Strategic Interplay: The Mennonite *Verband* and Soviet Power in the 1920s

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It is impossible to understand the Russländer, as the 1920s Mennonite migrants from the Soviet Union to Canada are known, apart from the activity of the Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage (Verband der Bürger Holländischer Herkunft—hereafter referred to as the Mennonite Union). The mission carried out by this organization was quite successful, albeit incomplete, in that it allowed for the emigration of a part of the Mennonite population from the territory of Ukraine in the early Soviet period. The Mennonite Union's activities were complex and involved manoeuvring through various challenges, addressing a multitude of tasks, and responding to shifting priorities. The multifaceted nature of the Union's activities is a crucial characteristic of the organization and warrants thorough examination.

Two main groups of sources provide different understandings of the Union's activities.[1] When I embarked on my research into the history of the Mennonite Union during the 1990s, Ukrainian archival collections pertaining to the early Soviet period portrayed this organization as a relatively prosperous, Mennonite cooperative organization. It encompassed over 14,000 Mennonite farms and operated across 173 settlements. According to Soviet documentation, this multifaceted organization pursued a variety of objectives and adeptly guided the colonies towards reconstruction within the new framework of the USSR.[2] In the later stages of my research, I came

across the Union's published internal documents. These were written in 1920s for Mennonite internal consumption. Emotionally charged correspondence between Union chair B. B. Janz, diplomats, and leaders of foreign, Mennonite, and charitable organizations provide compelling evidence that emigration held a central position within the Union's agenda.[3] The two distinct collections of sources (Soviet and Mennonite) reveal the Union to be an organization with different self-representations characterized by two primary missions (emigration and reconstruction) and numerous secondary tasks.

It is my position that the organization achieved its objectives through skilful manipulation of those tasks. In this paper I will not retell the history of the Mennonite Union, as this has been covered by numerous Mennonite and Ukrainian historians.[4] Instead, I will focus on dissecting its strategies that I interpret as the art of political manoeuvring. This strategic acumen played a pivotal role in the Union's success, enabling it to function not only as an economic organization but also as a public institution advocating for emigration. In this article, I represent the viewpoint of one Ukrainian historian.

It is important to clarify that in my discussion of the organization's strategy, I do not mean that its course of action was premeditated, because this was absolutely impossible in that turbulent time. On the contrary, it had a situational and reflexive nature. In the face of an unstable situation, a successful strategy entailed daily decisions and the ability of the organization's leaders to find optimal solutions to unexpectedly emerging problems and political changes.

New Conditions, New Opportunities

After the brutal Ukrainian War of Independence (1917–1920),[5] the Ukrainian Mennonites found themselves the citizens of another state, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. Formally it was an independent country, linked with Soviet Russia by a bilateral treaty of alliance signed in 1920. In actuality, the Ukrainian state was dependent on the Russian republic (Bolshevik by nature),[6] and over the following years, Soviet Russia's bloody Communist experiments were extended to the territory of Ukraine. Those changes had a profound and lasting impact on the state's history and would shape its political and social landscape for decades to come. They defined the context in which the Union would operate.

After the period of "War Communism" (1918–1921),[7] marked by unlimited food requisitions, political violence, and undisguised devaluation of human life, the Soviet government introduced the New

Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. Proclaimed by the Russian Bolsheviks as "a temporary retreat" from the stringent state control and central planning of the economy that had been imposed during the Russian Civil War (and extended to the territory of Ukraine), this policy (1921–1928) provided the Mennonites with some economic and political opportunities.

During the NEP period, certain market-oriented reforms were slated for implementation. For instance, small-scale private enterprises, trade, and agriculture were permitted to function within specified limits. Peasants were potentially granted the opportunity to sell their production on the open market. Furthermore, the NEP ushered in a mixed economy allowing state- and privately-owned businesses to co-exist. Addressing the issue of food production, the NEP aimed to revitalize agricultural productivity, as this sector had been severely impacted in the preceding period. Peasants were also offered the option of greater autonomy in managing their land and selling surplus products.[8]

As a religious, comparatively prosperous, and German-speaking community, not all of the NEP's features (as proclaimed by the government) were accessible to Mennonites. Nevertheless, they were able to exploit the opportunities offered during this relatively brief period. However, political contradictions and a devastating famine (1921–1923) threatened not only the Mennonites but also the fragile Bolshevik regime, and the authorities clearly understood this. The situation provided compelling reasons for a convergence of interests between two markedly different partners, the Bolshevik state and the Mennonites. It is important to note that both parties understood the transient nature of their partnership.

New opportunities shaped the Mennonite Union's strategy, and it carefully chose its modes of operation. First, amid the domestic chaos and economic collapse of 1921, the Bolsheviks were inclined to endorse what were known as "advanced family farms."[9] These were not supposed to be subject to land redistribution, provided that they did not employ, and thus "exploit," labourers.[10] In the same year, the government, aware of Mennonite skills in farming, urged local authorities to lend support to advanced Mennonite farms and disseminate their agricultural practices among neighbouring communities.[11] At first glance, this appeared to be a highly promising situation.

A second major opportunity emerged after 1921. There had been a significant demand to advance the cooperative movement,[12] which led to the enactment of a new Decree on Consumers' Cooperatives. The cooperative system was regarded by the Bolsheviks as the primary means to engage the peasantry in the reconstruction of a

devastated agricultural and industrial sector. Each cooperative organization was defined as "an autonomous association of individuals who voluntarily came together to address their shared economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a collectively owned and democratically managed enterprise."[13] In the conditions of the looming famine, the cooperative movement provided substantial support to religious groups. The law explicitly stated: "If the activities of a religious group do not pose a threat to Soviet power, their economic endeavours should be endorsed within the existing legal framework."[14] This provision provided an opportunity for the Mennonites to establish the Union, despite the consistent advocacy of its chairman, B. B. Janz, for total emigration.

The Decree on the Separation of Church from State and School from Church (passed in January 1918) served as the foundation for the promotion of atheistic propaganda and secular education. Despite the decree, Soviet authorities exhibited a relatively positive disposition towards sectarian groups compared to members of the major churches, such as Orthodox and Catholic churches.[15] In the early history of the Bolshevik party, sectarians were viewed as potential political allies who could contribute to the downfall of official churches. In the Third Duma (during the First World War), the Social Democrats (future Bolsheviks) voted against the religious persecution of Mennonites and other sectarians.[16] The Bolsheviks were attracted to the economic potential and communal aspects of Mennonite teachings as well as the absence of a church hierarchy. The prior successes of the Mennonite community provided the new government with a reason to keep them as an "economic example" for the other peasantry.

Multiple sectarian congresses actively encouraged different congregations (including Baptist groups) to accept and support the new Bolshevik state. For instance, during the congress of Evangelical Christians and Baptists in 1920, a resolution was passed demanding that congregations be granted the status of legal entities. Soviet governments were eager to maintain control over religious groups and announced the registration of congregations (including the Mennonites). Successfully registered congregations were promised the right to own property, establish industrial enterprises, engage in economic activities, and generate income for their churches.[17] It is important to note that the Mennonite congregations in various villages underwent this registration process individually (every congregation did it separately and independently), rather than as a unified church entity.

Since the Bolsheviks lacked confidence during the early Soviet period, they chose to eliminate class enemies rather than combat

them politically. The Bolsheviks supported voluntary or forced emigration of "undesirable social groups." V. I. Lenin advocated the forcible expulsion of intellectuals who did not share Bolshevik ideals in the article "On the Significance of Militant Materialism" (1922). It stated that hostile "teachers and members of scientific societies" should be "politely dispatched to countries with a bourgeois 'democracy.'"[18] A special commission was established to make the final consideration of candidates for deportation. The staff included well-known Bolsheviks such as I. S. Unshlikht (deputy chairman of the GPU, chairman of the commission) and L. B. Kamenev (a member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party—Bolsheviks). The chairman of the All-Ukrainian Cheka and the OGPU of Ukraine,[19] V. N. Mantsev (who communicated with Janz), was also a member of the commission. In an interview with the American journalist Anna Louise Strong published in *Izvestia* (News), a daily broadsheet newspaper in USSR, the chairman of the Revolutionary Council, Lev Trotsky, stated: "The individuals we are deporting or will deport are politically insignificant on their own. However, they are potential instruments in the hands of our possible enemies. . . . That is why we prefer to deport them peacefully. I hope you will not refuse to recognize our prudent humanity and undertake its defence before public opinion."[20] In other words, the Bolsheviks presented deportation or support for voluntary emigration as an act of humanity towards their class enemies. Although the special commission did not directly concern the rural populations or, specifically, Mennonites, it set a precedent to which congregations seeking emigration could appeal.

The Union's direction was significantly shaped by the emergence of a new Mennonite (mostly secular) elite in 1920. These new leaders (including Janz, P. I. Dyck, and P. D. Cornies) displayed a greater sense of dynamism in negotiations, relocation/business trips, and decision-making. They were willing to engage in pragmatic compromises. Further, they recognized that the "era of privileges," when the Mennonites were highly valued by the tsars and provided with abundant opportunities, had come to an end.[21]

The period of post-revolutionary destruction and famine (1921–1923) was marked by strategic compromises. The government aimed to consolidate its authority while the Mennonites were fervently seeking merely to survive. In such conditions, any alliances were deemed necessary and acceptable. Furthermore, they were actively sought and formed even when the allies were aware of the transience of their common interests. In this period, Mennonites were uncertain that the authorities would allow them, as a distinct religious group (and as kulaks), to benefit from new Bolshevik

legislation. However, they were ready to struggle for those possibilities.

