

Chapter 1 : Library Books - Mennonite

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The Bolshevik Revolution in October gradually spread and reached toward the Mennonite settlements, but the major Mennonite settlements of the Ukraine were occupied by the German army between April and November. When it withdrew, since the new Soviet government had not yet established itself in this area, various temporary forms of government came into being, including the group of followers of Nestor Makhno. They were anarchist in their outlook and set out to destroy any order and to punish those who possessed property. The settlements of Molotschna, Chortitza, Borozenko, and Zagradovka suffered untold hardships from them. The male population of a number of villages was completely annihilated and the food and property were taken. A total of some people were murdered. Old and young women were raped, and consequently venereal diseases spread in the communities. Typhoid fever and other contagious diseases were also brought in. Before the German occupation army withdrew, it had drilled some Selbstschutz units and left weapons and ammunition in some communities. This was prior to the Makhno incursions. In some instances the trained young men took up arms to defend their families and their property against the anarchistic bandits when they came, which in turn provoked the bandits to renewed attacks. The question as to whether it was permissible or even the duty of the young men to defend their families against the bandits caused many discussions and tested the centuries-old principle of nonresistance. Most of the leaders and the majority of the Mennonite population did not support such views. Nevertheless, particularly among the younger generation quite a number felt that in this case it was their duty to take up arms in self-defense. Selbstschutz group from the villages of Blumenort, Tiede, and Ohrloff, ca. Mennonite Library and Archives. Photo It is likely that the Molotschna Mennonites were the first to be attacked by the Makhno anarchist hordes. Some German officers remained in the Molotschna to lead the Selbstschutz which they had drilled and equipped. One of the significant battles between the Makhno group and the Selbstschutz took place twenty miles 35 km north of Halbstadt near the Catholic village of Blumental early in March. After a fierce five-day battle, the Selbstschutz unit was overwhelmed by the Makhno group which outnumbered them ten to one. Gradually they withdrew to Halbstadt. The regular Red army regiments soon moved in and prevented the Makhno bandits from occupying the Mennonite villages, and the Makhno followers then subjected themselves to them from March to July. During this time the Mennonites suffered very severely. A similar fate overtook the Mennonites of the Chortitza settlement and the surrounding villages. Between July and September the White army under Denikin occupied this territory, fighting for the restoration of the old regime. Mennonites who had already experienced the unpredictable situation during the Revolution and had been molested by the Russian peasantry showed their sympathies toward the Denikin army as they had done before with respect to the German occupation army. Some young men were now drafted into the Denikin army. Late in September the Makhno bandits moved into the Chortitza settlement, killing hundreds of people and destroying property and burning houses, particularly the families and homes of those where a member had joined the Denikin army. A most vivid description of the tribulations of the Chortitza settlement is given by the report of the eyewitness, Dietrich Neufeld, in *Ein Tagebuch aus dem Reiche des Totentanzes* in English, *Russian Dance of Death*. According to Karl Stumpp a total of individuals were murdered in the Chortitza settlement in . It was to include all males years of age. A nearby Chortitza daughter settlement, Nikolaipol Nikolaifeld, also suffered immeasurably. The village Dubovka Eichenfeld lost its male population and four women, a total of 85 persons during one night. As in other cases, the population had shown preference to an orderly government. After the occupation by the German and the Denikin armies, some had joined the Selbstschutz. All this, however, does not justify the measures taken by Makhno and his bandits, although it may have helped to provoke them. The Makhno raids were simply planless anarchistic behavior which expressed itself in these explosive ways under the slogan, "Anarchy is the mother of all order. Here, too, some of the young men had been trained in the use of

weapons during the German occupation and the withdrawing Germans left weapons and ammunition with the Mennonites, which was known to the surrounding Russian population. The next government was that of the Petlura bandits and the Bolsheviki, after which the White army of Denikin moved in. Property which had been taken from the Mennonites by the surrounding Russian population was restored during the occupation of the German army and now again by the White army. The fact that some of the Mennonite young men helped in returning the property was later counted against them. On 29 November, the Makhno bandits also occupied the Zagradoivka settlement. Horrors which the settlers experienced cannot be described. In one village they killed almost the total male population on 29 November. Neufeld reports that people were killed here and six villages were destroyed by fire. In some of the larger Mennonite settlements like Orenburg and Siberia similar Selbstschutz organizations came into being, although they were directed more against the uncontrollable native groups such as the Bashkirs. Examples of complete nonresistance in hours of immeasurable stress and trial were furnished by the Mennonite settlements of Terek and Central Asia. The majority of the Mennonites of all settlements did not approve of any measure of self-defense although they probably did not always clearly protest against its use. Janzen later of Waterloo, Ont. He was vigorously opposed to the Selbstschutz. The total number of the Selbstschutz members given by Ehrst as 2, seems rather high. The official leaders and conferences regretted this development and stated publicly that it was a "grave mistake. On the whole the Selbstschutz organization was a regrettable deviation from a cherished principle of the Mennonites. It was an illustration of the fact that a peacetime principle tested under unusual conditions will likely not find per cent adherence. On the whole, however, it must not be overlooked that only a small percentage arose in self-defense, which was caused by immeasurable suffering. In view of this fact it is probably more surprising that not more of the Mennonites participated. Many of those who were in the Selbstschutz remained in Russia. Among those who joined the White army were the "62" who came to the United States via Constantinople. Much has been written on the subject of "Makhno" and the "Selbstschutz" but primarily as an outburst caused by a mortal wound. No scholarly inquiry has been made into the causes of the attack on the Mennonites, the relationship of this attack to the Selbstschutz, and the factors which led to the organization of the Selbstschutz and the opposition to it. During the German occupation April-November, , hitherto secret Selbstschutz units were trained openly under German supervision mainly in Molotschna, Chortitza, Nikolaipol, and Zagradoivka. If and when the German troops withdrew, these militia units were to become operative. The Molotschna Selbstschutz proved to be the only one of any military significance. As the largest and wealthiest Mennonite colony, Molotschna had the most to lose from terrorist depredations. The more militant Mennonites were further influenced by the glamorous presence of German troops and by the militancy of nearby non-Mennonite German colonists. They also welcomed the compromise resolution approved at the Lichtenau Allgemeine Mennonitische Bundeskonferenz July which affirmed the ideal of nonresistance but refused to condemn Mennonites who took up arms. The centuries-old principle of nonresistance seemed suddenly irrelevant in a life-and-death crisis. Aided and abetted by the White Army, the Molotschna Selbstschutz took the field with a successful attack against Makhnovite forces at Chernigovka 6 December. In early March, Makhno combined with the advancing Red Army to force the Selbstschutz to retreat and disband in Halbstadt. What had begun as a police action ended, in the eyes of the Bolshevik government, as rebellious fighting against the Red Army. Having opted out of the political process four centuries earlier, the Mennonites had opted back in militarily and shown that "the logic of circumstances spoke more strongly than the logic of theology," according to one historian. In tragically provocative conditions and against the will of the majority, Mennonites had sacrificed the concept of the suffering church to the instinct for self-preservation. The History of the Makhnovist Movement, Journal of Mennonite Studies 4 Ehrst, Adolf Das Mennonitentum in Russland: Toews in Mennonite Life 26 July Entstehung, Entwicklung und Untergang. Mennonite life in Russia before the Revolution. Die Mennoniten-Gemeinden in Russland bis A Russian Dance of Death: Revolution and Civil War in the Ukraine, trans. Menschenlos in schwerer Zeit: Wer das Schwert nimmt. Toews, Gerhard George De Brecht. Deutsche Schicksale im Russland der Anarchie. Toews, Czars, Soviets and Mennonites.

