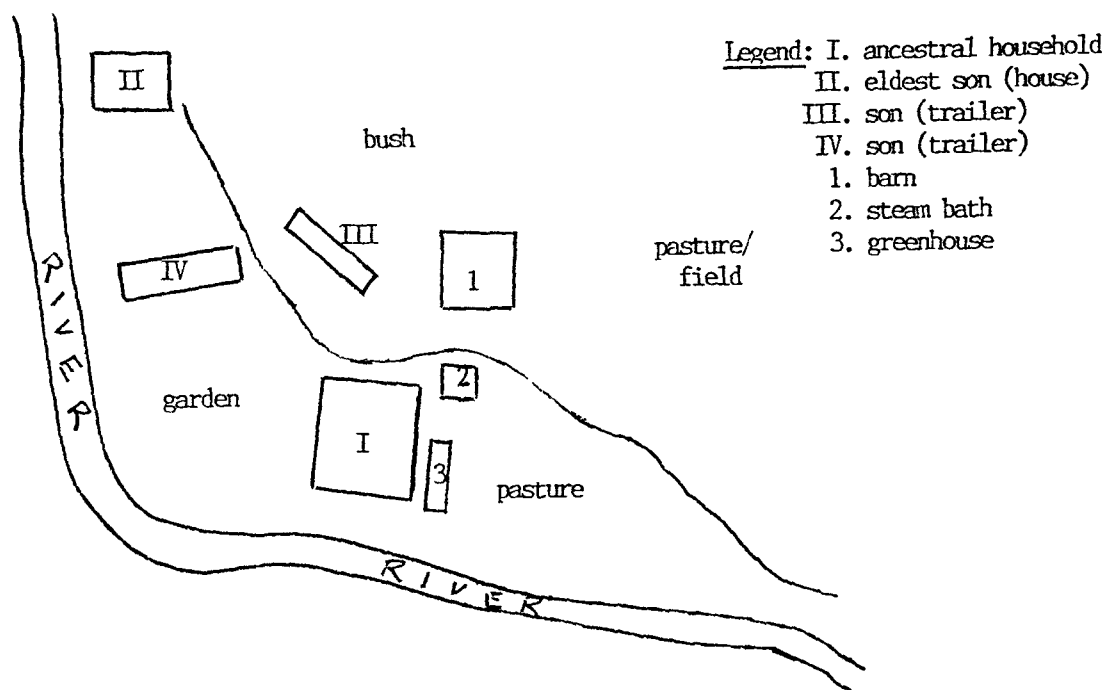


Figure 3. Typical residential cluster in 'outer' Berezovka.

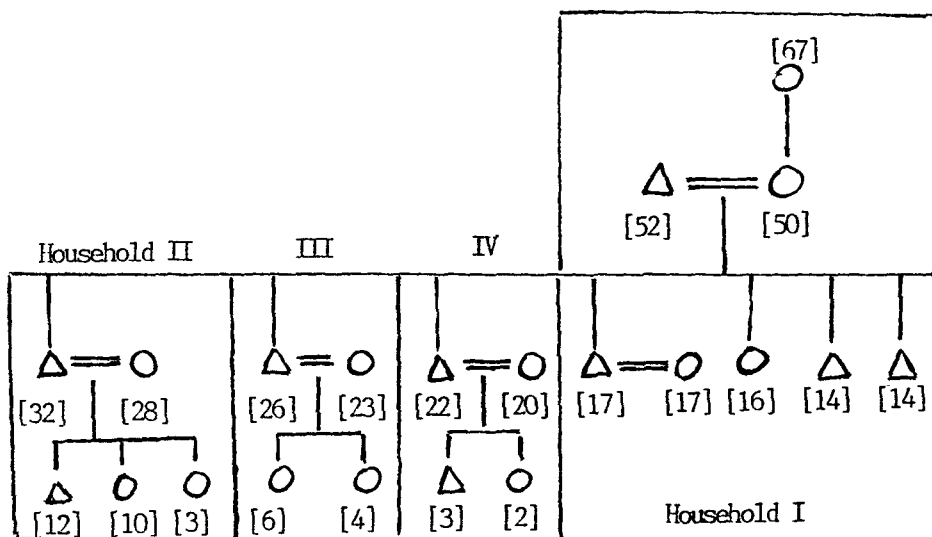


Table 4. Residential cluster composition; age in [].

The world view shaped by these residential arrangements coincides with the salient features of peasantry as defined by George Foster in his famous essay (1965). It is based on suspiciousness and the belief that only the most immediate relatives can be trusted. Anybody outside the realm of nashi in the narrow sense is a potential enemy. This expectation influences the socialization of children who are encouraged to play with siblings and first cousins rather than with unrelated peers. It also influences the choice of partners in the economic cooperation of adults. And it is this profound distrust of the world beyond the gates of the dvor which hampers community-wide political action. It is only entirely ignorant outside observers who are misled into believing that the 'Christian' vs. 'pagan' dichotomy is based on harmony within the camp of the Old Believers.

Conflict does of course occur within the kinship clusters as well. Beside the universal clashes of personalities to which local families are certainly not immune, there is the far more disruptive effect of acculturation. This process affects primarily inter-generational behaviour and threatens to undermine the traditional unity of the family. Because of the exposure of children to formal English education, some important tasks that would normally remain the sole responsibility of parents require the assistance of often very young children. This applies to any encounter with outsiders - bank tellers, physicians, car salesmen, social workers, and so on - who do not comprehend Russian. Although the young translators cannot really be trusted with complex issues, their parents' reliance on their services has created a certain asymmetry in family

roles. Consequently, parents become vulnerable to unreasonable demands, and their offspring complain of not being understood by their older and therefore far more sheltered relatives.

The seductive power of the outside society hangs above the Old Believers like the sword of Damocles. Afraid of losing their son or daughter to the 'pagan' world, parents increasingly adopt a 'do not see, do not hear' attitude to television sets, radios, and even home computers hidden in a closet, drinking sprees in a nearby town, and shopping in Edmonton. However, because of religious principles which prohibit such tacitly tolerated transgressions, the children may be severely reprimanded or even temporarily excommunicated by Berezovka's elders. This casts a shadow over the entire family, which in turn results in considerable internal tension and conflict.

The marginal position of the young generation has not so far led to widespread abandonment of the ancestral community. There are probably not more than ten or fifteen young members who have left Berezovka with the intention of not returning. And even those who have taken such a drastic step remain in frequent contact with their relatives, come for visits, and, perhaps most importantly, they retain key elements of their traditional cultural identity, such as religious fasting, daily prayers, abstinence from smoking, and similar attributes. Invariably, however, the authority structure within the family is undermined, and parents fear the defector's influence on the remaining children. This situation is summed up by a woman in her early twenties who is married to a Canadian and resides on a farm in the vicinity of, but separated from, Berezovka:

I do miss the family, because they are not allowed to come and see me here. I can go there, but sometimes I am busy and can't go, and my brothers and sisters are not allowed to come and stay with me. Or, when I ask for help, they are always too busy to help me. So, I kind of miss having the family around, and I miss the fighting of my brothers (laugh). But I don't miss the yelling and screaming all the time out there. Every time I go out there, I feel like I am going to stay for the whole day... spend the whole day with mom just talking...and when I get there, she's always yelling at the kids and always giving them hell, always hitting them. I can't stay there more than half an hour. I decide to pack up and leave and never come back again....There are certain things you miss, like going to church, once in a while. When you go there, you hear the singing and all that; you kind of miss that. But then, you don't miss getting up at two o'clock in the morning to go there either. So, you still go once in a while,...listen to the singing, and it kind of brings back memories, how I went when I was small, and when I go home to the brothers and sisters, we all get together and talk....But it will never be the same for me...to go back there and be treated like one of them....I will never be treated like that.

This informant's sixteen year old sister - now happily married in Oregon - coped with the temptations of 'pagan' society in accordance with her mother's wishes. Asked how she visualized her own ideal future, the girl drew inspiration from the traditional search for isolation. Interestingly, however, what we encounter in this and many other similar accounts given by children, is the desire for 'nucleated solitude'. Unlike the parents, the children seem not interested in isolated communities or even large families. Instead, they see themselves alone or in the company of a beloved spouse, surrounded by animals and an impenetrable forest. In the words of my sixteen year old informant:

Well, like we live on a farm away from the Russian village, and we usually stayed alone, especially me, I usually stayed alone because I was the youngest girl, and I usually just stayed beside mom. Then mostly I got hooked on books, and I read books about places like girls shooting animals and they are good shots, and I wanted to be something like that. Then when we moved to the other farm, the village was closer, but since I didn't make much friends, I still used to be alone a lots, so I usually just stayed home and walked around the woods, built tree houses, things like that, and mom would make me sometimes go to the village and be with friends, but since

I got used to being alone, I liked it better because nobody could bother me. Sometimes I get mad at people because I can't stay long with people. And I always dreamed about building a place somewhere far away and just no electricity or just making things yourself and having animals for friends. And maybe having two (!) kids or something to play around with and living beside a river, just getting your own food around yourself. [Asked about her ideal husband]...Well, somebody that knows how to build places, and is nice, and like usually they'll say that the Russian men, that they don't understand people, that they don't think, and that they think that wives are supposed to do all the work for them, so I always wanted somebody who could help me as much as I'd help him, and understand each other and have the same dreams mostly....The extras there is around this house, like there is cars and telephones and usually people have radios and T.V.s, electricity and furnaces. I would like wood stoves, so you can just put in wood, and have a small hut, just enough room for a table and a small place too for a bedroom, just so you don't get confused like the houses everybody builds right now is big, and some places you don't even need and you build.

vi. Economy

The isolated life style embraced by the Old Believers finds numerous expressions in their economy. The older generation possesses all the skills one would expect to find in a society moulded by the frontier. Men are well versed in hunting, fishing and trapping; they know how to construct houses and how to transform wilderness into fields and gardens. Women have an excellent knowledge of domesticated and wild plants, cooking, weaving and spinning. Although the homes built in Berezovka are equipped with modern appliances, indoor plumbing and running water, the ethos of a less comfortable era lives on in the pride all Old Believers display in home-grown food, home-sewn clothing, and many other achievements of an essentially domestic economy.

Like so many of their traditions, the essential features of the domestic economy were shaped by the Chinese exile. Instead of the settled way of life

pursued in Russia, northern China encouraged a semi-nomadic existence based on subsistence farming combined with commercial hunting. Advantaged by their exemption from restrictions placed on the use of fire-arms, Old Believer men carved out a lucrative niche for themselves as suppliers of animal parts employed in traditional Chinese medicine and as catchers of live tigers sold to zoos. While the women and children remained at home, small bands of brothers and friends combed the forests, returning to the village for brief periods of time during religious holidays and to help with the harvest. Although with advancing age most men would settle down to full-time farming, the life style of the hunter remained firmly associated with masculinity and the image of volnost'.

Today, hunting is no longer the source of cash, but the traditional 'double economy' has survived. The woman continues to be responsible for subsistence agriculture, which most commonly takes the form of gardening, small livestock keeping, and the gathering of wild berries and mushrooms. While the man does help out in these activities, his primary economic pursuit is seasonal work in the forest industry. Like hunting in the past, the planting of trees in the summer and their felling in the winter constitute male work which is the source of virtually all cash for most families. Just as men help out with some agricultural tasks, so women do occasionally spend a week or two in the bush, joining their husbands during the tree planting season. But this limited excursion does not affect the basic division of labour between the sexes, which demands that women occupy the traditional position of the nourishing housewife while the husband takes on the task of a mediator between the household and the outside world.

While the husband-and-wife team constitute the core element in the local economy, older children are also of great importance. The Old Believers are required by religious tenets to refrain from any interference in procreation, and although young couples tend to take this prohibition with a grain of salt, most families are certainly much larger than the standard encountered in rural North America (Hall 1970). According to the local world view, numerous offspring provide the foundation for economic prosperity and political power- one informant tried to explain this opinion by linking the decline of Great Britain as a world power to its falling birth rate - and to some extent this is still true in Berezovka. As soon as a child can walk, it is introduced to the expectation of physical endurance through a combination of religious and secular training. After countless attempts at rebellion, rebuked with the omnipresent formula of nado privyknut' (you must get used to it), the child accepts weaning from the mother's breast and the discomfort of church services held early in the morning. As it grows older, it realizes the importance of not only attending the service but of participating until its conclusion several hours later. Together with nado privyknut', the requirement of completion (nado zakonchit') forms a key double commandment that governs religious and economic activities. Those who don't await the completion of the prayers commit a sin; those who abandon a project prior to its conclusion will be hard pressed to find work the next season. The echo of this demand can be heard all over Berezovka as returning members of work crews are asked the ubiquitous question: 'did you finish' (zakonchili)? As someone who on a few occasions failed to live up to this expectation, I can personally attest to the ridicule one is exposed to.

Equipped with patience and endurance, children begin to make a real economic contribution during early puberty. Girls have by then been exposed to most of the female tasks, and they may start being entirely responsible for the milking of cows, feeding of chickens, the supervision of younger siblings and similar chores. Boys, on the other hand, may finally be allowed to join the men not only in the relatively comfortable summer camp, but now in the far harsher environment of the winter camp. This transition from the warmth and coziness of women and their home to the cold and danger prevailing in the frozen bush constitutes a significant rite of passage. Here, the young man is initiated into male society, with its folklore of hunting and fighting tales from China and a strong disdain for the safe and immobile female domain.

As can be expected, the planting and felling of trees is organized along kinship lines. Depending on the season, terrain and size of the territory, the work is carried out by a crew of between fifteen and thirty labourers under the supervision of a contractor (kontraktchik) who is responsible to provincial government officials. The contractor and his immediate assistants are usually close kinsmen or friends, with the rest of the crew consisting of young single men, most of whom are brothers and cousins. Unlike the planting of trees, which does not require expensive tools, the cutting in the winter is highly mechanized, and each participant is required to use his own equipment. This tends to influence the division of labour, with older and more affluent men occupying more prestigious positions than rookies armed with a mere basic chain-saw.

The seasonality and mobility involved in the forest industry exhibits parallels with Russian seasonal labour known as otkhodnichestvo which developed after the emancipation of the serfs. But unlike this institution which had a profound effect on the diffusion of urban culture into Russian countryside (Dunn and Dunn 1963), its counterpart among the Old Believers minimizes their exposure to the wider society. The elders of Berezovka are keenly aware of the limits this economic activity imposes on the ability of adolescents to engage in deviant behaviour, and there is more than subtle pressure on boys to abandon the school in Josephville and to join the far more practical educational system set up in the bush. This expectation is gladly fulfilled by the young workers who clearly enjoy the comradeship and isolation experienced in the camp. Despite the hard work, the volnost' from parental, spousal, and governmental interference is highly valued.

Prior to a child's formal separation from the parental household (dielenie), the entire income earned by any means must be handed over to the family head. This means that adolescents who participate in the forest industry do so as dependents who are not free to dispose of the wage as they desire. This freedom is attained only with the setting up of one's own residence following marriage, which is made possible through a contribution (pridanoe) made by the parents in the form of money, land, and some livestock. A smaller contribution is given to a daughter upon her marriage, and remaining parental assets are divided equally among all children after the father's retirement from regular work.

III. SOURCES OF ORTHODOXY

The material presented in this chapter pertains to the Old Believers' interpretation of the sources of their religious culture. It reviews the basic principles employed in the organization of the congregation, and in the composition of the written and oral traditions. Particular attention is given to conflicts arising out of disputes concerning the problem of priesthood, which have had a considerable impact upon the North American congregations in recent years.

i. Religious Specialists

The acephalous political authority pattern described in the previous chapter is contrasted by a well-defined and binding power structure in the religious realm. As in the political field, decisions are made by the stariki (elders) of the sobor. But unlike in temporal deliberations, majority views affecting religious issues must be heeded by the entire congregation. Dissenters face several degrees of excommunication (otluchenie), which amounts to de-facto social banishment and the loss of Christian status.

The counterpart of the starosta in spiritual affairs is the nastavnik or nastoyatel' (preceptor) whose duties overlap with those of an Orthodox priest. He oversees the performance of religious services and shapes the debates of the sobor. In spite of his influence, the nastavnik remains a layman whose authority is delegated by the elders of the council. Once a person gains the required qualifications - which consist primarily of

exceptional leadership abilities, devotion, and a good grasp of 'Christian' ritual and dogma - he may be elected to this prestigious position. The length of his service, which is carried out without any pay, depends on age, health, and community satisfaction. A good spiritual leader is expected to display charisma, and the one whom I became acquainted with during the field work commanded considerable respect for his inspired defence of Berezovka's independence. On the other hand, a nastavnik may forget that he is accountable to the sobor, and he may act too much like a genuine priest. When reprimands fall on deaf ears, then the elders are entitled to depose the autocratic individual.

Because of the essential role played by the nastavnik, there may be several men selected for the position, with the understanding that they will assume the required duties in times of the principal leader's illness, absence, or removal from office. In addition to these deputies (zamestitel), there are several other elders who are involved with public religious services. The meticulous conduct of the liturgy is ensured by the ustavchik who selects the canons and prayers employed in a given service and the zastavlianchik who chooses readers from the assembled congregation. Finally, there is a principal and a secondary cantor (pevets) to lead the singing.

These religious specialists determine in conjunction with the remaining elders how the 'Christian' tradition should be interpreted, and what type of redress must be demanded for grave transgressions. Their deliberations are based on a corpus of written canonical rules referred to simply as the 'law' (zakon). These legal principles, summarized further

below, must from time to time be reconciled with the social conditions encountered in a new environment, a task which requires the participation of all 'Christian' congregations which constitute a single marriage universe. The infrequently held synods, attended by the senior elders from each congregation, are the only formal mechanism that ties the Alberta-Oregon-Alaska triad together. As will be shown momentarily, such occasions lead to the expression of manifold tensions and do not necessarily help settle disputes.

In addition to the officials mentioned so far, there is a large class of religious specialists whose responsibilities are limited to the private discharge of Christian duties by individual parishioners. This class consists of confessors. When reaching the age of marriage, a person is entitled to select a trustworthy adult who is consulted whenever the need arises on matters that might burden one's conscience. A girl may choose either a spiritual father (dukhovnyi otets) or a spiritual mother (dukhovnaya mat'), while a boy, restricted by the undesirable impression of a man bowing to a woman, must settle for a male confessor. This person then acts as an interpreter of God's will, prescribing atonement for minor sins and offering informal absolution upon its completion. The most common method of this type of discipline involves a combination of prayers and fasts.

The institution of the confessor indicates an important division of labour between the collective interpretation of zakon by the elders of the sobor on the one hand, and the individual interpretation by a privately appointed 'relative' on the other. Without it, the council would be swamped with relatively trifling requests for assistance, and its

effectiveness would suffer. At the same time, the confessor ensures that grave transgressions - such as the breach of physical purity maintenance, adultery, theft, and other serious sins - are communicated to the council. The offender is publicly admonished at the end of the Sunday service, and the elders prescribe appropriate punishment. In this manner, the entire community retains control over individual members without insisting on a complete disregard for privacy.

The chain of religious command ends with ordinary parents who are responsible for the instruction of their children. In view of the semi-nomadic life style of men, this task is primarily fulfilled by women. Long before a child goes to school, it becomes exposed to a variety of techniques employed by its mother in an effort to introduce the principles of 'Christian' life. Because of this essential role, women, in spite of their exclusion from the realm of the sobor, possess an impressive degree of knowledge of all aspects of the religious culture. Its demonstration, however, is rarely given in the company of men who count as the official guardians of orthodoxy.

ii. Written Tradition

The most important source of local orthodoxy and thus the core of 'Christian law' (zakon) is the tradition written down in what is collectively known as 'old books' (stariie knigi). These works share the following properties. They are, for the most part, of pre-Nikonian date; in one way or another, they are held to be divinely inspired; with a few exceptions, they are written in the liturgical language, Church Slavonic.

Because Church Slavonic - a combination of several dialects formalized by Greek missionaries to the Slavs - is the only language used in Berezovka to address God, its acquisition by all Old Believers is a prerequisite for membership in the congregation. Russian, which is also indispensable, but only at the level of human communication, and Church Slavonic are taught in different ways, with different goals in mind. The former is the discourse of socialization, which emphasizes the spoken word. The instruction is informal, pronunciation tends to vary according to the speaker's geographical origins, and where some writing skills have been achieved, they differ significantly from standardized Russian.

This lack of uniformity is not tolerated in the use of Church Slavonic. The instruction, which begins around the age of five, is formal, it stresses reading skills, and its goal is the elimination of idiosyncrasies. The teaching process takes usually place at home, with all the children of the household seated at the kitchen table. Each pupil receives a text written in Church Slavonic, a primer or a book of prayers depending on age and aptitude, and recites an appointed passage aloud, together with the other participants. The instructor walks around the group, points out errors, demands repetition, and punishes inattention. There is no attempt at interpreting or summarizing the recited passages; the goal of the sessions is to familiarize the students with clusters of words and to facilitate their repetition as rapidly and as uniformly as possible. Although most people do seem to grasp the content of sentences written in Church Slavonic, informants confronted with unfamiliar texts experienced considerable difficulties in understanding them. Hence,

even the most literate residents were unable to distinguish between pre-Nikonian and post-Nikonian versions of some rarely used liturgical books.

The distinction between Church Slavonic and Russian makes the communication with God considerably more trying than the discourse with man. The latter is flexible, personal, and changing; the former is rigid, impersonal, and resistant to any kind of modification. The dichotomy that emerges here is reminiscent of the already discussed distinction between freedom (volnost') in secular affairs and its opposite in religious matters. The Old Believers explain their insistence on Church Slavonic as a guarantee of receiving God's word in its original version. They reject the opinion of Church Slavonic being a man-made language, claiming instead that God revealed it to the Greek missionaries as a tool of communication favoured by Him. To deviate from the liturgical language would consequently amount to heresy. It is this crime which the people of Berezovka attribute to Nikon and his followers as well as all other Christians. In consequence of their 'modernization' of the written tradition, they are believed to have lost access to the 'law' in its orthodox manifestation. Instead of 'pure' words and sentences, the reformed Russian Church is said to employ false texts, which are the result of the mixing up (pomeshchanie) of sacred and profane linguistic elements. Concrete examples of this development are enumerated in the following chapter as part of the discussion of 'symbols of orthodoxy'.

The corpus of 'old books' treasured in Berezovka is extensive, and I cannot attempt to provide anything more than a rough outline of its most important components. With the exception of a few manuscripts, the

bulk of the collection consists of printed works manufactured in semi-legal print-shops in 19th century Russia. Two such businesses operate nowadays in Portland, Oregon and Ponto Grosso, Brazil. The purpose of these privately-run companies is the dissemination of pre-Nikonian books, and individual families place orders from time to time for whichever text may need replacement. It is often impossible to determine the exact source of the reprints, and my informants clearly trusted the supplier with employing an orthodox original. Few people in Berezovka are even aware of the various editions of pre-Nikonian manuals, and their opposition to the standardized versions is expressed vaguely as a resistance to 'changed books'. Although I was told of the existence of several skilled bibliographers in Oregon, I could not locate any such specialist during my field work.

A second characteristic of the written material which is at odds with the professed desire for retaining access to the original sources of orthodoxy is the huge number of compendia, which contain mere excerpts from the 'law'. Often, the authors of these works remain anonymous, and some of the sources are attributed to saints and scholars whose existence is disputable. This observation applies primarily to books held to be written in Byzantium.

The apparent preference for excerpts affects even the most highly regarded source of the law, the Bible. The New and the Old Testaments are well known, but few families possess the entire text. Instead, the most frequently used passages are copied out in collections of a wide variety of inspired writings.

The core of the written tradition consists of the class of service books (sluzhebnye knigi), which are all claimed to be copies of editions employed in pre-Nikonian Russian Orthodox Church. These are the euchologion (trebnik), which contains the complete text of the mass and the sacraments; the liturgikon (sluzhebnik), which lists the three liturgies used by the Orthodox Church; the horologion (chasovnik) with a guide to all holy days; the psalter (psaltyr), which contains the psalms and numerous rules pertaining to the ritual conduct of individual believers; and finally, the typikon (ustav) with a description of daily prayers and fasts.

In order to convey an impression of the content of these books, I would like to provide a synopsis of the psalter and the typikon, works found in every household and consulted daily. Beginning with the latter, it is useful to know that its proto-type emerged in Greek monasteries as a type of internal constitution, based largely on rules formulated by the Emperor Justinian and St. Sabas of Jerusalem. The earliest known version dates to the ninth century (Delehay 1949).

The copy made available by one of my informants is entitled simply ustav and said in the preface to be a collection of rules assembled from "many church books", without specifying which ones. Exceptionally, it is dated to the year 7,325 since the creation of the world, which translates as 1817 A.D. It was printed in Vilnius, an important centre of doctrinal priestless Old Believers.

The content begins with a long section called "About Fasts", enumerating in great detail the purity precautions required during the various religious fasts. These extend to the type of diet, number of meals, and

occasions when sexual intercourse is allowed. The next section pertains to "Prostrations" (o poklonakh), meaning the various types of prayers to be performed at specified times during the day, depending on whether that day falls on a holiday or not. The latter point is taken up in the last section, called "About Holy Days" (o prazdnikakh). It defines the differences between "great", "middle", and "little" days of importance according to what type of work may be carried out, diet to be consumed, and prayers to be performed at home and in church.

The psalter which I had an opportunity to examine consists of two works bound in one volume. The actual psalter, which is undated, takes up the first part; the second part consists of a horologion (chasovnik) said to be originally printed in Moscow "under the tsar Alexis Mikhailovich during the reign of the Patriarch Iosif" - Nikon's predecessor - and reprinted in an unknown location presumably in the 1860s.

The psalter begins with the heading "About the sign of the cross", which introduces the significance of this symbol for all faithful Christians. A lengthy exposition of its history emphasizes the power of the cross in the fight with the devil and heretics. Several ancient sources are adduced to confirm the validity of the two-finger sign, which is described in great detail. What follows is a short section on the "four-fold prayer", namely "Lord, Jesus, Christ, Son of God", which should accompany the making of the sign of cross. This formula is said to confirm faith, preserve from illness, and to chase away demons. Whether on a trip, at home, sitting or standing, eating or drinking, beginning or completing work, all Christians must use this prayer as often as possible.

The third section, "About the psalter" (o psaltyri), is said to have been extracted from the psalter of Basil the Great, in order to impress the reader with the significance of this work, similar to "a great sea, which never loses water." Freely translated, several of the poetic sentences in this section read as follows: 'Not a single day are you allowed to omit the reading of the psalter....it opens your eyes, and makes you understand God's law. The writing of the psalter was prompted by John Chrysostomos who showed how the singing of psalms frightens demons and chases away darkness. The psalter shines like the sun, purifies like water, burns like fire....The singing of psalms is similar to the eating of honey....It consoles old men, beautifies young ones, it helped Jesus Christ Himself; the psalms are the mouth for the laws of the prophets'.

The actual psalms follow in the last section, arranged according to these headings: "Psalms of David", including those "suppressed by the Jews"; "Psalms of Asafok"; "Collected psalms"; "Canon of Irmos"; and finally, "Canon for the dead", also attributed to Irmos.

In addition to the service books, the people of Berezovka possess a considerable number of exegetical works, which range from collections of Byzantine canon law to apologetics authored by Old Believers. This is a very important source of inspiration and instruction, which will be reviewed in some detail.

The most basic and widely used of these texts is the primer (azbuchik) whose complete title reads "Primary instruction for persons desirous to learn from books of God's writing". The fifty-page-long hand-written booklet begins with an introduction to Church Slavonic, explaining the names

of the different characters, and the rules of punctuation and pronunciation. The remaining two thirds of the booklet contain the basics of Christian prayers and commandments. These are supplied under the following headings: "Prayers and prostrations performed upon arriving and leaving in church and at home"; "morning prayers"; "psalm 50"; "confession of faith of the first [ecumenical] council"; "confession of faith of the second council"; "archangel's greeting to the holy Mother of God"; "prayers upon rising"; "prayer before lunch"; "prayer after lunch"; "prayer before supper"; "prayer after supper"; "prayers accompanying the making of the cross sign"; "prayers for success".

The last ten pages introduce the reader to a short synopsis of Christian morals attributed to the Patriarch Iosif of Moscow, followed by the Ten Commandments, and, taken directly from the psalter, the instruction on how to make the sign of the cross. A large sketch of the correct position of the fingers fills the last page.

More advanced readers find the principles of their faith confirmed in several classics of Old Russian Orthodoxy. The most important of these is the kormchaia kniga, which can be translated as the "Rudder" or "Pilot Book". Based on the Greek "Nomokanon", the kormchaia constitutes the corpus of Orthodox canon law, including its local Russian version. It seems that the first compilation of the various Church Slavonic documents containing the Orthodox law was carried out in the first half of the 16th century and printed in 1650 under Patriarch Iosif. (Pascal 1938:150). Three years later, Patriarch Nikon published a second, revised, edition, and yet another version came out in 1787, which seems to be still used by the Russian Orthodox Church (Mitrovits 1898; Pascal 1938).

The copy which I gained access to in Berezovka was a 1914 reprint of the 1650 edition commissioned by Iosif. The introduction summarizes the history of the schism between Eastern and Western Christendom, attributing it to the 'heresies' of the Roman Catholic Church. Its sins are said to consist of the Latin confession of faith with the 'filioque', the use of unleavened bread in the Eucharist, the notion of purgatory, beardless priests, modified holy days, incestuous relations between affines, and the consumption of defiled food. These reasons are enumerated as an explanation for the excommunication of the Latins by Greek patriarchs, who consider Western Christians "great enemies of the Greeks and of the Orthodox Church".

The next section of the kormchaia consists of "the rules of the holy apostles", none of which contains any type of reference to the New Testament or some other source. The directives issued by the 'apostles' vary from the prohibition of various sexual sins - such as the mutilation of one's penis or the rape of a virgin - to definitions of defiling categories of food. Great attention is paid to the necessity of correct baptism by means of a triple immersion and of avoiding any intimate contact with pagans and heretics.

The bulk of the manual is taken up with a myriad of rules and recommendations issued by the seven ecumenical councils and a number of local synods held during the first Christian millennium. The issues discussed at these gatherings seem to have been copied in an almost verbatim manner, without any type of commentary. A great many of the directives are referred to in chapter VI.

The volume concludes with a number of short treatises written by obscure or anonymous authors and concerned with the various 'heresies' committed by Western Christians. Thus a "Studdite monk Nikita" chastizes the Latins for serving communion without salt and yeast; someone else proves with Moses that trimmed beards constitute a sin, and yet another author speaks out against Christian men letting their hair grow long like women. The final section is a lengthy diatribe against the Germans and other Latins and their perverted customs.

The topic of Western apostasy looms large in another influential work, the "Book of the only truly orthodox faith" (kniga o vere edinoini istinnoi pravoslavnoi). Written in Kiev in the 1620s, the "Book of faith" came out in Moscow in 1648 and became something of a bestseller (Smirnov 1898; Pascal 1938). My copy, a reprint of the 1648 edition, begins with these words: "Lord, force us to remain within the bounds of sacred laws, and do not, Christ, abandon the East for the West."

The first part provides an overview of the history of Christianity in Kievan Rus', beginning with the exploits of the 'Apostle Andrew' and ending with the triple immersion of Prince Vladimir and his marriage to Anna, the sister of the Emperor of Byzantium. What follows is a long analysis of Latin departures from orthodoxy, including their addition of the 'filioque' to the creed, the absence of yeast from the host, the custom to reserve wine for the clergy, and similar sacramental inaccuracies. This section concludes with a full exposition of the significance of the two-finger sign of cross, and of the theological basis of iconography.

The second part elaborates on the postulated heresies of the Roman Catholics and explains why the Florentine Union cannot be recognized as valid. The Greeks are said to have retained the orthodox faith, unlike the Ukrainian uniates who are condemned on the same grounds as their Latin patrons. After a brief exposition of the Western error of baptizing by sprinkling rather than immersion, the author offers a powerful apocalyptic vision of the near future. The antichrist is predicted to appear in the year 1666, and on account of his Jewish origin, he is expected to attack orthodox Christians, trying to seduce them into joining the apostate Latins.

Another influential work, which I could not examine in detail, is "The Book of Cyril of Jerusalem" (kniga Kiriliia Ierusalemkogo), usually referred to as Kirilova kniga. It seems to have first appeared in Moscow in 1644, but its source may have been a Ukrainian text published in Vilna in 1596 (Akademiia nauk 2/2 1948:326). Attributed to "Church Fathers", this treatise is yet another compilation of Western heresies, embedded in a strongly eschatological context. Unlike the "Book of faith" - which may have been composed as a reply to several suggestions made herein - the "Book of Cyril" is critical of the Greek claim to orthodoxy. This seems to have occasioned its burning by the Greeks in 1650 (Pascal 1938:204).

