

Letter to the Editor of TIME MAGAZINE, 1958

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Introduction

Summary from: [Inquirer, Vol. 4, no. 11 — January 1958, p. 11](#)

Letter to *Time* Magazine

Response to Time Magazine by Koozma J. Tarasoff — Misconceptions: Zealots are not the same as Doukhobors. Use of word 'Doukh' [Douk]* is derogatory. Innuendo of guilt for burnings is unjust.

* K. J. Tarasoff mistakenly spelled the word used in TIME magazine – **Douk** – as *Doukh* in this article below which is a transliteration of the Russian Дух, spirit. “Douk” is what the English speakers hear when pronouncing Doukhobor (**Douk**-ho-bor) *Doukh* is what Tarasoff hears and thinks in Russian (**Doukh**-o-bor). Due to terrorist activities in the 1950s which newspapers falsely reported and implied were done by “Doukhobors” instead of solely by “Sons of Freedom”, the racist insult “Dirty Douk” became common.

Image scan of published original: [The Inquirer, Jan. 1958, vol. 4, no. 11, pp. 11-12](#)

Below is the text of the above link with red notes.

It is encouraging to note that the press and radio have been continually improving in regards to news reports concerning the Doukhobors and the "Sons of Freedom." Altho' not always consistent, the news media has been relatively careful when blaming a particular group for some particular act. More improvement, however, is needed in this regard.*

* This note lacked a title, probably due to space. It was squeezed in. And, the footnote apostrophe was omitted.

"On behalf of THE INQUIRER staff I would like to clarify some flagrant misconceptions that some writers of TIME have recently made concerning the Doukhobors and also concerning the "Sons of Freedom."

In particular, two news items [both from the *Toronto Star*] come to mind :

- "Young Doukhobors Kept Behind Wire" (August 12, 1957 p. 11) and
- "Explosive Protest" (February 24, 1948, p. 18).

The first questionable news item, reprinted from the TORONTO STAR, in part, states:

"The Doukhobor sect involved is troublesome. As Sons of Freedom they do not believe in sending their children to state schools and some of the extremists among their 3,000 have been responsible for dynamiting bridges and railways, burning down schools, and parading about in the nude."

Then in the more recent news item a description was presented regarding the recent negotiations of the "Sons of Freedom" to move to Russia because the majority of this group believe that Canada has not allowed them freedom to practise their religious beliefs. Here, as in the reprint from the TORONTO STAR, three errors were apparently made.

Firstly, no differentiation between the Doukhobors and the "Sons of Freedom" was made. Remember that the "Sons" are only a minority group of some 2,500 in the Kootenay region of British Columbia, while the Doukhobors comprise a total of some 20,000 people in Canada. Nor is Doukhobor synonymous with "Sons of Freedom." Doukhobor refers to individuals who believe in a particular form of religion, one of the tenets being the principle of brotherhood and non-violence in human affairs. Thus, it follows, that anyone who participates in an act of violence automatically ceases to be a Doukhobor. The failure to distinguish Doukhobors from "Sons of Freedom", therefore, is discriminatory.

Secondly, the use of the word "Doukh" [Douk] is a deviation from journalistic objectiveness which avoids emotionally charged words. The Canadian Press, has for several years dropped the policy of using this form of derogatory expression in their news reports and editorial opinions. The connotative use of the word "Doukh" [Douk] is to imply inferiority, and this again is discriminatory.

Last, but not least by innuendo or indirect suggestion your news item implies that the Doukhobors as well as the "Sons of Freedom" are to blame for dynamiting and bombings in the Kootenays of British Columbia. Yet the fact remains that these accusations are assumptions based on rumours which have not been proven to be true. To assume that someone is to blame before he is proved guilty is an assumption foreign to our democratic principle of justice. Surely our system cannot allow for impromptu or self appointed judges to proclaim with justice here.

So what if acts of violence occur in areas adjacent to some particular group of people? Does it necessarily follow that this particular group is to blame? Furthermore, isn't it a better policy to judge people as individuals and not place them into a caste or a stereotype category of people?

We trust, therefore, that the writers of TIME will in the future use more care when referring to the Doukhobors, "Sons of Freedom" and other minority groups."

Summary index title is taken from this sentence:

Recently, the Editor of *The Inquirer* sent the above letter to the Editor of TIME MAGAZINE.

Similarly in Europe, certain newspapers are careless in their reporting. One European correspondent brought to the attention of *The Inquirer* the following erroneous report in one paper which referred to a "Sons of Freedom" delegation in the USSR: "The Doukhobors said they practice the primitive communism, changing wives, walking entirely nude, and so on. Such nonsense !

More about Sons of Freedom

[The 'Sons of Freedom' — a Flashback to 1956:](#)

Origins, problems, misconceptions, and relationship to Doukhobors.

In [‘References stating that ‘Doukhobors are not Sons of Freedom’](#)

[“Sons of Freedom” mistaken as “Doukhobors” in TIME magazine, 1924-1966](#)

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