Provenance

7. The International Connection

The great need of our brethren in Russia has brought all the Mennonites of the world closer together. Formerly we were strangers to each other and now we feel so close. One can sense this . . . in Germany, Holland, the United States of America and Canada — C.F. KLASSEN. [1]

THE SETTLING down in congregational communities and the resultant inward look was rudely disturbed in the fall of 1929 by two international crises, which shook not only the Mennonites but also much of the western world. The ruthless implementation by Joseph Stalin of his first Five-Year Plan[2] sent thousands of Mennonites and other German-speaking colonists fleeing to Moscow in a desperate attempt to escape to the West.[3] Their exodus, however, was at that very time held up because countries like Canada would not accept any more immigrants, no matter how destitute, because of the national anti-immigration mood, which was strongly reinforced by the international economic depression.

It is an irony of history that relatively good things often arise from adverse situations, and such was the case for the Mennonites in 1929. Responding to the plight of co-religionists in Russia, the world Mennonite community experienced a new international awareness and a new sense of peoplehood, which had formerly escaped them in their separated communities, nationally and denominationally. The

focus of this new spirit and outlook was provided by the emerging Mennonite world conference.[4] At last the far-flung and separated Mennonite churches had an international connection, which some leaders in Canada learned to appreciate the most.

The convening in Danzig in 1930 of a World Relief Conference (*Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz*) as a direct response to the latest emergency was actually the second of three such Russia-oriented gatherings of world Mennonite leaders.[5] A similar event in Switzerland five years earlier had been called to commemorate at its birthplace in Zurich the 400th anniversary of the founding in 1525 of the Mennonite movement.[6] But even then the tragic unravelling of the Mennonite community in Russia had already been a centre of concern, not least of all because the only delegate from Russia, Elder Jakob A. Rempel, had been turned back at the border by uneasy Swiss authorities, a rejection all the more painful because Rempel had previously been a theology student in Switzerland for six years.[7]

The critical times continued through the 1930s with enforced collectivization, repeated famines, the exile to Siberia of Mennonite *kulaks*, and the systematic destruction of Mennonite cultural and religious life. Thus, the third Mennonite world conference in 1936 likewise could not escape the Russian theme, even though that conference in Holland in 1936 was called to commemorate another 400th anniversary — Menno Simons's resignation from the Catholic priesthood in 1536 to become an Anabaptist minister.[8]

For Canadian Mennonite leaders, especially for David Toews, the international concern for the Mennonites in Russia and from Russia, repeatedly reinforced by the world conferences, was a most welcome undergirding of the efforts to help the uprooted people. Canada was given not only a much-needed hearing before the world Mennonite community but also a helping hand, as the various dimensions of the Russlaender burden — immigration, detention, settlement, payment of the transportation debt, preventing the deportation of dependants, and the relief of poverty at home and famine abroad — continued into the second decade.[9]

From Civil War to Collectivization

The earlier desperate circumstances of the Mennonites in Russia as a result of revolution and civil war had been alleviated to a very

considerable extent by the mid-1920s. Foreign relief organizations played a most vital role in rehabilitation, according to the Soviet government, which awarded first and second place for the quality of their work and their overall achievement to the French Red Cross and to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), respectively.[10] The American Relief Administration under Herbert Hoover stood in fifth place.

Working out of the city of Zaporozhe, the MCC had fed up to 43,000 people a day at the peak of the need in July 1922 at a total cost of $600,000. The MCC also distributed $260,000 worth of clothing, provided 50 Fordson tractor-plough units as well as horses and seed grain, and dispensed medicine to doctors and hospitals. Additionally, an estimated 20,000 packages containing food and clothing were forwarded on behalf of individuals in North America to individuals in the U.S.S.R. via the American Relief Administration.[11]

Other factors contributing to the renewal were the emigration of the destitute to Canada, the New Economic Policy introduced by Lenin in 1921 as a temporary concession to private enterprise, and several Mennonite organizations established during this time to speed the process of reconstruction. The Union of Citizens of Dutch Ancestry, previously mentioned, worked for economic renewal in the Ukraine out of Kharkov, until 1926 under the leadership of B.B. Janz.[12] A similar organization, the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Society, working out of Moscow with Peter Froese and C.F. Klassen as leaders, was founded in 1923 and embraced some 6,000 Mennonite farms in 19 local organizations in Siberia, the Volga Region, Turkestan, and the Crimea, in other words all the Mennonite settlements outside the Ukraine. The Society achieved notable success in procuring and distributing seed grain, improving the breed of cattle, producing cheese, and setting up tractor stations and grain distribution centres.[13] The Society also published *Der Praktische Landwirt* (*The Practical Farmer*), a publication for agricultural and economic affairs, beginning in 1925.

That year also marked the initiation of *Unser Blatt* (*Our Paper*), a monthly periodical devoted to religious affairs and published at the behest of the January 1925 meeting in Moscow of the General Conference of Mennonite Congregations in Russia. This meeting of representatives of Mennonite congregations from all the regions of

the Soviet Union turned out to be the very last. The harassment of teachers and ministers, the main groups constituting the delegate body, by the Soviet authorities made efforts on behalf of religious nurture increasingly precarious. Most of those attending the Moscow conference died in prison or exile in the 1930s.[14] These tragic developments were a reminder of the Martyrs' Synod at Augsburg in 1527, so called because most of the Anabaptist leaders attending met a martyr's fate soon after.[15]

After 1925, many of the efforts contributing to the renewal of the Mennonite communities or to the emigration of their members were coming to an end. Legal and political problems abounded. Passports, visas, and medical clearances were hard to obtain. In 1928, Canadian medical inspectors, admitted after once being excluded but restricted in their movements in the best of times, were once again banned from the U.S.S.R. altogether. More and more young men were denied exemptions from military service and, when they failed to comply, were imprisoned, placed in forced labour camps, or shot.[16] The Mennonite civic organizations also had many problems with the authorities. In 1926, the southern Kharkov-based Union was dissolved, and the publication of the *Landwirt* of the Moscow-based Society was suspended. The year 1928 saw the dissolution of the northern Society as well as the last issue of *Unser Blatt*.[17]

The termination of their own institutions was one problem confronting the Russian Mennonites, but another problem, much more serious, was coping with the new Soviet programs and institutions that were being thrust upon them. On October 1, 1928, the first Five-Year Plan was initiated as a second drive to achieve the full objectives of communism, temporarily suspended during the years of the New Economic Policy. This meant, above all, the collectivization of agriculture. Also associated with the Plan was a renewed attack on religion and on traditional education. This in turn required the disciplining of the recalcitrant leadership: ministers, teachers, and well-to-do farmers. All of these tended to be classed as *kulaks*, that five per cent of the population who were blamed for Russia's economic and social inequities but who were by no means equally responsible.

A standard definition of a *kulak* was never offered by the Party officials, but it quickly became apparent that many Mennonites were

so defined. Once branded a *kulak*, one could expect expropriation of property, loss of voting privileges, imprisonment, and exile. The intention was to eliminate this class, and most often this meant their transfer to forced labour camps in distant parts of the Soviet Union.[18] Needless to say perhaps, being treated as undesirable elements and criminals was traumatic for the Mennonites. They had developed their own utopian communities as their best contribution to society as a whole; some had done their best to improve the life of the peasants, and now a century of pioneering and progress was treated negatively, even judgmentally, by the authorities. The numerous instances of false accusations levelled against the Mennonites and the persecutions, especially of their ministers and teachers, thoroughly confounded them. B.H. Unruh attempted to explain their dazed confusion:

> We cannot understand what sort of interest the state has in unprotected and defenceless people who themselves want to remain faithful to their way, to torture them to death with exceptional laws, with economic and political terror, with administrative banishment, and with the robbing of freedom. We cannot understand that the Moscow Government sends a whole group of our thoroughly innocent religious and sociable people into prison or into exile.[19]

The early phases of the collectivization program also featured massive grain requisitioning and exceptionally heavy taxation. Tax assessments in kind often bore little relation to the harvest actually produced by an individual farmer or by the collective. The taxes imposed upon the Slavgorod district, to cite one example, illustrated the depressing nature of the situation. Four villages harvested 25,000 poods of grain, yet were required to deliver 34,000 poods to the authorities.[20]

Any failure to fill assigned delivery quotas resulted in summary punishment. In order to meet the exacting demands, farmers were forced sometimes to purchase grain on the open market at vastly inflated prices, with money generated from the sale of their precious livestock and agricultural equipment. When even this amount of capital was insufficient to fill the quota, the authorities auctioned off remaining possessions and not infrequently deported family heads to

the frozen north. A resident from Slavgorod described the impossible predicament:

> If he [the farmer] planted his seed grain, the tax on the crop yield was set at an exceptionally high rate. If he failed to seed his crop, he was branded as an enemy of the state, a status which deprived him of all political and legal rights of a full-fledged citizen of the land.[21]

Understandably, the Mennonites were becoming extremely restless. Little hope was held for any kind of tolerable future in Stalin's Russia. Some turned their backs on their beloved homeland and slipped across the border illegally into Persia or into China in the far east. Others liquidated their farms and, ignoring the midwinter temperatures, set out on the arduous train journey to Moscow. Their one desire was to get out of Russia and to join friends and relatives who were now in Canada. Thus began a series of events both happy and tragic, which saw a minority escape and a majority turned back, as by the end of 1929 the emigration gate of the east and immigration doors of the west were completely shut and the keys thereof, so to speak, thrown away.

These events included: the successful departure of several scores of families by August 30; the rush to Moscow of thousands in September and October and the further exodus of several hundred families until on October 30 Canada announced its refusal to accept them; feverish negotiations in Canada to obtain a reversal of that ruling, without the desired success; forceful removal from Moscow of the majority of refugees beginning in mid-November until Germany agreed to conditional acceptance; the transfer of those accepted to Brazil, Paraguay, and some to Canada over a period of years.

Seventy Mennonite families, all originating from points east of the Urals, had collected in Moscow by April 1929.[22] Theirs was a formidable and dangerous undertaking. At the risk of being classified as subversives and of incurring the inevitable penalties, the would-be emigrants besieged the authorities with requests for permission to leave. They directed their appeals to the government, to top Party officials, and they also called at the German embassy.[23] Their early endeavours were not encouraging. As their departure was delayed, Mennonite organizations abroad and at home held out

little hope for their success and urged them to return to their homes. Said one, severely criticizing a group of men departing for Moscow:

> I cannot understand how mature men can act in this way, leaving their nests with families in times such as these when one knows precisely that Moscow will not issue any passports.[24]

Those in Moscow, however, were determined, and their resolve held. They told themselves that at certain points in history people must risk all for the sake of the future. They were buoyed up by the news that the persistence of two families had paid off, and they were already in Germany.[25] Thereafter, the would-be emigrants troubled the officials and prayed to God as never before. "Whoever hadn't been stranded in Moscow," they later said, "hadn't learned to pray."[26] Suddenly, in midsummer the government relented, and the entire group was permitted to leave. On August 30, they departed by train in the direction of the western border.

News of the group's stunning success swept swiftly through the settlements. Hope surged that others would likewise be granted permission to leave; a mass panic-stricken flight to Moscow ensued. Families rushed to dispose of their households, often in such haste that they settled for a fraction of their real value. At first in single family units, later in groups of families, the Mennonites began to stream into Moscow. Unlike the officially sanctioned migration to Canada earlier in the decade, this flocking to Moscow enjoyed neither the benefits of a centralized organization nor foreign financial assistance. The rush to the capital was rather a spontaneous act on the part of people motivated solely by the slim prospect of leaving the country.