A fourth work justifying the views held by Berezovka's Old Believers is the "Book of life and mercy" (kniga zhitiia i ochasti), published in 1912 and attributed to a 16th century metropolitan of Moscow, Macarius. Beside a long account of un-Christian vices, it contains a richly illustrated and greatly expanded version of the Book of Revelation. This text is most often employed as a source of eschatological views.

These four books supply a powerful array of weapons defending many - though not all - local practices and beliefs, which cannot be justified on the basis of liturgical texts alone. Whenever I desired an answer to a question starting with "what is the source of....?" or "how do you know that your view on such and such is correct?", I would be told that the kormchaia, or another of the above works, confirms the validity of the opinion in question. Never, though, was I helped in my search with an exact reference. My informant knew that his answer was validated somewhere and did not bother to conduct a lengthy search. This point, which has to do with the relation between the written and the oral tradition, will be returned to momentarily.

What the written tradition reviewed thus far does not confirm are the numerous departures from orthodox practices necessitated by the loss of priesthood. It will have been noticed that all four works were written prior to Nikon's reform and describe conditions expected to prevail in the official Orthodox Church. They warn of the consequences of heresy but do not offer a strategy suitable for the conditions encountered by the Old Believers. This is a major stumbling block in the path of people whose insistence on locating the source of orthodoxy in the pre-Nikonian era deprives them of genuine certitude concerning the validity of several important articles of faith. The consequences of this very significant problem are discussed a little later in this chapter.

The emphasis on conditions prevailing prior to the schism explains the relative lack of attention to and knowledge of works written by Old Believer authors. Since the people of Berezovka constitute a blend of formerly separated social clusters with somewhat heterogeneous traditions,

it is virtually impossible to appeal to the authority of any of the founding fathers of the movement without facing contradictions between past and present definitions of orthodoxy. For example, the famous archpriest Avvakum is known to every adult in Berezovka, and a few have actually read his autobiography, which remains the classic attack on Nikon's reform written by an Old Believer (Avvakum 1974). Avvakum is highly regarded as a martyr, but his advice to the defenders of the old faith is not accepted without criticism. How can the people of Berezovka who reject all priesthood as defiled embrace Avvakum's insistence on the absolute necessity of retaining access to priests despite their ordination by heretical bishops (Smirnov 1898)? Or, for that matter, how can the local definition of any type of suicide as sin be reconciled with his call for self-immolation as a radical method of purification (Avvakum 1974; Zenkovsky 1970)?

Similar difficulties surface in respect to a second classic work authored by an Old Believer, Andrei Denisov's Pomorskie otvety, written in 1723 (Chrysostomus 1957). Unlike Avvakum, who is claimed as the founding father by the priestist popovtsy, Denisov is acknowledged as the earliest and best formulator of priestless principles adhered to by the most influential branch of the bezpopovtsy. His work is far less familiar to the people of Berezovka, but the spiritual leader has read it, and a few other elders are at least aware of its general direction. Although many of the local traditions coincide entirely with those supported as orthodox by Denisov, the elders are leery of claiming him as a divinely inspired authority. Contrary to their own views, the influential leader of the

bezpopovtsy insisted on universal celibacy and a far more communally oriented society than the local Old Believers are able or willing to form (Crummey 1970).

Despite the ideological insignificance of post-Nikonian apologetics, the people of Berezovka are acquainted with historical works describing the schism and its consequences from the Old Believer perspective. For the most part, however, this category consists of anonymous pamphlets obtained from unknown sources sometime in the past and of spiritual songs composed by 18th and 19th century folk artists. The latter genre used to be firmly established as an essential component of the written tradition, but it has been in decline since the emigration from China. The songs were intended to be sung at home by the entire family as a source of moral and historical edification. Today, the melodies are familiar only to older residents, and I had to request a special performance in order to hear the tunes once during the whole field work.

To the best of my knowledge, there are only two collections of such spiritual songs (dukhovnye stikhi), containing some thirty different texts altogether. Both are written in Church Slavonic, with one handmade and the other printed. The origins of the lyrics are unknown, but the collections themselves appear to have been compiled in the 1850s or 1860s. The whole content can be subdivided into two categories. Common Christian themes surface in songs called "about the flood", "about the resurrection of Christians", "on virginity", "about the birth of Christ", "Adam's lament", and "Joseph's lament." Specifically Old Believer views are expressed in lyrics entitled "Lament of the monks of Solovetski", "Avvakum and his family

in banishment", "Avvakum in prison", "Boiarina Morozova" [a famous follower of Avvakum, martyred for her faith], "about final times", and "about the Church schism under Patriarch Nikon".

All of the songs are a celebration of solitude and undisturbed communication with God and an account of the difficulties faced by true Christians desirous of this type of life. The lyrics devoted to the post-Nikonian situation are filled with sadness and anger at the perpetrators of the heretical reform. The 'new times' are likened to the disorientation of Babylon, and considerable space is given to a foreboding sketch of the antichrist - dominated 'final times'.

Having outlined the most important components of the written tradition represented in Berezovka, it is fitting to mention in a few words the presence of external constraints working against its expansion. Because of the threat of volnodumstvo (freethinking), local residents are expected to refrain from the reading of morally harmful material, ranging from obscenity to political propaganda. The most interesting prohibition pertains to written material describing magic, sorcery, and occult phenomena. One elder once proudly pointed out that because of their absolute refusal to read books of this type, the Old Believers are the least superstitious people. More will be said about this shortly.

iii. Oral Tradition

The oral traditions preserved in Berezovka fall into several categories, all of which cannot receive attention in this limited space. Stories recounting the Old Believers' experiences in China and Turkey are omitted.

Legends and epic tales describing the lives of saints and other Christian heroes prior to the Russian schism are also disregarded. Although many of these are known and told in Berezovka, my concern for specifically Old Believer traditions does not demand a lengthy compilation of themes readily available elsewhere. In view of the content of the following two chapters - containing the core of local theology - the only genre of oral tradition I wish to address here is that developed after the schism in order to explain its emergence and its consequences.

The Old Believers love to tell stories. Every adult of reasonably advanced age possesses a huge inventory of proverbs, parables, legends, and historical accounts, and my most pleasant memories of the field work are of endless hours spent in the presence of enthusiastic and skilled storytellers. The ethnographer must, however, be on his guard in order to distinguish tales and jokes meant to entertain from histories intended as edification. Most local traditions belong to the latter category of 'oral history', with history being clearly distinguished from myth. Myth in the colloquial sense of a partly fictitious story is unknown in Berezovka, and I vividly recall the ire of an informant asked about religious skazki (tales). Anything told in Berezovka about the Christian past is considered istina and pravda (truth).

The appeal to historical accuracy notwithstanding, the 'truth' underlying the oral tradition is differentiated from that of the written sources. Unlike the latter, which are surrounded with an aura of divinity, their oral counterparts are mere human interpretations of a higher authority. Consequently, the 'profane' Russian stories are not subjected to the same

guarantees of perfect rendering as the Church Slavonic 'sacred' texts. The oral historian is not a copyist but rather a fallible translator. Because the written history is (somewhere) preserved, its oral interpretation can assume a number of versions, which are not entirely interchangeable. Different speakers may therefore develop their individual renderings of historical facts without being accused of heterodoxy.

The point here is that because the codified history of Berezovka's Old Believers ends prior to the raskol, their interpretation of the post-Nikonian past cannot be maintained within a larger and universally accepted context of written 'truth'. The result is a vast number of traditions developing out of different conditions encountered in the locales inhabited prior to the melting of the three groups, each offering a unique perspective on the post-Nikonian era. Under normal circumstances, the blank spot is simply disregarded by pretending that the definition of orthodoxy has always been congruous with the situation in Berezovka. But, as I show in the next section, the absence of agreed upon interpretations of relatively recent history can easily shatter the precarious harmony and erupt into a bitter schism.

Before providing samples of a few important oral traditions, I would like to point out one more salient property of Berezovka's storytellers. Although their grasp of history and geography is much better than that of average Canadians possessing comparable educational qualifications, it is greatly biased in favour of personal experience. Any Old Believer has an excellent recall of the slightest detail observed perhaps fifty years ago in Manchuria. He remembers the names of Chinese, Japanese, and Russian

generals who fought the war in his territory; and every inch of the voyage from China to Brazil is etched in his memory. But when it comes to events and places of little personal significance, all informants, including adolescents educated in Canadian schools, tend to exhibit a great deal of ignorance. Thus a man in his thirties inquired whether Ontario was separated from Alberta by a sea, and he was amazed that Holland was not ruled from Moscow. The same person had given me a very informative lecture on the geography of

Some of these idiosyncrasies can be detected in the following account given by an older woman asked to sketch the conditions leading to the raskol. The conversation was conducted in Russian, and the text has been edited to eliminate undue repetition.

There were many years, the Christian belief endured for a thousand years, unwavering. Then Patriarch Nikon changed it; he was seduced by a woman who wanted to test him. She told him that "if you will cut off your beard, I will be able to be with you." But when he obliged, she said, "what kind of patriarch are you, one that got seduced by a woman; you abandoned your rank and violated the law. You are not a good man." So he got ashamed and wondered how he could show himself to the people. He came to church and fed the pigeons so that they ate grain from his ear. So he tied himself up so that nobody would see what had happened to him, and he said: "The Holy Spirit told me that beards must be shaved off, that's what God proclaimed, and I have shaven mine already". And then people got horrified, and those who were staunch Christians didn't follow him. But the weak ones who thought that if God had said that, then it should be done, they began to shave. But the Christians were against it. So then he started to change books. But the righteous holy fathers didn't want to do it, so they were being tortured, they were burned, they were executed in all sorts of ways.

At this time, Archpriest Avvakum emerged. He fought them, he was for truth, he was calling councils; many hundreds of people would come, from all countries, nothing would keep them; neither mountains, nor sea, nor spaces, nor rivers, nothing. As they said, they would flock together like eagles to these councils, in deserts, in caves where they lived, everyone would gather to the council by the strength of God, as the Lord ordained. And they were passing resolutions. All those who followed him [Nikon] are called Nikonites, and those who remained Christian, of the ancient catholic belief, these are Christians, and this is what we are maintaining.

This account contains a number of highly interesting features. Its structure consists of two historical texts, one written, the other oral, and woven together in a rather smooth fashion. The informant, unaware of her own sources, interprets the Russian schism within the context of the early persecution of Christians by the Romans and the emergence of the schism between the Greeks and the Latins. Thus the raskol seems to have erupted around the year 1000 - the approximate date of the first serious conflict between the East and the West - and Patriarch Nikon assumes the role of Roman popes. He shaves his beard - there is no historical evidence supporting this claim - and pretends divine inspiration for a 'heresy' attributed by the Greeks to several of their rivals in Rome. Indeed, as I show in chapter VI, Byzantine accusations against the Latins, incorporated into old Russian texts, made use of exactly the same story to explain the motivation of the first shaven pope!

The first Old Believers become merged with early monks living in deserts, and an internal Russian affair is extended to "all countries". Nikon's opponents are no longer peasants and members of the lower clergy, but "righteous holy fathers", and Avvakum is portrayed as the convener of fictitious Church "councils". This tendency to interpret the raskol as a continuation of the eternal struggle between the Christians and the pagans/heretics, is perfectly congruent with the Old Believers' view of themselves as the last 'Christians'. For those who may doubt the identity between the first and last guardians of Orthodoxy, this type of oral history furnishes the proof.

The same informant supplied a second powerful motif that can be detected in local oral history, namely the belief in Nikon's complicity with the devil. Like a sorcerer (charodei), the faithless patriarch is said to have made a pact with Satan, thus preparing the way for the rule of the antichrist. Attention should be paid to the association between the polar opposites of right and left and God and Satan.

Actually, Nikon's mind was possessed by the devil. Satan himself, you know. And he went to see Satan. His right hand was a deacon, something like a patriarch's servant. His name was John. He was God - fearing, and God was near to him, and he was near to God. So this deacon entered his [Nikon's] cell and saw that Nikon was soulless, he lay there like a corpse. So John became afraid, ran out and was ready to shout that the patriarch had died. And he sees him walking! The body was lying, but the soul came out and said: "What's with you John, why are you so flustered as if you were afraid?" "Well, I was afraid when I came in and saw you soulless", replied John. And Nikon said, "Don't tell anyone." And John looked into his boots and saw that in one of them there was a picture of the Mother of God and in the other - of crucified Christ. So he was trampling these pictures in his boots. And he said, "Don't tell anyone. I went to see Satan, and we were about to make an agreement. And he said to baptize in the name of Satan." Nikon replied, "I cannot do this, but when I baptize, I will do it with the left hand, on your side."

When the child is baptized from the font, the priest gives the child onto the right hand of the godparent who must stand to his right. But the Nikonians started handing the child onto the left arm....Then they started changing other things, and so on. They started to say, "It's the same the two-finger sign of the cross or the three-finger sign"; but it is not the same....The three-finger sign of the cross is not acceptable to God, it's not right....And there was a council, there was Arius [!], he was also a Christian, and he said that the three-finger sign is correct, and all who were on his side agreed, but those who were Christians said it wasn't right. And so it went that they started torturing the Christians, and the Christians started to have strength, and the Nikonians took away, and so it went on and on. They went along their path, and we went on our own. They had their churches and started to baptize their way, to warm the water. First, they also baptized by full immersion, and then they made more and more changes; finally, they just place the child in the font and pour some water over its head. But now, I don't know. Perhaps they just drip some water.

The post-Nikonian period is usually portrayed in two complementary themes, one pertaining to changes forced upon the worldly society in order

to escalate its alienation from orthodoxy, the other concerned with tribulations experienced by the Old Believers. As the following example shows, the first topic is rendered quite accurately.

Afterwards, Peter [the Great] came. He had been travelling in foreign countries, and he brought back tobacco and coffee and started to force people. Older people who didn't smoke and didn't drink, he simply started to force them. His servants would catch them and shave them and forced them to drink coffee; and he forced women to cut their hair and to wear different clothes. And people would run away, they would hide in the mountains, and they would say that the antichrist had come already. They called him [Peter] the beard-shaver [britous], that's what they called him...people were so afraid of him. Already when he was growing up, he behaved like a hooligan.

And he decided to build the city of St. Petersburg. He would chase people there, and they would carry lumber on their backs and run, and everything was built there in water and mud. They were saying:"It is too hard, we can't, the people are hurting!" To no avail; no sooner some die, they sent others. And so this St. Petersburg stands on top of human bones. So many people perished there, in the water, in the mud, with little food, that's how people perished there. Still, they built the city, it is beautiful, but a great number of people died there.

The second theme, dealing with internal developments within the Old Belief, sheds some light on how the people of Berezovka explain their mixed identity, between doctrinal popovtsy and bezpopovtsy. The problem of priesthood - the most significant factor in the interplay of myth and history and fully explained in the next section - deserves particular attention.

[The Nikonites] were trying to destroy all priests. As soon as they would see one that keeps Christian beliefs, they would either deport him, or put him in jail where he would fester, or kill him right there and then, that's how they were exterminating them. And we also had priests and the rest, but then all this started to disappear....There was a priest in Austria who had been blessed by righteous priests, and so people travelled there. In those days, you didn't just hop into a car and go - so when the people arrived there, he had already died. What to do? What can a deceased person do? So they selected a person and had him ordained with the dead man's hand. And now they say about the 'Austrians' [Avstriitsi] that they were blessed by a dead hand. But our people would not accept that. If you elected a priest, the people may say "ordain this one", but then others would ask "what kind of a person is this man?" So he would pray, he may

perhaps not eat or drink for a week, and the Lord would reveal that this person is not worthy of being a priest, and that another one should be appointed. But here, when they bless with a dead man's hand, who knows, maybe he wouldn't have blessed that man at all? Maybe he would have not found him suitable. And that's when our people left and went their own way.

And so Pavel Kolominski [Bishop Paul of Kolomna] was held under arrest already, and Christians would go secretly and ask him for guidance: "What shall we do, we are orphans, we have neither priest nor patriarch, we have nothing. How must we live?" But he is sitting in a jail, a prisoner, what can he do? So he blessed them [blagoslovil] and said: "My blessing will be upon you and your offspring." And so, now we follow this. As he blessed, so we now also bless one person in council, and so it goes on, when this one passes away, they bless another one, and in this way we have to gather and meet as long as we have the strength, and to teach our children to the extent of our strength to follow the right path, so as not to fail.

[Asked about the geographical boundaries of present-day 'Christianity']
.... Some survived somewhere in the deserts. In Russia, there are some Christian monasteries on the Yenissey [River]. The Yenissey is very far away, there are no cars, people travel by boat. So there is still a Christian monastery, but very few young people go there; maybe some who are ill. There are some in Brazil, in Bolivia, in Uruguay, just a handful here and there. I don't know about the others, maybe these are somewhere, but we don't hear about them. And there may be Christians in Poland, but we haven't seen them yet, only heard of them. There were some in Turkey, they now came to Oregon. We didn't know about them when we lived in Brazil. There were Christians in Siam, but we didn't know them either. Maybe there are Christians in other places. Maybe they don't know about us, and we don't know about them. The Lord only knows. As the Lord said, "If there were two or three righteous people, I will extend the time, there will be more time, but if there be no more Christians, then it will be the end of time." So, there must be more people somewhere, good, righteous people....But eventually, everything will come to an end. Things are going worse all the time, everything becomes so hard; it is becoming harder to bring up children, and everything becomes more difficult.

The above sample is a very good example of the local interplay between hope and despair regarding the future of Christianity and humanity. The two attitudes are correlated with the expectation that the Old Believers are not alone in guarding orthodoxy on the one hand, and with the fear of the antichrist's imminent arrival on the other. Despite their occasional boasting of being ready to survive the apocalyptic period without giving in to the forces of darkness, most of Berezovka's residents are afraid of the apocalyptic future and wish for its postponement.

The antichrist doctrine permeates every aspect of public and private life. Every conversation inevitably concludes with the observation that the time of reckoning is just around the corner, and every world event is interpreted in accordance with this belief. It is difficult to provide a coherent summary of the doctrine, for there is no real agreement on who the antichrist will be or when he will arrive. In spite of one informant's assurance that "It is all told in the Bible, in the books, everything is written", the people of Berezovka do not adhere to a literal interpretation of any written sources. Instead, they take a few passages from the Book of Revelation, from the prophecy of Isaiah, from the pre-Nikonian works reviewed in the previous section, and even from the 'Awake!' booklets obtained somewhere from Jehovah's Witnesses. These sources are then combined in such a way as to explain contemporary political events as unquestionable indicators of the antichrist's readiness to invade the world. What follows is one example of an idiosyncratic version of the doctrine. It will be complemented with several shorter components.

The Lord did not reveal to the angels [when the end will come], but He said that we should be ready at any hour. But He said that if there be good people on earth, He will increase it; if not, He will decrease it. That's what He said, and nobody knows when this day will arrive. But when the antichrist comes, he will reign three years and half a year, and then there will be the end of time.

[Antichrist] will be reigning in Rome. He will be like a king. First, he will be such that he will love everyone, he will be like a Christian, go to church, build churches, give alms and love the beggars, do everything as a sorcerer. He will do everything this way, but it will not be God helping him but the demons [biesy]. Demons will walk around as if together with people. And he will do things resembling miracles.... He will do everything in a sly manner, and all people will say: "Has there ever been a king like this one? No, so this must be God and King."

And when everyone will bow to him, then he will turn around and become evil, and then there will be hunger, and he will say that only those who bow to him may get food and drink....And thus he will reign three years and a half. Then Eliah and Enoch will come and unmask him: "You are the

antichrist, and things are not right!" And he will have them killed. And they will be killed and thrown on a haystack, somewhere in a village. They will lie there for three days...and then the Lord will tell them:"Arise and go", and they will get up....That's when everybody will be at war, and they will annihilate each other, and the seven cities shall gather into one city. That means that if we had seven cities before, most of them will perish, and only one city will remain.

Although Rome is a frequently mentioned location of the antichrist's capital, I heard rumours about several Old Believers from Oregon who, during their visit to the Holy Land, had observed the construction of the antichrist's temple in Jerusalem. Yet another version selected Geneva and Brussels as the most likely seats on account of these cities' association with the United Nations Organization.

What these locations have in common is cosmopolitanism and internationalism, traits attributed to Babylon and to a society succumbing to the antichrist. It is a chaotic society, resulting from the melting [slivanie] of distinctions and the mixing up [pomeshchanie] of values and beliefs. This image, diametrically opposed to the faithful preservation of a single orthodox tradition, is evoked by the Jews on account of the historical role they have played in Christian stereotypes in general and in Russian folklore in particular. The association of Rome with Babylon has an ancient root in the ideology of Eastern Christendom, and the perception of the United Nations as a helper of the antichrist is not as far fetched as it may appear. This organization's goal of promoting an 'international government' is seen as proof of 'Babylonian' tendencies.

Any type of census, registration, survey, and similar methods of information gathering are regarded as highly suspicious activities providing the antichrist and his helpers with valuable knowledge about their enemies.

The people of Berezovka believe themselves to be particularly threatened because of their outspoken defence of Christian principles, and they are fiercely opposed to tattoos, skin stamps, and similar markers that could be employed in antichrist's registration attempt. An adolescent girl who had visited a discotheque in Edmonton caused a great uproar upon displaying the stamped symbol she had been given instead of a ticket. For days afterwards, Berezovka was abuzz with the rumour that antichrist's allies were preparing the ground by making people accept innocent looking marks. Similar rumours were triggered by the news that the United Nations introduced a super-computer to store information on all inhabitants of the world. This hostile attitude to 'data gathering' enforces the desire for isolation and obstructs the work of the anthropologist.

Although nobody dares to question the validity of the antichrist doctrine, there is no consensus on its chronology. It is generally agreed that the devil has been behind all organized deviations from orthodoxy, and that major heretics, including Nikon, have acted as his helpers. As the final struggle between God and Satan is brought closer by every new apostasy--due to the diminishing number of 'Christians'--the Old Believers have always suspected the antichrist to be just about to make his appearance. But although some informants provided exact forecasts, ranging from eight to thirty years, most of them conceded that the final decision was up to God. Hence there was no contradiction in expecting the antichrist and at the same time working hard to ensure care-free old age. When I joined the Old Believers during the tree planting season, my foreman

revealed to me that the seedlings we were planting by the hundreds would never reach maturity, because the end of the world was imminent. Asked why then did he engage in such futile activity, he replied with a broad grin: "as long as there is a government stupid enough to pay good money for useless work, we will happily take it!"

This answer shows how the apocalyptic beliefs can reinforce one's feeling of superiority. Indeed, as the keepers of secret knowledge, the people of Berezovka feel able to assign meaning to otherwise puzzling phenomena, and to compensate for the disorientation and culture shock experienced outside their own community. The chaos which seems to surround them can be organized.

In spite of the functional integration of the antichrist doctrine into the belief system of Berezovka's residents, people do express a very real fear of the destruction of this world and wish to postpone it. Since God is said to grant an extension as long as there should be a sufficient number of orthodox Christians, the Old Believers are interested in increasing their numbers. This strategy does not involve any organized efforts at converting outsiders, for the idea of a 'naturalized' rather than a 'natural' Old Believer is not at all popular. Instead, it entails a very informal search for 'lost tribes' of truly ancient 'Christians' in isolated parts of the world.

Having acted as a resource person, I can vividly recall some of the peculiarities that struck me in this search. The local nastavnik had explained to me that according to oral tradition, there was an organized orthodox Church, including its own hierarchy and all, somewhere in the

mountains of northern India, with possible branches elsewhere. He spoke of several persons he had met who confirmed this belief, and I promised assistance with establishing more concrete evidence. Our search would be conducted in the following manner. I would bring geography and anthropology books containing pictures from all parts of the world, and the nastavnik looked for signs of Christian culture. Thus, for example, he pointed out a bearded inhabitant of Bosnia, declaring "he could be one of us!" I was then given the task of locating this man and writing to him!

On one occasion, I 'discovered' a sizable community of Old Believers in Poland, and the photographic and written evidence was scrutinized all over Berezovka. Everybody expressed great interest in these people who began being referred to as nashi (ours), and plans were being made for inviting them to visit and possibly join the local congregation. The action never progressed beyond the planning stage. It seems that all one wanted was a flicker of hope that the tradition of the 'lost tribes' had some concrete basis. Had one proceeded beyond the available evidence, the likely discovery of 'errors' among the foreign Christians would have eroded the credibility of this tradition.

Before concluding this section, I would like to offer a few comments on the continuation of these themes by members of the young generation. Although it is too early to pronounce an informed verdict concerning future preservation of the oral history, it seems very likely that the numerous stories known to older people will be reduced in scope and detail. Where parents give details of time, place, and personality, their children recall just a fuzzy shadow of a certain event whose importance is not clearly

appreciated. In my numerous conversations with adolescents, I detected a profound ignorance of the significance of historical figures such as Avvakum, Nikon, Paul of Kolomna, and even Peter the Great. The anonymity of the past comes through in the following excerpt from an interview with an adolescent girl, conducted in English.

Uh, when I think about the Russian religion and the way things were brought to us, the way they were taught, and like some things they are fun to do, and sometimes they are not, and usually I would always think about how it started, and how people tried to keep their religion, and what they went through, like mom told us about people like they were put into fires, and some of those, the important ones, they succeeded staying inside the fire, and they didn't feel anything, and the person who tried to do it was real angry. And it made us feel good that they could do that, [so] that we can still have the Russian religion around....

Uh, I think that it is very important for the children to read and understand the Bible, because most of the rules are in the bibles; like if there is nobody, if nobody knows how to read it, they couldn't be able to go by the religion, and those there are a lot of words they are different than the way we speak Russian, and they are kind of hard to understand sometimes....

Some of the children - who, for the most part, are far more thoughtful than their Canadian peers - have come up with interesting versions of the antichrist doctrine fused with its modern western equivalent. In the words of an adolescent boy:

If I have kids,...they aren't going to have much of a life [because of a nuclear war], and they are gonna have a hard time trying to get away from that stuff [contamination] you know, and it's gonna be hard to get water and things like that, because everything is gonna be polluted. Well, rivers, like this one right here, flowing beside our place. It'll be dry and dried right to the bottom, just like a gravel road or something... And the rains, there is less rains around here right now, and there is always the thought of a nuclear war, you know....And they are making so many atomic bombs and the other arms like that, the missiles, planting them all over the place in fields, in farmers' fields and things like that, you know, and as soon as the war begins, they are going to blow up everything.

Growing up with one foot in Berezovka and the other in Canada, so to speak, Old Believer children are rarely able to harmonize the world view

of their parents with that of their teachers. Today's apocalyptic mood may strike a traditional chord, but deep contradictions between the types of knowledge received at home and at school are far more common. Stories circulated in Josephville of Russian children refusing to participate in multicultural festivities because of their fear of the Chinese 'dragon' cannot reveal the profound conflict experienced as a result of modern formal education. Some of it may be gathered from the following interview, conducted in English, with a fourteen-year-old boy.

Well, some of the things that bother me are like them going to space, going to moon, and everything like that, but our religion says they don't go to moon, because God won't let them pass....Well, I don't know if they do or not, but it states that nothing could go there,...and when I ask at school, like when the rocket gets out of the earth's atmosphere, you know, when there is no air, once it hits where there is no air, what do the engines push against? So, nobody answered that yet, so I don't even know what to follow, so I guess I am still following our religion and will teach my sons and daughters the same thing.

Well, he [the teacher] said that when the earth spins, it pulls everything together, but when you spin a ball, everything goes apart, so he didn't even answer anything. So I ask him these questions again, and he just says, "okay, that's enough." And when I ask mom and dad, they give me all the proper answers, you know. They show me examples, they even take balls and everything, and they show me what it is.

iv. Schisms

I have alluded several times to the discrepancy between the pre-Nikonian written tradition regarded in Berezovka as the basic source of orthodoxy and the Old Believers' inability to follow it faithfully in all respects. The contradiction between what is and what ought to be traditional Christianity is caused above all by the absence of a Church hierarchy, priesthood, and conventional sacraments. Without dwelling on

local practices aimed at overcoming this vacuum - these are described in the following chapters - I would like to discuss recent attempts at restoring priesthood by some 'Christians' in Oregon and Alaska. The resulting schism is having far-reaching consequences for the future of North American Old Believers.

It has been mentioned on a number of occasions that the residents of Berezovka, and most of their North American relatives, are neither doctrinal popovtsy nor convinced bezpopovtsy. Their neutral position is based on a recognition of the possible existence of a truly orthodox Church hierarchy somewhere in the world, which, if found, would enable them to resume all pre-Nikonian traditions, including the full range of sacraments. However, all known orthodox Churches are considered heterodox, and most of my informants were skeptical about the likelihood of ever abandoning their present 'emergency solution' for a better alternative.

Still, several older residents admitted having lived in communities with priests and written sources indicate that both the Turchane and the Sintsianty had, prior to their exodus to the United States and China, been influenced by priestly traditions (Shamaro 1964; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930). Such influence can still be detected in the Turkish congregation in Oregon (Morris 1981). Hence the question as to the reasons behind the loss of priesthood becomes pressing. In view of the cultural domination of Berezovka by members of the Kharbinty, I will attempt to provide an answer using material pertaining to the history of this group. One should, however, keep in mind the heterogeneous ancestry of all three local groups, which makes it impossible to generalize about the past of all their members.

The source on which this reconstruction is based consists of a manuscript written by a Brother Imrik in 1920 and entitled malaya rodoslovna (short genealogy). I was not aware of its existence during my field work in Berezovka where its content is known to only a few elders who consider it controversial. A copy was given to me by a prominent proponent of priesthood in Oregon who employs it as proof of the priestly orientation of the ancestors of several prominent families of the Kharbintsy. While this document does not contradict the general sketch of the post-Nikonian past drawn by my informants, it should not be regarded as an official component of Berezovka's written tradition.

Malaya rodoslovna is composed in the manner of a hagiography, starting with Paul of Kolomna, the sole Russian bishop explicitly opposed to Nikon's reform. The bishop is said to have confirmed the resistance of several prominent leaders of the Old Belief who were assured that Christ's priesthood would continue forever and His body and blood preserved until the end of the world (malaya rodoslovna - further abbreviated as m.r.- 1920:4-6). The number of these early leaders is postulated as having included twenty men, among them Avvakum, belonging to the clergy, who were soon joined by another twenty-three, all of them ordained by orthodox bishops (ibid.:8-10). These founding fathers of the popovtsy carried the seed of dissent into all corners of the country.

The ranks of the pre-Nikonian clergy had to be eventually expanded by members of post-Nikonian priesthood, ordained by 'heretical' bishops prior to their escape. The fugitive priests were 'corrected' (ispravlenie) by members of the old clergy through a second chrismation (peremazanie), which in

turn entitled them to act as 'correctors' of future fugitive priests. This mechanism was threatened by the death of the last Russian patriarch, Adrian, in 1700, and his replacement by the "Holy Synod". This body of high ecclesiastics came to be dominated by Ukrainian theologians with strong Latin tendencies, among them a preference for baptism by sprinkling rather than the customary immersion. At this stage, faced with the prospect of admitting priests ordained no longer by heretics but by 'pagans', the ancestors of the Kharbintsy resolved not to employ this last category of 'clergy' (m.r. 1920:17-23).

The supply of 'old' priests began to dry up in the early part of the 18th century, and in 1757, a representative of Siberian popovtsy set out in search of an orthodox Church outside Russia. He found it in Georgia whose hierarchy could be traced back to Patriarch Adrian, and in 1758, a Georgian priest was persuaded to travel to Moscow for further examination by a council of elders. Having passed the examination, this priest was 'corrected' and allowed to minister to this branch of popovtsy. The Georgian connection flourished until the 1830s when this source dried up in consequence of the forced incorporation of the national Church into Russian Orthodoxy (m.r. 1920:22-23).

Around this time, one of the last members of the Georgian branch, a priest-monk Antonii, seems to have found his way to the Lake Baikal region inhabited by the direct ancestors of several Kharbintsy (m.r. 1920:25; Iosif 1985:1,5). It is unclear whether this congregation was served by another priest after Antonii's death, but by 1867, one encounters only

lay monks carrying out the duties of today's nastavnik (m.r. 1920:26-27).

This general sketch of the religious affiliation of some of Berezovka's ancestors coincides with the account supplied by an outside observer. According to that version, the popovtsy of the Baikal region did indeed receive a priest in the early part of the 19th century (Anonymous 1865). It confirms also that starting in the 1850s, presumably after the priest's death, the responsibility for spiritual affairs came to rest in the hands of laymen. Significantly, both versions agree in attributing this shift not to a complete lack of priests, but rather to the refusal of local Old Believers to employ clergymen whose orthodoxy was questionable (Anonymous 1865; m.r. 1920:23-24).

