

# The Fate of Mennonites in the Volga-Ural Region, 1929-1941

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*“Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it”*

For the past 10 years I have been gathering data on Mennonite victims of terror and repression in the Soviet Union during the 40-year period from 1917-1956.<sup>1</sup> To date, this data base contains the names of over 23,000 Mennonite men, women and children, which are summarized below in Table 1 under the following categories:<sup>2</sup> a) persons killed during the upheaval of the Civil War, persons who died in the typhus epidemic of 1919-20, and persons who starved to death in the famine of 1921-22; b) persons dekulakized, arrested and exiled during the years of collectivization, 1929-33, and victims of the 1933-34 famine; c) persons arrested during the years from 1933-41; d) persons whom I classify as victims of war, including: i) men conscripted into the Red Army or the German Wehrmacht who were killed in action, missing or POWs; ii) civilian casualties of the Great Trek of 1943 and the Great Flight in the winter and spring of 1945; iii) persons deported by Soviet authorities in the fall of 1941 and persons conscripted into the *Trudarmia*, 1942-46; iv) persons forcibly repatriated from German occupied territories back to the USSR after the war, 1945-46; and finally e) persons arrested in the last 10 years of the Stalinist regime, 1946-56.

**Table 1. Mennonite Victims of Terror and Repression in the Soviet Union, 1917-1956**

	Estimated Victims	Actual Names
A. Murdered, 1917-21	1,300	1,230
Typhus, 1919-20	1,500	1,030
Famine, 1921-22	500	120
B. Dekulakized, arrested and exiled, 1929-33	10,000	3,000
Famine, 1932-33	500	300
C. Arrested, 1934-41	10,000	5,630
D. Deported / Trudarmia, 1941-45	25,000	6,685
War Casualties: RA – WM – Trek	1,500	1,380
Repatriated, 1945-46	23,000	3,850
E. Arrested, 1946 – 1956	?	100
		23,325

Almost three quarters of these names (17,475) are of persons who lived in the large Mennonite settlements in Ukraine, Crimea and the northern Caucasus region. Up until recently, the bulk of Russian Mennonite historiography has dealt with the history and fate of these colonies. It is only in the past 10-15 years, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, that a growing number of publications – both scholarly studies by German and Russian scholars, and numerous memoirs and diaries of the women and men who lived through these tumultuous and tragic years – have begun to shed new light on the fate of Mennonites in Siberia and the Central Asian republics, and most recently, on the fate of the seven Mennonite settlements located in the Volga-Ural region of Central Russia, “in between” the larger Mennonite colonies in Ukraine and Siberia.

The only reliable population figures for these seven Mennonite settlements prior to World War II come from the 1926 Soviet census, and are summarized below in Table 2.<sup>3</sup> The 15,011 Mennonites living in the Volga-Ural Region in 1926 represented about 15% of the estimated 100,000 Mennonites living in the Soviet Union at the time,<sup>4</sup> and approximately 1/3 of them (almost 5,000 names) are registered in my data base.

**Table 2. Mennonite Population Figures in RSFSR, 1926 Census**

	Mennonites	Non-Mennonites	Total	Land (dessiatini)
Am Trakt (1854-1875)	1,358	272	1,630	15,516
Alt Samara (1859-1870)	1,226	612	1,838	13,869
Neu Samara (1891)	3,071	66	3,137	21,701
Orenburg (1895)	5,765	20	5,785	33,892
Ufa – Davlekanovo (1895)	1,831	698	2,529	10,222
Arkadak (1910)	1,152	52	1,204	3,488
Zentral (1910)	608	34	642	2,028
	15,011	1,754	16,765	100,716 dess. =271,933 acres

In this paper I will attempt to survey the history of these seven settlements during the years of the so called ‘Second Revolution’ from 1929-1941. In doing so, I must first admit that for me this has not been a dispassionate scholarly exercise. Rather, my preoccupation with the tragic fate of the Russian Mennonite people under Soviet rule has been motivated by an intense personal interest in the fate of my own family. It began at the height of the Cold War in the early 1960s, when I, as a young child, became aware that I had uncles, aunts and cousins living under the most difficult of circumstances in the Soviet Union.

My grandfather, Peter David Letkemann, was one of the original settlers of the Arkadak Settlement in 1910. He owned and operated a large flour mill in the railway town of Arkadak, located a few kilometres to the west of the seven Mennonite villages that made up the Arkadak Settlement. After the Bolshevik Revolution the mill was taken from him, and he moved to the small nearby Mennonite village of Vladimirovka (#1). My father, my uncles and aunts were all born in Arkadak. My uncle David was arrested here in 1937 and sentenced to 10 years in the GULag labour camps. I also have numerous personal connections to individuals and families in the other Mennonite settlement of the Volga-Ural region.

Secondly, I must state clearly that though this paper deals extensively with numbers, these should not be seen merely as statistics – rather, these numbers represent the names and lives of thousands of real people, people who were victims of crimes against humanity, perpetrated by one of the worst criminal regimes of all times.

## I. 1929 – 1933: Collectivization and Dekulakization

Jakob Neufeld writes that the period from 1929 onwards must be seen as one uninterrupted path of suffering (*Leidensweg*) for Mennonites in Russia.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this paper, I have divided the years in question into three periods: first, the years of collectivization and dekulakization from 1929-33; then the years of mass arrests from 1934 to June 1941 (i.e. the beginning of the war in Russia); and finally the six months from July to December 1941 (the period of the deportation). I have summarized the number of Mennonite victims in the Volga-Ural region during this time into 3 tables.

Table 3 summarizes the number of “kulak” individuals and families arrested and exiled during the years of collectivization from 1929 to 1933. The majority of these arrests/exile occurred in 1930-31.