Chapter 2 : Frontier - GAMEO

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The Chicago Manual of Style. The University of Chicago Press, Our Trek to Central Asia. Elizabeth Peters and Gerhard Ens. Es Wurde Wieder Ruhig: Mennonite Heritage Centre, Mennonites in the Global Village. University of Toronto Press, And When They Shall Ask. Dueck Film Productions, An Introduction to Mennonite History: A Popular History of the Anabaptists and the Mennonites. Gift of Mennonite Heritage Centre. Troubles and Triumphs, Excerpts from the Diary of Peter J. Dyck Ladekopp, Molotschna Colony, Ukraine. Up From the Rubble. Memoirs of Trauma and Tears. The Mennonite Experience in Canada, University of Ottawa Press, Versuch einer Darstellung des Entwicklungsganges derselben. Historische Schriftenreihe des Echo-Verlages, 8. Macmillan of Canada, Anthologie des deutschen Schrifttums der Mennoniten in Canada. Mennonite German Society of Canada, A Mennonite in Russia: The Diaries of Jacob D. Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War. Translated and edited by Peter Pauls. Das Ende von Chortitza Destruction of Chortitza. In Search of Utopia: Life on the Wintergruen Estate. Translated by Neta Enns. The Story of Four Mennonite Villages. Mennonites in Russia, Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz. Mennonites through the Centuries: Mennonite Heritage Village, Buildings of the Mennonite Commonwealth. A Modest Mennonite Home. Friesen, Ted and Elisabeth Peters, ed. Pine Hill Printery, Selbstverlag des Verfassers, From its Founding in to the Present. Mennonite Settlements in Crimea. A Family History, No Strangers in Exile: Gift of the Mennonite Heritage Centre. Mennonite Library and Archives, Adventures of a Mennonite: From the Dirty Thirties out Into the World. As a Mennonite of Pioneer Ancestry. An Example of Russian Mennonite Life. From Danzig to Russia: Translated by Walter E. Toews and Adolf Ens. Historische Schriftenreihe des Echo-Verlages, 6. North Kildonan, Manitoba, Canada: Included Amish and Brethren in Christ. Mennonite life in Russia before the Revolution. Jewish Mennonite Ukrainian Committee. A Sharing of Diversities: Journal of Mennonite Studies. A People of Two Kingdoms: The Political Acculturations of the Kansas Mennonites. Faith and Life Press, Augustana College Press, Bei uns im Alten Russland: Low German songs Among the Mennonites. University of Manitoba Press, Klassen, Herbert and Maureen. Ambassador to his People: Klassen and the Russian Mennonite Refugees. Stimmungsbilder, Gedanken und rinnerungen The Island Chortitza: Moods, Thoughts and Memories. From the Steppes to the Prairies: A Homeland for Strangers: An Introduction to Mennonites in Poland and Prussia. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Heimat Einmal Once a Homeland. Klippenstein, Lawrence and Jacob Dick. Mennonite Alternative Service in Russia: Klippenstein, Lawrence and Jim Suderman. David Klassen and the Mennonites. Book Society of Canada: Peter, a Man of Stamina and Courage. From the Steppes to the Prairies Mennonite Publication Office, On the Backroad to Heaven: Johns Hopkins University Press, First Mennonite Villages in Russia, Arbeiter-Samariter- Bund Rhein-Necker, Kulturtagung der Deutschen aus Russland. Soziale und kulturelle Integration der Russlanddeutschen inder Bundesrepublik Deutschlnad: Kulturtagung der Deutschen aus Russland vom Landsmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, Immer Weiter nach Osten: Mennonites Escape the Land of Suffering. Mennonite Colony on the Dnieper.

Chapter 3 : Direction: Journeys: Mennonite Stories of Faith and Survival in Stalin's Russia

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It asserted that "the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development. For much of their history the Anabaptists Anabaptism and Mennonites have also been a frontier people. During most of the 16th century most of the Anabaptists fled simply to save their lives or were expelled upon threat of death if they returned. The impulse to survive drove them into the wilderness, to the frontiers of their day and, strange as it may seem, even some 20th-century Mennonite migrations have been what seemed to the migrants a search for survival, now not so much physically as culturally and, they would say, spiritually. No fewer than edicts or mandates were issued against the Anabaptists and Mennonites by various authorities from to , demanding suppression, exile, or death, and an additional 55 from to Thus those who survived were truly forced to become the church in the wilderness Ezekiel Limited tolerance came first in the Netherlands , in the North in the s and in the South in the s, but various dukes, counts, and nobles gave them shelter earlier also, as did Countess Anna of Friesland in Moravia proved to be a particular haven of refuge for Anabaptists as early as It is estimated that from 20, to 30, found shelter there, including leaders like Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Hut. Eventually the Hutterian Brethren became the largest of the groups in Moravia , continuing their "Golden Period" until about The Hutterites were not only excellent agriculturists, but also excelled in many trades and crafts like ceramics pottery , cutlery, clocks of all sizes, weavers, tailors, agricultural tools, milling, shoemaking. A total of 39 vocations were listed in their Chronicle Gross. A few even became barber-surgeons serving the health needs of common people and nobility alike, being called to Prague and to various castles and monasteries Friedmann. These skills obviously made the local authorities tolerant and eager to retain the Hutterites. Yet there was, since the 15th century Hussite wars, also a long tradition of religious tolerance in the region. Some nobles also found the faith of the Anabaptists attractive. It is believed that Johann of Liechtenstein , lord of Nikolsburg , received believers baptism. Prussia, and Poland Because of severe persecution, Anabaptists fled from the southern Netherlands , now Belgium , to the north and along the Baltic coastline to Bremen , Hamburg, and Danzig Gdansk beginning in the s. Most of the Mennonites, however, initially located in East Prussia in the area around Koenigsberg Kaliningrad. It is likely that they came from Moravia. By the number of Anabaptists had increased, but the largest influx came from the Netherlands. In a letter dated May 2, , the city council of Danzig asked the authorities in Emden, Amsterdam and Antwerp to certify the passenger lists of ships going to Danzig to prevent Anabaptists from going there, but they went anyway, either as stowaways or overland or with the quiet connivance of ship captains. No early evidence has been found to show that Prussian authorities seriously tried to prevent the Anabaptist immigration despite the warnings and edicts against them. The authorities of several Baltic-rim Hanseatic League cities, including Danzig, did plan to meet in Luneberg on July 1, , to find ways of coping with the problem, but it is not clear whether the meeting took place. In any case, the substantial migration from the Netherlands was to continue for many years. In Menno Simons visited the region and, a year later, Dirk Philips became permanent elder until his death on a trip to Emden in Why were they tolerated? Not least, probably, because they were quiet and peace-loving citizens, but primarily because they proved to be a powerful economic asset. The Polish-Prussian War of had devastated the region. The Anabaptists, in this case the Dutch Mennonites, were not only hard workers but also knew from life in their homeland how to drain the swamps of the Vistula River delta, build windmills, and restore or establish thriving new agricultural communities. Bringing the delta lands under control was to take the better part of a century and, in fact, became a constant challenge. Royal Hapsburg pressure eventually did force authorities to ask the Mennonites to leave East Prussia, but they found a ready welcome nearby in West Polish Prussia. Other Mennonite refugees soon took their place again in the east. Even the Roman Catholic bishop of Lesslau refused to expel them, despite repeated urging by the authorities, because he needed their economic skills Peter Klassen. Polish nobility maintained a considerable degree of autonomy in the 16th century and were