The direct link between the Kharbintsy and a branch of the popovtsy is not denied in Berezovka. While details of its composition are subject to individual interpretation - as indicated in the section on oral tradition - some elders are willing to concede that the partial sacraments described in the next chapter are derived from post-Nikonian priests. What is most vehemently disputed is the possibility of using that connection for a resuscitation of priesthood. This puts these elders at odds with some of their co-religionists.

Since the early 1980s, an initially small faction of the Old Believers in Alaska and Oregon has been advocating re-integration into the priestly camp. The leader of the 'priestists', the nastavnik of Nikolaevsk in Alaska, was ordained priest in 1983 (Tserkov 1983(13):16-21), followed by a nastavnik of the Turchane in Oregon in 1984 (Tserkov 1984(17):31).

This betrayal, as it is seen in Berezovka, has caused a grave schism that threatens to explode the precarious harmony maintained by the North American 'Christians'.

The priestly branch joined by the 'apostates' belongs to the "Old Orthodox Church of Belaia Krinitza" whose headquarters are located in Romania. It was founded in 1846 in a small settlement of fugitive Old Believers (Lipovane) in Austrian Bukovina by a former metropolitan of Sarajevo and Bosnia, Ambrose. The hierarch, living in Istanbul without any means of support, had been persuaded by messengers dispatched from Moscow to renew the Old Orthodox Church, and after the plan's approval by the Austrian government, Ambrose arrived in Belaia Krinitza to be installed as its archbishop in October 1846 (Polek 1885; Andreev 1870; Chrysostomus 1969).

Starting the following winter, the metropolitan set out to secure a solid foundation for the new Church, which was intended as a rallying point for all priestly Old Believers in and outside Russia. He ordained several priests, cooked a generous supply of chrism, and ordained his successor and one other bishop (Andreev 1870:224; Chrysostomus 1969). His further activities were stopped by the Austrian government, which had been forced by Russia to put an end to the alarming developments in Bukovina (Nadezhdin 1846:109-110; Kelsiev 1860:143,151-153). Eventually, Ambrose was arrested and sent into banishment in Triest where he died in 1863 (Chrysostomus 1969).

Despite the removal of its head, the 'Austrian' Church - hence the informal name of Avstriitsy, Austrians, applied to its members - remained

functional, and its two new bishops carried on the work begun by Ambrose. In addition to a large number of priests, they ordained six bishops prior to 1855, two of whom managed to slip into Russia (Goehlert 1863; Chrysostomus 1969). By 1912, the Church of Belaia Krinitza consisted of a hierarchy of twenty-three bishops (Milovidov 1979:31,36), including one with the title "bishop of Canada" (Starobriadcheskaia Arkhiepiskopiia 1966:55-57).

Although the 'Austrian' Church became the best organized and most numerous priestly faction - it had the support of some four million Old Believers in the 1860s (D.P. 1867:405) - almost two centuries of secretiveness had conditioned many popovtsy to view any 'official' priesthood with suspicion. Armed with doubts regarding the validity of Ambrose's 'correction' - the metropolitan spoke only Greek, and he mispronounced the Slavonic prayer of purification - baptism, and his authority to consecrate bishops on his own (Andreev 1870:224; Chrysostomus 1969), almost two million priestly Old Believers rejected the legitimacy of the new hierarchy and continued to rely on fugitive priests (D.P. 1867:405). This branch came to be referred to as beglopopovtsy.

The 'Austrian' Church has been known to the Old Believers of Berezovka and their North American relatives for a long time. The Turchane lived in an area belonging officially to the diocese of the bishop of Mainos who became Ambrose's successor as the next metropolitan. Although the majority of the local population were beglopopovtsy (Kelsiev 1866:435,448; Call 1979:144), it is quite likely that some did belong to the new Church. The same can be said about the ancestral region of the Sintsianty in Central Asia, which was partly converted by an 'Austrian' priest who arrived in the first years

of this century (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:34-35). Finally, a considerable number of fugitive popovtsy, led by a Bishop Joseph of the Far East, escaped to northern Manchuria during the Russian Civil War (Piepkorn 1977). Their settlements in the Three-River-Region were situated approximately half-way between those of the Sintsianty and the Kharbinty, and my informants were certainly aware of their existence.

The proximity between the 'Austrians' and the people of Berezovka continues in Canada. Between 1924 and 1928, as many as two hundred popovtsy from Manchuria were admitted to this country - the government insisted on excluding many more, among them Bishop Joseph, who could not pay their own passage or for other reasons threatened to become a burden - and settled down in the Peace River district in Alberta. I paid several visits to this oldest congregation of popovtsy in North America and was told of their many attempts at establishing friendly contacts with the more recent 'Christian' immigrants. These advances were rejected by Berezovka's as well as Romanovka's residents who regard the local Avstriitsy as heretical 'pagans'.

This view applies also to the followers of the two former nastavniks turned priests. They no longer enjoy 'Christian' status, and may therefore not visit any home or the temple of Berezovka. Although the 'schismatics' are still few in number, their influence seems to be spreading. In addition to the two priests, the Church now has a 'bishop for the diaspora' whose task consists primarily of persuading all the 'Christians' in Australia, North- and South America of the necessity to join the renewed Old Orthodox Church. The most powerful argument is the admonition that true Christians cannot live without access to genuine sacraments (Iosif 1985).

The opposition, on the other hand, disputes the validity of the sacraments dispensed by the new priests, claiming the entire 'Austrian' Church to be a deceit thought out by enemies of orthodoxy. This opinion is supported by a gamut of evidence, ranging from Ambrose's 'heretical' baptism to his inability to understand Church Slavonic.

Some of the theological issues raised by this latest raskol will be explored in subsequent chapters. For now, I would like to emphasize the emotional impact upon the people of Berezovka. What is regarded primarily threatening is the result the schism is having on the kinship solidarity of closely related nashi. Families in Oregon and Alaska have been split up, chapels and homes have gone up in flames (Gilbert 1985), and the relatives of the 'bishop for the diaspora' have threatened to suspend him from a tall tree by his long hair if he ever dared to show up in Berezovka. Aware of the importance of kinship for their cultural survival, many older persons claim fratricide as the sign of the apocalypse.

Among the younger members of the congregation, the schism has led to an even higher degree of confusion about their social identity. Most of the future carriers of the 'Christian' banner do not understand what the 'Austrian' Church is all about and how it fits into their own past. If anything, the schism has revealed the thinly disguised doubts that many local people have about their branch of orthodoxy, and whether it indeed coincides with pre-Nikonian Orthodoxy. Unlike the academically skilled 'Austrians', who can prove that their dogma is indeed supported by the written tradition, much of Berezovka's evidence consists of not entirely clear oral accounts presented as 'history'.

v. Summary

Let me recapitulate the most essential points raised in connection with the sources of orthodoxy appealed to in Berezovka. Firstly, orthodoxy is synonymous with truth (istina, pravda) and law (zakon) and derives from God. Its opposite, heterodoxy or heresy, originates with Satan and is disseminated by his human allies. The Old Believers see themselves as God's warriors in the eternal struggle between forces of truth and falsehood. The apostasy of former Christians has prepared the way for the apocalypse, foreshadowed by various signs of the antichrist.

Secondly, the link between God (truth, law, orthodoxy) and His followers is revealed primarily in divinely inspired 'old books'. Unlike other so-called Christians who have all been confused by reforms similar to Nikon's, the Old Believers **lay** claim to the original version of the 'old books', which alone preserve God's will. Because of their exalted source, these texts cannot be questioned nor subjected to the type of scrutiny demanded by the scientific method. Instead of analysis and understanding, the Old Believers require their memorization and repetition. This alone ensures that the 'word' will be preserved and God's will fulfilled.

Thirdly, the proper interpretation of the orthodox tradition and its continuation are tasks entrusted to several skilled lay men who act as religious specialists. Despite his accountability to the council, the nastavnik can be seen as a pseudo-priest with a pseudo-ordination. The belief that the last orthodox bishop, Paul of Kolomna, blessed his

followers and their offspring establishes an institution verging on 'apostolic succession' and connecting the people of Berezovka with the pre-Nikonian Church.

Fourthly, the bridge between Berezovka and Russian Orthodoxy prior to the schism is cracked because of the sacramental vacuum created by the absence of priesthood, but also as a result of local residents' inability (and often unwillingness) to reconstruct their post-Nikonian past. This creates the impression of an 'identity crisis' felt primarily by the young generation.

Fifthly and finally, the people of Berezovka are fiercely opposed to recognizing the legitimacy of any Church known to them. Their refusal to accept the 'Austrian' hierarchy and priesthood has several historical reasons, but it is also related to their contemporary culture. Despite the concession that not everything is as it should be, the priestless accommodation to 'necessity' has become part of Berezovka's tradition. In view of local resistance to authority originating outside the realm of kinship, the unwillingness to recognize a hierarchy located in Romania is understandable.

IV. ORTHODOX SYMBOLS: THE CHURCH

In this chapter I describe the objects and acts employed in Berezovka in the discharge of religious duties. I make no attempt at analyzing states of the mind, such as charity, love of one's neighbour, and similar symbols shared by all Christians. Without discounting their importance, I consider it more pressing to restrict attention to those aspects of the religious culture which are unique to the Old Believers.

i. Ritual Calendar

The people of Berezovka subscribe to a notion of time which is in several respects at odds with the Canadian standard. Time is reckoned from the year of creation, which is held to have taken place 5508 years before Christ's birth. Despite the alleged importance of keeping track of time in order to predict antichrist's arrival, many people are unable to determine authoritatively the current year according to any chronology. Some informants thought they were living in the 1970s and even 1990s, and the conversion of 'Christian' into 'creationist' years required a lot of thought. The confusion about large and impersonal numbers is probably related to the 'merging of time' observed in the previous chapter in connection with oral history.

The ritual year begins on the first of September, which is held to have been the starting point for creation. It is measured in accordance with the Julian calendar, which means that Berezovka's time is some two

weeks behind that of most Christians. This discrepancy is taken very seriously as it seems to provide evidence concerning Satan's success in confusing the 'pagans'. Since the latter are ahead of the orthodox calendar, their pseudo-holidays do not really coincide with the occasions supposed to be commemorated, and the gap between the past and the present cannot be closed. Also, the Old Believers use neither Roman nor Arabic numerals as their calendar is based on letter combinations borrowed from the Slavonic alphabet. In this way, they have combined a divine language with an equally divine chronology, preserving them from the chaos disseminated by Satan and his allies.

The 'calendric' independence used to be more jealously guarded in the past than it is today. Older residents showed me complex-looking astronomical charts attached to the ustav which summarize significant constellations of the stars and related facts used in the determination of time. The charts were issued for blocks of up to sixty years and were intended for isolated communities of Old Believers. A somewhat rougher method relied on the human hand with its numerous lines and bones. A skilled person could read a number of time-related indicators from this simple tool, which can no longer be adequately explained today. These and some other techniques ensured that even a person separated from 'social time' could still determine the day of the year and offer appropriate prayers.

Nowadays, the astronomical charts and similar auxiliary devices are no longer employed by the Old Believers. Berezovka's residents are

not persecuted, and there is little likelihood of a sudden catastrophe leading to chronological confusion. But, as before, the keeping of correct time remains a prerequisite for the commemoration of religiously significant events that must be remembered forever. Accurate chronology is a crucial component of the local desire at preserving the overlap between the past and the present.

The calendar used in Berezovka could be conceived of as an example of the 'organic analogy' employed in social science. While time may be likened to the visible parts of the body, the sacred time of holy days provides its 'engine' in the form of organs and circulating blood. Thus one can pay minimal attention to unmarked, secular time and still remain acutely aware of the flow of its sacred equivalent. Such is roughly the situation in Berezovka. People are, for the most part, influenced by pressure stemming from concrete chores that have to be completed, rather than from the abstract notion of 'lack of time'. One doesn't say, 'the cutting of the hay must be finished by tonight'. Rather, the cutting of hay continues until it is completed. Hence people do become oblivious to the markers separating day from night and mornings from afternoons, unless a religious event effects a temporary transition from secular to sacred time.

The change from secular to sacred time has a number of correlations which involve transformations from private and informal to public and formal types of behaviour. For example, on ordinary days, family members rise at different times depending on the nature and amount of work that demands their attention. With the exception of small children, everybody

eats on his own in the morning and often also at night. Prayers are said privately, and the degree of social interaction can be minimal. This is in sharp contrast with the practice observed during holy days when the entire family cooperates in the discharge of religious duties and social pleasantries. Everybody rises together, prayers are offered as a group, and following the church service in the village, all family members and invited guests partake of a formal meal. In view of what has been said about the acephalous nature of Berezovka's social life, it would appear that sacred time plays an important role in maintaining some degree of community cohesion.

Without going as far as to speculate whether there may be a causal link between social cohesiveness and the amount of sacred time, it is interesting that the fragile community of the Old Believers is exposed to the integrating influence of sacred time on a vast number of occasions. Without counting movable holy days and those Sundays which do not fall on a special commemorative event, there are altogether 186 days that require some type of religious attention. For the most part, it is sufficient to offer personal prayers at home, but a still considerable number of days requires public worship.

The Old Believers distinguish between three kinds of sacred occasions. The least significant ones, which are celebrated privately at home, are referred to as malye prazdniki, meaning 'little holidays'. More important ones, srednie or 'middle' holidays, may be commemorated publicly, but attendance is not compulsory. The last and most authoritative class of holidays consists of groznye, meaning 'formidable' and 'terrible'. These events

must be celebrated publicly, and every parishioner is expected to attend. In addition, every Sunday is considered a major holy day that commemorates Christ's Resurrection (hence the term voskresenie for both occasions). All in all, a formal religious service takes place on about eighty days in any given year. My informants classified the following occasions as groznye prazdniki.

F i x e d D a t e s	September	8	The Nativity of the Mother of God	
		14	The Exaltation (Raising Up) of the Life-Giving Cross	
	October	1	The Protective Veil of the Mother of God	
	November	21	The Presentation of the Mother of God in the Temple	
		30	Apostle Andrew, St. Peter's Brother	
	December	25	The Nativity of Christ	
	January	1	The Circumcision of Christ	
		6	The Baptism of Christ (Epiphany)	
	February	2	The Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple (Candlemas)	
	March	25	The Annunciation of the Mother of God (Lady Day)	
	May	8	Apostle John the Theologian (<u>Bogoslov</u>)	
	June	24	The Nativity of John the Baptist	
		29	St. Peter and St. Paul	
	August	6	The transfiguration of Jesus Christ	
		15	The Falling Asleep of the Mother of God (Assumption)	
		29	The Beheading of John the Baptist	

M o v a b l e D a t e s	EASTER		Palm Sunday Great Thursday Great Friday Great Saturday RESURRECTION (Easter Sunday) followed by Easter Week	
	Ascension		40 days after Easter	
	Pentecost		50 days after Easter	
	All Saints		First Sunday after Pentecost	
	<hr/>			

Table 5. Major holidays in Berezovka

The ritual calendar may be further refined with the inclusion of an extremely important component of Berezovka's annual cycle, namely the locally observed religious fasts. With a few exceptions, fasts are held every Wednesday and Friday in commemoration of Christ's trial and crucifixion. In addition, there are four blocks of continuous fasts dedicated to the celebration of outstanding events. In order of importance, these periods consist of the seven weeks of Lent (velikii post), the six weeks between St. Philip's and Christmas (Filipovka), the two weeks preceding Assumption (uspenskii post), and between one and six weeks prior to St. Peter's and St. Paul's (post sviatykh apostolei). This last period depends on the date of All Saints; it spans the distance between those two holy days.

Since the details of local fasting behaviour are discussed in the next chapter, I merely want to point out the significance of fasts for the calendar kept in Berezovka. My informants seemed to think of the year as consisting of several blocks of time falling into either of two categories: fast (post) and fast-free (miasoied'). These two categories are then further refined depending on which part of a post or miasoied' one is concerned with. Thus there are weeks named after meat, cheese, and butter, expressing the gradual transformation of miasoied' into a strict post. And as people virtually gorge on the type of food to be banned in a few days, they invariably come to associate major religious occasions with the content of their stomach. In short, local time, or at least its most significant peaks, cannot be divorced from the condition of the human body. More on this will be said shortly.

ii. Ritual Space and Action

The public commemoration of holy days and Sundays consists of an interrelated double service in Berezovka's chapel. The afternoon prior to the holiday, work ceases, and all families undergo the private ritual of washing in the steam bath (bania). By late afternoon or early evening, the congregation assembles for the vespers (vechernaiia), which may last up to two hours. The parishioners then return home and rest - without eating - until early morning when they return for the matins (utrenia). This component begins around two or three in the morning and continues until approximately eight o'clock. Major celebrations require an extension of this norm by up to three hours. It is expected that everybody attends both parts of what is seen as a single devotional occasion (sluzhba).

The building which accommodates the congregation is a modest-looking frame structure that bears little resemblance to an Orthodox church. The sole external sign of its function is a silver cupola topped with a traditional cross and erected only around two years ago in response to 'Austrian' jokes about praying in a 'barn'. The chapel still lacks a bell, which, I was told by the nastavnik, may not be added without the permission of a priest. Other explanations pointed out the physical difficulty of transporting a heavy bell during possible future migrations. Since the building lacks the status of a church (tserkov), it is officially designated as a chapel (molebniaya). Nevertheless, people slip frequently and refer to it as tserkov. Its interior is sketched in Figure 4.

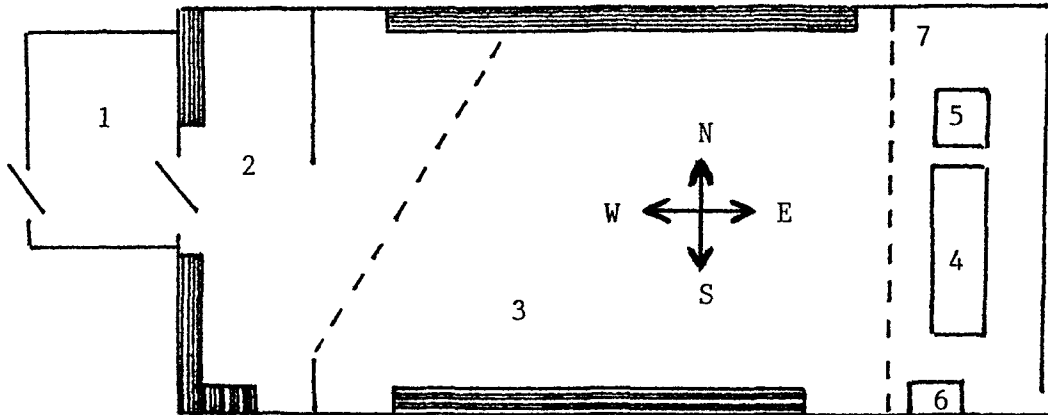


Figure 4. Berezovka's chapel

One enters through the western door which leads into a cloak room where heavy garments are hung up along the walls (1). Adjoining this vestibule is a semi-enclosed area (2) reserved for women and impure visitors, including temporarily excommunicated members of the congregation. Women in good standing may proceed all the way to the imaginary dotted line, but only along the northern, or left, wall which is considered the female side. The central space (3) is used by men and boys in good standing, giving them the best view of the ritual that unfolds along the eastern wall. The dotted line in the east separates common from 'sacred' ground. The latter is occupied by a long desk (chetnyi naloi) (4), a small table called pristol (5), and a low bookcase (6) containing liturgical books. A lectern (7) is employed from time to time to support hymnals and may be moved to different parts of the central area (3).

The chapel lacks a proper altar which is normally situated in a sanctuary adjoining the eastern wall. Similarly, there is no iconostasis in the traditional sense, which would adorn the wall between the sanctuary and

the public room (3). Instead, there are numerous icons placed upon a board that lines the eastern wall. The small pristol (5) substitutes for a proper altar in supporting a covered book of gospels, a standing cross (krest), and a censer (katsei). As if it were a real sanctuary, the eastern section is reserved for religious specialists responsible for the ritual conduct.

The entire room is decorated with numerous large embroidered square pieces of cloth, bearing flowers and symbols of orthodoxy, such as crosses and sacred monograms. Several long chains of decorations used on North American Christmas trees are suspended from the ceiling. Although the chapel is ventilated through four large windows on the northern and southern walls, it retains a heavy smell of incense mixed with human odour and beeswax. During a well-attended service, the building may absorb as many as two hundred people.

The Old Believers are not expected to arrive at the chapel at a pre-arranged time. When I inquired prior to my first visit about the beginning of the matins, an elder told me vaguely to come "early in the morning." Pressed further, he mentioned two o'clock as an appropriate time. Having followed his advice, I found myself alone, waiting in front of a dark and locked chapel. About one hour later, the nastavnik and two other elders, dressed in long black coats (kaftan) worn by some men during ritual occasions, unlocked the door and disappeared in the building. A few minutes later, I could see flickers of candle light through the windows and hear the tones of a chanted prayer. Gradually, elderly men and women, followed by families and young couples, began to arrive. By six o'clock or so, the

majority of the congregation was together. On very important days, there is a tendency to start the service very early in the morning, and the 'arriving time' may be considerably shorter. But there is no obvious desire to stipulate formally a point at which everybody is expected to congregate.

The flexibility of attendance is largely influenced by the flexibility of the service. After entering the chapel proper, the worshipper carries out a number of prostrations (zemnye poklony) accompanied by numerous signs of the cross. He then bows to the congregation, whose members reply in kind, and takes up position somewhere in the main part of the chapel. Looking from the entrance, there is a clear concentration of female parishioners at the back and on the left side while men congregate along the right wall and at the front. This arrangement agrees with local views which correlate the female sex with the left and the west, and the male sex with the right and the east. All participants are expected to stand throughout the duration of the service, but if overcome with fatigue, one may rest on benches that line the northern, southern, and western walls. The absence of pews or chairs encourages a lot of movement as small children are sent from one parent to another, and as people step outside to catch some fresh air or to make use of the outhouses located to the west of the chapel. The impression of commotion is emphasized by the constant chatter of adolescents 'hidden' in the cloak room - and periodically reintegrated by an elder - and by the loud banging of the door. Still, the tumultuous environment - which resembles an Old Believer home - does not seem to detract from the ability of the parishioners to discharge their duties to God. The tasks at hand are fulfilled conscientiously and imposingly.

The structure of the service is determined by the ustav, which makes a distinction between liturgy conducted by a priest and by a layman. The latter, employed in Berezovka, consists of four basic components that can be elaborated and repeated depending on the occasion. The longest part is allocated to the chanting of 'canons' (kanuny) by men selected by the zastavlianchnik in accordance with their literacy and ability to withstand this strenuous activity. I was not allowed to examine the text of these 'canons' and can say little about their origins. Their content is varied, ranging from expositions on the significance of Sunday to commemorations of the deeds of the saint or martyr who is remembered on the day of the service. Each canon is read by a separate man from a separate book placed on the chetnyi naloi by the nastavnik. Shorter passages may be chanted by boys known to have mastered the liturgical language and the appropriate text.

The recitation of canons is interrupted repeatedly by prayers said by the entire congregation. Most of them are taken from the psalter and are known by heart. The prayer is concluded with the request Gospodi pomilui (God, have mercy), which may be repeated up to a hundred times. The counting is aided by a rosary (lestovka) made of cloth and clutched in the right hand of every believer. This rather long and stiff tool is also used in hitting ill-behaved children during the service. The row of prayers ends with numerous prostrations and signs of the cross. A square flat pillow of colourful fabric (podrushnik) is placed upon the floor in order to guard the forehead from contact with the ground.

The third component consists of the singing of hymns (dukhovnye stikhi) from special song books written in notes (kriuki) known as znamenie (sign).

The reading of this old notation system requires special training which is passed on by the first cantor (pervyi pievets) and his assistant. The cantor is responsible for choosing an appropriate voice (golos) out of a scale of eight. The hymnal is placed upon a lectern and surrounded by a small group of men and boys. The rest of the congregation may join in depending on their knowledge of the particular tune.

The fourth and final component is the reading of an appropriate edifying passage known as pouchenie (instruction). This is usually a gospel on resurrection, but other biblical stories may also be chosen. It is performed by the ustavchik or the nastavnik, with everybody else seated with bowed head and closed eyes. Asked why one cannot stand during this part of the service, informants underlined the direct contact with God through the Bible, which requires that the book be placed above the congregation. A prohibition on entering or leaving the chapel while the pouchenie is in progress contributes even further to the solemnity of this occasion.

Once these four components have been carried out, it is up to the nastavnik to decide the extent of elaboration and repetition. His decision depends on the importance of the commemorated event as well as on quite mundane considerations. For example, when there is a wedding ceremony to be performed later on in the morning, the service can easily be shortened by two hours, giving people more time to celebrate outside the chapel. Some of my older informants complained about the alleged tendency in recent times to abbreviate more and more services.

Without underestimating the importance of age, sex, literacy, and individual taste for discerning the 'meaning' of the public religious devotion, it appears quite legitimate to look for it in the domain of ritual form rather than intellectual content. The Old Believers do not go to church in order to learn something new from a sermon, nor in the expectation of being challenged to modify their behaviour. Even the short pouchenie, which has the most pronounced moralistic tendency of all the four components, is interpreted as a voice from heaven that remains external to the listener and does not require the kind of self-examination aimed at by sermons delivered in Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Most of my informants found it hard to summarize the content of the 'instruction' or the canons recited during the service. They knew of course, except in the case of some adolescents, that the devotion was held in honour of a certain event or saint, but there was no need felt to analyze what exactly was done and why.

The chapel is considered as a middle ground between earth and heaven. Although it is conceded to be less sacred than a real church with relics, bells, and altar, the building is somewhat more elevated than an ordinary home. This high status is reflected in the scrupulous avoidance of defiling acts, such as the penetration of animals or impure persons into the sanctuary. In accordance with purity beliefs outlined in the next chapter, menstruating women are barred from attending religious services for fear of offending God. Similarly, visiting outsiders defiled by their consumption of impure substances such as tobacco, blood, coffee, and tea, may not venture past the western partition that separates 'Christians' from temporary and permanent 'pagans'.

The insistence on outer, that is, material, purity is intertwined with the one activity which fills most of the time spent in the chapel, namely the recitation of prayers and 'canons'. With a few minor exceptions, all prayers in Berezovka, private and public, are audible. The reasons for this custom are related to the desire for expressing as forcefully as possible one's allegiance to God and renunciation of the devil. The cosmic rivals listen in on the prayers through the intercession of saints and demons (biesy) respectively, and their conclusion as to the status of the formulator influences his future after death. As my informants put it, depending on the nature of the prayer, either the angels or the demons 'frolic' (raduyutsia).

As can be expected, a Christian prayer incorporates all the standards of correctness observed in the realm of the liturgical Church Slavonic language. The incorporation of any linguistic deviation - such as words or accents borrowed from Russian or any other natural language - is held to transform the prayer into a tool of the devil and must immediately be rectified, often at the insistence of the congregation. I recall my amazement when confronted for the first time with this aspect of the public prayer session. An elder chanting a 'canon' had mispronounced a word, and several voices supplied the correct version and demanded that he repeat the entire sentence. In this manner, the church service enforces conformity and reveals gaps in the knowledge of individual participants.

The insistence on ritual orthodoxy precludes the active participation of non - 'Christians'. Wherever I found myself in the middle of a religious event, my hosts never tired of admonishing me not to pray with them.

This prohibition extended beyond prayers in the strict sense (molitva) to its extension, the multiple prostrations (poklony). For fear of undoing their effort at communicating with God, I was instructed to remain standing, with arms folded, behind the worshippers.

Despite the high regard for the divinely inspired word, few elders feel confident to explain exactly how their prayers differ from those employed in the official Orthodox Church. Out of the numerous 'corrections' instituted by Nikon (Chrysostomus 1957), only three were known to my informants. Everybody is aware of Nikon's substitution of Iisus for Isus (Jesus) and of Nikolai for Nikola (Nicholas). The third modification pertains to the heresy of the 'triple alleluia'. Unlike in official Orthodoxy where alleluia is repeated three times and then followed by its Slavonic translation slava tebe Bozhe, in Berezovka the repetition occurs only twice. This discrepancy is known to only a few local residents.

The Old Believers are not allowed to visit the churches of other denominations for fear of defilement. They consider them to be playgrounds of demons where God cannot dwell, and few seem to be at all intrigued by the prospect of seeing such environment personally. The stereotype of a 'pagan' church is a Roman Catholic cathedral equipped with a huge organ, nicknamed 'devil's pipes'. The use of instrumental music is seen as a major result of the 'mixing up' of sacred and profane elements in 'pagan' religious settings.

A final aspect that deserves to be mentioned in this context is the link between devotion and discipline. I have already pointed out the parallel between religious and secular socialization of children. Here, I wish to

emphasize the local view of church attendance as demonstration of one's willingness and ability to withstand fatigue. My informants stressed the importance of sweating and aching during the service. The pain felt as a result of the endless vigil reminds the worshipper of Christ's sacrifice, which is, after all, recalled every Sunday. But it also evokes fear of God and of the punishment meted out to sinners. As I heard so many times, faith alone was not a sufficient demonstration of 'Christian' status. Faith must be demonstrated, and what better proof is there than the visible adherence to God's law of ritual orthodoxy?

Because of the connection between endurance and piety, an Old Believer must participate in public services. Absence from two consecutive occasions leads to temporary excommunication, and even work in the bush at the other end of the province is not considered a sufficient excuse. Despite the apparent flexibility of one's arrival in the chapel, the congregation takes note of who comes when and modifies its classification of the piety of all residents accordingly. Eventually, one's marital prospects and standing among the elders may be influenced by the endurance shown in church.

iii. Sacramentals

The channel of communication between God and the worshippers is carved out not only by prayers but also by several other acts and objects of unusual power, which I refer to as 'sacramentals'. The Old Believers designate this domain with the term sviatost'; it can be loosely translated as 'holiness' or 'sacredness'. Although sviatost' is distinguished

from sacraments (tainstvo), the dividing line can be very thin. A most important point is the dependence of sacraments on sacramentals, which underlies local attitudes to the spiritual gifts dispensed by the official Orthodox Church. Since its sacramentals are considered heterodox, the sacraments administered by the Church are claimed to be invalid.

The description should start with the sign of the cross, which the people of Berezovka single out as the symbol of orthodox Christianity. As soon as a child has learned to exercise some control over its body, it is introduced to the correct signing of the cross, a gesture performed on a countless number of occasions. In executing this sign, one joins the thumb, the ring and the little fingers of the right hand to denote the Trinity. The index and the middle finger are held erect side by side, with the latter slightly bent. This configuration symbolizes the double nature of Christ and His descent from heaven to earth. The hand then touches one's forehead, navel, and both shoulders from right to left. By touching the head, one affirms Christ's supremacy over the Church and every believer. The pointing to the stomach is interpreted as professing His descent to earth and seedless conception. The right shoulder signifies Christ's seat to the right of God the Father from where He assists His followers. The touching of the left shoulder indicates one's belief in the final judgement and the casting of sinners in hell.

It can be easily seen that the sign of the cross serves as a simplified summary of Christian dogmã. Understandably, its modification appears as an attack on orthodoxy and evokes accusations of heresy. This charge

is expressed against all so-called Christians whose sign of the cross deviates from the norm observed in Berezovka. The dichotomy of orthodoxy and heterodoxy is encapsulated in the dichotomy of the correct and the incorrect sign of the cross. The former is believed to derive from God; the latter is associated with the devil.

Any version of the wrong sign is seen as a derivative of the Latin-inspired three-finger sign (troyuperstnoe krestnoe znamenie) introduced by Nikon as replacement for the orthodox two-finger sign (dvoyuperstnoe krestnoe znamenie). The confusion resulting from this substitution is seen as being consistent with the patriarch's alleged pact with Satan and his desire to make people submit to the antichrist. The new sign is believed to demonstrate that association. Although the Nikonites continued to affirm the trinity, they did so by joining the first three fingers while holding the ring and the little fingers concealed inside the palm. The Old Believers interpret this configuration as an attempt at denying the divinity of Christ and at replacing holy with unholy trinity. The latter is seen as consisting of the apocalyptic beast, snake, and antichrist, represented also by the three numerals 666.

The view that the Nikonites and other pseudo-Christians sign themselves with a symbol of the devil is further strengthened by the association of the three-finger sign with snuff-taking. As will be shown further below, tobacco is considered a strongly polluting substance believed to be introduced through Satan's influence as a profane version of incense. The Old Believers refer to the three-finger sign condescendingly as 'pinch' (shchepotka) and to its adherents as 'snuffers' (shchepotniki).

When an elder is asked to prove the antiquity of the two-finger sign or any other orthodox symbol, he appeals to the testimony of 'old books' and icons. Having already discussed the composition of the written tradition, I would like to provide an outline of its painted counterpart. An icon (ikona, obraz) is defined locally as any painted or cast-iron representation of a holy figure or theme that is executed in accordance with orthodox iconographic views and methods. Although the parallel is not perfect, it is apparent that the rules governing pictorial designs are essentially the same as those observed in the reproduction of words. Both types of images are attributed to God or at least to divinely inspired human representatives, and both are protected from any kind of intervention which would threaten the full transmission of the original 'text'. This insistence on regarding major symbols of orthodoxy as faithful copies of divine prototypes may be designated as the 'iconic principle'.