**Table 3. Mennonite “Kulak” Individuals and Families Arrested or Exiled, 1929-33**

	Category I		Category II Persons	rate per capita
	Arrested	Families		
Am Trakt	18	48	237	ca. 20%
Alt Samara	18	55	331	ca. 28%
Neu Samara	15	18	90	ca. 3%
Orenburg	?	29	130	ca. 2.2%
Ufa	16	?		
Arkadak	15	8	66	ca. 0.6%
Zentral	30	none		
		158	854	ca. 5.6%

The “Liquidation of Kulaks as a Class” was proclaimed as official state policy by Stalin on 27 December 1929.<sup>6</sup> A series of decrees were issued in January and February 1930, outlining specific measures to be taken by the GPU (*Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravlenie*) and other state officials to eliminate an estimated 1.2 to 1.3 million “kulak” peasant households, affecting a total of some 5–6 million persons, or between 3 and 5% of the population.<sup>7</sup>

The Central Committee’s decree on “Measures to Liquidate Kulak Households” of 30 January 1930 divided these “kulak” households into three categories, to be dealt with as follows:<sup>8</sup> 60,000 kulaks (Category I) were to be arrested by the GPU and sent to concentration or labour

camps. The decree even went so far as to stipulate target numbers from various regions: 3 – 4,000 were to be arrested in the Middle Volga and 4 – 6,000 in the Lower Volga Region. 150,000 kulaks (Category II) were to be exiled to distant Rayons in the Far North, the Urals, Siberia and Kazakhstan by 15 April 1930. Target quotas called for 30-35,000 to come from Ukraine; 8-10,000 from the Middle Volga, and 10-12,000 from the Lower Volga Region. In fact, figures published by I.E. Zelenin in 1990 show that not only 150,000 kulaks, but 150,000 entire kulak households were “resettled” in 1930.<sup>9</sup>

The remaining kulak families (Category III) were dispossessed and evicted from their homes, but allowed to remain within their respective Rayon – at least for the time being. In part they were left to their own devices to find lodging with family or friends in the village or neighbouring villages; others – like my great-grandfather David Letkemann – were resettled outside the borders of existing villages and collective farms. In fact they were not really “resettled” – they were merely unloaded onto a bare open field and left to fend for themselves. Both my great-grandfather and great-grandmother died within a year of this “resettlement.”

Of the approximately one million families in this Category III, another 230,000 households were exiled the following year, in 1931. In total, 381,026 families – 1,803,392 persons – were “resettled.”<sup>10</sup> In Soviet documents they were euphemistically referred to as ‘special settlers’ (*spetsposelentsy*). These 1.8 million people represented about 1.15% of the estimated 1930 population of 157.4 million.<sup>11</sup>

While the 100,000 Mennonites in the USSR made up about .06% of the Soviet population in 1930, the per capita rate of Mennonite families from the Volga-Ural region dekulakized and “resettled” in 1930-31 was almost 5 times higher than the 1.15% rate of families “resettled” in the population as a whole (i.e. approximately 5.6% of the 15,000 Mennonites in the Volga-Ural settlements). As Table 3 shows, at least 158 families, and probably many more – since my lists are not complete – were exiled from the Volga-Ural region. If this number represents about 15% of the total number of Mennonite families exiled, than at least 1,050 Soviet Mennonite families were exiled in 1930-31. In actual fact, based on my name lists and findings on Mennonites in the Ukrainian and Siberian settlements, I estimate that the number is considerably higher, and probably closer to 1,500 or even 2,000 Mennonite families exiled.

Actual numbers, however, vary considerably from one settlement, and even from one village to another, depending not so much on the legislation as on the “enthusiasm” of local officials in fulfilling state quotas. As the figures in Table 3 show, the residents of Alt Samara and the Trakt settlements suffered dramatically higher rates of exile than

their nearby neighbours. When I raised this matter in correspondence or conversations with survivors from the era they were shocked, but could offer no logical or “reasonable” explanation. As one elderly man in his 90s put it, they were not dealing with logical or reasonable authorities!

In the fall of 1929, the Alt Samara colony had a Mennonite population of 151 Mennonite families.<sup>12</sup> In the years 1930-31 more than 1/3 of these families – 55 families in all, with a total of 331 persons, were exiled to the far reaches of the Soviet empire. The first group of 36 families (233 persons) were exiled on 30 March 1930 and taken by train to the Arkhangelsk region, 837 kilometers north of Moscow. They were unloaded on a small siding in the wilderness and put up initially in small huts in the nearby woods. By the following year the men had built larger barracks at kilometre 816, and the settlement of Kholmoleyevo was established. All able-bodied men and women, even young boys and girls of 16 years, were required to do forestry work. Statistics for the Kholmoleyevo settlement are appalling: 49 (21%) of the 233 persons died within the first few years; 81 (35%) were subsequently arrested (mostly in 1937-38) and perished in prisons or labour camps; 45 were taken into the *Trudarmia* during the War. Only 37 were still alive as of September 2002.<sup>13</sup>

In January 1931, two families – the Hermann Riesen family (5 persons) and the David Janzen family (5 persons) – were exiled to the Omsk region. Surviving members of the Janzen family eventually returned to Alt Samara, but were later deported to Kazakhstan in the fall of 1941, together with all remaining residents of the settlement. A third group of four families (31 persons) were exiled in February 1931 to the ‘Far East’ (*Dal’nii Vostok*) region beyond Lake Baikal in Siberia.

A fourth group of 12 families (52 persons) were exiled to Kazakhstan in June 1931. One of these families, that of Peter Peter Harder (b. 1880), his wife and 7 children, is listed in Volume 7 of the *White Book: Of Victims of Political Repression [in Samara Region]*. Here it states that the family was exiled to Kazakhstan in 1931, but still on the basis of the Central Committee’s Decree of 1 February 1930; the entire family was declared innocent of any wrongdoing and rehabilitated on 18 October 1991.<sup>14</sup>