Most of the prospective emigrants came from the east, that is from beyond the Ural mountains. One elder writing in 1930 estimated that in one district 80 per cent of the people had left, or would have, had they not been forcibly restrained by the officials.[27] Not surprisingly, people from other regions in Russia were also infected by emigration fever. They came to Moscow from the Black Sea steppes, the Crimea, the northern Caucasus, Samara, Ufa, Orenburg, and Omsk. By the end of October, German officials in Moscow estimated the number of Mennonites and other German colonists assembled in the city to be 5,000. By mid-November, they claimed the

total had swollen to 13,000. The would-be émigrés themselves believed the figure lay closer to 18,000.[28]

The unexpected deluge of refugees into the capital produced an acute housing shortage. Most clustered together in summer *dachas* or cottages, situated in the suburbs along the rivers up to fifteen miles outside of Moscow. The concentrated quarters created serious sanitation problems. Food remained a constant worry for many of the destitute migrants. However, their morale was sustained by the hope that eventually they would win their release. About 3,000 of the Mennonite transients were in possession of steamship tickets to North America, sent and guaranteed by relatives in Canada. These were useless, however, unless accompanied by an official exit visa issued by the government.

Accordingly, the refugees directed a persistent flurry of appeals to Party luminaries requesting permission to leave for Canada. Contacts were made with the central committees of Moscow, of the regional Russian republic, and of the U.S.S.R. Messages were sent to lower Party officials and even to Lenin's wife.[29] When these actions all failed to elicit any favourable response, the Mennonites turned their attention to the German embassy. This was extremely risky, since communication by Soviet citizens with foreign officials was generally interpreted by the police as counter-revolutionary activity.

The German consulate initially adopted a hands-off policy with respect to the refugees—everyone, that is, except the German agricultural attaché, Otto Auhagen.[30] Auhagen was deeply moved by the tragic circumstances. From early October on, he remained in daily contact with the refugees and publicly urged his government to intervene on their behalf. In Germany itself, B.H. Unruh presented the cause of the refugees to the government in Berlin. Both Unruh and Auhagen argued for a temporary admission of the refugees on the assumption that they could then be transferred to Canada. Their task was made easier by the favourable crystallization of public opinion. Under pressure, the German government broached the subject of resettlement with the U.S.S.R. and with success.

On October 19, Moscow agreed to the immediate movement of the refugees. The Soviet Union's sudden shift of mind probably reflected its fear of being driven even further into international isolation.[31] Those waiting were unaware of the negotiations and the

official breakthrough. In the absence of any encouraging news, they continued to press their case before the Soviet authorities. Several hundred women relayed their anxious thoughts to the government via a petition. Later, a group of mothers with their children staged a mass demonstration in a waiting room adjacent to the office of Soviet President Kalinin.[32] In late October, a lengthy petition bearing three separate sheets of signatures was prepared and sent to each of six principal organs of the Soviet government. The statement concluded with the warning that, if exit passports were denied to the refugees, they would march as one down to Red Square and there await their death.[33]

Then came the extraordinary news that the people could leave. Jubilation flooded the congested dachas, though at first the colonists found it difficult to comprehend this incredible good fortune. In short order, the required eight refugee lists, each containing about 200 families, were prepared and submitted to the authorities.[34] The first assignment of refugees departed on October 27. Others were scheduled to follow shortly, since Moscow had made it plain that it wished to be rid of the burdensome Mennonites.

Canada Once Again Closed

But on October 30 all further movement ceased. On that day Canada announced that, for the present, it would not accept responsibility for any of the refugees destined for Germany, since it had thus far made no formal commitment to that effect. The other parties involved in the relocation of the refugees all had assumed that the earlier conditions favouring immigration still prevailed in Canada and that it was then just a matter of working things out. But this was no longer the case. Beginning already in 1927, stiff opposition to the entry of newcomers from southern and eastern Europe had been heard in Canada. This was true especially in the western provinces.[35] By 1929 the immigration door was completely closed.

The western plains had absorbed large numbers of agricultural settlers since the beginning of the century, and now many citizens and leaders believed that the region's settlement zones were saturated. Further immigration would tend to aggravate, rather than strengthen, the prairie's economic fortunes. Western labour organizations, along with the provincial governments, complained that the

railways were bringing in unwanted immigrants who, besides aggravating the urban labour scene, proved impossible to assimilate.[36] As well, there were those who believed that the integrity and ideals of the British tradition were being eroded by the presence of non-English immigrants. The National Labour Council of Toronto, an affiliate of the All-Canadian Congress of Labour, was "absolutely opposed" to the admittance of the Mennonite refugees, as were such other groups and organizations as the Sons of England and the Native Sons of Canada.[37]

The federal government was sensitive to the western criticism. During the winter of 1928–29, the Department of Immigration and Colonization ordered the railways to reduce the immigration of continentals to one-third the number brought in the previous year.[38] Robert Forke, the Minister, responded further to the anti-immigration temper by holding conferences with the provinces in July 1929 in recognition of their demand for a greater voice in the formation of immigration policies. Under the provisions of the British North America Act, overall control of immigration lay with the federal government. But since immigration had an immediate bearing on economic, educational, and social conditions in a local area, the provinces maintained that they should be consulted on immigration matters. Following his consultations, Forke announced that henceforth the federal government would not act without first contacting the provinces.[39]

The Mennonites had learned from an incident earlier that summer that more immigrants would have difficulty entering Canada. The occasion was a request for the admission of about 170 refugees stranded in the Chinese city of Harbin, without passports, having left the Soviet Union illegally. Since they preferred to come to Canada, the Mennonite Immigration Aid in Winnipeg contacted Ottawa on their behalf and explained to the officials that in lieu of Soviet documents, the transients would carry a personal *Ausweiss*, or passport substitute, provided by the German representative in Harbin.[40] Mennonite officials of both the Aid and the Board also gave the standard guarantee that their organizations would supervise the maintenance and placement of each refugee, as well as assume the costs of maintaining in Canada any persons, dependent on others, who could not be admitted, or who, having been admitted, might subsequently be threatened with deportation.

The final decision of the government was handed down on August 22. The Department of Immigration announced that the Mennonites would not be admitted, since they possessed no valid passports and almost no money.[41] The deputy minister also doubted whether the Mennonites in Canada were in a position to accept further financial responsibilities, saddled as they were with the heavy obligations connected with the earlier movement of immigrants. Ultimately, the Harbin group went to Brazil, Paraguay, and the United States.

The developments in the U.S.S.R. during the fall prompted renewed attempts to change Canadian immigration policy. Pressure to accept the people in distress came also from non-Mennonite quarters. Ludwig Kempff, the Consul General of Germany assigned to Canada, told Department of Immigration officials on October 29 that his country held a special interest in the Moscow refugees, owing to their German ethnicity.[42] Kempff indicated that economic circumstances prevented Germany from accepting sole responsibility for their future. However, that country was prepared to accommodate the immigrants en route to Canada and to supply each of them with a personal *Ausweiss*. The latter was a guarantee that, in the event of rejection on medical grounds or deportation from Canada, Germany would accept any deportees.[43]

The League of Nations also demonstrated a keen interest in the refugee problem. In late October, Fridtjof Nansen, the high commissioner, cabled an urgent appeal asking Canada to offer a haven to the refugees.[44] The various transportation companies likewise urged the government to admit the refugees into Canada. As far as the railways were concerned, the reputation of the Mennonites in Canada was such that further transportation credits were offered. According to one official:

> I do not know of any other class of Central European settler that sticks to the land like the Mennonites do. Their reputation for honesty and industry has induced the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to advance in recent years, between one and two million dollars. . . . I doubt whether any other group of immigrants, British or foreign, has a reputation that would guarantee an equal amount of assistance.[45]

Towards the end of October, CPR representatives informed Canada that their company was ready to begin moving approximately one

thousand families from Moscow to Canada at the rate of 500 persons every two weeks.[46]

The single missing piece needed to reactivate migration into Canada was official federal approval. To the dismay of the Mennonites and their supporters, Ottawa announced on October 30 that it did not consider itself to be under any obligation to assist the refugees. This, for the moment at least, was the government's official policy. Unofficially, and in marked contrast to the attitude of the western provinces, Ottawa expressed warm sympathy for the refugees and their cause and seemed genuinely anxious to help them.[47]

In November, the Department of Immigration, the CPR, the German consulate, and Board officials made concerted efforts to overcome prairie opposition to the proposed immigration, all with the tacit blessing of William Lyon Mackenzie King. At his request, the Prime Minister's associates kept him posted daily on the latest developments. On November 5, for instance, Robert Forke dispatched a telegram to King who was then on a pre-election speaking tour of the west.[48] Forke reported that his department was under great pressure to admit 1,000 families temporarily stationed outside Moscow and facing the real risk of deportation to Siberia. Forke conceded that the timing of the proposed movement was wrong, coming as it would at the onset of winter. None the less, and despite the impoverished conditions of the refugees, Forke was prepared to accept such families as could be properly absorbed by host farmers in Canada.[49]

The following day, David Toews approached King, then in Rosthern, with a similar proposal.[50] King's reply was carefully guarded. Any movement into the country depended on the willingness of the hosts to accommodate the newcomers and to provide firm guarantees that they would not become public charges. King avoided a direct personal commitment by deferring final decision to the Department of Immigration, which had obligated itself to discuss the matter first with those provinces most immediately involved.

King's cautious response to Toews's request was politically well advised, considering the disposition of Saskatchewan's outspoken premier, J.T.M. Anderson. The premier was unaccustomed to soft-pedal on any issue, including immigration. In fact, he had distinguished himself with his zealous crusading for the right of the

provinces to control the flow of immigrants into their territories.[51] Ottawa correctly assumed that the key to the planned admission of the Moscow refugees hinged largely on Saskatchewan's attitude. Accordingly, that province was the first to be sounded out by immigration officials.

Meanwhile, Germany and the League of Nations had informed Canada that time was running out for those stranded in Moscow. Hoping to respond positively to the renewed appeal, Forke dispatched a telegram to Premier Anderson on November 7, explaining that Canada was being urged on humanitarian grounds to accept about 1,000 displaced families and that refusal to accept the group would result in their exile to Siberia and "inevitable starvation."[52] Forke assured the premier that the Board and their hosts would assume total responsibility for the welfare of the immigrants, guaranteeing in particular that the newcomers would conform to Canadian school regulations. It was a strange guarantee, because the Russlaender already settled in Saskatchewan since 1923 had given no occasion to doubt their interest in education.

Anderson summarized his initial position in a telegram sent to Ottawa on November 8.[53] The Mennonites, he admitted, made excellent citizens. However, the sagging employment situation militated against further immigration. None the less, Anderson provided some hope that, at a minimum, relatives of families already established in the province would be admitted on the understanding that they would not become public charges for a period of two years. A final decision would be made following a meeting between the Saskatchewan government and a delegation representing the Board.

