To Stay or to Go: Why Some Mennonites Were Unable or Did Not Want to Emigrate from the Soviet Union during the 1920s

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The hundredth anniversary of Soviet Mennonite migration to Canada in the 1920s has generated renewed academic and popular interest in the topic.[2] For the descendants of the more than twenty-two thousand Mennonite migrants, the anniversary is also an opportunity to examine the reasons why their ancestors made the decision to leave the USSR and move to Canada. With the benefit of hindsight, some descendants assume that the decision for Soviet Mennonites to emigrate Canada was always the best decision: why would anyone want to remain in the USSR where years of civil war, famine, and disease shattered millions of lives? However, historical records clearly illustrate that the decision to emigrate was not straightforward for many Soviet Mennonites. As David G. Rempel, a former resident of the Khortytsia Mennonite colony in Ukraine, observed: "Families [were] split on the fateful issue of whether to emigrate or to stay in Russia in the hope that they could recover their prosperity in the land they loved so dearly."[3]

This paper will examine the issue of migration from the perspectives of Soviet Mennonites who did not emigrate in the 1920s. More specifically, it will discuss why some Soviet Mennonites who wanted to emigrate were unable to do so and why many Soviet Mennonites ultimately decided to remain in the Soviet Union. In doing so, this analysis will shed light on the factors and considerations that ultimately determined why tens of thousands of Mennonites remained in the USSR.

The Context

In the 1920s, Soviet Mennonites had valid reasons for wanting to leave the USSR. They had experienced anti-German antipathy prior to the First World War, and this worsened during the war. Mennonite alienation intensified after the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917. While some Mennonites supported the new Soviet government, many viewed the atheistic Bolshevik leadership with contempt and perceived it as a serious threat to traditional Mennonite life and religious practice.[4] Mennonite insecurity increased during the ensuing civil war (1918–22) that engulfed Mennonite communities. They were the sites of looting and pillaging, indiscriminate destruction of property, violent sexual assaults, and cold-blooded murder—much of this at the hands of Nestor Makhno's *Makhnovshchina* and, to a lesser extent, Red Army troops. Deadly outbreaks of disease and widespread hunger culminating in the 1921–22 famine also further eroded Mennonite communities. With little or no food, many Mennonites resorted to eating cats, dogs, vermin, carrion, and weeds to survive. Piles of corpses soon appeared in some Mennonite villages. Mennonite communities were also overwhelmed by destitute orphans, abandoned children, and displaced persons—including Mennonites—desperate for food and shelter.[5] These deteriorating conditions motivated many Mennonites to find a way to leave the country.

In addition to the chaos described above, the new Bolshevik regime also implemented policies that upended the lives of many Mennonites. Through local committees of the village poor (*Komitety nezamozhnykh selian* [*komnezam*], or CVP), Soviet authorities confiscated large tracts of Mennonite land (up to 75 percent in some communities) and redistributed them to poor, landless families, Mennonite and non-Mennonite. Mennonites who still possessed land had their holdings reduced to 32 dessiatins (and less in some villages) per farm. Bolshevik policies also ensured that poor Mennonite and non-Mennonite peasants assumed positions in newly

established village and district soviets, government organizations, and Communist Party bodies. They now exerted authority in political and administrative matters that wealthier Mennonites had traditionally controlled. The Soviets also implemented repressive measures against Mennonite households, including the seizure of livestock and the imposition of punishing tax-in-kind assessments (*prodnalog*), compulsory deliveries of food to the state (*prodrozkladka*), and harsh, compulsory labour service (*Scharwerk*). By 1924–25, some officials in Ukraine assessed Mennonite and German farms with agricultural taxes that were two to three times higher than those assessed to neighbouring Ukrainian farmers.[6]

Other Soviet policies also motivated Mennonites to want to leave the USSR. In the early 1920s, officials began bolshevizing Mennonite social institutions including orphanages and rest homes for invalids. By the mid-1920s Soviet authorities prohibited worship services in private homes and encouraged its Militant League of the Godless to undermine Mennonite faith and religious institutions. Officials also revised military conscription regulations and directed local courts (which were not always impartial) to determine which Mennonite men were exempt from military service. This resulted in an increased number of Mennonite men drafted into the Red Army. When it came to education, the government passed laws prohibiting religious instruction in the classroom, incorporated Communist Party dogma into the school curriculum, and required teachers to attend political indoctrination sessions. Mennonite teachers who refused to comply with these regulations were often forced to resign or were terminated from their positions.[7]

To deal with the Bolshevik leadership, Soviet Mennonites established two organizations: the Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage (Verband der Bürger holländischer Herkunft, or UCDL), which was a semi-autonomous economic association established in 1922 to represent Mennonites communities across Soviet Ukraine and facilitate their economic reconstruction; and the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Association in Moscow (Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein, or ARMAA), which was an association representing Mennonite interests in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). The UCDL also received Soviet permission to facilitate a "limited migration" of displaced Mennonites (whom Soviet officials described as "unwanted elements") from Ukraine pursuant to specific government conditions. This emigration project required not only the participation of Soviet officials, the UCDL, and the ARMAA, but also the assistance of Mennonite leaders (including B. B. Janz, C. F. Klassen, Philipp D. Cornies, A. A. Friesen, B. H. Unruh, David Toews, and P. F. Froese), the

Canadian government, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the Joint-Stock Russian-Canadian-American Passenger Company (Aktsionernoe obshchestvo Russkocanadsko-amerikanskoe passazhirskoe agenstvo, or RUSCAPA), the Mennonite Central Committee (North America), and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBC). By August 1922, the UCDL had compiled lists with the names of more than 17,100 individuals wanting to emigrate. The most common reasons for wanting to leave were the brutal civil war (1918–22), the deadly 1921–22 famine, and the devastation inflicted by the *Makhnovshchina*.[8]

The majority of Mennonites on emigration lists were so destitute that they required financial assistance from the CMBC to pay all of their emigration costs (*Reiseschuld*); Mennonites in this category were sometimes referred to as "full-credit emigrants." Those who could pay some of the emigration costs but still required CMBC financial assistance were known as "half-credit emigrants." Full-credit and half-credit emigrants travelled together in groups often call "group applications." In 1924, the UCDL began assisting Mennonites who could pay all their emigration costs. These "cash emigrants" were responsible for obtaining their emigration paperwork and typically travelled in family units.[9]

In the end, Soviet authorities permitted more than 17,160 Soviet Mennonites to emigrate from the USSR—mainly to Canada—between 1923 and mid-1927. While the majority emigrated from the USSR for the reasons mentioned above, others left for personal reasons, such as to escape from a family conflict or, in one case, an embarrassing extramarital affair.[10]

Only a handful of Soviet Mennonites were permitted to leave the country between mid-1927 and the fall of 1929. But in late 1929 and early 1930, more than 3,880 Soviet Mennonites left the USSR during the so-called "flight to Moscow" (see the discussion below), leaving those who remained in the USSR to deal with the consequences.[11]

Mennonites Who Wanted to Emigrate but Could Not

Approximately one in five Soviet Mennonites emigrated from the USSR in the 1920s.[12] Many more wanted to emigrate but were unable to do so for a variety of reasons.

Advanced age and health-related issues: There were thousands of Mennonites who, because of their advanced age and/or health-related issues, were unable to emigrate. The civil war, the 1921–22 famine, and the disease epidemics left an untold number of Mennonites physically, mentally, and emotionally disabled. Some were

so traumatized that they were incapable of making any decisions about their future. Many were unable to find care in overcrowded healthcare facilities and had to depend on their relatives who felt obligated to stay with them.[13]

Within this group were Mennonite women and children who, as victims of the depredations of the *Makhnovshchina*, suffered from the debilitating consequences of sexually transmitted and contagious diseases, including syphilis and trachoma. Contaminated water and food during the civil war and the early 1920s ensured the successful spread of cholera and other diseases. Many Soviet Mennonites were simply too ill to travel.[14]

What also disqualified many Soviet Mennonites from emigrating was the Canadian government's requirement that every emigre to Canada pass a medical fitness examination and receive a certificate of medical fitness before arriving in Canada. This requirement disqualified anyone with a contagious disease, a mental illness, or a physical or mental disability (preventing them from earning a living) from entering Canada. What made this requirement especially challenging for Mennonites was that the Canadian government did not recognize certificates of medical fitness issued by Soviet physicians. At the same time, the Soviet government refused to grant Canadian doctors medical visas to conduct the medical examinations in the USSR. A solution to this problem came from the German government, which permitted medical examinations to be conducted in Lechfeld, Germany, and allowing those Mennonites unable to obtain medical certificates to convalesce in Germany. In the first transport of 750 Soviet Mennonites that left in spring 1923, at least 25 percent were deemed medically unfit, with many suffering from trachoma or tuberculosis. To accommodate the large number of refugees requiring Canadian medical fitness tests and care, a second medical camp was established at Atlantic Park, England.[15]

When Canadian doctors were permitted into the USSR in May 1924, they enforced the Canadian medical requirements strictly and disqualified many Mennonites emigres who did not meet medical requirements. In some cases, Mennonite families made the decision to remain in the Soviet Union when one of their family members was denied a certificate of medical fitness.[16]

Orphaned, abandoned, and institutionalized children: One of the tragic consequences of the civil war, the 1921–22 famine, and deadly disease epidemics was the inordinate number of orphaned, abandoned, and institutionalized children in Mennonite communities. Some Mennonite orphans, foster children, and unaccompanied minors were able to emigrate to Canada—usually with siblings, relatives, or friends. In many cases, however, orphaned children did not

have anyone to represent their interests or submit their emigration paperwork; they remained in the USSR.[17]

There were also orphaned children who were assigned (usually by the village soviet) to live with certain families or were informally or legally adopted by family relatives, friends, or strangers. In many of these cases, orphaned siblings were separated and shuttled off to different families, sometimes separated by hundreds of kilometres. In these blended families, the adopted often had little say, especially about emigrating from the USSR. Their fates were determined by the adults in their new foster families.

Pressure from extended family members to keep orphaned siblings together or at least in the same country further complicated emigration plans, as did disagreements between different sides of the family as to what was in the best interests of their orphaned relatives. In one case, extended family members went to the household of a Mennonite family in the process of emigrating with an orphaned niece, seized the niece, and brought her back to their village—much to the distress of the girl's foster family.[18]

Women without support: There were unmarried Mennonite women, childless widows, unwed mothers, and widows with children who emigrated to Canada with or without the assistance of family members or friends.[19] Others desperately wanted to leave the Soviet Union but felt that they could not emigrate without the help of family members or friends. Single women without financial means, for example, often depended on family members for financial support, accommodation, and protection. If they found it difficult to survive on their own in the USSR, then how could they expect to do so in Canada? Unwed women were also expected to care for aged, disabled, or ill family members, and this heavy obligation prevented some of them from leaving the Soviet Union.[20]

There were also women who wanted to emigrate but were unable to do so because their menfolk (husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, etc.) did not intend to leave the USSR. These men determined, to some degree, the survival prospects of the women and children in their families.[21]

Loyalty to the church: There were Mennonite church leaders—such as Elder Abram Klassen (Halbstadt) and Elder Jakob Rempel (Steinfeld-Grünfeld)—who wanted to emigrate but remained in the USSR out of a sense of mission to continue serving their congregations.[22] Their internal sense of vocation overrode their desire to leave the country.

