

# Russian Servitor and Mennonite Hero: Light and Shadow in Images of Johann Cornies

Harvey L. Dyck *University of Toronto*

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, two clusters of Mennonite villages, known as the Khortitsa and Molochna settlements, were founded in the Russian Black Sea steppe area between the lower Dnieper river and the Sea of Azov. After difficult beginnings they had, in the second quarter of the 19th century, during the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55), undergone a remarkable economic transformation.<sup>1</sup> Johann Cornies (1789-1848) was unquestionably the most influential leader ever to have emerged from within these settlements. He dominated their development in the 1830's and 1840's, and his name is inseparably linked with fundamental changes. Through the exercise of vast and discretionary executive powers vested in 1830 by the state in his office as lifetime Chairman of the Molochna District Agricultural Commission, Cornies came to leave a deep and lasting impression on the structure, economy and ethos of his brotherhood. As an aggressive agrarian modernizer and colonial statesman his influence also reached well beyond Mennonite society to the whole of the southern frontier region, known as New Russia then and as the southern Ukraine today.

Interpretations regarding the remarkable career of Johann Cornies have produced images of both light and shade. These may conveniently be examined within the setting of three distinct eras: that of Cornies' lifetime; from his sudden death in 1848 until the revolution in 1917; and that of the post-revolutionary period down to the present.

During Cornies' lifetime, official Russian and foreign opinion lionized him. In 1843, for example, Baron August von Haxthausen, a noted German scholar of agrarian institutions, travelled throughout European Russia and visited the main Mennonite settlements. In a signifi-

cant work on Russian peasant institutions, Haxthausen described the achievements of Mennonite agriculture under Cornies' direction. Cornies, he wrote, was one of the "most influential personalities of southern Russia." Even the "governor of all southern Russia . . . would not be likely to take measures concerning the internal administration of this region without asking the advice of J. Kornies."<sup>2</sup> He concluded:

In all of Russia there is no region where, on the whole, there exists such a uniformly high level of agricultural and social development as here. These Mennonite colonies can serve as a standard for the government and as a model for all of the Russian peoples as to what one can achieve through diligence, integrity and order.<sup>3</sup>

Haxthausen's glowing characterization of Cornies and of the Mennonites' agrarian prowess rested on his own observations as well as on the opinions expressed to him by leading Russian court and bureaucratic circles. During the time of his principal reforming initiatives, Cornies interacted continuously with official Russia. The autocratic Emperor, Nicholas I, received and honoured him. Count P. D. Kiselev, the progressive Minister of State Domains, who was known as Nicholas' "Chief of Staff for Peasant Affairs,"<sup>4</sup> gave him instructions and also sought his counsel, as did the governor of New Russia. As an intimate of successive reform-minded chairmen of the Supervisory Committee for Foreign Settlers located in Odessa (the Ministry of the Interior's and, after 1837, the Ministry of State Domain's administrative agency for New Russia's foreign settlements), Cornies was involved in influencing most policies affecting them.<sup>5</sup>

Johann Cornies was not, to be sure, a member of the state bureaucracy in any formal sense. Yet he was regarded by Russian officialdom as a highly successful and exemplary state servitor because of his effective pioneering of rational programmes of fundamental economic and social significance for New Russia. He operated under the direction of the state, with its authority, and often under its inspiration, and officialdom strongly endorsed his statist and tutelary methods and goals. His guiding concept, as he explained toward the end of his life, was relatively simple. If agriculture was to flourish, the "husbandman could no longer cling to antiquated opinions and prejudices in his utilization of the soil, but should farm on the basis of his needs, to his advantage and in response to the demands for his products of his customers from near and far."<sup>6</sup> Such a system of rational, market-oriented agriculture, resting on experimentation and ceaseless calculation, would, Cornies wrote, "secure for a growing population a greater enjoyment of life, morally, spiritually and materially, under the aegis of a gentle but strict leadership."<sup>7</sup>

Statist reformers in the Supervisory Committee and in the Ministry of State Domains ably propagandized Cornies' ideas and undertakings in

leading Russian and German language agricultural journals of the day. The widely read Russian-language *Transactions of the Imperial Free Economic Society*<sup>8</sup> and the *Journal of the Ministry of State Domains*,<sup>9</sup> as well as the more regionally oriented German-language *Journal for German Settlers in Southern Russia*, reported the practises of Mennonite steppe agriculture in detail and published articles authored by Cornies and his closest associates. What these men advocated were not merely theoretical proposals, as often appeared in the Russian journals. Their ideas had been repeatedly tested in the micro-environment of Cornies' model estate, which was in fact an experimental farm, at Iushanle, and had then been successfully introduced throughout the villages of the Molochna Mennonite district. This background lent force and realism to Cornies' proposals.

Earnestly and in detail, Cornies and his associates advocated the following wide range of innovations throughout New Russia: introducing a system of four-field crop rotation, with summer fallow, as the "pivot" of successful dryland tillage;<sup>10</sup> diversifying the steppe economy, to buffer its inhabitants against the uncertainties of market and climate and to support a rapidly growing population; popularizing tobacco growing, beekeeping and silk production; encouraging agricultural implement manufacturing and the trades;<sup>11</sup> afforesting steppe lands with orchards, windbreaks and woodlots;<sup>12</sup> improving fodder production and scientific breeding as the foundation of modern animal husbandry and to free land for the expansion of grain growing;<sup>13</sup> improving haylands by damming steppe streams and irrigating;<sup>14</sup> raising the efficiency of manpower through a better layout of buildings, homesteads and villages;<sup>15</sup> raising improved, disease-free strains of potatoes from seed;<sup>16</sup> beautifying village scapes and roadsides by planting trees and by painting buildings and fences with cheap and durable homemade paints;<sup>17</sup> and many others.

Cornies sudden death in 1848, at the age of 59, was the occasion for a stream of official tributes in the journals. Of these the most detailed and influential was a laudatory, 6,000-word biographical appreciation published in a special Supplement of the *Journal for German Settlers*.<sup>18</sup> It was given wider currency, in Russian translation, in the *Journal of the Ministry of State Domains*.<sup>19</sup> Prepared at the request of the Chairman of the Supervisory Committee, it was written by an agronomist of that agency, von Gavel, on the basis of "personal acquaintance" and written reports.<sup>20</sup> It should, the *Journal* said, "be welcomed by all friends of mankind." The life of Cornies, as portrayed in this authorized, reverential biography, was commended to Mennonite and German colonist readers as "worthy of imitation."<sup>21</sup> Cornies was, "in the true sense of the word, a Christian and a faithful subject of his monarch, and had demonstrated this . . . by useful and energetic activity."<sup>22</sup>

Gavel's informative and compelling portrait of Cornies appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Journal*, unabridged, in translation from the original German. It is important, first, as a mine of information. Second, it is a mirror of contemporary autocracy's image of Cornies and of Russian Mennonites. Cornies was signally honoured because of his perceived utility in helping to chart the path of New Russia's transformation from vast primitive frontier into a rich and populous storehouse of natural products and of grain exports. This development had started with the conquest of the Black Sea coastlands in the late 18th century. It involved the inter-locking processes of military consolidation, administrative integration, colonization, social assimilation of pre-existing pastoral and nomadic peoples to agriculture, and economic development.<sup>23</sup>

Cornies had demonstrated leadership in several of these areas. He was, par excellence, a colonizer, expertly laying out new villages with homesteads, public buildings, haylands, pastures, fields and roads and establishing the basis of village and district self-government. Initially he did so for new communities of Mennonite immigrants from Prussia and later for Hutterites, other immigrant Germans, Russian Molokans, state peasants and Jews. He was celebrated, also, for having played a strategic role in turning the pastoral Turkic Nogaitsy of the Sea of Azov area to village life and settled agriculture. Finally, no one could gainsay his genius as a practical agrarian modernizer and apostle of economic development. In his appreciation of Cornies' life, Gavel focused on each of these areas, suggesting that his accomplishments and his example were equally worthy of note.

