

Reforging Mennonite *Spetspereselentsy*: The Experience of Mennonite Exiles at Siberian Special Settlements in the Omsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk and Narym Regions, 1930-1933

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It was a cold, miserable day in the south Ukrainian Mennonite village of Osterwick, Khortitsa (Chortitza) where members of the village soviet were gathered on February 22, 1930, to take care of some important business. Most of the people at this meeting were Mennonites from Osterwick and the nearby village of Kronsthal, but there was also a Communist Party member and a few members of the local Communist Party youth organization. The officials who led the meeting were Johann D. Rempel, the Mennonite chairman of the Osterwick village soviet, and his secretary, another Mennonite by the name of Vogt. Everyone in attendance knew the purpose of the meeting: it was to identify and approve a list of kulak households. Kulaks were

better-off peasants who were considered to be counter-revolutionaries and agitators; they not only hindered the socialist construction in the countryside but also directly and indirectly led the ignorant masses astray. After dealing with some preliminary matters and discussing what should happen to the eighteen Mennonite names on the list, the village soviet passed a number of resolutions:

1. Heinrich Bernard Rempel (Osterwick): a disenfranchised former factory owner who had spread his anti-Soviet views at every opportunity, had traded with counter-revolutionaries, and previously had been a bloodsucker. He will have his property confiscated and be resettled, along with his family, outside of Ukraine.
2. Johann Isaak Klassen (Osterwick): a disenfranchised kulak who previously had a large farming operation, was a slave driver, and supported the German occupation during World War I. He will be sentenced to death.
3. A. A. Funk (Osterwick): he will be resettled, along with his family, outside of Ukraine.
4. Jakob J. Winter (Osterwick): he will be dekulakized, that is, deprived of his citizenship and his property.
5. Jakob Gerhard Wölk (Osterwick): he is the same kind of individual as Johann Isaak Klassen. He will have his property confiscated and he and his family will be sent to Siberia.
6. Isaak Abram Klassen (Osterwick): he is a kulak who was a former large land owner, was disenfranchised, was an agitator for emigration and a public enemy of collectivization, and had exploited the work force. He will have his property confiscated and be sent, with his family, to Solovki.

That same evening, the Osterwick village soviet passed another twelve resolutions concerning the remaining Mennonite names on their list of kulaks. In total, eleven Mennonite families were to be exiled out of Ukraine, and seven were to have their property confiscated.² This scene was not unique to Osterwick, but played itself out numerous times in Mennonite settlements across the Soviet Union.

Those Mennonites selected for exile, as well as millions of other Soviet citizens, were eventually sent to special settlements (*spetsposeleniia* or *spetsposelki*) that were established in the northern and eastern reaches of the USSR in the spring of 1930. The special settlements were organized by the OGPU³ (Soviet secret police) and ultimately became the foundation of Stalin's *GUITLTP* (later renamed

GULAG), the administrative department that oversaw the vast number of forced labour camps across the USSR.⁴ The vast majority of *spetspereselentsy* (special settlers) inhabiting these settlements were kulaks, peasants whom the Soviet regime had identified as enemies of the state, and who had been disenfranchised, deprived of their property and exiled in a nation-wide campaign commonly referred to as “dekulakization.” One of the goals of the Soviet leadership was to use the special settlements as a means to re-forged (*perekovka*) the kulaks, that is, to re-mould and re-educate them through “honest labour” for their possible reintegration into Soviet society. Kulaks who could not be re-forged were to be declared irredeemable and then executed.⁵ By 1932 more than 1.3 million people were being re-forged in special settlements across the USSR.

Thousands of these kulaks were German-speaking Soviet Mennonites who were sent to special settlements in the Northern Territory, Komi, the Urals, and the Far East in the early 1930s. Thousands of Mennonite kulaks were also exiled to Siberia, where many toiled and died in special settlements in the Omsk, Tomsk, Novosibirsk, and Narym regions. Despite the large numbers of Mennonites resettled in these regions, very little is known about their experiences in the camps. Russian and western scholars have published important works on life in the special settlements but very few of these publications focus on the Russian Mennonite experience in Siberian labour camps in the early 1930s.⁶ In this paper I will endeavour to fill this vacuum by examining first-hand accounts of Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* who were banished to special settlements in Siberia.