My informants attributed the appearance of icons directly to God. The first example of holy images is associated with the so-called 'Veronica's cloth', said to preserve the imprint of Christ's face, and similar depictions of early Christian scenes surfacing miraculously without any human intervention. Encouraged by these expressions of God's desire to enshrine pictorial representations, prominent early Christians are believed to have taken up iconography in an attempt to instruct people and to facilitate their communication with God. The Old Believers single out St. Luke as the author of the first picture of Mother of God painted with human hands. Despite the 'natural' origin of this class of images, the artists' hands are said to have been guided by God.

The Old Believers acknowledge that most orthodox icons found in the world today, including all those kept in Berezovka, cannot be attributed directly to God or saintly iconographers. Instead, they are the work of ordinary artists who have conscientiously copied all the details required to preserve the continuity with the divine originals. But this does not detract from their value. Just as 'old books' are not evaluated on the basis of the age of the paper, so also 'old images' may be of recent origin. Their status depends primarily on the faithfulness of the transcription.

Local residents accuse Nikon and his followers of having destroyed the perfect overlap between the prototype and its copy. The innovations enumerated by my informants concern the diminished separation of sacred and secular paintings and the modification of a number of traditional symbols. Examples of the bridging of the distance between sacred and profane art consist almost exclusively of the naturalism expressed in post-Nikonian iconography. The depiction of holy figures is claimed to emphasize physical rather than spiritual qualities; instead of concentrating on the face, the 'new' artists are believed to be preoccupied with the body and its movement; consequently, one is confronted with a picture of restlessness and flexibility whereas 'old' artists conveyed an image of stability and stasis. The culmination of this heterodox trend is identified in the depiction of nakedness, which is held to suggest that saints and other extraordinary persons were just bundles of mortal flesh.

The rejection of naturalism is strongly entrenched in views expressed on the correct representation of crucified Christ. Although the statements supplied by my informants were not entirely unequivocal, the dominant opinion held that Christ did not suffer during crucifixion. When I enquired about the nature of His sacrifice, I was told that He felt betrayed and suffered mentally but not physically. To suggest otherwise would, I was given to understand, amount to denying His divinity. This is exactly what the Old Believers see in 'new' depictions of the scene where Christ's body is twisted, covered in blood, and His eyes shut or filled with resignation. When I displayed a famous Baroque painting of the crucifixion, a woman glanced at it and exclaimed with distaste, "this is not our Christ!"

The orthodox depiction of the crucifixion exemplifies the local attention to iconographic detail. Because the Old Believers are opposed to three-dimensional carvings, their 'crucifix' is either painted or, more commonly, made of cast-iron, which allows a slight projection of the body above the cross. This image, referred to as raspiatie, must employ a cross with eight points (vosmikonechnyi), which alone is considered a copy of the life-giving cross of crucifixion (krest). The four-pointed version (krizh) is associated with the Old Testament and may be used only in conjunction with but not as a substitute for the krest. One of the major heresies attributed to Nikon was his betrayal of this tradition, believed to have been prompted by the renegade Greeks and Latins in conjunction with Satan.

The insistence on the superiority of the krest over the krizh is fortified with numerous legends and symbolic associations. The three horizontal bars of the eight-pointed cross are said to represent the three-dimensional, universal, realm of Christ's rule, expressed in the selection of three types of wood for the original instrument. The trees used for the construction are believed to have grown from three seeds placed in Adam's mouth just before his death. The seeds had been fetched by Seth from the vicinity of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, and their growth ensured a tangible connection between the fallen and the risen man. In accordance with this belief, Adam's skull must be depicted underneath the crucified, waiting to be cleansed by Christ's blood. Thus while the horizontal axis expresses spatial universality, the vertical axis links the past with the future.

Figure 5 is a faithful reproduction of a raspiatie considered orthodox in Berezovka. Although all of its properties need not be discussed, there are several more details mentioned by the Old Believers as important 'Christian' symbols. Starting at the top, there is an image of Christ the King (1) making the two-finger sign of the cross. Underneath Him are two angels with trumpets (2) announcing the Second Coming, separated by a barely recognizable depiction of a dove above the head of the crucified. As can be seen in the smaller raspiatie (B), which is used by doctrinal bezpopovtsy - in local terminology referred to as Pomortsy - the dove is missing. This seemingly insignificant difference is emphasized in Berezovka as evidence of the heterodoxy of priestless Old Believers. The dove signifies the Holy Spirit and its protection over the Old Orthodox Church. Its absence expresses resignation about the loss of the Church and clergy.

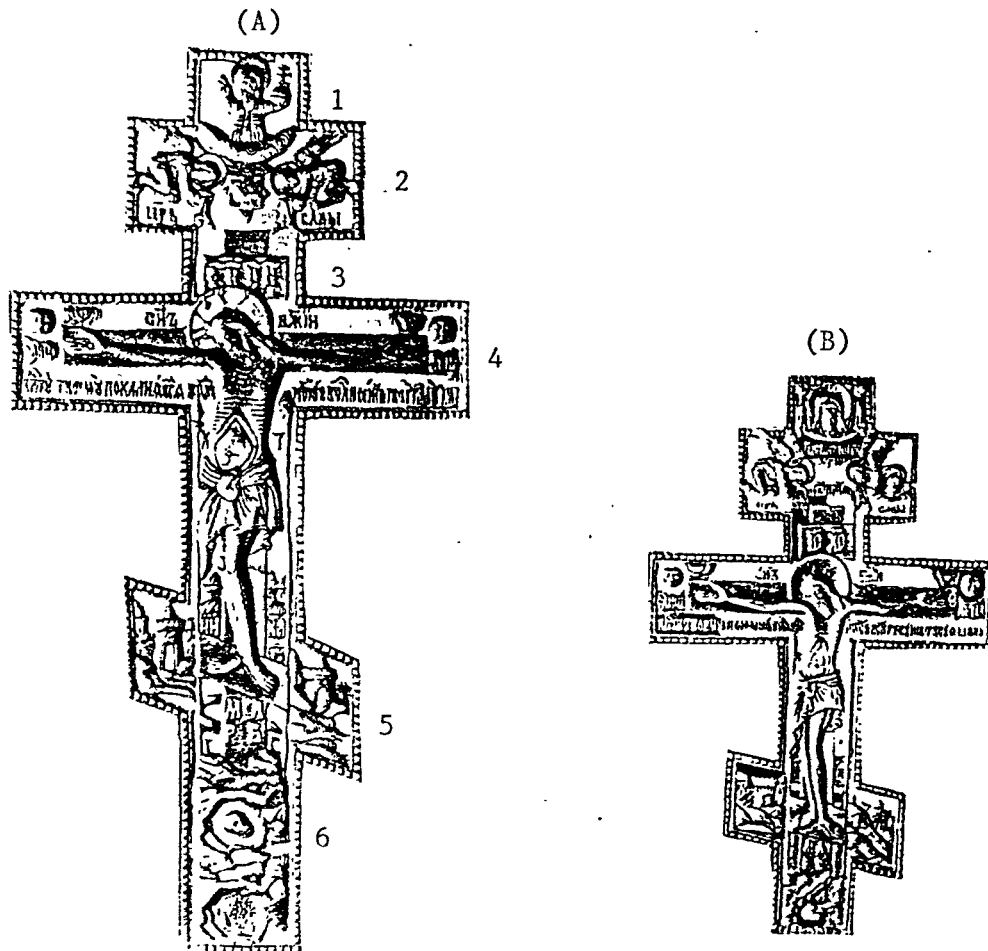


Figure 5. Raspiatie; local (A) and doctrinal priestless (B).

A further important distinction between a local and a priestless cross can be seen in the inscription or 'title' (titla) above Christ's head (3). The bezpopovtsy employ the monogram IC XC (Isus Khristos) .. while the people of Berézovka, together with the popovtsy and the Nikonites, adhere to INCI, which is the Slavonic version of 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. My informants were not certain about the implications of the difference, which played a part in the fragmentation of the Old Belief in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The cosmic significance of the crucifixion scene is alluded to through the depiction of symbols for sun and moon above the hands of Christ (4). The sun face represents the east and is therefore placed above the right hand, and the moon face, above the left hand, stands for the west. The crucified figure's arms are stretched out as far as possible, inviting, as my informants put it, the entire cosmos to follow suit. This universal gesture would be far less effective if Christ were hanging rather than standing. As local residents point out, Christ stood on the lowest slab of wood (5), designated as 'foot rest' (podnozhie). Once Nikon removed this essential ingredient of the orthodox krest, the new krizh left Christ dangling, and the doctrine of His sacrifice had to be modified. The pictorial theology of the raspiatie ends with the skull of Adam (6) which complements the interpretation of the cross being not a 'tree of death' but rather an extension of the 'tree of life'.

The local attention to iconographic details encompasses all sacred images. Depictions of the Mother of God without a head cover are rejected on account of misrepresenting her marital status. Wrong spellings of holy names, especially the aforementioned Iisus, make an otherwise orthodox icon heretical. And, above all, a saint performing the three-finger sign of the cross cannot be prayed to. All such images are said to be of 'dissimilar writing' (nepodobnovo pisma) and hence invalid.

The meticulous manner in which the Old Believers evaluate pictorial representations may be illustrated with two examples drawn from the realm of secular imagery. Having been invited to attend a wedding in Berezovka,

I was searching for an appropriate gift. By a stroke of luck, I happened to have in my possession a small reproduction of a famous 19th century painting by Surikov, depicting the arrest of the boiarina Morozova, one of the early martyrs for the old faith. After presenting the newlyweds with this picture, there was considerable upheaval among the guests, and several elders began to scrutinize every detail of the depicted scene. Within a few moments, the elders declared triumphantly that the picture was not true to reality, because the sign of the cross made by the boiarina had been painted incorrectly. The point here is not that in view of the tiny size of the sign it was impossible to analyze its orthodoxy. What appears more significant is the absolute unwillingness of the elders to concede that a non - 'Christian' could be the author of a correct depiction of a religious topic. Needless to say, I have not seen my gift in the home of the young couple.

The second example is harder to understand. Toward the conclusion of the field work, I wrote an article for a mass-circulation magazine which was intended to draw attention to the difficult educational situation of the Russian children. The piece contained some photographs of local residents, and I distributed several copies to my informants. Perhaps a year later, I happened to talk to the nastavnik and his son who accused me of having written 'lies' about the community. Prompted to supply evidence, the young man mentioned several statements whose content he had not understood because of his imperfect command of English. But then he pulled out the magazine and pointed at a photograph of a group of

adolescent boys taken some two years prior to our meeting. "Some of these boys have beards, you know", my accuser explained, "but in this picture, they are all beardless!" My arguments that this discrepancy between the past and the present was caused by the maturation process, something I had no control over, fell on deaf ears. The man continued to accuse me of having distorted the facts.

This anecdote invites a few remarks about the Old Believers' attitude to photographic reproductions of icons and to the taking of photographs in general. Activities of the former type are strictly proscribed. Whether the icon is in church or at home, it may, under no circumstances be photographed, a prohibition which extends to any other object found in the chapel as well. The only explanation provided by my informants emphasized the danger of the photograph falling into hostile hands and being defaced. Hence there seems to be a postulated identity between the painted original and its mechanical copy, but I wasn't able to receive adequate information on this topic.

The taking of photographs of secular scenes is also officially prohibited as is the mere possession of a camera. Again, I do not have sufficient data to do justice to local explanations, but it seems that the opposition stems from the association of photographs with spying and with frivolous entertainment. Despite the prohibition, virtually every younger person owns and uses a camera, and every family has at least a few old photographs from China and many more from North America. I encountered few difficulties taking innocent pictures, but a few elders refused to be

photographed or to supply a reason for the refusal.

The people of Berezovka face something of a crisis caused by a diminished supply of painted icons. The several thousand North- and South American 'Christians' are supplied by only two qualified icon painters, one in Bolivia and the other in Alaska. Both had been trained by Russian-born specialists and 'ordained' by means of a blessing (rukopolozhenie) accompanied by a certificate. Not unlike priests and nastavniks, these artists constitute a crucial link in the chain of orthodox tradition. Due to the growing population, however, more and more sacred images are manufactured from cast-iron by a commercial company located in the United States. Prior to their 'activation', they are purified by the nastavnik.

All the icons in Berezovka are privately owned and inherited within the nuclear family. Parents usually present their children with sacred images upon the occasion of marriage, laying the foundation for a small collection displayed in every home. The bride is most likely to receive an image of the Mother of God, while her husband is given an image of Christ. In order to set up house, the couple must possess these two icons and a raspiatie. Without them, other Old Believers would refuse to spend any time in their home, and the private performance of religious duties could not take place in the prescribed manner. The people of Berezovka do own other icons depicting several important saints, but the variety is limited. If a person has a painting of a saint whose deeds are about to be commemorated publicly, it is lent to the chapel for that occasion. When no such icon is owned locally, the congregation employs a 'multiple icon', which is a panel containing tiny pictures of all the saints commemorated

during an entire given month.

The primary function of sacred images derives from their power to facilitate communication between the congregation and God. The Old Believers consider the depicted saint as an intermediary or, as some of my informants put it, as God's 'secretary' (sekretar), who takes on some of the responsibilities of his heavenly superior. Hence one prays not to the material image but to the 'prototype' represented by it. The channel opened up by the icon seems, however, to be reciprocal, giving the saints a glimpse, so to speak, of human life. This belief underlies many of the purity precautions observed in the chapel and at home, such as the ban on animals, sinners, and 'pagans'. When I inquired about the reason for the requirement that I stand behind everybody else, including the women, I was told that the saints would be offended by my presence. I had to literally keep out of their sight!

The sight and the power of the holy figures can be somewhat regulated by the worshippers. The tools to this end are pure beeswax candles manufactured and donated to the chapel by all residents. The candles are attached to the simplified 'iconostasis' (bozhnitsa) in such a manner as to illuminate directly the eyes of the depicted saints. An old man shoulders the responsibility for readjusting the candles throughout the duration of the service, ensuring that the images can be seen by the congregation, and that the parishioners remain visible to the holy figures. As soon as the candles are doused, the icons are 'de-activated', and impure visitors may penetrate the sacred field along the eastern wall and examine the paintings at close range. Every public service begins and ends with the lighting

and the dousing of the candle facing the raspiatie in the centre of the bozhnitsa.

In addition to their 'communicative' role, sacred images serve also as potent purifiers after material defilement. This aspect is described in the next section on sacraments and in chapter V. On account of this elevated status, icons and crosses may not be disposed of as some secular object. They may not be sold or given to non - 'Christians', and, in the case of serious damage, they must be committed to the waters of a river. The same treatment is accorded to dilapidated liturgical books.

The final member of the sviatost' category is incense (ladon), known colloquially as kadilo. It is employed in a wide range of occasions associated with prayers and purification and is seen as a complement to icons. While the substance itself is purchased in a store in Edmonton, it may only be used in an 'orthodox' type of censer (katsei) which is not found in the Nikonian Church. Unlike the censers employed in most Christian settings, which consist of a bowl suspended from several chains, Berezovka's version is equipped with a long handle. Hence the censer is not swung but more or less held horizontally. The act of fumigation may be performed only by the nastavnik who moves the tool in such a way as to draw a smoky image of the krest. Examples of the use of incense follow in subsequent sections.

iv. Sacraments

The people of Berezovka have access to a number of spiritual gifts designated as 'sacraments' (tainstvo), but their status is somewhat ambiguous on account of the absence of priests. I have already indicated that the local Old Believers do not consider themselves doctrinal bezpopovtsy, and that they retain a faint hope of renewing the Orthodox Church with all its traditional components. Since I conducted the field work in the middle of the 'Austrian' campaign, my data might be somewhat distorted by the defence of informants of local practices attacked by their recently converted relatives. Since those attacks concern primarily the question of sacraments prepared and administered by laymen, it is conceivable that my informants tried to conceal any doubts they have about this issue.

This warning should be heeded especially in the interpretation of Berezovka's substitute for the Eucharist whose status is somewhere in-between a sacramental and a sacrament. The substance which serves as a pseudo-communion consists of specially prepared 'holy water' designated as sviatynia (sacred, holy thing) and associated with the water employed in Christ's baptism in the Jordan River.

Because of this association, sviatynia is prepared at Epiphany (Bogoiavlenie) during a ceremony known as kreshchenie, a term related to the designation of human baptism and christening (krestiny). On two separate occasions, on the eve and in the morning of the holy day, a bucketful of water is fetched from the frozen river underneath the chapel and mixed with sviatynia preserved from the previous year. The water made in the

evening becomes 'small' (malaya), its counterpart mixed in the morning 'great' (velikaya) sviatynia. The former is reserved for external purification of defiled objects and animals, such as household dishes, newly constructed homes, and cattle acquired from outsiders. Every household receives a flask filled with the substance, which is then kept beside the icons at home. Great sviatynia, on the other hand, provides internal cleansing and is consumed on a number of occasions.

The first occasion coincides with the morning of Epiphany, immediately following the preparation of the powerful holy water. With the exception of excommunicated sinners, the congregation forms two long files segregated according to sex. Starting with the male half, pairs of men approach the 'altar' and receive a white plastic cup filled with sviatynia by the nastavnik and several helpers. The men shake hands and kiss each other on the mouth three times, then drink three draughts of the water. While the pairs shuffle toward the eastern wall, a short tune commemorating Christ's baptism is repeated over and over again.

The holy water is consumed collectively on two further occasions, namely at the beginning of Lent and just prior to its end on Easter Saturday. The nastavnik reads a long list of acts considered sinful during this period of cleansing, and the congregation partakes of sviatynia in the manner described above. On Easter Saturday, the consumption is restricted to those who have kept the fast conscientiously. Children, who are considered unable to sin wilfully, are never denied this spiritual nourishment.

Further use of great sviatynia is controlled by the confessors of individual parishioners who are each given a flask at Epiphany. They dispense it after receiving the confession of their spiritual children, for which there is no prescribed frequency. Finally, holy water is also administered in times of serious illness and on the deathbed.

Although I do not recall hearing anybody refer to sviatynia as communion (prichastie), it seems clear that there is a close affinity between these two spiritual gifts. This affinity is revealed not only through an examination of sviatynia's function but also in statements concerning its origin. My informants admitted that on account of lacking clergy, they cannot convert ordinary into holy water; all they can do is to add fresh supply of river water to existing sviatynia which goes back to priestly times. The exact source of the original sviatynia could not be clarified. Some residents claimed that it goes all the way back to the site and time of Christ's baptism while others spoke of orthodox priests being responsible for its initial manufacture. Whatever its source may be, it is abundantly clear that local holy water is an essential element in Berezovka's 'iconic' link with the orthodox past.

According to the 'Austrian' propaganda, sviatynia is employed by the priestless 'orphans' as an explicit substitute for proper communion. Since its source appears to go back to the same branch of Old Believers who later renewed Old Orthodoxy in Austrian exile, its use is said to undermine the local rejection of priesthood (Iosif 1985). It is this type of criticism which made my informants nervous about discussing the status of sviatynia.

From the perspective of the Old Believers, the only really indispensable sacrament is baptism (krestiny). Without it, one can never be considered a member of the community or hope to achieve salvation. Baptism is conferred on the eighth day after birth - unless the child is expected to die, in which case it takes place as quickly as possible. The parents choose a name which should derive from one of the saints commemorated in the period between birth and baptism. There are altogether around seven hundred potential male names and only some two hundred female ones. Although local residents have a definite preference for archaically sounding names, they avoid explicitly Jewish ones, such as Abraham, David and Isaac. Commonly given male names include Vasilii, Lavrentii, Leontii, Onufrii, Pamfil, Feodosii, and Stepan. Frequent female names are Anastasia, Agripina, Elena, Evdokia, and Feodosia. Although they are not found in the approved register, ordinary secular names such as Ivan and Uliana are not entirely absent.

The ritual of baptism is preferably performed by the nastavnik in the chapel, but a ceremony carried out by any other Christian adult is apparently equally valid. The only exception applies to the child's parents. On account of her impure condition, the mother may not be part of the baptism ritual regardless of where it is held. The father is present, but his participation is limited by the norm that whoever holds the child during the rite automatically becomes its godparent. Such status would provide an unwanted kinship link between the child's father and mother, making their marriage incestuous and forcing them to dissolve it. In order to minimize the restrictive impact of this institution on the

marriage universe, the Old Believers tend to select godparents from close consanguines.

The godparent (kriostnyi/kriostnaya) brings the child to the chapel wrapped in a blanket but otherwise naked. The father or some other relative fetches a high aluminum trash can kept for this purpose in a closet and fills it with water taken directly from the river. Local residents have no misgivings about using a font of this type and claim to have relied in the past on cauldrons and buckets taken straight from the kitchen. What counts above all is the purification of the water inside the container, which is accomplished with four lit candles attached to its upper border. The nastavnik fumigates the font with incense, asks the godparent to renounce the devil, and then immerses the naked child three times from head to toe.

The impurity discarded by the child during the immersion is seen as genuine material substance which has a defiling effect on the performer of the ritual. In order to minimize the 'infection', the nastavnik washes his hands and arms with pure river water, and the content of the font is returned to its source. I was told that if a single drop fell onto the floor of the chapel, the entire building would have to be purified. The polluting effect of baptism extends to the four candles, which must be discarded together with the water.

Following the triple immersion, the child is dried off and given three objects of ritual value that define its Christian status. These are a small pectoral cross suspended from a string (krestik), a woven

belt (poyas) fastened around the belly and conceived of as an umbilical cord connecting the child with God, and a white shirt (riza) to conceal nudity. Although these symbols of the Trinity may be changed for adult versions as the child grows up, they must be worn at all times. From now on, the child is protected by God but also exposed to Satan's temptation. The struggle between the two entities is nicely expressed in the belief that every 'Christian' possesses a personal angel and demon. The angel sits on the right shoulder and keeps track of one's good deeds. The demon hovers over the left shoulder in order to observe one's sinful conduct.

The people of Berezovka do not recognize the validity of any other but their own baptism. This opinion is based on the premise that Christ was baptized by triple immersion (pogruzhenie), a custom that was to be followed by all Christians. The Latins, however, modified the ritual into a mere pouring or sprinkling (polevanie), setting an example for the Greeks and the Nikonians. The latter are also said to have started warming up the water, thereby denying the power of the Holy Spirit to keep the child comfortable even when immersed in ice-cold water. In addition, members of the official Orthodox Church are believed to hold the child with the left rather than the right hand and to employ an incorrect prayer formula. All these infractions of orthodoxy support the firmly held assumption that children outside the realm of 'Christians' are baptized in the name of the anti-christ. This is seen as a worse sin than lacking baptism altogether.

Local Old Believers do not, however, have access to the holy oil required for chrismation, a ritual which normally takes place immediately after baptism. My informants confirmed that chrismation cannot be carried

out without the assistance of a priest, but they nevertheless insisted on their baptism possessing sacramental validity. This opinion is not shared by members of the 'Austrian' Church who have expressed grave doubts about Berezovka's Christian status. Although the hierarchs seem to be satisfied with merely adding the chrismation to the ceremony undergone by converts, some of the latter have chosen to be baptized afresh.

Similar doubts have been expressed by the converts about the validity of local marriage, defended in Berezovka as another true sacrament. This rite of passage consists of three separate ceremonies. The first one brings together the future bride and groom with their respective parents. Provided they agree with the proposed marriage, all four parents confer a blessing on the young couple (svatat'), followed by three collective prostrations before the icons at home. The young woman and man are then asked separately whether their decision is voluntary. This question (ty volie idosh?) is repeated three times; if the answers are affirmative, the couple is officially engaged.

The public announcement of the decision is made by means of a ceremony held at the bride's home at least a week prior to the wedding. Its name, dievieshnik, may be loosely translated as the 'feast of the virgin'. The bride invites her girl friends to help prepare the clothing to be worn on the wedding day, and the groom and his friends visit in the evenings to join in the singing of traditional wedding songs and more or less explicit sexual teasing. The atmosphere is filled with joy and sadness as the girls discuss the advantages and disadvantages of married life.

The dievieshnik may be thought of as a 'liminal' stage. Throughout its duration, which varies from a few days to two weeks, the bride is freed entirely of her former domestic duties, and her membership in the parental household is symbolically minimized by the constant attention she receives from her girl friends. The latter accompany the bride wherever she goes by day or by night, protecting her from the evil eye as well as a premature loss of virginity. Adults may drop in during the evening performance of songs, but they may not interfere in anything that takes place. As a sign of her election and liminality, the bride wears a wreath (krosata) of flowers with long colourful ribbons falling down her back. It symbolizes the transition from the uncovered hair of girlhood to the head cover associated with womanhood.

The wedding is almost invariably celebrated on a Sunday, following immediately the morning service. Prior to her arrival, the bride is washed in the bania by her assistants with a brush (venik) donated by the groom, and she enters the chapel in the company of several young people. The party consists, from left to right, of a close female relative of the groom (svashka ot zhenikha), the bride's maid (svashka nevestina), the bride (nevesta), the groom (zhenikh), and the groom's best man (druzhka [ot zhenikha]). The members of the party are linked with white kerchiefs held in their hands. They remain standing in the centre of the chapel, awaiting the conclusion of the service.

The wedding ritual takes place with activated icons in the presence of perhaps twenty adults. Because of its sexual overtones, children and single adolescents are required to leave. The first component consists of

a benediction (bogoslovenie) conferred separately by all four parents. One by one, the parents enter the restricted space between the 'altar' and the eastern wall to instruct the couple to live together in peace and in fear of God. The groom is then presented with a raspiatie whose podnozhie ('foot-rest') he must kiss. The bride receives an icon of the Mother of God and kisses her right cheek, which is the one supporting Christ's head. The benediction ends with all participants exchanging three kisses on the mouth.

The second component consists of the 'crowning' (zavienchanie) of the bride, carried out in the north-western, that is, left corner of the chapel. The two female assistants remove the bride's kerchief, dissolve her single braid of hair, and arrange it into a double braid to represent married status. This is then topped with a triple cover of thin fabric which must be worn permanently by all married women. The cover is designated by several terms, such as vienets (wreath, crown), obruchenie (betrothal), volosnik (hair cover), chin (rank), kitchka, and shoshmura. Without delving too deeply into local hair symbolism, a topic discussed in chapter V, it is noteworthy that the head cover is made by the bride's mother-in-law and installed by a relative of the groom, often his sister. Hence, as my informants clearly recognized, the 'crown' becomes a symbol of the husband's authority over his wife. The groom is not crowned, because, I was told, a cover would interfere with his contact with God.

During the final component, the nastavnik hands out two wedding rings (koltse), which are worn on the right ring-finger by the bride and on the left finger by the groom. The rings are interpreted as obruchenie (betrothal), a term deriving from the word obruch, which means 'hoop', implying

a tangible connection between the husband and the wife. They may not be removed until death when they are taken off before burial to allow the deceased to begin a new life.

Although the wedding ritual is presided over by the nastavnik, his participation is limited to giving a few words of advice and admonishing the bride to accept the guidance of her husband. The couple leave the chapel as molodye (newly-weds) and arrive at the husband's home to participate in the worldly celebration (svadba) of their new status, which spans several days and includes the adults of the entire community.

Compared with a marriage performed by an Orthodox priest, the ritual conducted in Berezovka appears incomplete. Virtually all of the enumerated components are part of the preliminary office of betrothal (obruchenie), which does not constitute a sacrament. Sacramental validity is bestowed by the office of crowning (vienchanie, brak), which must involve the bride as well as the groom. These deviations do not concern local residents who appear unfamiliar with the conduct of a proper Orthodox wedding ceremony. They refer to their version as vienchanie and brak and treat it as a full sacrament. Nevertheless, all married 'Austrian' converts are required to have their bond validated by a priest.

The situation is similar with respect to confession. Although the spiritual father or mother provides advice and imposes penance (epitimia), the prayer of sacramental absolution is not pronounced. My informants agreed that the latter may be given only by a priest, but they seemed confident in receiving absolution directly from God.

The anointing of the sick, which under normal circumstances consists of confession and absolution, is limited to a simple confession followed by the administration of sviatynia. However, many Old Believers die from injuries incurred in the bush or on the road, and they attach far more importance to funerary and post-mortuary rituals than to practices conducted prior to death.

A dead person is supposed to be buried three days after passing away, ostensibly to minimize the danger of mistaking apparent for genuine death. The waiting period can be eliminated in cases that are beyond doubt. The body is wrapped in a special outfit whose white colour underlines the parallel with birth. It makes no distinction between men and women, poor or rich, expressing simplicity, resignation, and the expectation of resurrection.

The responsibility for making the outfit rests with an old widow selected and blessed by the nastavnik. She is required to use cloth made from locally grown flax and stitched together by hand. The shroud (savan) consists of an over-size, long shirt (riza) - an adult version of the baptismal shirt - wide, knee-high socks (noski), the actual savan, which resembles a sleeping bag covering the entire body except the face, and two long sheets (postilki) attached to the front and the back of the body. The shrouded corpse is tied with white strings woven from flax (piliny), which are believed to keep it from falling apart during the stormy journey to heaven. The feet are left unobstructed in order to facilitate resurrection.

The body is buried in the praying posture, with arms crossed and a rosary and a prayer-pillow placed in the hands. The right hand clutches also a Slavonic 'certificate' (rukopisanie), likened to a passport, signed by the person's confessor and attesting to his Christian status. A crown (vienets) made of cardboard and inscribed with prayers and religious symbols is placed upon the head, and the old pectoral cross (krestik) is exchanged for a new one, hanging on a white string. A person in good standing is interred in the central part of the cemetery (kladbishche); an excommunicated member is banned to a small fringe, clearly separated from the rest. In either case, the body must face east from where the signal for resurrection is believed to be coming. The grave is marked with a large white cross (krest) made of wood.

On the third day after death - hence usually immediately following the funeral - the deceased person's relatives invite the rest of the community to a commemorative meal combined with a short vigil (pominki). A ceremonial dish, consisting of boiled wheat with honey (kutia) is served prior to the singing of funerary songs known as ponekhidy. These gatherings are repeated on the ninth, the twentieth, and the fortieth day.

The purpose of the pominki is to support the soul of the deceased on its journey through the heavenly spheres (mutarstvo) in search of a niche where it awaits the resurrection. The body remains for the time being on earth, undergoing natural decay, which supposedly will be reversed when the body is called upon by Christ to rejoin the soul. The corpses of saints and martyrs alone are held to be immune to decay, awaiting resurrection in their original state.

My informants could not agree on the composition of the heavenly realm. They all subscribed to the notion of it being divided up into a number of separate fields (mutarstvo), but some insisted on two and others on four such divisions. The two-fold version was believed to house the sinners in a dark sphere and the pious people in a light one. The four-fold version contains one layer resembling hell (ad), a second one just like earth, a third of elevated beauty (israelskoe miesto), and finally a fourth location akin to paradise (rai).

The soul of the deceased undergoes a rigorous examination which determines its place of waiting. The examination is carried out by angels and demons who compete for the soul on the basis of written evidence assembled by the deceased person's 'guardian' angel and demon. The pominki are held to influence the decision by persuading the judges of the person's Christian background. Since the verdict is believed to be announced on the fortieth day after death, the last commemorative session is of special importance.

Asked about the sources of their funerary practices, my informants pointed out iconographic depictions of scenes such as the raising of Lazarus, the falling asleep of the Mother of God, and the resurrection of Christ, all of which reveal a mortuary appearance structure akin to Bere-zovka's. At the same time, although the local practice is considered the sole continuation of such divine prototypes, I found little evidence of explicit attempts at discrediting 'pagan' death-related rites. With the exception of cremation, which is held to have an adverse effect on the status of the soul, the Old Believers seem unaware of and uninterested

in mortuary practices observed in other Christian denominations.

Whether we discussed Roman Catholic ordination, Protestant communion, or Greek Orthodox confession, local residents always returned to two fundamental reasons underlying their alleged invalidity. Firstly, the 'pagan' so-called sacraments are prepared and administered in conjunction with false sacramentals, ranging from the sign of the cross to holy images and prayers, which discredit the entire ritual occasion. Secondly, even if the employed sacramentals were orthodox, they become ineffective when used by people lacking proper baptism. Hence the sacramentals and baptism should be considered the dominant symbols of local ritual orthodoxy. In both instances, there is tremendous interest in showing off the continuity of the 'iconic principle' and its absence in 'pagan' versions.

The remaining components of the tainstvo class do not evoke that much interest. Although the 'iconic principle' continues to influence the orthodoxy of sviatynia, the mortuary appearance structure, and, in a sense described more fully in the next chapter, the vienchanie, these pseudo-sacraments are not compared with their 'pagan' counterparts, and discussions about their status are avoided. The selectivity in the choice of self-identifying symbols is surely related to the role of priesthood in their 'construction'. By insisting on the dominance of symbols which do not require priestly intervention, the people of Berezovka have been able to reconcile their definition of orthodoxy with its pre-Nikonian prototype. Because of its selectivity, this fragile accommodation is threatened by the 'Austrian' insistence on a full range of real sacraments.