Gavel's statist biography of Cornies is significant, thirdly, because its contents and interpretation constitute the starting point and basis of most subsequent evaluations of Cornies, as will be described further on. But it should be noted that however flattering Gavel's luminous tribute may seem to Cornies and Russian Mennonitism, it is incomplete and one-sided. For what Gavel plays down and even trivializes is the strong, widespread and often principled opposition which Cornies' actions provoked within Mennonite society itself, pondering neither its content nor symptomatic importance.

To be sure, Cornies was also strongly supported in his programmes by a small Mennonite proto-elite of modernizing school teachers, land-owners and administrators at the district level and in several villages. Brief histories of each of the Molochna villages dating from 1848 offer somewhat of a sampling of opinion on this question.<sup>24</sup> They were written shortly after Cornies' death on orders from the Supervisory Committee and bear the signatures of their respective village mayors, assistant mayors and school teachers. One such village history credits the "never to be forgotten Cornies" with promoting plantings of fruit, mulberry and

forest trees and of "significantly furthering" silk culture, the growing of flax, artisanal activities and the trades.<sup>25</sup> Another attributes the "flourishing condition" of Molochna villages to "improved sheep breeding, the planting of orchards, silk worm culture and the rapid spread of grain growing since the establishment of the port of Berdiansk." In all this, the report adds, "Johann Cornies everywhere blazed the path by positive example and by severely censuring the disorder and inactivity that was creeping in. The improvements introduced [by him] in all economic arrangements are especially deserving of recognition."<sup>26</sup> The chronicler of Cornies' beloved village of Orlov, which was also the seat of the Agricultural Commission, described Cornies' leadership as having "such energy and vigilance as to be unique in the history of our people."<sup>27</sup>

Significantly, however, only 8 of 44 extant Molochna village histories of 1848 contain tributes of this kind. The other 36 are mute about Cornies as a positive force. Similarly, Heinrich Heese's engaging, synthetic historical sketch of the Khortitsa settlement, also written in 1848 at the Supervisory Committee's request, devotes no word to Cornies' career despite his powerful influence on that community in the 1840's.<sup>28</sup> During his lifetime, opposition to Cornies' reform measures was treated as insubordination to the state. Punishments had ranged from reprimands through fines and public labour to floggings, imprisonment and even exile.<sup>29</sup> In 1848, under circumstances of strict censorship, and at a time when the state encouraged obeisance to Cornies' memory, silence was the only public criticism allowed his nay-sayers, and must be so regarded. For the rest, censorship and fear prevented Cornies' many detractors from developing a coherent statement of their opposition and working out its larger implications. Information in this regard survived only as anecdote in the folk memory, in one-sided reports of particularly dramatic clashes recorded by Cornies' supporters, and in a small number of unpublished diaries and letters. This material has not, however, been systematically gathered and sifted.

Without going into detail, it can be said that many, perhaps most, Mennonite villagers responded with varying degrees of passive resistance to, or complied grudgingly with, the prodigal stream of directives coming from Cornies respecting most facets of village life. These directives, supported by the full weight of police authority, extended from systems of crop rotation, fallowing and the obligatory planting of hedges and woods, to schooling and the minutest details of village morals, yard maintenance, house-keeping, family life and the rearing of children. Cornies' statist, tutelary approach, which treated society and its members as children, deeply offended many.

This approach also, it should be noted, violated well established Mennonite norms regarding the strict separation of the civil and religious

spheres, personal responsibility, community leadership, and a prohibition on the use of force in relations between believers. Programmatic opposition centred on three main issues. Cornies was accused of having usurped the constituted authority of elective village and district officials by invalidating elections and then filling offices with compliant supporters.<sup>30</sup> He was further condemned for violating a basic principle of church life by ordering church members to flog co-religionists for civil infractions and then punishing church leaders who sought to intervene.<sup>31</sup>

The most serious charge was that Cornies had deliberately eroded the fundamental guarantee of freedom of religion contained in the Charter of Privileges granted the Mennonites in 1800. At issue here was Cornies' orchestration of the intervention of the state in the internal organization of the Mennonite church in order to silence opposition from its leadership and laity. To cow his opponents within the largest of the church bodies, Cornies had its church elder, Jakob Warkentin, dismissed by civil authority and his church split into three groups, each with its own elder. Several years later, the elder of one of these smaller bodies, a certain Heinrich Wiens, was, again at Cornies instigation, ordered deposed by the Supervisory Committee and then exiled to Prussia, amidst heart-rending lamentations of his congregation.<sup>32</sup>

In response to this high-handed action, Wiens' defenders, in unpublished writings at the time, spelled out a darkly-shaded image of Cornies and of his governance. Cornies, they wrote, was perpetrator of a "shameless despotism."<sup>33</sup> He had fomented "strife in the church,"<sup>34</sup> violated "Mennonite principles of the faith,"<sup>35</sup> falsely accused those who questioned his actions of "inciting the people to sedition against the government,"<sup>36</sup> and martyred faithful servants of the church. From his place of exile, Wiens developed an apocalyptic understanding of his fate, suggesting that his suffering signalled the "last days."<sup>37</sup>

How widely diffused this sombre image of Cornies was is indicated by the fact that the moderate Khortitsa church leader, David Epp, confided similar sentiments to his diary in the late 1830's and early 1840's. Epp belonged to a prominent Mennonite family which provided many moderate church and lay leaders to the community in the 19th and 20th centuries. He was highly literate, well read for the time, knew Cornies personally, was even reputed to be his friend,<sup>38</sup> and was keenly appreciative of the need for a modern agriculture and industry, as understood by Cornies and his allies.<sup>39</sup> Yet Cornies' methods and some of his ends were an abomination to him. The "behaviour of Joh. Cornies is more despotical than Christian," he wrote in his diary in 1838, after returning from travels through the Molochna villages.<sup>40</sup> A year later he found the situation unchanged: "In the Molochna instead of love, true despotism, and . . . the torch of discord burns."<sup>41</sup> The community, he wrote in despair on

another occasion, "lacks the power to halt this evil."<sup>42</sup> Issues in dispute were invariably being resolved on Cornies' imperious terms and to the damage of the community: "In the church of the Molochna the consequences of the divisions [i.e., between the community, on one side, and the Agricultural Commission, headed by Cornies, and a compliant district administration, on the other] are becoming ever more visible. The district office and the Agricultural Commission rules, more by means of despotism than through gentleness according to the teachings of Jesus."<sup>43</sup> Equally worrisome to David Epp was Cornies' willful breaching of the division between church and state, in defiance of a fundamental Mennonite tenet. In a diary entry shortly before his death in 1843, he summed up the cheerless situation:

The troubles in the Molochna continue on, and in fact are growing . . . God alone knows where all of this is leading to. Externally much is being undertaken in the development of gardens, forest groves and the tillage of land. But in spiritual matters it appears, particularly with respect to church leadership, that great indolence has entered in. Increasingly in the utterances of church leaders greater heed is being paid to the orders of government than to the demands of religion.<sup>44</sup>

From the mid-19th century onwards, outside interest in Russia's foreign colonists, including the Mennonites, gradually declined. To be sure, travellers and scholars still recorded their positive impressions about them, but with a somewhat different emphasis. In 1855, Alexander Petzholdt, a Dorpat Professor of Agronomy, after visiting the settlements, wrote a book in which he echoed Haxthausen's opinion that the "influence of the Mennonites on their environs was very considerable." He portrayed Cornies' life in detail, following Gavel.<sup>45</sup> And in 1866, Friedrich Matthai, a noted German scholar of colonization and a corresponding member of the Imperial Free Economic Society, maintained in a major work that the Mennonites would continue to be a "model and example" of agrarian accomplishment along Russia's settlement frontiers.<sup>46</sup> This view lived on but was not left unchallenged. In 1877, D. Mackenzie Wallace, a scholar and *Times* correspondent, in a best-seller, *Russia*, wrote that a Mennonite village might appear to a "weary traveller" as an "earthly paradise,"<sup>47</sup> but its influence on the surrounding population was slight because of a spirit of "exclusiveness"<sup>48</sup> and a "lack of communications."<sup>49</sup>

Imperial Russian writing about Mennonites from 1850 to 1914 underwent a similar evolution, offering several new perspectives on Cornies' career. In the 1850's and early 1860's, Russian officialdom was preoccupied with the enormous challenges stemming from the lost Crimean war and the freeing of the bonded peasantry. But a flurry of renewed interest in Russian Mennonites, as well as in Cornies, was sparked in the late 1860's by a celebrated series of articles about foreign

settlements which appeared in Russia's leading liberal journal, *Vestnik Evropy*. The articles were written by A. Klaus, an experienced official of the Ministry of State Domains, and republished in book form under the title, *Our Colonies*.<sup>50</sup>

Klaus' study attracted great attention because of its novel recommendation regarding land-holding among Russian peasants. Klaus argued that the prosperity and order evident in the foreign settlements of Russia stemmed solely from the system of land ownership, land tenure and local administration given them by the state. The potential for economic growth and social stability inherent in this *Russian-created* system had been most fully realized in the Mennonite settlements, under Cornies' direction. These communities, he concluded, should therefore serve as a *native model* for the reconstruction of Russia's basic agrarian peasant institutions.<sup>51</sup> This idea, which was by no means far-fetched, was not, however, taken up by the state, which for decades put off grappling seriously with the perennial dilemma of raising low agricultural yields. Consequently, through to the end of the empire, a more positive outside Russian view of Mennonite agriculture and of Johann Cornies' career survived only in a handful of studies, newspaper articles and scholarly entries in Russian encyclopaedias.<sup>52</sup>

Indeed, from the 1880's onwards, Gavel's and Klaus' flattering statist view of Russian Mennonitism, and of its chief architect, came under full-scale assault from a burgeoning Russian nationalist movement. In various books and articles, the leading publicists of this movement argued that the foreign settlements were not benefactors of Russia, but veritable parasites.<sup>53</sup> The colonists' prosperity, they averred, was the result only of crass privilege, which had allowed them to occupy the most productive steppe lands. From this favoured position they were now driving up land prices beyond the reach of Russia's peasantry. Moreover, the colonists' missionizing was disrupting Orthodox communities in their environs. And their susceptibility to German nationalism endangered the security of southern Russia.

The indictment by Russian nationalism of the immigrant colonies generated a sharp polemic in the 1890's, in which the main rebuttal came from a certain P. V. Kamensky, a modernizing landowner, publicist and later leader of the Octobrist party. In a book entitled, *A Problem or a Misunderstanding? A Question Regarding Foreign Settlers in Southern Russia*, Kamensky defended the settlers as agents of agricultural updating for Russia. He was intimately familiar with colonist agriculture and the Mennonite settlements. His spirited defense made heavy play with the career of Johann Cornies. His "great social significance" for New Russia, he pointed out, had been attested to by no less an authority and

patriot than Count Kiselev, the highly esteemed former Minister of State Domains.<sup>54</sup>

During this same time-span of about two generations, Russian Mennonite thinking about Cornies underwent a fundamental change. In the decades following his death, hatred of him among the Mennonite elite and masses gradually waned, and in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the first small generation of Mennonite lay historians came to hold a common view of him as the "great man" of their past, a heroic figure, as Gavel had pictured him warmly a half century earlier. The tone of resounding approval was set by the emerging Mennonite periodical press. In 1897, an anonymous writer in the pietistical *Christian Family Almanac* credited the striking, contemporary prosperity of the Molochna settlement principally to Cornies' "conscientiousness, faithfulness and tireless perseverance."<sup>55</sup> Several years later, the *Almanac* attributed the great honours heaped upon the Mennonites by the regime of Nicholas I entirely to Cornies' "tireless activity."<sup>56</sup> The more conservative *Mennonite Yearbook* portrayed Cornies as the matchless "example"<sup>57</sup> and "great reformer"<sup>58</sup> of Russian Mennonite history.

The epithets used to characterize Cornies by the three chief Mennonite historians of the late Imperial era, namely Franz Isaac, David H. Epp and P. M. Friesen, were, if anything, even more unqualified. This entire historiography was strongly moralizing, and illumined the past from a reformist perspective. Concerning Cornies, it leaned heavily on Gavel's information, often following him almost verbatim. Franz Isaac, in his *Molochna Mennonites* (1908), affirmed that Cornies had achieved nothing less than to set Russian Mennonites "on the path of achieving that end for which they had been called into Russia, to become an example to the surrounding peoples by deed and behaviour."<sup>59</sup> In the sole book-length biography of Cornies to appear to date (1909), David H. Epp termed Cornies a "titan,"<sup>60</sup> a "benefactor of mankind,"<sup>61</sup> and an exemplar of a "robust Christianity."<sup>62</sup> Cornies, he wrote, was an "unrivalled initiator and organizer,"<sup>63</sup> a "man of iron and steel," and a "pathfinder" for all of southern Russia. Out of "disorder," he had fashioned a "glorious Eldorado," an "oasis of flourishing civilization in the midst of an untouched wilderness," using the "strength and tenacity of a superman."<sup>64</sup> D. H. Epp even suggested that Russian Mennonite history had only really started with Cornies, who was the very "father" of his people.<sup>65</sup> The revolution in perceptions reflected by such epithets can be gauged by the fact that their author was the namesake and grandson of the churchman who, two generations earlier, had termed Cornies a despot and impugned the legitimacy of his initiatives.