In the settlement ‘Am Trakt’ 48 families (237 persons) were exiled in the years 1930-31. The process proceeded in several stages. In Stage 1, a number of families were dekulakized in 1929; i.e. they were dispossessed and evicted from their homes, but allowed to remain within the borders of the settlement. In Stage 2, two families – Johann Penner and Bruno Epp (12 persons) – were exiled to Archangelsk in late-March 1930.<sup>15</sup> In Stage 3, later that spring, another large group of “kulak” families were evicted from their homes and dispossessed. Some were

able to find shelter with relatives or friends, but the majority – at least 41 families – were forced to settle in the “kulak settlement” Kulakovka, located on the open steppe behind the village of Ostenfeld. These families spent one year here, living in the most appalling conditions. Although it was dangerous, and illegal, most of these families, who had been driven from their homes with practically no possessions, were “secretly” aided by relatives, who provided them with food and clothing. The men were forced to do a variety of work, including the construction of a bridge in Köppental, and forestry work in the winter. In April 1931 the men were arrested and imprisoned. On 21 June they were transported to Karaganda to begin construction of temporary shelters for their families, who arrived in Karaganda by train on 17 August 1931. In total, 199 persons were shipped to Karaganda. Elisabeth Wiens recalls that they were stuffed into cattle cars, so that there was barely room for all to sit; if someone died, the body had to remain where it was until the train stopped and the corpse could be buried in a shallow grave beside the tracks. There was so little water provided that each child received no more than a spoonful per day.<sup>16</sup>

In the Neu Samara settlement, a large number of disenfranchised [*lishentsy*] kulak families were required to give up their livestock, machinery and grain inventory to the collective, but were not allowed to join the *kolkhoz*. On 8 March 1930, celebrated in the Soviet Union as “International Women’s Day”, 11 of these “kulak” families were sent into exile, in spite of a blinding snowstorm.<sup>17</sup> Among these 11 families was that of *Ältester* Daniel Boschmann, elder of the *Mennoniten Gemeinde*. After 7 days they arrived at the first *Sammellager* (camp) in Lusa, in the northern Urals. One year later, the parents and sisters were sent further north to Camp Verkhni Viesliana, located on the river Viesliana (a tributary of the Kama River), in the Komi-Seerjan Region. The mother starved to death here in 1932. After her death, *Ältester* Boschmann and his daughters were sent further to Camp Krassnokamsk, 30 kilometers downstream from Sverdlovsk, where Boschmann starved to death in 1933.<sup>18</sup>

A correspondent to the *Mennonitische Rundschau* wrote that many other disenfranchised (*Stimmlose*) families in the Neu Samara settlement were to be exiled by 17 March; I have only been able to identify four of these families. Another four families were exiled to the Akmolinsk region in the summer of 1931.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, many of those who had fled to Moscow in the fall of 1929 and been forcibly returned to Neu Samara, including the ministers Bernhard Bergen, Abram Janz, Tobias Voth, Heinrich Peter Sukkau and others, were arrested and sent to labour camps, where most of them perished.

In Arkadak, 15 men were also arrested in connection with their flight to Moscow. Because local officials wanted to cool down the

emigration panic, no families were resettled in 1930 – some families were dekulakized, that is, dispossessed and evicted from their homes but allowed to remain within the settlement. One year later, in April 1931, 8 families were resettled to Karaganda. These families left their homes with little more than hand luggage. They were first taken to a so-called “kulak settlement” in the forest about 27 kilometers from Arkadak, where they were forced to do forestry work. Then all males aged 18 and over were arrested and imprisoned, and later transported to Kazakhstan, presumably to construct some sort of shelters for their families, who joined them later in the summer. Johann Pauls writes that these 8 families numbered 51 persons; by 31 October 1931 only 31 remained – 20 had died (a 40% death rate within first 6 months).<sup>20</sup>

In the large Orenburg settlement, only 29 families were dekulakized – some were sent to Karaganda, some to the far North and other remote regions.<sup>21</sup> An unknown number of families were exiled in the nearby Ufa-Davlekanovo settlements. Many families had earlier emigrated to Canada in the 1920s, or fled to other settlements to escape arrest and exile.<sup>22</sup>

In Zentral, a few families were evicted from their homes early in 1930 and forced to find accommodation elsewhere in the village, but none were exiled and resettled beyond the village. However, 29 men and 1 young female teacher were arrested in 1932-33 and sentenced in 1933 to 3 years in the labour camps.<sup>23</sup>

## II 1934 – 1941: Arrests

Table 4 summarizes the number of Mennonites, mostly men, arrested in the Volga-Ural region from 1934-1941. The vast majority were taken during the years of the ‘Great Terror,’ 1937-38.

**Table 4. Mennonite Arrests in the Volga – Ural Region: 1934 – 1941**

	1934-36	1937-38	1939-41
Am Trakt	30	78 > 6.7%	1
Alt Samara	20	59 > 7.0%	
Neu Samara	12	101 > 3.3%	15
Orenburg	7	322 > 5.5%	85
Ufa		15+ >	
Arkadak	14	170 > 14%	3
Zentral	19	19 > 3.1%	
	76	787 > 5.2%	

There is still no general agreement on the total numbers arrested during the 1930s, but according to the most recent archival sources 1,372,382 persons were arrested for counter-revolutionary crimes in 1937-38 – less than 1% of an estimated population of 162.5 million in 1937. Of those arrested in 1937-38 at least 681,692 were executed.<sup>24</sup> It is not the purpose of this essay to wade into the debate on the number of Stalin's victims during the 'Great Terror'; rather, I only need to point out that the ratio of arrests per capita for the same period in an estimated Mennonite population of 100,000 persons was at least 5 times higher than the 1% figure mentioned above for the general population.<sup>25</sup>

Fairly complete lists are available for some forty-nine Mennonite villages in Ukraine, west of the Dnepr River – including villages in the settlements of Khortitsa, Yazykovo, Zagradovka, Nepluyevka, Borozenko and Shliakhtin-Baratov. These lists show a total of 1,800 arrests (8.2%) in an estimated 1937 population of 22,000 Mennonites. Figures for the Molochnaia villages, east of the Dnepr River, also show about 1,800 arrests (9%) in an estimated population of some 20,000 persons. Data for other Mennonite villages east of the Dnepr River seems to support the conclusion that arrests among Mennonites in the Ukrainian SSR during the *Yezhovshchina* amounted to approximately 8 or 9 percent of the Mennonite population.

As Table 4 shows, the ratio of arrests in the Volga-Ural region does not seem to have been as high as in Ukraine, with the exception of the Arkadak settlement. For the whole region, at least 770 Mennonites are known to have been arrested in 1937-38, approximately 5.1% of an estimated Mennonite population of 15,000.