The federal request was not opportune from Saskatchewan's point of view. Times were difficult, unemployment was rising, and government leaders had all they could handle to satisfy people already in the country. Anderson said he wanted to decrease, rather than increase, government spending. His concern that an influx of refugees would aggravate the province's economic problems emerged in his November 8 telegram to Ottawa. Would the federal government, he asked, be prepared to assist Saskatchewan in relief matters now being carried out among recent arrivals, which included Mennonites?[54]

Another motive other than the economic one fuelled Anderson's resolve to bar the Mennonites from his province. The premier was

an Orangeman of long standing, and he reflected that society's religious and racial prejudices.[55] Anderson also headed the provincial Conservatives, a party that generally subscribed to the view that non-British elements should be assimilated into the dominant Protestant and Anglo-Saxon culture as quickly as possible, or, alternatively, be kept out. The political leader articulated the sentiments of his party at a founding meeting of a branch of the Canadian Legion at Bienfait. To his audience he pledged:

> I will as long as I am premier of this province, be utterly opposed to and combat with all proper means any attempt to destroy the fundamental principles of our British citizenship.[56]

Popular Images and Public Opinion

One popular image held of the Mennonites in 1929 was that of a group of communally minded religious sectarians inclined to remain aloof from the usual economic and social enterprises. Many people still associated all Mennonites with Hutterites and Doukhobors on the basis of old images which had led to the 1919 immigration ban and with those Kanadier that had clashed with provinical governments over the issue of public schools. Uncritically, such people assumed that the newcomers would be like that, thus demonstrating that memories of a former day, no matter how distorted, or if correct no matter how irrelevant, are easily recalled if they happen to reinforce prejudice and serve the desired cause. A press release originating in Regina on November 5 reflected the distorted and outdated images:

> Mennonites are a problem. They are excellent farmers. But their insistent attitude toward Canadianization in general and Canadian school systems in particular make their assimilation difficult.[57]

The selective Mennonite resistance to the public schools was still living on in the public mind when another wave of negative publicity for the Mennonites of Saskatchewan arose from the so-called Friesen-Braun trials.[58] In those trials, which extended from 1925 to 1928 and resulted in a five-year prison sentence and deportation to

Russia for Braun in 1932, the Mennonites in general and officials of the Board, David Toews and A.A. Friesen in particular, were placed in a rather bad light.[59] The whole proceedings were grist for the mill for all those who were against immigration, certainly eastern European immigration, those who were against the Mennonites, those who were sure that the immigrants had very sharp operators or even Bolshevik sympathizers among them, those who were opposed to the Rosthern Board for whatever reason, those who liked to widen the gulf between Kanadier and Russlaender, and those who sided with either the Toewses or the Friesens in their ongoing quarrel. Henry P. Friesen, one of the principals, was the brother of Isaac P. Friesen, a ministerial colleague of David Toews, between whom there were a number of differences of opinion.[60]

The Friesen-Braun story began with the arrival of immigrant Isaac Braun from Halbstadt, Russia, in Rosthern in July 1924. Henry P. Friesen, a Kanadier farmer and businessman, tried to sell Braun some land. Negotiations were incomplete when in August Braun left Saskatchewan for Renata, B.C., from where he later wrote to Friesen demanding payment of $5,000, which he claimed Friesen had borrowed from him on August 29, 1924, at the Western Hotel in Saskatoon. Henry P. Friesen denied having made such a loan. Braun sued for the stated amount, and thus the protracted court proceedings began.[61] He won his case with the help of an I.O.U. bearing Friesen's signature and two witnesses, Jacob Friesen and Frank Hildebrandt, both youths who swore they had witnessed the transaction at the Western Hotel.

Later, the two youths gave sworn testimony that they had perjured themselves, that they had not been in Saskatoon on August 29, and that they had not seen Friesen or Braun on that day. Henry P. Friesen took the matter to court to have the earlier judgment against him set aside. At the same time, perjury or subornation of perjury charges were laid against Hildebrandt, Jacob Friesen, and Isaac Braun. Braun, somewhat surprisingly, retaliated by charging Henry Friesen with perjury. Henry P. Friesen won his case and the earlier judgment against him was set aside. Hildebrandt and Jacob Friesen were convicted and given suspended sentences. Braun's charge of perjury against Henry P. Friesen was dismissed. Braun, however, was convicted of subornation of perjury and sentenced to a five-year prison term.

Braun appealed his conviction and the appeal court judges ruled that his conviction had resulted from a mistrial and ordered a new trial. During this new trial Braun introduced new evidence, purportedly letters written by Henry P. Friesen in which Friesen acknowledged the $5,000 debt. Handwriting experts were called in and it was determined that the new evidence presented by Braun was fabricated. The crown then laid new charges against Braun and chose to proceed on the charge of fabrication of evidence rather than on the original charge of subornation of perjury. Braun was found guilty of fabrication of evidence on October 26, 1928, and sentenced to a five-year prison term, to be followed by deportation to the Soviet Union. In October 1933 Isaac Braun was deported, although his wife and two children were allowed to remain in Canada.[62]

The entire episode proved to be most embarrassing for Board officials, who were openly sympathetic with Braun, and for Russlaender generally, who at one point had furnished some $10,000 bail for Braun. One judge expressed the view "that the Mennonite Colonization Board was a fit subject for the careful attention of the authorities."[63] And as it is elsewhere written:

> The whole process produced much ill-will in the Rosenort church, in the Rosthern community, and in all of Canada. . . . the long, dark shadows cast by the Friesen-Braun trials were not easily dispelled.[64]

The effect of the public school issue and the Friesen-Braun trials was that any petitioning to allow new immigration had to include assurances that Mennonites would be "law-abiding" citizens.

Anderson exploited the distorted popular perceptions of the Mennonites.[65] In early November, he reported to the press that he knew of one instance in Saskatchewan where 60 children were without public school facilities.[66] The premier knew that not all Mennonites were opposed to public schools and that those now seeking admission were among them. But he also knew that approval of the proposed immigration would not sit well with an electorate who did not make those distinctions and to whom he had pledged the removal of "sectarianism" from the public school.

The premier quickly discovered that his negative response to the immigration department and to the Mennonites was politically

advantageous. The public was kept well-informed on the course of developments, since the major newspapers regularly covered the exchanges between Ottawa and the provincial capitals.[67] The premier received support from various labour groups, the United Farmers, the Canadian Legion, the Orangemen, the Masons, and the Ku Klux Klan. Many of the protesters feared that the newcomers would take jobs from them or otherwise weaken the economy. Their alarm reflected popular prejudices as well as economic decline in the west.

The Klan had made its way into Saskatchewan in the mid-1920s. As an extremist, ultra-fundamentalist and pro-British organization it grew quickly, feeding on the prejudices that had been growing over the years. The federal government's immigration policy (especially that prior to the war) and the influx of many east European Catholics and other non-WASPs had alarmed much of the Anglo-Saxon Saskatchewan populace. Turning that alarm into racist prejudice was an educational policy and system, vigorously promoted in earlier days by Anderson, which "fostered the development of a society based on the one language" and which helped "to create an intolerance which would be amply demonstrated in the rapid inculcation of the Ku Klux Klan mentality in Saskatchewan people in the post-1927 period."[68] As one historian analysed the situation:

> The Klan provided hundreds with a vent for ingrained prejudices in the guise of safeguarding all that was admirable in British institutions, in Protestantism, and in the Canadian way of life.[69]

The Klan was an important factor in the 1929 election. There was no official link between the Klan and the Conservative Party, though many Conservatives were Klan members. However, the party made much political hay of the hysteria aroused by the Klan. In the words of William Calderwood:

> The Conservative party . . . adopted an attitude that was politically expedient by taking advantage of the emotionalism aroused by the Klan, by secretly obtaining the endorsation of the Klan leaders regarding certain planks in its platform, and by publicly remaining silent on the Klan issue. Obviously, the admission of Mennonites from Russia, though not Catholics, would have antagonized the very people who had so recently voted for the Conservatives.[70]

The negative public reaction against the proposed Mennonite migration was heard also in Alberta. J.E. Brownlee's United Farmers government was especially sensitive to the public climate, since an election campaign was then under way. The United Farmers movement was, to some extent at least, influenced by Norman F. Priestley, the United Church minister at Coaldale, who got involved in serious quarrels with the Mennonites and who was also very influential in the United Farmers of Alberta. Brownlee was advised that the Sedgewick local of the UFA was "utterly opposed" to bringing into Canada in general, and to Alberta in particular, "any of the band of Mennonites who are now stranded at some point in Russia or Germany."[71] A missive emanating from Rosedale was more explicit:

> Nothing can be gained by assuming further obligations of a people destined to reduce our standard of living, opposed to assimilation of our demands in social legislation, determined to adhere to their own ideas of total segregation.[72]

The burden of converting the indifferent, if not hostile, provincial governments to the Mennonite position fell upon David Toews. His was not an enviable task, but he pursued it, as he had all other causes on behalf of his people, with unflagging determination. After a personal appeal to federal immigration officials, at which time he was informed that the government was powerless to act without the consent of the provinces concerned, Toews returned west where, beginning on November 12, he conducted separate meetings with all three provincial governments.[73]

Manitoba was the first to respond formally to the Toews delegation, which also included G. Sawatzky of the CCA and R. G. Duncan of the CPR. The immigration department later assessed Manitoba's position as "reasonable and logical" alongside that of the other provinces. As it turned out, Manitoba's offer was the most generous one extended to the Mennonites. A maximum of 250 families were welcome to settle in the province with the understanding that they would receive care and shelter from the resident hosts.[74]

Toews next conferred with the Saskatchewan cabinet. He could not have been encouraged by the sceptical attitude displayed by Anderson. The premier questioned the veracity of reports describing the dire straits in which the Mennonite refugees found themselves and speculated that they owed their misfortune to their probable

refusal to comply with Soviet laws.[75] Anderson then denied that Toews had the united support of all Canadian Mennonites on the basis of a telegram received from a group in Dalmeny:

> We are not in favour of the immigration of Mennonites from Europe, and we cannot house any as we have plenty of our own Canadian Mennonites to help.[76]

Later that month Anderson again referred to the split in the Mennonite ranks, but this time he was challenged by a determined response. Only one in 129 Saskatchewan farmers interviewed, he said, was willing to assist the destitute colonists if brought to Canada.[77]

Saskatchewan Mennonites responded to Premier Anderson's scepticism of group solidarity by showing rousing support for the Board's immigration plan. A large November meeting held in Herbert, attended by representatives of various local churches, unanimously passed a motion committing themselves to the care of 250 refugees until they would be able to help themselves.[78] For the time being at least, their resolve made no difference at all to Anderson.

Anderson formally summarized his thoughts in a letter to David Toews, which he also released to the press.[79] There could be no admission of any refugees for several months, he said, and then possibly only those with relatives willing to support them. He went on to demand lists of established Mennonite farmers prepared to look after incoming relatives as well as lists of refugees with full particulars as to their age, sex, and former occupation. The request could only slow up the process, quite possibly its only intention, because such information was obtained only with much effort and the passing of precious time.

In Alberta the reception was kinder, but the end results were the same.[80] Premier Brownlee readily extolled the virtues of the Mennonites in that province. The problem was that their petitioning coincided with a provincial surplus of agricultural and industrial labour and with a recent record of poor crops, at least in southern Alberta. Brownlee explained that the farming opportunities should be preserved for people already in Alberta, "many of whom, as a result of complete crop failure, are in nearly as destitute a condition as your people in Moscow."[81]

Brownlee also heard urgent pleas from the Mennonite Farmers Association in the province, which offered the hospitality of 95

households,[82] from Alberta members on the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization,[83] and from the Mennonite Committee of Alberta.[84] The latter praised the freedom of Canada and peace enjoyed under the British flag and promised that the Mennonites would be good citizens, obey the laws, and in general assist in the welfare of the country. But the messages of the Alberta Council of the Canadian Legion,[85] the United Farmers of Alberta,[86] the United Mine Workers of Alberta,[87] the National Order of Canada,[88] and various Orange Lodges[89] were more representative of the general and popular feeling, which was very much opposed to immigration and which carried much more weight with the premier.