Managing Resources and Protecting Mennonite Communities

Once the government in Ukraine achieved some stability and the Mennonites acquired a permanent political negotiating partner in the Bolsheviks, the next crucial step for Mennonite leaders was to assert control over the situation by managing their communities and their small resources effectively. For these leaders, it became imperative to devise an organizational framework that could appeal to the Soviets and align with their policy objectives while simultaneously respecting the fundamental principles cherished by the Mennonites.

As the Bolsheviks encouraged the cooperative movement, Mennonite leaders sought to unite and protect all the Mennonite communities in Ukraine under the umbrella of a cooperative organization. Their idea was to preserve the territorial and economic autonomy of their communities. To accomplish this goal, their leaders endeavoured to convince the authorities that they posed no threat to the Soviet regime and pursued exclusively economic objectives. For instance, in their December 1921 petition to VUTsIK (the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee)[22] on behalf of all Mennonites, Janz declared: "We have a small, non-political peoplehood exclusively concerned with agriculture and industry, who care for the poor and sick in their own institutions. They, with help from abroad, desire to rebuild and live peaceably by their own labour."[23]

Among the many goals of the Union, reconstruction (a "restoration of agricultural power and culture of citizens of Dutch origin") stood out as the primary explicitly stated aim. Other non-economic goals held by the Mennonites were relegated to a secondary status.[24] Reconstruction was crucial because, despite Janz's unwavering advocacy for a near total emigration, Mennonite society found itself divided on this issue, with some contemplating remaining in Ukraine. Janz wrote to Dutch Mennonites about the nature of this reconstruction:

> The intention is to amalgamate us Mennonites into it [the Union]. . . . We are determined to maintain the independence of our organization, including the civil one, relying on the support of our brothers from abroad. We tell the authorities that we will not only be receiving alms, but that consideration is also being given to provide aid in rebuilding the economy. The more insight we gain into the frightening, growing need of our people in particular and of the population generally, the more we become

> aware that the primary concern is to guarantee life itself, and only then to begin economic recovery.[25]

Despite new legislation encouraging the development of the co-operative moment, Mennonites encountered significant difficulties in the process of registering the organization's statutes. In April 1922, their leaders received notification that their application had been cancelled due to the religious character of the group.[26] As a result, Mennonites adopted an alternative title for the organization, identifying themselves as "Citizens of Dutch Lineage." This disguised the Protestant character of their membership. Mennonite leaders were able to expedite the registration process by making this concession. They had important reasons to hasten the foundation of their organization. The first casualties of starvation were documented in November 1921. In February 1922, the territory of Ukraine was officially recognized as a "famine-stricken area."[27] This required active measures and some flexibility from the future Union's leaders. Additionally, it should be stressed that Mennonites in Ukraine and throughout the former Russian Empire had a history of publicly adapting their identity if circumstances warranted. With favourable results, they had done so during the First World War by proclaiming, "We are not Germans but Dutch!"[28]

With the name change, organizational statutes were approved in April 1922. The governing document established a three-tiered structure ranging from the colony level to the Union Council. The Union's objective was to encompass a wide range of rights and business activities within its articles.[29] At the time, it remained unclear which provisions would be essential and effective. The Mennonites acted cautiously but with determination. All Mennonite lands (formerly private and in community possession) were incorporated into the organization's real estate capital. Consequently, the previous proprietors of the businesses relinquished their ownership in favour of the Union.[30] That strategic move allowed the congregations to shield their landholdings from nationalization.

Mennonite institutions such as schools and charitable organizations were successfully integrated into the Union's assets.[31] Key Mennonite priorities included religious freedom, land allocation, retaining control over schools, and securing the right of exemption from military service. Therefore, from the beginning of 1920s, Mennonites managed to maintain control over those crucial aspects of their community life. However, the concept of a Mennonite school as a closed and religious institution was impossible to protect. The congregations' leaders harboured no illusions about the ultimate intentions of the Communists.

A Twofold Strategy

Despite the legal pathway opened by the Decree on Consumers' Cooperatives, authorities were reluctant to approve a Mennonite cooperative in 1921. Their political opposition to the Mennonite Union persisted even as the spectre of impending famine loomed on the horizon. Mennonites aimed to navigate this opposition through a twofold strategy in which foreign aid would be leveraged to gain legal standing for the cooperative. Under the conditions of imminent famine in Ukraine, the Mennonites declared themselves mediators who could secure some foreign aid for the region and country. For Mennonites, this new form of cooperation was not only a strategic shift but also an expression of their desperation. Famine had already taken hold in the Volga region and its impending arrival cast a shadow over Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the government staunchly declined long-term offers of foreign aid. Lenin refrained from seeking assistance for an extended period because he believed that accepting donations from foreign governments would inevitably entail onerous conditions and undermine the international prestige of the Soviet state. This changed in the summer of 1921. Amid hundreds of starvation-related deaths in the Volga region, reports of cannibalism had surfaced. In July 1921, the well-known Russian author Maxim Gorky published an open appeal to "all honest European and American people" to "give bread and medicine."[32]

At the beginning of 1921, American Mennonites were already prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the country through the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). However, as A. W. Slagel noted, the Soviet government was not interested.[33] Moreover, the state could not extend any aid to the Mennonite communities because the southern Ukrainian provinces (the area where many Mennonite villages were located) were not recognized as starving. Remarkably, even as the famine crisis unfolded, the export of grain from Ukraine did not cease. This led to the dire situation in which 75–100 percent of the Mennonite population within the colonies was suffering from starvation.

In August 1921, Janz was involved in negotiations between the American Mennonites (MCC) and the Ukrainian government. The fate of the future Union depended on their outcome. Progress was difficult and, according to Communist L. Kamenev, who represented the Soviets at the negotiations, teetered on the brink of collapse.[34] M. M. Litvinov, deputy of the head of the Foreign Affairs Commissariat, articulated official skepticism towards the Mennonite charity organization: "On one hand, we have a formidable

organization like Hoover,[35] and on the other, these smaller groups that aim to provide assistance exclusively to specific religious communities rather than the entire local population."[36] For the Bolsheviks, accepting foreign aid from a religious mission was tantamount to acknowledging their own weakness and the failure of their policies. Despite the humanitarian crisis and soaring mortality rates, the preservation of their own power remained a priority for them. As Miller wrote, "while the government is slow, millions of people are dying."[37] He was echoed by Janz, voicing his concern in October 1921: "The harvest is past, summer is ended and we have received no help!"[38] The Mennonite colonies in Ukraine needed support in late 1921.[39] As Janz observed, the Bolsheviks' response shifted when they were assured that assistance would be provided "without respect to nationality or religion."[40] This condition was pivotal in obtaining a favourable response from the government.

Mennonite charitable missions carried out their activities under the protection of Herbert Hoover's American Relief Administration (ARA). The American Mennonite Relief (AMR) organization was set up under the Mennonite Central Committee in 1921 and operated in the Soviet Union during the entire famine period and beyond. An agreement between the AMR and the Soviet authorities was signed in Moscow on October 1, 1921, following an earlier "treaty" between Soviet Russia and the ARA.[41] Under the terms of the AMR agreement, American Mennonite charitable organizations as well as German Mennonite Aid (GMA), founded in 1920 in post-war Germany with the support of North American congregations,[42] were granted limited capacity to operate, subject to rigorous oversight aimed at preventing any perceived "harmful activities." Three weeks later, the AMR and GMA signed an agreement with the Ukrainian government. Shortly thereafter, a similar agreement was signed in Kharkiv with Dutch Mennonite Relief.[43]

The scope of the North American and German missions encompassed Mennonite villages as well as adjacent Ukrainian regions. All were integrated into the food distribution program. From the very beginning, both AMR and GMA were subjected to scrutiny by the Soviet government that partially reduced their contributions in alleviating the famine crisis. Constraints were also imposed by MCC. In a letter to B. H. Unruh, Miller expressed his disappointment at instructions he had received from the MCC head office following promising negotiations with the Ukrainian and Russian governments:

> Mennonite work is to be done only through the food draft plan, . . . no Mennonite workers will be sent [from abroad], . . . it will not be possible

> to make it a really Mennonite relief work, but merely handing over supplies in Russia to local committees . . . possibly once in two months, for the travel conditions in Russia will be such that more frequent visits will be practically impossible. It is a tragic anticlimax to the high point reached in the play in Moscow.[44]