Local politics and government bureaucracy: Local village politics, Soviet government regulations, and the bureaucratic process for reviewing and approving emigration applications also prevented

some Mennonites from leaving the USSR. This approval process was predicated on the Canadian government providing Soviet authorities with a guarantee that Canada would accept all refugee applicants and that no applicant would later be returned to the Soviet Union.[23]

In 1922–24, Mennonites in Ukraine hoping to leave the country first registered with the UCDL indicating their desire to emigrate. In many communities, these registrants also had to secure favourable character references and village approval to emigrate.[24] In some settlements local officials also expected to be paid a bribe to secure their final approval. Those who did not acquire village approval or pay the requisite bribes could not leave.[25]

The UCDL then submitted the list of potential group emigrants and their paperwork to Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) government offices in Kharkiv for approval. In the early 1920s, the Ukrainian SSR had autonomy in determining who could emigrate from Ukraine. Kharkiv officials approved most names on the UCDL lists in 1922 and issued exit permits for approved applicants over sixteen years of age. The UCDL collected the exit permits and prepared a UCDL certificate for every exit permit; the UCDL certificate confirmed that UCDL would cover any travel costs incurred by the emigrant. No Mennonite could emigrate without an exit permit and a UCDL certificate.[26]

In 1922 and 1923, Kharkiv officials generally approved the UCDL's lists of group transports, but this changed in 1924 when Kharkiv officials prohibited future group transports. Ukrainian officials now only approved individual cash applicants (but at a very slow rate). The allocated spaces of Mennonite applicants denied Kharkiv approval were filled by RSFSR Mennonites.[27]

Most Mennonite emigrants travelled by train to Moscow and then west, passing through the Red Gate (northwest of Sebezh, USSR) that separated the Soviet Union and Latvia. This route required the OGPU (Ob"yedinyonnoye gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravleniye pri SNK SSSR, the Soviet secret police) office in Moscow to review the emigration paperwork. If the paperwork was in order, the OGPU issued transit visas that were required to cross the border. The OGPU could also deny an applicant permission to leave the USSR if an applicant had a criminal conviction or had been previously arrested by the OGPU, or if it suspected that an applicant was a White Army participant or counterrevolutionary.[28]

From early on, Soviet officials routinely denied the emigration applications of Mennonite men eligible for military service, as well as those who had been conscripted into the Red Army. As a result of UCDL lobbying efforts, the government began to approve the

applications of Mennonite conscripts in February 1924, but for many of these conscripts this approval came too late. They were unable to leave before the government restructured the UCDL in 1926.[29]

More government red tape was added in 1924 when the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vserossijskij Tsentraĺný Ispolniteĺný Komitet, the supreme governing body of the RSFSR) announced that it had to approve every group application before its departure. In 1925, Soviet authorities required every emigrant to have a Soviet passport. By this time the government's emigration process had become so bureaucratic that some Mennonites found it necessary to travel to Moscow to personally secure the release of their exit permits.[30]

Why the increasing emigration bureaucracy? One reason was because OGPU officials (H. Yagoda and A. K. Artuzov) began viewing Soviet German and Mennonite populations as bases of espionage for the German government in 1924–25. Artuzov also accused these populations of being controlled by *Auslanddeutsche*, nationalists, fascists, fascist-terrorists, and fascist-nationalists who were spying for the German regime and conducting German counter-revolutionary activities in the USSR. They also identified some German and Mennonite organizations (including the UCDL) as German fascist organizations that had to be liquidated because they participated in German espionage and were anti-Soviet.[31]

After the government's reorganization of the UCDL in April 1926, most Mennonites found it extremely challenging to clear the government's bureaucratic emigration obstacles. They now did much of the emigration legwork on their own. This included obtaining sponsorship clearance (confirming that the applicant had a Canadian sponsor) as well as "permission documents" (confirming that an applicant was permitted to come to Canada). Despite repeated pleas to Canadian relatives and friends to send permission documents, many Soviet Mennonites never received them.[32]

Other documents required by emigration applicants included a clearance certificate confirming that the applicant's taxes were paid in full and a declaration stating that the applicant was of good character, did not have a police record, and was exempt or released from military service.

Even with the proper documentation, Soviet Mennonites found it increasingly difficult to obtain government permission to emigrate in the late 1920s. After mid-1927, officials continued to grant provisional approval of the applications, but they rarely issued the final paperwork required to leave the country. Time and again,

Mennonites complained that their provisional emigration documentation expired before they received their exit permits.[33]

Inadequate financial means: Most Mennonites did not have the wherewithal to pay the costs related to emigration. In the early 1920s, many cash-starved Mennonite farmers could not afford to pay their UCDL membership dues, let alone the UCDL's registration fees (110,000 tsarist roubles), the emigration application fee (20 Soviet roubles), and the UCDL's emigration identification certificate fee (6 Soviet roubles), not to mention the transit fees and the transportation, food, and incidental costs that accompanied every departure. Some Mennonite communities (such as Tiegerweide [Molochansk] and Steinfeld [Kryvyi Rih]) were so poor and so desperate to emigrate that they offered to sell their entire villages and surrounding land for cash to finance their emigration costs.[34]

Pursuant to an agreement, the CMBC, UCDL, and ARMAA covered the emigration application costs related to full-credit and half-credit emigrants. This, however, was not the case for cash emigrants, who had to pay a 6-rouble fee to the UCDL for an identification certificate as well as government application fees (often more expensive than those assessed to group applications).[35] These fees discouraged some from applying.

To pay these fees and other emigration costs, some Mennonite emigrants put their property up for sale. Not all were successful in selling their property and many had to settle for far less than they hoped to receive. What proved financially disastrous for some families was receiving news that their departure date was delayed for months: this forced them to use their farm sale proceeds to pay for living costs while they waited for their new departure date.

Not all Mennonite emigrants could afford to purchase the food and other supplies needed for the train trip out of the country. Before their departure, they used whatever flour they had to bake and dry-roast bread rolls (*reeschkje Zwieback*, or rusks), which served as their main food staple during the trip. Many of the train transports travelled through Moscow where emigres often had to rent expensive rooms for several days to pay for and obtain exit permits, travel tickets, carrier fares (330 roubles each), and medical examinations required before they left the country. Those who did not pass the requisite medical examinations had to remain in Moscow—sometimes for months at a time—until they obtained a medical certificate. All of this proved to be very distressing for those without adequate financial resources.[36]

Mennonite emigres also expressed serious concerns about not having adequate financial resources to survive in Canada and, therefore, becoming a financial drain on Canadian relatives and

friends. These concerns intensified in 1926–27 when there were rumours that the number of Canadian Mennonites who were willing to support Soviet Mennonite emigres had decreased significantly. After October 1, 1927, it appeared that it would no longer be possible for Mennonite emigres to billet with Canadian families.[37]

By the late 1920s, the cost of an exit permit doubled and, in some cases, tripled every few months—from 50 roubles in early 1928 to as much as 300 roubles by spring 1929. Since all prospective immigrants over fifteen years of age required a valid exit permit and these permits were only valid for three months, many Mennonites found it very challenging to cover these costs.[38]

The UCDL's discretion: In facilitating the emigration of Mennonites from Ukraine, UCDL leaders (including B. B. Janz, Philipp D. Cornies, and Peter I. Dyck) and representatives exercised broad discretionary powers in determining who could emigrate, finalizing lists of names of potential Mennonite emigrants, delaying emigration applications, and disqualifying those whom they deemed were not "Mennonite." Some UCDL officials, for example, disqualified Mennonites who were married to Ukrainians or to communists from including their names on emigration lists.[39]

UCDL leaders also prioritized the emigration applications of Ukrainian Mennonites over RSFSR Mennonites for allocated spaces on the transports. Their justification for doing so was based on a UCDL resolution stating that RSFSR Mennonites would only be eligible to leave after 10,000 Ukrainian Mennonites had left the country. Not surprisingly, ARMAA officials were frustrated with the UCDL's preferential treatment of Ukrainian Mennonite applicants and, in 1924, they demanded that RSFSR Mennonites be included in upcoming transports. The UCDL and ARMAA eventually reached an agreement whereby the spaces of Ukrainian Mennonites deemed to be medically unfit to emigrate would be filled by non-Ukrainian Mennonites. The preferential treatment of Ukrainian Mennonites over RSFSR Mennonites meant that a smaller number and percentage of RSFSR Mennonites were permitted to leave the country.[40]

The CMBC, the CPR, and the Canadian government: Soviet Mennonite emigration depended in large measure on the cooperation and commitment of the CMBC, CPR, and the Canadian government. But the actions, inactions, and delays of these key players also prevented some Soviet Mennonites from leaving the USSR. One example of this was extended delay in the establishment of the CMBC. Already in the spring of 1921, Canadian Mennonites discussed establishing a Canadian Mennonite organization to help Soviet Mennonites emigrate to Canada. Regrettably, Canadian Mennonite churches did not approve the establishment of the CMBC until July

1922 and only later did the Canadian government certify the CMBC's charter of incorporation. The protracted delay in establishing the CMBC meant lost time and opportunities for more than 2,770 Soviet Mennonites who had Soviet permission to leave Ukraine in April 1922.[41]

Another delay related to the first CMBC contract with the CPR to transport 3,000 Soviet Mennonites to Canada at a cost of $370,000. Before and after the contract was signed, Canadian and American Mennonites voiced their opposition to the agreement. Their vociferous opposition called into question the extent of North American Mennonite support for Soviet Mennonite and, in turn, delayed the departure of the first transports of Soviet Mennonites to Canada until spring 1923.[42] Mennonites in Ukraine considered this delay unacceptable—some lost respect for American Mennonites while others lost confidence in the CMBC.[43] Khortytsia Mennonites became so frustrated with the CMBC's failure to secure their emigration in 1922 that they proposed forming their own delegation to travel to North America to secure an emigration agreement with either Canadian or American authorities.[44] As a result of these CMBC delays, the first Soviet Mennonites were unable to emigrate to Canada until spring 1923. Until then, famine and disease continued to ravage Ukraine, ensuring the premature deaths of some Mennonites hoping to leave.

In July 1924, the CMBC declared that it was short of funds and could no longer provide financial support for Soviet Mennonite emigration to Canada to the same extent that it previously had. This meant that the CMBC had to reduce its 1924 immigration contract to 3,000 credit emigrants, preventing some Soviet Mennonites from leaving the USSR.[45]

The CPR also delayed some planned transports of Mennonites out of the USSR. The CPR's postponement of transports in October 1923, July 1924, and September 1925 not only proved costly for Mennonites (many drained their financial resources to stay alive during the delays) but also prevented some Mennonites from leaving the USSR.[46]

Throughout much of the 1920s, the Canadian government played a key role in facilitating Soviet Mennonite immigration. But in the late 1920s, when Canadian public opinion was increasingly opposed to immigrants, the Canadian government made it more difficult for Soviet Mennonites to enter the country. For example, in the fall of 1929, Canada's minister of immigration advised the German government that Canada would no longer accept any more Mennonite refugees until the spring of 1930. As a result of this new policy, Germany refused to accept any more Mennonite refugees until such

time as Canada and Germany could negotiate a mutually acceptable arrangement.[47] Eventually, Canada accepted just over 1,340 Soviet refugees (the majority were Mennonite) in 1930, but its delay in doing so prevented large numbers of Mennonites from leaving the USSR. In March 1931, any possibility of Soviet Mennonites emigrating to Canada vanished when Canadian Prime Minister R. B. Bennett passed an order-in-council resulting in the most restrictive immigration admissions policy in Canadian history.[48]

OGPU detentions and arrests: The OGPU routinely detained and arrested Mennonites applying to emigrate. OGPU visits were very intimidating and caused some Mennonites to think twice about leaving. Those who were incarcerated by the OGPU were sometimes prohibited from leaving the country even after their release from custody.[49]

UCDL missteps: The UCDL and B. B. Janz also made errors that ultimately delayed and, in some cases, prevented Mennonites from leaving the country. One UCDL misstep occurred in the spring of 1924 when UCDL leader Janz distributed emigration certificates before he received the appropriate supporting paperwork from Canada. As a result, the certificates were deemed invalid and some Mennonites were prevented from emigrating.[50]

More serious UCDL errors related to its representations to and dealings with Soviet authorities. As noted above, Soviet officials became increasingly suspicious of the UCDL and its emigration work in 1924, and they ordered investigations into the UCDL's role in fomenting "administrative confusion" at the local level and the role of UCDL and Mennonite leaders in interfering in the sovietization of Mennonite communities. By late 1924, Ukrainian authorities alleged the UCDL was a closed, religious national economic organization led by Mennonite intelligentsia, former bourgeoisie, and religious leaders who were closely connected to foreign organizations and who had promoted "mass" instead of "limited" Mennonite emigration. Officials were also infuriated that UCDL had refused to join the Ukrainian all-republican cooperative agricultural system (*Silskyi Hospodar*), to evade Soviet government and Communist Party authority. In response, Ukrainian officials declared that they would no longer approve any lists of Mennonite groups wanting to emigrate and would only consider the emigration applications of Mennonites who had previously liquidated their assets. Officials also suspended the departure of a third group of refugees (some of whom were cash emigrants) planning to leave in 1924.[51]

The public statements of UCDL leaders also angered Soviet officials. In February 1925, for example, UCDL leaders at the Grigoryevka congress (located near Barvinkove, Kharkiv oblast, Ukraine)

declared that Mennonite emigration was justified because of the Soviet government's failure to protect Mennonite interests. More specifically, UCDL leaders complained that the Soviet state had made a series of errors that jeopardized future Mennonite existence in the USSR. These included the absence of a stable government land-use policy; the state's violation of the Mennonite right to exemption from military service; the government's prohibition of Mennonites educating their own children and youth; the government's threat to dismiss Mennonite teachers who violated state education policies; the state's failure to honour its promise to respect schools as neutral spaces where neither religious nor anti-religious propaganda was permitted; the absence of a general legal status for Mennonites in the USSR; the state's ongoing efforts to unlawfully deprive Mennonites of their voting rights and arbitrarily impose taxes-in-kind; the country's ongoing economic depression; and the government's failure to restore Mennonite confidence that adequate livelihood opportunities were possible in the USSR.[52] In response to the government's allegation that the UCDL was facilitating a mass emigration movement, UCDL leaders declared that they had helped some Mennonites to emigrate, but these had always been "private" matters. The UCDL also stated it had discontinued its emigration work in the fall of 1924 and any Mennonites leaving the country thereafter were doing so on their own accord.[53]