Ottawa kept up its pleading with the prairie provinces, the only ones considered by either the Mennonites or the federal government.[90] Immigration officials reminded the latter of the repeated warnings received from Germany of the certain banishment from Moscow of the Mennonites.[91] They also referred to Germany's offer to provide temporary care to the refugees until Canada could absorb them and to create a special fund to defray any deportation expenses that might subsequently arise. The news produced no softening on the part of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Even Manitoba reconsidered its original offer and informed Ottawa that it wished to defer the admission of the 250 families until spring when the critical period of unemployment would have passed.[92] Ottawa was reluctant to inflame public opinion and therefore ruled against accepting the refugees. On November 26, the government announced that no Mennonites would be admitted into the country during the winter, though there was some possibility of a limited movement in the spring.[93] Exaggerated press reports that 100,000 Mennonites could be knocking on Canada's doors didn't help the situation.[94]

The deference of the federal government to the provinces raised the fundamental question of jurisdiction over immigration policy. Both levels of government understood that the proceedings marked a departure from federal supremacy in the field of immigration. The trend continued. In March 1930, Ottawa conceded that henceforth all initiatives in immigration matters would come only from the provinces.[95] The Mennonites might have empathized with provincial positions, given their own historic provincialism and their fear of nationalism and imperialism, but the provinces had rarely sided with the Mennonites. As in education before, so in immigration

now, Mennonites were the losers when the provinces chose to exercise their authority and the federal government could not or would not intervene.

The weak and mostly negative response of the governments appears to have been supported by public opinion, if it can be said that the press both reflected and determined the popular mood. The *Victoria Daily Times* bluntly stated that there was "no room in Canada for fanatics" and that "their unhappy relations with the authorities of Soviet Russia are not our concern."[96] The *Vancouver Daily Province* recognized that the Mennonite event in Moscow was "bad for the Bolshevist reputation" and hoped for "the interest and sympathy of the world" but did not see any relevance for Canada's immigration policy.[97] The *Manitoba Free Press*, fully aware that the Mennonites in Moscow were facing starvation and deportation to Siberia, editorialized on the "changing outlook" on immigration in Canada.[98] The *Regina Star* defended "constitutional rights conferred by the British North America Act to safeguard immigration into the province."[99] The Toronto *Globe*, commenting on the cruel shipments to distant Siberia, derided "Soviet cruelty deluxe" and hoped for a "world-wave of pity," but not a word was said about Canadian obligations.[100]

Among those who tried to correct the *Globe* on some of its biased or uninformed reporting were Swiss Mennonite leaders in Waterloo County. In some ways they were in the best position to do so because the Mennonite reputation as "good citizens" was "particularly true in Ontario."[101] C.F. Derstine was very critical of the *Globe*'s reflection of Premier Anderson's view on Mennonites and education.[102] To make a judgement about 100,000 Mennonites on the basis of a group near Swift Current, he said, was like characterizing all the Baptists on the basis of the "Hard Shelled Baptists," the Methodists by some "fanatical offshoots," and the Presbyterians by looking at the "blue stocking Presbyterians."

M.S. Hallman targeted the well-reported sentiments of the Native Sons of Canada, who claimed to reflect "the feelings of the Canadian people."[103] Placing himself in the line of "native sons" and of the United Empire Loyalists, Hallman asked what was to be done "with almost boundless spaces" if Canada's population was to be kept to less than 10 million and if entry was denied to an "agricultural people, proficient in the cultivation of the soil." Reflecting an amazingly good understanding of the Mennonite experience in

Russia, he suggested that Canada could not afford to be without a people who "have been tried and tested by fire, and are in deadly earnest to succeed again, having succeeded before." These Mennonites, he said, "are educated, cultured, musical, and would make altogether desirable citizens of Canada."

New Homelands for Some

The fateful story of the refugees occupied a prominent place in the German press, which reported their plight much more sympathetically than the Canadian papers.[104] Many Germans attributed their country's political and social position to communist agitation, and they demanded that the German *Volk* in Moscow not be abandoned to a freezing Siberian fate. The popular sympathy for the homeless led to a nation-wide fund appeal called *Brueder in Not* (Brothers in Distress), which attracted the support of the postal service, the banks, the railways, numerous charitable institutions, and even President Hindenburg.[105] The German cabinet was more cautious, at least for the time being, mainly on account of the country's staggering economic deficit, partly the result of war reparations. Its expressed hope was

> that other countries will regard this sudden and tragic exodus of Russian peasants as akin to such disasters as the sinking of the Titanic, the eruption of Vesuvius and the Japanese earthquake, when, irrespective of nationality, committees were constituted in numerous parts of the world to relieve the distress.[106]

Germany's energetic intervention on behalf of the desperate refugees contrasted sharply with Canada's indifference and negative verdict. Not surprisingly, the impact of Germany's benevolence on behalf of the refugees was profound. An earlier empathy for things German now turned into enthusiasm and even patriotism. Those receiving German beneficence, while the rest of the world ignored their plight, subsequently demonstrated an indiscriminate appreciation for anything connected with Germany, and this brought some of them into serious conflict with the non-German cultures in which they lived.[107]

Canada's intransigence led the Soviet government in mid-November to begin the forced removal of the refugees from the

Moscow environs. Within a week, all but 5,600 refugees had been cleared from their quarters.[108] One participant described the terrible ordeal of those being evicted:

> The trip from our living quarters to the railroad freight station was an experience in itself. Way up on top of their belongings crouched these poor, unfortunate victims, driven along in bitter cold weather. Their senses were so numbed they could not even cry. . . . They knew and realized now that they had no home; they had no protection; they had no shelter; they had no voice. . . . And now they were driven at breakneck speed into the night . . . into the dreadful, terrible, and seemingly endless and hopeless night.[109]

Families were separated, sometimes forever, as the Mennonites were returned to their former homes or shipped to new and unfamiliar localities. For days in the dead of winter they travelled in unheated boxcars that bore the deceiving words "settlers in transit." Blankets froze solid to the walls while the dazed travellers, pondering the consequences of their flight to Moscow, huddled together for warmth. Their desire had been a relatively simple one: only to leave the country. Now they were branded and treated as counter-revolutionaries. They paid dearly for their actions with their homes and possessions, their time, and sometimes their lives. Small wonder that they, and those who actually escaped from Russia, developed an enduring fear of, and loathing for, the Communist state.

The Soviet action prompted an adamant rejoinder from Germany. Attaché Auhagen informed Moscow officials that, should they continue to deport the refugees, diplomatic ties between the two countries would be severed. Auhagen's appeal was also directed to Germany in the new emergency and as a result the German cabinet ended its temporizing and agreed that state funds should be used to expedite the transfer to Germany of the refugee remnant.[110] All along, the position of the U.S.S.R. had been that the refugees could leave if they had a place to go.

Thus, on November 25, further transport of refugees to Germany was approved. Two days later, the Executive Committee of the Mennonite Central Committee, in session at Philadelphia, promised its "best efforts" and influence "to its fullest extent" for refugees so that they would not become a public burden in any way. The Committee also promised to bring together "leaders and representa-

TABLE 28[114]

PERSONS ACCOMMODATED IN GERMAN REFUGEE CAMPS
(1930)

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	NUMBER
Mennonite	3,885
Lutheran	1,260
Catholic	468
Baptist	51
Adventist	7
Total	5,671

tives of the different branches of our church in the United States" to enlist whole-hearted support.[111] Except for a minority now leaving Moscow, the intervention of the MCC was too late.

The remaining *dacha* residents learned of their imminent deliverance the following night. New passenger lists were prepared since many of the principals on the original lists were now missing, and passport fees were collected. Beginning on November 29 and continuing over a span of two weeks, nine crowded trains departed for the Latvian border. A final contingent of families was inexplicably denied their release and rerouted to an eastern exile.

The mood of the first group to arrive in Riga was a mixture of thankfulness and reflective sobriety. After a word of greeting from Latvia's German ambassador, the refugees attempted to sing a hymn. Choking and sobbing interrupted the singing. There were few dry eyes among the refugees, the German diplomats, the local German citizenry, the Latvian Red Cross workers, and others who were present. All of the emigrants were overwhelmed by the generosity shown to them.[112] In Latvia, the refugees were showered with gifts of clothing, food supplies, books, and sweets. Germany herself accorded them a hero's welcome replete with a decorated reception room, fir greenery, and garlands of flowers.

Three former military camps, situated at Hammerstein, Prenzlau, and Moelln, served as the temporary home of the refugees.[113] A total of 5,671 persons, of which 3,885 were Mennonites, passed through the camps during these months (Table 28). They were well

cared for, charitable organizations providing them not only with the essentials of food and clothing but also with money, books, and even sewing machines. An American Mennonite observed:

> The attitude of the German nation and the government toward the refugees has been remarkable and too much cannot be said in praise of their generosity and services.[115]

Certain discomforts could not be avoided, however. Every person was subjected to a disinfection and quarantine process. An epidemic of measles among the children restricted all movement in and to the camps. Conditions were very crowded. In the barracks, families lived in rooms sometimes containing sometimes as many as four or five families. The most common complaint voiced by the refugees was that of boredom. Barbershops, basket-weaving, shoe repair services, and libraries afforded some distraction to the people, but many fretted at their general inactivity. They were impatient to proceed to the final destination where they could begin to rebuild their lives. The problem was where to go.

Canada, their preferred choice, remained closed to them. Even if the country had agreed at that time to accept a quota of immigrants, many would likely have been rejected for health reasons.[116] The ordeal in Moscow, where the people had subsisted in poorly heated summer cottages with inadequate food supplies, had left its mark upon them. Because Canada was closed, other possibilities had to be explored.