From March 1922 to August 1923, Mennonite charitable organizations played a pivotal role in supplying food to a significant part of the population within the region, including Mennonite, Russian, and Ukrainian villages. For instance, in the Halbstadt district (Molotschna), charity canteens made it possible for 64.2 percent of Ukrainian children to access essential food provisions.[45] It is crucial to note that in addition to their anti-famine efforts, the AMR initiated independent measures aimed at revitalizing the economy of the Mennonite colonies and they did it together with the Union. On August 18, 1922, an additional agreement titled "On the Restoration of Agriculture" was signed between the AMR and the Ukrainian government. The American organization assisted farmers in procuring livestock through credit arrangements—a priority in regions such as Chortitza, Molochansk, and Bogdanovka, where the livestock inventory was merely 18 percent of the 1914 levels for horses, 40 percent for cattle, and 10 percent for pigs. The AMR also undertook ploughing and planting activities on designated lands without charging the villagers; the entire proceeds were directed towards famine relief efforts. These lands included those at the Maria School for the Deaf in Tiege, Molochansk, as well as the teacher's school in Alexandrovsk.[46]

The establishment and recognition of the Union hinged upon the signing of agreements with relief organizations. In October 1921, Janz remarked that the authorities in Kharkiv appeared to be more favourable not only towards the Mennonites but also to all former colonists in Ukraine.[47] By collaborating with charity organizations, the Union assumed the position of a co-sponsor in the process of economic reconstruction. The issue of the future reconstruction of the Mennonite villages was deliberated at the Union's Congress held in Osterwick, Chortitza, in September 1922.[48] The prospects discussed there were infused with a sense of cautious optimism. For example, the AMR's commitment to provide the Union with twenty-five tractors increased government interest in the Mennonite Union, and its leaders believed the American machines would increase the prestige of the organization: "The Ford [Company] could not have thought a better advertisement than to introduce a steel horse into a land without horses. . . . Unless catastrophe strikes, the Union will need 30–50 tractors!"[49] Reports indicated that the AMR would

deliver fifty tractors to the USSR by 1924, with plans to acquire an additional two hundred.[50]

The Union statutes included provisions for foreign economic activities, granting the Union the possibility to manufacture goods for foreign markets. Simultaneously, the Union sought collaboration with the Commissariat of Foreign Trade and aimed to establish the potential for entering into long-term agreements with foreign enterprises. This endeavour represented an effort to obtain another ally, namely, the Commissariat of Foreign Trade.

The most significant initiative championed by the Union's leadership was the formation of an "International Mennonite Society." This envisioned society would serve as a unifying force bringing together Mennonite communities in Ukraine and the diaspora to jointly execute economic ventures and to secure financial support from overseas. It was an ambitious attempt by Mennonites to address the limits of their possible activities under the reigning political circumstances. By leveraging the "International Society," the Union aspired to secure the right to unfettered communication with international organizations after the famine. This strategic approach held the promise of facilitating external connections vital for both emigration and reconstruction aims. The organization's ambitious goals were attractive to the government. Though the authorities did not have much concern for the state of the colonies, they were impressed by the Union's commitment to "participate in solving the universal tasks of economic revival of the country such as the building of industrial enterprises, roads, communication systems, and power plants."[51]

Nevertheless, the Soviet response to the International Mennonite Society initiative, which was supposed to involve Ukrainian, Russian, American, Dutch, Canadian, and German communities, was resolutely negative. The organization's mono-confessional character, multinational composition, and perceived conspiratorial undertones engendered grave concerns within the ruling regime. The Mennonite attempt to use the idea of an international organization to strengthen their domestic position proved unsuccessful.

The Union and Authorities: Between Scylla and Charybdis

While grappling with a multitude of challenges, the Union and its leaders found themselves engaged in a many-sided dialogue with the Soviet governments on three distinct tiers: the local level, situated as close as possible to the colonies; the Ukrainian level; and the all-union level (effectively the Soviet Russian level).[52] On each of

these levels, communist ideology prevailed, inherently negating core tenets such as religion, pacifism, and private property rights. The Mennonites were acutely aware that their Union's existence was contingent upon the ongoing post-war famine crisis. To avoid irritating authorities, the Mennonites had to keep their real intentions and thoughts secret. According to its charter, proclaimed in April 1922, reconstruction (not emigration) was the primary objective of their organization.[53] As for emigration, a rather cautious position was articulated: "Today emigration is a waiting game."[54]

Following the signing of the treaty that established the USSR (the Union of Soviet Social Republics) in December 1922, the situation began to deteriorate as a political and legal agenda formulated in Moscow was applied to Ukraine. By 1923, the first signs of anti-Union sentiments emerged at the state level and in Moscow, as Communist Party sections exerted pressure on executive institutions. For example, at a joint meeting held on April 1, 1923, involving representatives of the Central Bureau of the German Section of the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks and members of the German Section of National Minorities within the NKVD,[55] concerns were raised regarding the approval of the statutes of the Mennonite Union, including claims that it had been done without proper authorization from the Communist Party apparatus.[56] The secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Bolshevik Party of Russia, Molotov, called for an intensification of the Bolsheviks' propaganda efforts among the German population of the USSR.[57]

The head of the counter-espionage department of the OGPU, A. C. Artuzov, accused the German and Mennonite population of the USSR of disloyalty. He reminded the government that "the German people took an active part in the Austrian-German occupation of Ukraine (1918), in the political adventures of the White Army. Also, they struggled against the Soviet power. The Germans were always privileged and distinguished by its economic power."[58] The OGPU consistently harboured suspicions towards the Mennonites and its representatives' visits to the Mennonite colonies often resulted in significant hardships for the villagers. For instance, during the summer of 1921, over one hundred innocent Mennonites found themselves incarcerated in Tokmak prison because of such suspicions.[59] In despair, Janz once exclaimed: "Instead of an end amid terror, there is terror without end!"[60] In 1923, Janz was also interrogated at the Lubyanka (Moscow), the main headquarters of the OGPU.[61]

In 1923, Soviet intelligence embarked on an investigation of the connections between Germany and Soviet German citizens, reminiscent of the persecutions of 1914–1917. The deputy chairman of the Soviet Union's security and intelligence agency, G. G. Yagoda,

delivered a report titled "About German Intelligence and How to Deal with It."[62] His report contended that Soviet German and Mennonite commercial organizations were implicated in espionage activities: "The main source of information for German intelligence in Russia is the multi-million German speaking population (the kulaks and intelligentsia from the German colonies and towns), who are the main focus of attention for Germany."[63] It was unanimously decided that all German colonist unions, schools, clubs, and charities would be closely monitored. All those organizations were called as "foreign agents."[64] The Union, which had only recently started its activities, was also included in the list of unreliable organizations. The OGPU insisted on deporting Mennonites who did not support the government as well as of those who had already sold their property, preparing for emigration.[65]

Janz observed that, under the influence of Moscow institutions, the Kharkiv government had lost its independence entirely by August 1923.[66] He lamented the "endless suffering amid the hopelessness of any economic recovery."[67] Authorities in Kharkiv who were in closer proximity to the Mennonites and responsible for the direct development of the region may have been willing to make some concessions to the experienced farmers, including Mennonites. When they lost their autonomy to Moscow, the prognosis for the future became grim.

Moscow's governance created challenges in executing various projects, including emigration. Janz remarked that Moscow had a "different viewpoint" than Kharkiv and that he felt "caught between two fires."[68] Starting in the summer of 1924, Janz noted a marked shift in the attention given to the activities of the Union around emigration: "They are astonished, conduct inquiries, send commissions to investigate, withdraw previous sanctions for free exodus. People who are ready for the journey . . . find themselves in deepest distress, some in deep sorrow. In Bakhmut, . . . officials delayed several groups of Mennonites . . . since February."[69] When another problem concerning emigration arose, prompting the Union to seek assistance from Kharkiv, the leaders were eventually informed that the decision had been made in Moscow.[70] Despite Janz's efforts to secure an audience with V. J. Chubar, the leader of the Ukrainian SSR,[71] it became apparent that authority rested in the "big capital."[72]

The local volost and provincial administration proved to be highly hostile. In their dealings with these officials, Mennonites encountered the most blatant manifestations of greed and lawlessness. In December 1921, the first deaths from hunger were documented.[73] Officials who visited a colony and seized all available food justified

their actions with the words, "You are expecting aid from America, but who is going to help us?"[74] It was not an isolated incident.

In the Union's petition to the VUTsIK, Janz expressed grave concern: "It follows that unless the Mennonites are given special aid, they will fall victim to violence and armed attacks since banditry in southern Ukraine is still prevalent."[75] He noted, "The Jews in the Hebrew colonies report that the goods sent by the American Jewish community have been seized" as a form of taxation.[76] His concern was to prevent a similar situation with Mennonite aid, as the Mennonites could never satisfy what he called elsewhere the "bottomless Bolshevik stomachs."[77] The petition went on to lament, "Attempts to restore civil order through existing institutions prove fruitless. The one works only for higher bribes, the other does not believe that such arbitrariness exist."[78] The petition (dated December 17, 1921) resulted in a special investigating commission consisting of two men—V. Makar, a Bolshevik and a member of the All-Ukrainian Executive Commissariat, and Y. Romanovsky, a lawyer—who interrogated Mennonite villagers. Janz and Union secretary P. D. Cornies reported the commission produced no "discernible results" from the central authorities, although local authorities, whom they described as "our enemies," "responded . . . in their usual fashion" with a "hateful" article in the local newspaper.[79]

Several local officials had formerly been associated with the Makhnovites. In the Halbstadt district, in place of the previous structure of self-governance, two Communists, Bagon (a Latvian Bolshevik) and A. Neufeld (a Mennonite), exercised authority with unprecedented capriciousness and violence.[80] In July 1921, seventy-five people were arrested for their their participation in an "illegal" meeting of the Halbstadt Cultural and Education Association.[81] There was no need to search for meaning in their actions. They were looking for a pretext for repression and the confiscation of the property of the arrested people.