It is unclear why UCDL leaders felt it was necessary to publicly criticize the Soviet government at the Grigoryevka congress.[54] It is also unclear why UCDL leaders made false statements about Mennonite emigration being a private affair and that the UCDL had not been involved in emigration matters since the fall of 1924. What is clear, however, is that the UCDL declarations provoked the government to increase its attacks against the UCDL. Throughout 1925, Ukrainian authorities continued to delay their approval of Mennonite exit permit applications and refused to process many new applications. By mid-1925, Soviet newspapers (including *Visti* and *Red Star*) published articles harshly critical of the UCDL, its foreign connections, and its alleged mismanagement of UCDL funds.[55] In autumn 1925, Ukrainian officials conducted further investigations of the UCDL. They called into question the legality of UCDL operations and emigration activities and alleged that UCDL leaders were controlled by socially harmful elements with connections to foreign agents (including the RUSCAPA, the Dutch General Commission for Foreign Emergencies, and several foreign consulates). Ukrainian officials also complained that they had always dealt with the UCDL and Mennonite communities in good faith, granted them concessions and a degree of autonomy that no other group enjoyed, and

permitted the most desperate Mennonites to emigrate. And how did the UCDL and Mennonites repay them? By taking advantage of the state's goodwill and evacuating as many Mennonites as possible. From the perspective of Ukrainian authorities, the UCDL acted in bad faith and operated outside the state's acceptable structures. They also warned that the foreign press would exploit Mennonite emigration to unleash a new campaign against the USSR. For these and other reasons, the UCDL had to be liquidated, its branches restructured, and its assets transferred to state organizations.[56]

In response to these allegations, the UCDL leadership published a letter defending its actions, but this was to no avail. By early 1926, Soviet officials declared the UCDL's emigration activities to be counterrevolutionary and dissolved the UCDL by transferring its operations and assets into *Silskyi Hospodar*.[57] Without a Mennonite organization providing emigration services was it still possible for Soviet Mennonites to emigrate? After UCDL leader B. B. Janz was advised that he was about to be arrested and subsequently fled the USSR in May 1926, many Mennonites believed their last opportunity to emigrate had disappeared with him. Perhaps some even felt that Janz had abandoned them. Yes, RSFSR Mennonites still had the ARMAA and its leader C. F. Klassen to represent their interests, but there was no one with the same connections or clout that Janz had with Soviet officials.[58]

UCDL and ARMAA directives not to emigrate: During the early 1920s, the UCDL and ARMAA facilitated Mennonite emigration while also supporting the reconstruction of Mennonite communities in the USSR. In fact, both organizations declared that reconstruction was critical to Mennonite survival in the new Soviet regime. However, after Soviet officials started attacking the UCDL in 1924–25, UCDL and ARMAA leaders warned their constituents that only a small number of Mennonites would be able to emigrate and so there was no point in pursuing unrealistic emigration illusions. At the Grigoryevka congress in February 1925, for instance, UCDL leaders reported that there were many ways to make a living in the USSR and that it was the duty of the UCDL to ensure that the economic reasons for emigrating were eliminated as quickly as possible. Given these prospects, UCDL leaders declared Mennonites must not thoughtlessly leave their homeland for an uncertain future.[59]

The ARMAA issued even stronger directives to its members in the RSFSR. In 1925, ARMAA officials warned Kulunda Steppe Mennonites in western Siberia to forget about emigrating from the USSR. This warning was in response to the actions of some Kulunda Mennonites who, after experiencing years of deprivation and hunger, travelled to Moscow in August 1925 to obtain government

permission to leave the country. The ARMAA refused to help these Kulunda Mennonites and instructed them to return to Siberia to focus on the agricultural reconstruction of their communities. To stop others from travelling to Moscow, ARMAA issued a notice advising Mennonites not to leave Siberia with the objective of emigrating from the country—those who did would be subject to "repressive disciplinary measures."[60] Such warnings certainly discouraged some Mennonites from pursuing their goal of leaving the USSR.

Waited too long: In 1922 the UCDL complied lists with the names of more than 17,100 Mennonites who wanted to emigrate. Mennonites who registered their names on the emigration lists after 1922 discovered that their failure to register earlier put them at a disadvantage: the longer they waited to register, the less likely their applications were to be accepted, especially after 1924 when Ukrainian officials no longer approved group applications, slowed the approval of cash applications, and, in early 1926, restructured the UCDL.

By 1927, many Soviet Mennonites believed that the possibility of emigrating was quickly evaporating. Ukrainian officials now approved very few emigration applications, and often years after the applications were initially submitted. Those Mennonites who received official approval to emigrate often discovered that the approval expired before they received their final exit permits. Some of these Mennonites reapplied and paid additional fees, but these efforts rarely produced exit permits.[61]

Increased Soviet repression (late 1920s): A national grain crisis and rumours that Western countries were preparing to attack the USSR prompted Soviet officials to implement repressive administrative measures (*chrezvychaishchina*) in 1927. These measures targeted kulaks and "former people" (*byvshie*, who included old, privileged classes, nobility, estate owners, industrialists, clergy, Russian army officers, and White Army participants) with new taxes, forced grain procurements, and arrests with the aim of ensuring the regular delivery of peasant grain to the state and safeguarding the country's long-term industrialization. The repression intensified in 1928 when the government implemented its Ural-Siberian Method (extraordinary measures to collect grain) and the first Five-Year Plan (facilitating rapid and large-scale industrialization of the country). In 1929 and 1930, the regime unleashed a host of repressive measures to "dekulakize" and collectivize (move into collective farms) the Soviet peasantry en masse. This included the disenfranchisement, dispossession, arrest, incarceration, exile, and execution of kulaks that continued throughout much of the early 1930s. As

ethnic Germans, Mennonites often suffered higher rates of dekulakization and collectivization than neighbouring Ukrainian peasants.[62]

In these increasingly repressive conditions, Mennonites desperately wanted to emigrate. Some continued to submit their emigration applications to officials, but many others did not, fearing that their applications would bring unwanted government and OGPU attention and repression. The government also made it increasingly difficult—with its bureaucratic red tape, protracted delays, and increasing application fees—for Mennonites to obtain exit permits. The departure of Canadian medical inspectors from the USSR created yet another emigration hurdle at this time. The result was that fewer than 1,240 Mennonites emigrated from the USSR between April 1927 and the early fall of 1929.[63]

The flight to Moscow (late 1929): The "flight to Moscow" also impacted Mennonite emigration prospects. The flight began when a group of Siberian Mennonites travelled to Moscow in the spring of 1929 and obtained government permission to emigrate from the USSR. News of the group's success spread quickly, and in the fall of 1929, thousands of Mennonites from across the USSR sold, gave away, or abandoned their property before leaving for Moscow to obtain exit permits. Soviet officials characterized the flight as counterrevolutionary. Despite OGPU efforts to prevent the exodus to the Soviet capital, more than 13,000 German-speaking refugees—including over 9,000 Mennonites—converged on Moscow by November 1929.[64] To diffuse the crisis, Soviet authorities issued more than 3,880 exit permits to Mennonites in Moscow in late 1929. Of these refugees, approximately 1,300 Mennonites emigrated to Canada, while the majority settled in Paraguay and Brazil.

The fate of the 5,200 or more Mennonites in Moscow who were denied permission to leave the country proved disastrous. The OGPU arrested them, sent some into exile, and transported most to their home villages in unheated livestock and freight cars. Many of the returnees died en route. Local officials often branded those who returned as "counterrevolutionaries," "disloyal kulaks," "agents of foreign states," "saboteurs," and "agitators for emigration." Many were soon exiled to the far north.[65]

The flight-to-Moscow event evoked mixed emotions among Soviet Mennonites. For some, the departure of almost four thousand Mennonites to the West raised hopes that future emigration might be possible. For others, the brutal manner with which the OGPU dealt with the more than nine thousand Mennonites who were denied exit permits signalled that leaving the country was no longer possible.[66] There were also Mennonites who viewed the flight to

Moscow as an embarrassing escapade that would have severe repercussions for the Soviet Mennonite community. This was because the OGPU now branded Mennonites as disloyal agitators for emigration. There were also purges (*chistki*) of government and party organizations in Mennonite communities that resulted in Mennonites losing their government and party positions. This angered those Mennonites who had not participated in the flight but were paying the price of increased repression and purges for their coreligionists' gamble to flee to Moscow.[67]

Despite the increase in state repression, a small number of Mennonites attempted to travel to Moscow in the spring of 1930 to apply to emigrate. Their efforts were largely in vain. The German government experienced greater success when it negotiated the release of approximately 130 Mennonites who had been separated from their families during the flight to Moscow of 1929. Many of these Mennonites travelled to Germany in 1930–31. Thereafter, the Soviet government permitted only a handful of Mennonites to emigrate.[68]

Arrest, forced repatriation, and death: In the late 1920s, increased Soviet repression and fewer opportunities to emigrate prompted some Mennonites to move to Soviet border areas—such as Belarus, the Caucasus, Kazakhstan, Turkestan, and the former Far Eastern Republic—where they hoped to cross the Soviet border illegally and escape to freedom. Some Mennonites, for example, tried to flee to Poland via Belarus. Other Mennonites fled to the Amur River region, including Mennonite settlements near Blagoveshchensk, where many tried to cross the Amur River into China.[69] Still other Mennonites travelled to Soviet Turkestan, Alma-Ata (Kazakh Autonomous SSR), or Tashkent (Uzbek SSR), hoping to escape into India or China. These escape efforts proved successful for some, but not all, Mennonites. Some Mennonites were arrested and imprisoned during these attempts and others died in their bid to escape. Crossing the border into another country was not always the guarantee of freedom that they hoped: some Mennonites succeeded in reaching China only to be repatriated to the USSR.[70]

Mennonites Who Did Not Want to Emigrate from the USSR

Outlined below are reasons why thousands of Soviet Mennonites did not want to emigrate from the USSR.

Personal considerations: There were many and varied personal reasons why some Mennonites did not want to leave the USSR. The possibility of being permanently separated from family members was inconceivable for some. Many Mennonites also considered their

homes and farms as their only security in such precarious times. Why sell their property when there was a real possibility that they would not be allowed to emigrate? Many deemed it a risk not worth taking.

The fear of the unknown and the fear of failure also motivated many to remain in the USSR. Why leave their "*Heimat*" (homeland) and travel to an unknown country with unknown challenges? The possibility of failing in Canada factored into the reluctance of some Mennonites to leave the Soviet Union. The question of whether to emigrate or not engendered such fear and panic in some Mennonites that they became paralyzed.[71]

Weather was also a factor in the emigration decision for some Mennonites. As one Soviet Mennonite reported: "Some say that although it is cold and stormy here, it is even worse in Canada. When I imagine such a situation, I fear I will freeze if I come there."[72] The prospect of cold Canadian winters was enough to motivate some Mennonites to stay put in the Soviet Union.

Negative reports from North America: As early as 1922, Mennonites in North America began sending reports to Soviet Mennonites warning them not to come to America. Some reports declared that the American government opposed Soviet Mennonite emigration to the US because of Mennonite opposition to military conscription and worries that some Mennonites who could not work might become a drain on the state. Mennonite churches and leaders in the United States also voiced their opposition to Soviet Mennonite emigration. For example, in 1923, C. E. Krehbiel (field secretary of the General Conference Mennonite Church) told CMBC leader David Toews that he was reassured that Mennonite churches in the United States were not named (i.e., not financially liable) in the contract that the CMBC signed with the CPR to facilitate the emigration of Soviet Mennonites to Canada.[73]

Between 1922 and 1924, Canadian Mennonites also sent letters to Soviet Mennonites warning them not to come to Canada. They provided a host of reasons to stay in the USSR: the living conditions in Canada were very poor, Mennonite children were required to attend English-language schools operated by the government, and Soviet Mennonite refugees were required to join the church of their Canadian sponsors after their arrival in Canada. Some Canadian Mennonite church leaders publicly opposed the CMBC efforts to help Soviet Mennonites immigrate to Canada.[74] These reports provided confirmation to some Soviet Mennonites that emigrating was inadvisable.

Mixed messages from Mennonite religious leaders: There were Soviet Mennonite religious leaders who publicly questioned—in

sermons and church meetings—whether leaving Soviet Russia was part of God's divine plan. In 1924, for example, Pastor P. Peters (Molochansk) preached several sermons in which he discussed the pros and cons of emigration, questioned whether God wanted his people to move to Canada, raised concerns about the ulterior motives of those planning to leave, and asked what was to happen to those individuals (such as the elderly) whom Canada would not accept.[75]

Other Soviet Mennonite religious leaders declared that Mennonites should not emigrate because they had a duty to advance the Kingdom of God in the Soviet Union.[76] Hearing religious leaders cast doubt on whether emigration was part of God's plan proved to be a powerful religious justification for remaining in the USSR.

Mennonite support for the Bolsheviks: Even before the 1917 revolutions, there were Mennonites—including poor peasants, landless labourers, middle peasants, intellectuals, and those in the medical corps (*Sanitätsdienst*) and forestry service (*Forsteidienst*)—who supported the Bolsheviks and their policies. They witnessed extreme poverty, injustice, and exploitation. Some concluded that the socialist cause and the Bolshevik proposal to redistribute land to benefit the poor had more in common with Christianity than capitalism. During the civil war, some Mennonites abandoned pacifism and showed their support for the Soviet leadership by serving in the Red Army; these soldiers and their families received money and food both during and after the war as compensation for their service to the Red Army. After the civil war, there were a growing number of Soviet Mennonites who ardently defended the Soviet leadership and its policies; some became Communist Party members and even attacked Mennonite institutions on behalf of the Soviet state.[77] These Mennonites felt indebted to the Soviet state and were not interested in leaving the country.