The arrest ratio in the seven villages of the Arkadak settlement, on the other hand, was at least 14%. Almost all adult males, including my uncle David Letkemann, were arrested in 1937-38. As far as I have been able to determine, relatively few were shot; most men were given 10 years sentences and sent to the labour camps, where the vast majority perished. My uncle David was one of the few to survive his 10 years in exile and rejoin his family in Karaganda in 1947.

In the Orenburg settlement, the arrest ratio seems to have been about 5.5%, with a total of at least 322 men arrested in 1937-38. Tragically, it seems that up to 96% of these men were shot and buried in mass graves on the banks of the Ural River.<sup>26</sup> After the War, a recreational area known as Saural'naya Roshcha was built on this site. In 1989 most of this area was flooded when the Ural River overflowed its banks. Soon large numbers of decayed corpses were found floating in the river. Residents who had lived in the area prior to the war recalled that they had often heard shots ringing out from here in the night. Authorities were finally forced to admit the truth of what had happened, and in

April 1989 the local paper *Svetlii Put'* (*The Bright Path*) began publishing the names and rehabilitation statements of the victims.<sup>27</sup>

Many more names and stories of Mennonite victims of the Great Terror could be shared, but I would like to reflect briefly on two questions: Why were so many Mennonites arrested? Why were so many shot?

Put quite simply, Mennonites were targeted for arrest and execution because they were identified as Germans! Animosity against Germans in Russia had already surfaced in the 1890s<sup>28</sup> and intensified during World War I, culminating in the notorious Land Liquidation Laws of 1915.<sup>29</sup> Under Bolshevik rule these laws were repealed, and Lenin followed a policy of rapprochement with Germany. Both Soviet Russia and Germany were outcasts in the post-Versailles world, and they joined hands naturally for mutual advantage.<sup>30</sup> Trade agreements were concluded as early as May 1921 and soon supplemented by secret military negotiations. On 16 April 1922 Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Rapallo, which formed the basis for economic, political and military cooperation over the next decade.<sup>31</sup> This treaty did not apply directly to German Soviet citizens, but the improved political climate contributed to their economic achievements during the 1920s.<sup>32</sup>

Tensions in German-Soviet relations arose in the years 1929-32, well before Hitler came to power, during Stalin's dekulakization and collectivization campaign. Germans suffered significant losses during this time, not principally because they were "Germans" or "Mennonites," but because they were branded as "kulaks" – they had been prosperous, they were strongly religious and anti-Communist. Relatively few Germans joined the Communist Party during the first two decades of Soviet rule. In Ukraine, out of a German population of 393,924 in 1926, only 1,069 were Party members.<sup>33</sup> Data from 1941 shows that in the Kuibyshev oblast there were only 139 party members and candidates in a population of 11,500 Germans (1.2%); in the Voronezh oblast there were only 45 party members and candidates in a population of 5,125 Germans (.87%).<sup>34</sup> The well publicized exodus of Mennonites and other Germans to Moscow in November 1929 proved an especial embarrassment to Soviet authorities, and the subsequent exile of those families not allowed to emigrate contributed to sour Soviet-German relations.<sup>35</sup>

Relations deteriorated further after the Nazis came to power in January 1933. Hitler made no secret of his anti-communist stance. The Reichstag Fire of 27 February 1933 was declared as "the beginning of the Communist revolt," and led to the arrest of over 4,000 German Communist deputies and officials, the closing of the party's offices in Germany and a ban on all their publications.<sup>36</sup> In his memoirs, Nikita

Khrushchev writes: "In his book *Mein Kampf* . . . Hitler spelled out the aggressive designs he had on the world . . . He set as his sworn duty the annihilation of Communism and the storming of its citadel, the Soviet Union."<sup>37</sup> Yet Stalin, unable to rely on the United States, Great Britain or France for expanded trade or loans, continued to look to Germany during the period 1931-34 for economic and military support.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout these years, Soviet Mennonites and Germans made significant contributions to agricultural and industrial growth in the USSR. In the early 1930s, hundreds of Mennonite engineers, craftsmen and labourers worked on the construction of the Soviet Union's first large hydroelectric dam, the Dneprostoi in Zaporozhe. Also in Zaporozhe, Gerhard C. Hamm, Peter J. Dyck and Kornelius K. Pauls pioneered the assembly-line production of combines in the 'Kommunar' Factory and were awarded the 'Order of Lenin' for their efforts.<sup>39</sup>

Many Germans, including Mennonites, sought to demonstrate their loyalty as Soviet citizens in other ways: David Johann Penner (alias 'Reinmarus') wrote articles denouncing Mennonite religious leaders, and others showing how Germans had benefited and prospered culturally and economically under Soviet rule.<sup>40</sup> Members of the 'Lenin' Collective Farm in the North Caucasus, responding to the publication in western newspapers of stories about famine and hardship in the Soviet Union, wrote an open letter stating: "We German collective farmers declare to the whole world: "We do not need your fascist relief efforts; do not stick your snout into our Soviet vegetable garden." Among the sixty-two signatures were the 'Mennonite' names B. Harder, E. Friesen, Anna Bekker, and Johann Isaak.<sup>41</sup> During 1933-34, articles appeared in all German-language Soviet newspapers denying "lies" about the famine, and letters were published from many individuals, including Mennonites, rejecting the food packages or monetary gifts they had received from Germany.<sup>42</sup> Given the circumstances of the time, one naturally wonders what types of "pressure" were used to solicit such "voluntary" and "sincere" expressions of support for the regime.