Nevertheless, Union leaders understood how important it was to maintain a dialogue and at least a semblance of good relations with the authorities. As Janz wrote in 1924, "Instinctively I feel it's better not to make enemies with the district and provincial representatives. One has to look at who constitutes the government and at what difficult times may lie ahead."[82] For that reason, he saw bribery as the most expedient means to achieve desired ends. He admitted that throughout their history Mennonites had occasionally influenced politicians through financial inducements, and that "the means deployed were not always impeccable. There were always men who championed Mennonite interests. Then of course there was also the money!"[83] In conditions of famine and poverty, bribery did not

require much. A dozen eggs, domestic poultry, or a pair of shoes and a used coat could help the Mennonites solve problems with the authorities. Nonetheless, the Union lamented the system's corruption. In his letters to officials, Janz repeatedly voiced his grievances and alarm, noting that "bribery . . . thrives as never before. No train car moves, no passenger travels, no freight or baggage moves without greasing a person's palm."[84]

At times, the Union attempted to employ flattery—essentially "bribing with words." An illustrative example is a passage from a letter addressed to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine in February 1922, in which Union leaders wrote with exceptional courtesy while presuming an affirmative response: "Confident of the sympathetic attitude of the Soviet power to the needs and fate of our people, I would once again request permission for repatriation and immigration in accordance with the resolution passed at the Delegate Assembly of our Union."[85]

Personal Connections: Strategic Friends and Informants

In the sources, we do not encounter many names of Soviet functionaries who had close ties to the Union. However, some references indicate their impact on its fate. On the one hand, M. O. Skrypnyk, a commissar of internal affairs,[86] was an atheist who mistrusted religious communities. On the other, the pragmatic B. I. Yermoshchenko, who served as secretary of VUTsIK until 1925,[87] viewed Mennonites as valuable contributors to economic recovery. Yermoshchenko maintained a strong business relationship with A. Miller and made significant efforts to legitimize the Union.[88]

Janz also received some support from Vasily Mantsev, who led the NKVD and had been appointed from Moscow to head the Soviet secret police agency (Cheka, the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission).[89] Mantsev was born into a family of Old Believers and was a close friend of the famous Bolshevik V. Bonch-Bruyevich. The latter was a personal secretary of Lenin, held a degree in history, and was famous for his study of sectarianism, Doukhobors, and religious history.[90] During personal conversations with B. B. Janz, Mantsev criticized radical atheism and suggested that those in power should adopt a more flexible and rational approach. He was the source of the idea that Mennonites present their organization as Dutch (in the name of the Mennonite Union) and assured Janz that he would use his political influence to approve the Union's statutes in the event of opposition from provincial authorities.

True to his word, Mantsev subsequently encouraged his party colleagues to recognize the Union and sought Moscow's approval for the second list of emigrants to depart.[91] In 1924, Mantsev planned to return to Moscow for promotion. Prior to his departure there was a grand reception in Kharkiv, and Janz received a personal invitation. Janz seized this opportunity to express his gratitude to the politician in person. In correspondence, Janz expressed his respect for the man: "If communists like him ruled Russia, things would be in much better shape."[92] Their open and candid communication left a positive impression on other officials and held the potential to contribute to the Union's future endeavours. However, the political landscape was evolving rapidly, with the Bolsheviks gaining strength and confidence and adopting a more direct and forceful approach.

Another official Janz spoke of favourably was a member of the Presidium of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsIK) named Lobanov. The head of the Union mentioned in April 1925 that this official had shown keen interest in his reports on the state of the colonies. Allegedly, Lobanov was interested in Mennonite successes and willing to expand the authority of the Union. Janz wrote: "It appears that . . . he is to become the next 'Totleben' for the colonies. He is . . . a more liberal, very reasonable man, and places confidence in us and in me."[93] In contrast to the head of the German Section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, I. F. Gebhardt, who viewed the Mennonites with suspicion, after visiting the colonies, Lobanov wrote positive reviews to the Communist Party and administrative bodies. The examples of Mantsev and Lobanov confirm a simple truth: personal relationships helped dispel stereotypes and create a more positive climate around the Mennonites.

Within the corridors of power, the Union also maintained informants, including government bureaucrats. Given the frequent turnover of officials, it became imperative to restart such discreet efforts periodically. In his correspondence, Janz occasionally alluded to these confidential discussions with bureaucrats in Kharkiv[94] and Moscow.[95]

The Land Issue

The land issue was of paramount importance for both Mennonites and Bolsheviks. In their ascent to power, the Bolsheviks championed the slogan "Land—to peasants, factories—to workers!" as their principal motto. Conversely, the Mennonites aimed to shift the land issue from the realm of politics to the economic domain, as an

integral component of their reconstruction strategy. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian government vigorously sought to solve the land issue at Mennonite expense, and therefore identified what it considered a significant amount of surplus land within the villages. However, the colonies were overpopulated and these circumstances hindered both sides from effectively pursuing their conflicting land agendas. The Mennonites aimed to protect their possessions, whereas the Bolsheviks sought to confiscate them.

The problem was most acute in the Mennonite "mother colonies" (Chortitza and Molotschna), which had experienced an influx of Mennonite refugees from villages that had been destroyed during the civil war. For instance, Molotschna settlements sheltered hundreds of destitute families from Brazol, Schoenfeld, and Terek, who had to be accommodated in the homes of relatives and other hospitable people. If the overcrowding of communities posed problems for the authorities in terms of tracking population, the Mennonites wanted to benefit from the situation by requesting "excess plots" and preserving the land as part of the Union's estate capital.

Residents of neighbouring Russian and Ukrainian settlements also appeared in the villages at this time. They were mostly poor peasants who dreamt of benefiting from the political moment to secure property. The Slavic newcomers were drawn by well-built Mennonite houses and still relatively comfortable villages. From the Mennonite perspective, these unwanted newcomers destroyed the ethnic and religious homogeneity of their German-speaking communities. In the 1921 petition, Janz noted the popular movement to push Mennonites off their land: "The phenomenon has appeared throughout Ukraine and cannot be fully attributed to Makhno. It exists in regions Makhno never entered."[96] Slavic neighbours employed political slogans to justify their actions when they seized the Mennonite lands in the spring of 1921, even before official requisitions were made by the authorities.

Another cause for Mennonite concern was the presence of units of the Red Army stationed in the colonies without the consent of the local population. These troops relied entirely on the Mennonites for their food supplies, and it was unclear how long they would remain.[97] To provide sustenance for this entire complex population—longtime residents as well as invited, uninvited, and imposed "guests"—as well as to meet tax obligations, the Mennonites needed more land, making the redistribution process a complex and challenging issue.

During the famine period, when the authorities were most willing to extend concessions to Mennonites based on their farm production, there was some opportunity to influence the practice of land redistribution. Relying on the laws concerning "advanced

farms" and responding to critical food situation in Ukraine, the Union presented a set of demands to the government. These included the following items: redistribution of land at a rate of 32 dessiatines per family; sharing vacant plots with the landless Mennonites; and ensuring land tenure security with the aim to protect "the investment of foreign capital, without which reconstruction in the colonies is impossible."[98] The Mennonites successfully employed this strategy only at the initial stage of the Union's operation, when the authorities were in disarray and particularly needed foreign assistance.

Resolutions from Union congresses in Margenau, Landskrone, and Tiege in 1922 and 1923 appealed to the government to restore the traditional size of landholdings, insisting on at least 32 dessiatines per family as the minimum size at which a farm could effectively operate.[99] Colony leaders worked to persuade the government that resolving the land issue would change Mennonite attitudes towards emigration in a manner favourable to the authorities. Union leaders repeatedly appealed to economic considerations and avoided mentioning religious and cultural self-identification as reasons for emigration. The latter might have exacerbated the authorities' discontent with the religious group.

As expected, government officials responded negatively by citing their desire not to "conflict with the peasantry": "We never go against but with the masses. These are against you. We want peace. If we give you the land . . . and the surrounding Russians once again decide to massacre a village, what can we do? We can't help you. We must reckon with the masses."[100] Nevertheless, in July 1922, during a period of severe famine when the land issue became crucial, Mennonites received permission to retain 16 out of 32 dessiatines per family.[101]

Despite this promising decision, local authorities continued taking land from the Mennonites and ignored directives from the central Ukrainian government. When it became evident that the problem was not being resolved, Janz used the land issue as an opportunity to promote the emigration program. This time he proposed emigration as a solution to (not a result of) the land problem, with the idea that the excess population would depart and free up land for others. As he put it in the 1921 petition, "If our farmers now leave voluntarily, they will avert further friction and bloodshed."[102] This angle turned out to be attractive to the government.