P. M. Friesen was less colourful, but no less definite, in assigning seminal importance to Cornies' career. In his massive and important

study and source book, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia* (1911), Friesen placed Cornies in the select company of the Mennonite church father, Menno Simons, himself. He wrote:

Menno and Cornies have given us Russian Mennonites both in Russia and America, our ecclesiastical and cultural character for all time . . . We see in Cornies' reform the healthy body (culture and civic community) for Menno's spirit (the heart of Christianity and church community) . . . Let us remember our two teachers, Menno and Cornies!<sup>66</sup>

These three late Imperial Russian Mennonite historians readily acknowledged the extreme means Cornies had employed in enforcing his reforms, but they defended these, as Gavel had earlier, as having been historically necessary. Isaac explained to his readers that the dissident elders had been advocates of an "aspiring economic and social hierarchy"<sup>67</sup> and had forced Cornies' hand. They had "meddled in government and civil affairs,"<sup>68</sup> incited "church members to disobedience against the local authorities,"<sup>69</sup> and covertly "cast suspicions" on Cornies' beneficent undertakings and on the support given him by the state.<sup>70</sup>

Isaac's interpretation was rooted in what he defined as the central theme of Russian Mennonite history from the 1820's to the 1870's, an ongoing struggle between two hostile parties. The one, headed first by Cornies and then by his son-in-law Philipp Wiebe, was tolerant of religious differences, committed to social justice and economic modernity and had invariably defended the "common weal."<sup>71</sup> Against it was pitted the party of particular, hierarchical interests, spear-headed by church elders who were animated by a "thirst for power,"<sup>72</sup> and supported by the "great ignorance and unyielding intolerance"<sup>73</sup> widespread in Mennonite society. Only the government's unqualified support of Cornies' and his use of harsh discipline had ensured the triumph of the "general interest."<sup>74</sup>

David H. Epp, as well, defended Cornies' resort to despotic means but in terms of what he saw as recurring world historical combat between creative geniuses, akin to Hegel's world historical heroes, and groups representing the mediocre average of mankind. He recognized that the Mennonite concept of brotherhood, with its implicit demand of democratic equality, had turned Mennonites against the authoritarian Cornies. Nevertheless, he wrote, "coarse wood required a coarse wedge," and a "truly great man" like Cornies, who "willed the achievement of great deeds, could not allow himself to be stopped by petty considerations."<sup>75</sup>

P. M. Friesen similarly subscribed to a secular ethic in this question and endorsed the primacy of ends rather than means in fixing Cornies' place in Mennonite history. He granted that Cornies had perhaps erred in his use of discipline in particular cases.<sup>76</sup> But, like his fellow lay historians, Friesen attributed the opposition to Cornies of the elders, and its wide

community support, to a mentality bred of the "impoverishment and stunted growth of the church of our fathers."<sup>77</sup> His final judgement helped to solidify the consensus present in late Imperial Russian Mennonite thought, namely, that Cornies' contributions outweighed "his mistakes, and we honour him ardently for his accomplishments."<sup>78</sup> P. M. Friesen's depiction of Cornies as a genius, who had realized authentic Mennonite values, necessitated also his marked down-playing of autocracy's contribution to Cornies' ideas and authority.

The virtual consensus around a Mennonite superman image of Cornies in late Imperial times cannot, however, be explained mainly in terms of these historians' personal views. The birth of the powerful Cornies myth, and its ready acceptance by Mennonite society, was the product of changes within Mennonite life after Cornies' death and of powerful Empire-wide forces threatening it before 1914. As to the former, in the 1860's and 1870's, Mennonite society was convulsed by popular, socio-economic and religious movements, which, after years of crisis, resulted in a land distribution, a system of communally-sponsored daughter colonies and confessional pluralism in the new Mennonite Brethren and Templer churches.<sup>79</sup>

Leaders of these movements had been close to Cornies and been tarred as "blind followers" of his vision in the 1860's;<sup>80</sup> they regarded their currents of reform as integral parts of a single stream of renewal originating with Johann Cornies. Franz Isaac was a leading spokesman for the landless and became an adherent of the Templer church. P. M. Friesen was an ardent educational reformer and Brethren leader. Both affirmed the utility and legitimacy of the 1860's and 1870's reforms by linking them indissolubly to Cornies' transforming initiatives. Moreover, from 1860 to 1914, modernism generally triumphed among Mennonites and was seen as validating Cornies' vision.

Yet the creation, in late Imperial times, of the myth of Cornies as the larger-than-life prime mover of Russian Mennonite history, as well as its popularization in schools and through the Mennonite press, were also prompted by threatening outside pressures. Within Mennonite society the last decades of Tsarist rule were characterized by rapid economic growth, a spreading of wealth, a lessening of social tensions, greater inter-confessional cooperation and marked cultural and educational flowering. The chief sources of uncertainty were now external. These included the ebb and flow of the European grain market and of Imperial tariff policies; the threat of social revolution in the villages and factories of New Russia; mass electoral and Duma politics, with their bewildering currents and cross-currents; and a strident Russian nationalist movement. This latter force, in particular, as has already been indicated, filled Mennonite society with gloom and foreboding. It branded all German-

speakers as objectively disloyal, denied that the colonists and Mennonites had played anything but a parasitic role in Russian history and demanded that proselytization by them among the Orthodox population be stopped and their landowning be closely circumscribed.<sup>81</sup>

In its search for a strategy of survival amidst these uncertainties, the legacy of Johann Cornies, as defined by contemporary Mennonite historiography, proved of great value to the Mennonite's economic, educational and clerical elite. The mounting external pressures, for one thing, demanded a high degree of cohesion among Mennonites. Since Cornies predated the confessional and ideological splits of the 1860's, his legacy, belonging equally to all, was astutely appealed to as a basis of cooperation. Moreover, Cornies' well-known reputation as colonizer of New Russia, architect of the Molochna's advanced agriculture, and zealous servant of monarchy, could be cited in disproving the nationalist charges of parasitism and disloyalty. Mennonite historiography eagerly embraced Cornies' legacy in this regard, arguing that Russian Mennonites remained what Cornies had made them, bearers of order and of agrarian and industrial progress in all regions where they lived.<sup>82</sup>

The heroic image of Cornies proved also of great utility, as role-model and source of self-confidence, in helping to realize what might be termed the centre-piece of the strategy for survival: the self-conscious development of a unique *Russian* Mennonitism.<sup>83</sup> During the last decades of the Empire, the Mennonite leadership reached tacit agreement on the need for a distinctive identity, separate from that of other German colonists, and one that could less easily be assailed by Russian nationalists. To build such a group character, learning Russian was strongly promoted in village and secondary schools, and Cornies was credited as father of the policy. Monarchism and imperial patriotism, again as exemplified by Cornies' life, were consciously nurtured in the home, taught in school and preached from platform and pulpit on national holidays. Furthermore, the idea was spread about that purpose in life, individually and collectively, was to be found in becoming to the surrounding world an example, or "model," of diligence, rectitude, economic accomplishment, mutual aid and charity, as Cornies' own life had been. Statism, progress and an ethic of secular service thus became the bedrock of Russian Mennonitism's political theology and historical self-understanding. On this foundation, Mennonite leaders hoped that they might succeed in blunting the attacks of Russian nationalist firebrands, rekindle the favour of monarchy, and find for themselves a secure place on Imperial Russia's emerging political spectrum.