Yet their efforts were in vain. Hitler ignored Stalin's overtures for continued cooperation, and on 26 January 1934 concluded a Non-Aggression Pact with Poland. Stalin recognized the reality of the Nazi threat to the Soviet Union and immediately sought diplomatic relations with the United States and more cordial relations with France.<sup>43</sup>

The battle against ethnic Germans intensified on 5 November 1934, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a special resolution "On the Battle against Counter-Revolutionary Fascist Elements in the German Colonies," which gave the NKVD (*Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* – Soviet secret police) a free hand to undertake the arrest, interrogation and execution of suspected "enemies" and malicious activists in the German regions.<sup>44</sup> The resolu-

tion also condemned the acceptance of food packages and monetary gifts from German Aid Organizations as a counter-revolutionary act. Recipients were accused of being agents of “capitalist-fascist organizations.” On 11 November, within days of this resolution, the accountant Johann David Klassen was arrested in New-York (Ignatyev), accused of promoting anti-Soviet propaganda, and sentenced to five years in the GULag.<sup>45</sup> On 17 November, four members of the “Workers’ Friend” Collective Farm in the German Rayon of West Siberia – including Chairman Heinrich Unruh, “Brigadier” Gerbrandt, Johann Derksen and Klaas Epp – were arrested. Gerbrandt and Derksen were sentenced to death. On 20 November, four members of the “Bolshevik” Collective Farm, “Brigadier” Franz Berg (a former Mennonite minister), Abram Wiebe, Heinrich Janzen and the “kulak” Peter Buller were also arrested. Berg and Buller were executed.<sup>46</sup>

According to Harvey Dyck, the files of the Molochnaia Communist Party during this period from 1934 to 1936 are “bursting with incendiary documents typcasting large numbers of Mennonite society as instruments of traitorous fascist policy lying in wait for a German military attack.” A mass meeting held in a Molochnaia village in October 1936 “unanimously” passed the following resolution: “We Bolsheviks have seen through the predatory schemes of fascism which seeks to destroy our peaceful socialist policy through war . . . Hitler agents and their supporters and those who accept Hitler [food] packages must be unmasked and driven out of our midst . . . In recent times, fascist agents in many collectives of the Molochnaia rayon have again begun to rouse themselves. We undertake to renew our class-consciousness and mobilize ourselves for the struggle. We will banish such enemies from our collectives and petition authorities to condemn those deemed foes and traitors of our socialist Fatherland.” At another meeting, in December 1934, local Party officials recommended the deportation of 500 families. “Although the advice was not acted on at the time, the [recommendation] was based on a damaging analysis that German-speaking Soviet society was abnormal, that it was a veritable “kulak society,” and hence fair play for open season by the NKVD.”<sup>47</sup>

Terry Martin’s groundbreaking research into the history of Soviet ethnic cleansing clearly shows that by 1936, Germans and other western “Diaspora nationalities” such as Poles, Finns, and Latvians, were stigmatized as collectively disloyal to the Soviet state and subjected to ethnic cleansing.<sup>48</sup> Stalin’s “class war,” as mentioned, for example, in his address to the 1937 February-March Plenum, was replaced by terror that targeted entire “ethnic” rather than “class” groups. Mass arrest operations targeting “former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements” launched by NKVD decree #00447 on 30 July 1937 were followed by various “national operations,” beginning with

decree #00485, the “Polish” operation, on 15 August 1937. The NKVD later spoke of their “German operation” and “Latvian operation,” and individuals were arrested “according to the Polish line” or “the Finnish line.” From July 1937 to November 1938, 335,513 individuals were convicted in these national operations, and 247,157 (73.6 percent) were executed.<sup>49</sup> “The average percentage of death penalties on the “German line” was higher – 76.16%; but this ratio varied considerably from one region to another – in some places only 30-40% were shot; based on data for the Zaporozhe region I can say that about 80% of Mennonite and German men arrested in 1937-38 were shot, on average within 6 weeks of their arrest. In the regions of Krasnodar, Novosibirsk and Orenburg the execution ratios were even higher – 96.1%, 96.3% and 96.8% respectively. “It is impossible to explain these stunning figures by anything other than the personal cruelty of the UNKVD chiefs.”<sup>50</sup>

### III. 1941: Deportation

The Terror and the suffering of the Soviet-Germans did not end in 1938. There was a brief “respite,” especially after the signing of the Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the USSR on 23 August 1939. But within two months after the German invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941 the Soviets began deporting Germans from Crimea, Ukraine, the Caucasus and the European districts of the RSFSR to Siberia and Central Asia, on the basis of the infamous decree of 28 August 1941, in which the Soviet government accused Germans in the Volga Republic of harbouring thousands of spies and terrorists – “enemies of the Soviet people.” By 25 December 1941 authorities had deported 894,626 Germans.<sup>51</sup>

I estimate that this deportation affected at least 21,000 or more Mennonites in Ukraine, Crimea and the Caucasus. Further east, in the Volga-Ural Region, an estimated 3,800 Mennonites were deported from the Trakt, Arkadak, Zentral, and Alt-Samara settlements (Table 5). For reasons unknown to me [and former residents as well!], the people of the two largest and most populous Mennonite settlements in the Volga-Ural region – Neu Samara and Orenburg [together with the few remaining residents in Ufa-Davlekanovo] – were not deported. They were allowed to remain in their settlements. In total then, at least 25,000 Mennonites were deported to Siberia or Kazakhstan by December 1941.

The decree of 28 August was couched in deceptively cautious and humane words. The deportation was described not as punishment, but as a precaution “to avoid undesirable events . . . and to prevent serious bloodshed.” There were promises of “land allotment” and “state

assistance” in settling in the new areas. Subsequent instructions issued by the Ministry of Defence spoke of providing adequate provisions and medical treatment en route during the time of transport.<sup>52</sup> Even prominent scholars like Robert Conquest were duped into believing that “their treatment was throughout better than that of later deportees.”<sup>53</sup> Nothing can be further from the truth!

**Table 5. Deportation of Mennonite Settlements  
in the Volga-Ural Region, 1941**

Am Trakt	12 September	ca. 1,200+ persons
Arkadak	13-14 September 1941	ca. 1,000+ persons
Zentral	20 October 1941	ca. 600+ persons
Alt Samara	2-3 December 1941	ca. 1,000+ persons
		3,800+ persons

This is confirmed by the testimony recorded in countless letters, diaries, personal memoirs and conversations. Time and space permits only a few examples to be provided here.