The Union's approach was to recast the land issue from a political to an economic one. Given the prevailing land shortage, the "Holland-Ukraine" agricultural concession represented a noteworthy initiative, and a partial realization of the broader idea of the

International Mennonite Society. Concession agreements were employed in the 1920s and early 1930s to allow foreign capital to participate in enterprises in the USSR. The "Holland-Ukraine" concession enterprise was established at the initiative of Dutch Mennonite Relief and GMA as part their efforts to support Mennonites in Ukraine, with the aim of leasing land to be used by local Mennonites. The agreement was signed in June 1923.[103] Initially negotiations aimed to secure the right to cultivate 120,000 dessiatines of land, but the Mennonites were able to obtain only 3,000 dessiatines. Nevertheless, this was a significant achievement, because emigration was a long-term process and it was imperative to ensure the sustenance of the community.[104]

Even as the Mennonites contemplated emigration, they remained actively engaged in the process of reconstruction. It was crucial for them to showcase their achievements to the government. While challenges persisted, the year 1923 marked significant economic progress. Famine was no longer a predominant issue and some equipment and financial assistance had been delivered. At the 1923 congress in Tiege, Union officials reported notable successes in cattle breeding, the establishment of model farms, the implementation of multiple cropping systems, and an increase in landholdings.[105] Nevertheless, the government declaration of "victory over the famine" in October 1923 was misleading.[106] It was only the harvest of 1924 that finally lifted the colonies and region out of famine.[107]

In July 1924, VUTsIK decided that Mennonite farms could be categorized as "advanced farms" and therefore could receive additional plots of land.[108] Any glimmer of hope was quickly offset by a simultaneous increase in the tax burden, which rose to 40 percent of the harvest (two to three times higher than the taxes imposed on non-Mennonite farms).[109] This indicated that the authorities had not altered their position towards the Mennonites. Consequently, most of the community, particularly after enduring the famine, strongly desire early emigration.

The Mennonites consistently demonstrated their resilience in the face of extremely challenging circumstances. The Union made a final attempt to leverage the situation to their advantage in 1924. They compiled a list of essential demands whose acceptance could slow emigration and prevent the loss of important labour resources for the Soviet Union. Beyond land concerns, this list encompassed various other issues, including religious freedom and the restoration of self-governance. In January 1925, the All-Union Congress of Mennonite and Evangelical Communities convened in Moscow, where these demands were expressed to M. I. Kalinin.[110] Remarkably, the USSR Central Executive Committee acknowledged some of these

points during a meeting on November 18, 1925; however, cultural and religious demands were not accepted.[111]

The Union attempted to frame the land issue as an argument for, and later against, emigration. Both strategies were unsuccessful even though the authorities were willing to make some concessions after 1924, and specifically in 1927.[112] The political situation in the USSR was changing dramatically and moving closer towards collectivization.

Moving Towards Emigration

Emigration remained the principal, if carefully disguised, goal of the Union. Initially conceived as a complete evacuation of the entire Mennonite population, it remained important for the leaders of the Union to campaign among those community members who had certain hopes to remain. As B. B. Janz remarked, some Mennonites exhibited a "short-sighted behaviour."[113] They looked to their community's history in the Russian Empire. A pattern of crises followed by periods of stability when life returned to a semblance of normalcy had been the Mennonite experience for more than 150 years. For those who rejected emigration, this historical pattern might have been a compelling but misleading reason to stay. While planning the emigration of the entire Mennonite population in 1921–1922, Janz conducted extensive explanatory work with these consistent objectors. He understood how important it was to act while the government was permitting the emigration of Mennonites.

Between 1921 and 1923, the Bolsheviks aligned with the Mennonites on the issue of emigration from a political perspective. In this early stage of Soviet power, the government's policy aimed to rid the state of counter-revolutionary elements. This was a form of "purification," with the aim of eliminating those who could obstruct the spread of the Bolshevik ideology in the colonies and across the country. The leaders of the Union correctly perceived this as a fleeting window of opportunity. By the late summer of 1922, the political conditions in Ukraine had become favourable for emigration. Because there was no consensus within the government regarding the Mennonites, the leaders of the Union believed the authorities would permit them to leave.[114] This alignment of interests between the Mennonites and the Bolsheviks allowed the emigration process to move forward. The Union leaders considered different destinations (Paraguay, for example[115]), points of departure,[116] and financing (private as well as sponsored).[117] The Union also conducted

extensive planning with communities, missions, diplomats, and commercial entities in the West. This deliberation delayed emigration.[118]

The issue of pacifism further enhanced emigration sentiments. In January 1919, the Soviet government issued a decree exempting sectarians, including Mennonites, from military service.[119] Based on court rulings, some young men who proved their affiliation with a religious pacifist community could be exempted from military service involving the using of weapons. Instead, they were directed to non-combat medical units. This unique opportunity existed because the Mennonites were categorized as a sect rather than a church. However, the situation soon worsened due to rumours about their upcoming emigration. It was clear that military exemption was just a temporary concession. For this reason, it was necessary to take preemptive action. As a part of discussions in October 1922, the Union deliberated on the emigration of young men born in 1901, who could be conscripted into military service. Reports indicated that many of these men had already been conscripted and transported to units far from the colonies.[120] This made organizing their emigration challenging.[121] Despite these difficult circumstances, Janz managed to achieve some degree of success in navigating this complex situation.[122]

In the autumn of 1923, the Central Committee of the Communist Party criticized the Mennonites who were going to North America—2,500 people from the so-called "first list"—for "leaving the seeds in the ground." In departing before the harvest, they were abnegating their duty.[123] Following this report, the authorities imposed many obstacles regarding the emigration process. As a result, the leaders of the Union actively sought to demonstrate their achievements in the field of reconstruction with the aim of hiding their main goal (emigration). For this reason, the sources preserved in 413 collections of the Kyiv TsDAVOU Archive could mislead a researcher, as they create the illusion of steady economic achievements by the Mennonite cooperative organization.

The position of the Union on emigration was placed on the agenda of the Union Congress in Grigorievka in February 1925 at the request of Soviet authorities, who asked to be informed of the reasons for emigration. The leaders of the Union adopted a resolution rejecting emigration as a goal of the organization's activity. The resolution asserted that the Union had acted in accordance with the Soviet government and that in terminating its emigration activity it had "curbed the agitation for emigration." It also emphasized that Mennonites had many economic opportunities in Soviet Ukraine and commented on the Union's responsibility to foster accelerated

economic development.[124] Recognizing that emigration had become a dangerous goal to openly proclaim, the Union adjusted its protocol to emphasize reconstruction as its primary aim.[125] Yet while acceding to the government's demands, the Union continued to focus on the waves of Mennonite emigrants. In 1926, due to the organizational activities of the Union,[126] 5,940 Mennonites left Ukraine and Russia.[127] In total, 17,000 Mennonites emigrated from Soviet Ukraine between 1923 and 1927.

At the meeting of the Central Commission for Immigration and Emigration in October 1926, Soviet officials declared that this Mennonite "exodus" should be stopped. This decision was rooted in the acknowledgement that Mennonites were a crucial economic resource. To implement this policy, it was considered necessary to ramp up Communist propaganda efforts, impose limitations on passport issuance, and replace certain employees of the Russian-Canadian-American Passenger Agency[128] with members of the Communist Party, to monitor this organization's activity.[129]

Persistent Struggle

Janz believed that active emigration work was "costing the Union its head" and would cause its liquidation.[130] A new problem emerged when the policy of *korenizatsiia* (indigenization)[131] was implemented in the USSR in 1924. As the Bolsheviks needed to collaborate with local elites who were more accepting of Soviet power, *Korenizatsia* aimed to attract the representatives of numerous non-Russian ethnic groups, including Germans, into the Communist Party and the state apparatus. It was a purposeful strategy of Sovietization designed to bolster the regime's social foundation, that would have adverse effects on Mennonite society. Accordingly, the Mennonite Union was a staunch opponent of the program. A few German national districts with German-speaking administrations were established under the policy.[132] National minorities (including Mennonites) were promised certain rights, inluding self-government, the use of the German language, and access to a national school. The issues of church-related and property rights were notably absent from the program.[133] The Union resisted Sovietization efforts by all possible means. For instance, it was impossible to control the school system, but attempts were made to establish Babsomol (Baptist Youth Organization) as an alternative to the Komsomol (the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League). By 1925, there were a total of ten youth groups affiliated with the Union.[134]

In 1924, the Bolsheviks abandoned the policy of the economic concessions which the Union had been using quite successfully since 1922. In summer of that year, the leaders of the Union noticed exceptional Soviet attention to the Union's work on emigration. In December 1924, the Katerinoslav Provincial Committee of the Communist Party established a commission to investigate the activities of the Union. Its primary resolution, known as the "Final Act," specifically focused on the organization's "harmful political activities" and strongly advocated the dissolution of the Mennonite organization.[135] The Union was accused of economic shortcomings and of nurturing false hopes among the Mennonites, particularly the belief that they could sustain ethnically restricted cooperation and independent development, thereby obstructing the process of Sovietization in Mennonite-populated areas.

