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## Political Economy <sup>of</sup> ~~the~~ Doukhobors

The shining feature about the Doukhobors is that they are, in the language of James the Apostle, "doers of the word." With them there is no divorce between theory and practice. If they have a belief, they will carry it out to its logical conclusion, regardless of the consequences. If they believe (and some of them have entertained the belief) that it is wrong to wear clothing of wool or leather or fur, they will face the cold, withering blasts of the Northwestern winter in linen garments and boots of binder twine. If they believe (as they do) that it is sinful to kill—that is, to kill either man or animal—to believe is to act; and the result is that you have in them now a people who will not harm the least of God's creatures, who will not even taste of slaughtered flesh, and who will not war upon their fellow-men. Many and many a Doukhobor has wasted the flower of his days in the prisons of Siberia because he would not "make soldier," as they say. Mr. Verigin himself, their Doukhobor Pericles, spent sixteen years in exile in Siberia, and was in no less than three hundred different prisons; he has, as he says, five brothers in Siberia now, two living and three dead.

But the Doukhobors are no fanatics. They are sane, practical and progressive. I have seen a bridge constructed by the Doukhobors over the White Sand River which has survived the floods where two bridges built by Government engineers were carried away. Their progress in this direction within the last two years has been phenomenal. Two years ago they lived in houses of mud and logs; now they have a brickyard, and are building houses of brick. Two years ago they hitched their women to the plows; now they have 25-horse-power, double-cylinder steam plows that plough 25 acres a day. Two years ago they ground their flour by windmill; now they have four grist-mills and also four saw-mills. Three years ago they did not have a threshing machine

outfit to bless themselves with; now they have five traction engines and four portable engines, all run by Doukhobor engineers. A few years ago they were a disorganized rabble, restless and discontented, dwellers in the Cave of Adullam; today they have evolved a system of political economy that may be described as strictly ideal.

Now, it is because they are so practical and progressive that the Doukhobors are "doers of the word." They are so practical that things that are impracticable to others are practicable to them. They never say die. Whether it is a bridge or a system of political economy that is

under consideration, they are of the opinion that whatever is right is possible; that while it is not always possible to do one's own will, it is always possible to do the will of our Father. So that while some men, for instance, believing devoutly in the academical justice of Communism, have yet considered it Utopian in actuality, and while others have regarded it as a dream of the future—the peasant Doukhobors, standing on the first principle of equity, have wrought out a system of political economy, an unmitigated Communism, that works to all appearances without a hitch.

What are the details of this Doukhobor system of Communism?

In the first place, the individual cannot own land or property. It is all vested in the community. The land is all unfenced, is all merged in

one great common field. Even personal property belongs to the state. A Doukhobor does not own the garden he cultivates, the house he inhabits, the horses he drives, the clothes he wears; they all belong to the state. About the only thing a Doukhobor can call his own is his family photographs.

In the second place, there is no money in the community. When a man wants some eggs, he goes to the woman whose duty it is to keep the hennery, and she will give him them for nothing. If a man wants a coat, he must go to the store-