Mexico, Brazil, and Paraguay all received serious consideration. A small party, assisted by the U.S.-based Mennonite Colonization Board, established themselves in Mexico,[117] though only briefly. A larger group of just over 1,000 persons agreed to locate in the primeval forests of Brazil,[118] though most doubted the wisdom of their choice. Brazil's rugged terrain, together with its refusal to grant an absolute military exemption, presented obvious worries. However, great pressure was being applied to the Mennonites to vacate the German camps and thus several hundred families reluctantly agreed to settle in Brazil. The advance party left Germany on January 16, 1930, and was followed in the next months by the larger transport groups, all enjoying German help.[119]

Paraguay received the largest number of refugees. The active settlement assistance given by the Mennonite Central Committee,

the presence in that country of other Mennonites recently arrived from Canada, and the privileges extended by the government to the settlers accounted for Paraguay's greater popularity. The first group of settlers left Germany for the Paraguayan Chaco in mid-March. Over 1,500 refugees eventually established themselves in the Fernheim Colony, located a short distance from Menno Colony, founded a few years earlier by the Chortitzer, Sommerfelder, and Bergthaler(S) from Canada, who now hosted and helped the newcomers.[120]

Mennonites in Canada clung to the hope that their country would absorb some of the refugees and expressed general disappointment at the cold indifference of the provinces. Efforts were continued to persuade the governments to act otherwise. Some individuals also did their best to have the Mennonites from Russia admitted. Abraham Funk from Carlton, Saskatchewan, for instance, made a pitch for the opening up of homestead lands in bushland areas owned by the Hudson's Bay Company and begged Canada's Minister of the Interior, Charles Stewart, to put together a delegation of Mennonite farmers, as well as government and railway officials, to examine the prospect.[121] Funk spoke from experience when he cited the potential of the bush country for Mennonite settlement. Having arrived from Danzig with a family of 10 children in 1903, he had with the aid of his sons in less than three decades brought 1,200 acres under cultivation on nine quarter sections, most of which had been cleared from bush in the so-called Parkland.[122]

And Joseph R. Tucker of Sub Rosa in Saskatchewan sent a map to support his offer to sell or lease enough land in the Sub Rosa district for a hundred or more Mennonite families, who were much to be preferred over other Europeans "of mongoloid or hybrid-mongol race under the tutelage of land speculative corporations." The appearance of such unpreferred settlers would "be hotly resented." But Mennonites were more than welcome. Tucker explained his generous offer to the Minister of Immigration:

> The leading men around Sub Rosa care nothing for religion and the Mennonites could profess any or none as they wished. Said Mennonites could practise any social customs they pleased at Sub Rosa as long as they kept the King's laws and turned over their rent-shares duly. They could suit themselves whether they sent their children to Sub Rosa school, if the provincial government did not interfere in this particular.[123]

One proposal submitted to the Ontario government suggested that some of the refugees could be settled in the undeveloped north, meaning Reesor and other areas of the clay belt. Nothing came of the suggestion, even though it attracted the province's mild interest. Another petition sent to the governments in both Toronto and Ottawa in 1930 was more forcefully expressed. It requested that special immigration provisions be made for the persecuted fellow believers in Russia. The Mennonites justified their special appeal on the grounds that they "always believed that in Canada, the principles of humanity and Christian mercy outweighed economic and political consideration."[124]

The Conference of Mennonites in Central Canada, having heard David Toews's report on immigration and on the plight of the people in Russia, expressed "gratitude to the highly esteemed government" and expressed the confidence that "the new element of Mennonites" would "give an added impetus to agricultural growth and other lines of activity and in that way be a positive factor in the Canadian national life."[125] At the 1930 sessions, the David Toews report[126] was followed by a telegram to M.J. Kalinin, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, U.S.S.R., which requested that all those whose properties had been seized be allowed to emigrate and that individual cases of those imprisoned be examined objectively before the courts.[127]

The German government also exerted pressure on Canada to reverse its decision. Unless Canada accepted 500 Mennonite families, an urgent warning said, future relations between the two countries might be affected.[128] The message had a positive effect. The railways, for instance, which had been authorized to bring in 200 families each, were now encouraged to apply this allotment to the Mennonites in the German camps. The CNR explained that its quota had for the most part already been filled, but the CPR could, and did, agree to the request. On February 24, 1930, the first complement of 24 families set sail for Canada. Other groups followed in March and April, usually in small consignments, deliberately so as not to cause undue attention and disturb public opinion.

This minimal success was small comfort for the failure to achieve a much larger movement. David Toews had logged countless hours in his attempt to rescue all the refugees. His correspondence with the various levels of government was voluminous. When his written requests were dismissed, the elderly leader persisted in asking the

authorities for personal interviews. "Any time and place," he assured them, "will be convenient for us."[129] A communication with the Prime Minister's office in early 1930 revealed that, while Ottawa's disposition was to co-operate more fully, its hands were tied by the intransigence of the western provinces. King confided by letter to Toews that his government would be prepared to go

> just as far as the Government of Saskatchewan were willing to have us go, but that it would not be in the public interest to adopt a different course with respect to Saskatchewan or any of the other provinces to which the refugees might hope to come.[130]

Toews did not give up. He presented a comprehensive report on Mennonite immigration activity past, present, and future to Saskatchewan's Royal Commission on Immigration and Settlement.[131] As he customarily went to the Mennonite press to plead his case with the Mennonite people, so also he went to the public press to plead the Mennonite case with the Canadian people. Soon after King's latest reply, David Toews wrote a lengthy letter to the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* "to correct some wrong impressions that have been created."[132] Mennonites, he said, were a religious denomination, not a nationality. Mennonites were greatly interested in education. Voluntarily they had established "something like one hundred public schools in the Province of Saskatchewan" and the conversation of the young people was such that they could have been "born of English-speaking parents."

Those opposing the public school, a small minority, had left the province so that "we are safe in saying that the public school is being taken advantage of by our people unanimously." But "in order to do justice to our conservative friends," he explained that they had in 1873 accepted "in good faith" the promises of the Dominion government concerning autonomy in educational matters, "not knowing that the Dominion government really had no jurisdiction over the school laws of the provinces." When compulsory education was enacted, they offered some passive resistance and then left for Mexico and Paraguay. They were a people of good character, honest and conscientious.

As to the Mennonite religion, it distinguished itself from other Protestant denominations in three respects: adult baptism, which put

them in the good company of the Baptists; affirmation in the courts instead of swearing, but that was no reason for concern because false affirmations were punishable the same as perjury; and aversion to war or nonresistance, which also put them into the good company of generals who said "war is hell" and the Quakers, who are respected in England, the United States, and Canada. Such people, believing these things, severely persecuted in another country, were "modestly knocking at the door of Canada . . . to enjoy freedom of conscience and the fruits of their own labour . . . willing to assume their obligation as citizens." The Mennonites already in Canada were willing to guarantee that they would "not become public charges" and that they would "not aggravate the unemployment situation." If, then, the coming of these destitute people would not cost Canadians a single dollar, why did they not open wide the door? Toews invoked the evidence of history as he issued his passionate appeal:

> Has the British nation suffered by the coming of the Huguenots in 1685, have the Canadian people suffered by the coming of the British Empire Loyalists? Have the American people suffered by the coming of the Pilgrim Fathers? Even from a national point of view we know that they have gained.[133]

He promised:

> These people, if permitted to come to Canada, will be law-abiding, will send their children to school, will learn the English language, will cultivate lands that are now idle; they will become no public charges; they will lighten the burdens of the ratepayers by paying taxes themselves; they will help to produce wealth; they will not be clamoring for help or relief; they will be as good citizens as any class of immigrants that have ever been brought to Canada.[134]

Not all of those who desired to come to Canada could be accommodated within the 200-family allotment awarded to the CPR. Yet there were problems even in filling that quota. Admission depended on provincial approval, which in turn was dependent on proper sponsorship in the respective provinces. Therefore, the organizations busied themselves with arranging nominations for families related to Mennonites already established in Canada. Alberta was asked in the early summer to accept 38 sponsored families. Toews promised that the Board would do everything possible to settle them on homesteads in northern Alberta or possibly on CPR irrigation lands in southern

TABLE 29[138]

DISPERSION OF 1929 MOSCOW REFUGEES
(BY 1932)

COUNTRY	NUMBER
Argentina	6
Brazil	2,529
Canada	1,344
Europe	528
Mexico	4
Paraguay	1,572
U.S.A.	4
U.S.S.R.	*c.* 7,000–12,000
Total	*c.* 13,000–18,000

Alberta.[135] The guarantee had little effect. Alberta refused the appeal on the grounds that if the Mennonites were invited in, other groups and individuals would also apply for entry.

A similar list, nominating 127 families, was presented to the Saskatchewan government. At least 55 congregations from across the province had pledged their readiness to provide for one or more refugee families. Support for the undertaking was particularly strong in the Hepburn, Rosthern, Hague-Osler, Glenbush, Laird, and Herbert districts. Premier Anderson investigated some of the nominees and, in June, approved the entry of 27 families—100 families less than requested—totalling approximately 145 persons.[136] Owing to that year's federal election, even that small movement was deferred to the spring of 1931.

A greater degree of success was achieved in Manitoba. Early in May, that province authorized the admission of 118 families, conditional on the guarantee of their nominators to maintain them.[137] Because some of the nominated families had by this time proceeded on to South America, Toews asked that others be permitted to take their places. Manitoba vetoed any such substitution, and the actual number of families brought to the province was less than the figure originally agreed upon.

None the less, for some, the efforts paid off and by 1932 a total of 1,344 Moscow refugees had landed in Canada (see Table 29). Public

antipathy to immigration in general, and to Mennonite immigration in particular, had prevented many more from coming and deflected them instead to South America. That several thousand had been safely plucked out of the Soviet Union was largely due to Germany's energetic involvement. Germany negotiated their release from Moscow, furnished them with transportation from Russia to Germany and later to the ocean ports, provided for their temporary maintenance in the camps, and donated an outfit of clothes and a small sum of money to the colonists destined for South America. Transportation to the southern hemisphere was also financed by Germany in the form of interest-free loans to be repaid in ten years.[139]

Germany's move to help them, when she herself was in great need and when all other countries desisted, deeply touched the refugees. In Brazil and Paraguay, two settlements were named Auhagen and Hindenburg, respectively, in appreciation of the work performed by the two German leaders. South America's youngest Mennonite communities retained intimate attachments with Germany in subsequent years. Not even the rise of fascism could destroy the association, since the German country, more so than its particular form of government, remained important. Germany also occupied a prominent place in the hearts of those who came to Canada. Their grateful sentiments were expressed in a statement of tribute and thanks directed to the German government shortly before the departure of one of the first groups to Canada. The testimony thanked the country for its good deeds and concluded, "May God bless the German Reich and its leaders for ever and ever."[140] There would be more such prayers before the 1930s were over.

International Mennonite Concern

For those remaining in the Soviet Union or for those nearly 1,000 who had fled across eastern borders, the problems were by no means over. The latter included nearly 200 persons who had crossed into Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India, or Western China.[141] An additional 700 or more left the settlements they had established in 1927 near the Amur River in the far east and fled 300 miles to the Chinese city of Harbin, which had already become an eastern refuge from collectivization.[142] Here they were led by Johann Isaak, a medical doctor who had been sent from Omsk by the Siberian Mennonites in

1920 to seek help from America but who had never gone farther than Harbin. Most of these people also hoped to be admitted to Canada, but all but a few ended up in Paraguay, 373 in 1932 and 184 in 1934, while 215 found refuge in the United States.[143]

The 100,000 Mennonites remaining in Russia faced successive waves of physical and psychological hardship. During 1929 and 1930 thousands of *kulaks*, including over 10,000 Mennonites, were exiled to distant places with or without their families. Working in northern forests, in eastern gold mines, or in new industrial and agricultural centres, they experienced severe winters, hard labour, spring floods, hunger, and disease, all of which took their toll in human life.[144]

For those not uprooted in Russia, there were other troubles. Crop failures, due to climatic conditions and the inefficiencies of the collectivized agriculture, brought to the Ukraine and the Caucasus in 1933 a famine greater than that of 1921. From Canada, David Toews continued his appeals for intervention and help. At one time, 15 leaders in meeting at Rosthern on behalf of the "Mennonite people of Canada and the United States" petitioned the Canadian representative at the League of Nations in Geneva "to fully open the way for relief work in Russia" because millions of people were dying of starvation.[145] Cultural and spiritual conditions reflected similar impoverishment. By the mid-1930s, most church buildings had been converted and were being used as clubhouses, theatres, granaries, or stables.[146]

The greatest tragedy was the loss of their leaders in the Great Purge. Initiated in 1934, the purge began with Stalin's cleansing of the Communist Party by imprisoning, exiling, or executing those suspected of disloyalty, including top Bolsheviks. It grew to embrace people from every level of Soviet society and eventually involved millions.[147] Hundreds of Mennonite men, indeed most of the leaders still remaining, were also sent into exile, this time to unknown destinations where they died alone and unheard.[148]

The western nations learned of the terrible fate of Mennonites and other peoples in the Soviet Union, but being preoccupied with the economic troubles of the time, they generally chose to ignore it. The three Mennonite world conferences, however, attested to the concern felt by the world-wide Mennonite community. This was particularly true of the 1930 conference, which was convened specifically for the

purpose of considering relief action. Whatever conclusions there were to be drawn from the Russian experience about Mennonite innocence or guilt,[149] few people doubted that it was their duty to render whatever assistance they could to their suffering brethren. The manifold responses of the international Mennonite community were shared and reinforced at the world conferences.