The government initiated a public campaign against the Mennonite Union in 1925. Grimly reflecting on this, B. B. Janz wrote, "It is certain that I will personally stand at the coffin of the precious Union of all Mennonites at whose cradle I stood in 1921."[136] The last Union congress convened in February 1926 and was held in Kharkiv, at the authorities' insistence.[137] Under its new policy, the government commissioned numerous articles in the press with the intention of tarnishing the Union's reputation and sowing discord within Mennonite communities.[138] Officials also accused the Union of maintaining unlawful connections with foreign organizations and conducting espionage. The government once again labelled the Mennonites as internal enemies who were plotting against the socialist state. As punishment, the government subjected the Mennonites to penalties in the form of loans.[139] While the government aimed to attract foreign capital to strengthen the Soviet economy, political considerations often took precedence over practical issues. In an unexpected move, in 1925 the government abruptly terminated the activities of the AMR in the USSR. Miller was ordered to leave the country within seven days. This move served the authorities' interests, as the possessions of AMR were subsequently handed over to government institutions. The AMR soon faced allegations of inciting emigration, while Union leaders were accused of serving as paid members of the relief organization.[140]

On October 3, 1927, new regulations on the agricultural cooperative movement classified the activities of sectarian businesses as going "beyond economic objectives." Sectarian and Protestant cooperatives were labelled as "pseudo-cooperatives" created for religious propaganda purposes.[141]

Nevertheless, even in such a situation, the Mennonites were persistent. The leaders of the Union were willing to "knock on closed

doors" because they understood that a significant number of Mennonites were being forced to remain in Soviet Ukraine where, without protection, difficult times would await them. In the final paper "Report on the Reorganization of the 'Union of Descendants of Dutch Lineage in Ukraine,' Its Societies, and Branches" compiled on February 10, 1927, the Bolsheviks cast the effective "dissolution" of the Union as a form of reorganization.[142] The Union was divided into thirteen territorial branches, all of which consisted largely of Mennonite members. Once again, the Mennonites exhibited their compliance and prudence by severing their ties with foreign organizations and missions.[143] They proposed to establish a new entity known as the Bureau of Representatives of Mennonite Cooperation to regain control over their resources and keep their influence in the colonies. However, this proposal was firmly rejected by the authorities. In January of 1927, they attempted to establish the position of Mennonite Cooperation General Commissioner; this was also rejected by the government.[144] By this time, the Soviet government had evolved into a formidable political entity and Ukrainian Mennonites found themselves powerless against this colossal political force.

The government's dissolution of the Union reflected the internal political shifts occurring within the state. The growing command-and-control system, entrenched in a single-party monopoly dictatorship, permeated every facet of public life, compelling extensive regulation of social and economic matters, and requiring consolidation for the sake of administrative efficiency.

Conclusion

This article focuses on the important role of the Mennonite Union and the rescue mission that it carried out in the 1920s. For those who doubt whether this organization's activities ultimately proved successful, it suffices to recognize what happened to the Mennonite population during the subsequent decades of Stalinism, which maimed and stripped Mennonites of their identity and, in some cases, ruthlessly ended the lives of community members. The activities of the Mennonite church were only restored in Ukraine in the 1990s. At that time, on the territory of the former colonies, one could find only a few families with Mennonite surnames who miraculously survived the long period of political repression and religious persecution.

Emigration—the primary goal of the Union—became possible due to the incredible efforts of the Union's leaders. Their strategy, manifested in various forms, determined the results of the Union's

activities, as detailed in the documents of the Union and the correspondence of B. B. Janz. The organization was established during a period of famine and initial weakness of the new Bolshevik power. The Mennonites managed to use the short period of support for the cooperative moment to save community members from starvation and organize the emigration process. The *korenizatsiia* program implemented by the Boksheviks in 1924 (still praised by many contemporary historians) promised much to the so-called national minorities in Ukraine and the other Soviet republics. However, it demonstrated its complete ineffectiveness when applied to the "Mennonite case." *Korenizatsiia* offered some opportunities but only within the Bolshevik model, which was detrimental to the Mennonites. It required them to change their worldview and identity, and they vehemently resisted. Not without reason, the launch of the *korenizatsiia* program coincided with the beginning of the open persecution of the Union.

As this analysis demonstrates, Mennonites were unable to access many of the legal opportunities afforded to the local Ukrainian and Russian peasantry. Soviet authorities initially viewed Mennonites as a hostile German-speaking religious group and a "society of kulaks" opposed to the Bolshevik regime. Union leaders recognized that their reluctance to bow to Bolshevization and their commitment to Mennonite unity and religious traditionalism would inevitably lead to the abolishment of the Union. In this regard, Union leaders harboured no illusions, and for this reason they had to act very prudently. Although they considered emigration as a top priority, the activities of the Union were structured in a way that appealed to the government's agenda. They emphasized reconstruction tasks and international humanitarian aid. This allowed the Union not only to accumulate resources and save the lives of the Mennonite population but also to develop and run the emigration program as successfully as possible.

When it became clear to Union leaders that a complete evacuation of Mennonite communities was not possible, due to both internal and external reasons, they focused on addressing the land issue. In their correspondence with the government, Mennonite leaders now presented their demands for land reorganization as a necessary prerequisite to *prevent* emigration. This strategic reversal was another manifestation of the Union's strategy. They were not concerned with preventing emigration but aimed to provide land resources to those community members who were not fortunate enough to leave the Soviet state. The time-tested tactic of Mennonite dialogue with authorities, resulting in the recruitment of certain

officials to their cause, again proved its effectiveness in the Union's activity.

Mennonites were engaged in a hidden struggle with the Soviet state. The latter gradually took on the form of a totalitarian power and eventually evolved into a Leviathan. Although not all Union efforts and tactical actions were effective, each element of the strategy served the main purpose, and their simultaneous application allowed for the achievement of the maximum possible results for the Mennonite communities in the Soviet Ukraine.

Notes

1 These are (1) the documents from Soviet-era collections, which are kept in Ukrainian and Russian archives, and (2) the sources resulting from the activities of the Mennonite Union (Verband) and used exclusively for internal purposes.

2 See, e.g., State Archives of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (DADO), f. 1, inv. 1, file 1930, 24.

3 The most complete collections of sources are John B. Toews, ed., *The Mennonites in Russia, 1917–1930: Selected Documents* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1975); and John B. Toews and Paul Toews, eds., *Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage in Ukraine (1922–1927): Mennonite and Soviet Documents* (Fresno, CA: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2011) (hereafter cited as *Union*).

4 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); John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921–1927* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1974); John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1982); James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics, and Peoplehood: Europe–Russia–Canada, 1525 to 1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006), 138–158; N. Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch: Mennonitskoe soobshchestvo Ukrainy v 1914–1931 gg.* [At the crossroads of the epochs: The Mennonite community of Ukraine, 1914–1930] (Moscow, 1998); John B. Toews, "Understanding the Union Story," in *Union*, 1–20; Leonard G. Friesen, *Mennonites in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Through Much Tribulation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 183–204.

5 The period from 1917 to 1920 in Ukraine was marked by significant political, social, and military upheaval, as well as foreign intervention. Ukraine's war for independence (the Ukrainian People's Republic was declared in 1917) was fought amid the disintegration of the Russian Empire and the ongoing Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. The conflict involved not only the invading Bolshevik Red Army but various Ukrainian political forces, including anarchists (Nestor Makhno) and nationalists (Simon Petliura). Several foreign military units, including those of Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as Russia's White Armies, also intervened and complicated the situation. By 1920, the independent Ukrainian People's Republic had collapsed, and the

Bolshevik Red Army took control of most of Ukraine, orchestrating the foundation of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic. Serhii Plokhy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 206–227; and Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 468–503, 526.

6 Magocsi, *History of Ukraine,* 526, 529–33.

7 The elements of War Communism policy were imposed in Ukraine when the Bolsheviks attempted to establish their authority (in 1919 and beyond). These included the Red Terror, Soviet administration, Russian nationalist influence, and the suppression of Ukrainian culture. See O. P. Reent, *Bil'shovyky i ukraïns'ka revoliūtsīiā 1917–1920 rr.: Sproba vyznachenniā kharakteru i dynamiky sotsīal'nykh protsesiv* [Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1920: An attempt to determine the nature and dynamics of social processes] (Kyiv, 1994).

8 S. Kulchytsky, *Komunizm v Ukraïni: Pershe desiātyrichchiā (1919–1928)* [Communism in Ukraine: The first decade (1919–1928)](Kyiv, 1996); and S. V. Kulchytsky, *Komunistychna doktryna i sproby ïï realizatsīï v Ukraïni u 1919–1920 rr.: Do pytanniā pro tak zvanyĭ "voiēnnyĭ komunizm"* [Communist doctrine and attempts to implement it in Ukraine in 1919–1920: To the question of the so-called "war communism"] (Kyiv, 1992).

9 An "advanced family farm" was a farm run by members of a single family using the promoted agricultural technology for obtaining high yields and high-quality products.

10 *Agrarnaiā politika Sovetskoĭ vlasti (1917–1918): Dokumenty i materialy* [Agrarian policy of the Soviet Power (1917–1918): Documents and materials] (Moscow, 1954), 420–25, 433–36.

11 A. I. Savin, "'Razdeliai i vlastvui': Religioznaia politika Sovetskogo gosudarstva i evangel'skie tserkvi v 1920-e gody" ["Divide and rule": The religious policy of the Soviet state and Evangelical churches in the 1920s], *Vestnik Tverskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: Istoriiā* 2008, no. 1: 5–6.