Peter Froese, from the village Borissovo [Arkadak settlement] recalls that on [Friday] 12 September the residents of all 7 villages were driven in open wagons to the Arkadak rail station, where they waited under the open sky for a train to arrive. The people prayed and wept and sang together to comfort one another. Then they were loaded into cattle cars and transported, without any provisions, to the region of Tjumen in the Novosibirsk Oblast.<sup>54</sup>

Nelli (Peters) Krahn, from the same village, writes: “We had to wait [for the train] three days and two nights – thank God the weather was good, with no rain. Only on the evening of the third day did the train finally arrive. There must have been at least 30 cattle cars – we were loaded up like animals. The cars had no light, no toilet – only a pail near the door, and no water. There were so many people crowded into each car that not all could sleep at one time – the children and the elderly slept at night, the young people tried to lie down and sleep during the day. The train included one car with soldiers to guard us, to insure that no one would escape. The train moved slowly, often stopping for hours on end on some abandoned siding, with no facilities, no water, so that we had to go into the forest to relieve ourselves. Three times in two weeks we received a meal of warm soup and bread. No one knew where we would end up. I can remember that two people died en route and had to be left lying beside the tracks. On the 15<sup>th</sup> day we arrived at the station of Jalutorovsk in the Tjumen Region of the Novosibirsk Oblast.”<sup>55</sup>

Residents of the Am Trakt Settlement were deported on the same September weekend. Helene Wall recalls that they were ordered to be ready in 3 days. Those who had grain reserves stored up were allowed to deliver their grain to the state, in return for credits promising that they would receive equivalent amounts at their place of destination – these promises were never kept! On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> they were taken by wagon to a nearby train station, where they slept outside. The next day, [Friday] 12 September 1941, a freight train arrived – they were loaded like animals into cattle cars – this was the tragic end of the Trakt Settlement. Early on the morning of 27 September the train arrived at the station Tugan in the Tomsk Region. The weather was cold – rain showers mixed with snow.<sup>56</sup>

A similar fate struck the village of Zentral in the Voronezh Oblast on 20 October 1941, when all remaining women, children and the elderly were transported eastward to the Ust'-Tarka rayon, Novosibirsk Oblast. Anna Käthler writes of conditions in Zentral just prior to deportation: "The favourable weather and growing conditions of the summer of 1941 had produced a bumper crop. There was talk of each kolkhoz worker receiving 8 kg of grain per work unit; [we] had never experienced anything like this in all the 11 years that the kolkhoz had existed. And this in spite of the absence of most of the young men – who had been taken shortly after the war began and pressed into forced labour digging trenches . . . The remaining women and elderly men had brought in the harvest of the kolkhoz fields and of their own private gardens, and had made preparations for the winter – canning water melons and pickles and making sauerkraut. They were just beginning to prepare for the hog slaughtering [which usually occurred at the end of October or early November, after the first heavy frost]. And now everything had to be left behind. Windows and doors were boarded up. The livestock bellowed in the barns, as if to bid us farewell . . ." In a personal conversation, Susanne Isaak added, "no one was left to milk the cows or feed the hogs and sheep. We were instructed to take warm clothing, utensils and tools, and food provisions for one month. We were given "receipts" for livestock and personal possessions left behind; the authorities promised that these would be reimbursed after arrival at our destination – this promise was never kept. If the government did release funds for such a purpose, they were probably stolen by local administrators – we never received them!"<sup>57</sup>

The last Mennonites to be deported from the Volga-Ural region were the residents of Alt Samara. Having heard the all of the Volga Germans had been exiled to Siberia, they assumed that their turn would come soon – but one week followed another, and they heard nothing. According to Robert Penner, "the officials in Kuibyshev tried to forestall the deportation [of such valuable workers] until December. But then the

village soviet received the order for resettlement . . . On 2-3 December the village was surrounded by NKVD troops and residents were quickly loaded onto wagons for transport to the nearest rail station. By Christmas time the train arrived at the station Nurinsk, where half of the wagons were disconnected. The other half continued their journey. Those in Nurinsk waited two days at the station for wagon to take them to their new destinations. The Penner family was sent 100 kilometers to the village of Akshar. Two weeks later young Mr. Penner and other young men were taken into the *Trudarmiia* and sent to the forest camps of the Ural region. He left behind his pregnant wife. He never did see his new-born daughter; she died as an infant after one year.”<sup>58</sup>

In many ways, the fate of these deportees was worse than that of the men and women who were taken during the Yezhov years. They were not mercifully shot; instead, theirs was a living hell of back-breaking labour, hunger, cold, disease and anxiety about the whereabouts and fate of loved ones taken in the 1930s. Up to one-half of these unfortunates, including all able-bodied men aged 16-60 and women aged 16-45, were subsequently “enlisted” into the slave labour camps of the *Trudarmiia*, where thousands perished. Those who remained behind in Neu Samara and Orenburg also suffered huge losses of men and women into the *Trudarmiia* – a topic that will have to await another paper.

The final tragedy in this Mennonite chronology of suffering was the forced repatriation of some 23,000 Mennonites to the USSR (often with Allied assistance!) after the end of World War II. The cattle cars were called into duty one last time to transport thousands of tired and frightened refugees from Germany and Poland to the forests of Siberia or the barren steppes of Kazakhstan. Again, hundreds died of cold, disease or starvation [including my own grandmother]. Those who survived were forced to labour in mines or forests, virtual prisoners until 1956, when the ‘Kommandatura’ came to an end.

No government has ever offered an apology; and no officials have ever stood trial for their crimes against humanity. Yet none of the individuals with whom I have spoken or corresponded called for revenge. All seemed prepared to forgive, but not to forget; and all encouraged me to continue my efforts to record and remember the names of the victims and to honour their memory.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This research project is a continuation of work begun years earlier by my late friend and colleague Dr. George K. Epp of Winnipeg, who died of cancer in October 1997. Dr. Epp is the author of numerous articles on Russian Mennonite History,