often open to new religious movements. Many "heretics" found shelter on their estates Ratzlaff, Unruh. We conclude from these accounts and those which follow that being an economic asset was to become a major, if not primary, reason for tolerating Mennonites in Moravia , The Netherlands , the Palatinate , Canada , the United States , and wherever they went, not least in Latin America, throughout their entire history to the late 20th century. They came to be known as self-sufficient, hardworking, frugal, and peaceful on the most difficult frontiers. There have also, however, been many examples of tolerance in principle, regardless of economics , as illustrated in Moravia and, notably in the 16th century, by Duke Philipp of Hesse Littel and William of Orange of The Netherlands. Russia Social, agricultural, and economic pressures eventually caused many Prussian Mennonites to accept the invitation of Catherine II of Russia to migrate to the Ukraine beginning in The expulsion of the Tatars and Turks from that region made it necessary to occupy and restore the land. The earliest movements brought ca. A barren new frontier awaited them. Migrations from Prussia continued into the s but Mennonites in Russia also moved to new frontiers within Russia, particularly through the founding of daughter colonies. By there were ca. While the Mennonites were only a small portion of European immigrants to Russia, they had become aware of their own unique economic power and used it as leverage to secure special privileges, a practice which had already begun partially in Prussia. A point petition requesting both limited and. This was known as the Privilegium and set a precedent that has continued to the present in other contexts. Many of the articles applied to matters of faith and culture. If these were threatened or broken in the course of time, many Mennonites often the more conservative? This accounted for the s migration from Russia to Canada and the United States. Canada and the United States A major reason for Mennonite success on hostile frontiers has been their cooperation among themselves, normally settling in colonies with a centralized economy and administration This was particularly true in Russia. The degree of Mennonite cooperation was not as intense as that of Hutterian communalism which allowed no private property, but interdependence and mutual aid often became the key to survival. Thus the advance parties sent to investigate North America in looked for large tracts of land suitable for colony settlement. They were not disappointed in Canada, where the Secretary of Agriculture presented them with a point Privilegium which included the two key guarantees of block settlement and exemption from military service F. A similar request in the U. Congress failed, despite powerful advocacy in the Senate based on the economic asset the new settlers would become Smith. Land distribution seemed to be the prerogative of the railroads and military recruitment and conscription were under the jurisdiction of the states. Mennonites were well-known in both countries, of course, since their settlement in Germantown in , and in Upper Canada Ontario , in The Dutch Mennonite Plockboy had even earlier established a short-lived utopian communitarian colony at Horekill on the Delaware River, Because of these developments the Mennonite immigrants to Canada in the s did settle on "reserves" provided especially for them, while the larger number immigrating to the United States settled in less compact communities in the Midwest. It may be that the Mennonite sectarian work ethic played a role in securing special privileges both in Canada and the United States. Their history as successful pioneers on difficult frontiers was well known. Yet most religious groups were tolerated on the North American frontier. Mennonites were not above the laws of the land. They too went West until the frontier was gone ? When World War I came , tolerance became one of its casualties. In Canada it led to some Mennonite emigration to Mexico and Paraguay ; in the United States to harassment and suffering. While Mennonites, along with many other groups, did seek lands where they might preserve their identity in isolation, and, where they did not emigrate, language temporarily replaced geography as a boundary marker. In time they inevitably became a part of the developing Canadian mosaic of peoples and of the U. Latin America Because many Mennonites believed the Canadian government had not held to the terms of the privilegium large numbers of Old Colony and Sommerfeld Mennonites immigrated to Paraguay and to Mexico between and In Paraguay the requested privileges were guaranteed by Decreto Ley law in and similar guarantees were secured by presidential decree in Mexico. Nowhere did the Mennonites encounter a more difficult frontier in their entire history than in the "green hell" of the Chaco , except perhaps in Siberian slave labor communities. But in time they made the desert bloom even in the Chaco Friesen. Pioneering in Mexico was also difficult, but climate and roads were more manageable. Still, it was a barren, windswept frontier when they came Fretz, Redekop, Sawatzky. New

groups of Mennonites entered the Chaco and Brazil in , but in the latter without the privilege of exemption from military service. Alternative service for conscientious objectors was written into the Brazilian constitution only in . Eventually new frontiers were found in Bolivia and Belize and, in the s, in Argentina. During the s new Mennonite immigrants traveled from Mexico to Texas as well as to Nova Scotia and other parts of Canada. Cheese and dairy products have become a major Mennonite contribution to the economies and human welfare of their new homelands, as have many other products and services. In Paraguay the development and production of wheat suitable to that climate turned the nation from complete reliance on imports to becoming a wheat-exporting country. Summary The era of special privilege in return for national economic gain may be over. Laws have changed, some because of Mennonite influence, but they are assumed to apply to all people, with some exceptions in Latin America. The movement has been from persecution to toleration to special privileges privilegium to integration or assimilation. First-generation Anabaptists did not ask for special privilege. What they claimed to be biblically right and true for themselves they claimed for all believers. The movement has come full circle. Geographical frontiers have largely disappeared. The frontiers of faith and witness, but also occasional cultural distinctives, have taken their place as, for example, among the Amish , Old Order and Old Colony Mennonites. The absence of background literature about Mennonite frontiers in Asia and Africa made it seem prudent not to include them here though we do have some information on Indonesia and Australia. In its time the frontier gave Mennonites the isolation they wanted, but not always for their good. Faith and culture atrophy in isolation, of which there are examples in the Mennonite experience, but the frontier also encourages faith, driving pioneers to their spiritual roots. The frontier fosters idealism, vision, self-reliance, and a certain individualism, yet invariably also interdependence and community. It provides opportunity for growth and experimentation. The frontier allows something new to emerge in all areas of human experience. The virtues of sharing and caring are nurtured on the frontier. Life and death take on new meaning. Persecution and frontiers have been primary motifs in shaping Mennonite identity.

Chapter 4 : John B. Toews (Author of Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre)

The Mennonites first immigrated to Prussia from the Netherlands around in order to escape religious persecution. In , Emperor Charles V proclaimed an edict against heretics, but it was after when the persecution began to increase to levels that sparked larger movements to Prussia.