12 V. I. Lenin, "O prodovol'stvennom naloge: Znachenie novoĭ politiki i eë usloviiā" [On food tax: The meaning of the new policy and its terms], in *Polnoe sobranie sochineniĭ* [Collected works], vol. 43 (Moscow, 1967), 208.

13 Lenin, "O prodovol'stvennom naloge," 208.

14 *Narodnoe khoziāĭstvo Ukrainy v 1921* [National economy of Ukraine in 1921] (Kharkov, 1922), 632–38.

15 "Dekret SNK ob otdelenii tserkvi ot gosudarstva i shkoly ot tserkvi" [Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the separation of church from state and school from church] in *Sobranie uzakoneniĭ i rasporiāzheniĭ Rabochego i Krest'iānskogo pravitel'stva* [Collected decrees and orders of the Workers' and Peasants' government], no. 18 (Moscow, 1918), 262–63.

16 Russian State History Archive (Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation), f. 821, inv. 133, file 311: 36–37.

17 Z. V. Kalinicheva, *Sotsīal'naiā sushchnost' baptizma, 1917–1929 gg.* [The social essence of Baptism, 1917–1929] (Leningrad, 1972), 67–69.

18 V. I. Lenin, "O znachenii voinstvuiūshchego materializma" [On the significance of militant materialism] in *Polnoe sobranie sochineniĭ*, vol. 45 (Moscow, 1970), 32–33.

19 The All-Ukrainian Extraordinary Commission (Cheka) was the first of a succession of Soviet secret-police organizations. The OGPU (the Joint State

Political Directorate) was the Soviet intelligence service and secret police from 1923 to 1934.

20 *Izvestia*, Oct. 30, 1922.

21 A. Eisfeld, *Politicheskaiа zhizn' mennonitov Rossii v 1917-1919 godakh* [Political life of Mennonites in Russia in 1917–1919]," *Voprosy germanskoĭ istorii* (Dnepropetrovsk, 2000): 223–48; Natalija Venger, "Die mennonitischen städtischen Gemeinden im Gouvernement Katerynoslav während der Ukrainischen Revolution (1917–1920): Metamorphosen der Hoffnung," *Nordost-Archiv* 31 (2022): 93–122; 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 of North America, 1978); A. Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer: Der jüngsten Vergangenheit und der Gegenwart*, vol. 1 (Winnipeg: self-pub., 1949), 271–75.

22 The All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee (VUTsIK) was the supreme legislative, administrative, and executive body of Soviet Ukraine from 1917 to 1938.

23 Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 388.

24 "Draft Charter of the Union of Societies and Groups of Mennonites of Southern Russia," Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine (TsDAVOU), Kyiv, f. 5, inv. 1, file 976: 72–76 rev.

25 B. B. Janz to Dutch Mennonite Relief Agency, Oct. 8, 1921, in *Union*, 380–81.

26 B. B. Janz to Study Commission, Apr., 17, 1922, in *Union*, 409.

27 Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch*, 62–63, 68–69.

28 During the years of the First World War, Mennonites assured Russian society of their Dutch origins to try to escape anti-German legislation.

29 Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch,* 173–82.

30 Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch,* 173–82.

31 Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch,* 173.

32 Bertrand M. Patenaude, "Give Bread + Medicine: Maxim Gorky's Appeals," Hoover Institute Library & Archives, 2023, https://histories.hoover.org/bread-medicine/maxim-gorky/.

33 A. W. Slagel, "The Novorossisk–Rostov Trip," in *Feeding the Hungry: Russia Famine, 1919–1925*, ed. P. C. Hiebert and Orie O. Miller (Scottdale, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929), 115.

34 State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), Moscow, f. 1064, inv. 6, file 6: 8.

35 A reference to Herbert Hoover, future the head of the American Relief Administration, which was active in famine relief in Soviet Russia from 1921 to 1923. Hoover was president of the United States from 1929 to 1933.

36 M. M. Litvinov to People's Commissariat of the USSR, Sept. 14, 1921, GARF, f. 1046, inv. 6, file 6: 48.

37 A. J. Miller to the MCC, Sept. 1921, GARF, f. 424, inv. 1, file 19: 98.

38 B. B. Janz to Dutch Mennonite Relief Agency, Oct. 8, 1921, in *Union*, 377.

39 A. German and N. Ostasheva (Venger), "Golod" [Famine] *Entsiklopediia nemtsev Rossii* [Encyclopedia of Russian Germans], vol. 1 (Moscow, 2003), 595–99.

40 B. B. Janz to Executive of the Mennonite Relief Agency, Aug. 5, 1921, in *Union*, 374.

41 Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch*, 194–98.

[42] Established for relief purposes by South German Mennonites in 1920 as Mennonitische Flüchtlingsfürsorge (Mennonite Refugee Aid), the organization later changed its name to Deutsche Mennoniten-Hilfe (German Mennonite Aid). Toews, *Lost Fatherland*, 119, 133, 134, 136, 175.
[43] TsDAVOU, f. 258, inv. 1, file 4: 62–66; TsDAVOU, f. 125: 62–64.
[44] B. H. Unruh to A. A. Friesen, Nov. 8, 1921, in *Union*, 386.
[45] Toews, *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites*, 114; Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch*, 75–78.
[46] GARF, f. 1058, inv. 1, file 290: 19.
[47] B. B. Janz to Dutch Mennonite Relief Agency, Oct. 8, 1921, in *Union*, 380.
[48] Minutes of the Union Congress Meeting, Sept. 22–23, 1922 (Osterwick), in *Union*, 175–82.
[49] B. B. Janz to Representatives of the Union in Ukraine, Oct. 9, 1922, in *Union*, 430.
[50] GARF, f. 1058, inv. 1., file 374: 65.
[51] TsDAVOU, f. 27, inv. 3, file 15: 2–3.
[52] In 1922 Ukraine became one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union (1922–1991).
[53] "Approved Charter of the Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage in Ukraine," Apr. 24, 1922, in *Union*, 91–92.
[54] B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to Study Commission Abroad, Mar. 1, 1922, in *Union*, 397.
[55] The NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) was established as an ordinary interior ministry of Soviet Russia in 1917. In 1934 it became the all-union secret police agency when it absorbed the functions of the OGPU, giving it a monopoly over law enforcement activities that lasted until the end of the Second World War.
[56] V. B. Evtukh and B. V. Chirko, *Nimtsi v Ukraïni (1920–1990 rr.)* [Germans in Ukraine (1920–1990)] (Kyiv, 1994), 102.
[57] L. V. Yakovleva, V. Chirko, and S. Pyshko, eds., *Nimtsi v Ukraïni 20-30-ti rr. XX st.: Zbirnyk dokumentiv derzhavnykh arkhiviv Ukraïny* [Germans in Ukraine, 1920s–1930s: Collected documents of the state archives of Ukraine] (Kyiv, 1994), 41–42.
[58] A. Eisfeld, *"Velikiĭ terror" v Ukraine: Nemetskaia operatsiia 1937–1938 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov* [The Great Terror in Ukraine: The German operation of 1937–1938: Collected documents] (Kyiv, 2018), 226.
[59] B. B. Janz and Heinrich Wiebe to Mennonite Relief Agencies, July 25, 1921, in *Union*, 367.
[60] B. B. Janz to American Mennonite Relief, Apr. 30, 1922, in *Union*, 413.
[61] John B. Toews, introduction to 1923 letters of B. B. Janz, in *Union*, 446.
[62] Eisfeld, *Velikiĭ terror*, 225.
[63] Eisfeld, *Velikiĭ terror*, 225.
[64] Eisfeld, *Velikiĭ terror*, 225.
[65] TsDAVOU, f. 413, inv. 2, file. 10: 111.
[66] B. B. Janz to Representatives of American Mennonite Churches, Aug. 30, 1923, in *Union*, 463.
[67] B. B. Janz to Representatives of the Russian Mennonites Abroad (A. A. Friesen, B. H. Unruh, and A. J. Fast), July 1–4, 1923, in *Union*, 459.
[68] B. B. Janz to Mennonite Committees in Canada and the United States, and our Representatives Abroad, February 14, 1924, in *Union*, 468.
[69] B. B. Janz to B. H. Unruh and A. A. Friesen, June 27, 1924, in *Union*, 477–78.