- including “Die deutschen Mennonitenkolonien an der Wolga,” in *Zwischen Reform und Revolution. Die Deutschen an der Wolga, 1860-1917*. Herausgegeben von Dittmar Dahlmann und Ralph Tuchtenhagen (Essen: Klartext, 1994). See also his three-volume *Geschichte der Mennoniten in Russland* (Bielefeld: Logos Verlag, 1997-2003). Further details on his life and work can be found at the following web-site: <http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/outreach/friends/letkemann.html>
- <sup>2</sup> Previous summaries of my data are found in the *Mennonite Historian* (June, 1998); (December 1998); (June 1999); *Preservings* (December 1998); and in “Den Opfern zum Gedächtnis” *Der Bote* 8 (11 April 2001), 7-9; 9 (25 April 2001), 15-16.
  - <sup>3</sup> This data appeared in *Der Praktische Landwirt* [the official organ of the All-Russian Mennonite Agricultural Society], 5 (May 1926), 2-3. Further information on the 1926 census, as it relates to the German population is found in Karl Stumpp, “Das Deutschtum in Russland nach der Volkszählung 1926,” *Heimatbuch der Deutschen aus Russland* (Stuttgart: 1957), 103-114.
  - <sup>4</sup> On Russian Mennonite population figures, cf. Adolf Ehrht, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin - Leipzig: Verlag von Julius Beltz, 1932), 159. Ehrht estimates the 1929 population as 118,000; Peter Braun, “Einige Zurechtstellungen zu Dr. A. Ehrts ‘Das Mennonitentum in Russland’,” *Mennonitische Blätter* May (1932), 53, disputes this figure and claims that a figure of 100,000 is more accurate. Official population figures for the Mennonite villages in the 1930s are unavailable; estimates can be made on the basis of data from the official 1926 census, from census data found in captured German War Documents, and from information provided by former residents. Information for villages west of the Dnepr is found in the Captured German War Documents [GWD] of the Stumpp Sonderkommando; Richard H. Walth, *Strandgut der Weltgeschichte: die Russlanddeutschen zwischen Stalin und Hitler* (Essen: Klartext, 1994) offers a comprehensive analysis of these German War Documents. Portions of these village reports have been translated by J.B. Toews, “Documents on Mennonite Life in Russia, 1930-1940, Part I - Collectivization and the Great Terror,” *Work Paper No. 19*, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, December 1975, 3-12. Information for the Molochnaia villages is found in the “Dorfkarten” prepared by the German SS in 1942. Mennonite population figures for Ukraine in October 1926 (population - 46,830) are given in Ehrht, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland*, 152. Further information, together with the complete name lists of victims will be published in my forthcoming *Book of Remembrance - Mennonite Victims of the Soviet Inferno*.
  - <sup>5</sup> Jakob Neufeld, *Tiefenwege*, (Virgil, ON: Niagara Press, n.d.), 10.
  - <sup>6</sup> J.V. Stalin, *Works, Volume 12, April 1929-June 1930* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), 173.
  - <sup>7</sup> Moshe Lewin, “Who was the Soviet Kulak,” *Soviet Studies* 18 (1967), 197-98.
  - <sup>8</sup> *Zhertvii Politicheskikh Repressii v Altaiskom Kraie* [Victims of Political Repression in the Altai Region], vol. 1, [Barnaul, 1998], 44-48.
  - <sup>9</sup> Moshe Lewin, “Small Facts from Big Files about the kolkhozy in 1940,” in Julian Cooper, Maureen Perrie and E.A. Rees, ed. *Soviet History, 1917-53. Essays in Honour of R.W. Davies*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 191ff.
  - <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
  - <sup>11</sup> Michael Ellman, “A Note on the Number of 1933 Famine Victims,” *Soviet Studies* 43: 2 (1991), 375.
  - <sup>12</sup> Based on data provided by Jakob Klassen, (Detmold, Germany) in a series of letters between 18 April 1997 and 18 March 1998.
  - <sup>13</sup> Based on data provided by Wilhelm Claassen (Limeshain, Germany) in a series of letters between 5 December 1997 and 31 March 1998.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Samarskaia Oblast’ – Bielaia Kniga O Zhertvakh Politicheskikh Repressii* [Samara Region – White Book Of Victims of Political Repression], 15 volumes, 1997 – 2001, 5,741 pages. [<http://orel.rsl.ru/nettext/memorial/samara07.htm>] Volume 7, p. 90:

HARDER, Peter Peter. I am grateful to Elmar Matthies of Germany for providing me with copies of this volume.

- 15 Personal conversation with Helmut Epp, son of Bruno Epp, in Detmold Germany on 14 May 2003.
- 16 Data supplied by Johann Bergmann, of Germany; the official chronicler of this deportation. He has prepared a detailed list of all those deported and keeps an up-to-date record those still alive. At the time of our last correspondence, in January 1998, about 37 survivors were still living; a fellowship that has not existed for 70 years is kept together in Bergmann's book.
- 17 "Auf der Kolonie Neu-Samara," *Mennonitische Rundschau* 16 April 1930, 8; 26 April 1930, 8.
- 18 J.H. Brucks, *Neu Samara am Tock* (Clearbrook: Fraser Valley Printers, 1964), 82.
- 19 Franz Martens describes the events in his letter of 31 July 1931, published in *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 3 September 1931, 6.
- 20 Johann Pauls, letter in "Beechy, Sask., 31 Oct.1932," *Mennonitische Rundschau* 23 Nov 1932, 6-7.
- 21 The data for Orenburg is compiled from Karl Fast, *Orenburg, die Letzte Mennonitische Ansiedlung in Osteuropa* (Winnipeg: Das Bunte Fenster, 1995), 69-71, 120-132; Walter Quiring, "Grossbauern werden Landarbeiter," in Peter P. Dyck, *Orenburg am Ural* (Clearbrook: Christian Book Store, 1951), 151-56; Jakob W. Rempel, *Dolinowka, zur Geschichte eines deutschen Dorfes in Russland* (Meckenheim Wahrlich Druck, 1995); the unpublished memoirs of Aron Pries (manuscript in author's possession), and various personal interviews with former residents of Orenburg.
- 22 Gerhard Hein, editor, *Ufa Die mennonitische Ansiedlung bei Ufa am Uralgebirge, 1894-1938* (n.p., 1975).
- 23 Heinrich Isaak (Köln), unpublished research paper on Zentral, 83-90, based on archival research in the Regional State Archive of Voronezh (paper in author's possession); and a series of several dozen letters and interviews with Susanna Isaak (Meckenheim, Germany).
- 24 Stephen Wheatcroft, "Victims of Stalinism and the Soviet Secret Police," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51: 2 (1999), 326.
- 25 Peter Letkemann, "Mennonite Victims of the 'Great Terror,' 1936-1938," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998), 33-58.
- 26 N. Okhotkin and A. Roginskii (Moscow), "'Iz istorii 'niemetzkoi operatzii' NKVD 1937-1938," [From the History of 'The German Operation' of the NKVD, 1937-1938] in *Nakazanii Narod* [A Punished People – Repressions against Russian Germans] (Moscow: Zveniiia, 1999), 69. I am indebted to Vitaly Martens for his excellent English translation of this article.
- 27 Olga Hildebrandt, "Erinnerungen an die verlassene Heimat," *Der Bote*, 38 (12 Oct 1994), 8,11; and Karl Fast, *Orenburg*, 80.
- 28 Harvey Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism and the Challenge of Russian Nationalism, 1889," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 56 (1982), 307-341.
- 29 David G. Rempel, "The Expropriation of the German Colonists in South Russia During the Great War," *The Journal of Modern History* 4 (1932), 49-67.
- 30 Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), 567.
- 31 Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union* (New York: Random House, 1960), 77.
- 32 Benjamin Pinkus/Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Die deutschen in der Sowjetunion* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987), 163.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 82.