Gradually, this policy extended to a few other major cities. In , Moscow had about , citizens; 18, of them were Nemtsy, which means either "German" or "western foreigner". Vistula Germans Poland [edit] See also: Germans and Dutch settled its valley starting from the Baltic Sea and moving further south with time. Its existence was brief - to , but by its end many German settlers had established Protestant agricultural settlements within its earlier borders. The "Breyer Map" shows the distribution of German settlements in what became central Poland. The French Emperor incorporated it and other territories into the Duchy of Warsaw. The western Posen region again became part of Prussia, while what is now central Poland became the Russian client-state Congress Poland. Many Germans remained in this central region, maintaining their middle-German Prussian dialect, similar to the Silesian dialect, and their religions. Some became Polonized , however, and their descendants remain in Poland. After World War II, many of those who retained their German language and customs were forcibly expelled by the Russians and the Poles, with the loss of all their property. Volga Germans Russian Germans [edit] Main article: She proclaimed open immigration for foreigners wishing to live in the Russian Empire on July 22, , marking the beginning of a much larger presence for Germans in the Empire. German colonies in the lower Volga river area were founded almost immediately afterward. These early colonies were attacked during the Pugachev uprising , which was centred on the Volga area, but they survived the rebellion. German immigration was motivated in part by religious intolerance and warfare in central Europe as well as by frequently difficult economic conditions. Moving to Russia gave German immigrants political rights that they would not have possessed in their own lands. Religious minorities found these terms very agreeable, particularly Mennonites from the Vistula River valley. Their unwillingness to participate in military service, and their long tradition of dissent from mainstream Lutheranism and Calvinism , made life under the Prussians very difficult for them. Nearly all of the Prussian Mennonites emigrated to Russia over the following century, leaving no more than a handful in Prussia. German colonization was most intense in the Lower Volga , but other areas also saw an influx. The area around the Black Sea received many German immigrants, and the Mennonites favoured the lower Dniepr river area, around Ekaterinoslav now Dnipro and Aleksandrovsk now Zaporizhia. In the chaos of the Napoleonic wars , the response from Germans was enormous. Ultimately, the Tsar imposed minimum financial requirements on new immigrants, requiring them to either have gulden in cash or special skills in order to come to Russia. The abolition of serfdom in the Russian Empire in created a shortage of labour in agriculture and motivated new German immigration, particularly from increasingly crowded central European states, where there was no longer enough fertile land for full employment in agriculture. The 18th-century partitions of Poland " dismantled the Polish-Lithuanian state, dividing it between Austria, Prussia and Russia. Many Germans already living in those parts of Poland transferred to Russia, dating back to medieval and later migrations. Many Germans in Congress Poland migrated further east into Russia between then and World War I , particularly in the aftermath of the Polish insurrection of The Polish insurrection in added a new wave of German emigration from Poland to those who had already moved east, and led to the founding of extensive German colonies in Volhynia. When Poland reclaimed its independence in after World War I , it ceased to be a source of German emigration to Russia, but by then many hundreds of thousands of Germans had already settled in enclaves across the Russian Empire. Germans settled in the Caucasus area from the beginning of the 19th century and in the s expanded into the Crimea. In the s new German colonies opened in the Altay mountain area in Russian Asia see Mennonite settlements of Altai. German colonial areas continued to expand in Ukraine as late as the beginning of World War I. According to the first census of the Russian Empire in , about 1. Catherine the Great had gained this land for Russia through her two wars with the Ottoman Empire " and from the annexation of the Crimean Khanates The area of settlement was not settled as compactly as

that of the Volga territory, rather it became home to a chain of colonies. The first German settlers arrived in , first from West Prussia , then later from Western and Southwestern Germany, and from the Warsaw area. Also many Germans, beginning in , immigrated from the northeastern area of Alsace west of the Rhine, and settled roughly 30 miles northeast of Odessa city in Ukraine, forming several enclaves that quickly multiplied with daughter colonies springing up nearby. Crimea Germans and Crimean Goths From onwards a systematic settlement of Russians , Ukrainians , and Germans in the Crimean Peninsula in what was then the Crimean Khanate aimed to dilute the native population of the Crimean Tatars. In , two years before their deportation to Central Asia , around 60, of the 1. Under perestroika in the late s Germans gained the right to return to the peninsula. Germans of Volhynia Belarus, Poland and Ukraine [edit] The migration of Germans into Volhynia as of [update] covering northwestern Ukraine from a short distance west of Kiev to the border with Poland occurred under significantly different conditions than those going to other parts of Russia. By the end of the 19th century Volhynia had over , German settlers. Although the noblemen themselves offered certain perks for the move, the Germans of Volhynia received none of the special tax and military service freedoms granted to the Germans in other areas. The settlement started as a trickle shortly after A surge occurred after the first Polish rebellion of but by , they were still only about in number. The largest migration came after the second Polish rebellion of when they began to flood into the area by the thousands until they reached their peak at about , in the year The vast majority of these Germans were of the Lutheran in Europe they were referred to as Evangelicals faith. Limited numbers of Mennonites from the lower Vistula River region settled in the south part of Volhynia, while Baptists and Moravian Brethren also arrived, mostly settling northwest of Zhitomir. Another major difference between the Germans here and in other parts of Russia is that the other Germans tended to settle in larger communities. The Germans in Volhynia were scattered about in over villages. Though the population peaked in , many Germans had already begun leaving Volhynia in the late s for North and South America. Between and a small group of Volhynian German farmers 36 families - more than people chose instead to move to Eastern Siberia, making use of the resettlement subsidies of the Stolypin reform of They apparently were not using German any more, but rather spoke Ukrainian and Polish, and used Lutheran Bibles that had been printed in East Prussia , in Polish , but in fraktur. Their descendants, still bearing German names, continue to live in the district into the 21st century. Caucasus Germans A German minority of about , people existed in the Caucasus region, in areas such as the North Caucasus , Georgia , and Azerbaijan. In Joseph Stalin ordered all inhabitants with a German father to be deported, mostly to Siberia or Kazakhstan. Decline of the Russian Germans[edit] See also: In , he repealed the open-door immigration policy of his ancestors, effectively ending any new German immigration into the Empire. Although the German colonies continued to expand, they were driven by natural growth and by the immigration of Germans from Poland. The Russian nationalism that took root under Alexander II served as a justification for eliminating in the bulk of the tax privileges enjoyed by Russian Germans, and after they were subjected to military service. Only after long negotiations, Mennonites, traditionally a pacifist denomination, were allowed to serve alternative service in the form of work in forestry and the medical corps. The resulting disaffection motivated many Russian Germans, especially members of traditionally dissenting churches, to migrate to the United States and Canada, while many Catholics chose Brazil and Argentina. The majority of Volhynia Germans chose Canada as their destination with significant numbers later migrating to the United States. After , Russian Germans were required to study Russian in school and lost all their remaining special privileges. Many Germans remained in Russia, particularly those who had done well as Russia began to industrialise in the late 19th century. World War I was the first time Russia went to war against Germany since the Napoleonic era , and Russian Germans were quickly suspected of having enemy sympathies. The Germans living in the Volhynia area were deported to the German colonies in the lower Volga river in when Russia started losing the war. In , an order was issued to deport the Volga Germans to the east as well, but the Russian Revolution prevented this from being carried out. The loyalties of Russian Germans during the revolution varied. Although some Russian Germans were very wealthy, others were quite poor and sympathised strongly with their Slavic neighbours. Educated Russian Germans were just as likely to have leftist and revolutionary sympathies as the ethnically Russian intelligentsia. In the chaos of the Russian Revolution and the civil war that followed it, many ethnic Germans