Mennonite participation in Soviet institutions: The civil war also witnessed a growing number of Mennonites participate in Soviet government institutions affiliated with the Soviet state and, to a lesser extent, the Communist Party. Already in early 1918, Mennonites worked in Bolshevik-controlled village soviets, with some serving as chairmen and secretaries. Many of these soviets disbanded during the German occupation in mid-1918, but they were quickly reconstituted when the Red Army assumed control of Mennonite-populated areas in mid-1920. Mennonites soon recognized that it was in their best interest to have a cooperative relationship with the victorious Bolshevik authorities, and they joined local soviet institutions in large numbers.[78] Other Mennonites joined because of the prospect of upward social mobility, higher incomes, better housing,

and desirable educational opportunities that accompanied a government or party post. In 1920 and 1921, for instance, hundreds of Mennonites participated in the organization and operation of regional soviets,[79] volost soviets,[80] village soviet organizations,[81] district CVPs,[82] village CVPs,[83] trade unions, consumer associations, livestock associations, land associations,[84] *kolkhozy* (collective farms), the Red Army,[85] the Communist Party,[86] and Soviet-affiliated women's organizations.[87] By 1928–30, thousands of Soviet Mennonites were employed in state and party institutions at the village, district, and regional level. In these positions, Mennonites participated in the establishment of soviet power in the Mennonite countryside and influenced how government policies were implemented in Mennonite and non-Mennonite communities until the mid-1930s.[88] This power and influence also incentivized many Mennonites to remain in the USSR.

Bolshevik land reallotment policies: As noted above, the Bolsheviks' land reallotment policies facilitated the confiscation of large tracts of Mennonite lands and redistributed them to poor Mennonite and non-Mennonite peasants and landless labourers in the early 1920s. Not surprisingly, these Bolshevik land initiatives purchased the loyalty of many poor Mennonites who now had access to land for the first time in their lives and saw no reason to emigrate.[89]

Mennonite participation in kolkhozy: In the spring of 1919, some Mennonites started organizing and joining village artels (a type of *kolkhoz*). In the artels, Mennonite and non-Mennonite members shared livestock and agricultural equipment and worked together to perform field work. Artel members were permitted to keep their homes and household goods. While many of these artels disbanded when the civil war intensified in the fall of 1919, Soviet officials reestablished many of them and organized new kolkhozy when the Red Army regained control of Ukraine in 1920.[90]

An important factor in establishing kolkhozy in Mennonite-populated areas were village CVPs—semi-autonomous bodies that limited their membership to poor peasants, landless labourers, and middle peasants. By early fall 1920, most Mennonite settlements had a village CVP where Mennonites participated in the establishment of village kolkhozy.[91]

In the Khortytsia area, for example, Mennonite members usually outnumbered non-Mennonites members in many village CVPs. In many cases, Mennonites served as CVP chairmen and secretaries. The meeting protocols and orders of the CVP in the early 1920s confirm that Mennonite CVP members participated in the confiscation of land, grain, and other property belonging to former people and kulaks (including Mennonites) in their villages. The village CVP

often retained 25 percent of all seized grain and food for its members and, subsequently, redistributed the remaining grain and property according to government directives.[92]

In January 1921, the Khortytsia volost land department issued order #8, directing villages to organize kolkhozy in preparation for the upcoming spring seeding campaign. By the end of 1921, there were at least nine kolkhozy in the Khortytsia area.[93] More than fifty kolkhozy were added by late 1922.[94] Hundreds of Khortytsia Mennonites were members of these kolkhozy and many served in leadership positions.[95] Emigration seemed unnecessary or even ill-advised when the kolkhoz promised security, land, food, and government support.

By the mid-1920s, many Mennonite-populated kolkhozy in Ukraine were no longer operating due, in part, to a significant improvement in economic conditions during the New Economic Policy (see below) and the UCDL's establishment of alternative agricultural associations. In 1925, the UCDL was still administering at least two Mennonite artels—"Vpered" (Berdyan'sk, Ukraine) and "Novaya Ukraina" (Slavhorod, Ukraine).[96] The number of Mennonite-populated kolkhozy increased significantly in the late 1920s and early 1930s because of Soviet repression, dekulakization, and collectivization.

The New Economic Policy: Between 1921 and 1927 the Soviet government implemented its New Economic Policy (NEP) to revive a national economy devastated by years of civil war, the Bolsheviks' war communism policies, and state terror. NEP focused on developing a market-oriented economy that allowed individuals to own small and medium-sized businesses subject to minimum state regulations, whereas the government controlled banks, foreign trade, transport operations, and large industry. During NEP the state discontinued its use of repression and punishing requisitions to force peasants to surrender their agricultural products. Instead, peasants were permitted to farm the land they possessed and to pay a tax-in-kind based on a percentage of their harvest. The result was that peasants retained more surplus grain than they had prior to NEP.[97]

Soviet officials predicted that NEP would result in more cash in peasants' pockets and this would incentivize them to purchase more state-manufactured goods. This prediction did not become reality, however. After suffering years of deprivation, many peasants used their surplus grain to feed their families and livestock herds.[98] This resulted in a surplus of consumer goods and industrial products, forcing the government to lower the price of these goods and products and raise the price of grain in 1922–23. By 1926–27, many economic indices had rebounded to or near pre-war levels.

Most Soviet Mennonites thrived during NEP. Already in 1923, Mennonite leaders noticed that in villages where the economic conditions were improving, there were fewer Mennonites registering to emigrate. At the Grigoryevka congress (February 1925), Mennonite leaders reported on the positive economic and agricultural developments in Mennonite communities and some declared that the future looked hopeful in the USSR.[99] Given these promising conditions, why leave the Soviet Union?

Korenizatsiia: In 1923, the Bolsheviks introduced a new Soviet nationalities policy (*korenizatsiia*) that granted every soviet national group its own national territory, which ranged in size from kolkhozy to republics. The policy also encouraged each national group to use its language in government institutions within the group's territory, celebrate acceptable forms of cultural expression, and recruit and promote members of the national group into the Communist Party and leadership positions in village soviets, kolkhozy, and government institutions in the group's national territory. Soviet authorities permitted a number of German national districts (*raiony*) in Ukraine, with two set aside for Mennonite communities: the Molochansk national district was established in 1924 with 136 settlements (59 of which were predominately Mennonite), totalling more than 174,910 hectares; and the Khortytsia national district was established in 1929 with 38 villages (18 of which were predominantly Mennonite) totalling 44,700 hectares.[100] With their own national territories where they could speak the German language and pursue their own cultural interests, some Mennonites saw no need to emigrate.

UCDL success: By the mid-1920s, the UCDL had established village cooperatives in most Mennonite communities, seven district UCDL cooperatives, as well as a general UCDL cooperative that coordinated trade, provided credit to Mennonite farmers and small businesses, and incubated new business ventures and local industrial operations. By 1925, the UCDL had also established livestock associations, stores, dairy and butter production facilities, oilseed and flour mills, tree nurseries, tractor associations, cooperative societies, as well as agricultural schools. The UCDL also rebuilt the seed funds of many Mennonite communities, assisted with the reconstruction of former Mennonite mills and factories, and acquired land to rent to landless Mennonites and to establish agricultural and industrial operations.[101]

At the UCDL congress in Kharkiv in February 1926, leaders boasted about UCDL activities and accomplishments across Ukraine. In a report on the Molochansk district, delegates learned that the UCDL established twenty-nine livestock associations,

several pig operations and breeding stations, eight UCDL stores, twenty-eight milk separating stations, a central butter operation, two grain elevators, and a tractor association. The UCDL also acquired and distributed 500 poods (Russian unit of weight) of selected seed material in the district. In 1925–26 alone, the UCDL's efforts resulted in more than a million roubles in economic activity in Molochansk.[102] UCDL leaders acknowledged that some Mennonite-populated areas, such as Nikolaipol', Barvinkove, and Nikopol', were continuing to suffer economically and agriculturally, but, overall, the Mennonite communities enjoyed a strong economic recovery. UCDL efforts to assist Mennonite farmers to make a relatively good living provided an economic incentive for Mennonites to remain in the USSR.[103]

Church life continued: Despite Soviet efforts to disparage religious practice, limit military service exemptions, and impose restrictions concerning religious education in schools, Mennonite religious life continued and, in some instances, thrived after the civil war. Throughout much of the 1920s, Mennonites were permitted to operate their churches and to maintain their traditional religious practices with little or no state interference; they held weekly religious services, prayer meetings, Bible studies, and choir practices, and celebrated religious holidays, baptisms, minister ordination services, songfests, concerts, weddings, and funerals. Foreign Mennonite ministers and missionaries were also permitted to visit and preach in Soviet Mennonite congregations. Yes, Soviet authorities sometimes harassed Mennonite ministers, but Mennonite religious leaders continued to have many of the same rights (including the right to own land) as others. Mennonite religious leaders were also permitted to travel to other regions of the USSR, where they participated in religious conferences, preached in Mennonite churches, and ministered to Mennonites serving in the Red Army.[104]

Ukrainian officials implemented measures to improve Mennonite religious life and Mennonite leaders appreciated these efforts. At the All-Mennonite Congress in Melitopol (October 5–9, 1926), Mennonite religious leaders reported that the Ukrainian government exempted Mennonite pastors from taxes, granted provisional permission for Mennonites to operate a Bible school, permitted the distribution of Bibles from Germany, and exempted Mennonite men from military service if they received permission from the People's Court. To show their gratitude, Mennonite religious leaders sent a telegram to Grigory Petrovsky, chairman of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (Vseukrainskyi tsentralnyi vykonavchyi komitet, or VUTsVK), to thank the government for taking the needs of the Mennonite community into consideration and for granting

Mennonites permission to hold the Melitopol congress.[105] All of this led some Mennonites to believe that it was possible to practice their faith in a Bolshevik state.

Reasons to be optimistic?: In 1925, Ukrainian authorities proposed to implement measures that promised to improve Mennonite economic life and decrease Mennonite interest in emigrating to Canada. In July–August 1925, for example, the Central Bureau of the German section of the VUTsVK issued a resolution that promised to address outstanding land and agricultural issues in Mennonite-populated areas. This included implementing policies to complete land settlement work in German and Mennonite colonies; providing German land societies with long-term credits for finalizing land settlement matters; settling borders between German and non-German areas to prevent disputes between German and non-German populations; finalizing outstanding land issues and transferring surplus land to landless Germans and Mennonites; granting Mennonite and German religious groups legal rights provided in Soviet legislation to address their outstanding religious concerns; and providing a mechanism to establish more independent German villages and districts to improve the cultural and economic experience of Mennonites and Germans.[106] To what extent Mennonites were aware of these government proposals is unclear, but they sounded very promising and may have factored into the decision of some Mennonites to remain in the Soviet Union.

Soviet propaganda: Soviet officials also employed propaganda and pressure tactics to quell the Soviet Mennonite desire to emigrate. One tactic was to recruit pro-Bolshevik Mennonites who were tasked with convincing fellow Mennonites to remain in the USSR. One of these pro-Bolshevik Mennonite was the schoolteacher P. P. Sawatsky, a communist sympathizer, who presented community talks in Molochansk in 1922 to discourage Mennonites thinking about leaving the country. Another Bolshevik tactic was to use pro-Soviet Mennonites to publicly attack Mennonites planning to emigrate and question why they wanted to leave their homeland.[107]

Local authorities also sponsored theatrical presentations to discourage Mennonite emigration. However, not all of these presentations proved effective. One Mennonite wrote, "What nonsense! We need food and the promise of spring seeding instead of noise (theatrical presentations), lectures and meetings."[108]

Soviet officials also exploited accounts of Soviet Mennonites who had emigrated to Canada and later returned to the USSR disillusioned with Canada. In an article entitled "Ein Enttaeuschter" in the Soviet newspaper *Das Neue Dorf* (March 11, 1928), there was a report on the experiences of Abram Sawazki who emigrated with his

family to Canada in 1927. The article stated that Sawazki considered his emigration to Canada to be the most disastrous decision of his life. It is not clear how influential Sawazki's account was in convincing Mennonites to remain in the USSR.[109]

Soviet officials also tried to link Mennonite emigration to foreign states intent on harming the USSR. Soviet newspapers, for instance, accused American bourgeoisie of sending correspondence and material aid to the USSR to entice Soviet Mennonites to come to America to enslave them.[110] Once again, the extent to which Soviet media successfully influenced Soviet Mennonites to remain in the USSR is not known.

Some Final Observations

What the above analysis demonstrates is that Soviet Mennonite emigration in the 1920s was a complex and protracted affair and not all Soviet Mennonites saw emigration in the same way. For many, the decision about whether to stay or go involved weighing a host of considerations including personal, familial, economic, agricultural, social, political, ideological, and religious factors. Because the decision was not straightforward, and considering the risks involved, many were indecisive about what to do. They were also fearful about the potential consequences of any decision: they feared the unknown, they feared failing in Canada, and they feared what the Bolsheviks might do in the years to come. For some Mennonites, this fear was so overwhelming that it paralyzed them and prevented them from making a final decision, sometimes for years.

Thousands of Soviet Mennonites had rational and legitimate reasons for choosing to remain in the USSR in the 1920s. The end of the civil war and the economic recovery that accompanied NEP significantly eased the concerns of many Mennonites about their future in the Soviet Union. There were new economic, agricultural, and political opportunities to be exploited, especially for poor Mennonite peasants who now had greater access to land. *Korenizatsiia* also made it possible for Mennonites to participate in local and district soviet institutions where they would have a greater say in the administration and development of their communities. Those Mennonites who participated in state and party institutions could take advantage of an array of employment and educational opportunities as well as higher wages, better accommodations, and possibilities of upward social mobility. At the same time, Soviet Mennonites, to a greater or lesser extent, could continue to participate in many forms of Mennonite religious practice. Yes, life in the new Soviet state was

different than it had been under the tsars, but there were also new possibilities to thrive and participate in the construction of a new socialist state.