For the decade-old Mennonite Central Committee in the U.S.A., the continuing Russian crisis meant a prolongation of its own life, and the expansion of activity to other areas of need for which, of course, there were precedents. Before the founding of the MCC in 1920, certain programs had been undertaken in Europe and in the Middle East which, together with the relief in Russia and in India, amounted to $2,500,000 and involved 80 workers.[150] Thus, while the Russian emergency precipitated the founding of the MCC, the concept of a wider ministry, extending not only to Mennonites but also to people in need anywhere, actually preceded that founding.

In the early 1930s the Mennonite Central Committee was again forwarding considerable amounts of relief to Russia, much of it through individual remittances via American Express and *Torgsin*, Russian stores where clothing and food could be purchased with American dollars. Used clothing was being sent to immigrants in Canada and Paraguay. The latter also received shipments of dried fruit, aid for a new hospital, for the high school, and for the co-operative in Fernheim, and allowances for destitute ministers. The refugees in China and other Asian countries were assisted, as were those in transit in Europe and Mexico.

The new immigrants in Brazil received aid not only from the German government but also from the Mennonites in Holland, who raised 100,000 guilders for those settlements alone and whose historic struggle for human rights and contribution to the relief of their destitute brethren in the faith was thus reinforced. Now the General Commission for Foreign Needs concentrated on helping people in transit, especially through the Bureau in Rotterdam, but also as far away as Persia.[151]

The German Mennonite Aid, founded in 1920 also in response to the Russian emergency, had delivered a variety of services to the Russian Mennonites, both those emigrating and those remaining in Russia. Included among its donations were 12,000 schoolbooks and 4,000 Bibles. The Aid had been discontinued in 1926, but begin-

ning in 1929 the Germans once again gathered large quantities of clothing and amounts of money for the refugees from Russia. They were assisted by Mennonites in Switzerland, Poland, Alsace, and France.[152]

European aid had also gone to help resettle those immigrants who had been fortunate enough to enter Canada during the 1920s. Speaking to the 1936 world conference, David Toews acknowledged more than $18,000 received from Holland, Germany, France, and Poland to support immigrants detained in European camps for medical reasons. He also noted that for more than a decade about 15,000 pounds of clothing had been received annually from American Mennonites. Funds were also arriving from the United States to support ministers and to help build 40 churches for the immigrants.[153]

For Toews, it was most important that all the aid for the Russlaender not overlook the struggle in Canada.[154] He identified some of the burdensome responsibilities the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization had to deal with: a huge transportation debt, immigrants leaving the farms, mental patients and other dependants threatened with deportation if not cared for. But the main problem, he emphasized, remained the need in the Soviet Union. This was not surprising given the fact that 20,000 Russlaender in Canada had personally experienced the suffering of friends and relatives left behind. Toews summarized the problem as follows:

> After the emigration to Canada, also to Brazil and Paraguay, perhaps as many as 75,000 Mennonites remained in Russia. These have now been scattered throughout the Russian empire, and partly destroyed. It is questionable whether 50,000 are left. These have been silenced and are slowly going to their graves. The young people for the most part have been poisoned by the bolshevik system. . . . Over there they are longing for the time "when the Lord will redeem the prisoners of Zion." We too are longing for this time whenever we think of our brethren in Russia.[155]

Gratefully, Toews observed that the relief work for "our brethren in Russia" had brought together all the Mennonites of the world and he expressed the hope that there would be even more unity and joint action in the future.[156]

Relief action was one of the dominating themes at the world conferences and one of the forces working for unity, but there were also others. Information was shared about the history and state of Mennonite affairs in the different countries. Various theological themes were reviewed, and contemporary tasks, including missions and the nurture of young people, were outlined. The contributions of Menno Simons were assessed, and the origins of Anabaptism were recalled, as was appropriate especially at those world conferences, 1925 and 1936, which served as 400th anniversaries.

The rediscovery of common historical and theological roots was as essential, or more so, to an enduring international connection of the Mennonites as were relief programs. Thus, deep reflection on great historical events served the cause of commonality, while it also revealed some deep differences, which were already evident within the world Mennonite community. Yet, the discussions were felt to be so valuable for the rediscovery of history and the reaffirmation of identity that any divergences were tolerated, at least for the time being.

The heritage of faith itself received a positive review. Anabaptism, it was explained by Swiss representative Samuel Geiser, was not the result of cold calculation or fanaticism, as the work of Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and Georg Blaurock had been depicted in various church histories and by contemporary critics.[157] But rather, Anabaptism was, as the rich source materials amply documented, "a creative act of God," prompted by decadence in the church and the desire to form a fellowship of believers according to the precepts of early Christianity.[158] In Geiser's interpretation this meant emphasizing the inner experience of salvation, baptism upon confession of faith, the practice of separation from the world, the insistence on church discipline, the defence of complete religious freedom, the call to discipleship, and the rejection of the oath as well as of military service.[159]

Menno Simons, on the other hand, received a mixed review at the 1936 conference in Holland commemorating the 400th anniversary of his resignation from the priesthood. Dutch leader N. van der Zijpp noted that in many ways Mennonites in the Netherlands knew little about him, somewhat of an irony given the fact that Menno himself was Dutch. Very little had been said or written about him,

the last Dutch edition of his works having appeared in 1681. As well, the Dutch believers had for many centuries referred to themselves as *Doopsgezinde*, meaning Anabaptists, rather than Mennonites.[160]

Van der Zijpp explained that part of the reason for this reluctance was that Menno Simons was not really the founder of Anabaptism: he did not leave behind him like other reformers a theological system.[161] He was also too indecisive to become "the head of the church." On the positive side, Menno did guarantee continuity at a time when Calvinism, Catholicism, the use of force, and fanaticism threatened the brotherhood. He was known for his uniting of word and deed, for striking the right balance between doctrine and ethics. Also, he would always be known for his piety.

The world conference reflections on the early movement and its leaders was followed by a close look at the historical development and contemporary expression of the church. The Swiss churches, it was reported, had suffered decline for many years owing to oppression from the state, consequent emigration, and the rural isolation of those who had stayed behind. However, a renewal had occurred early in the twentieth century with continuing positive results.[162]

In the Netherlands the General Society of Anabaptists, founded in 1811 as a voluntary association, had been reorganized in 1923–1924. The new society, it was hoped, would provide better support for the Amsterdam seminary, needy congregations, and foreign relief and would allow for more active participation in the ecumenical movement. The reorganization was also intended to strengthen the fellowship of 40,000 members, an increase from a low of 27,000 in 1800 following a steady decline from 160,000 a century earlier. The reasons for that decline were fragmentation, on the one hand, and the growth of wealth, on the other hand, which led to new modes of relating to the world, including mixed marriages, participation in government offices, and military service, all of which tended to make the church unimportant, if not unnecessary.[163]

The rest of European Mennonitism, apart from Russia, included 40 congregations in southern Germany, about half a dozen congregations in northern Germany, about 10 congregations in Danzig and nearby regions formerly known as Prussia, and 8 congregations in Poland. Altogether, these Mennonites numbered about 20,000.[164] France now embraced both French- and German-speaking congre-

TABLE 30[166]

SUMMARY OF FOREIGN MENNONITE MISSIONS
(*c.* 1930)

SPONSOR	AREA	MISSIONARIES	MEMBERS
Dutch Mennonites	Java	6	2,130
Old Mennonite General Conference	Argentina	17	565
	India	41	1,366
	East Africa	10	39
General Conference Mennonite Church	America (Indians)	17	
	India	31	3,190
	China	16	
Mennonite Brethren Church	America (Indians)	33	100
	India		500
	China		1,000
Mennonite Brethren in Christ	Africa	21	-
	India		
Congo Inland Mission	Belgian Congo	31	-
Krimmer Mennonites	Mongolia	6	-
China Mennonite Mission Society	China	38	650

gations. The latter had previously been located within German borders, but with the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine after the First World War, they were now within France.[165]

None of the Latin American German-speaking congregations or, for that matter, mission congregations were as yet represented at any of the world conferences (1925-36). However, their pioneering did not go unremembered. Several presentations outlined the situations in South America, Africa, and Asia. In addition, there were letters of greeting from newly established churches in Brazil and Paraguay. From India, the most fruitful of the various Mennonite mission fields (see Table 30), came a message of identification with the suffering Russian brethren,[167] quite possibly because some of the

refugees in Asia had found their way to the mission stations.[168] The work of the missionaries, at that time numbering over 260, most of them from the U.S.A., would change in due course the character of the Mennonite world conference and thoroughly diffuse its Dutch-German and Swiss-German ethnic bases. But the full extent of that diffusion could not yet be foreseen.

The ethnic continuity of the Mennonites, who had a European base, was clearly evident in the North American story as reported at the international meetings. Practically all, if not all, the congregations in both the U.S.A. and Canada were related to either the Swiss-South German or the Dutch-North German cultural families. The Dutch had been the first to arrive in America, a number of businessmen establishing themselves in New York in 1643, others in Delaware in 1663, and still others in Pennsylvania in 1683.[169] The majority of immigrants who laid the real foundations of Mennonite life in America were, however, the Swiss and the South Germans. They began to arrive in the United States in 1683, some of their descendants moving on to Canada a century later. Significant numbers of Dutch-German Mennonites from Russia settled in both the United States and Canada in the 1870s.

Mennonite faith and life in America was described as exceedingly varied owing to the many different groupings, but there was also a common character, marked by the rejection of modernism and the active support of, or empathy with, fundamentalism. The teachings of most churches included the full authority of the Bible, the necessity of personal salvation and the sanctified life, the role of the church as an agent free and independent of the state, the clear separation of church and state, and the doctrine of nonresistance. An aggressive denominationalism, strongly influenced by American Protestantism, manifested itself in Sunday schools, youth societies, Bible studies, prayer groups, revival meetings, men's and women's associations, mission societies, choirs, and Bible conferences. There were missionaries on three continents, many mission stations in America, eleven hospitals, five children's homes, nine homes for senior citizens, two deaconess institutions, as well as colleges, other schools, and publications of all kinds.[170]

Through the sharing of information, discussions on faith and theology, and joint relief action, the world conferences, not yet officially bearing that name, had united Mennonites from various

groups and countries, at least symbolically so, for the first time in 400 years. This coming together was found to be so good, useful, and promising that further such gatherings were held in prospect. The common fellowship, the common faith, the common front, and joint action, it was believed, would contribute much to the survival of the parts as well as of the whole.

Meanwhile, it was more accurate to speak of the Mennonite reality in terms of parts rather than of the whole. The Mennonite World Conference had provided emotional and spiritual links, but it possessed as yet very little organizational strength, not even as an international umbrella. In Russia, the wholeness that had been there was slowly but most surely being decimated. And in Canada, David Toews could not yet count on all the Mennonites uniting to support what was for him the overriding cause of those years, the needs of the Russlaender in Russia, Latin America, and Canada. Parochialism, provincialism, and denominationalism were the stronger forces, which even the depression and the Mennonite sense of mutual aid could not overcome. In that way the Mennonites were no different from their opponents, the narrowly focused Premier Anderson of Saskatchewan and many other clannish Canadians.