The heroic image of Cornies cultivated by Russian Mennonites was faithfully mirrored in contemporaneous writings of European and American Mennonite scholars.<sup>84</sup> Cornies' authoritarian edge, to be sure, grated

somewhat on the democratic sensibilities of the American church historian, C. H. Wedel, who, in 1901 expressed mild regret at Cornies' "Russian" methods and his interference in "church affairs." But, despite all that, he applauded Cornies' reforms as having, "on the whole, redounded to the benefit of the colonies."<sup>85</sup> The dark image of Cornies, as bearer of evil and alien values and as oppressor of the church, seems to have lived on only among the most conservative, anti-modernist emigre Mennonites of southern Manitoba. There, in 1903, a small volume was published documenting the saga of Cornies' fierce persecution of Elder Heinrich Wiens.<sup>86</sup> It appears that in these circles Cornies' great antagonist became a revered "martyr hero" and the book containing his writings an item of "classic martyr literature."<sup>87</sup>

Since 1917, writings about Cornies fall into one of three categories, depending on their origin and perspective, namely, approaches of Soviet Marxist-Leninists, in-group Mennonite émigrés, and western social scientists. Soviet students of Russian Mennonitism have ignored Cornies or denigrated his role in the transformation of the Black Sea steppe region. This may be explained by their concentration on the Mennonites of the post-1917 period, a bias against "great man" explanations of historic change, and a political down-playing of the role of foreigners, especially "Germans," in Russian history.

This latter circumstance may well account for the unbalanced treatment of Cornies' career by E. I. Druzhinina, the leading Soviet scholar of the southern Ukraine during this period. Druzhinina, to be sure, acknowledges that "foreign colonists," and in particular Mennonites, demonstrated the potential for development in New Russia by pioneering an advanced agriculture. But she echoes Russian Imperial nationalist writers in wrongly attributing their success chiefly to government largesse — land grants, loans, exemptions and a privileged legal status.<sup>89</sup> She contends that these advantages were compounded in the case of the Mennonites by the wealth they had brought with them as immigrants. "The ruling clique," she concludes, "supported the Mennonites, seeing in them their social support, on the one hand, and experienced landlords, on the other."<sup>90</sup>

In Druzhinina's schema, New Russia was one of the main areas of emerging agricultural capitalism in Russia, and Cornies' career "graphically personified" this development. Druzhinina describes Cornies as a "noted wealthy individual" who, beginning as a poor immigrant, exploited the market opportunities of New Russia to acquire three very large estates.<sup>91</sup> Clearly, Druzhinina's exclusive focus on Cornies' private wealth and entrepreneurial activities leads to the total neglect of his much more significant public role in the Molochna Mennonite settlement and throughout New Russia.

Since 1917, emigre Mennonite publicists and scholars in Germany, the United States and Canada have devoted much attention to the arresting personality and career of Johann Cornies. This is not surprising as immigrant groups often seek to preserve and embellish, indeed even to absolutize, those facets of their heritage which are bound up with the deepest sources of their esteem and self-knowledge. The last generation of Mennonites in Imperial Russia, as shown, grew up believing that Johann Cornies had laid the foundations of their principal institutions. They were also taught that he had endowed them with an elevated outlook and ethic and pointed them in a direction that promised both prosperity and meaning. Yet this group, within the span of only three decades, witnessed the obliteration of their beloved communities through terrible disasters: World War I, the revolutions of 1917, civil war, collectivization and famine, deportations, flight, mass purges and World War II.<sup>92</sup>

In the 1920's and 1940's, approximately 40,000 Mennonite refugees from Russia found new homes abroad, a small number of them in the United States and in Germany, a larger group in South America and the majority in Canada. The first generation of immigrant writers was naturally inclined to evoke fond memories of its lost world and of its greatest heroes, especially Cornies. Canadian immigrant writing brimmed with publications about him. D. H. Epp's biography of Cornies and <sup>93</sup> Gavel's obituary were republished in Western Canada,<sup>94</sup> and his career was honoured in numerous commemorative articles and lay histories.

This largely repetitive émigré literature was informed by a tone of uncritical admiration. It was designed to keep aglow the burnished image of Cornies already available, and it added nothing to it by way of new information or viewpoint. This may also be said of D. G. Rempel's admirable doctoral study of the Mennonite settlements (1933), which laid the basis for the scholarly study of Russian Mennonitism. Rempel's dissertation concluded that, before the revolution, Russian Mennonites had brilliantly achieved their assigned purpose of becoming "models" of moral and material progress for the surrounding peoples.<sup>95</sup> This stereotyped thesis, with Cornies' at its centre, served also to buttress the emigre view that Russian Mennonites had not deserved the cruel fate they had suffered in the Russian revolution. Rempel's later writings broadened this focus considerably.<sup>96</sup>

Emigre Russian Mennonite writers in the Weimar Republic similarly pondered their recent past in a spirit compounded of regret and injured pride and in defense of the moral legitimacy of their Russian brotherhood. This defense usually rested on a conventional portrayal of Cornies' pioneering career.<sup>97</sup> The triumph of Hitler in 1933, however, paved the way for a novel twist in this conventional picture. Several

prominent Mennonite academics, including B. H. Unruh and Walter Quiring, came under the sway of Nationalist Socialist "folkish" ideas and recast their views of Russian Mennonite history, and Cornies' role in it, in accordance with the new ideology.

Walter Quiring, the most blatant of the National Socialist Mennonites, set about, as he wrote, to "convert the Mennonites to their ancestral German nationality."<sup>98</sup> To this end, he sought to transform Mennonite publications into propaganda organs and wrote popular historical articles from a "folkish" angle. These included several about Cornies. The chief of these was printed in 1939 in a much-read book, *Great Germans Abroad: A National German History in the Form of Biographies*.<sup>99</sup> Walter Quiring's portrait of Cornies was also informed by the general opinion that Russian Mennonite history had a transcendent logic of having preserved the Germanness of the Mennonite community to the day when it could embrace National Socialism. Quiring accordingly clothed Johann Cornies anew as a German nationalist hero, an archetypal National Socialist activist. Iron-nerved and skilled, he was depicted as having galvanized the German Russian community into creative activity, defended the German language as a holy birthright, and surmounted all obstacles with severity and discipline. After World War II, Quiring's writings about Cornies, including an entry in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, followed more the interpretations common to Mennonite emigre writing in North America.<sup>100</sup>

Since 1917, only a little new light has thus been shed on Cornies' historic role by Soviet Marxist or Mennonite emigre writers. The chief contributions in this regard have come instead from a handful of Western social scientists. In writings spread out over some fifty years, a German Weberian sociologist, Adolf Ehrt,<sup>101</sup> an Austro-American specialist on comparative ethnicity, E. K. Francis,<sup>102</sup> and an Australian-British historical ethnographer, James Urry,<sup>103</sup> have illuminated major changes in Imperial Russian Mennonite history from diverse perspectives. All, however, focus upon global forces impinging upon particular societies and trace the unique ways in which tensions between tradition and modernity transformed Mennonite society. They identify the age of Cornies' ascendancy as the great watershed in this process and ascribe a shaping influence to him.