There were also many Soviet Mennonites who wanted to emigrate in the 1920s but for a variety of reasons were unable to do so. Some of those in this group were vulnerable individuals—such as infants, orphans, the physically and mentally disabled, as well as those in abusive, controlling relationships—who had little or no agency in their lives. In some cases, decisions about their future were made by their representatives. Foster parents, guardians, spouses, and parents did not always consult with those under their care or consider their best interests. There were also some vulnerable Mennonites—such as orphans without foster parents or guardians—who had no one representing their interests and, by default, had to remain in the USSR notwithstanding that some desperately wanted to leave.

Others in the category of Mennonites who wanted to leave the USSR but were unable to do so included those who had personal agency to make their own decisions but were prevented from emigrating due to factors beyond their control. For some, medical conditions disqualified them from passing the rigorous Canadian medical examination. For others, the failure of Soviet authorities in approving exit permits, the protracted delays of the CMBC and CPR in implementing emigration plans, and the growing immigration restrictions imposed by the Canadian government spelled the end to their dream of starting a new life in Canada.

The UCDL and ARMAA also prevented some Mennonites from leaving the Soviet Union. Yes, the UCDL and the ARMAA—and especially the deft negotiation skills of B. B. Janz—made it possible for thousands of Mennonites to secure Soviet permission to leave the USSR, but UCDL and ARMAA representatives also prevented "ineligible" Mennonites (such as Mennonites married to non-Mennonites or communists) from registering on the emigration lists. As the keepers of the lists, UCDL and ARMAA leaders decided which Mennonite names would be submitted to Soviet officials for approval and in what order of priority. The UCDL also gave preferential treatment to Mennonites in Ukraine by prioritizing their emigration applications over those Mennonites in the RSFSR. And when Soviet officials began to slow the emigration approval process in the mid-1920s, the UCDL and the ARMAA began issuing warnings to Mennonites to remain in the USSR and to fulfill their national duty to assist with the agricultural reconstruction of the country.

The UCDL's deteriorating relationship with Soviet officials in the mid-1920s also proved disastrous for Mennonites wanting to leave

the country. The UCDL's public criticisms of the Soviet government in 1925, its false public statements about its emigration work, and its refusal to join *Silskyi Hospodar* infuriated Soviet officials. In retaliation, Ukrainian officials delayed the final approval of mass Mennonite emigration transports, stopped future mass transports, and ultimately restructured the UCDL, thereby jeopardizing future Mennonite emigration possibilities.

The Soviet government was the final gatekeeper, ultimately determining how many Soviet Mennonites would receive exit permits. From the government's perspective, a limited evacuation of "unwanted" Mennonites (as the government described them) was acceptable so long as the evacuation facilitated the economic reconstruction of Mennonite communities and did not become a mass Mennonite emigration movement. In this respect, the Soviet regime viewed this evacuation as a numbers game played by the regime, on one side, and the UCDL and the ARMAA, on the other. The rules of this game were largely set in 1922 when the UCDL provided the government with lists of approximately 17,100 names of Mennonites who had registered to leave the country. It was UCDL leaders who decided which Mennonites were eligible to depart and, until 1924, government authorities essentially rubberstamped the UCDL lists. After Ukrainian officials determined that the UCDL was no longer following the rules of the game, it retaliated by restructuring the UCDL in 1926 and dramatically slowing the Mennonite emigration process with more bureaucratic red tape and higher fees.

When the Soviet regime initiated a new period of repression in 1927–28, a growing number of Soviet Mennonites—including many who previously wanted to remain in the USSR—began to regret that they had not left the USSR earlier. Their regret intensified in 1929 when the government ramped up its collectivization and dekulakization campaigns, exiled some Mennonite leaders (including UCDL leader Philipp D. Cornies in May 1929), and ordered the systematic arrest and exile of those Mennonites whose flight to Moscow in 1929 proved unsuccessful.[111] By the end of 1929, Soviet officials used Mennonite emigration as justification for accusing Mennonites of being "disloyal," "agents of foreign states," "enemies of the state" and "agitators for emigration."[112] In this respect, the Mennonite emigration experience of the 1920s proved very costly for those Mennonite who remained in the USSR after 1929. Their loyalty to the Soviet state would always be in doubt and they would regularly be identified as agents of enemy states throughout the 1930s. In short, they would pay the price for the success of those who were able to emigrate.

Notes

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[2] B. B. Janz, "Was andere ueber die Not der Mennoniten unter dem Bolschewismus in Ruszland gesagt haben," B. B. Janz Collection, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (hereafter CMBS), Winnipeg; Adolf Ehrt, *Das Mennontentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart* (1932; repr., Steinbach, MB: Crossway Publications, 2003), 158–59.

[3] David G. Rempel with Cornelia Rempel Carlson, *A Mennonite Family in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, 1789–1923* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 254–55.

[4] Colin P. Neufeldt, "Separating the Sheep from the Goats: The Role of Mennonites and Non-Mennonites in the Dekulakization of Khortitsa, Ukraine (1928–1930)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 83, no. 2 (Apr. 2009): 222–24; Gerhard P. Schroeder, *Miracles of Grace and Judgment* (Lodi, CA: self pub., 1974), 20–21, 193, 202–6, 211–20; John B. Toews, "Halbstadt Volost 1918–1922: A Case Study of the Mennonite Encounter with Early Bolshevism," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 48, no. 4 (Oct. 1974): 490–94.

[5] Derzhavnyi arkhiv Zaporiz'koi oblasti (hereafter DaZo), fond R-236, opis 1, sviazka 4–5 (hereafter DaZo: R-236/1/4–5); R-236/1/15, 17–18, 29–58; R-1777/1/1–6, 9, 16, 22–3, 28, 30; R-236/1/29, 37–8, 50–3, 55–6, 58; R-121/1/9, 11, 24, 67, 91–4, 100, 108–114; R-2014/1/1, 3–6, 11, 13–14; Rempel, *Mennonite Family*, 155–99; John P. Dyck, ed., *Troubles and Triumphs, 1914–1924: Excerpts from the Diary of Peter J. Dyck, Ladekopp, Molotschna Colony, Ukraine* (Springstein, MB: self-pub., 1981), 136, 139, 169, 190, 195–99, 206–13, 243; Anna Baerg, *Diary of Anna Baerg, 1916–1924*, trans. and ed.Gerald Peters (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1985), 8–11, 16, 20–22, 31, 37–40, 48–49, 52, 56, 61–62, 72–73, 76, 81, 85, 95, 107; John B. Toews, "The Origins and Activities of the Mennonite *Selbstschutz* in the Ukraine (1918–1919)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46, no. (Jan. 1972): 5–40; *Nimtsi v Ukraïni. 1920–1930s: zbirnyk dokumentiv derzhavnykh arkhiviv Ukraïny*, (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny NAN Ukraïny, 1994), 19–40; B. V. Chyrko, *Natsionalni menshyny v Ukraini (20–30 roky XX stolittia)* (Kyiv: Asotsiatsiia 'Ukraino,' 1995); John B. Toews, *The Mennonites in Russia from 1917 to 1930: Selected Documents* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1975), 390; John B. Toews, ed. and trans., *Mennonites in Ukraine amid Civil War and Anarchy, 1917–1920* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2013), 43, 140, 184.

[6] DaZo: R-235/3/28, 40, 49; R-235/1/611; R-4031/1/1; V. I. Marochko and Instytut istoriï Ukraïny (Natsional'na akademiia nauk Ukraïny), eds., *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz nashchadkiv hollands'kykh vykhodtsiv na Ukraïni (1921–1927): zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv* (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï Ukraïny, 2000), 78; A. Herman, "Antinemetskiye Kampanii," in *Nemtsy Rossii. Entsiklopediia*, eds. V. Karev et al., vol. 1 (Moscow: ERN, 1999), 62–64; John B. Toews and Paul Toews, eds., *Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage in Ukraine (1922–1927),* trans. John B. Toews, Olga Shmakina, and Walter Regehr (Fresno, CA:

Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2011), 341; John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921–1927* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967), 50–52; Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, MB: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962), 44–46, 57; John B. Toews, *With Courage to Spare: The Life of B. B. Janz (1877–1964)* (Winnipeg: Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978), 26; B. V. Chyrko, "O soblyvosti zaprovadzhennya podatkovoyi polityky v nimets′kykh ta menonits′kykh koloniyakh Ukrayiny v 20–30-ti roky," in *Voprosy nemetskoy istorii*, ed. S. Y. Bob′sheva (Dnipro: Dniprovs′kyy Natsional′nyy Universytet, 2013), 133–34.

7 DaZo: R-121/1/1–96; R-1777/1/8, 23; R-99/1–42; R-3452/1/27; R-235/3/3; R-121/2/6; R-236/1/1–66; R-236/2/1–2; PR-226/1/32; R-286/1/115–389; R-235/4/21; Oblpartarkhiv Zaporiz′koho obkomu KPU (hereafter OZoKPU): fond 7, opis 1, sviazka 138 (hereafter OZoKPU: 7/1/128); John A. Harder, ed. and trans., *From Kleefeld with Love* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003), 50–51; Jacob B. Janz, "Up and Away to Canada," 1 (in the author's possession); Lawrence Klippenstein, "Mennonites and Military Service in the Soviet Union to 1939" in *Challenge to Mars: Pacifism from 1918 to 1945*, ed. Peter Brock and Thomas P. Socknat (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 7–12; Gerhard Penner, *Mennoniten dienen in der Roten Armee* (Winnipeg: self-pub., 1975); Hans Rempel, *Waffen der Wehrlosen: Ersatzdienst der Mennoniten in der UdSSR* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1980), 8–12, 24–26.

8 DaZo: R-121/2/6; Marochko, *Sil's′kohospodars′kyĭ soiuz*, 34–47, 78, 120; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 428; Baerg, *Diary,* 127; Peter F. Bargen, ed., *From Russia with Tears: Letters from Home and Exile (1930–1938)*, trans. Anne Bargen (Winfield, BC: self-pub., 1991), 345–50; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 109, 134–35, 296–98, 331; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 92–94, 98; Alfred Eisfeld, "'Velykyy teror' v Ukrayini: Nimets′ka operatsiya 1937–1938 rr.," in *"Velykyy teror" v Ukrayini: nimets′ka operatsiya 1937–1938 rokiv: zbirnyk dokumentiv*, ed. Alfred Eisfeld, Andriy Kohut, Serhiy Kokin, Otto Lukhterkhandt, Iryna Lyabakh, Nataliya Serdyuk, and Yoakhym Tauber (Kyiv: K.I.S., 2018), 136; Leonard G. Friesen, *Mennonites in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Through Much Tribulation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 189–90; Ad van de Staaij, "American and Dutch Food Aid in 1922: Differing Attitudes?," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 40, no. 1 (2022): 33–60; Terry Martin, "The Russian Mennonite Encounter with the Soviet State, 1917–1955," *Conrad Grebel Review* 20 (Winter 2002): 20.

9 Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 147–48, 157, 189–90; Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 147.

10 Toews and Toews, *Union,* 16, 289–90; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 343–45, 350–51. My grandfather Johann J. Neufeld was married with four children when he left Kubanka, Orenburg, to emigrate to Canada in 1926. A year or so before emigrating, my grandfather had an extramarital relationship with an unwed woman who provided domestic help to his family. The affair resulted in the birth of girl, an event that proved so embarrassing to my grandfather's brothers that they reportedly thrashed my grandfather for his infidelity. According to my father, this event was one of the reasons why my grandfather and his family emigrated to Canada. Colin P. Neufeldt, Kevin Neufeldt, and

David Wiebe-Neufeldt, *The Neufelds and Borns of Kubanka: A Pictorial History of Two Families* (Edmonton: self-pub., 2006), 313–14.

11 John B. Toews, ed. and trans., *Letters from Susan: A Woman's View of the Russian Mennonite Experience (1928–1941)* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College), 17, 33–35, 45, 52, 62, 86; Bargen, *From Russia,* 22–23, 28, 63, 77, 127, 151, 163, 215, 362.

12 Janz, "Was andere"; Ehrt, *Das Mennontentum,* 153–61.

13 Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 53.

14 Baerg, *Diary,* 106–07, 113–14, 122–25, 126; Toews, *Selected Documents*, 15–18.

15 David Toews, "A Memoir of Migration," trans. Ingrid Moehlmann and Lothar Moehlmann, *Preservings*, no. 46 (Spring 2023): 44–45; *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* (hereafter *MR*), Nov. 10, 1926, 10; *MR*, Mar. 30, 1927, 4; Baerg, *Diary*, 114; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 133–34, 161, 175, 199; Hans Werner, "Getting the Right Papers: The Russlaender Migrants," *Preservings*, no. 46 (Spring 2023): 48–49.

16 Toews, *Selected Documents*, 15–18; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 16, 437, 471, 476, 485; Jacob J. Rempel, David J. Rempel Smucker, and Eleanore Rempel Woollard, *Consider the Threshing Stone: Writings of Jacob J. Rempel, A Mennonite in Russia* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2008), 110–13; Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 140.