V. ORTHODOX SYMBOLS: THE HOME

This chapter continues the description of Berezovka's symbols of orthodoxy, extending it from the ritual setting of the church to the context of the home. It has been shown that proper baptism establishes a person's Christian status, which is maintained by continued adherence to ritual orthodoxy. However, there are several other criteria that must be fulfilled in order to maintain proper status. Foremost, an Old Believer is required to uphold numerous standards of proper diet, appearance, and sexual expression, which could be said to certify his bridging of the abyss between nature and culture.

Because these norms are designed to regulate the contact between the sacred and the natural domains, I employ from time to time the term 'natural purity' to express the contrast to the 'ritual purity' dealt with in chapter IV. This semantic distinction is not meant to obscure the interdependence and similarity between the symbols associated with ritual and natural purity respectively. Proper prayers or baptism alone are as insufficient guarantees of orthodoxy as are proper diet or appearance on their own. It is the combination of the two classes of symbols which denotes 'Christian' status in the manner understood by the Old Believers. The affinity between these symbols can be further detected in the continued, albeit somewhat modified, importance of the 'iconic principle'.

The reason why I nevertheless discuss natural purity separately from ritual purity lies primarily in the association of the former with the 'Christian' home. This setting might quite usefully be conceived of as a filter between the raw and chaotic forces of nature and the ordered world of Christian culture. It is here that wild elements are classified and held back in case they present a threat to the maintenance of ritual purity. The home constitutes a buffer zone between the heterogeneity of the 'outside' and the carefully guarded homogeneity of Berezovka's 'inside', the chapel. What I am primarily interested in is the logic behind the filtering process which determines what of nature may proceed into the home, and how much of it is elevated to a symbolic status.

i. The Christian Home and Nature

The dwellings of Berezovka differ little from ordinary Canadian homes. They are either trailers set up by newly-wed couples prior to the construction of a permanent house, or they are spacious bungalows of the 'all American' design that can be encountered anywhere between Dallas, Toronto, and Yellowknife. These standardized structures have nothing 'Russian' about them: no carvings, bright colours, or mud. Even the large gardens surrounding them appear quite 'domestic', and were it not for the long, single road connecting all the houses, the community would hardly stand out in the Alberta landscape.

The interior looks perfectly ordinary as well. There are the usual kitchen appliances, and the rooms are furnished somewhat sparsely but in the style and material encountered everywhere in rural Alberta. The walls are covered with huge canvases displaying some mass artist's rendition of a bull moose wading through a pond against the backdrop of the Rockies, or a grizzly baring his jaws at an invisible intruder. Only the conspicuous absence of a television set creates a slight feeling of disharmony.

Despite its ordinary appearance, the home is considered a place of elevated ritual status. If one regards a genuine church a reflection of heaven, and the local chapel a reflection of a church, then the home may very well be understood as a reflection of the chapel. It is the lowest link in the chain connecting God with His followers and the past with the present.

The ritual status of the home derives from a miniature 'temple' referred to as the 'beautiful corner' (krasnyi ugol), which is located in every inhabited room. It consists of a small iconostasis (bozhnitsa) with several holy images, a flask with sviatynia, a few dyed eggs blessed at Easter, and, occasionally, a censer. An embroidered curtain adds a touch of beauty and decorum. When sexual intercourse takes place, the curtain is drawn over the bozhnitsa, concealing the act from the sight of the saints.

The 'beautiful corner' in the main room is located above the dining table in full view of visitors entering the house. Here, the family gathers for the performance of collective prayers before and after formal meals and during minor feasts when a visit to the chapel is not deemed essential.

When a visitor arrives, he performs three prostrations accompanied by signs of the cross and a short prayer. Only then does he greet the occupants of the house. The expectation of being in a Christian home is conveyed by the question asked by a visitor unable to locate the icons; he asks 'where is your God' (gde vash Bog)?

Because the house is not a place intended to serve exclusively ritual purposes, it conveys the impression of an environment where sacred and profane forces meet, and, depending on their status, are either allowed to mix or not. It is almost as if the dwelling were equipped with two doors, one leading to the chapel, the other to the world outside, including the 'pagan' society. The occupants open and close the doors in such a manner as to maintain an appropriate mixture of the two currents. Too much ritual purity makes human life difficult if not impossible. Hence when sexual intercourse is contemplated, the 'eastern' window is shut with a curtain over the icons. Conversely, a powerful pollutant, such as a dog or a smoker, must remain outside for fear of defiling the atmosphere. Should they gain entry, the eastern door must be flung open to admit potent purifiers from the chapel. This is the essence of the simile comparing the home to a filter.

It would be a considerable and somewhat redundant undertaking if one attempted to chart the workings of this 'filter' in all details. What I do in the following pages is a sketchy attempt at designing a basic model which contains only elements that possess great symbolic value. Particular attention is paid to those associated with natural as well as ritual purity. I begin with the symbolic connotations of natural liquids.

element	source	association	secular use	ritual use
holy water	Jordan	Christ	none	purifier
	rivers/creeks	angels	human consumption	purifier
water	wells	'Christians'	after purification	none
	ponds/lakes	demons	animals	pollutant
blood	edible animals		medicinal	pollutant
	inedible animals	pagans	pollutant	pollutant

Table 6. Natural liquids and their secular and ritual status.

The above table can be seen as a purity scale of those natural liquids which the Old Believers use as symbols of something else. Starting at the top, sviatynia, the least 'natural' element, occupies the highest position as a most potent purifier that cannot defile anything or anybody. Without further precautions, it may be employed in the chapel as well as at home.

Ordinary water is a more complex substance whose status depends on its source. The rapid flow of rivers and creeks is believed to act as an automatic cleansing agent, and this is one reason why the Old Believers locate their settlements along rivers. A second explanation advanced for the preference contains a supernatural component. All of my informants agreed that every morning, God dispatches two angels who hover above a river

used by 'Christians', with the task of eliminating any further impurity. The water is pumped into homes with no further precautions. It is drunk, cooked with, washed in, bathed in. Although weaker than sviatynia, river water can become a source of ritual purification when complemented with other purifiers, such as incense and candles. The best example was supplied in the discussion of baptism. On account of these properties, river water may be brought to home and church without any precautions.

A source of water that occupies an intermediate position are wells and springs. Held to be fed by an underground river, wells are not entirely stagnant, but their quality must be improved through a short prayer and fumigation with incense. The water then becomes fit for human consumption, but it may not be used in any ritual context. The residents of Berezovka rely on wells only where access to a river cannot be gained. Without such access, ritual and domestic life would come to a standstill.

The opposite of flowing water is stagnant water, found in lakes, ponds, and puddles. It is considered impure and polluting on the basis of two explanations. Firstly, the accumulation of a body of water that doesn't move is believed to prevent the discharge of harmful organisms. Secondly, stagnant water is held to be a favourite habitat of demons (biesy) whose presence can be detected from the foul smell emanating from such reservoirs of pollution. The demons, who are Satan's helpers, are invisible, and their primary task consists of trying to penetrate the human organism. The symptoms of demonic infiltration were said to resemble those resulting from poisoning and mental illness. In some cases, the victim can free himself through a combination of prayers and proper diet; in other cases, the damage may be permanent.

Although cattle are allowed to consume this type of water, the Old Believers themselves use it for no purpose at all. I was told that this substance would not cause any harm if it were employed in the washing of a truck or animal. But its mere presence in the chapel would require purification of the icons.

The last natural liquid is animal blood, which evokes the strongest possible fears. The status of blood depends on its source. If it derives from an edible animal, it may be drunk sparingly as a remedy against anaemia, but only if drained from the right side of the animal. Any other consumption of any type of blood is considered strongly polluting. With the exception of the cat, carnivorous animals are not tolerated within the house for fear of defiling the holy images. No exceptions are allowed when it comes to the strict banishment of all blood and carnivores from the confines of the chapel.

This tri-partite classification demonstrates in a nutshell the buffer zone function fulfilled by the home in maintaining the separation between the sacred culture of the church and the profane nature of the impure environment. It is noteworthy that the consumption of blood is one of the serious sins attributed to 'pagans' of whatever persuasion. Although my informants could not supply concrete examples of the consequences of partaking of blood and blood products, they all agreed that the substance constitutes the 'soul of animals'. Their testimonies implied that the incorporation of this essence of animality would lower humans from the realm of culture, that is Christianity, to that of nature, which is synonymous with paganism.

River water, on the other hand, elevates humanity from the domain of nature to that of culture. It does so primarily because of its association with the sacred sviatynia which may be regarded as the divine prototype of pure water in general. The iconic principle is unmistakable. The sanctity of the Jordan River is reflected in other rivers just as Christ's baptism lends validity to ordinary human baptism. The link between a natural element and a ritual occasion makes water a powerful symbol of natural as well as ritual purity.

Unlike blood, which derives from an altogether different source and belongs to a different domain, stagnant water should be considered a caricature of river water. It looks the same, it tastes the same, but while the one is protected by angels, the other is inhabited by demons. This crucial distinction derives from the much weaker connection between the divine prototype - Jordan River - and a lake or pond. Hence just as heterodox baptism, stagnant water becomes the symbol of pseudo-Christians. This association can be seen in the Old Believers' refusal to modify in any way the water employed in baptism. Should they heat it or even use a lake as its source, the reflection from the prototype would be unacceptably diminished.

The next realm of nature which evokes considerable symbolic connotations consists of plants and products manufactured from them. The overwhelming majority of plant species, including poisonous ones, are considered pure and ritually harmless. The exceptions are the hop, the vine, and the tea-, coffee-, and tobacco-plants. The Old Believers are divided

on the question whether these plants are inherently impure or whether their polluting effect is limited to occasions of their consumption. Those who subscribe to the former opinion attribute their origin to Satan; the other interpretation regards Satan's role as being confined to prompting humans to partake of products that should remain untouched.

The impure plants share two crucial qualities which underlie their status. They are considered 'alcoholic' in the sense of modifying one's behaviour, and their origin is sought outside Russia. With the exception of tea, which is known to have been imported from China, these 'alcoholic' substances are believed to have spread from the Near East immediately following Christ's crucifixion. Satan, jealous of God's successes, is blamed for having introduced the local population to smoking and drinking in order to cloud the minds and weaken the bodies of potential followers of Christ. The first victims are said to have been the Arabs and the Turks who gradually seduced the Latins and the Greeks. The latter in turn exported the drugs to Russia.

Although the alcoholic products may not be consumed locally, they are, with one exception, not considered pollutants of ritual objects or acts. Consequently, they can be better discussed in the context of food in the next section. The one exception consists of tobacco and its consumption in any form, which evokes the strongest fears of natural and ritual defilement. Tobacco is held to pollute one's body and soul on account of being 'alcoholic', and to destroy the beneficial power of sacred objects on account of being a 'pagan' version of incense. The latter association was not made explicit by my informants, but I deduce it from several

examples where a clear connection was established between any type of smoking (kurenie) and what the Old Believers consider to be pagan rites. Whether North American Indians, Manchuria's aboriginal peoples, or indeed witches and sorcerers, their ritual performances were always said to revolve around the consumption of tobacco. As has been shown already, the same link is laid between the snuffing and the making of the wrong sign of the cross by the Nikonites.

Although a smoker may be allowed to visit a local home, he would be denied access to liturgical books and icons, objects whose effectiveness is believed to suffer from even indirect contact with tobacco. Outright smoking, an unheard of act within the home, is held to destroy entirely the power emanating from the icons, which would have to be purified with sviatynia and incense. Still, despite the extremely negative connotation of tobacco, a few adolescents and young men indulge in smoking outside Berezovka's confines.

Aside from the small class of drugs, plants are highly regarded as nutritious food and effective medicine. I was told of highly skilled herbalists whose superb knowledge of a wide range of vegetation made them capable of curing any type of illness with perfectly natural methods. Although no such specialist lives in Berezovka, every older resident has some of these skills and applies them in the treatment of minor ailments experienced by humans and animals alike. Because northern Alberta is said to be poor in medicinal herbs, local healing efforts depend to some extent on supplies of tropical plants received from South American Old Believers.

The classification of animals is based primarily on the criterion of edibility. Those that may be consumed are considered pure (chistye), the remaining ones are held to be impure (nechistye). This dichotomy resembles the classification of plants as it pertains in the first instance to the purity of the human body. Strong fears of ritual defilement are expressed only about a sub-class of nechistye animals, namely those designated as 'pagan' (pogany). The latter can be compared to tobacco insofar as they too pollute human bodies and ritual objects alike. The criteria employed in the differentiation of pure from impure animals are summarized in Table 7.

Habitat	feet	food	other criteria	status
AIR	red feet			edible
	toes with membrane			edible
	thin hairs below knees			edible
	naked below knees			edible
	naked above knees			inedible
				live in couples
LAND	hooves			edible
	cloven hooves			edible
		chew cud		edible
		don't chew cud		inedible
		predators		inedible
		uncloven hooves		inedible
WATER	hoofless			inedible
	dog's paw			inedible
		predators		inedible
			scales & 8 fins	edible

Table 7. Animal classification according to edibility.

The criteria listed in Table 7 were all mentioned by informants asked to enumerate characteristics associated with animal purity and impurity respectively. I wish to make it clear that individual persons displayed preferences for just a few criteria, which did not necessarily overlap with those mentioned by other informants. For example, one resident might use 'red feet' as the sign of purity in birds while another would insist on 'naked feet'. Similarly, land animals could be classified according to their feeding habits or the constellation of hoofs. This lack of agreement does not derive from uncertainty about the status of a given animal but rather from the peculiar manner in which most Old Believers go about creating order in this domain. Instead of evaluating animal status on the basis of unchangeable criteria, they move in the opposite direction by designing their criteria to justify the traditional status of a given animal. Thus while the 'signs' of purity or impurity differ from informant to informant, everybody agrees on which animals are edible and which are not.

The status of birds is most commonly associated with the appearance of their feet. Those with 'red feet' (krasnolapye), a membrane between the toes, or 'naked' (nagatye) below the knees are considered pure and edible, but these criteria are applied so broadly that virtually any bird that does not feed on carrion or other animals falls into this category. Indeed, it appears that the dividing line between edibility and inedibility coincides with the distinction between herbivores and carnivores, and that the preoccupation with feet may be an attempt at concealing the carnivorous tendencies of the chicken. The latter is considered a pure bird, which is

a foremost source of festive food. Its occasional consumption of blood is regarded with disgust, and people try to minimize it by creating appropriate living conditions. Although feeding habits do not figure prominently in the classification of birds, my informants agreed that the impurity which makes some inedible derives from carnivorous traits.

One interesting class of birds exempted from the equation between edibility and purity consists of creatures 'living in couples' (parenni). They are considered pure but may not be killed because of their resemblance with humans. Like a husband and wife, if one member of the pair dies, the other suffers and may perish from sadness. This parallel was drawn to explain the status of swans, but I strongly suspect that it extends to other birds of pure feeding habits, such as doves. The dove is of course a well-known symbol of the Holy Spirit, and to the best of my knowledge it is not eaten in Berezovka. But I failed to inquire about its status during the field work.

Animals living on land are classified on the basis of their feet and/or feeding habits. With regard to these criteria, some of my informants associated edibility with the mere possession of hooves (kopyta) combined with the chewing of cud (zhevat') while others insisted on the hoof being cloven (razdielennye kopyta) as the sole sufficient characteristic. Thus the swine, which is of great local importance, is held to be edible on account of having cloven hooves while the hare, in spite of its feeding habits, is considered impure because of its feet. The horse and similar chewing but improperly 'footed' beasts are also inedible.

Despite their inferior status, animals which have uncloven hooves and vegetarian feeding habits do not evoke sentiments associated with ritual purity. The situation is entirely different with respect to hoofless creatures, especially when they feed on other animals. Regardless of their feet, all predators (grabitel'skii zvier) are unfit for human consumption and pogany in the sense of defiling ritual settings. Their classification resembles a pyramid whose top is occupied by the dog, an animal considered most profoundly polluted and polluting. Although dogs are kept and cared for locally, they are rarely touched and never let into the home. Should a dog succeed in sneaking inside, the occupants would be required to have their icons purified. Like tobacco, the dog is believed to defile ritual objects.

The justifications supplied for the local aversion to dogs consist for the most part of references to impure feeding habits. In addition to subsisting on the blood of other animals, the dog is held in contempt for lapping up vomit and for being preoccupied with feces. In view of its excessive salivation, the dog is seen as a most likely transmitter of disease and dirt (griaz) and as the prototype of a 'pagan' animal.

The 'iconic' relationship between the dog and other naturally and ritually impure animals is expressed in the term 'dog's paw' (lapa sobachi). When asked about the status of such diverse animals as the bear, the tiger, the cat, or the mouse, they are all subsumed in the 'pagan' class on account of sharing the dog's paw. Although this attribute is defined rather widely in order to allow the inclusion of not necessarily carnivorous

but otherwise distasteful creatures, the primary criterion remains the killing and eating of other animals. Consequently, 'paganism' in animals is synonymous with rapacity.

The Old Believers do, however, distinguish between more and less 'pagan' creatures. This can be seen in the treatment of the cat, which occupies the bottom of the pyramid presided over by the dog. Unlike the latter, the cat is admitted into the house, and kittens are given to small children as presents. The differential treatment is explained by pointing out the cat's hygienic habits, which make it a suitable domestic companion. Another, perhaps even more important reason, derives from the contribution of the cat to keeping the home free of mice. Still, the cat is a carnivore and may therefore not be allowed direct contact with icons or liturgical books.

One class of animals considered 'pagan' but lacking the dog's paw consists of snakes and other reptiles known collectively as gadina. These creatures are subsumed in the category of predators, and the derivative verb gadit' is applied to a wide range of distasteful behaviour.

Finally, aquatic organisms fall into either of two classes. Fish (ryby) are always pure and edible, regardless of their habitat, if they possess scales and eight fins. Unlike any other animal, a fish may be eaten with its blood. Shellfish, sharks, seals, and all other creatures living in water and not belonging to ryby are known as 'sea animals' (morskii zvier) and may not be consumed. As the core of this class consists of predators, it would appear that morskii zvier is the aquatic equivalent of the more inclusive category of grabitel'skii zvier.

This is in summary a picture of the most significant features of the 'Christian' environment outside the chapel. The picture is focused in subsequent sections where the implications of the local views on natural purity are discussed in the context of daily life. At this stage, I would like to offer a few concluding remarks on the commercial use of impure plants and animals, a point which should further clarify their status.

There is no indication that the idea of natural impurity would prevent the Old Believers from handling substances considered defiling when such use can be converted into a profitable occupation. This is made abundantly clear by the long history of commercial activities involving impure plants and animals. During their sojourn in China, several local residents participated in the growing and smuggling of opium, a highly 'alcoholic' plant indeed. The economy of the Kharbintsy depended to a great extent on tigers, bears, and other impure beasts of the forest sold to Chinese merchants. My informants extolled the medicinal properties of bear fat and ground tiger teeth and expressed regret at having been deprived of these and other folk remedies due to their 'pagan' origin.

Today, many of the Oregon - based Old Believers and their relatives in Berezovka derive good income from harvesting hops, and the breeding of foxes used to be a fairly popular enterprise until very recently. Most of the 'Christians' in Alaska subsist on fishing, and they catch and sell shellfish with little regard for its impure status.

ii. Food and Drink

The people of Berezovka are vastly attached to good food and drink. Every major social occasion calls for the preparation of elaborate meals, and the status of individual households is determined to a considerable extent by the hospitality of its members. A good wife is expected to know how to prepare vast quantities of various traditional dishes, and her skill in the kitchen is measured to a great degree by her appearance. Although the standard is shifting somewhat under the influence of North American popular culture, older residents regard a well-rounded figure and glowing cheeks as primary indicators of feminine beauty. A corpulent woman is believed to work hard, experience little difficulty in childbirth and take good care of her husband. A portly man is said to demonstrate a happy home environment.

The local diet consists for the most part of traditional Russian peasant fare with a sprinkling of recently introduced dishes, such as pizza and spaghetti. The meals lack variety, and their nutritional value is diminished on account of too much starch and little protein. The basic staple is heavy bread baked from white flour and served in abundance with every meal. It is supplemented by raw vegetables and a vast number of dumplings and pies stuffed with mushrooms, cooked peas or beans, and, more sparingly, minced meat. Meat is reserved for festive occasions and is usually served well cooked and mixed with a greasy soup. Fish is eaten occasionally, most likely in dried or smoked form. The separate dishes are all served at once, and the sequence of consumption is up to one's own taste.

The Old Believer diet is influenced by the distinction between pure (edible) and impure (inedible) natural substances outlined above, and an elaborate 'feast and fast' cycle which is part of the ritual calendar. The latter consists of the already mentioned dichotomy of post (fast) and miasoyed (meat eating), which in theory constitutes eight long blocks of time coinciding with restricted and unrestricted diet respectively. In reality, there are several mechanisms built into the ritual cycle that bridge the gap between post and miasoyed. For example, when a holy day falls on a Wednesday or Friday, the requirement to fast is set aside regardless of any other rules normally observed at that time. On the other hand, the theoretical dietary freedom of miasoyed is overridden by the demand for fasting on an ordinary Wednesday and Friday, and many of the numerous feasts celebrated in Berezovka call for some dietary restraint during fast-free periods. Hence the type and quantity of food consumed on a restricted day during miasoyed can be identical with that allowed on a lenient day during post.

The Old Believers view fasts as a time of introspection and intensified demonstration of the spirit's mastery over the body by means of sexual and dietary abstinence (vozderzhanie). The demand for fasting is justified on the basis of the prophecy of Isaiah (Is. 65) and associated with the setting aside of a 'tithe' of land (desetina) cultivated in the expectation of a future harvest, which will benefit only the obedient 'farmer'. Although sexual activity must cease entirely, the intake of

food and drink is merely curtailed in terms of quantity and quality. In order of severity, one's diet changes from including meat to containing nothing but water. The highest degree of vozderzhanie applies to the last week of Lent.

The gradual descent from unrestricted to severely limited meals is conceived of in terms of three pairs of opposites which express the composition and mode of preparation of a given meal. These pairs are 'hot: cold' (gorkoe:studeno), 'oily:dry' (masliano:sukhoe), and 'cooked:raw' (varen:syroye). The ustav uses these terms in stipulating proper diet for individual days, and they are translated into meals by the cook. As can be seen easily, the least restrictive fast contains cooked, hot vegetarian - and, from time to time, dairy - food, while the strictest regimen - except for the last week of Lent - requires cold, dry, and raw food. The six attributes make it possible to combine different elements, thereby preserving some variety and accommodating fluctuations within a given fast.

It is apparent that the views underlying the distinction between fast and fast-free meals are related to the principles separating pure (edible) from impure (inedible) natural substances. In both instances, we see a very marked gap between blood and water on the one hand, and between meat and vegetables on the other. This can be represented as a double dichotomy of 'blood...meat : vegetables...water'. It can be expanded into a basic model of the distinction between carnal and spiritual life, which coincides to a considerable extent with the differentiation of 'Christians' and 'pagans': 'blood...meat...hot...sex:sex-less...cold...plants...water'.

The ideals of vegetarianism, chastity, and spirituality are felt very strongly during protracted fasts, particularly the Lent. One could say that the Old Believers overflow at such times with the desire to emulate the desert fathers and other famous Christian ascetics. But this desire is rarely translated into reality as one's sustenance derives from the vision of the end of the fast rather than from the spiritual rewards stemming from vozderzhanie. People complain about the rigours to be endured, and little secret is made out of their inability and unwillingness to permanently suppress carnal urges. But they also pride themselves on fasting more rigorously and conscientiously than any other Christians.

Ideally, some form of dietary abstinence (vozderzhanie) should be observed during fast-free periods as well. Because most people are unwilling to practice voluntary restraint from food, they compensate for it by limiting the intake of strong drink. Here we come back to the status of 'alcoholic' beverages derived from impure plants, an issue that is both complex and murky.

Berezovka's residents expend much energy in the manufacture of two kinds of fermented beverage, which are consumed in every household. There is, first of all, the extremely mildly alcoholic kvass, derived from a mixture of water, bread crumbs, and various berries. Local people do not consider it alcoholic, and kvass is drunk by young and old alike, resembling a traditional version of the North American 'soft drink'. A different situation is confronted regarding braga, which is a fruit wine of considerable

potency. It is prepared from berries or other types of fruit mixed with water, sugar, and yeast, and fermented under carefully controlled conditions. The effect of braga is comparable to that of strong wine, a parallel drawn by the Old Believers themselves when they often refer to braga as vino (wine). Like wine, it comes in white and red variety, and its quality depends on age.

Without exaggeration, the consumption of this beverage approaches the status of a local 'cult'. Life without braga - or rather brashka as it is tenderly known - would be unthinkable. Every self-respecting household head cultivates a large collection of huge plastic barrels filled with gallons and gallons of braga sorted out according to age, fruit base, and taste, awaiting an appropriate social occasion. Although one may empty a few cups after the main meal at home, braga is a social beverage whose enjoyment - and, it seems, potency - increases with the number of people who partake of it together. This can be seen at any wedding celebration where specially appointed 'waiters' do nothing else but watch for empty cups to be constantly refilled with a steady stream of new braga. Within a few hours, most guests are fairly inebriated. At the end of the three-day celebration, the home and yard are strewn with motionless figures that must be loaded up on a truck and driven to their respective houses.

Despite the nearly universal weakness for brashka, many Old Believers deny its 'alcoholic' properties. Alcohol is associated with the prohibited plants and with hard liquor, such as vodka, which is believed to derive its potency from raw alcohol added to it during the manufacturing process. Hence vozderzhanie is understood primarily as an abstention from strong

beverages, including tea and coffee, imported from outside of Berezovka rather than from locally produced liquor. There is, however, one apparent exception within the dichotomy of self-made and imported 'alcohol'. Beer (pivo) was a popular beverage of the Old Believers in Turkey, and the Turchane of Oregon managed to have it exempted from the category of forbidden liquor. Despite this concession, the Turkish minority is expected to adhere to the same rules as the remaining residents of Berezovka, and beer is not tolerated locally.

Hard, meaning imported, liquor is compared to an axe (sekyra) in the sense of threatening human life. The consumption of alcohol is said to lead to the state of being 'hot' and 'wild' (goriachi), which is the opposite of the ideal of 'cold' sobriety aspired to by the local residents. One could argue that the distinction between braga and foreign alcohol fits into the tension between water (Christianity) and blood (paganism). Unlike braga, an essentially 'cold' drink made from river water and edible vegetables, imported liquor is a 'hot' beverage whose consumption transforms the drinker into a senseless animal. Hence the effect is not at all dissimilar from the dangers associated with the eating of blood.

The differentiation of local from foreign liquor is but a part of a much wider classification of food and drink according to its origin. Just as ritual elements formulated and/or acted out by outsiders are feared as pollutants of the ritual domain, so also local natural purity is believed to depend on the isolation of food and drink from the external, 'pagan' world. Where such distance is not maintained, the threat of pollution intensifies.

The belief in the defilement of food and drink as a consequence of insufficient boundaries between the inside and the outside worlds can best be demonstrated with the help of the already mentioned fear of demonic infiltration. Due to their preference for standing water, demons are held to penetrate not only lakes and ponds but any type of liquid stored over a period of time. This fear prompts the covering of all containers filled with milk, water, braga, or kvas with a lid, which is removed only to allow the liquid to be poured out. Generally speaking, the thinner the liquid, the more elaborate are the precautions that accompany its storage and consumption. Anything that is drunk must be exorcised by the sign of the cross and a short prayer, a ritual rarely omitted even by braga-drinkers at the highest stage of inebriation.

Liquids must be guarded not only against contact with demons but also with the saliva of impure animals and people. The fear of contamination underlies the Old Beleievers' refusal to drink from a vessel employed by an outsider or to serve the latter from their own dishes. Visitors receive their share from a special set of dishes, usually made from plastic, which is known as mirskaya posuda or chasha (worldly crockery or cup). This precaution is required in view of the table manners adhered to locally whereby soups, salads, and broths are shared by several persons, each equipped only with a separate spoon. The visitor is seated either at a separate table or his place is segregated from the rest by means of a small tablecloth. The strict polarization between the 'Christians' and 'pagans' is reminiscent of the exclusion of visitors from any ritual action, including the partaking of sviatynia.

The ban on eating together with 'pagans' is related to their alleged consumption of blood, impure animals, tobacco, and other defiling substances. It is observed very conscientiously, and an ignorant visitor can cause a great deal of misery by not following the rules imposed by his hosts. But even a sympathetic and fairly knowledgeable outsider can run into trouble as I did on several occasions. Once I caused great consternation with an attempt at washing my hands in the kitchen sink, something done frequently by the Old Believers but not permitted to an impure 'pagan' who would defile the dishes washed there in the future. Equally inappropriate was one of my less successful responses to the pressure put on me at a wedding to drink as much braga as other 'real men'. I sneaked with my full cup to the sink and emptied it with a quick gesture. One of the bystanders raised havoc, and the entire company joined in and lamented my unwise move. I was given to understand that despite my assurances of not having touched the cup with my lips, it was a 'worldly' container whose content may not be deposited in the 'Christian' sink. The family would have to stop using the sink and await its purification by the nastavnik.

The fear of contamination permeates also several rules which prohibit the purchase of commercially prepared juices, ice-cream, canned soups, and any other type of liquid food (sobornoe ulozhenie n.d.). With the exception of meat, which is believed to be improper if at all bled, solid staples, such as flour, sugar, salt, and rice may be acquired outside Berezhovka. The distinction between liquids and solids makes the consumption of solid food far less of a dangerous activity, and I was always encouraged to help myself to bread, pancakes, and raw vegetables from the 'Christian'

dishes used by my hosts. What is clearly at issue here is the role of the saliva in the transmission of contamination.

Food and drink can be defiled not only by direct contact with the human or animal agent of pollution but also by being prepared in impure household utensils. The Old Believers are supposed to refrain from acquiring used equipment of this kind and to purify new, never before used, dishes prior to their incorporation into the kitchen. Existing crockery defiled accidentally within the home environment must also be purified before being used again.

The elements involved in the cleansing of defiled dishes include prayers, water, fire, incense, and icons. Brand-new objects are merely washed in the river and prayed over. Second-hand equipment, acquired at auctions contrary to the prohibition, undergoes identical treatment but only at Epiphany when the river is held to be imbued with additional power. Dishes polluted by contact with 'pagan' animals and humans must be taken to the chapel where they are exposed to the purifying effect of icons, incense, and prayers before being cleaned with small sviatynia. Some informants insisted that the first step in this case consists of the object being placed in fire; this custom seems to be declining with the growing popularity of plastic.

There are, however, two types of defilement which defy any of these methods. The first case concerns any direct contact between a household dish and a dog. The second instance pertains to utensils tainted by the urine of a girl. Such objects must be discarded. My informants did not explain what makes the urine of a girl that much more dangerous than that

of a boy, but some of the material on sexuality, which follows this section, should be of relevance.

The fear of being polluted as a result of physical contact with certain impure substances exercises some influence on the healing methods resorted to in Berezovka. Although professional physicians are consulted for serious ailments, indigenous techniques are always applied first. Minor disorders, such as fever or muscle ache, are expected to vanish after the patient's exposure to the hot steam of the bania. The results are usually very good.

Graver internal disorders are cured with herbs and other plants, which are administered either in the form of a strong tea or dried, ground up and mixed with ashes and other organic matter. Because there is no local herbalist, many patients rely on catalogues of various 'herbologists' in and outside Alberta and order appropriate medicine via this route. When a professional physician must be consulted, the Old Believers strongly prefer a person with a 'holistic' background, and they are ready to travel to Saskatchewan or British Columbia to obtain the appropriate type of treatment. One such specialist, a Korean practitioner of acupuncture from British Columbia, pays annual visits to Berezovka, and the demand for his service is considerable.

The preference for natural and holistic healing methods is understandable in view of the Old Believers' social and geographical isolation. But their fear of defilement plays some part as well. Pills and injections filled with strange-looking and -smelling matter are regarded with great suspicion, and although blood transfusion is allowed to occur when really

necessary, this procedure causes considerable trepidation.

In conclusion to this exposition of local rules governing dietary purity, I wish to emphasize once again the inability of my informants to identify exactly the sources of these precepts. The justifications varied from theological arguments to appeals to common sense based on hygienic considerations. For example, the distinction between pure and impure animals and plants was claimed to be derived from the Bible and orthodox 'old books', but when confronted with the prohibition of pork in Levithicus, it was discounted as a 'Jewish' tradition which does not apply to Christians. On the other hand, Moses' alleged refusal to eat with 'pagans' in the Egyptian exile was acknowledged as the source of an orthodox tradition that should be adhered to by Christians as well.