FOOTNOTES

1 C.F. Klassen, "Die Lage der russischen Gemeinden seit 1920," in *Bericht ueber die Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz vom 31. August bis 3. September 1930*, ed. by D. Christian Neff (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1930), p. 57.

2 Robert Payne, *The Rise and Fall of Stalin* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1965). See also Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 547-51.

3 H.J. Willms, ed., *At the Gates of Moscow or God's Gracious Aid Through A Most Difficult and Trying Period*, trans. by George G. Thielman (Yarrow, B.C.: Columbia Press, 1964), pp. 13-15.

4 Cornelius J. Dyck, "The History of the Mennonite World Conference," in *Mennonite World Handbook*, ed. by Paul N. Kraybill (Lombard, Ill.: Mennonite World Conference, 1978), pp. 1-9.

5 D. Christian Neff, *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

6 *Bericht ueber die 400-Jaehrige Jubilaeumsfeier der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten vom 13. bis 15. Juni 1925 in Basel* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1925).

7 See Cornelius J. Dyck, p. 2, and P.A. Rempel, "Auszuege aus Aeltesten J.A. Rempels Lebensgeschichte," in *Mennonitische Maer-*

tyrer, ed. by A.A. Toews (Winnipeg: The Author, 1949), pp. 34–46.

8 D. Christian Neff, ed., *Der Allgemeine Kongress der Mennoniten gehalten in Amsterdam, Elspeet, Witmarsum, 29. Juni bis 3. Juli 1936* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936), p. ii.

9 David Toews, "Hilfswerk und Immigration," in *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, ed. Neff, pp. 151–58. See also C.F. Klassen, p. 54.

10 H.S. Bender, "Hilfswerk der amerikanischen Mennoniten in Russland," in *Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz*, ed. by D. Christian Neff, pp. 59–64.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 63–64.

12 John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921–1927* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1967), pp. 76–79.

13 C.F. Klassen, pp. 52–53.

14 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons, 1962), p. 223.

15 C. Henry Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites* (Newton, Kans.: Mennonite Publication Office, 1981), p. 21.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 330.

17 C.F. Klassen, pp. 54–57.

18 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 229–30.

19 Benjamin H. Unruh, "The Mass Flight of the German Farmers from the Soviet Union, Their Basis, the Results in Russia and its Effects of Foreign Relief Work," in *Mennonite World Relief Conference at Danzig, 1930*, ed. Delbert L. Gratz (Akron, Pa.: 1946), p. 30.

20 Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization, Depression, and Immigration, 1929–1930: A Chance Interplay," in *Empire and Nations: Essays in Honour of Frederic H. Soward*, ed. by Harvey L. Dyck and H. Peter Krosby (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 144–59. A pood is a Russian unit of weight equal to about 36.11 pounds.

21 H.J. Willms, p. 12.

22 Walter Quiring, *Russlanddeutsche Suchen eine Heimat: Die Deutsche Einwanderung in den Paraguayischen Chaco* (Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1938), p. 106.

23 Germany's role in the events is recounted by Harvey L. Dyck, *Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, 1926–1933: A Study in Diplomatic Instability* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1966), pp. 162–80.

24 Quoted in Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization," p. 145.

25 H.J. Willms, p. 124.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

27 John B. Toews, "The Mennonites and the Siberian Frontier," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 47 (April 1973):83–101.

28 Harvey L. Dyck, *Weimar Germany*, p. 163. Estimates differ as to the exact number of refugees gathered in Moscow, though all agree

that Mennonites constituted a majority. David Toews referred to the movement as embracing 13,000 people of which 8,000 were Mennonites. PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, David Toews to Gorden, 25 October 1930.

29 Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization," p. 147.
30 Walter Quiring, p. 110.
31 Harvey L. Dyck, *Weimar Germany*, p. 167.
32 H.J. Willms, p. 61.
33 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 64.
35 Howard Palmer, ed., *Immigration and the Rise of Multiculturalism* (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing, 1975), pp. 55-58. See also "The Preference to British Immigrants," *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 November 1929, p. 17.
36 Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization," p. 151.
37 PAC, RG. 14, Vol. 214, file 178, pp. 68-71.
38 *Canadian Annual Review 1928-29*, pp. 159-60.
39 *Canadian Annual Review 1929-30*, p. 179.
40 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, A. Buhr to Deputy Minister of Immigration, 5 June 1919.
41 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, W.J. Egan to A. Buhr, 22 August 1929.
42 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, F.C. Blair to Robert Forke, 30 October 1929.
43 CGC, XV.31-2, "1920-Moscow(4)." This file contains "Deutsche Hilfsmassnahmen zugunsten der Auswanderung deutschstaemmiger Fluechtlinge ueberwiegend mennonitischen Glaubens aus der Sovjetunion und ihre Ansiedlung in ueberseeischen Gebieten, 1929-1932: 23 Dokumente aus dem Politischen Archive des Auswaertigen Amts der Bundesrepublik Deutschland." This collection of documents telling about the German response from 5 November 1929 was made public on the occasion of the 50th anniversary, July 1980, in Paraguay of Colony Fernheim, whose population base is Moscow refugees of 1929.
44 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, Memorandum for file prepared by F.C. Blair, 26 November 1919.
45 *Ibid.*
46 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 244.
47 As late as 9 November, Blair confided to Kempff that he believed the transportation of Mennonites from Moscow to Canada could commence in the next couple of weeks or thereabouts, though the movement might not be completed until spring. PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11.
48 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, Robert Forke to Mackenzie King, 5 November 1929.
49 "Mennonites Admission is Favourably Viewed by Federal Govern-

ment," Toronto *Globe* (9 November 1929); "Admission of Mennonites to Be Deliberated," Montreal *Gazette* (9 November 1929).

50 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 245. See also "Premier Discusses Mennonites' Case," *Manitoba Free Press* (5 November 1929); "Mennonite Refugees Cannot Be Allowed to Be Public Charge," Toronto *Globe* (7 November 1929).

51 Anderson knew of the Mennonites' desire to come to Canada. On 5 November, he released a statement to the press saying that his government should be consulted before any of the Mennonites settled in the province.

52 The telegram was reproduced in "Ask Saskatchewan to Take Mennonites," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 9 November 1929, p. 1. For a summary and chronology of events 7 November to 7 December see PAC, RG. 14, Vol. 214, file 178, pp. 26–58.

53 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, J.T.M. Anderson to Robert Forke, 8 November 1929. See also "Guarantee Asked They Will Not Be Public Charges" *Regina Daily Post* (9 November 1929).

54 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, J.T.M. Anderson to Robert Forke, 8 November 1929.

55 At an Orange meeting held in Regina several months after his election, Anderson affirmed that he had been an Orangeman for over 30 years. George Joseph Hoffman, "The Saskatchewan Provincial Election of 1934: Its Political, Economic and Social Background" (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1973), p. 185.

56 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 48.

57 "Problems in West," Toronto *Globe*, 5 November 1929, p. 3. A similarly slanted article appeared several weeks later. "Few of Mennonites Likely to Emigrate," Toronto *Globe*, 20 November 1929, p. 5.

58 A compilation of newspaper reports is contained in George P. Friesen, *Fangs of Bolshevism: Friesen-Braun Trials in Saskatchewan, 1924–1929* (Saskatoon: Friesen, 1930).

59 *Ibid.* See also Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 214–17; Reports by RCMP, Saskatoon Detachment, "F" Division Prince Albert, 17 November 1926; CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Friesen-Braun Trials."

60 See Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 216–17.

61 The major decisions of the Friesen-Braun trials are given in 2WWR 257, 2OSLR 512, 2DLR 1032, WWR Vol. 3, pp. 227–30, DLR, Vol. 23, pp. 205–8.

62 "Braun's Family Not to Be Deported," *Saskatchewan Valley News*, (19 October 1932).

63 RCMP, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

64 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 216–17.

65 The federal government was not at all concerned about the attitude of

the Mennonite immigrants to education. F.C. Blair remarked: "Someone has very aptly described the difference between the 'Old Colony' and the 'New Colony' Mennonites by saying that the 'Old Colony' Mennonites could scarcely be got into school, and the 'New Colony' Mennonites can scarcely be kept out of it." PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, F.C. Blair to Paul Viau, 31 March 1930.

66 "Premier Talks on Refugee Question," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 7 November 1929, p. 13.

67 Between 5 November and 3 December, the Toronto *Globe* carried 14 articles related to the Mennonite refugee question. Front-page mention was given to 8 articles. The *Manitoba Free Press* carried 11 Mennonite-related press releases between 4 and 29 November. Of these, 7 were presented on the first page.

68 Caroline Melis, "J.T.M. Anderson, Director of Education Among New Canadians and the Policy of the Department of Education: 1918–1923," *Saskatchewan History* 33 (Winter 1980):11.

69 Patrick Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Crosses—The Election of 1929," in *Politics in Saskatchewan*, ed. by Norman Ward and Duff Spafford (Don Mills: Longmans Canada, 1968), p. 101.

70 William Calderwood, "Pulpit, Press and Political Reactions to the Ku Klux Klan in Saskatchewan," in *The Twenties in Western Canada*, ed. by S.M. Trofimenkoff (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, History Division, 1972), p. 213.

71 PAA, Accession no. 69. 289/498, UFA Sedgewick local to J. E. Brownlee, 13 November 1929.

72 PAA, Accession no. 69. 289/498, V.M.W. of Rosedale local to J. E. Brownlee, 25 November 1929.

73 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 247.

74 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, R.A. Hoey to David Toews, 12 November 1929.

75 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 247–48.

76 "Canadian Mennonites Protest Immigration of Their Compatriots," Toronto *Globe*, 15 November 1929, p. 1. The Mennonite Brethren Church regretted that some of its members had dispatched the telegram. The chairman of the semi-annual meeting of the Mennonite Brethren churches of the Rosthern District at Dalmeny critically explained that "the name of Christ had been shamed." The following resolution was unanimously adopted at the conclusion of the meeting: "We condemn with all our hearts the action of those who dispatched the telegram, as unchristian and declare that we as Mennonite Brethren churches of the Rosthern district have nothing in common with it." P.P. Nickel, "Ein Bedaurenswertes Telegram an Premier Anderson und unsere Stellung dazu," *Der Bote* 8 (21 January 1931):2–3.

77 "Mennonite Attitude Quoted by Mr. Anderson," Toronto *Globe*, 23 November 1929, p. 1.

78 C.C. Peters and H.A. Neufeld, "Eingabe der Herberter Mennoniten an den Premierminister, Hon. J.T.M. Anderson," *Der Bote* 6 (27 November 1929):3.

79 "Premier Replies Refugee Entry Is Conditional," *Calgary Albertan* (15 November 1929). He also wrote to the secretary of Mennonite Immigration Aid. PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, J.T.M. Anderson to A. Buhr, 14 November 1929.

80 "Bishop Outlines Mennonite Plan for Settlement," *Edmonton Journal* (18 November 1929); "Alberta Will Probably Bar Russian Mennonite Families; Government Disapproves," *Edmonton Journal* (18 November 1929); "Mennonite Question May Go to League," Toronto *Globe*, 18 November 1929, p. 1.

81 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, J.E. Brownlee to David Toews, 19 November 1929.

82 PAA, Accession no. 69. 289/498, Extract of the Minutes, Mennonite Farmers Association, Coaldale, 21 November 1929.

83 *Ibid.*, B.B. Janz and A.W. Klassen to Hon. Mr. Brownlee, 27 November 1929.