were displaced within Russia or emigrated from Russia altogether. The chaos surrounding the Russian Civil War was devastating to many German communities, particularly to religious dissenters like the Mennonites. Many Mennonites hold the forces of Nestor Makhno in Ukraine particularly responsible for large-scale violence against their community. This period was also one of regular food shortages, caused by famine and the lack of long distance transportation of food during the fighting. Russian German organisations in the Americas, particularly the Mennonite Central Committee , organised famine relief in Russia in the late s. Volga German Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, Nonetheless, Soviet nationalities policy had, to some degree, restored the institutions of Russian Germans in some areas. The Lutheran church , like nearly all religious affiliations in Russia, was ruthlessly suppressed under Stalin. It is evident that, at this point, the regime considered national minorities with ethnic ties to foreign states, such as Germans, potential fifth columnists. On August 12, , the Central Committee of the Communist Party decreed the expulsion of the Volga Germans, allegedly for treasonous activity, from their autonomous republic on the lower Volga. In subsequent months, an additional , ethnic Germans were deported to Siberia from their other traditional settlements such as Ukraine and the Crimea. The Soviets were not successful in expelling all German settlers living in the Western and Southern Ukraine, however, due to the rapid advance of the Wehrmacht German Army. Thus in , the Nazi German census registered , ethnic Germans living in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union. With the Soviet re-conquest, the Wehrmacht evacuated about , German Russians and brought them back to the Reich. More than , German Russians were deported, against their will, by the Allies and sent to the Gulag. Thus, shortly after the end of the war, more than one million ethnic Germans from Russia were in special settlements and labor camps in Siberia and Central Asia. It is estimated that , to , died of starvation, lack of shelter, over-work, and disease during the s. Although the post-Stalin Soviet state no longer persecuted ethnic Germans as a group, their Soviet republic was not re-founded. Many Germans in Russia largely assimilated and integrated into Russian society. There were some 2 million ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union in A very few Germans returned to one of their ancestral provinces: Russian Germans and the Perestrojka[edit] The neutrality of this section is disputed. Relevant discussion may be found on the talk page. Please do not remove this message until conditions to do so are met. July This article relies largely or entirely on a single source. Please help improve this article by introducing citations to additional sources. July Since migrating to Russia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Germans had adopted many of the Slavic traits and cultures and formed a special group known as "rossiskie nemtsy", or Russian Germans. Many Germans integrated into Soviet society where they now continue to live.

Chapter 5 : Selbstschutz - GAMEO

Mennonites in Canada, Volume 2, A People's Struggle for www.nxgvision.com Frank H. Epp. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, pp. \$ and Czars, Soviets.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta MHSAA undertook to publish the stories of a number of people, both men and women, who have served significantly in providing leadership for our people. Some played a very important role in church work, while others served in the wider conferences and committees. In many cases, it was the spouses and children of these leaders who were the mortar that held the family and church together. The Vauxhall church was in existence for 62 years. Rempel, translated by David J. The story is a very personal, faith-based one, written in the belief that God led rescued this family and many, many others through great tribulation to the only possible solution – that of immigration to Canada. It is a stirring account of faith, survival and escape. Faith, Life and Witness in the Northwest, It was organized by three small Alberta congregations in It has grown by adding new congregations of Mennonite settlers and initiatives in northern missions, voluntary service, and church planting. It now finds itself in a period of transition as it assesses new challenges and the impact of a major reorganization of the parent national and international conferences with which it is no longer affiliated. A Generation of Vigilance: Ted Regehr was invited to write the story of the Harders after Jacob Loewen, who had begun the task, passed away. For several decades, the Harders were the most prominent and influential MB church and conference leaders in British Columbia. Persevering in her pursuit of education she was one of the first students to graduate from high school and became a teacher and librarian. She married and raised a family. This is her first book. Bergthal Gemeinde Buch with annotations by John Dyck; Chortitzer Gemeinde Buch indexes for volumes started in , and ; Passenger lists of Mennonite immigrants to Manitoba with annotations by Cathy Barkman; The federal census data on residents in Manitoba Mennonite communities edited by John Dyck, published by Hanover Steinbach Historical Society Softcover, pp. Only the title is in German – contains thousands of family group sheets from the Bergthaler Mennonite Manitoba church records that were begun in , Bergthal, Russia. Generally birth, and baptismal dates are provided. Often death dates are also recorded. Families are cross-referenced with older and younger generations. A household head index is included. Mennonites found on Quebec passenger lists for are cross-referenced as are those found in the Census of Canada for Manitoba Mennonite municipalities Hanover, Rhineland, Stanley. Church, Family and Village: Some appearing for the first time in English. Grandma 6 compiled by California Mennonite Historical Society, self-published Definitely a bargain for the genealogist! Among them were Heinrich and Helena Kroeger and their five children. After living for years in the comfortable surroundings of a Russian Mennonite community, the Kroeger family experienced war, revolution, a typhus epidemic, and hyper-inflation in quick succession. In , they left their homeland to settle in an arid region of Western Canada. Mennonite Historical Atlas, 2nd Ed. Includes many pages of thumbnail geo-historical text, a bibliography, and an index. Updated with a page index. The cities covered are: Molotschna Historical Atlas by Helmut T. Amazing assembly of whole-colony and individual village maps. The final section also addresses significant departures of Mennonites from the East Reserve. Male and Female indexes are included. Ben Horch ; G Building on the Past: Diary of Anna Baerg: They left a Hutterite colony near Portage Prairie, Manitoba with seven children and little else, to start a new life. Overnight, the family was thrust into a society they did not understand and which knew little of their unique culture. Martin describes the revolution in American medicine first, from a bottom-up view as a participant; but, perhaps even more important, Martin can describe these changes from a top-down view since he has been the leader of academic medicine during this period. In this book we learn about the evolution of modern medicine from one of the people who participated in shaping it and who did so with the attempt not to lose sight of the patient, the physician, and the science that drives it all. His successes in sport and business were not enough to silence the struggle with a sense of rejection. He sought out information about his birth mother and examine his strengths and weaknesses. Searching those out he found his identity in his faith. It moves from being a personal narrative to contextual comments. This is a story of faith, family, forgiveness,

freedom. Mennonites in Canada, Who would have known that we had over pages of information available to us on Mennonite estates in Russia? While maps are featured in about 60 pages, the focus of this book is on the lengthy annotated lists of Mennonite Estates in Imperial Russia this covers over pages. However, James Urry dispels this myth in his detailed and scholarly exploration of the subject. It shows Mennonites involved in constitutional reform through to party politics. It was originally published in German in This new edition was completed for the years after This work has been done by a committee in Warendorf. Written by 19 different writers. There are theologians and teachers, poets and artists, printers and publishers – a diverse array. They all had a passion for education and self expression, and spanned the spectrum from religious evangelism to communism. Through Fire and Water: It uses stories of men and women, peasants and pastors, heroes and rascals, to trace the radical Reformation from 16th Century Europe to the global Anabaptist family of the 21st Century. It is a highly readable account of Mennonite history. Travelling in a conestoga, or covered wagon, they suffered many hardships on their journey north. Through courage and endurance, they found a new life in Canada. Last Updated 01 Apr

Chapter 6 : Germans from Russia Heritage Collection

The Regehr family was among approximately , Mennonites who lived in the Soviet Union during the s. Mennonites are an ethnic and religious Anabaptist group who traditionally practice pacificism, voluntary adult baptism, and a rejection of oaths.