The overlap between theology and hygiene can be seen in statements which I received concerning the apparent purity of wine in biblical writings. Those informants who were less inclined to associate the vine with Satan explained that wine used to be pure in the past when it was manufactured at home, just as braga is today. Later, however, it began to be made in 'factories' where hired workers crushed the fruit no longer with clean hands but with dirty feet. Who would want to drink that?

The reference to dirty feet surfaced at another time when I tried to elicit information concerning the extent to which the purity precautions change over time. It appears that prior to the emigration from Russia, the Old Believers were allowed to purchase butter from outsiders. Upon their arrival in Manchuria, however, they were shocked to learn that

local butter was allegedly made by hired peasants' feet, and the refugees agreed not to eat such an unhygienic product. Today, living in a society preoccupied with germs and pollution, some Old Believers feel safe in relaxing some of the precautions guarding the purity of edible food and drink. This applies primarily to the class of commercially produced soft drinks, which, while still officially banned, are resorted to occasionally. I was told that this was only a minor infraction in view of the hygienic purity surrounding the manufacturing process of these beverages.

Despite the gradual relaxation of some of the precautions regulating the flow of food and drink from the 'pagan' to the 'Christian' society, it would be erroneous to equate the Old Believers' understanding of hygiene with the scientific concept. Some older residents insist on washing unpeeled oranges and bananas, and I was told of several cases where the Russian children refused oranges distributed by their teachers at school. Fruit and vegetables grown in Berezovka are, on the other hand, eaten unceremoniously, often without any type of cleaning. Hence in those instances where some of the local dietary taboos are attributed to scientific principles, religious factors are still far from irrelevant.

iii. Appearance and Sexuality

The analysis of dietary rules is of some importance in the context of sexual behaviour. Indeed, proper sexual conduct parallels in several respects orthodox dietary practices. Just as vegetarianism is considered more becoming than the consumption of meat, so also a sexless life is

valued more highly than an existence dominated by carnal desire. The example of the pious, chaste, and solitary inok (hermit, monk) is used rather often to describe ideal Christian attributes. The Old Believers don't credit many people, however, with the strength required for attaining this ideal stage. As with their diet, the people of Berezovka exhibit sexual attitudes which are designed to curb excesses without resulting in a complete suppression of sensuality.

In agreement with this strategy is the insistence on regulated sexuality, a condition defined as the conjugal relationship between two members of the opposite gender. Unregulated sexuality, such as masturbation, sodomy, pre-marital and extra-marital intercourse, is considered aberrant and sinful. Although the material collected on this topic is sketchy, it is apparent that pre-marital relations do occur sporadically in spite of the desirability of female virginity in particular. Early marriage functions as one of the precautions against unwanted pregnancy and social disgrace. Simultaneously, it expresses local unwillingness and inability to postpone sexual gratification. It is not uncommon for an elder to comment on the physical beauty of a young woman and to make sexual advances at large gatherings of semi-inebriated residents. Any single female above the age of seventeen or eighteen who happens to be present is considered fair game.

Regulated, that is, marital sexuality, is regarded with a mixture of pleasure and fear, which resembles the consumption of tasty food. As long as obsession and gluttony are avoided, copulation and eating are

accepted as normal by-products of life. Both realms are controlled by similar rules of abstinence and moderation (vozderzhanie), which ensure that behaviour which is on the borderline between purity and defilement does not become excessively dangerous. This applies primarily to periods of increased ritual significance, such as fasts and the night preceding a visit to the church, when sexual activity must stop.

Despite the clear parallelism between food and sex, the latter domain is subjected to several further precautions, which demonstrate its riskier nature. As I have already indicated, the 'iconostasis' at home is equipped with curtains that can be closed when sexual intercourse takes place. Given the delicate subject matter, I refrained from a systematic inquiry into the extent of and justification for this custom. But even the incomplete evidence at my disposal demonstrates quite conclusively that what makes intercourse distasteful to the eyes of the holy figures is the animal-like passion which often accompanies it. Like excessive drunkenness, sex can be 'hot' and 'wild', the opposite of the ideal of restraint. But unlike alcoholism - or, for that matter, the drinking of blood - marital sexuality is not an infraction against the 'law' but rather an institutionalized 'breach of decorum'. Hence it seems that the drawn curtain should be seen as an admission of guilt in a legal but improper situation.

The guilt is alleviated somewhat by shifting the responsibility for sexual desire onto the woman and her primeval ancestress Eve. The Old Believers, especially the men among them, are very fond of narrating the story of Adam's fall, and they never fail to draw the conclusion of

the female gender being naturally inferior. Although Eve too is held to have been created in God's image, her status is claimed to have been intended to remain below that of Adam. This postulate is proven allegedly by the creation of the woman from the body of the man, and, as if this were not enough, from his left rib. Whenever the creation story was narrated, I would be encouraged to verify it by counting my ribs in order to see that one of my left ribs is missing. The fall of Adam is attributed to his foolish willingness of allowing a creature that was in more than one sense his property to assume independence. Since Eve is believed to have lacked the moral will and ability to follow God's commands, she snared Adam with the desire for her beautiful body. Ever since, the woman has been used as a bait by Satan, and her lasciviousness must be subjected to strict controls imposed by the naturally more spiritual man.

The most important visible symptom of the greater animality of women is their periodic discharge of blood in menstruation (miesichnaya) and childbirth. A menstruating woman is regarded as a source of defilement of the ritual domain on account of which she is barred from the chapel. This condition does not seem to affect her natural purity as she is allowed to engage in the usual duties, including the preparation of food. Childbirth, on the other hand, requires that the mother be segregated from the family and use her own set of dishes. The period of impurity lasts for eight days if the child is a boy and forty days if a girl. A prayer read over the mother by the nastavnik at the end of the purification period restores her previous status.

The onset of menopause signals the loss of the woman's natural attractiveness and, especially when combined with widowhood, some elevation of her ritual status. The responsibilities she may be entrusted with are menial when compared with those of men, such as the manufacture of candles for the chapel or the sewing of the mortuary shroud. In the past, an old woman could occupy the prestigious position of znakharka, which was a healer who cured with the help of powerful prayers. With the disappearance of this occupation after the exodus from China, female elders have lost a prestigious niche. But despite the lack of formal recognition, old women tend to be respected and even feared for their sharp tongue by Berezovka's official elders.

Many of the local attitudes to sexuality and gender distinctions are entrenched in the physical appearance of Berezovka's residents. The Old Believers stand out not only by their robust physique but also by their colourful costume which makes them an object of curiosity wherever they go. There are many interesting features, such as a host of details in embroidery and design which differentiate members of the three local groups, that should be addressed in a specialized treatise, but such an endeavour cannot be made here. My analysis of the local appearance structure is limited to those markers which are interpreted as common symbols of orthodoxy by all of Berezovka's residents regardless of their geographical origin.

The rules governing the human exterior are intended to accentuate the Old Believers' orthodox status by preserving the visual continuity between Christ and his early followers and their present-day successors. The 'iconic principle' is unmistakable in this realm, and my informants agreed that they

strive to the best of their ability to emulate the appearance of male and female saints as it is depicted in orthodox sacred images. This copying activity should, however, not be interpreted too literally. What matters is not the preservation of every detail associated with a particular famous figure, but rather the continuity of the structure of appearance exhibited by the early Christians. After all, the Old Believers do not see themselves as being part of a reincarnation process but merely as guardians of those traits which should be shared by all Christians collectively. Consequently, an adult man's beard is not expected to be identical with that of Christ, St. Paul, or St. Nicholas, but rather to preserve the attributes of the wider Christian prototype. The ingredients of the appearance structure can best be supplied by following the life-cycle of a male and a female resident.

The ritual reception of a new child into the Christian society has already been described, and I merely wish to repeat that the baptismal outfit does not distinguish a boy from a girl. The lack of attention to the child's sex continues to shape its appearance during the first two years or so. Both boys and girls are dressed in a simple long-sleeved shirt which reaches half-way down the thighs, and, depending on their activity, swaddling clothes.

After mastering the art of walking, children are slowly prepared for participation in ritual activities, which requires segregation between males and females. Girls receive a miniature version of the outfit worn by women, consisting of a long shirt (rubakha), an almost ankle-long

dress (sarafan), and a somewhat shorter apron (zapon). A large kerchief (platok) is placed over the head on ritual and other formal occasions. Boys are equipped with long pants (shtany), a long-sleeved shirt (rubakha), and their heads remain uncovered. The far more elaborate clothing worn by girls signals an important gender-specific distinction in the tolerance of nakedness. Unlike boys, who may wander around with exposed buttocks and genitals, girls are severely reprimanded for baring their private parts in public. A girl is taught to keep her legs together, and, during activities which make it impossible, she is furnished with long pants that are worn underneath her dress.

The unequal tolerance of male and female nakedness continues into adolescence and adulthood. Girls have understood by now that any unnecessary exposure of flesh may be interpreted as a sign of lewdness and could therefore jeopardize their marital prospects. Their shirts remain always buttoned up all the way to the neck, and the arms are covered by long sleeves at all times. Boys and men, on the other hand, are permitted to expose the upper part of the chest during informal occasions, and they are increasingly becoming accustomed to wearing short-sleeved shirts when they engage in hard work in hot weather. Young women are allowed to add some new elements to their basic outfit, such as fashionable shoes and even ear-rings. But no such innovation is allowed to replace a traditional item.

One symbol of Christian appearance which receives extraordinary attention is the gender-specific hair style. Female hair is charged with sexual connotation and is regarded as an important component of attractiveness. Simultaneously, it expresses the woman's subordinate status and

need for guidance. Male hair symbolizes sexual prowess and dominance over the woman. In both instances, hair is styled in accordance with divine examples furnished by Christ and male saints on the one hand, and the Mother of God and female saints on the other.

Female hair is never cut. This prohibition was explained to me as a strategy aimed at emphasizing its beauty and at the same time at increasing the distance from men whose hair must be kept short. Prior to adolescence, a girl wears her hair loose or tied in a single braid. The latter arrangement prevails during the courting period when the braid signals virginity and availability. The braid (kosa) is sold symbolically to the groom by the bride's brother on the eve of the wedding, expressing the girl's transfer from one household to another. Then, during the already described crowning ceremony (zavienchanie), the bride's hair is modified into a double braid, which signifies marriage.

From this point on, the woman's hair must remain covered at all times. The triple layer (chin) - consisting of a thin cap worn directly on top of the hair (shoshmura), a larger cap or small kerchief (sorochka), and a large kerchief falling over the shoulders and concealing the neck (platok) - is interpreted as a sign of submission to the husband who, symbolically, is placed above the wife's head. In future, the only man allowed to see the hair exposed will be the husband, the sole legitimate sexual partner.

The hair of boys and men is kept short in order, I was told, to facilitate communication with God who is considered the 'head' of men. This departure from iconographic examples - which depict Christ and male saints

with long hair - is justified with reference to the congregation's priestless status. Only an ordained priest, bishop, or any other ecclesiastic, is worthy of imitating Christ's long hair - or correspondingly, cover his head in church. Ordinary laymen must keep their hair short and bare their heads in church. I suspect, however, that short male hair has an additional sexual connotation, expressed in the local injunction against women cutting the hair of men or boys or even witnessing the event. Male hair may be treated only by another male, and although my informants could not explain this custom, I wonder whether there may be an element of castration fear here.

A far more powerful symbol of male sexual and ritual maturity is the beard. Like the hair of women and girls, the beard may not in any way be tampered with. However, Berezovka's girls express a strong preference for suitors with smooth skin, and the plucking of unwanted facial hair is known to be practiced secretly. Once married, a young man is very unlikely to obstruct the growth of his beard, which gives him access to full social and ritual participation. Beardless visitors are ridiculed and likened to women, and particular contempt is shown for men with moustaches who are said to resemble cats.

With the exception of the cutting of male hair, there is a strong motif underlying the local appearance structure which consists of a reluctance to 'falsify' one's natural appearance. The argument goes that since humans are created in the image of God, any artificial intervention in the creation process would distance the creator from His 'product' and

perhaps wipe out the divine imprint altogether. Consequently, the Old Believers fear that a person who has modified his 'true' appearance with plastic surgery, cosmetic aids, a wig, or dyed hair, will not be recognized by God and will be treated as any other violator of the iconic principle. This fear underlies the local rejection of any type of cosmetics - lips covered with lipstick may not kiss an icon - shaving, and any other significant modification of the 'original' body.

Worst of all is the fate of deceased pious persons who, through no fault of their own, are subjected to an autopsy. It is expected that on account of missing certain parts of the body, victims of autopsies will experience difficulty in resurrecting. The 'passport' certifying the bearer's Christian status is hoped to alleviate his suffering, but many people are genuinely afraid that their mutilated bodies will be unrecognized by God.

The strong desire to pass through life without a major distortion of the image received at birth is perhaps reflected in the parallel between the appearance of a baby and a corpse. As has already been pointed out, it is only at birth and at death that all social and sexual distinctions are disregarded. One enters the world as a Christian, and one hopes to leave it in the same way. Possibly, the similarity between the baptismal and the death shroud is meant to underline the desire to minimize the impact of the years separating birth and death. After all, the longer one lives, the more removed does one become from the sinless existence of early childhood, or, in other words, the fainter the imprint of God's image. By structuring death as a second birth, one's original image is renewed.

VI. FROM ETHNOGRAPHY TO HISTORY

Having sketched the major properties of Berezovka's 'religious culture', I would like to use this chapter to provide a historical context for its emergence. The material collected with this purpose in mind is intended to clarify the often confused and confusing statements of informants regarding the origins of their beliefs and practices. By contrasting ethnographic with historical data, we will be better equipped to uncover the deeper foundation of the local society.

However alluring a full reconstruction might appear, it is impossible for technical and methodological reasons to trace every belief and custom adhered to in Berezovka to a plausible historical prototype. The analysis attempted here is limited topically to the major postulate advanced on several occasions that the distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy is expressed in outer forms, that it can be measured with the help of the iconic principle, and that it has a physiological extension in the polarity of natural purity and defilement.

The investigation is limited chronologically and geographically to those periods and regions which the people of Berezovka regard as 'ancestral'. Hence I consider Byzantine, Muscovite, and pre-20th century Old Believer traditions as constituting the precedents for Berezovka's religious culture.

i. Byzantine Precedents

The powerful Christian:pagan dichotomy employed in Berezovka as a correlate of the distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy has an important antecedent in the Byzantine differentiation between Greeks and Latins. The latter, commonly referred to as Frangoi (Franks), came to be regarded as religious heretics and cultural barbarians in consequence of several political and theological disputes which escalated into the schisms of 867 and 1054. Let me briefly review those conflicts that have a direct bearing on the history of the Old Belief.

The most significant disagreement arose as a consequence of Greek accusations that the Latins lacked proper baptism. The question of what was to be considered valid baptism seems to have surfaced for the first time in the third century (Hein 1973), leading to the entrenchment of the trinitarian formula (Bullough 1963:80) and the rejection of rituals consisting of a single immersion (Kormchaia 1650:88). Later on, Latin and Greek theologians became divided on the question of whether the candidate for baptism was to be subjected to a complete triple immersion or whether effusion would be sufficient. The Latin interpretation that the crucial component consisted of a triple gesture (Bullough 1963:78) - effusion or immersion - was attacked by Greek scholars who underlined the symbolism of burial and resurrection, which could only be made clear with a full immersion (Ware 1972:284).

This discrepancy led to the suspicion that Latin Christians were pretenders and concealed heretics. Although an official confirmation of this

view did not exist at this time, Greek insistence on the rebaptism of Latin residents of Byzantium could be heard throughout the early and high Middle Ages (Dvornik 1961:54; Geanakoplos 1984:208-210). As one western witness reports, this custom led to tragic consequences during the sack of Constantinople by crusaders on their way to the Holy Land:

But, O dreadful thing! we heard of an ill usage of theirs [the Greeks'] which should be expiated by death; namely, that every time they celebrate the marriage of one of our men, if he has been baptized in the Roman way, they rebaptize him before they make the pact....Actually, it was for these reasons that the Greeks had incurred the hatred of our men, for their error had become known even among the lay people. Because of this they were judged not to be Christians, and the Franks considered killing them a matter of no importance.... (Odo of Deuil 1948:57).

Another conflict arose over the proper composition of the Eucharist. In addition to the universal requirement that the wine be mixed with water (Kormchaia 1650:188; Erickson 1970:159), several theologians began to demand that the ingredients employed in the preparation of the bread be specified. Although the primitive Church seems to have used primarily leavened bread, the Latins gradually changed to unleavened azymes, perhaps as an attempt to differentiate the Eucharist from ordinary daily food (Erickson 1970:159). The Byzantines insisted on the older custom, arguing that Jesus used artos, a bread whose name derives from the term for 'elevation' and 'carrying to the heights'. Since only yeast makes the dough rise in this manner, it seemed clear that the original Eucharist must have been leavened (Erickson 1970:159).

The dispute between the Latin 'azymites' and the Greek 'prozymites' had some interesting dogmatic overtones, and as the latter pointed out,

the Latin preference for unleavened bread implied that the body of Christ was dead, deprived of the soul added by the ferment. Hence the 'azymite' position resembled the Jewish one not only in partaking of 'Jewish bread', but also in denying Christ's resurrection (Erickson 1970). As in the baptism dispute, the Latins took a less rigid position and refrained from condemning the Greek usage. Hence it was primarily the Byzantine intransigence that was responsible for escalating the issue into the primary cause of the second schism in 1054 (Erickson 1970; Geanakoplos 1984:207-209).

The first schism in 867 erupted out of conflicting interpretations of several traditions, including the domain of verbal purity. The early Fathers of the Church held that while orthodox prayers served as shields against the devil (Russell 1981:87), their heterodox counterparts defiled and nullified them (Hein 1973:315,336). This was one of the reasons for the exclusion of heretics and other unbelievers from any type of Christian ritual (Hein 1973; Kormchaia 1650:3,21,44,50,73,79).

The importance attached to sacred words was reflected in the reverential treatment of liturgical books whose content was not to be altered in any way (Hefele 1896:232), a crime attributed to heretics (Russell 1981:95). Correspondingly, early medieval Christians insisted on a perfect harmony between written and spoken prayers (McCann 1952:107), and an incorrectly pronounced prayer formula was held capable of invalidating the Eucharist and other sacraments (McNeill and Gamer 1938:200).

The domain of verbal purity was attacked in 794 at the Council of Frankfort where Latin theologians suggested a modification of the common

Christian creed. In its traditional version, the creed expressed the belief in "...the Holy Spirit, the Lord. the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father...." The new version contained the addition filioque ("and the Son"), which was soon accepted by all Western Christians (Ware 1972:58-59). The Byzantines rejected it sharply because the new wording implied the presence of two Holy Spirits, one proceeding from the Father, the other from the Son, creating the impression that the Holy Trinity consisted of four entities. The filioque dispute led to the first real schism between East and West and stifled relations for centuries to come (Geanakoplos 1984:205-212).

The conflict over sacred words went hand in hand with disagreements about the interpretation of sacred images. Like liturgical books, icons and related images were initially seen as material representations of divine words and figures deserving of veneration (Hefele 1896:262,375; Jedin 1967:147,152). However, just as one was not supposed to pay homage to the ink and parchment but to the content of the book (Baynes 1951:100), what was venerated in the image was not the object itself but rather the subject that had inspired its making. As explained by St. Basil the Great (329-379), "the honour which is shown to the figure passes over to the original, and whoever does reverence to an image does reverence to the person represented by it" (in Hefele 1896:375; Mango 1972:47).

Although this theological position has never been modified by the Orthodox Church, ordinary Christians were not so much interested in the symbolic role of icons as in the possibility of treating them as holy

essence which took on some of the properties of relics. The parallel between these two types of ritual objects is unmistakable. People consumed flakes of paint and dew drops falling from icons in the expectation of miracles (Mango 1972:134), and just as the reading of the passions was believed to increase the power of the relics (Brown 1981:82), so also the illumination of icons with candles and oil lamps was thought to bring about a corresponding effect (Kitzinger 1976:128). The elevated status of images was solidified, and somewhat reconciled with the theological position, with the discoveries of so-called archeipoietai, which were objects attributed to divine origin (Dobschütz 1899; Mango 1972:40).

The ritual elevation of images to the status of pseudo-relics became an important weapon in the fight against various heresies which denied the double nature of Christ (Ouspensky 1978:115). With the help of theology and archeipoietai, the Church managed to ensure a fairly standardized depiction of the crucifixion as well as other scenes of dogmatic importance. Until the first century of the second millennium, most Latin and Greek artists depicted the crucified Christ as victorious, standing rather than hanging, the head erect or slightly inclined, with a minimal amount of blood covering the right side of His body, wrapped in a long tunic or at least a loin-cloth (Seymour 1898; Cabrol and Leclercq 1914:3088-3089; Thoby 1959; Moore 1977:258). The emphasis rested upon impressing the viewer with Christ's divinity and the plausibility of His statements, and thus achieving a perfect overlap between the Image and the Word (Campenhausen 1957:89).

The agreement between the divine prototype and its iconographic copy was seriously threatened in the West after the Council of Frankfort dismissed the veneration of icons as "adoration" and idolatry, and, contrary to the rules issued at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, removed these images from the class of ritual objects (Hefele 1896:399). Freed from Byzantine conventions, Roman Catholic iconography came to be practiced not apart but as part of profane art, responding to the desire for a more personal relationship with God by lowering Him to the level of perishable nature (Shorr 1954:1; Schöne 1957:32; Steinberg 1983).

The new anthropomorphic approach is especially striking in Gothic depictions of the crucified Christ. The lower horizontal bar of the cross became less and less frequent, leaving Christ hanging; the wounds grew bigger and bloodier, the head inclined further and further, and the face assumed an expression of intense pain, accentuated by a crown of thorns and streams of blood covering the entire body (Seymour 1898; Thoby 1959). The new Christ of the West ceased being a victor (Schöne 1957:34; Moore 1977:258-261).

While most Eastern critics attacked the western 'iconoclasm' by expressing dismay over the irreverence of the Latins toward holy images (Geanakoplos 1976:166), the changed 'vocabulary' had not gone unnoticed. As the testimonies of two Greek theologians visiting Italy in the early 15th century show, the former overlap between the prototype and the copy had been seriously eroded. According to Symeon of Thessalonica, the Latins

confect holy images in a different manner and one that is contrary to custom. For instead of painted garments and hair, they adorn them with human hair and clothes, which is not the image of hair and of a garment, but the hair and garment of a man, and hence is not an image and a symbol of the prototype (in Mango 1972:254).

The consequences of this departure from tradition, as seen by Gregory Melissenus, were far-reaching:

When I enter a Latin church, I do not revere any of the [images of] saints that are there because I do not recognize any of them. At the most, I may recognize Christ, but I do not revere Him either, since I do not know in what terms he is inscribed (in Mango 1972:254).

The Latin 'iconoclasm' contributed to the Greek belief that Roman Catholic churches were not a proper place of worship and had better be avoided (Bolshakov 1903).

A relatively minor but still controversial issue arose out of disagreements concerning the sign of the cross. Early Christians made the sign to repel the devil (Russell 1981:100) and to validate any ritual action (Cabrol and Leclercq 1914:3140-3144) without much attention to the position of the fingers. By the end of the first millennium, the Monophysites were in the habit of erecting a single finger, and the Orthodox seem to have responded by insisting on signing the cross with two fingers (Koch 1962:95). Eventually, another form began to spread whereby one held the first three fingers together while the remaining two were concealed in the palm. This 'three-finger' sign, symbolizing the Trinity, became associated with the laity, and the older 'two-finger' sign remained in use among the clergy who used it in blessing the congregation in Christ's name (Koch 1962:96).

At some point during the high Middle Ages, Latin Christians modified their way of signing the cross by joining all five fingers and by touching not the right but the left shoulder first (Popov 1875:64; Cabrol and Leclercq 1914:3144). The significance of this change did not go unnoticed by Greek critics. The new sign was considered wrong and dangerous for it represented neither the Trinity nor the double nature of Christ, and, by accentuating the weak, left side, it wrought havoc with traditional symbolism (Popov 1875:64; Geanakoplos 1976:166). Nevertheless, there were only a few attacks on this innovation, which did not play much of a role in the Greek-Latin conflict.

The situation was considerably graver with respect to the controversy surrounding the wearing of beards. Early Roman Christians, in the western as well as the eastern part of the empire, were clean shaven and contemptuous of beards, which were associated with pagans and Jews (Reynolds 1950:75). With the appearance of the first archeipropietai, which portrayed Christ as wearing a beard, the attitude to beards changed considerably, and Greek as well as Latin clergy adopted them as a major sign of orthodoxy (Reynolds 1950:99-101; Cross 1958:144). In the course of the second half of the first millennium, however, Roman Catholic priests discontinued the custom and began to shave once again (McNeill and Gamer 1938:260; Reynolds 1950:101-103; Cross 1958:144).

Since the beard had come to be seen as an important attribute of man's and especially a priest's iconic relationship with Christ, the Latins were sharply criticized in Byzantium and occasionally refused the Eucharist (Reynolds 1950:106) and even access to Orthodox churches (Popov 1875:9-13).

The beard controversy received a lot of attention in the first schism of 867 and continued to play an important part in all disputes throughout the Middle Ages (Geanakoplos 1984:208-212). It must be kept in mind, however, that despite the importance of beards in Byzantine society, the prohibition of shaving applied primarily to clergy. As numerous paintings made between the 7th and the 14th centuries demonstrate, there was nothing incongruous in clean shaven dignitaries of the state mingling with bearded hierarchs of the Orthodox Church (Haussig 1971).

In addition to the so far enumerated ritual conflicts, the relations between the Greeks and the Latins were also dampened by disagreements over natural purity maintenance. Foremost in this area was the question of the status of food derived from sources proscribed in the Old Testament. The Synod of Jerusalem demanded abstention from "things sacrificed to idols" - meaning presumably non-Christian versions of communion - and from "blood and what is strangled" (Acts 14:29). In view of the rejection elsewhere in the New Testament (Mk 7:15; Matt 15:11; I Tim 4:4) of the Mosaic idea that any part of nature could have a defiling effect on humans, the synodal injunction against blood has been widely interpreted as a metaphor for the preservation of life and love (Böckenhoff 1903; Dix 1953; Cochrane 1974; Hennisch 1976). Correspondingly, early Church councils emphasized the purity of all food but at the same time continued the prohibition of blood, carrion, and meat from unbled animals (Kormchaia 1650:14,19).

The question of dietary purity became more complex with the elaboration of demonology in the second and subsequent centuries. Some Apostolic

* Fathers attributed demonic possession to tiny bodies penetrating the ^{*→}organism through the mouth (Russell 1981:40), and several theologians, including Origen, sought to link demonic invasion with the consumption of 'impure' substances, such as sacrificial food and blood (Böckenhoff 1903:55-59). Although this view was condemned by the Church (ibid.:81-82), it influenced the thinking of many Christians. Later assertions that demons and other forces of evil were repelled by rivers and fresh water in general (Russell 1981:191) contributed to the entrenchment of the association between blood and illness, and water and health.

Gradually, some local councils began to permit abstention from unclean diet defined in accordance with the Mosaic laws, stipulating that such permission was a response to human rather than divine taste (Böckenhoff 1903:129). Eventually, this concession to human weakness changed into a prohibition of 'unclean' food and was incorporated into some Greek penitentials. Although great care was taken to exonerate God, and thus to distinguish Christian from Jewish rules, the food products defined as unclean could have been taken directly from Leviticus. The only explicit exception was the exemption of the swine from the impure category (Böckenhoff 1903:130-135).

While the Greeks exceeded the dietary rules laid down by the Church - and thus exposed themselves to accusations of Judaistic tendencies - the Latins, for the most part, fell short of the minimal injunction against blood (Haberland 1887:364; Böckenhoff 1903:69; Hein 1973:84). This led at first to mild rebukes - such as a reference to the consumption of blood sausage at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Kormchaia 1650:199) - which

* Origen
** Origen

grew progressively sterner as they were repeated over and over again by the Patriarch of Constantinople and other high ecclesiastics of the Orthodox Church (Popov 1875:9-13,33-36,46).

While the hierarchs criticized the Latins for violating the indisputably traditional prohibition of blood, members of the lower clergy and private citizens were indignant over departures from specifically Greek views on dietary purity. Thus the 'Franks' were rebuked not only for allegedly drinking from glasses that had contained blood (Geanakoplos 1976:166) or for feeding dogs from plates used by humans (*ibid.*), but also for eating hedgehogs, bears, otters, turtles, crows, and "even filthier animals" (Popov 1875:62; Geanakoplos 1976:167). The perception of the Latins as defiled humans led to occasional refusals to share meals with them (Popov 1875:242).

ii. Muscovite Precedents

The Greek-Latin conflict was exported to Kievan Rus' and Muscovy by Orthodox missionaries who, until the 16th century, dominated the hierarchy of the Russian Church. Consequently, the indigenous distinction made by the Russians between 'Christians' and 'pagans' (pogany) was built upon essentially the same elements and involved primarily the same categories of people as in Byzantium. Orthodoxy continued to be located in the East, while heterodoxy was regarded as a malady affecting the West (Koncevicus 1927).

However, because of the extremely low educational standard of the Russian population, the gradual nationalization of the Church led to

problems which had not been felt in the same measure in Greece. As James Billington has argued, Kievan Rus' - and later Muscovy - absorbed the Byzantine "form" without its "content". On the one hand, the churches of Constantinople were copied and admired, but Byzantine philosophy, literature, and science were disregarded, creating a religion associated with "concrete beauty rather than abstract ideas" (Billington 1970:7). The lack of rigorous theological training led to an uncritical acceptance of the Christian Tradition as a single corpus of equally important parts, which were predominantly poorly translated and less than adequately understood (Koch 1962:50-51). In due time, the Russian Church was inundated with a myriad of local traditions whose origins were unclear, and whose importance could not really be determined by anybody (Koch 1962).

In spite of the chaos created by undated, unsigned, incorrectly translated, and forged documents, it is possible to detect a strong preoccupation with semi-canonical and uncanonical folk traditions, most of them presumably imported from Greece, demanding the utmost attention to physical purity maintenance (Golubinskii 1904:474-475; Goetz 1905:110-122; Smirnov 1914:14; Fedotov 1975:184-185). During the Kievan period, the presence of Greek bishops ensured at least a theoretical distinction between the folk version and the Great Tradition of Orthodoxy. The Muscovite period, characterized by growing Russian nationalism, brought about a marked elevation of the folk version and a 'popularization' of the Orthodox dogma to a level that could be universally understood.

This tendency can be seen in the classification of orthodox and heterodox traits summarized below. Although it is clearly built upon the

Greek model, the increased attention to ritual detail is indigenous. At times it seems that unlike in Byzantium where the importance of ritual derived from its supportive role of the dogma, the Muscovite view tended to protect ritual purity for its own sake. In the long lists of accusations compiled about the Latins and other 'pagans', there is hardly any mention of heterodox beliefs. What preoccupies the authors instead is the concrete evidence of heresy expressed in appearance, diet, and deportment.

The Byzantine opinion that some Latin sacraments were suspect and even invalid was extended in Muscovy to all sacraments (Kniga o vere 1648:230). This notion was temporarily threatened by the pilgrimage of the Greek metropolitan of Kiev, Isidore, to Florence where he signed the union with Rome on behalf of all Russia (Arkheograficheskaya kommissiya 1897). Upon his return, Isidore outraged the Muscovites by preaching the orthodoxy of Latin sacraments (ibid.:37), which led to his arrest and replacement by a Russian ecclesiastic.

Baptism was the most often attacked Latin sacrament, and the voiced objections were identical with those expressed by the Greeks (Kniga o vere 1648:245,284; Kozhanchikov 1863:81; Herberstein 1926:76). Additional deviations consisted of delayed chrismation and the custom of placing saliva and salt upon the tongue of the candidate (Kniga o vere 1648:245;284). All these departures from Russian orthodoxy were deemed to defile the sacrament and to require a repetition of the ritual (ibid.:288). Latin rebaptism was called for, although not always carried out, as early as the 13th century (Koncevicus 1927:101), and the pressure intensified

after the signing of the Florentine Union (Ware 1972:108). A synod held in Moscow in 1621 insisted on Latin rebaptism as an unconditional requirement for Orthodox marriage (Baron 1967:233).

Unmistakable traces of Greek influence can also be detected in Muscovite interpretations of the Eucharist. The Latin host was rejected as a "lifeless body" (Kniga o vere 1648:48-49,228), and in addition to the requirement of yeast, salt was specified as another necessary ingredient (ibid.). The small eucharistic loaf was imprinted with a cross, and the part destined for use was cut out with a miniature spear (Olearius 1656:311). The wine had to be mixed with river water and warmed up to the temperature of the Holy Spirit (Kozhanchikov 1863:68). As an aside, the holy water blessed at Epiphany acted as a purifier of grave sins, but unlike in Berezovka, it was never drunk but merely applied to the surface of the body (Olearius 1656:310).