17 A review of the "Index to Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Registration Forms (1923–1930)," Mennonite Heritage Archives, Winnipeg, https://www.mharchives.ca/holdings/organizations/CMBoC_Forms/ (hereafter ICMBCRF) reveals that more than one hundred Mennonite orphans, foster children, and unaccompanied minors emigrated to Canada between 1923 and 1930. For examples, see ICMBCRF, CMBoC # 0235, 0857, 0955, 1005, 1262, 1431, 2202, 2612, 3513, 3836, 4041, 4121, 4586, 4647. See also Toews, "Memoir," 46; Harder, *From Kleefeld,* 53; T. D. Regehr, *A Generation of Vigilance: The Lives and Work of Johannes and Tina Harder* (Winnipeg: CMU Press, 2009), 23, 28–29.

18 DaZo: R-236/1/16–17; R-3/1/836; R-1777/1/5, 23; R-121/1/12a-192; R-576/1/22, 76; R-235/2/10; R-99/1/65, 68; R-236/1/16; Melissa Friesen, "*Hanjenome* (Adopted): Jessie's Story," *MHSA Chronicle* 26, no. 3 (Oct. 2023): 1, 4; P. R. Toews, *On Hearing from Heaven: A Memoir of a Pastor* (Ann Arbor, MI: Elfrieda H. Hiebert, 1999), 18–22, 40–42, 177–80; Clara Toews, "Aunt Frieda" (Winnipeg: unpublished manuscript, Mar. 8, 2022).

19 A review of the ICMBCRF reveals that more than 450 unmarried Soviet Mennonite women, widows, unwed mothers, and widows with children emigrated to Canada between 1923 and 1930. For examples, see ICMBCRF, CMBoC # 4762, 5619, 5613, 0008, 0058, 0088, 0304, 0389, 0458, 1267, 1499, 2007, 2803, 2834, 3365, 3783, 4190, 4382, 4355.

20 Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 53.

21 Baerg, *Diary*, 113.

22 Rempel, Rempel, and Rempel Woollard, *Consider,* 104, 106.

23 Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 140.

24 Baerg, *Diary*, 112. See also Dyck, *Troubles*, 256.

25 Baerg, *Diary*, 106; John G. Bergen, "Our Trip from Russia to Canada," ed. Ernie G. Dyck, trans. Katherine Bartel, *Preservings*, no. 46 (Spring 2023): 19.

26 Toews and Toews, *Union*, 410, 433; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 97–104; Werner, "Getting," 48.

[27] Toews, *Selected Documents,* 343–45, 350–51; Johann P. Klassen, "The Chortitza Emigration: A Report," trans. Peter H. Rempel, *Preservings*, no. 46 (Spring 2023): 12–13; Rempel, Rempel, and Rempel Woollard, *Consider*, 107; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 163, 174–76, 189–90.

[28] Baerg, *Diary*, 112, 123; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 16; DaZo: R-1415/3/1; Alfred H. Redekopp, "An Idealist in Soviet Times: Johannes G. Thielmann," *Preservings*, no. 46 (Spring 2023): 56–57, 59.

[29] Toews, *Selected Documents,* 311; Bergen, "Our Trip," 19; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 305–08; Baerg, *Diary,* 126; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 147–48, 157.

[30] Bergen, "Our Trip," 19–20; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 169, 196. In 1921, the Canadian government required every immigrant to present a valid passport upon entering Canada. At this time, the Soviet government had not yet developed its own passport system, making it impossible for Soviet Mennonites to acquire passports. To address this issue, the Canadian Department of Immigration and Colonization exempted Soviet Mennonites from having to produce a passport. By 1928, the Canadian government required every Soviet Mennonite entering the country to produce a passport. Werner, "Getting," 48.

[31] Andrei I. Savin, *Etnokonfessiya v sovetskom gosudarstve. Mennonity Sibiri v 1920–1930-ye gody. Emigratsiya i repressii: Dok. materialy* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studie; Novosibirsk: Posokh, 2009), 123–28, 150–57; Andrei I. Savin, "Ethnification of Stalinism?: Ethnic Cleansings and the NKVD Order No. 00447 in a Comparative Perspective," in *Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Stalin's Soviet Union: New Dimensions of Research,* ed. Andrej Kotljarchuk and Olle Sundström (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola, 2017), 48–50; H. R. Romanets′, "'Vynni u tomu, shcho… nimtsi': represiyi proty nimets′koyi natsional′noyi menshyny Dnipropetrovshchyny (1920–1940 rr.)," in *Mista i sela Dnipropetrovshchyny u vyri politychnykh represiy: zbirnyk statey, personaliyi*, ed. Ye. I. Borodin, O. V. Kainova, Yu. V. Pshenychnyy, and N. R. Romanets′ (Dnipro: Vyd-vo "Monolyt", 2017), 5:29–31.

[32] Harder, *From Kleefeld,* 65, 73, 74, 79, 151.

[33] Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 65–66, 71–72, 75; Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 227–28; *Der Bote* (hereafter *DB)*, Apr. 17, 1929, 3; Toews, *Letters*, 16, 18–19, 21–23, 25; Chyrko, "O soblyvosti," 133–34; Harder, *From Kleefeld,* 66.

[34] Schroeder, *Miracles*, 219, 231, 239; Toews and Toews, *Union,* 278, 305–8; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 335–37.

[35] Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 144, 147–49, 157, 189–90; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 16, 289–90; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 343–45, 350–51.

[36] Schroeder, *Miracles*, 253–54; Ernest Becker and Werner Becker, "From Schoensee to Canada," *Preservings*, no. 46 (2023): 25–28.

[37] Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 31–32, 53–54.

[38] Bergen, "Our Trip," 19; *MR*, Apr. 4, 1928, 6; *MR*, May 2, 1928, 11, 14; *MR*, Sept. 12, 1928, 8; *MR*, Mar. 20, 1929, 5; *MR*, May 22, 1929, 12; *MR*, Apr. 4, 1928, 6; *MR*, May 2, 1928, 11, 14; *MR*, Sept. 12, 1928, 8; *MR*, Mar. 20, 1929, 5; *MR*, May 1, 1929, 12; *MR*, May 22, 1929, 12; Toews, *Letters,* 15; Colin P. Neufeldt, *The Fate of Mennonites in Soviet Ukraine and the Crimea During Soviet Collectivization and the Famine (1928–1933)* (Edmonton: self-pub., 1989), 87–88.

[39] Rempel, Rempel, and Rempel Woollard, *Consider*, 104.

[40] Toews, *Selected Documents,* 166; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 158–60, 174, 176.

[41] Toews, "Memoir," 38–40; Klassen, "Chortitza," 12.
[42] Toews, "Memoir," 40–46.
[43] Klassen, "Chortitza," 13. See also Toews, "Memoir," 44.
[44] Klassen, "Chortitza," 13–16.
[45] Helmut Harder, *David Toews Was Here, 1870–1947* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 2002), 115–22; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 140–41, 157, 173–74; Toews, *With Courage*, 47–48.
[46] Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 134. For an evaluation of the role that the CPR played in Soviet Mennonite emigration in the early 1920s, see Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 144, 174, 184; Aileen Friesen, "Reflections on the CPR: Russlaender 100 Gala Dinner Address," *Preservings*, no. 47 (Fall 2023): 57–60.
[47] Toews, "Memoir," 37; German Foreign Ministry Documents (hereafter GFM) 33/1981/4562/31, The National Archives of the UK; GFM 33/4538/L609; Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Flight to Moscow, 1929: An Act of Mennonite Civil Disobedience," *Preservings*, no. 19 (Dec. 2001), 41–42; Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Fate of Soviet Mennonites in Ukraine and the Crimea on the Eve of the Second Revolution (1927–1929)," (master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1989), 93–95; Werner, "Getting," 52.
[48] Neufeldt, "Flight to Moscow," 44; Harder, *David Toews*, 183. The order-in-council limited admissible immigrants to "American and British subjects with sufficient means to maintain themselves until securing employment; agriculturalists with sufficient means to farm in Canada; and the wives and minor children of Canadian residents. Immigrants of all other classes and occupations were explicitly prohibited from landing in Canada." Order-in-Council P.C. 1931-695 (Mar. 21, 1931), https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/order-in-council-pc-1931-695-1931.
[49] Bergen, "Our Trip," 21–22; Redekopp, "An Idealist," 56–57; Neufeldt, "The Fate (1927–1929)," 96–97.
[50] Baerg, *Diary*, 123.
[51] Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz*, 60–61, 65–66, 73–74; Toews, *With Courage,* 47; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 56, 341; Janz, "Up and Away," 3; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 169–70, 174.
[52] Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz,* 276–87; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 174.
[53] Toews, *Selected Documents,* 174.
[54] One possible reason was because of public statements made at the All-Mennonite Congress in Moscow in January 1925. At this time leaders of the Mennonite Committee for Church Affairs (Kommission für Kirchenangelegenheiten) drafted a public resolution that demanded the Soviet state recognize Mennonite rights related to the conduct of their religious services; exemptions from government taxes; the operation of orphanages, seminaries, schools, and youth events; the importation of religious materials; and a permanent exemption from military service and the right to participate in an alternative service program. Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz,* 259–76.
[55] Toews and Toews, *Union*, 305–8, 355; Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 185.
[56] Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz,* 155–68, 174–90.
[57] Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz,* 168–74, 190–258; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 318–19.

[58] Helen Rose Pauls, "Looking Out for my Brothers: Mary Neumann's Recollections about her Father, B. B. Janz," *Roots and Branches* 10, no. 3 (Winter 2004/05); Toews and Toews, *Union,* 17, 289–90.

[59] Toews, *Selected Documents,* 174.

[60] C. F. Klassen, "Drei Vertreter-Versammlungen des A.M.L.V," *Der Praktischer Landwirt* 12 (Dec. 1926): 2; Hans Werner, "Modelling Mennonites: Farming the Siberian Kulunda Steppe, 1921 to 1928," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25 (2017): 278–83. See also P. P. Vibe, *Nemetskie Kolonii v Sibiri: Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskiĭ Aspekt* (Omsk: Omskiĭ gos. pedagogicheskiĭ universitet, 2007), 195–201, 215.

[61] Toews, *Letters,* 10–16, 22, 23, 33–35, 45–46; Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 61, 64–65.

[62] Viktor P. Danilov, Roberta T. Manning, and L. Viola, eds., *Tragediia sovetskoĭ derevni: kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie: dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh, 1927–1939*, 5 vols. (Moscow: Rossiĭskaia polit. ėntsiklopediia, 1999–2006), 1:111–13, 119–37, 141–48, 231–36, 319–55, 464–66, 473–79, 525–28, 612–17, 659–60; 2:11, 85, 126; Lynne Viola, Viktor P. Danilov, N. A. Ivnitskii, and Denis Kozlov, eds., *The War against the Peasantry, 1927–1930* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 67, 128; I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 13 vols. (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1946–51), 12:167; Iu. N. Afanas′ev, V. P. Kozlov et al., eds., *Istoriia stalinskogo Gulaga: konets 1920-kh-pervaia polovina 1950-kh godov: sobranie dokumentov v semi tomakh*, 7 vols. (Moscow: ROSSPĖN, 2004–5), 1:105, 115, 127; 5:107, 136; Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Fate of Mennonites in Ukraine and the Crimea during Soviet Collectivization and the Famine (1930–1933)" (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 1999), 41–49, 263.

[63] *Das Neue Dorf*, Mar. 11, 1928; Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 228; Neufeldt, "The Fate (1927–1929)," 41–82.

[64] *DB*, Dec. 18, 1929, 4; *MR*, Nov. 27, 1929, 12; *DB*, Jan. 29, 1930, 4; DaZo: PR-7/l/136a; PR-7/l/120a; R-234/3/40; GFM 33/1981: E160278–80, E160362–441, E160467; GFM 33/4538: L192230–479; Bargen, *From Russia*, 361, 451; Toews, *Letters*, 65–66; "Brüder in Not!," *Mennonitische Blätter*, Dec. 1929, 105; *MR*, Dec. 4 , 1929, 2; *MR*, Dec. 11, 1929, 2, 5; B. H. Unruh, *Fügung und Führung in Mennonitischen Welthilfswerk*, *1929–1933* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1966), 18–28; Neufeldt, "Flight to Moscow," 35–47; Neufeldt, "The Fate (1927–1929)," 89–93; Harold Jantz, ed., *Flight: Mennonites Facing the Soviet Empire in 1929/30, from the Pages of the Mennonitische Rundschau* (Winnipeg: Eden Echoes Publishing, 2018).

[65] *MR,* Dec. 4, 1929, 3, 6; *MR*, Dec. 18, 1929, 1, 11; *MR*, Dec. 25, 1929, 13; *DB*, Dec. 25, 1929, 4; *DB,* Jan. 29, 1930, 4; *MR,* Jan. 29, 1930, 7, 13; *DB*, Feb. 12, 1930, 4; *DB*, Jan. 22, 1930, 4; GFM 33/1981: E160371–405; Bargen, *From Russia*, 361; Toews, *Letters*, 68; Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization, Depression and Immigration, 1929–1930," in *Empire and Nations: Essays in Honour of Frederic H. Soward*, ed. Harvey L. Dyck and H. Peter Krosby, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 158–59; Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 89; Neufeldt, "The Fate (1927–1929)," 98–99; Romanets′, "Vynni", 32–33.