These factors include increased militarism among European Mennonites, survival tactics of the Mennonites, German nationalistic feelings, Antisemitism and difficult situations in the Soviet Union such as collectivization, violence, and anti-German sentiments. This article explores not only how these factors influenced these men, but the Mennonite community as a whole. Examining these men and the factors that influences their decisions in such difficult and unique circumstances is important because it offers a look into an often untold story in Mennonite history, which runs counter to the main ideals of nonresistance. Background Studies investigating the Holocaust have widely accepted the categories of people involved as perpetrators, bystanders, and victims. Some research has even begun to add a fourth category: Each saw what had happened from its own, special perspective, and each harbored a separate set of attitudes and reactions. Often when drawing these lines, certain organizations were labeled as perpetrators, such as the SS, while others were generally deemed as having clean hands, as was the case with the Wehrmacht. Many scholars point out, however, that these categories are not always easily distinguishable. Common belief when looking at Mennonite involvement in the Holocaust is that they took a stance against the Nazis and would be classified as rescuers or bystanders. Much scholarship supports this attitude. Horst Gerlach stated, It can be demonstrate that Some men of Mennonite background collaborated with the Nazis, in some instances taking active roles in the Final Solution. Small groups of Mennonites were involved in the Holocaust, serving in the SS or in the regular army, and participated in the murder of Jews and other victims of the Holocaust. It is generally unusual to think of a Mennonite playing such a role so it is important not only to look at the part that they played in the Holocaust but also the outside influences and culture that would have led them into such a task. There are a number of different cases of men who were Mennonites. All of the men came from quite similar backgrounds in the Ukraine or Danzig area and yet their religious status differed noticeably, according to how they registered themselves under four different categories of religion: Such a study brings up the question of why exactly these men would choose to declare statuses other than Mennonite on their papers. Another issue to consider is that Protestant is very likely to be a broader and more acceptable term under which Mennonite would fall. Despite the fact that these men chose different religious statuses, they were all still products of the Mennonite community. Such a category begs new questions, such as what different circumstances and conditions would lead these men to serve in either the Wehrmacht or the SS, regardless of the fact that such actions fell short of the pacifist beliefs of the Mennonite people. There are a number of factors that may have had an influence, the first of which is that these men did not move away from their beliefs at all because of the decrease in pacifism in European Mennonites already in the years before World War II. Many Mennonite men also did not want to serve in such a capacity or expect to commit such crimes, but they felt it was necessary in order to survive. Some of these men had strong nationalistic feelings toward Germany and felt as if it was their duty to serve in order to show their loyalty to their fatherland. Struggles with collectivization, violence, and the suppression of faith in the Soviet Union made many men view Germany as their liberators once the German army occupied the Mennonite villages as well. It is important to not overlook one final explanation for why some Mennonites might enter the Wehrmacht or SS, which is that at this time many Mennonites had strong antisemitic feelings. The Holocaust is one of the most tragic events that occurred within the twentieth century. The Nazi party that was the foundation of the terror fed off of already established beliefs of antisemitism and fear of communism. One particular example, which occurred in , was the burning of the Reichstag, the parliament building in Berlin. This event perfectly demonstrated what Hitler did to gain the power that he needed to launch such massive operations of genocide. Hitler blamed the burning of the Reichstag on the communists, and took action against many communist men, such as arrests, shootings, and even opening the first concentration camp to imprison them. This small step led to another and another, and by

the end of the Holocaust there were an estimated six million Jews dead. This does not take into account the communists, Poles, gypsies, handicapped, homosexuals and many others who also lost their lives at the hands of the Nazi powers. This particular paper is going to focus not only on practicing Mennonites but also on ethnic Mennonites. This includes those who would classify themselves religiously as Mennonites as well as those who may not have considered themselves to be Mennonite in religion but who had a Mennonite background. Men who renounced Christianity but still confessed a fundamental belief in God chose this option. Beginning in , with increased tension between the churches and the Nazi party, more members began to leave the church. This movement was most prominent in the SS, but could be seen throughout the party.

Geographic Histories City of Danzig and Environs The Mennonites first immigrated to Prussia from the Netherlands around in order to escape religious persecution. In , Emperor Charles V proclaimed an edict against heretics, but it was after when the persecution began to increase to levels that sparked larger movements to Prussia. The emergence of the Mennonite church in Danzig was in the mids, with the first documentation of these people being referred to as Mennonites in the s, and Menno Simons visiting Danzig between . The first documentation of an established church is from the s. Newcomers in brought conflicting views over matters of church discipline, which resulted in a schism. The Flemish, which made up the majority of the Mennonite population were stricter when it came to matters of discipline, while the Frisians were more lax. The traditional religions already established in this area were Lutheran, the Reformed, and Roman Catholic. Although the Mennonites were tolerated as a sect, they would not be granted citizenship unless they converted to one of the three old traditions. This remained the case until the s. The overwhelming feeling was that the Mennonites were merely tolerated, and not accepted because they were part of a sect. Through the end of the seventeenth century, they constantly experienced restrictions and lived in fear of being severed from their livelihood. The Mennonites welcomed this change in the hopes that the church would be able to enjoy the religious protection under the Prussian King. Their nonresistance, however, still suffered even under the new religious toleration. Frederick II issued a Charter of Privileges for the Mennonites on March 29, , which ensured freedom from military service, of religion, and to practice trades. After his death, however, Friedrich Wilhelm II issued a new edict. This Edict Concerning the Future Establishment of the Mennonites in All Royal Prussian Provinces, Excluding the Duchy of Silesia, July 30, , although it still allowed exemption from military service, severely limited the purchase of rural lands, which was a repercussion for their pacifist beliefs. It was around this time that the emigrations to Russia under Catherine II began. The army destroyed the Frisian church in Neugarten in , and only portions of the church could be saved. The two congregations joined in , which proved difficult because of the differences between their ideas of discipline, especially around the topic of marriage outside of the church. This time marked the beginning of the Seven-years suffering under foreign occupation, and was a time of great economic difficulties for the Mennonite people. Frederick William IV used the royal army to quell these rebellions, which triggered a response by the people, who formed citizen militias. These served the purpose of keeping the royal armies in check and allowed a voice for the people who sympathized with the militias. The Mennonites felt the pressure to participate in these militias. The West Prussian Mennonite Congregations held a meeting to discuss what actions should be taken, and agreed to permit participation as long as the men did not carry weapons or wear military emblems. Of course, such stipulations basically forbid them from joining, so another meeting was held in Danzig, and through majority vote, 65 to 36, the men were permitted to participate and bear arms. The King of Prussia passed a new conscription law, which stated that all male inhabitants were subject to military service and all charters of privilege were suspended. The King made an amendment the following year, allowing the Mennonites to serve as drivers, medics, clerks, or craftsmen. The Mennonites held meetings in to decided whether or not to stay. Some left for America, while the others decided that noncombatant service did not violate their beliefs. In , Catherine II, also known as Catherine the Great, extended an invitation to the German people, including Mennonites, to enter Russia and settle the vast expanses of land that she had available. Many accepted to escape from the situation in Prussia. The Mennonite people in particular were welcomed because they had a reputation for being good and respectable farmers. She gave the Mennonites a guarantee of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to govern their own villages, communities, and colonies, and