In this scenario Cornies is cast in the role of bearer, or agent, of impersonal economic and cultural forces which came to erode a well-defined primordial Mennonitism fashioned of tradition, communitarianism and self-isolation. Ehrt describes Cornies as being the willing tool of the autocratic state, the main source of initiative. He was coopted to its purposes and mandated, in effect, to draw all non-Russian Orthodox state peasants in southern Russia, including the Mennonites, into the

market nexus. The government's sole objective was economic development. In this manner, Ehrt concludes, all of these groups were ever more deeply "incorporated into the encroaching environment and subjected to a sweeping process of assimilation. At the focal point of this development stood the breakthrough of capitalism."<sup>104</sup> Francis discerns a similar process at work, but finds greater continuity in Mennonite institutional and cultural life because of its ability to adapt to the great forces of the day.

More radical implications of the approach to Russian Mennonite history pioneered by Ehrt and Francis have been suggested in James Urry's rich and detailed doctoral study. Despite some shortcomings, the study advances our understanding of Russian Mennonitism and of Johann Cornies through argument, evidence and the evocation of a social order caught up in thorough-going change. Urry denies Cornies any role as a representative of a Mennonite outlook or of Mennonite values. Drawing upon recent western studies of the Russian bureaucratic phenomenon, he pinpoints Cornies' close links with leading "enlightened bureaucrats,"<sup>105</sup> and depicts Cornies as becoming enamoured of their vision. As a surrogate of the state he triumphs over the forces of "tradition," thereby sealing forever the fate of the "closed order" of pristine Mennonitism and of its chief advocates, the "maintainers."<sup>106</sup> Unwittingly, Cornies becomes a midwife for the state in its Europeanization, indeed its embourgeoisment, of Mennonite society. As such, Urry reasons, Cornies must be regarded as a shaper both of the Mennonites' economy and of their deepest perceptions:

The new possibility was a transformation, a transcendence of the closed order, not a change but a grasping of the new and different order of discourse and practice, radically different in its perception of the person and of the world, in the parameters of its view of 'knowledge' and the boundaries of its meaning.<sup>107</sup>

No scholar has gone further in his claims for the revolutionary character of Cornies' influence, in both its destructive and creative facets. Stripped of its social science idiom, however, this argument is a throw-back to the charges levelled against Cornies' by his clerical foes, that he was an embodied anti-Christ, destroying all that was unique and precious in the heritage the Mennonites had emigrated to Russia to save. One suspects that a deeper understanding of Cornies' legacy is more likely to be found in pursuing Francis' concept of "adaptation" than Urry's notion of "transcendence." The latter is the product of an approach overly fond of sharp dichotomies, such as "open" and "closed" or "progressive" and "maintainer," and deficient in its understanding of Russia's social and political environment. Most Russian Mennonites, in the last decades of the Empire, were profoundly conscious of both continuity and change in

their past, and this perception mirrored an important reality. Equally, elements of continuity and departure were fused in Cornies' personality, career and legacy.

What David H. Epp wrote almost three-quarters of a century ago, remains true today: "Johann Cornies still awaits his biographer."<sup>109</sup> A serious biography will need to be grounded in the insights of modern psychology and be based on a command of Russian, Ukrainian and Russian Mennonite history. It will require an intimate knowledge of the sources, the skills to fathom a nuanced reality, and the artistry to recreate a three-dimensional personality within a changing and tension-laden environment. Such a biography will also need to grapple with the immediate and long-term consequences of *forced social change* in Russian Mennonite history. In creating such a portrait Cornies' modern biographer will have to address the epithets generated by in- and out- group observers.

The often sharply conflicting images of Cornies, explored above, portray him variously as autocratic servitor, German "Kulturträger," embodied anti-Christ, builder of a parasitic society, authentic Mennonite hero, carrier of bourgeois class interests, archetype of National Socialist man and agent of transcendent, modernizing forces. These images reflect, as through distorted glass, the vicissitudes of Russian Mennonite history, ideological interests, changing intellectual styles, and the evolution of the modern world. In sorting out the layers of partly extraneous meaning embodied in these images, Cornies' modern biographer will unquestionably weigh Agronomist Gavel's obituary carefully. Despite its lacunae, one-sidedness and hagiographical tone, it continues to provide the most fresh and sharply etched portrait of Johann Cornies yet available.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>General histories of the Russian Mennonite experience include: David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia: A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (hereafter MQR) (1973), 259-308 and (1974), 5-54; John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*, (Newton, Kan., 1982); Adolf Ehrst, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland* (Berlin, 1932); and P. M. Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)*, trans. by J. B. Toews and others (Fresno, Cal., 1978).

<sup>2</sup>August von Haxthausen, *Studies on the Interior of Russia*, ed. by S. Frederick Starr, transl. by E.L.M. Schmidt (Chicago, 1972), 165.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 172-3.

<sup>4</sup>W. Bruce Lincoln, *Nicholas I: Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias* (Bloomington, Ind., 1978). This is also the most up to date and balanced general treatment of the period.

<sup>5</sup>David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia: A Study of their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789 to 1914" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1933), 36-43, 147-78.

<sup>6</sup>J. Cornies, "Ueber die landwirtschaftlichen Fortschritte im Molotschnaer Men-

noniten-Bezirke in dem Jahre 1845," *Unterhaltungsblatt für deutsche Ansiedler im südlichen Russland* (hereafter *UB*) (May 1846), 10.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>8</sup>*Trudy imperatorskago vol'nogo ekonomicheskago obshchestva* (hereafter *TIVEO*).

<sup>9</sup>*Zhurnal ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv* (hereafter *ZhMGI*). The following were typical: "Byt molochanskikh menonistkikh kolonii v Rossii" (1841), 553-62; "Opisanie menonistskikh kolonii v Rossii" (1842), 1-42.