[66] Bargen, *From Russia*, 22–24, 28, 32, 63, 77, 127, 158, 162, 362; Peter J. Rahn, ed. and trans., *Among the Ashes: In the Stalinkova Kolkhoz (Kontinusfeld), 1930–1935* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2011), 65–70; Toews, *Letters,* 65–66, 68–70.

[67] DaZo: PR-7/1/135–36a; R-235/3/40; R-235/1/766, 814–15; R-1415/3/1; R-235/5/69; R-235/4/212; R-286/1/170, 191, 207, 216, 406; *MR*, Mar. 12, 1930, 11; *MR*, Apr. 23, 1930, 8; Neufeldt, "Separating" 259–63; Colin P. Neufeldt,

"Collectivizing the *Mutter Ansiedlungen*: The Role of Mennonites in Organizing Kolkhozy in the Khortytsia and Molochansk German National Districts in Ukraine in the Late 1920s and Early 1930s," in *Minority Report*: *Mennonite Identities in Imperial Russia and Soviet Ukraine Reconsidered, 1789–1945*, ed. Leonard G. Friesen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 227.

[68] Olga Rempel, *Einer von Vielen*, ed. Gerhard Ens (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1979), 76; *DB*, Mar. 12, 1930, 4; *DB*, Mar. 26, 1930, 5; *MR*, Nov. 26, 1930, 6; *MR*, Dec. 14, 1932, 7; Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 97, 101–02; Neufeldt, *The Fate (1928–1933)*, 182–83.

[69] Romanets′, "Vynni," 32; *DB*, Jan. 25, 1928, 3; *DB*, May 23, 1928, 3; *MR*, Jan. 16, 1929, 9; *MR*, Feb. 20, 1929, 5; *Zionsbote*, July 3, 1929, 9; *Zionsbote*, July 31, 1929, 10–11; *Zionsbote*, Nov. 13, 1929, 11; *MR*, Dec. 18, 1929, 1–3; *MR*, Nov. 5, 1930, 10; *DB*, Mar. 25, 1931, 2; Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 171–73; Abram Friesen and Abram J. Loewen, *Die Flucht über den Amur* (Rosthern, SK: Echo-Verlag, 1946), 7, 13–15, 18–20; Mary M. Enns, *Mia*: *The Story of a Remarkable Woman* (Winnipeg: A. A. DeFehr Trust, [1982]), 67–69; Heinrich Woelk and Gerhard Woelk, *A Wilderness Journey: Glimpses of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia, 1925–1980*, trans. Victor Doerksen (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1982), 12–14; Toews, *Letters*, 31; Neufeldt, *The Fate (1928–1933)*, 85–87, 184–85.

[70] B. H. Unruh, "Kuldja-Gruppe," Feb. 22, 1934, 1–2, CMBS; B. H. Unruh, "Aktenvermerk," Apr. 27, 1934, 1, CMBS; B. H. Unruh, "Bericht XII," Feb. 22, 1938, 5–6, CMBS; Toews, *Letters*, 106; Neufeldt, *The Fate (1928–1933)*, 184. In the early 1930s Soviet Mennonites fled to Kuldja and Kashgar, China. In Kuldja an Islamic uprising erupted in 1933, and Mennonite men (between 18 and 40 years of age) were drafted to fight local rebels. Those refusing to fight were imprisoned and later repatriated, with their families, to the Soviet Union.

[71] Toews, *With Courage*, 47–48; Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 52–53, 61, 57, 64.

[72] Harder, *From Kleefeld*, 53.

[73] Baerg, *Diary*, 78, 106, 112; Toews, "Memoir," 43–44, 45; Harder, *David Toews*, 120–21, 127–29.

[74] Schroeder, *Miracles,* 217, 238–39; Harder, *David Toews*, 116–18, 120.

[75] Baerg, *Diary*, 124.

[76] Alexander Rempel and Amalie Enns, *Hope is our Deliverance: Aeltester Jakob Aron Rempel; The Tragic Experience of a Mennonite Leader and His Family in Stalin's Russia* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2005), 71.

[77] DaZo: R-235/1/811; R-286/1/107, 114–16, 120, 170, 190, 192, 207, 216, 227, 229, 232, 243, 254, 394, 397–400, 406, 408, 415; OZoKPU: 1/1179/49; 7/1/132; Rempel, *Mennonite Family*, 170–71, 173–75; Dyck, *Troubles*, 41–42, 44–46; James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe–Russia–Canada, 1525 to 1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006), 140–41; Redekopp, "An Idealist," 53, 55–56; A. Reinmarus (David J. Penner), *Anti-Menno. Beitrag zur Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland* (Moscow: Zentral Voelker Verlag, 1930); A. Reinmarus, G. Frizen, and I. Gebgart, *Mennonity: Kratkii ocherki* (Moscow: Akts. izd-vo ob-vo "Bezbozhnik," 1930); A. Reinmarus and G. Frizen, *Sektantstvo i proletarskaia revoliutsiia* (Moscow: 1930); A. Reinmarus, *Guldendorf: Ein Deutsches Stu͏̈rmerkollektiv Zur 15. Oktoberfeier* (Kharkiv: Staatsverlag der nat. minderheiten d. USRR, 1932); A. Reinmarus and G. Frizen, *Pod gnetom religii: nemtsy-kolonisty SSSR i ikh religioznye organizatsii* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel′stvo, 1931);

Bernhard Bartels, *Die deutschen Bauern in Russland: Einst und Jetzt* (Moscow: Zentral-Völker-Verlag, 1928).

78 DaZo: R-121/1/1, 5; R-1415/3/1; R-236/1/1–69; R-235/3/1–2; R-99/1/1, 5–10, 12–26; R-2430/1/1, 3–20; R-2014/1/1–6; R-1777/1/1–10, 16, 18, 22–23; R-2014/1/1–6; Rempel, *Mennonite Family*, 187; Schroeder, *Miracles*, 90–92, 107–08, 212–17; Toews, *Mennonites in Ukraine*, 51, 57, 179–80.

79 In 1920–21 the following Mennonites served in the Ekaterinoslav Uezdkomdez (county executive committee) and played key roles in bolshevizing the territory: Peter J. Berg (Khortytsia), Rempel (Pavlovka), Abram P. Braun (Kichkas), Franz J. Peters (Khortytsia), U. G. Klassen (Baburka), D. J. Hildebrandt (Schirokoe), Peter P. Janzen (Pavlovka), Andres (Kantzerovka), Jakob J. Quiring (Kichkas), Abram A. Günter (Kantzerovka), Jakob J. Löwen (Schirokoe), Abram J. Klassen (Vodyansk), Abram H. Tiessen (Kantzerovka), Johann Peters (Schirokoe), Peter P. Janzen (Pavlovka), Abram J. Klassen (Vodyansk), and Johann A. Letkemann (Pavlovka). DaZo: R-236/1/1/12; R-121/1/9, 91.

80 In 1920–21 Mennonites served on the following Khortytsia volost organizations: Khortytsia volost executive committee (*Volispolkom*): Epp, Johann J. Penner, A. Penner; H. Hese, P. P. Dyck, H. Krahn, B. Nikkel, F. Braun, Peter J. Berg, F. F. Foth, B. Penner, J. Wiebe, H. I. Dyck, J. I. Epp, J. Wiens, P. J. Rempel, F. Loewen, B. Töws, Jakob H. Sawatsky, V. Pankratz, J. P. Schroeder, and Löwen; Khortytsia volost administration department (*Volotdel upravleniya*): Penner, Löwen, Töws, Epp; Khortytsia volost military department: B. Penner and Abram J. Günter; Khortytsia volost land department (*Volzemotdel*): Johann Penner, Johann J. Epp, Abram P. Regier, Heinrich H. Hese, Jakob Regier, David D. Epp, D. Pankratz, Derksen, Tiessen, Bruno Nikkel, V. Pankratz, Franz Loewen, Jakob A. Kopp, J. Wiebe, G. Bergen, and Paetkau; Khortytsia volost revolutionary commission (*Volrevkom*): Eduard Beutler, Penner, Abram P. Regier, Peter P. Dyck, David P. Penner, Bruno J. Nikkel, Heinrich H. Peters, H. Hese, David D. Epp, P. Isaak, Peter J. Berg, Jakob P. Hamm, N. P. Penner, Peter J. Berg, J. P. Penner, and Franz J. Braun; Khortytsia volost mandatory labour committee (*Voltrudotdel*): David D. Epp, Jakob P. Hamm, Henrich H. Dyck, Abram J. Redekop, Abram J. Sawatsky, Franz J. Loewen, J. Sawatsky, and J. P. Willms; Khortytsia district food provision department (*Volprodkom*): Peter Rempel and Heinrich H. Hübert; Khortytsia raion food provision committee (*Raiprodkom*): Johann A. Martens, G. J. Klassen, Huebert, and Warkentine; Khortytisa volost military commissariat (*Volvoenkoma*): B. Penner. Mennonites also served in the Khortytsia volost tax commission (*Volnalogkom*), Khortytsia district peoples' assessors at the Peoples' Courts (*Volost narodnye zasedateli*), and Khortysia volost commissariat for education (*Volnarobraz*); DaZo: R-236/1/1, 9–11, 16, 18, 20, 22, 50, 61, 201; R-121/1/9, 15, 18–19, 21, 23, 28, 91.

81 DaZo: R-236/1/2, 4, 8, 11, 14–16, 21; R-121/1/18, 21, 23, 26, 28; Rempel, *Mennonite Family*, 138–39.

82 In 1920–21 the following Mennonites served on the Khortytsia volost CVP: Johann Dyck, Friesen, Eduard Beutler, Frieda Peters, Heinricha Dyck, Boris B. Dyck, P. Janzen, Vasilii J. Wiens, Johann J. Reimer, Johann P. Martens; A. P. Regier, P. P. Dyck, D. P. Penner, B. Nikkel, Hese, D. D. Epp, Peter J. Berg, Peter A. Nikkel, Heinrichs, Johann J. Dyck, P. P. Sawatsky, Johann A. Bergen, Pauls, B. Dyck, Jakob J. Tiessen, K. Pauls, and K. Lehn. DaZo: R-236/1/1–2, 9, 10–12, 18, 20–22, R-121/1/23.

[83] In 1920–21 there were the following numbers of Mennonite CVP members: 20 in the Khortytsia volost CVP; 14 in the Khortytsia village CVP; 41 in the Baburka village CVP; 23 in the Pavlovka village CVP; 18 in the Vodyansk village CVP; 31 in the Smolyansk village CVP; 45 in the Kanterzerovka village CVP; 26 in the Novoslobodsk village CVP; 22 in the Nieder Khortytsia village CVP; 29 in the Schirokoe village CVP; 14 in the Dolinsk village CVP; 6 in the Kitchkas village CVP; 10 in the Malashevka village CVP; 4 in the Kapustyanka village CVP; and 1 in Voznesensky village CVP: Rempel. DaZo: R-236/1/1–5, 8–22, 53; R-121/1/21, 23 26.

[84] In 1920–21 Mennonites served as members on village consumer associations and trade unions. DaZo: R-236/1/2, 10, 20–21; R-121/1/21; R-1415/3/1.

[85] For information on Red Army Mennonite servicemen, their families, and the support they received from the Bolshevik government, see DaZo: R-236/1/1, 4–5, 15, 17–18; R-1415/3/1.

[86] Some Mennonite Communist Party members in the Khortytsia area in 1918–22 included Eduard Beutler, Nikolai Boldt, and V. Martens. DaZo: R-236/1/9; R-286/1/170. For information about other Soviet Mennonites who were Communist Party members in the 1920s and 1930s, see DaZo: R-1415/3/1; R-235/1/811; R-286/1/107, 114–16, 120, 170, 190, 192, 207, 216, 227, 229, 232, 242–43, 254, 394, 397–400, 406, 408, 415; OZoKPU: 1/1179/49; 7/1/132.

[87] The Kichkas and Khortytsia womens' department (*Zhenotdel*) included Mennonite women. DaZo: R-236/1/2.

[88] OZoKPU: 7/1/128; 1/1179/49; 7/1/132; DaZo: R-235/4/36, 53, 56, 62; R-235/1/730, 781, 811, 815, 823; R-235/2/61, 133, 138; R-3452/1/21; R-286/1/107–09, 111, 114–16, 120, 123, 133, 142, 170, 190, 192, 207, 216, 227, 229, 232, 243, 254, 394, 397–400, 406, 408, 415; R-862/1/35; R-235/1/757, 808, 811, 813, 839; R-235/4/211; R-236/1/1–22; R-121/1/21, 23, 26; R-235/3/1–3; Neufeldt, "The Fate (1930–1933)," 41–49, 155–59; Neufeldt, "Separating," 232–48, 266–71, 279–84, 286–91. Mennonites implemented government policies in the following ways: they determined the social classes of Mennonite and non-Mennonite families in terms of their eligibility for membership in local soviet institutions and the village CVP; they handled land reform and land reallotment issues; they participated in the confiscation of property belonging to former people and kulaks; they dealt with housing confiscation and assignment of housing priorities; they participated in the assessment and collection of punishing *prodnalog* and *prodrozkladka;* they administered *Scharwerk* assignments; they administered the redistribution of seized property to the poor; they assisted local military authorities in locating and mobilizing men (including Mennonites) eligible for the Red Army draft; they located deserters (including Mennonites) from the Red Army; they implemented plans to identify and defeat kulaks, former people, counterrevolutionaries, *Makhnovshchina*, bandits, Mensheviks, and speculators; they determined how much expropriated grain should be delivered to members of the village and volost CVPs; they confiscated and mobilized horses and livestock for the Bolshevik war effort; they determined food rations and land allotments for Red Army members and their families; they organized artels and other collectives in their communities; they identified, arrested, and punished Mennonites and non-Mennonites who served in the White Army; they identified and expelled White Army members who infiltrated local soviet institutions; they organized mobilization of seed committees for the upcoming harvest; and they organized "Red Revolutionary Tribunals" and local courts.