exemption from military service. Although the Mennonites experienced periods of great affluence in Russia, they began to face challenges to their Mennonite structure in the late s. Russification pressures began to increase and between and Russian became the official language of instruction in Mennonite schools. Also in , a military conscription law was passed, and it was only after intense dialogue between the Mennonite leaders and government officials that an exception was made which would allow the Mennonites to work in the Forestry service. For some Mennonites this was unacceptable and many resettled to America, while others accepted the terms and remained in Russia. The February Revolution of brought this period to an end and introduced the Provisional Government. This government did not last long however, because the next Revolution was only months later. The October Revolution brought the Bolsheviks to power, which marked the beginning of a period of chaos and disorder for the Mennonite people. The particular colonies in Ukraine that these men came out of were the Molotschna colony, the Memrik settlement and Spat, which were both founded by the Molotschna Mennonites, and the Chortiza colony. All of the men were born between and , with the exception of Johann Siebert who was born in . Five men in this study were involved in the SS, while the other six were members of the Wehrmacht. At least three of the men served in the Soviet Army before they joined the Germans, and everyone joined the Wehrmacht or SS by , again with the exception of Siebert, who is believed to have joined in . Five men mentioned that they or their families had to flee or were exiled at some point because of Soviet persecution. The documents from which the majority of this information was gathered from are archival documents, which provided basic background on the men. Some documents were from the Einwandererzentralstelle, which was the Central Office of Immigration. These were used in the process of naturalization to gain citizenship to Germany, which many of the men underwent because of an order that Hitler issued in . Other documents were official SS correspondence and letters from Camp Commandants or Officers in the army. In the case of Jack Reimer, the documents are from his court case in the United States. They contain more personal testimony about his experiences during the war, which is unique from all of the other men examined in this paper. The shortcomings of this form of information are that it is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. Reimer often gives contradictory information about his service in the SS and his experiences during the war. It is important to keep these things in mind when examining these men, because there are still gaps in the story. Kalinowo was part of the Memrik Settlement, which had been founded in by members of the Mennonite Molotschna colony. Just three years before Janzen was born, the membership of the Memrik and Kalinovo Mennonite church was a total of 3, people. All of these relations as well as himself he listed as Protestant. He had an education, attending the Volksschule elementary school from , the Mittelschule high school from , the Deutsche Hochschule German University from and the Russische Hochschule Russian University from . He then became an elementary school teacher, teaching Russian and German. On September 12, the German army drafted him as a soldier. During his service he received an Eastern Front Medal. He gained German citizenship on May 23, , under the decree of

Chapter 7 : History of Germans in Russia, Ukraine and the Soviet Union - Wikipedia

John B. Toews is the author of Journeys (avg rating, 3 ratings, 0 reviews, published), Mennonites in Ukraine Amid Civil War and Anarchy (

Book Review Mennonite Martyrs: Reviewed by Hans Kasdorf With the exception of a few biographical sketches now and then in Mennonite periodicals, this is the first book to appear in English describing the fate of some from among the many Mennonite men and women who suffered for their faith during 70 years of the Soviet regime. Thus both, the original compiler and current translator of these stories, deserve our commendation. Toews was a Mennonite Brethren minister and teacher who personally knew some of the people named in the book. His efforts resulted in the publication of two volumes, entitled Mennonitische Maertyrer. Toews, eminent historian and scholar of Mennonites under Czars and Soviets, has translated over sixty of these martyr stories. About fifty are from the first; the rest from the second volume. While Norwood and the Hefleys cover some of the same time period and the territory dealt with by Toews, there is no evident overlap of stories. It informs us who these people were, how and where they suffered and, in many cases, how they died. Style and language are uncomplicated. Families with teenagers and lay people in churches will appreciate that. But the many letters and comments from the martyrs themselves are primary sources for the scholar and researcher. The alphabetical listing of biographies and a short glossary are helpful tools. What some readers will miss is an index; what others may note are the typographical errors. But the stories remain the main thing. These are stories about Mennonite martyrs. That could suggest that the book is primarily for Mennonite readers. But that is not necessarily so, for these are stories of people who suffered for their faith, a fact transcending all confessional and ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, these stories also tell a unique story—a story of mission and witness of Christian Mennonites, Latvians, Jews, and Russians. The description of the tent mission and itinerant evangelism are examples. Moreover, these are stories of mothers, fathers, sons and daughters; of prophets, teachers, missionaries, pastors, and evangelists.

Chapter 8 : Religion in the Soviet Union - Wikipedia

Library Books Mennonite Czars, Soviets, Mennonites (Book-Soft) by John B. Toews David and Anna "My Labor of Love" (Book-Hard) by Diane Reimer with Anna Reimer.

Living Church and USSR anti-religious campaign

“Soviet policy toward religion was based on the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, which made atheism the official doctrine of the Communist Party. However, "the Soviet law and administrative practice through most of the s extended some tolerance to religion and forbade the arbitrary closing or destruction of some functioning churches", [23] and each successive Soviet constitution granted freedom of belief. As the founder of the Soviet state, Lenin, put it: Religion is the opium of the people: All modern religions and churches, all and of every kind of religious organizations are always considered by Marxism as the organs of bourgeois reaction, used for the protection of the exploitation and the stupefaction of the working class. In the s and s, such organizations as the League of the Militant Godless were active in anti-religious propaganda. Atheism was the norm in schools, communist organizations such as the Young Pioneer Organization, and the media. In , a New York Times correspondent saw Christians observing Easter peacefully in Moscow despite violent anti-religious actions in previous years. Secret "hard line" instructions were issued to local party organizations, but not published. When the anti-religious drive inflamed the anger of the rural population, not to mention that of the Pope and other Western church spokesmen, the regime was able to back off from a policy that it had never publicly endorsed anyway. For the Soviet regime, questions of nationality and religion were always closely linked. Therefore, their attitude toward religion also varied from a total ban on some religions to official support of others. Policy towards nationalities and religion[edit] This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. It stated that every Soviet citizen also had a particular nationality, and every Soviet passport carried these two entries. The constitution granted a large degree of local autonomy, but this autonomy was subordinated to central authority. In addition, because local and central administrative structures were often not clearly divided, local autonomy was further weakened. Although under the Constitution all nationalities were equal, in practice they were not treated so. Only fifteen nationalities had union republic status, which granted them, in principle, many rights, including the right to secede from the union. Twenty-two nationalities lived in autonomous republics with a degree of local self-government and representation in the Council of Nationalities in the Supreme Soviet. Eighteen more nationalities had territorial enclaves autonomous oblasts and autonomous okrugs but had very few powers of self-government. The remaining nationalities had no right of self-government at all. Although Lenin believed that eventually all nationalities would merge into one, he insisted that the Soviet Union be established as a federation of formally equal nations. In the s, genuine cultural concessions were granted to the nationalities. Communist elites of various nationalities were permitted to flourish and to have considerable self-government. National cultures, religions, and languages were not merely tolerated but, in areas with Muslim populations, encouraged. Demographic changes in the s and s whittled down the overall Russian majority, but they also caused two nationalities the Kazakhs and Kirgiz to become minorities in their own republics at the time of the census, and considerably reduced the majority of the titular nationalities in other republics. This situation led Leonid Brezhnev to declare at the 24th Communist Party Congress in that the process of creating a unified Soviet people had been completed, and proposals were made to abolish the federative system and replace it with a single state. In the s, however, a broad movement of national dissent began to spread throughout the Soviet Union. It manifested itself in many ways: Jews insisted on their right to emigrate to Israel; Crimean Tatars demanded to be allowed to return to Crimea; Lithuanians called for the restoration of the rights of the Catholic Church; and Helsinki Watch groups were established in the Georgian, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian republics. Petitions, literature, and occasional public demonstrations voiced public demands for the human rights of all nationalities. By the end of the s, however, massive and concerted efforts by the KGB had largely suppressed the national dissent movement. Nevertheless, Brezhnev had learned his lesson. Proposals to dismantle the federative system were abandoned in favour of a policy of drawing the nationalities together