[70] B. B. Janz to B. H. Unruh and A. A. Friesen, June 27, 1924, in *Union*, 478.
[71] N. Zenkovich, *Samye zakrytye liūdi: Entsīklopediiā biografiĭ* [The most reserved people: Encyclopedia of biographies] (Moscow, 2002), 630–32.
[72] B. B. Janz to B. Unruh and A. Friesen, June 27, 1924, in *Union,* 478.
[73] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 386.
[74] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 387.
[75] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 387.
[76] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 388.
[77] B. B. Janz and Heinrich Wiebe to Mennonite Relief Agencies, July 25, 1921, in *Union*, 367.
[78] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 388.
[79] B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to Study Commission, General Commission for Foreign Emergencies, American Mennonite Relief, Feb. 28, 1922, in *Union*, 393.
[80] B. B. Janz and Heinrich Wiebe to Mennonite Relief Agencies, July 25, 1921, in *Union*, 371.
[81] B. B. Janz and Heinrich Wiebe to Mennonite Relief Agencies, July 25, 1921, in *Union*, 374.
[82] B. B. Janz to Our Representatives, Dec. 21, 1924, in *Union*, 491.
[83] B. B. Janz to Leading Brethren of the Conferences and Organizations of the Mennonite in America, Dec. 31, 1922, and Jan. 1, 1923, in *Union*, 443.
[84] B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to Study Commission Abroad, Mar. 1, 1922, in *Union*, 396.
[85] B. B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to All-Ukrainian Central Committee, Feb. 27, 1922, in *Union*, 391.
[86] Mykola Oleksiiovych Skrypnyk was a Ukrainian revolutionary and Communist leader. He headed the Commissariat of Internal Affairs in 1921–1922. A leading force behind cultural Ukrainization, he committed suicide in 1937 rather than recant his policies.
[87] Veniamin Iosifovich Yermoshchenko was a Ukrainian statesman and politician. He served as first secretary of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee from 1919 to 1925. He was repressed and executed in 1937.
[88] B. B. Janz to B. H. Unruh, Mar. 12, 1922, in *Union*, 401.
[89] V. N. Mantsev was transferred from Moscow to Kharkiv in 1920. He was repressed and executed in 1938.
[90] V. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Iz mira sektantov: Sb. stateĭ* [From the world of sectarians: Collected articles] (Moscow, 1922); V. Bonch-Bruyevich, *Zhivotnaiā kniga dukhobortsev* [The Doukhobor book of life] (Saint Petersburg, 1909).
[91] John B. Toews, introduction to 1924 letters of B. B. Janz, in *Union*, 465.
[92] B. B. Janz to B. H. Unruh and A. A. Friesen, June 27, 1924, in *Union*, 479.
[93] B. B. Janz to Mennonite Colonization Association of North America Ltd., Apr. 7, 1925, in *Union*, 500.
[94] B. B. Janz to Study Commission, Apr. 17, 1922, in *Union*, 409.
[95] John B. Toews, introduction to 1923 letters of B. B. Janz, in *Union*, 445.
[96] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 388; and B. B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to All-Ukrainian Central Committee, Feb. 27, 1922, in *Union*, 391.

[97] B. B. Janz to Dutch Mennonite Relief Agency, Oct. 8, 1921, in *Union*, 377.
[98] TsDAVOU, f. 27, inv. 2, file. 210: 1; and B. B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to All-Ukrainian Central Committee, Feb. 27, 1922, in *Union*, 392.
[99] Minutes of Union Congress Meetings, in *Union*, 152–53, 169–70, 189–90.
[100] B. B. Janz to Leading Brethren of the Conferences and Organizations of the Mennonites in America, Dec. 31, 1922, in *Union*, 444.
[101] B. B. Janz to Study Commission, July 25, 1922, in *Union*, 422.
[102] Union of Southern Russian Mennonites to All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, Dec. 17, 1921, in *Union*, 388.
[103] Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch*, 106–7, 199–202.
[104] B. B. Janz to Study Commission, Mar. 31, 1922, in *Union*, 405.
[105] TsDAVOU, f. 5, inv. 2, file. 2724: 16.
[106] TsDAVOU, f. 1, inv. 20, part 1, file 2236: 38.
[107] B. B. Janz to Our Representatives, Dec. 21, 1924, in *Union*, 490.
[108] TsDAVOU, f. 27, inv. 5, file 299: 16, 21, 24, 55.
[109] TsDAVOU, f. 1, inv. 20, part 1, file 2236: 38.
[110] Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin was a Soviet politician and Russian revolutionary. He served as head of state of the Russian SFSR and the USSR from 1919 to 1946.
[111] Savin, "Razdeliai i vlastvui," 9–10; and M. Krapivin, A. J. Leikin, and A. G. Dalgatov, *Sud'by khristianskogo sektantstva v Sovetskoĭ Rossii (1917-konetś 1930-kh godov)* [The fate of Christian sectarianism in Soviet Russia (1917–1930)] (Saint Petersburg, 2003), 191.
[112] Ostasheva-Venger, *Na perelome epoch*, 113–14, 117–18.
[113] B. Janz and Ph. Cornies to Study Commission, General Commission for Foreign Emergencies, American Mennonite Relief, Feb. 28, 1922, in *Union*, 392.
[114] B. B. Janz to Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, Aug. 4, 1922, in *Union*, 425.
[115] B. B. Janz to Study Commission, Apr. 17, 1922, in *Union,* 410.
[116] B. B. Janz to Representatives of the Russian Mennonites Abroad (A. A. Friesen, B. H. Unruh, and A. J. Fast), July 1–4, 1923, in *Union*, 459.
[117] B. B. Janz to Hon. Minister of Emigration, Ottawa, Canada, Mar. 26, 1924, in *Union*, 471.
[118] Friesen, *Mennonites in the Russian Empire*, 194–203.
[119] "Dekret SNK RSFSR ob osvobozhdenii sektantov ot sluzhby v armii po religioznym ubezhdeniiām" [Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on exemption from military duty on religious grounds," Jan. 4, 1919, in *Dekrety Sovetskoĭ vlasti* [Decrees of the Soviet power], vol. 4 (Moscow, 1968), 282–83.
[120] B. B. Janz to Union Representative (A. A. Friesen and B. H. Unruh), Oct. 24, 1922, in *Union*, 430.
[121] B. B. Janz to District Office in New York, Jan. 31, 1924, in *Union*, 466.
[122] B. B. Janz to Mennonite Committees in Canada and the United States, and our Representatives Abroad, Feb. 14, 1924, in *Union*, 468.
[123] Eisfeld, *Velikiĭ terror*, 225.
[124] Minutes of the Union Congress Meeting, Feb. 26–28, 1925 (Grigoryevka), in *Union*, 220–21.
[125] B. B. Janz to Mennonite Colonization Association of North America Ltd., Apr. 7, 1925, in *Union*, 498–99.

[126] Report of the Commission of VUTsIK Presidium Commission Regarding Inspection of the Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage, second half of July 1925, in *Union*, 289–90.

[127] John B. Toews, introduction to 1926 letters of B. B. Janz, in *Union*, 506.

[128] The Russian-Canadian-American Passenger Agency (RUSCAPA) was a Soviet-Canadian-American joint-stock company that existed in the USSR during the NEP period. Headquartered in Moscow, the agency sent Mennonite emigrants to permanent residence in North America

[129] A. Savin, *Etnokonfessiiā v sovetskom gosudarstve: Mennonity Sibiri v 1920–1930-e gody: Emigratsiiā i repressii: Dokumenty i materialy* [Ethno-confession in the Soviet state: Mennonites of Siberia in the 1920s–1930s: Emigration and repression: Documents and materials] (Novosibirsk, 2009), 289.

[130] B. B. Janz to David Toews, Nov. 24, 1925, in *Union*, 504.

[131] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 21–22.

[132] A total of seven German national districts were established in regions of former German and Mennonite colonies. See Yakovleva, Chirko, and Pyshko, *Nimtsi v Ukraïni 20-30-ti rr. XX st.*, 5–6.

[133] M. Kozyreva, "Nemetskie raĭony iūga Ukrainy 20–30-kh gg. XX v. kak natsional'nye administrativno-territorial'nye edinitsy" [German districts of southern Ukraine in the 1920s–1930s as national administrative-territorial units], in *Nemtsy Rossii i SSSR 1901–1941: Materialy mezhdunarodnoĭ nauchnoĭ konferentsii* [Germans of Russia and the USSR, 1901–1941: Materials of the international scholarly conference] (Moscow, 2000), 298–305.

[134] State Archives of Zaporizhzhia Oblast (DAZO), f. 1., inv. 1, file 334: 68–69.

[135] DADO, f. 1, inv. 1, file 1930: 24–38.

[136] John B. Toews, introduction to 1926 letters of B. B. Janz, in *Union*, 492.

[137] DADO, f. 1, inv. 1, file 1930: 24–38.

[138] In the Kharkiv newspaper *Vesti*, there appeared a commissioned article by E. Mossenko titled "Dutchmen" (Aug. 12, 1925) about the activities of the "Union" that supposedly operated outside of Communist Party control and enjoyed special privileges.

[139] TsDAVOU, f. 271, inv. 1, file 490: 110.

[140] T. P. Nazarova, *Blagotvoritel'naiā deiātel'nost' zarubezhnykh mennonitskikh organizatsiĭ v Covetskom gosudarstve v 1920–nachale 1930-kh gg.* [Charitable work of the foreign Mennonite organizations in the Soviet state in the 1920s–early 1930s] (Volgograd, 2013), 191–92.

[141] Krapivin, Leikin, and Dalgatov, *Sud'by khristianskogo sektantstva*, 131.

[142] TsDAVOU, f. 413, inv. 1, file 229: 128.

[143] B. B. Janz to Mennonite Colonization Association of North America Ltd., Apr. 7, 1925, in *Union*, 498.

[144] TsDAVOU, f. 1, inv. 3, file 50: 38.