The Muscovites also attacked Latin burial customs, a domain not mentioned in Greek sources. Western Christians were accused of jeopardizing their status by being buried without baptismal crosses (Rushchinskii 1871:96), and they were strongly rebuked for allegedly shaving male and female pubic hair as a precondition for burial (Popov 1875:23,76). Another criticism was expressed on account of interring bodies facing west instead of east (Popov 1875:76).

A myriad of rules which can be sketched here only in the most general terms, guarded the purity of churches. The Latins were rebuked for bringing dogs to their places of worship (Kniga o vere 1648:257), for kneeling - a gesture associated with Pilate's laughing soldiers at Golgotha (ibid.;

Rushchinskii 1871:47) - and, a particularly grave issue, for using musical instruments during the liturgy (Kniga o vere 1648:249-250). The Muscovites interpreted Roman Catholic church music as 'devil's play' which angered God and pleased the devil. Consequently, some theologians expressed the opinion that the defilement caused by Italian fiddles, organs, trumpets and drums may have been responsible for the confusion experienced by the Greeks during the Florentine council (Arkheograficheskaya kommissiya 1897:35-36).

Like the Greeks, the Muscovites rejected the Latin filioque as heresy (Kniga o vere 1648:39-45; Kormchaia 1650:11), and prayers with 'pagans' were interpreted as conversations with the devil and therefore refrained from (Kniga o vere 1648:147). The high regard for 'sacred words' influenced the attitude to Church Slavonic, which on account of being attributed to God's 'apostles' rather than pagan ancestors, was regarded more highly than Greek (Uspensky 1984). To ensure its purity and power, the liturgical language had to be correctly copied by scribes and priests alike. Whether in writing or prayer, an incorrectly 'copied' word threatened the entire context and had to be rectified (Miliukov 1942:28; Uspensky 1984:381).

The liturgical book itself received the utmost respect. Religious texts could not be purchased or sold in the manner of profane objects, and once time had rendered them useless, they had to be entrusted to the waters of a river (Kostomarov 1905:167; Baron 1967:258; Uspensky 1976:29). The kissing of the Bible was done very rarely in order to preserve its purity, and the fear of defiling the sacred object apparently prompted

some priests to make use of a cloth when turning its pages (Rushchinskii 1871:96).

The purity rules governing the use of liturgical books were extended to the icons whose status dwarfed that of many sacraments. The art of iconography was regarded as a vocation ordained by God whose pursuit was irreconcilable with any secular activity (Kozhanchikov 1863:42; Bolshakov 1903:18-20). Foreign observers were unanimous in their opinion that Muscovite Christians believed in the depicted saint's residence in the painting (Rushchinskii 1871:75,78; Baron 1967:255), which led to numerous injunctions against improper behaviour being exhibited in front of the images. Thus some reports indicate the removal of icons and even pectoral crosses during sexual intercourse (Smirnov 1914:67; Herberstein 1926:81; Baron 1967:172), a precaution discouraged by a 12th century Greek bishop (Goetz 1905:308).

The concern for the purity of holy images led to a ban on direct contact with menstruating women and consumers of unclean diet (Smirnov 1914:40,126), users of tobacco (Rushchinskii 1871:99; Baron 1967:146), and dogs (Smirnov 1914:148). Even the kissing of icons by pure Christians, which was held to have a beneficial effect (Kozhanchikov 1863:121), was restricted to one day every year for fear of defiling the sacred objects (Rushchinskii 1871:96-97; Paul of Aleppo 1873:144). This concern provided the official justification for excluding foreigners from Orthodox churches (Baron 1967:73) and the inner quarters of Muscovite homes (Baron 1967:254). Contrary to Greek advice that dilapidated images should be buried in consecrated ground (Goetz 1905:135), the Muscovites insisted on committing

them, after the manner of left-over Eucharist (Goetz 1905:267), to the waters of a river (Kostomarov 1905:167; Baron 1967:258).

The status of proper icons was reserved for traditional Byzantine and Russian images employing the proper iconographic language and adhering to acceptable prototypes (Kozhanchikov 1863:128, Bolshakov 1903:18-20; Uspensky 1975). The Muscovites not only repeated older Greek objections to Latin religious art (Bolshakov 1903:2), but they organized purges against local imitators thereof. Starting in the 16th century, some Russian painters began to absorb the naturalistic tendencies of western painting (Buslaev 1861(2):397-408; Rushchinskii 1871:81; Andreyev 1961; Hösche 1975:141), evoking vehement protests from the Church. What its representatives objected to can be gathered from the words of Nikon's immediate predecessor, patriarch Iosif (in Andreyev 1961:40):

the icons of the God-Man Jesus and of the Immaculate Virgin and of all the Saints should not be depicted after the manner of the Latin and German deceivers, for it is not fitting that icons should reflect human lusts. Such icons must no longer be painted, and any incorrectly painted ones should be removed from the churches.

This resistance continued under Nikon who organized a large-scale purge in 1654 (Paul of Aleppo 1873:150; Andreyev 1961), and even the reformist council of 1667 acted in the traditional spirit when it came to the defence of icons (Hauptmann 1965:14). The last purge was carried out by the last patriarch of Moscow in 1690 (Bolshakov 1903:2; Skrobucha 1976:15).

An image of particular ritual importance was the cross. Surrounded by the same purity precautions as icons (Kozhanchikov 1863:119; Rushchinskii 1871:96; Smirnov 1914:81,40; Baron 1967:172), it became a major symbol of Muscovy's orthodoxy and Latin heterodoxy. The Muscovite cross

was perceived as a faithful copy of the "life-giving" instrument of Christ's crucifixion, which was believed to have had eight points. This postulate, based on numerous legends about its origin and manufacture (Pypin 1862:81-85), was violated in western depictions of the four-pointed crucifix. The latter was referred to as krizh, the orthodox version was known as krest.

The Muscovites recognized the validity of the krizh as a Christian symbol and employed it on ritual vestments and other objects (Smirnov 1898:194). But it was seen as a subordinate sign whose status derived from the krest (Kozhanchikov 1863:56; Smirnov 1898:206). Since the Latins treated the krizh as if it were the krest, the four-pointed crucifix was regarded as a major symbol of western heterodoxy and sharply criticized (Kniga o vere 1648:68; Koncevicus 1927:92,161). When the uniate metropolitan Isidore travelled to Florence, he kissed and bowed before a krizh displayed in Germany, and the members of his retinue were "gripped with terror" on account of such an irreverent act (Arkheografichaskaya kommissiya 1897:25). Upon his return to Russia, Isidore offended the Muscovites with a silver krizh he carried everywhere according to "Frankish custom" (ibid.:40).

The distinction between the two types of the cross corresponds linguistically with the distinction between Latin and Orthodox churches. While krest and tserkov (church) are Russian terms, their heterodox counterparts, krizh and kostel, were named according to Czech usage, expressing their westernized and Latinized origin.

The manual sign of the cross also played a part in the determination of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. While the Muscovites followed in Greek footsteps in rejecting the Latin five-finger sign, the Byzantine distinction between the two- and the three-finger sign, one for clergy, the other for laity, created some confusion. The three-finger version seems to have reached Muscovy relatively late, around the 15th century (Koch 1926:96), and most priests and laymen preferred the traditional unified two-finger sign (ibid.). Hence despite considerable evidence that the three-finger sign was used well into the 16th century (Popov 1875:64; Smirnov 1914:139; Herberstein 1926:86,88,232), the Stoglav council elevated the two-finger sign to the sole orthodox status (Kozhanchikov 1863:103). Despite its designation, the two-finger sign was really a combination of the two existing forms, merging the symbolism of the Trinity with that of the double nature of Christ (Koch 1926:98-99). Nevertheless, it continued being sharply differentiated from the Latin five-finger version (Kniga o vere 1648:252; Golubinskii 1904:827).

The Greek insistence on beards was extended in Muscovy from the clergy to all men, and a host of new rules transformed physical appearance into a major indicator of religious status. The demand for untrimmed beards was justified as a measure aimed at preserving God's image (Pavlov 1908:880) and at setting men apart from women (Buslaev 1861(2):228). People lacking this attribute could not expect a proper burial (Kozhanchikov 1863:124), and the high regard for beards is reflected in all travel reports written by foreigners (Paul of Aleppo

1873; Rushchinskii 1871; Kostomarov 1905; Baron 1967; Kireeva 1970). The absence of this status symbol was considered the most visible proof of Latin heterodoxy (Kniga o vere 1648:257).

Paralleling the heresy of shaving, virtually any attempt at 'falsifying' one's proper image evoked accusations of sinfulness. This elastic prohibition was the basis of opposition to autopsies (Olearius 1656:185), the use of powder and rouge (Kostomarov 1905:66), the wearing of furs and hides to church (Smirnov 1914:50,146; Blinoff 1961:86; Fedotov 1975:186), and, most importantly, the adoption of 'un-Russian' clothing imported from the West (Kozhanchikov 1863:48-52,122-124).

Turning to the category of dietary practices, one detects a progressive expansion of the class of impure food, which coincides with the diminishing influence of the Byzantine 'mother' Church over Muscovite affairs. Throughout the Kievan period, the Greek bishops tried to enforce the canonical prohibition on blood and carrion while their local priests attempted to import the much stricter folk system from Greece (Popov 1875:82-91; Goetz 1905:110-122; Smirnov 1914:14; Fedotov 1975:184-185). By the 16th century, rules promulgated by Muscovite clerics coincided significantly with the Mosaic laws and the Greek folk tradition (Smirnov 1914:121-136; Kostomarov 1905:70; Zelenin 1927:116-117; Kozhanchikov 1863:260). As in Greece, the Latins were perceived as defiled sinners on account of sharing their meals with dogs, drinking blood, and eating the meat of impure animals (Kormchaia 1650:16; Arkheograficheskava kommissiya 1897:60; Akademiya nauk 1941:351).

The Muscovite preoccupation with dietary purity did not stop, as was the case in Greece, at the boundary between meat and vegetables. Several documents reveal a strong opposition to the consumption of hops and beer (Kostomarov 1860(1):137-138; Smirnov 1914:53), wine (Kniga o vere 1648:124-132), and, most importantly, tobacco (Kozhanchikov 1863:166,299; Akademiya nauk 1947:90; 1948:334). In one way or another, tobacco, hops, and vine were linked with Satan and his attempt at seducing orthodox Christians (Kostomarov 1860(1):137-138; 1860 (2):427-435,447-449; Akademiya nauk 1948:288), and several decrees curbed or entirely proscribed their use. This applies primarily to tobacco which was banned in 1634, resulting in extremely harsh penalties for transgressors (Rushchinskii 1871:99).

The enforcement of the ban may have been made easier by the rapidly spreading belief that tobacco and any of its by-products was a ritual pollutant that defiled icons (Rushchinskii 1871:99; Baron 1967:146). This opinion was clearly at odds with Greek custom, which permitted the use of tobacco and related drugs, such as opium, even in high ecclesiastic circles (Paul of Aleppo 1873:64). This discrepancy was one of the contributing factors in the growing Muscovite criticism of the Greeks in the first half of the 17th century (ibid.; Bolshakov 1903:22-23).

Despite the tendency to include the Greeks in the 'pagan' category, the heterodox 'anti-world' was in the first instance populated by the Latins and their Protestant brethren. Their alleged ritual and natural defilement had to be avoided, and the Muscovites erected almost

insurmountable barriers between the orthodox and the heterodox society. In addition to the already mentioned ritual segregation between the congregations of the tserkov and the kostel, numerous ecclesiastic voices warned of the consequences of any intimate contact, including the sharing of meals (Popov 1875:318; Pavlov 1908:54,62,102; Smirnov 1914:73-75,121-126, 144-146; Akademiya nauk 1941:351; 1948:199). Although 'pagan' visitors were encouraged to introduce western technology to Muscovy, their residence and movements remained strictly controlled throughout their stay (Olearius 1656; Paul of Aleppo 1873; Staden 1964). Russians, on the other hand, were allowed to visit the 'anti-world' in the smallest imaginable numbers and only on the tsar's direct orders. Their return to Muscovy was followed by fasts and penance, intended to restore their temporarily lapsed orthodox status (Olearius 1656:221; Herberstein 1926:77).

iii. Old vs. New Believers

The summary of the Muscovite purity system presented in the previous section expresses an ideal condition, striven for by the Church and some State dignitaries, which surpassed the reality of normal life. Despite the official equation between the West and heterodoxy, it is a well known fact that Muscovy relied on many imported goods and services, and that their exporters were not always treated as defiled 'pagans' (Braun 1956; Smith 1977). Indeed, in spite of the insistence on Latin rebaptism and avoidance of intimacies, less radical conversion methods seem to have been resorted

to very frequently (Goetz 1905:74; Baron 1967:233), and there does not seem to be any hard evidence proving that foreigners were really excluded from Muscovite meals. On the contrary, some were treated with the type of hospitality reserved for the most orthodox guests (Olearius 1656:206).

Many of the discrepancies between the theory and the practice of Muscovite purity maintenance can be attributed to the tsar's court, which played a similar role in the diffusion of foreign customs as any other royal court at that time. The residence in Moscow was equipped with a stage for theatrical performances, with a full range of western instruments and naturalistic paintings considered 'pagan' outside the palace (Fuhrmann 1982). In 1672, the tsar Alexis issued an edict forbidding the keeping of Polish and Latin books, but his children were studying these languages from works found in the tsar's personal library (ibid.:204). An incomplete sample of heterodox behaviour practiced among the nobility includes shaving (Buslaev 1861(2):232; Golubinskii 1904:867; Herberstein 1926:222), excessive use of powder and rouge (Olearius 1656:135,180), and an extraordinary weakness for western apparel (Kostomarov 1905; Korshunova 1983:4; Fuhrmann 1982:204).

Outside the highest circles, the overlap between the ideal and the reality was not complete either, especially within the prohibited domain of 'pagan' plants and beverages. Far from evoking any type of fear, hops are reported to have served as a fertility symbol employed during wedding celebrations (Olearius 1656:215), and the brewing of beer together led to the formation of ritual kinship bonds (Staden 1964:102-103). Wine, beer,

hopped braga, and, since the 16th century, strong spirits introduced from the West, are reported to have been consumed everywhere, by everybody, and to an extent unknown among the 'pagan' Europeans (Olearius 1656:30; Smith and Christian 1984). The use of tea and coffee in southern territories bordering on Persia did not evoke disgust (Olearius 1656:597-600), and even the ban on tobacco issued in 1634 did not seem to alter the addiction of many Muscovites to this defiling drug (Laufer 1924).

The contradictions between the theory and the practice of daily life reached a boiling point around the middle of the seventeenth century, a time of protracted wars, large-scale epidemics, unpopular social and economic reforms, and cultural disorientation. Hand in hand with the introduction of western science and technology (Braun 1956; Smith 1977), arrived a wave of highly educated Ukrainian and Greek scholars who climbed to influential positions in the few centres of learning that Muscovy possessed (Florovsky 1974). While these forces were slowly eroding the foundation of 'holy Russia' from within, Ukraine, its immediate neighbour to the west, was being converted to Roman Catholicism (Vernadsky 1972(1):286-287), and Greece, the traditional source of intellectual inspiration, was under increasing suspicion of joining the Latin camp as well (Pascal 1938:205-206; Conybeare 1962:44). As the island of orthodoxy was shrinking, the Russian Church was growing progressively xenophobic (Olearius 1656; Paul of Aleppo 1873).

The raskol must be seen in this wider context of Muscovy's disorientation. Its eruption was preceded by a clerical campaign conducted by the

so-called "Zealots of Piety", which sought to restore orthodox morality by combatting western influence in all its alleged manifestations, including alcoholism and drug abuse (Ammann 1950; Smith and Christian 1984:152). This loosely-knit group of moralists included Avvakum, Nikon, and several other influential clerics who were to become leaders of the two camps created by the schism. His former cooperation with the 'Old Believers', recalled by Avvakum himself (Avvakum 1974), points to Nikon's initial agreement with the traditional principles of Muscovite orthodoxy. I think that one can go further and suggest that the patriarch never departed from those principles. Although he was described as an admirer of all things Greek (Paul of Aleppo 1873:109, 140,175,184), there is no evidence that Nikon supported Greek clerical garb, manner of singing, or the numerous ritual details he advocated, because of Grecophile *inclinations*. It seems that the patriarch's adoption of some Greek customs was inspired by political motives (Lupinin 1984) combined with the genuine belief in their orthodoxy (Paul of Aleppo 1873; Lupinin 1984). When he suspected heterodox tendencies, Nikon was ready to chastise the Greeks as forcefully as Avvakum (Andreyev 1961; Paul of Aleppo 1873:64,150,189).

This is not the place for speculating about the motives behind Nikon's reform or about its orthodoxy - two unresolved problems that should be addressed by historians and theologians rather than an anthropologist. What should be examined instead is the extent to which the Old Believers' response to the innovations was moulded by traditional views of orthodoxy and heterodoxy formulated in Byzantium and elaborated in Muscovy.

It has been pointed out repeatedly that the conflict between Nikon and the Old Believers began with the patriarch's printing of 'corrected' liturgical books. The bone of contention was the question whether the new books prescribed orthodox or heterodox ritual practices. Deacon Feodor, one of the Pustozersk Fathers, coined the opinion that the Greek 'originals' employed by Nikon's correctors were Latinized versions of Byzantine works printed in Rome and Venice after Greek presses had been shut down by the Turks (Subbotin 1881:41). The 'pagan' influence was, in the opinion of Feodor, discernible in the internal inconsistency of the new books (ibid.:34), which compelled Nikon to issue six editions of the all-important liturgikon, which all differed from each other (ibid.:25).

The first systematic analysis of all differences between the old and the new books was carried out in the early eighteenth century by a well-known nastavnik and scholar, Andrei Denisov, who enumerated thirty-eight innovations which were either detrimental to the Orthodox dogma or unnecessary departures from tradition (Chrysostomus 1957). Concentrating on the former, the early leaders of the Old Belief attacked the new 'triple alleluia' which had replaced the old double one. Since the alleluia was followed by its Slavonic equivalent slava tebe Bozhe (praise to thee, Lord), God was seen as being invoked not three but four times, destroying the symbolism of the Trinity. This modification was believed to be identical with and as harmful as the Latin filioque (Subbotin 1881:4-6,169-170; Barskov 1912:56; Chrysostomus 1957:96).

Four controversial innovations seemed to have modified the meaning of the Orthodox creed. Of the greatest significance appeared the correction of the name of Jesus from Isus to Iisus (Subbotin 1881:31-32,85,287;

Chrysostomus 1957:105), leading to the charge that Iisus is the name of the antichrist (Anonymous 1694:041). Another change led to the elimination of the phrase dukh istinnyi (the true Spirit) in favour of dukh istinny (Spirit of the truth) and of Bogoroditsa (the one who bore God; Mother of God) in favour of detorodinitsa or detotvoritel'nitsa (the one who bears/creates children) (Subbotin 1881:27). Finally, the Jesus prayer was modified from "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God..." to "Lord Jesus Christ, our God..." (Prokopovitch 1862(1):71; Chrysostomus 1957:105-106).

These and other, less evocative changes, were attributed to Latin influence and equated with the consequences of the introduction of the filioque into the western creed (Subbotin 1881:7-15,139,289; Barskov 1912:56). They were deemed sufficiently grave to warrant the accusation of the Nikonites praying to the devil (Smirnov 1898:86-87) and thus defiling all sacraments (Barskov 1912:61). This led to a virtually universal exclusion of 'pagan' visitors from religious services in Old Believer congregations (Vasilev 1694; Rochow 1799:420; Goehlert 1863:484; Subbotin 1881:279; Arsenii 1885:169-170; Kaindl 1897:360; Ammann 1937:190; Marchadier 1977:443; Cerkov 1985(21):29).

Notwithstanding the impact of altered words, the single most offensive innovation was seen in the replacement of the two-finger sign of the cross by its three-finger rival (Zelenkov n.d.:69-131; Chrysostomus 1957:86; Cerkov 1980(3):16-20). Although the new sign retained the double symbolism of the Trinity and Christ's nature, their importance was seen as having been reversed. Instead of Christ (two erect fingers) dominating the Trinity (three concealed fingers), the Trinity (three raised

fingers) now rose above Christ (two concealed fingers) (Akademiya nauk 1948:309). The modification prompted speculations that the new sign expressed faith in the devil, served by the unholy trinity of the beast, the snake, and the antichrist (Smirnov 1898:44; Hauptmann 1963:95-96; 1965:10). In the opinion of the Pustozersk Fathers, members of the official Church signed themselves no longer with a purifying but with a defiling gesture whose origin was sought in the West (Subbotin 1881:29,87; Barskov 1912:56-59). This association was strengthened due to the association of the new sign with the use of three fingers in snuffing tobacco. Henceforth, the term shchepotka (pinch) was applied to the heterodox sign, and its users came to be known as shchepotniki, that is implicitly, tobacco-users (Subbotin 1881:167; Pleyer 1961:42).

Another important area of conflict pertains to iconography. The Old Believers drew a parallel between liturgical books and images, accusing Nikon of changing both. In Avvakum's words, "But as the Niconians copy the European books, so do they copy their icons" (in Andreyev 1961:43). Although this charge was not justified in view of the patriarch's opposition to imported western paintings, the Pustozersk Fathers were willing to give credence to 'eye-witnesses' observing how Nikon had an icon and a cross (krest) stitched into the inner sole of his boots, crushing the images with each of his steps (Subbotin 1881:299).

Beside the anthropomorphism of the new images - Avvakum charged that "The swift dog, Nikon, the enemy, wishes to paint the icons as if the figures were alive as the foreigners do" (in Andreyev 1961:44) - the 'new' saints were particularly offensive by displaying the wrong sign of the

cross (ibid.:43). In the opinion of Feodor, such dissimilar images were inhabited by the antichrist (Subbotin 1881:82,87), and Avvakum encouraged all true Christians to spit on them just as they would spit on a heretic (Smirnov 1898:98). This suggestion seems to have been followed by many Old Believers who insisted on praying to 'similar' icons, painted in agreement with traditional standards (Zhuravlev 1831:133-134; Chrysostomus 1957:106; Leskov 1957). As trial proceedings from late 18th and early 19th centuries demonstrate, some did indeed spit on or otherwise insulted images lacking proper attributes (Lopukhin 1862:144-146,152-154; Sviedenia 1862:31). As more and more religious paintings absorbed innovations introduced from the West, the Old Believers extended their resistance to the use of oil (Kaindl 1897:306) and the placing of icons behind glass (Andreev 1870:83).

In addition to the traditional range of natural pollutants threatening the receptivity of icons, such as dogs, blood, and sexual activity, there was the threat of defilement from heterodox prayers. Avvakum advised those of his followers who lived secretly in the midst of Nikonites to wash images blessed by official priests and to address orthodox icons used in official churches only after the end of the defiling ritual (Smirnov 1898:93,96). Outsiders were banned from Old Believer services on account of the defiling effect of their prayers on orthodox icons (Kelsiev 1866:435; Gerss 1910:414; Pleyer 1961:163; Uspensky 1976:28), a danger which escalated whenever the visitor was a smoker (Kelsiev 1866:435; Gerss 1910:417).

The attacks waged against 'dissimilar' images included depictions of the 'life-giving' cross. After Nikon had disturbed the precarious relationship between the krizh and the krest by imprinting eucharistic bread with the former (Smirnov 1898:206), Avvakum and all subsequent defenders of the old faith branded his action as heretical (Subbotin 1881:87-88; Kaindl 1897:360; Smirnov 1898:196,206; Chrysostomus 1957:112; Cerkov 1980(3):31; 1984(20):2-4). Their criticism was based on the Muscovite beliefs referred to above (Smirnov 1898:196; Chrysostomus 1957:112), but Avvakum added his personal observation that after the removal of the 'foot-rest', "The crucifixion is painted in the Catholic manner, the body hanging from the cross and the arms stretched upwards", and thus agreeing with the new style where "Everything is depicted after the manner of earthly things" (in Andreyev 1961:43).

The changes of these enumerated 'ritual details' made the Old Believers' membership in the official Church impossible. Having witnessed the disappearance of the krest from the new eucharistic bread (prosfora) and the changes in the prayers said prior to and during communion, Avvakum denounced the Nikonian Eucharist as "communion of Antichrist" (Smirnov 1898:94-95; Avvakum 1974:439,447). Similarly, a 'corrected' prayer formula and an alleged tolerance of baptism by pouring prompted Avvakum to charge Nikon's priests with invoking rather than abjuring the devil (Avvakum 1974:447), an opinion repeated by other leaders in explanation for their rejection of the validity of the new baptism (Chrysostomus 1957:109). The

wholesale loss of credibility of the official Church, with all its sacraments and sacramentals, is expressed rather well in Avvakum's call to war:

He who wishes to fight for Christ...must gather up their [Nikonian] prayer texts and their books, and their images, and together with the Host put it all in a sack and throw it into the water with a stone attached (in Andreyev 1961:43).

In addition to their refusal to embrace strictly ritual changes, the Old Believers showed vehement opposition to the erosion of other Muscovite traditions which were considered part of the religious culture. In the summer of 1698, Peter the Great returned to Moscow from abroad and embarked on a comprehensive westernization program, which began with the first and second shaving of his nobles. By the early 1700s, a number of extremely detailed decrees had outlawed beards and traditional Muscovite dress for all but the lowest strata of secular society (Esipov 1863; Vernadsky 1972(2):347). The Old Believers, referred to condescendingly as borodachi (bearded ones), could obtain exemption by paying a considerable beard tax (Esipov 1863:179). By the 1720s, any bearded man was automatically suspected of sectarian tendencies (Sobranie 1858(1):21), and a few decades later it was no longer unusual to see clean shaven priests of the official Church (Hauptmann 1971:49).

The Old Believers invoked Byzantine rules against the modification of one's natural image as well as Muscovite diatribes attacking foreign apparel. In addition to condemning the britousi (shaven ones), they attacked boots with elevated heels for distorting one's natural height (Andreev 1870: 239; Uspenskii 1905:22), long hair of men for imitating women (Zhuravlev 1831:135; Uspenskii 1905:22), wigs and powder for deception (Uspenskii 1905),

loose and uncovered hair of women for imitating men (*ibid.*), the wearing of neckties and scarves for strangulating the pectoral cross (Andreev 1870:239; Uspenskii 1905:26), and even the use of buttons instead of hooks was occasionally proscribed on account of the former resembling 'devil's eyes' (Tetzner 1908:353). As in former times, the performance of autopsies remained unacceptable, and some Old Believers are reported to have carried the concern for preserving their natural image to the limit of keeping cut fingernails in the coffin (Andreev 1870:85).

The association between the new apparel and the West led to a new role for the antichrist. As one Old Believer put it in 1780, the devil appears in foreign clothing and uses it as a bait for catching orthodox Christians (Uspenskii 1905:24). He went on quoting the Old Testament: "But they mingled with the nations, and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them" (Ps. 106:35-36). The confirmation of this hypothesis could at times be demonstrated in rather interesting ways, such as when French calico acquired by some families in mid-19th century was discarded and buried following a rumour that the fabric had been dyed with the blood of dogs (Grinkova 1930:316).

In the domain of dietary purity, Muscovite traditions were also preserved and elaborated. The early leaders drew a parallel between ritual and natural orthodoxy, expressed in accusations against Greek patriarchs of trading in tobacco during their stay in Moscow (Subbotin 1881:248), and in typical Avvakumian observations, such as: "The Greeks, those sons of whores, are cunning; [their] patriarchs eat delicate viands from the same dish with the Turkish barbarians" (in Vernadsky 1972(1):261).

With the growing influence of tsar Peter's westernization program, most Russians soon joined the ranks of the defiled Latins and Greeks. Peter revoked the prohibition on tobacco (Baron 1967:146), and he made it clear that he considered the religious dietary precepts entirely irrelevant. The tsar was suspected of eating meat during Lent (Vernadsky 1972(2):349), and his protege, Feofan Prokopovich, was accused of snuffing tobacco in church and of eating unbled meat all year round (Markell 1862:3-8). Although rural people undoubtedly continued to uphold at least some of the more important dietary traditions, a cursory examination of late 18th century proverbs reflects very little attention to Muscovite ideals. The sayings warn against merely one traditional source of defilement, namely the dog (Dal 1862:1056). On the other hand, such 'pagan' substances as sausages (ibid.:905), beer, and tobacco are portrayed as indispensable sources of pleasure (ibid.:908). In an explicit attempt to discredit the Old Believers, one proverb even describes tobacco as God's plant and Christ's root (ibid.:909).

A partial reconstruction of Old Believer views on dietary purity demonstrates the continued importance of Muscovite traditions as well as a slight expansion of the category of prohibited foodstuffs. The strongest taboo was applied to the consumption of blood and the meat of carnivores, with occasional extensions to the meat of the swine (Zelenin 1927:116). Animals with unloven hooves (Tetzner 1908:351) and those whose offspring are born blind were abstained from (ibid.; Iwaniec 1977:282). Birds and aquatic animals could not be eaten whenever they exhibited 'abnormal'

features, such as long legs, deafness, blindness, or the absence of scales (Tetzner 1908:351; Zelenin 1927:117).

The Muscovite preoccupation with 'alcoholic' plants continued among the Old Believers. Due to its direct impact on ritual purity, especially in connection with icons, tobacco appears to have been universally shunned (Rochow 1799:412; Kelsiev 1866:435; Goehlert 1863:485; Kaindl 1897:360; Tetzner 1908:351; Popova 1928:23; Akademiya nauk 1947:89,92; Begunov 1969:511). The religious prohibition of beer continued to be upheld in theory, but numerous transgressions are reported in the literature (Kaindl 1897:308,367-368; Tetzner 1908:352; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:34). Tea and coffee, two 'drugs' introduced to Russia by Peter the Great, were banned almost as conscientiously as tobacco (Kelsiev 1866:427,434; Goehlert 1863:485; Andreev 1870:135; Kaindl 1897:360; Zelenin 1927:117; Popova 1928:14; Tetzner 1908:352; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:33). Both beverages were associated with the antichrist and his allies, the Latins and the Greeks (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:33; Akademiya nauk 1947:90-91; 1948:335; Andreev 1870:135). A similar heritage was attributed to several other plants introduced from abroad and occasionally abstained from, such as potatoes (Dal 1862:909; Andreev 1870:135; Zelenin 1927:117; Akademiya nauk 1947:89,91), and pepper (Tetzner 1908:352). The entire category of imported plants and plant products was often referred to as "vegetables from beyond the sea" (zamorskiya ovoshchi) (Unkrieg 1933:81).

Besides guarding the purity of food and drink against defilement stemming from contact with unclean animals and demons - which required that liquids be covered when stored (Dal 1862:909; Zelenin 1927:251) - the

Old Believers feared 'pagans' as a potent source of dietary defilement. This led to the exclusion of foreigners, members of the official Church, and deviant Old Believers from 'Christian' meals (Vasilev 1694:041-045; Zhuravlev 1831:135; Goehlert 1863:484; Andreev 1870:129; Gerss 1909:57; 1910:416; Pleyer 1961:153,163; Kolarz 1961:146; Crummey 1970:120; Katunskii 1972:89; Iwaniec 1977:282; Peskov 1982). Because of this fear, certain products, especially meat and liquids, were not to be purchased from outside sources, and dishes employed by a 'pagan' were kept apart from 'Christian' ones (Kaindl 1897:307; Tetzner 1908:352; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:33). The system of dietary segregation was known in some Siberian locations as "keeping cup" (chashka). Its prevalence among the Old Believers is attested to in Russian proverbs (Dal 1862:908).

As I have indicated, the importance of all these traditional principles was readily acknowledged by Nikon and his immediate successors who continued to combat western influences until the dismantling of the patriarchate by Peter the Great. It was because the Old Believers and their foes agreed on the relevance of 'ritual details' that the raskol erupted in the first place. In this sense, Nikon too was an 'Old Believer'.

Following the death of the last patriarch in 1700, the Russian Church came to be administered by a college of theologians known as the Holy Synod. Led by several highly influential Ukrainians, such as the tsar's adviser, Feofan Prokopovich, this body carried out a 'Ukrainization' of the official Church, which tinged its doctrines with a considerable number of Latin and other western principles (Markell 1862(1); Ammann 1950:375-388). It was in this setting that the ritualism of the Old Belief, Avvakum's as

well as Nikon's, came to be challenged by a new, definitely western approach to religion, which emphasized inner content at the expense of outer form. The formulators of this 'New Belief' no longer argued with the defenders of the old faith about the antiquity of various signs of the cross and the spellings of Christ's name. Such arguments, and therefore the entire platform occupied by the Old Believers, were becoming irrelevant.