- <sup>34</sup> Alfred Eisfeld and Victor Herdt, *Deportation – Sondersiedlung – Arbeitsarmee, Deutsche in der Sowjetunion, 1941 bis 1956* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1996), 94 (Dokument 76), 100 (Dokument 86).
- <sup>35</sup> Benjamin Pinkus, *Die deutschen in der Sowjetunion*, 179-86; Gerhard Hildebrandt, „Russlandmennoniten such die Freiheit. Der Aufbruch nach Moskau: Ursachen und Folgen (1929/1930),“ *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 52 (1995), 135-150; H.J. Willms, *Vor den Toren Moskaus* (n.p., 1958); Harvey L. Dyck, *Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia, 1926-1933* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 162-74, and “Collectivization, Repression, and Immigration, 1929-30: A Chance Interplay,” in Harvey L. Dyck and H. Peter Krosby (ed.), *Empire and Nations* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 144-59.
- <sup>36</sup> Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin. Parallel Lives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 309ff.
- <sup>37</sup> *Khrushchev Remembers*, translated and edited by Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1970), 126.
- <sup>38</sup> Rubinstein, *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, 86.
- <sup>39</sup> Information supplied by Gerhard C. Hamm’s surviving daughter, Mrs. Marguerite Bergmann of Winnipeg, interviewed 28 July 1998.
- <sup>40</sup> Penner’s denunciation of Aeltester David H. Epp and other Mennonite religious leaders in Khortitsa appeared in the *Deutsche Zentralzeitung* on September 23 1931 under the pseudonym ‘Reinmarus’, see A. Kroeker, “Ein Licht über das Antichristentum in Rußland,” *Mennonitische Rundschau*, November 11, 1931, 7. Another article, “Trudiashchiesia nemzii SSSR i ikh neproshennii radeteli” (“The working Germans in the USSR and their unwanted goals”), appeared in *Izvestia*, July 21 1933. I am grateful to Karl Fast for translating and interpreting this article for me. See also my essay on David Penner in *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets. Leadership among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880-1960)*, ed. by Harry Loewen (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2003), 297-311.
- <sup>41</sup> *Pravda*, 14 September 1934 [Nr. 254 (6140)].
- <sup>42</sup> K. Botschkarjow, „Die Antwort der deutschen Kolchosbauern,“ *Neues Leben*, 19 December 1973, 7.
- <sup>43</sup> Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin*, 334, 394.
- <sup>44</sup> Larissa Belkovec, “Der Beginn des Massenterrors. Die Getreiderequirierung von 1934 im westsibirischen Deutschen Rayon,” in *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Kultur der Russlanddeutschen* 4 (1994), 121.
- <sup>45</sup> Nikolaus Klassen, “Zu: ‘1998 als Gedenkjahr für Verschollene’. . . - Erinnerungen an New York,” *Der Bote* 2 April 1997, 5-6.
- <sup>46</sup> Larissa Belkovec, “Der Beginn des Massenterrors. Die Getreiderequirierung von 1934 im westsibirischen Deutschen Rayon,“ 121-23.
- <sup>47</sup> Harvey Dyck, letter of 17 July 1998. I am grateful to Prof. Dyck for sharing details of his recent archival research in the Communist Party Archives of Zaporozhe with me.
- <sup>48</sup> Terry Martin, “The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 813-861.
- <sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>50</sup> N. Okhotkin and A. Roginskii (Moscow), “‘Iz istorii ‘niemetzkoi operatzii’ NKVD 1937-1938,“ [From the History of ‘The German Operation’ of the NKVD , 1937-1938] in *Nakazanii Narod* [A Punished People – Repressions against Russian Germans] (Moscow: Zveniiia, 1999), 69; data for Zaporozhe region is taken from my own analysis of information given in *Poverneni Imena* [Restored Names], 2 volumes (Zaporizhia, 1999).
- <sup>51</sup> Eisfeld and Herdt, *Deportation – Sondersiedlung – Arbeitsarmee*, 132-133 (Dokument 131); also Peter Rempel, *Deportatsia nemets iz Evropeiskoi chasti SSSR i ‘Trudarmiiia’ po ‘sovershenno sekretniim’ dokumentam NKVD 1941 - 1944* (Moscow, 1995).

- <sup>52</sup> Einfeld and Herdt, *Deportation*, 101 (Dokument 87).
- <sup>53</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1960), 97.
- <sup>54</sup> Peter Froese, letter of 24 January 1998 to the author.
- <sup>55</sup> Nelli Krahn, letter of 16 February 1998 to the author.
- <sup>56</sup> Helene Wall, "Erinnerungen" *Der Bote*, 23 Sep 1998, 10-11; 30 Sep 1998, 10
- <sup>57</sup> Memoir of Anna Käthler, in Susanne Isaak, *Nach Sibirien vertrieben*, (Meckenheim, Selbstverlag, 1999), 45f.; Susanne Isaak, conversation, 28 October 2000; on the promise of reimbursement see Einfeld and Herdt, *Deportation*, 52.(Dokument 33) and 70 (Dokument 52).
- <sup>58</sup> Robert Penner, "Die Aussiedlung aus Alexandertal," *Der Bote* 12 Oct 1994,1