84 *Ibid.*, B.B. Janz, J.B. Janz, and H. Kornelsen to Mr. Brownlee, 15 December 1929.

85 *Ibid.*, Telegram from Provincial Secretary, Canadian Legion to J.E. Brownlee, 15 November 1929.

86 *Ibid.*, Resolution of Rowley UFWA, Local 68, 21 November 1929.

87 *Ibid.*, Letter from J. Weir, President, United Mine Workers of Alberta, 25 November 1929.

88 *Ibid.*, Letter from A.J. Morris, National Scribe, National Order of Canada, 3 December 1929.

89 *Ibid.*, Letter from George Jenkins, Secretary, Belfast Orange Lodge, Mayerthorpe, 28 January 1930, and from W.L. Hall, Grand Secretary, The Loyal Orange Association, Calgary, 24 March 1930.

90 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 248–50.

91 See CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Moscow(4)," "Deutsche Massnahmen . . ." p. 15 ff.

92 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 11, R.A. Hoey to Robert Forke, 25 November 1929.

93 "Forke Bars Mennonites," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 26 November 1929, p. 1.

94 "Mennonites Seeking New Homes May Reach Big Total of 100,000," *Manitoba Free Press* (21 November 1929).

95 *Canadian Annual Review, 1929–30*, p. 185.

96 "No Use to Us," *Victoria Daily Times* 75 (15 November 1929).

97 "Moscow *v.* Mennonite," *Vancouver Daily Province* (13 January 1930).

98 "Admission of Mennonites," *Manitoba Free Press* (18 November 1929).

99 "New Light on the Mennonites," *Regina Star* (22 November 1929).

100 "Soviet Cruelty Deluxe," Toronto *Globe* (3 December 1929).

101 "Mennonite Request Is Being Considered," Toronto *Globe* (6 November 1929). In a report to the Consul General for Bolivia in Canada, F.C. Blair, the Acting Deputy Minister, Immigration, referred to the Swiss Mennonites of Ontario as "a fine hardy pioneering type of law-abiding people, who have made good citizens of this country." PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, F.C. Blair to Paul Viau, 31 March 1930. In a letter to David Toews, Blair, referring to "my early days . . . in the County of Waterloo," says: "The reputation of Mennonites as law-abiding, industrious citizens, was such that I could not but be impressed with the desirability of such people." PAC, *op.cit.*, Blair to Toews, 1 March 1930. To Jacob H. Janzen, Blair wrote 28 October 1930: "My early life was spent in the County of Wellington and we were well-acquainted with Mennonite families and the successful settlement of Mennonite people in the adjacent County of Waterloo. Having had that experience it does not require any argument to convince me that Mennonites are a splendid, well-behaved, and industrious people." PAC, *ibid.*

102 "Mennonites and Schools," Toronto *Globe* (15 January 1930).

103 "The Mennonites," Toronto *Globe* (15 January 1930).

104 See Harvey L. Dyck, *Weimar Germany*, pp. 174–80.

105 President Hindenburg donated 200,000 marks ($50,000) from the funds at the president's personal disposal to a subscription of the German Red Cross and other charitable organizations. He made an earnest appeal for all Germans at home and abroad to contribute to the refugees' needs according to their means.

106 "Mennonite Problem Too Much for Berlin," Toronto *Globe*, 26 November 1929, p. 2.

107 See Chapter 12 and Frank H. Epp, "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspaper of a Canadian Minority Group, the Mennonites, in the 1930s" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1965).

108 Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization," p. 159.

109 H.J. Willms, p. 151. The story of one is included in Harvey L. Dyck, "Despair and Hope in Moscow: A Pillow, A Willow Trunk, and a Stiff-Backed Photograph," *Mennonite Life* 34 (September 1979):16–23.

110 Harvey L. Dyck, "Despair and Hope," p. 22.

111 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, P.C. Hiebert, Chairman, and Levi Mumaw, Secretary, "to whom it may concern," 27 November 1929.

112 H.J. Willms, pp. 92–96.

113 A description of the camps and their living conditions is found in Harold S. Bender, "Our Russian Refugee Brethren in Germany," *Gospel Herald* 23 (22 and 29 May 1930):170–71 and 190–91.

114 H.J. Willms, p. 102.

115 H.S. Bender, p. 171.

116 As with the earlier Russlaender immigrants, trachoma was the most common affliction affecting the travellers.

117 Joseph Winfield Fretz, *Pilgrims in Paraguay: The Story of Mennonite Colonization in South America* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953), p. 37, f. 16.

118 Their experience is recounted in Peter Klassen, "The Mennonites of Brazil," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 11 (April 1937):107–18.

119 The assistance given by Germany to the Mennonites in Brazil prompted one of their number to write, "The German government took the young colony under its wings in such a way and to such an extent that every writer of our history must recognize this wonderful service." *Ibid.*, p. 108.

120 Walter Quiring, "The Colonization of the German Mennonites from Russia in the Paraguayan Chaco," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 8 (April 1934):67.

121 PAC, RG. 14, Vol. 214, file 178, Abraham Funk, Carlton, Sask., to the Hon. Chas. Stewart, Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, 6 January 1930.

122 *Ibid.*

123 PAC, RG. 14, Vol. 214, file 178. Joseph R. Tucker, Sub Rosa, Saskatchewan, to the Minister of Immigration, 27 January 1930.

124 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, "Memorandum to the Governments of Ontario and Canada Submitted for the United Mennonite churches in Ontario by the Bishop of the Same, Jacob H. Janzen," 15 September 1930.

125 *Jahrbuch*, 1929, p. 8.

126 David Toews, "Bericht an die Konferenz," *Jahrbuch*, 1930, pp. 65–73.

127 *Ibid.*, pp. 72–73.

128 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12. Based on translation of code message by W.J. Egan, 28 November 1929.

129 Toews's tireless work prompted F.C. Blair to remark, "I am sure that Toews is sometimes at his wit's end to know what to do to help his people." PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, F.C. Blair to J. Macalister, 19 April 1930. See

also David Toews, "Einwanderung nach Kanada von Herbst 1928 bis Jetzt," in *Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz*, ed. by Neff, pp. 94–99.

130 PAC, King Papers, MG. 26, J 1, Vol. 183, King to David Toews, 10 January 1930.

131 "Toews Gives Details of Colonization Plan to Bring Mennonites," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* (29 April 1930):3, 5.

132 CGC, XV-31.2, "1920-Moscow(3)," David Toews, "A Letter Regarding Mennonites which appeared in *Star Phoenix* early February 1930."

133 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

134 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

135 PAA, Accession no. 69. 289/498, David Toews to J.E. Brownlee, 26 July 1930.

136 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 76, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, J.T.M. Anderson to David Toews, 14 June 1930.

137 PAC, Immigration Branch, RG. 75, Vol. 175, file 58764, part 12, Albert Prefontaine to Charles Stewart, 2 May 1930.

138 Walter Quiring, p. 115.

139 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 258.

140 H.J. Willms, p. 112.

141 "Schicksale einer kleinen Gruppe Mennonitsche Fluechtlinge aus Russland in China," in A.A. Toews, pp. 35–38; David Toews, "Immigration und Nothilfe," in *Jahrbuch*, 1933, pp. 71–73.

142 For a first-hand account of this expedition, see Abram Friesen and Abram J. Loewen, *Die Flucht Ueber den Amur* (Steinbach, Man.: Echo-Verlag, 1946). See also Abram J. Loewen, *Immer Weiter Nach Osten Suedrussland, China, Kanada* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1981).

143 P.C. Hiebert, "Hilfswerk und Kolonization der Mennoniten seit 1930," in D. Christian Neff, *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, pp. 146–50. See also P.C. Hiebert, "Hilfeleistung," *Verhandlungen* (ND), 1932, pp. 30–31; and David Toews, "Immigration und Nothilfe," *Jahrbuch*, 1934, pp. 71–73.

144 Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus*, p. 265.

145 CMCA, XXII-A, Vol. 1178, File 107, David Toews *et al.* "to the Canadian Representative at the League of Nations," 7 December 1934.

146 *Ibid.*, pp. 266–67.

147 An excellent account of Russia during Stalin's terror-filled reign is given by Adam Bruno Ulam, *Stalin: The Man and His Era* (New York: Viking Press, 1973).

148 *Ibid.*, pp. 267–69.

149 Jacob Kroeker, the Russian Mennonite émigré who spoke at the 1925 world conference, claimed that the Russian tragedy was the judgement of God on Mennonite materialism. He said: "Our

fathers and brothers became wealthy in the steppes of Russia and succumbed to materialism to a frightening degree. And now that a shocking world judgement is affecting Russia especially, what has happened to the millions which were the possession not only of a few but of many? The judgements of God have caught up also with the materialistic Mennonites." "Festansprache," in *Bericht ueber die 400-Jaehrige Jubilaeums Feier*, pp. 33–34.

150 Harold S. Bender, "Hilfswerk der Amerikanischen Mennoniten in Ruszland," in *Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz*, ed. by D. Christian Neff, pp. 59–64.

151 W. Kuehler, "Helfende Bruderliebe in der Vergangenheit Seitens der Hollaendischen Bruderschaft," in *Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz*, ed. by D. Christian Neff, pp. 39–44; S.H.N. Gorter, "Hilfswerk der Hollaendischen Mennoniten," in Neff, pp. 65–66.

152 D. Christian Neff, "Hilfswerk der Deutschen Mennoniten," in *ibid.*, pp. 67–68.

153 David Toews, "Hilfswerk und Immigration," in *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, ed. by Neff, pp. 151–54.

154 *Ibid.*

155 *Ibid.*, pp. 157–58. Toews's estimate of 75,000 Mennonites in Russia was at least 25,000 too few.

156 *Ibid.*, p. 158.

157 Even the *New York Times*, commenting on the Mennonite flight to Moscow, identified them as "good revolutionists closely connected with the Anabaptists and through them with the Peasants' War of 1525." See editorial on Mennonites, *New York Times* (6 December 1929):26. Harold S. Bender, responding to the editorial, in a letter prominently published, pointed out that the *Times*' "conception of the Mennonites and Anabaptists is the traditional one based on the historiography of the enemies . . . now completely invalidated by modern scholarship." H.S. Bender on history of Mennonites, *New York Times* (11 December 1929):28.

158 Samuel Geiser, "Die Mennoniten der Schweiz und Frankreiches in Geschichte und Gegenwart," in *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, ed. by Neff, pp. 47–60.

159 *Ibid.*

160 N. van der Zijpp, "Die Bedeutung von Menno Simons Wirksamkeit fuer unsere Bruderschaft" in *ibid.*, pp. 26–33.

161 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

162 Samuel Geiser, pp. 58–61.

163 J. Yntema, "Die Taufgesinnten in den Niederlanden in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," in *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, pp. 33–40.

164 D. Christian Neff, "Die Mennoniten in Deutschland, Danzig, und Polen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," in *ibid.*, pp. 40–47.

165 *Ibid.*, pp. 56–57.
166 Orie Miller, "Die Mission der Mennoniten," in *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, pp. 125–29.
167 D. Christian Neff, *Der Allgemeine Kongress*, pp. 21–22.
168 "Profile: Jacob J. Dick," *Mennonite Reporter* 10 (15 September 1980):11.
169 Harold S. Bender, "Die Mennoniten der Vereinigten Staaten in Amerika in Geschichte und Gegenwart," in *ibid.*, pp. 66–67.
170 *Ibid.*