more gradually. Soviet officials identified religion closely with nationality. Policy towards Orthodoxy[edit] This section does not cite any sources. November Learn how and when to remove this template message The Russian Orthodox Cathedral, once the most dominant landmark in Baku , was demolished in the s under Stalin. During the first five years of Soviet power, the Bolsheviks executed 28 Russian Orthodox bishops and over 1, Russian Orthodox priests. Many others were imprisoned or exiled. Believers were harassed and persecuted. Most seminaries were closed, and the publication of most religious material was prohibited. By only churches remained open out of about 54, in existence prior to World War I. The close ties between the church and the state led to the perception of the church as corrupt and greedy by many members of the intelligentsia. Many peasants , while highly religious, also viewed the church unfavorably. Respect for religion did not extend to the local priests. The Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in induced Stalin to enlist the Russian Orthodox Church as an ally to arouse Russian patriotism against foreign aggression. Russian Orthodox religious life experienced a revival: The regime permitted religious publications, and church membership grew. Although it remained officially sanctioned, in Khrushchev launched an antireligious campaign that was continued in a less stringent manner by his successor, Brezhnev. By the number of active Russian Orthodox churches was reduced to 7, Some of the most prominent members of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy and some activists were jailed or forced to leave the church. Their place was taken by docile clergy who were obedient to the state and who were sometimes infiltrated by KGB agents, making the Russian Orthodox Church useful to the regime. It espoused and propagated Soviet foreign policy and furthered the russification of non-Russian Christians, such as Orthodox Ukrainians and Belarusians. Viewed by the government as very nationalistic, both were suppressed, first at the end of the s and again in after they had renewed themselves under German occupation. The leadership of both churches was decimated; large numbers of priests were shot or sent to labor camps, and members of their congregations were harassed and persecuted. The Georgian Orthodox Church was subject to a somewhat different policy and fared far worse than the Russian Orthodox Church. During World War II, however, it was allowed greater autonomy in running its affairs in return for calling its members to support the war effort, although it did not achieve the kind of accommodation with the authorities that the Russian Orthodox Church had. The government reimposed tight control over it after the war. Out of some 2, churches in , only were still open in the s, and it was forbidden to serve its adherents outside the Georgian Republic. In many cases, the regime forced the Georgian Orthodox Church to conduct services in Old Church Slavonic instead of in the Georgian language. Although the Roman Catholic Church was tolerated in Lithuania, large numbers of the clergy were imprisoned, many seminaries were closed, and police agents infiltrated the remainder. Although the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was permitted to function, it was almost immediately subjected to intense harassment. At the same time, Soviet authorities forced the remaining clergy to abrogate the union with Rome and subordinate themselves to the Russian Orthodox Church. Before World War II, there were fewer Protestants in the Soviet Union than adherents of other faiths, but they showed remarkable growth since then. Many congregations refused to join this body, however, and others that initially joined it subsequently left. All found that the state, through the council, was interfering in church life. Policy toward other Christian groups[edit] This section does not cite any sources. Under Operation North , the personal property of over eight-thousand members was confiscated, and they along with underage children were exiled to Siberia from until repeal in There is no existing record of any having signed this declaration. While in Siberia, some men, women, and children were forced to work as lumberjacks for a fixed wage. Victims reported living conditions to be very poor. Some were forced to work in concentration camps, others forcibly enrolled in Marxist reeducation programs. Early in the Bolshevik period, predominantly before the end of the Russian Civil War and the emergence of the Soviet Union, Russian Mennonite communities were harassed; several Mennonites were killed or imprisoned, and women were raped. Anarcho-Communist Nestor Makhno was responsible for most of the bloodshed, which caused the normally pacifist Mennonites to take up arms in defensive militia units. This marked the beginning of a mass exodus of Mennonites to Germany, the United States, and elsewhere. Mennonites were branded as kulaks by the Soviets. Many were allowed passage to Germany as Volksdeutsche. Soviet officials began exiling Mennonite settlers in the eastern part of Russia to Siberia. After the war, the remaining Russian Mennonites

were branded as Nazi conspirators and exiled to Kazakhstan and Siberia, sometimes being imprisoned or forced to work in concentration camps. In the s the Russian government gave the Mennonites in Kazakhstan and Siberia the opportunity to emigrate. Policy towards Islam[edit] Main article: Islam in the Soviet Union Soviet policy toward Islam was affected, on the one hand by the large Muslim population, its close ties to national cultures, and its tendency to accept Soviet authority, and on the other hand by its susceptibility to foreign influence. Although actively encouraging atheism, Soviet authorities permitted some limited religious activity in all the Muslim republics, under the auspices of the regional branches of the Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of the USSR. Mosques functioned in most large cities of the Central Asian republics and the Azerbaijan Republic , but their number decreased from 25, in to in the s. Under Stalinist rule, Soviet authorities cracked down on Muslim clergy, closing many mosques or turning them into warehouses. The government also announced plans to permit the training of limited numbers of Muslim religious leaders in two- and five-year courses in Ufa and Baku, respectively. Policy towards Judaism[edit] Main article: History of the Jews in Russia and the Soviet Union Although Lenin publicly condemned anti-Semitism , the regime was hostile toward Judaism from the beginning. They created a special Jewish section of the party , whose tasks included propaganda against Jewish clergy and religion. Yiddish , rather than "reactionary" Hebrew , would be the national language, and proletarian socialist literature and arts would replace Judaism as the quintessence of its culture. Jewish leaders were arrested and executed, and Yiddish schools were shut down. Further persecutions and purges followed. Because of its identification with Zionism, Hebrew was taught only in schools for diplomats. Most of the 5, synagogues functioning prior to the Bolshevik Revolution were closed under Stalin, and others were closed under Khrushchev. The practice of Judaism became very difficult, intensifying the desire of Jews to leave the Soviet Union.

Chapter 9 : Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta –“ Used books

Mennonite Quarterly Review 46 (), , the most comprehensive and analytical treatment of the *Selbstschutz* to date, summarized in John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*. Newton, KS,