The new spirit in Russian (-Ukrainian) theology is well expressed in one of the landmarks of raskol literature, Feofilakt Lopatinskii's "Exposure of schismatic falsehood", written in the early 1740s. The author, an archbishop and member of the Holy Synod, provided the first official response of the Russian Church to theological arguments formulated by the Old Believers in defence of their stance following their excommunication (Chrysostomus 1957).

Lopatinskii's main argument can be summed up as an attack on ritualism anchored in beliefs and traditions which lack clear scriptural evidence. In his opening remarks, the archbishop accuses the Old Believers of schismatic views not on account of clinging to the 'old books' but on account of confusing dogma and ritual. The thirty-eight innovations behind the raskol are said to be "not dogmas of the apostolic orthodox faith but outward acts [ynieishnyia chiny] and rituals [obriady] of church conduct; not ordained by Christ, not by apostles, not by the ecumenical councils, but by shepherds [pastyr] desiring unity for their congregations" (Lopatinskii 1745:2). What follows is a forceful denunciation of the Old Believers' magical veneration of icons - claimed to be "far removed from

the power of the word" (ibid.:6) - the two-finger sign of the cross (ibid.:4-5), beards - shaving is defended against primitive beliefs "as if God's image resided in the beard" (ibid.:19), and a host of other ritual details. After dismantling the 'schismatic theology' as an empty doctrine based on "praying with the body rather than the spirit" (ibid.:11), Lopatinskii suggests that its power may be due to traditional Russian ignorance of literary and scholarly skills and traditions: "Do you know that other nations understand Greek better than you understand Russian; do you know that among the Latins and Germans all Greek texts...are not only read but also printed so correctly and purely that even at the time of the authors' lives their publication wasn't better"(ibid.:77)?! By contrast, the Old Believers are dismissed as "dull Russian bats trying to be eagles" (ibid.:78).

This proclamation of a 'New Belief' was consistent with unprecedented ecclesiastic and political decisions made in the second half of the eighteenth century. In view of the relative unimportance of ritual, the Russian Church legalized not only Latin baptism (Lopatinskii 1745:47; Ammann 1950:388) but also many of the old customs clung to by the Old Believers. Following Lopatinskii's claim that the two-finger sign of the cross was banned not for dogmatic but for political reasons (Lopatinskii 1745:22), the State lifted the ban in 1763, but only for use in official churches (Sobranie 1858:599). In the next three decades, the Old Believers received permission to keep their old books, rituals, and all other insignia of their faith as long as they refrained from sedition and propaganda against the official Church and the State (ibid.:708,729,759,771). The

culmination of these permissive policies must be seen in the establishment of edinoverie (one faith), a branch of the official Church which catered exclusively to the Old Believers (ibid.:748).

The victory of the 'New Belief' did not mean the end of persecution and discrimination of the Old Believers. The 'schismatics' continued to be bullied by the government well into the 19th century (Curtiss 1940; Zenkovsky 1957), but the justification was no longer theological but political. Unlike the 'New Believers', their traditionalist foes refused to permit ritual pluralism, and this made the edinoverie movement - where 'new priests' used 'old books' - a failure. The Old Believers continued to live in secrecy and isolation, unwilling to recognize the new Russian State's legitimacy (Zenkovsky 1957). Consequently, the new gauge of sectarian tendencies was no longer the beard or the sign of the cross but the unwillingness to pray for the tsar (Nadezhdin 1846; Sobranie 1858:759). By 1820, the classification of all schismatics, including Dukhobors, Molokans, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Castrates, was based on this single, political, criterion (Sobranie 1858(2):66).

iv. Popovtsy vs. Bezpopovtsy

The historical changes described in the previous section have an interesting parallel in the doctrines espoused by the priestless bezpovovtsy and the priestist popovtsy. The organizational structure of the priestless branch, claimed to have been approved by the dissenting bishop of Kolomna, Paul (Shchapov 1906:291), was originally based on strictly monastic principles.

Although provisions were made for pious elders to administer the sacraments of baptism and confession, the sacrament of marriage would have required a proper priest, and consequently universal celibacy was one of the foremost principles of the first bezpopovtsy (Vasilev 1694; Smirnov 1898).

Although the monastic lifestyle was, and to some extent remains, a powerful model of social life, the majority of priestless Old Believers soon departed from its ideals and renounced celibacy as well as communalism. This led to the emergence of numerous conflicts, schisms, and sects which do not have to be described here (Zhuravlev 1831; Andreev 1870; Chrysostomus 1971).

A similar devaluation of radical principles took place in other respects as well. Despite the renunciation of the official Church with its clergy and sacraments, the major factions of the bezpopovtsy soon developed institutions which closely resembled those of a priestly denomination. The sole religious specialist of most priestless congregations was a "spiritual father" (dukhovnyi otets/dukhovnik) who assumed those priestly responsibilities that could be fulfilled by a layman (Vasilev 1694; Zhuravlev 1831). This person was known variably as starik (Rochow 1799; Tetzner 1899; Gerst 1910; Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930), nastavnik (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930; Iwaniec 1977; Hauptmann 1984), and nastoyatel (Hauptmann 1984).

The election of this elder retained several elements employed in the ordination of proper priests (Rochow 1799; Zhuravlev 1831; Hauptmann 1984), and with time, the distinctions between a real and a semi-priest began to wane. Thus in one East-Prussian congregation, the elder was referred to

as starik in the 1840s (Gerss 1910) and as pop in the 1890s (Tetzner 1899). A similar situation is reported from western Siberia in the 1920s (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:29).

These pseudo-priests presided over pseudo-churches of considerable complexity. At first, services were conducted in ordinary homes or humble chapels lacking the equipment of proper churches (Gerss 1910; Iwaniec 1977). Gradually, towers were erected, bells acquired, and richly decorated iconostases constructed (Gerss 1910; Ammann 1937; Iwaniec 1977). Members of the congregation were assigned places in accordance with orthodox tradition, and the elder alone was allowed to approach a pseudo-altar erected in the middle of the eastern wall (Tetzner 1899:182; Gerss 1910:415-416; Ammann 1937:189-190) where he alone was deemed qualified to read the gospels in public (Gerss 1910:421,433).

Despite the theoretical absence of all but the two sacraments of baptism and confession, many bezpopovtsy enjoyed further spiritual gifts. People partook of bread exposed to icons and prayers (Crummey 1970:113), which seems to have been baked from a mixture of finely ground pre-Nikonian prosfora (eucharistic bread) and flour. 'Magnified' in this manner, it endured until at least the middle of the nineteenth century (Bakurevich 1862:43). Consecrated wine, diluted with ordinary red wine, seems to have been preserved in a similar manner (ibid.). These methods were adhered to in many locations independently of one another (Goehlert 1863:481).

Those priestless Old Believers who had given up celibacy participated in remarkably complex marriage rituals, albeit restricted to the office

of betrothal. A mere blessing of the parents at home (Rochow 1799:411; Popova 1928:21), the ceremony evolved into a far more elaborate affair celebrated by the elder in the chapel (Tetzner 1899:189). A similar refinement of initially very simple acts can be observed in connection with mortuary customs (Tetzner 1899:189; Popova 1928:35; Pleyer 1961:150).

Figuratively speaking, one might characterize the difference between the priestist and the priestless branches by saying that the latter started with almost nothing and ended with an impressive and well-equipped pseudo-Church, while their rivals evolved, at least temporarily, in the opposite direction. The popovtsy also credit the bishop of Kolomna with blessing them and their resolve to preserve orthodox traditions (Shchapov 1906:291). Their further fate does not have to be recounted in all details, for chapter III contains a reliable description of the major difficulties encountered by all priestist Old Believers prior to the foundation of the 'Austrian' Church (Andreev 1870:183,217; Ammann 1950:445-447).

Faced with an acute shortage of priests, internal disputes concerning essential issues, such as where to find valid chrism required for the 'correction' of fugitive priests (Andreev 1870:123-124,215-217), and active government persecution, the priestist movement reached a crisis in the first half of the nineteenth century. The few available priests had become valuable commodities, which could be 'purchased' only by rich congregations. Thus, for example, the Moscow congregation 'sold' a priest in 1825 for one thousand rubles, nine hundred above the normal price (Andreev 1870:212). The result of this crisis was unprecedented sacramental deprivation suffered

in all priestist congregations (Nadezhdin 1846; Anonymous 1865:312-313; Andreev 1870:134,220; Kaindl 1897:358,367-368; Pleyer 1961:35-36; Chrysostomus 1969:292).

Such conditions were conducive to a gradual breakdown of the major distinctions between priestist and priestless Old Believers. Prompted by necessity, numerous congregations of popovtsy were becoming de-facto bezpopovtsy (Andreev 1870:221). Just like the latter, they came to rely on a pious elder, known either as ustavshchik or nastavnik, who carried out similar duties as his counterpart among doctrinaire bezpopovtsy (Nadezhdin 1846:93; Anonymous 1865:312-314; Pleyer 1961:35-36). Although some congregations changed their orientation once the supply of priests had been renewed, more conservative members, wary of the questionable status of the clergy, severed all links with the priestist branch and followed in the footsteps of the bezpopovtsy (Anonymous 1865; Zenkovsky 1970:476; Milovidov 1979:121,125).

The lot of the remaining popovtsy improved considerably with the emergence of the 'Austrian' Church in 1846, developments described in chapter III. The evolution of the new 'Old Orthodox Church' in the second half of the 19th century was characterized by a conscious effort at shedding the folksy image associated with the Old Belief and at securing a sound dogmatic foundation, which would be in line with modern theological thought. The first step in this direction was made in 1862 in a circular letter which advised the membership to pray for the tsar, to refrain from subversive activities, and to repudiate the traditional theory according to which the official Church stood in antichrist's shadow (Subbotin 1865; Bolshakoff

1950:65; Chrysostomus 1970).

While the 'modernization campaign' has not meant any reduction in the attention given to the necessity to continue the old ritual in its entirety, it has disturbed to a significant extent the former interdependence between ritual and natural purity or between the church and the home. There is no evidence prior to the early twentieth century that the appearance of priestist and priestless Old Believers differed in any significant way. On the contrary, reports describing locations inhabited by both denominations underline their uniform appearance (Kaindl 1897:306; Grinkova 1930). The first reliable indication of a significant shift applies to young priestist women in Siberia who, in the first years of the present century, exchanged the traditional sarafan for an urban blouse and skirt. These women, who appeared in church without the required kerchief, scandalized the congregation (Grinkova 1930: 318-319). Significantly, the local 'Austrian' priest voiced not a single objection and tolerated their presence (ibid.).

The apathy to traditions stipulating proper 'Christian' dress can be detected from the virtual absence of any elaborate guidelines concerning this area in the numerous publications released by the 'Austrian' Church over the last century or so. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one such guideline, which proscribes tattoos, the use of cosmetics by men, short skirts, see-through blouses, and short-sleeved shirts, the last three objects only when worn in church (Cerkov 1980(3):11). Not a word about Russian dresses, Russian shirts, covered hair, or, most surprisingly, beards!

Even more revealing is a brief glance at developments within the 'Austrian' Church related to the issue of dietary purity. One of its first bishops, Arkadii of Slava, a man who had grown up in the traditional milieu of Bukovina's Lipovane, still waged a campaign against tea in the 1840s and 1850s (Call 1979:150). Barely fifty years later, the Old Orthodox Church was ready to accuse the bezpopovtsy of having falsified the written tradition in order to justify their resistance to tobacco, tea, and coffee (Cerkov 1911/1985(21):20). While the two beverages were fully exonerated, the use of tobacco continued to be discouraged, but now no longer for ritual reasons but purely out of consideration for physical health (ibid.). The tolerance to what used to be called the "devil's plant" had already been demonstrated in the 1860s when a visiting 'Austrian' bishop encouraged Alexander Herzen and his London-based revolutionaries to smoke in his presence (Andreev 1870:370).

Another significant departure from Muscovite traditions can be detected in the restriction of dietary taboos to the early Byzantine triad of blood, strangulated, and dead animals (Cerkov 1910/1985(21):31; 1980(3):32). The liberal interpretation of even this minimal demand - emphasizing spiritual rather than material consequences - seems to suggest that diet had become a matter of individual choice (Cerkov 1912/1985(21):29).

Perhaps the most revealing departure from the beliefs that used to tie the two branches together should be sought in the campaign against dietary segregation between 'Christians' and 'pagans'. The Church's theologians argued that such segregation should apply merely at eucharistic meals,

because no harm could result from sharing daily food and dishes with heretics and non-Christians (Arsenii 1885:170-172; Cerkov 1912/1980(2): 25-26). At least one reliable source indicates that the conversion of priestless Old Believers to the Old Orthodox Church led to the abandonment of the chashka (cup) custom (Blomkvist and Grinkova 1930:35).

In summary, the historical evidence suggests a differentiation within the Old Belief into a Great and a Little Tradition, which coincides with the distinctions between the popovtsy and the bezpopovtsy. The former, at least since the formation of the Old Orthodox Church, have striven to preserve ritual purity by emphasizing the centrality of priesthood and sacraments while, at the same time, discarding most of the folk traditions concerned with the purity of the home environment. The bezpopovtsy have strengthened the interdependence between the sacred and the profane domain, with natural purity maintenance seemingly compensating for the partial loss of sacraments.

The importance of ritual purity among the priestist Old Believers became very evident during my recent visit to the newly formed 'Austrian' congregation in Oregon. Preparations were being made for the consecration of a proper church, which was to be carried out by the Bishop for the diaspora, Iosif. Every detail of the ceremony had to be conducted in accordance with the 'old books', and the bishop placed tremendous emphasis on appearing in an exact replica of the garb worn by his Muscovite predecessors. Yet all this traditionalism did not prevent the bishop from sharing a can of American beer with me, an act that would be considered 'pagan' by his relatives in Berezovka.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

I began this study with a brief sketch of three cardinal properties of Berezovka's 'religious culture', namely the attention to outer forms, the interpretation of tradition as a continuation of the iconic principle, and the strong physiological parallel between orthodoxy/heterodoxy and purity/pollution. These characteristics have been shown to permeate the thinking and acting of Berezovka's residents, and chapter VI bears an explicit testimony to their importance among past Old Believers and their cultural ancestors.

Because the parallels between 'my people' and their predecessors are so clear, I see little value in comparing the ethnographic with the historical part point by point. Instead, I would like to provide a summary of the most interesting features of the Christianity encountered in Berezovka and then direct my attention to the one issue which has failed to be scrutinized by the scholars active in this area, namely the relationship between ritual and dogma. That discussion will make use of the historical material assembled in the previous chapter as well as touch on a topic of some anthropological interest.

The summary of Berezovka's 'religious culture' is built around the concept of the boundary. It has surely been noted that boundaries of various kinds are of considerable importance in the setting apart of 'Christians' and 'pagans', men and women, left and right, east and west, pure and impure, and so forth. In the following few pages, I address this 'separative'

tendency in the values of Berezovka's Old Believers. But I also want to point out a seemingly opposite theme of pulling down boundaries. Interestingly enough, local people construct barriers where we destroy them, and they disregard those which to us seem insurmountable.

i. Christianity as kinship

It has been shown in the historical part that the Christian tradition to which the people of Berezovka lay claim has always been correlated with the dichotomy of Christians vs. non-Christians. At first, the prerequisite for membership was fictive kinship, conferred by baptism, which enveloped the entire Church in a bond of shared spirituality. Gradually, baptism was replaced by the more restrictive requirement of correct ritual, leading to the opinion that the Latins were no longer 'related' to the Byzantines. The latter extended their kinship bonds to the Muscovites, but as the point of orthodox ritual assumed greater and greater importance, the Muscovites almost terminated the Greek 'affinity' and reduced the boundary of fictive kinship to coincide with ethnicity.

Nikon's renewal of ritual and kinship relations with the Greeks was unacceptable to the Old Believers who shifted the boundary in the direction of the family. The culmination of this process can be seen in Berezovka where fictive (i.e., ritual) and natural kinship overlap to an unprecedented degree. Assuming that the original intention of Christian fictive kinship was the inclusion of strangers into the newly created spiritual family, the Old Believers use it for the opposite purpose of

excluding strangers from their midst.

The interplay between fictive/ritual and natural kinship is responsible for much of Berezovka's dynamism. In theory, the fictive kinship of shared ritual is superior to the natural kinship of shared ancestry, and, to use the terminology of this dissertation, the former is seen as the prototype for the latter. This relationship can be detected in the dependence of the natural family on the spiritual family.

First of all, Christ, the spiritual Father, provides the model for the natural father who should be fair and protective but also authoritarian and fearless. In the same vein, the natural mother is valued for traits associated with the Mother of God, such as love, tenderness, and loyalty. These parallels are made very clearly during the wedding ritual, especially when bride and groom are presented with the icons of their respective 'patrons'. Numerous further aspects, ranging from appearance to division of labour and participation in public services, enforce this major role of the spiritual Father and Mother.

The congregation plays the part of the spiritual family, and its residence, the chapel, can be regarded as the model for the home of the natural family. Ritual celebrations bring the family together and are followed by secular celebrations, just as the sharing of ritual food - such as sviatynia - leads to the sharing of natural food at home. Because of the superiority of the spiritual family, excommunicated residents are excluded not only from the chapel, but also from their natural family.

This model of ritual kinship underlies the distinction made in Berezovka between 'Christians' and 'pagans'. The former are regarded as 'our people' (nashi) and must be given the same type of assistance and affection as close kinsmen. The latter, believed to be allied with Satan, are distrusted and barred from church and home alike.

Theoretically, the 'pagan' category does not coincide with 'strangers'. Indeed, there are natural relatives who, due to their heretical activities, belong to it, but there are no strangers occupying the 'Christian' status. The people of Berezovka admit the possibility of foreign, i.e., unrelated, 'Christians', but there is no concrete evidence of their existence. The very few cases of conversion to the Old Belief in recent times involved 'pagans' who married into a congregation and thus gained ritual and natural kinship status almost simultaneously. In reality, a stranger who demands recognition as one of 'us', cannot rely on being accepted merely on account of adhering to the same ritual as the people of Berezovka. His reception would be considerably warmer if he demonstrated shared natural kinship with some local residents.

The conflict between shared ancestry and shared ritual is revealed rather vividly in the incomplete integration of Berezovka's Sintsianty and Turchane. Despite their acceptance of the ritual leadership of the Kharbinty, there is little doubt that the two minorities would not be part of the community without their willingness to inter-marry with the majority. Hence, although one must not discount the importance of fictive kinship, I would argue that it must be intertwined with its natural

counterpart in order to function effectively.

In reality then, the 'church' is as much a model for the home as it is a model of the home. A child may listen there to a myriad of names of saints, martyrs, and other orthodox heroes who prove Christianity's universality in time and space, but the only 'Christians' it ever experiences as living beings are the same people who mix at home. Invariably, proper social status comes to coincide with physical and mental proximity, while 'paganism' is correlated with distance and distrust. As any other ideology based on the idiom of natural kinship, the gulf between 'us' and 'them' is conceptualized not only in social and spatial terms, but also as a biological barrier.

ii. Christianity as natural purity

The physical distance between kinsmen and strangers is expressed in and maintained by the laws of natural purity maintenance, which supplement the correlation between relatives/Christians and strangers/pagans with the contrast of purity and defilement. The comprehensiveness of this dichotomy is indebted to its direct association with God and Satan respectively.

The division of nature into a pure and a polluting sphere is based primarily on the criterion of harmony. The edible plants and animals are friendly in the sense of doing little damage to the environment and the human organism. Their inedible counterparts are either predators or substances which harm the human body by affecting its obedience to the spirit.

Hence it seems that in spite of a physiological substratum, dietary defilement cannot be considered as an exclusively physical state.

The people of Berezovka give the impression of ordering the domains of dietary purity and impurity according to similar principles as the categories of 'Christians' and 'pagans'. In both instances, the camp of impurity is united by disharmony (disobedience, rapacity) and must therefore be kept outside of church and home. Furthermore, because of the tendency to equate Christianity with kinship, it would seem logical to automatically suspect 'strange' elements of nature of 'pagan' qualities.

This inclination can be detected in the historical resistance of all Old Believers to 'exotic', that is, imported, consumption goods. Although many of them, such as tobacco, tea, coffee, and hard spirits, were rejected on account of their effect on the mind, some, such as potatoes and pepper, were abstained from exclusively because of their association with foreign lands. In the same vein, the willingness to cloud the spirit with home-produced alcoholic drinks while abstaining from less powerful imported versions indicates the strong link between pollution and the world of strangers.

The fear of demonic infiltration, a threat which cannot be eliminated by isolating the 'Christians' from the 'pagans', shows that the parallel between kinship and purity has its limits. Yet at the same time it emphasizes the tremendous importance of physical boundaries and the theme of separation. Although defilement has both spiritual and physiological connotations, it is prevented with material measures, such as the placing of

a lid over a container filled with liquid, which accentuate the need for a separation between 'inside' and 'outside'. This is not so dissimilar from the local understanding of kinship as a combination of spiritual and physical properties dominated by a desire to isolate the natural component as the more important one.

In the final analysis, the kinship principle tends to restrict 'Christianity' to the narrow territory of a single population, and the natural purity principle demonstrates the dangers faced by those in favour of its expansion. Both axioms underlie the introversion and isolation of past and present Old Believer communities and the significance of the expectation that the antichrist - the ultimate symbol of the stranger - will disguise himself as a friend.

This egocentric world view was considerably modified by the emergence of the 'Austrian' Old Orthodox Church, which renewed the commitment to spiritual kinship and spiritual values as the proper bonds uniting Christians. Its geographical expansion went hand in hand with the shedding of the traditional natural purity laws, which, due to the growing gulf between church and home and fictive and natural kinship, had become an obstacle. The animosity felt in Berezovka toward the members of this Church is nicely expressed in their designation as 'Austrians', meaning strangers.

iii. Christianity as ritual purity

While the laws of natural purity can be interpreted as restricting

contact between 'Christians' and 'pagans', by doing so they also prevent any intimate association between God and strangers. The principles of natural purity help stake out a space where God and His followers can communicate undisturbed. Should the spatial isolation be violated - either by an animal or a 'pagan' intruder - the contact between this and the other world breaks off. This is why natural purity maintenance is a precondition for ritual purity and why the home functions as a filter for the church.

Having separated themselves from the 'outside', the Old Believers can concentrate on merging the two layers of the 'inside', namely God and His followers. This is the primary function of ritual observances, and it is accomplished by diminishing the spatial and chronological distance between this and the other world. Despite their belief in God's omnipresence, the people of Berezovka conceive of the gulf between His and their realm in terms of historical epochs, and their ritual aims at linking the past with the present. As the link grows longer and longer with the passage of time, the Old Believers must try to prevent its rupture. Ritual purity laws guard the stability of this umbilical cord.

The principal aid in this enterprise is the 'iconic' character of the ritual objects and acts employed in the merging of the two poles. Whether we consider the sviatynia, the sign of the cross, local iconography, and even basic symbols of appearance, they are all used as evidence of the considerable effort undertaken by past and present Old Believers at preserving more than a mere shadow of the divine past. 'Pagan' symbols, on the other hand, are believed to falsify the nature of the connection by

driving a wedge between the prototype and its copy. Hence just as they try to undo the spatial segregation between themselves and the Christians, the 'pagans' also attempt to undermine the bridge linking the past with the present.

The iconic principle is only one out of several local strategies intended to diminish the barriers between this and the other world. What they all seem to have in common is a cyclical rather than a linear view of time. This tendency can be detected in the lack of attention to chronology in the scientific sense. The Old Belief is merged with previous persecutions of Christians, its leaders assume characteristics of the early martyrs, Nikon is portrayed as an early Byzantine iconoclast, and 'secular' years are hardly kept track of. Global time is felt as a cycle beginning and ending in paradise. This global cycle coincides with the local cycle of the ritual calendar which proves the correspondence between past, present, and future.

The cyclical perception of time is correlated with the emphasis on repetition, be it in prayers or icons. The depicted saints are immobile, unchanged, a personification of stasis. Their 'false' counterparts, the 'pagan' saints, disturb this affirmation of harmony by constantly rushing somewhere just like their worshippers.

Because of the wide scope of iconic ritual, Berezovka's residents do not seem to suffer from sacramental deprivation caused by their ancestors' secession from the Russian Orthodox Church. Most of them are utterly unaware of the distinctions between their own and traditional orthodox sacraments,

and had it not been for the 'Austrian' propaganda, they would have entertained few doubts about the orthodoxy of their 'emergency solution'. As I have tried to show, one plausible reason for the successful adaptation of priestless Old Believers to the sacramental vacuum resulting from the raskol, was their ability to tie the home even more closely to the 'church' than had been the case prior to the schism. The ensuing symbiosis, which expanded concurrently with the growing importance of locality and kinship in determining one's religious status, appears to have encouraged the elevation of domestic food to a semi-sacramental level. This trend is well reflected in the increased attention to domestic purity documented in the historical chapter.

iv. Ritual as dogma?

One opinion that is shared by all commentators on the raskol is the alleged absence of doctrinal differences between the Old and the 'New' Believers. Timothy Ware states in his manual on the Orthodox Church that the Old Believers "differed from the official Church solely in ritual, not in doctrine" (1972:123); Christel Lane, a sociologist of religion, argues that "Differences over aspects of dogma were not involved" (1978:113); the historian Nickolas Lupinin states unequivocally "there was...no question of dogma involved" (1984:135). Whether the scholar is Russian or western, there is a clear tendency to regard the schism and the Old Belief as the culmination of the old Russian 'ritualism' alluded to in the Introduction.

The concept of 'ritualism' as it is applied to Kievan, Muscovite, and Old Believer approaches to Christianity is a western invention. Defined by Mary Douglas as a "heightened appreciation of symbolic action" which leads to a "belief in the efficacy of instituted signs" (1973:26), ritualism is often associated with a magical understanding of religion (Thomas 1971; Douglas 1973). It is merged with external forms, such as sacraments, holy water, sacred images, amulets, and the body, and contrasted with inner states, beliefs, the word, and the spirit (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Thomas 1971; Douglas 1973).

The opposition between an inner and an outer approach to religion, between belief and action, creed and ritual, looms large in anthropological interpretations of the Reformation. According to Mary Douglas, the most significant Protestant departure from Roman Catholicism was the rejection of the traditional concept of the Eucharist as a "magical instrument" of contact in favour of the inner experience imparted by the Word, leading to a new emphasis on the spirit at the expense of the body (1973:70). In Keith Thomas' view, the pre-Reformation interpretation of religion was that of a "ritual method of living, not a set of dogmas" (1971:76). By contrast, Protestantism "presented itself as a deliberate attempt to take the magical elements out of religion, to eliminate the idea that the rituals of the Church had about them a mechanical efficacy, and to abandon the effort to endow physical objects with supernatural qualities by special formulae of consecration and exorcism" (1971:75-76). Apparently, for radical Protestants, the sign of the cross could "avail to nothing else but to scare away

flies" (Thomas 1971:72).

It is tempting to apply the western dichotomy of ritual vs. doctrine to the context of the raskol. As has been shown in chapter VI, this was done by the Russian 'New Believers' in the course of the eighteenth century when Archbishop Lopatinskii accused the Old Believers of confusing ritual with dogma and of "praying with the body rather than the spirit" (Lopatinskii 1745:11). It was undoubtedly the western-inspired denigration of ritualism that led to the legalization of ritual pluralism and the Old Belief itself. This new attitude is nicely reflected in the official terminology applied to the traditionalists. As late as 1745, the government was unwilling to allow them to use the name starovertsy (Old Believers) instead of the despised raskolniki (schismatics) (Sobranie 1858:462). In 1762, a more tolerant policy was announced and justified on the basis of the 'schismatics' Christianity which was said to be identical with official Orthodoxy except for its "old-fashioned" character (ibid.:587). Finally, in 1784, the government for the first time discouraged the use of the term raskolniki (ibid.:729), and from 1790 on, the designation staroobriadtsy (Old Ritualists) has been employed most commonly (ibid.). In the course of half a century, ritualism became divorced from dogma, was made trivial, old-fashioned and of no ideological or political significance.

The distinction between ritual and dogma, action and belief, and body and spirit is an imposed innovation which lacks clear precedents in traditional Orthodoxy. The people of Berezovka rarely use the word 'ritual',

'dogma', or for that matter 'religion'. To them, Christianity is a state of the mind as well as of the body. To repeat one of my earlier assertions, local Old Believers insist on demonstrating faith through the medium of the body, but this does not mean that religion is experienced merely as a 'ritual method of living' which is somehow divorced from a 'set of dogmas'. My informants confessed ignorance of controversial doctrinal problems, such as immaculate conception, the transformation of the Eucharist, and similar theological issues. They admitted to being poorly educated and thus unable to discuss such difficult matters. But how many average non-'ritualist' Christians could discuss them intelligently?

As I hope I have shown in this dissertation, most of the objects and acts employed as major symbols of Orthodoxy are respected not for their intrinsic value, but because of their association with Christian dogma. Thus an Old Believer does not insist on making the sign of the cross with two fingers out of some 'blind ritualism', but because the configuration of the hand expresses the core of the Christian creed. The same applies to the interpretation of the krest, the double alleluia, the baptism by immersion, and traditional iconography. Of course, the people of Berezovka do practise a 'ritual method of living', but this alone should not imply a lack of attention to doctrinal issues.

I would dare to speculate that the link between ritual and dogma constitutes one of the most characteristic attributes of traditional Orthodoxy. As could be seen in the historical account presented in chapter VI, whether the opponents were the Greeks and the Latins, the Muscovites and the Latins,

the Muscovites and the Greeks, or the Nikonites and the Old Believers, the conflicts played out between Eastern and Western (or westernized) Christians involved to a considerable degree disagreements over the interpretation of ritual changes. The 'modernists' emphasized doctrines as the core of the religion and were prepared, immediately or eventually, to tolerate some type of ritual pluralism. The 'traditionalists' insisted on an interdependence between doctrines and rituals and opposed the idea of ritual pluralism.

Under certain conditions, the interdependence could come to be viewed as a dependence of dogma on ritual. A particularly strong impetus for such a development would have been the elevation of the painted image, the icon, to the level of the written word, a process initiated in Byzantium in the late antiquity. In the words of Gregory the Great, "What the Scripture is for the man who knows how to read, the icon is for the illiterate. Through it, even uneducated men can see what they must follow. It is the book of those who do not know the alphabet" (in Ouspensky 1978:134).

As has already been shown, the 'icon-cult', always stronger in the East than West, reached the apex of its importance in Muscovy. In view of that society's educational level, it can be safely postulated that the icon played the role intended for it by St. Gregory and other theologians: it informed the masses about Christian history and doctrine. In the virtual absence of a reliable written tradition and intellectual discourse, religious beliefs were judged orthodox or heterodox on the basis of iconographic evidence and related visible symbols, such as the shape or the

sign of the cross. Since iconography had made visible what remains hidden in the Bible - appearance, Christ's position on the cross, scenes of baptism and burial, and a plethora of other details - Muscovite theology became preoccupied with what may appear as merely 'ritualistic' matters.

Since it was believed that all ritual details possessed some dogmatic significance - after all, otherwise they would not have been 'mentioned' in the iconographic 'Scriptures' - an attack on any ritual could have doctrinal reverberations. This can be very well seen in the conflict between Nikon and the Old Believers who stuck to this opinion despite a warning issued by the Patriarch of Constantinople not to attach undue importance to "small matters" which do not touch the "dogmas of faith" (Palmer 1873:408-409). Such small matters did not exist in Muscovy.

Because of the merging of ritual with dogma, I am skeptical of scholarly assessments which interpret the raskol as being not at all concerned with doctrinal issues. Such views are conditioned by the modern tendency to separate ritual and dogma, and to investigate each in isolation from the other. The Old Believers, on the other hand, perceived Nikon's attack on ritual as a simultaneous assault on Orthodox doctrine. This is made clear by the parallel drawn between the triple alleluia and other modified verbal formulas and the filioque by the Pustozersk Fathers and Andrei Denisov.

Similarly, the people of Berezovka insist on a doctrinal interpretation of the raskol and do substantiate it. For example, the warning

up of baptismal water conveys the impression of the Holy Spirit being absent just as the failure to immerse the child three times abrogates the belief in Christ's resurrection. The use of the krizh instead of the krest dispenses with the Holy Trinity, and depictions of Christ's crucified body as hanging rather than standing are believed to deny His divinity. Even the seemingly innocuous removal of St. Mary's head cover in post-Nikonian icons was pointed out as a denial of her marital status.

These conclusions, incomplete as they may be, provide impetus for discarding the prevalent notion of the Old Believers as fanatical ritualists who are ignorant of doctrinal issues. Hopefully, the line of inquiry initiated in this dissertation will be refined in future studies of the Old Belief, leading to a deeper understanding of the relationship between ritual and dogma. In this manner, the staunch opponents of all things western could help us grasp more fully the nature of the ancient schism between the European East and West.

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