<sup>10</sup>No subject received greater coverage: J. Cornies, "Ueber die landwirtschaftlichen Fortschritte im Molotschner Mennoniten-Bezirke in dem Jahre 1845," *UB* (1846), 3-6, 10. Agronomist Gavel, "Einiges über den Ackerbau der deutschen Kolonisten in den Steppegegenden Süd-Russlands," *UB* (1847), 37-43; a report of the Ministry of State Domains in *ZhMGI* (1847), appeared in German as, "Ueber den Fortschritt der Landwirtschaft in den südrussischen Ansiedelungen," *UB* (1847), 57-61; Filip Vibe (Philipp Wiebe), "O chernom pare v stepnykh khoziaistvakh," *TIVEO* (1851), 78-86; P. Wiebe, "Ackerbauwirtschaft bei den Mennoniten im südlichen Russland," *Archiv für Wissenschaftliche Kunde* (1853), 429-36.

<sup>11</sup>J. Cornies, "Kurze Uebersicht der im Molotschner Bezirke zum 1. Januar 1847 in Bestand befindlichen Obst-, Maulbeer- und Gehölzbäume, nebst einigen Anmerkungen über Gehölz, Obst und Seidenzucht und die Fortschritte in der Landwirtschaft und den Gewerben," *UB* (1847), 2-5.

<sup>12</sup>J. Cornies, "Von den lebendigen Hecken," *UB* (1846), 68-70; J. Cornies, "Von der Gehölzsaat überhaupt und Saat der in Südrussland gedeihendes Laubholzes insbesondere," *UB* (1848), 82-7.

<sup>13</sup>Abr. Töws, "Vorteilhaftes Viehfutter," *UB* (1846), 12-3.

<sup>14</sup>J. Cornies, "Kurze Uebersicht," *UB* (March 1848), Supplement, 1-4.

<sup>15</sup>Siemens, "Wirtschaftsgebäude nach ihrer Einrichtung im Chortitzer Mennonitenbezirke," *UB* (1850), 5-7.

<sup>16</sup>J. Cornies, "Kartoffeln aus Samen," *UB* (1847), 76.

<sup>17</sup>J. Cornies, "Anweisung zur Bereitung der wohlfeilen Farben," *UB* (1846), 15-6.

<sup>18</sup>*UB* (Oct. 1848), Supplement, 9-18.

<sup>19</sup>*ZhMGI* (1848), 220-31.

<sup>20</sup>*UB* (Oct. 1848), Supplement, 18.

<sup>21</sup>*UB* (1848), 73.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>23</sup>For an introduction to Russia's frontier development see: Dietrich Gerhard, "The Frontier in Comparative View," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1958-9), 205-29; M. Raeff, "The Style of Russia's Imperial Policy and Prince G. A. Potemkin," in *Statesmen and Statecraft of the Modern West*, edited by G. N. Grob, 1-51; Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia, 1762-1804* (Cambridge, 1979); and G. G. Pisarevskii, *Iz istoriia inostrannoi kolonizatsii v Rossii v XVIII v.* (Moscow, 1909).

<sup>24</sup>M. Woltner, ed., *Die Gemeindeberichte von 1848 der deutschen Siedlungen am Schwarzen Meer* (Leipzig, 1941).

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 132; <sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 96; <sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 162; <sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-26.

<sup>29</sup>The fullest treatment is to be found in James Urry, "The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change Amongst the Mennonites in Russia, 1789-1889" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1978), 257-342.

<sup>30</sup>Franz Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Russia, 1908), 16-8.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 91-122; <sup>32</sup>James Urry, 306-43.

<sup>33</sup>Heinrich Wiens and others, *Ein Abschied und Bericht* (Plum Coulee, Man., 1903), 3.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 11; <sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, 11; <sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, 16; <sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>38</sup>David H. Epp, "Industrie und Menschenleben: Kulturhistorische Skizzen aus alter Zeit," *Der Botschafter* (March 2, 1911). This serialized history appeared in *Der Botschafter* in 1911 in 2 parts: part 1, Jan.-April; part 2, Jul.-Dec., 1911. Two incomplete translations exist: *Sketches from the Pioneer Years of the Industry in the Mennonite Settlements of South Russia*, transl. and ed., J. P. Penner (n.p., 1972); "The Emergence of German Industry in the South Russian Colonies," transl. and ed., John B. Toews, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (Oct., 1981), 289-371. John B. Toews is incorrect in stating that part 1 did not appear in *Der Botschafter*.

<sup>39</sup>*Der Botschafter*, March 2, 1911.

<sup>40</sup>"Tagebuch geführt von David Epp in Chortitz," Sep. 20, 1838, Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Winnipeg, vol. 1017, 56.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1839; <sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 4, 1840; <sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 31, 1840; <sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, Mar. 28, 1843.

<sup>45</sup>Gerhard Wiens, ed., *Besuch bei unseren Vätern: Auszüge aus Alexander Petzholdts Reise im europäischen Russland im Jahre 1855* (Norman, Okl., 1963), 73-84.

<sup>46</sup>Friedrich Matthai, *Die deutschen Ansiedelungen in Russland* (Leipzig, 1866), 74-95.

<sup>47</sup>D. Mackenzie-Wallace, *Russia* (New York, 1877), 372.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 372; <sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>50</sup>A. Klaus, *Nashi kolonii: Opyty i materialy po istorii i statistike inostrannoi kolonizatsii v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1869). This study, abridged, was published in German translation as *Unsere Kolonien* (trans. and abridged by J. Toews, Odessa, 1887).

<sup>51</sup>*Unsere Kolonien*, 251-2.

<sup>52</sup>Typical examples are: I. Krasnoperov, "Menonitskoe khoziaistvo v samarskom uезде," *Russkaia mysl* (Sept., 1883), 53-68; "Mennonity," *Geograficheskostatisticheskii slovar' Rossiiskoe Imperii*, II (St. Petersburg, 1867), 223-5; N.B. and K.K., "Mennonity," *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, XIX (St. Petersburg, 1896), 93-96; a fairly balanced, moderate nationalist viewpoint in S.D. Bondar, *Sekta mennonitov v Rossii v sviazi s istorie nemetskoj kolonizatsii na iuge Rossii* (Petrograd, 1916).

<sup>53</sup>The definitive statement of this viewpoint by A. A. Velitsyn, *Nemtsy v Rossii: Ocherki istoricheskago razvitiia i nastoiashchago polozheniia nemetskikh kolonii na iuge i vostoke Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1893). See also: A Liprandi, *Kak ostanovit mirnoe zavoevanie nashikh okrain? Nemetskii vopros, sochnost' i znachenie ego v iugo-zapadnoi Rossii* (Kiev, 1890); L. V. Padalka, *Zemlevladienie Nemtsev, byvshikh kolonistov v Khersonskoi gubernii* (Kherson, 1891).

<sup>54</sup>P. V. Kamensky, *Vopros ili nedorazumenie: k voprosy ob inostrannykh poseleniiaakh na iuge Rossii* (Moscow, 1895), 100-1.

<sup>55</sup>*Christlicher Familienkalender für die Deutschen in Russland auf das Jahr 1897*, 56-7.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 1899, 106-7; <sup>57</sup>*Mennonitisches Jahrbuch*, 1907, 66-81; <sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 1903, 53-4; <sup>59</sup>Franz Isaac, *Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, 25-6.