[89] DaZo: R-235/3/28, 49; R-235/1/611; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 152–53; Dyck, *Troubles*, 166.

[90] Schroeder, *Miracles,* 89–90. There were three types of kolkhozy: (1) the association for joint cultivation of land (TOZ), where the land was worked in common by all members, the larger agricultural equipment was owned in common, and all animals and smaller agricultural implements remained in the personal possession of each member; (2) the artel, where each household had a small plot of land for personal use, the remaining land was worked in common, the larger animals and agricultural equipment were owned in common, and each household was permitted to have a few bee hives or a pig or chickens; and (3) the commune, where all land, animals, machinery, and farm buildings were owned in common, and members shared living quarters and ate meals together. DaZo: R-236/1/38.

[91] DaZo: R-236/1/4, 8.

[92] DaZo: R-236/1/28, 31.

[93] The artels included: Union artel (Khortytsia, established in March 1921), with 53 adults (mostly Mennonites) on 173 acres; Progress artel (Khortytsia, 1921), with key members Peter F. Klassen, Heinrich H. Kroeker, Peter J. Penner, Jakob G. Dyck, Vasilie J. Froese, Gerhard P. Siemens, and A. J. Froese; Zarya artel (Osterwick, March 1921), with key member Penner; Druzhba (Friendship) artel (Rosental, May 1921), with Jakob Kazdorf (chairman), Dyck (secretary), D. P. Evert, Dyck, K. P. Froese, P. P. Schroeder, J. A. Friesen, Tiessen, and Kazdorf; Novaya Zhizn' (New Life) artel (Nieder-Khortitsa, February 1921), with Peter P. Dyck (chairman), Peter I. Friesen, Heinrich H. Wall, Heinrich J. Sawatsky, Franz A. Peters, Johann J. Funk, and others on 138 acres; Trud (Labour) artel (Rosengart, July 1921); Rodnik (Spring) artel (Nieder-Khortitsa, October 1921), with Johann Peters (organizer), Epp (chairman, 1922), Kornie H. Grunau , Abram D. Epp, Jakob H. Martens, Gerhard G. Rempel, Peter P. Peters, Franz J. Martens, and others on 297 acres; Neuendorf artel (December 1921), with Peter Peters (chairman), Neufeld (executive member), and others on 103 acres; Schirokoe artel (December 1921), with Peter Peters (chairman), Neufeld, and others on 103 acres. DaZo: R-236/1/19, 22, 26, 28–29, 40, 52–53, 58, 60–61; R-121/1/53, 60–64, 67, 122–23, 126–28, 132, 135, 140, 185–86.

[94] The collectives added in 1922 included: Khortytsia artel (Khortytsia, 1922), with 41 people (mostly Mennonites) on 405 acres; Tsingovit-ova artel (Osterwick, April 1922), with Bergen (chairman), Pätkau (secretary), and others on 486 acres; Groza (Thunderstorm) artel (Osterwick, June, 1922), with Bergman (chairman) and 78 people; Energia artel (Khronstal); Pol'za (Benefit) artel (Schönhorst, June 1922), with Martin Neufeld and 46 people on 278 acres; Kopusova artel (1922), with 13.5 acres; Uniya artel (Rosental, May 1922), with 66 people on 76 acres; "Mirok Truda" artel (Rosental, January 1923), with Pankratz (manager) and 23 individuals (mostly Mennonites) on 202 acres; Rosental artel (Feb. 24, 1922), with Schroeder (secretary) and 26 people (mostly Mennonites) on 35 acres; "Voskhod" (Rising) artel (Rosental, July 1922), with Heinrich A. Hübert (secretary), Gerhard G. Epp, Franz Harder, Jakob J. Wiens, and Heinrich A. Hübert, and others on 57 acres; Rosental 5-household group (March 1922), with 24 people (mostly Mennonites) on 181 acres; Rosental 5-household group (March 1922), with 28 people (mostly Mennonites); Rosental 5-household group (March 1922), with Kornie J. Friesen (chairman) and Mennonite members; Rosental 5-household group

(March 1922), with 18 individuals (all Mennonites); Rosental 5-household group (March 1922), with Giesbrecht (chairman) and all Mennonite members; Rosental 6-household group (February–March 1922), with David D. Klassen (chairman), Bernhard D. Klassen (secretary), and 26 individuals (mostly Mennonites) on 79 acres; Rosental 7-household group (February-March 1922), with Peter P. Klassen (chairman), Johann P. Klassen (secretary), Peter P. Penner (chairman), and 24 individuals (mostly Mennonites) on 35 acres; Rosental 8-household group (February- March 1922), with Peter J. Penner (executive) and 29 individuals (mostly Mennonites); Rosental 6-household group (February 1922), with 31 individuals (mostly Mennonites); Rosental 7-household group (February 1922), with Jacob J. Sawatsky (chairman) and 31 individuals (mostly Mennonites) on 35 acres; Rosental 10-household group (February 1922), with Isaak J. Tiessen (chairman) and 10 households (mostly Mennonite); Rosental 5-household group (February 1922), with Johann P. Hooge (chairman) and 5 households (mostly Mennonite); Rosental 6-household group (February 1922), with Gerhard G. Kozlovski (chairman) and 6 households (mostly Mennonite) on 65 acres; Rosental 6-household group (February 1922), with K. K. Peters (chairman) and 6 households (some Mennonite); Rosental 6-household group (February 1922), with 36 individuals and 6 households (mostly Mennonite); Rosental 10-household group (February–March 1922), with Penner (chairman) and Günter (secretary); Rosental citizens group spring seeding campaign (March 1922), with Isaak I. Ens (chairman), Gerhard Rempel (secretary), and all Mennonite members; Neuendorf association for the common tillage of land (February 1922), with Peter I. Derksen (chairman), Aron F. Tiessen (secretary), and 19 people; Neuendorf economic collective #3 (February 1922), with Peter I. Derksen (chairman), Aron F. Tiessen (secretary), with 12 households (mostly Mennonite) on 105 acres; Neuendorf 20-household group (February 1922), with Martin H. Neufeld (chairman), David H. Peters (secretary), and 25 people; Neuendorf economic collective (February 1922), with Neufeld (chairman) and 22 households (mostly Mennonite) on 281 acres; Neuendorf 20-household group (February 1922), with Johann Derksen (chairman), Isaak I. Dyck (secretary), and 17 households (mostly Mennonite) on 292 acres; Neuendorf 20-household group (February 1922), with Johann P. Braun (chairman) and 25 households (mostly Mennonite); Neuendorf economic collective (February 1922), with Heinrich P. Penner (chairman) and 21 households (mostly Mennonite) on 230 acres; Neuendorf economic collective (February 1922), with Gerhard Kröker (chairman) and 17 households (mostly Mennonite) on 204 acres; Neuendorf 10-household group (February 1922), with K. Hübert (chairman) and 6 households (mostly Mennonite) on 49 acres; Neuendorf economic collective (February 1922), with Heinrich Banman (chairman), Johann J. Klassen (secretary), and 24 households (mostly Mennonite) on 266 acres; Blumengart 20-household group (February 1922), with Peter A. Peters (chairman), Franz I. Dyck (secretary), and 44 households (mostly Mennonite) on 692 acres; Neuenburg 20-household group (February 1922), with Jacob J. Neufeld (chairman), Friesen (secretary), and 14 households (mostly Mennonite) on 184 acres; "Svet" (Daylight) 10-household group (Osterwick, February 1922), with Jakob V. Klassen (chairman), J. Martens (secretary), and 10 households (mostly Mennonite) on 185 acres; Osterwick 20-household group (February 1922), with Vasilii V. Janzen (chairman), Giesbrecht (secretary) and 20 households (mostly Mennonite) on 394 acres; Burwalde

economic collective #5, 5-household group (February 1922), on 63.4 acres; Burwalde economic collective #6, 5-household group (February 1922); Khortytsia economic collective #5, 5-household group (February 1922), with Heinrich P. Tiessen (chairman), Franz J. Braun (secretary), and 5 households (mostly Mennonite) on 63 acres; Khortytsia economic collective #5, 5-household group (February 1922), with Johann D. Dyck (secretary) and 8 households (some Mennonite) on 61 acres; Khortytsia 20-household group (February 1922), with Jakob J. Epp (chairman) and 31 households (mostly Mennonite) on 737 acres; Khortytsia 20-household group (February 1922), with Aron M. Harder (chairman) and 23 households (mostly Mennonite) on 408 acres; Khortytsia 5-household group (February 1922), with Heinrich P. Tiessen (chairman), Franz J. Braun (secretary), and 5 households (mostly Mennonite) on 24 acres; Nieder Khortytsia artel (November 1922), with 36 people on 138 acres; Kolkhoz "Evabschestkom No. 1" (Evodschestkom) (1922); Prosvit artel (Neuenberg, June 1922); Einlage artel (November 1922), with 60 people on 122 acres. DaZo: R-236/1/22, 23, 25, 27–29, 51–56, 58, 60–61, 64; R-121/1/88, 122, 126, 128, 132, 134–35, 139–40, 160. In Pavlovka, there was also a military cooperative (*voenno-kooperative*), which had 180 dessiatins of land. DaZo: R-121/1/67.

95 Neufeldt, "Collectivizing the *Mutter Ansiedlungen*," 218–19.

96 Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyĭ soiuz*, 120–21; Toews, *Selected Documents*, 175.

97 R. W. Davies, e.d., *From Tsarism to the New Economic Policy: Continuity and Change in the Economy of the USSR* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1990); Alan M. Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen, 1921–1929* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

98 Lynne Viola, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland: Workers in the Vanguard of Soviet Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 19–20.

99 Dyck, *Troubles*, 239; Baerg, *Diary*, 110; Toews, *Selected Documents*, 170; James Urry, "After the Rooster Crowed: Some Issues Concerning the Interpretation of Mennonite/Bolshevik Relations during the Early Soviet Period," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 13 (1995): 29–30; Chyrko, "O soblyvosti," 133–34.

100 DaZo: R-235/2/144; PR-226/1/32; R-286/1/115, 130, 166, 170, 389; R-235/4/21; R-235/1/757, 808; *DB*, Jan. 3, 1929, 3; Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 12, 20, 38; Toews, *Selected Documents*, 161.

101 Toews, *Selected Documents*, 164–65, 169–72; Toews and Toews, *Union*, 338–39, 314; Nataly Ostasheva Venger, "The Mennonite Challenge to the Soviets," *Preservings*, no. 27 (2007): 20; Urry, *Mennonites, Politics*, 150–51.

102 Toews, *Selected Documents*, 178–79; Peter Froese, "Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein," in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Allrussischer_Mennonitischer_Landwirtschaftlicher_Verein&oldid=171315.

103 DaZo: R-4031/1/2.

104 Schroeder, *Miracles*, 192, 198, 220, 228–31, 234, 238, 240, 250–51; Jacob B. Janz, "Zeit-Tafel fuer die Zeit des ersten Weltkrieges 1914 bis 1926," 10 (in the author's possession); Toews, *Letters*, 30, 39–40, 47, 51, 63, 72–75, 79, 96, 98; Baerg, *Diary*, 76–77; Dyck, *Troubles*, 167, 174, 176, 183, 219, 237; Harder,

From Kleefeld, 45–46, 56, 78; Rahn, *Among*, 88; Toews, *Selected Documents,* 428–30.

105 Toews, *Selected Documents,* 439–441, 447.

106 Marochko, *Sil's'kohospodars'kyi˙soiuz*, 142–44.

107 Dyck, *Troubles*, 172–73; Bargen, *From Russia*, 230.

108 Dyck, *Troubles,* 175.

109 Neufeldt, *The Fate (1928–1933),* 135; Enns, *Mia*, 63–66.

110 Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, 228.

111 Baerg, *Diary*, 113–14; H. J. Willms, ed., *At the Gates of Moscow, or God's Gracious Aid through a Most Difficult and Trying Period*, trans. George G. Thielman (Yarrow, BC: Committee of the Mennonite Refugees from the Soviet Union, 1964), 38; *DB*, Jan. 22, 1930, 4; Jakob Redekopp, *Es war die Heimat: Baratow-Schlachtjin* (Curitiba, Brazil: self-pub., 1966), 67; Helmut T. Huebert, *Mennonites in the Cities of Imperial Russia,* vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Springfield Publishers, 2008), 203.

112 DaZo: R-235/1/814; PR-7/1/135; *MR*, Apr. 23, 1930, 8.