<sup>60</sup>D. H. Epp, *Johann Cornies: Züge aus seinem Leben und Wirken* (Ekaterinoslav and Berdiansk, 1909), 1.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 46; <sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 46; <sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, 70; <sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, 8; <sup>65</sup>*Ibid.*, 81, 108.

<sup>66</sup>Friesen, *The Mennonite Brotherhood*, 199.

<sup>67</sup>Isaac, *Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, 156.

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, 111-2; <sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, 112; <sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, 123; <sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, 26; <sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, 123; <sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 339; <sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, 26; <sup>75</sup>Epp, *Cornies*, 189.

<sup>76</sup>Friesen, *Mennonite Brotherhood*, 198-9.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, 198; <sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>79</sup>The land crisis, the first and only mass movement among Russian Mennonites, awaits modern scholarly treatment. The reformers' interpretation, richly documented, in Isaac, *Molotschnaer Mennoniten*, 27-88, and in A. Thiessen, *Die Agrarwirren bei den Mennoniten in Süd-Russland* (Berlin, 1887); an informed bureaucrat's view in A. Klaus, *Unsere Kolonien*, 267-84. The origin of the Mennonite Brethren Church is usefully surveyed in J. A. Toews, *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Hillsboro, Kan., 1975), 13-85, and treated exhaustively in P. M. Friesen, *Mennonite Brotherhood*. For the Templar movement see Heinrich Sawatzky, *Templer Mennonitischer Herkunft* (Winnipeg, 1955).

<sup>80</sup>See H. Görz, *Die Molotschnaer Ansiedlung*, 110-18.

<sup>81</sup>Introduced, with documentation, in Harvey L. Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism and the Challenge of Russian Nationalism, 1889," *MQR* (Oct., 1982), 307-41.

<sup>82</sup>A recurring theme in the already mentioned in-group Mennonite histories. This was also a unifying thread in contemporary periodicals, including: *Der Botschafter* (1905-14); *Die Friedensstimme* (1903-14 and 1917-1920); *Christlicher Familienkalender für die Deutschen in Russland* (1897-1914); and *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* (1903-14).

<sup>83</sup>Awaits systematic study. Observations may be found in: John B. Toews, "The Russian Mennonites: Some Introductory Comments," *MQR* (Oct., 1974), 403-8; D. G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia;" E. K. Francis, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914: A Sociological Interpretation," *MQR* (April 1951), 173-82; and Harvey L. Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism and the Challenge of Russian Nationalism."

<sup>84</sup>As examples see Anna Brons, *Ursprung, Entwicklung und Schicksal der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten* (Norden, 1884); H. A. van der Smissen, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte und Glaubenslehre der Altevangelischen Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten* (St. Louis, 1895); and Christian Neff, "Was aus einem einfachen Bauersmann werden kann," *Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender* (1914), 83-95.

<sup>85</sup>C. H. Wedel, *Abriss der Geschichte der Mennoniten*, III, *Die Geschichte der niederländischen, preussischen und russischen Mennoniten* (Newton, Kan., 1901), 144-6.

<sup>86</sup>Heinrich Wiens and others, *Ein Abschied und Bericht*.

<sup>87</sup>C[ornelius] K[rahn], "Wiens, Heinrich," *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV (1952), 949.

<sup>88</sup>Reflective of Soviet political interests are the following: A. Reinmarus and G. Frizen, *Mennonity* (Moscow, 1930); A. I. Klibanov, *Mennonity* (Moscow, 1931); "Mennonity," *Bol'shaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, XXII (1953), 153-4; V. F. Krestianinov, *Mennonity* (Moscow, 1967); and A. N. Ipatov, *Wer Sind die Mennoniten*, trans. H. Heinz (Alma-Ata, 1977).

<sup>89</sup>E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v 1800-1825 gg.* (Moscow, 1970), 24.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 241-2; E. I. Druzhinina, *Iuzhnaia Ukraina v period krizisa feodalizma 1825-1860 gg.* (Moscow, 1981), 170.

<sup>92</sup>No good, general treatment of this subject exists. Aspects of it appear in the following: John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921-1927* (Scottsdale, Penn., 1967); John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*; Jakob Redekopp, *Es war die Heimat: Baratow-Schlachtjin* (Curitiba, 1966); A. Kroeker, *Unsere Brüder in Not* (Striegau i. Schl., 1930).

<sup>93</sup>The study was republished as Volume III in the Echo Verlag series entitled "Historische Schriftenreihe" (Rosthern, Sask., 1946).

<sup>94</sup>*Der Bote* (Sept. 18-Oct. 13, 1929).

<sup>95</sup>David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia," 147-78.

<sup>96</sup>Especially his "Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia."

<sup>97</sup>For example, A. Kroeker, *Unsere Brüder in Not* (Striegau, Silesia, 1930), 19-23.

<sup>98</sup>Walter Quiring to Dietrich H. Epp (editor of *Der Bote*, the leading emigre newspaper among Russian Mennonites in Canada), May 10, 1935, Dietrich H. Epp Papers.

<sup>99</sup>Walter Quiring, "Johann Cornies, der Russland-Deutsche Bahnbrecher und Reformier," in *Grosse Deutsche im Auslande: Eine Volksdeutsche Geschichte in Lebensbildern*, ed. H. J. Bever and O. Lohr (Stuttgart, 1939). A version hereof appeared also in *Warte-Jahrbuch für die Mennonitische Gemeinschaft in Canada* (1943), 67-74.

<sup>100</sup>*The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, I (1955), 716-8; W. Quiring, "Johann Cornies — A Great Pioneer," *Mennonite Life* (July, 1948), 30-4.

<sup>101</sup>Adolf Ehrh, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1932).

<sup>102</sup>E. K. Francis: "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia, 1789-1914: A Sociological Interpretation," *MQR*, (April, 1951), 173-82; "The Russian Mennonites: From Religious to Ethnic Group," *The American Journal of Sociology* (Sept., 1948), 101-7; *In Search of Utopia* (Altona, Man., 1955).

<sup>103</sup>James Urry, "The Closed and the Open: Social and Religious Change amongst the Mennonites in Russia (1789-1889)."

<sup>104</sup>Ehrh, *Mennonitentum in Russland*, 85, 12-46.

<sup>105</sup>Urry's main argument is developed in a section entitled, "Johann Cornies and the Age of Progress, 1830-48," 257-342. For an introduction to Russian bureaucracy see: Daniel T. Orlovsky, "Recent Studies on the Russian Bureaucracy," *The Russian Review* (Oct., 1976), 448-67; Marc Raeff, "The Bureaucratic Phenomena of Imperial Russia, 1700-1905," *The American Historical Review* (April, 1979), 399-411; W. Bruce Lincoln, *In the Vanguard of Reform: Russia's Enlightened Bureaucrats 1825-1861* (DeKalb, Ill., 1982).

<sup>106</sup>Urry, "The Closed and the Open," 335-7.

<sup>107</sup>*Ibid.*, 340; <sup>108</sup>Explored in items listed under footnote #102; <sup>109</sup>Epp, *Johann Cornies*, 1.