Creating and Administering the Special Settlements

The fate of the kulaks became clear in a speech that Soviet leader Joseph Stalin gave at a conference of Marxist agronomists in late December 1929, in which he announced that the nation’s kulaks would be “liquidated as a class.” Although Stalin did not explicitly define what he meant by “liquidated,” it was not hard to imagine what he had in mind.⁷ The Bolshevik regime had already implemented a series of harsh economic and social policies in 1928-29 that targeted the most entrepreneurial and industrious peasant farmers, and initiated an all-out war against these kulaks. These policies included grain expropriation campaigns, repressive taxes, confiscation of property and arrest, all of which were aimed at accelerating the country’s collectivization program.⁸ These measures were intended not only to isolate kulaks from their families and communities but also to force millions of peasants to surrender their farms and join local collective farms.

On January 30, 1930, scarcely a month after Stalin's rallying cry to liquidate the kulaks, the Politburo prepared a secret decree entitled "Concerning Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak Farms in Districts of Wholesale Collectivization" (hereafter the "Politburo Decree"). Among other things, the Politburo Decree identified the most dangerous kulaks as the "counter-revolutionary kulak *aktiv*" (category 1 kulaks) and pegged their number at 60,000 for the entire USSR.⁹ Some members of this group, the decree stipulated, had been involved in counter-revolutionary activity and were, therefore, to be summarily executed by the *OGPU*; the remaining members of this group were to be sent to labour camps or areas of exile. The second group of kulaks listed in the Politburo Decree was the "kulak *aktiv*" (category 2 kulaks). Approximately 150,000 families in the USSR fell into this category, of which 70,000 families were to be exiled to the Northern Region, 50,000 to Siberia, 20,000-25,000 to the Urals and 25,000 to Kazakhstan. The third group of kulaks (category 3 kulaks) was considered to be the least threatening to the regime. Their punishment was the confiscation of their property and their relocation to newly established settlements in remote areas within the borders of their home districts. The Politburo Decree also stated that no more than three to five percent of the peasant population was to be liquidated, but under no circumstances should the liquidation of kulaks affect other peasants, families of Red Army soldiers, or families with members working in the industrial sector.

Weeks before the issuance of the Politburo Decree, Genrikh Iagoda, deputy head of the *OGPU*, had already begun implementing *OGPU* policies on the dekulakization and exile of kulaks. In early January 1930, for example, Iagoda instructed his *OGPU* lieutenants to purge kulak elements from the countryside and identify places for potential exile in the Northern Territory, the Urals, Siberia, and the Far East.¹⁰ In Iagoda's opinion, the current prison system was "thoroughly rotten," and he believed that it was time to turn the "entire prison system upside down" and "colonize the North in the shortest possible time." Inmates deported to the new colonization settlements would build their own huts and work in the forestry and mining industries; in their free time they would "work in vegetable gardens, raise pigs, mow grass and fish." Iagoda predicted that these settlements would become "proletarian mining towns" that would develop the country's rich supply of natural resources.¹¹

Shortly after the Politburo Decree, Iagoda issued an *OGPU* decree on February 2, 1930 entitled "Measures for the Liquidation of the Kulak as a Class" (hereafter "*OGPU* Decree"). While reiterating much of what was in the Politburo Decree, the *OGPU* Decree included several additional directives. First, it broadened the Politburo definition of category 1 kulaks to include the following new enemies of the state:

active members of church councils, sects and religious organizations; moneylenders; speculators; former landlords; former owners of large tracts of land; the wealthiest peasants; fugitive kulaks; kulaks who belonged to criminal groups; insurgents; bandits; and former and active members of the White Guard. Second, the *OGPU* Decree decreased the number of category 2 kulak families to be exiled to Siberia (from 50,000 to 44,000) and Kazakhstan (from 20-25,000 to 5,000), but it expanded category 2 kulaks to encompass “local kulak authorities and the whole kulak cadre.” This made the definition of category 2 kulaks far more ambiguous, and eventually enabled some authorities to brand poor peasants and landless labourers as kulaks. Third, the *OGPU* Decree provided a timetable for the immediate deportation of kulaks from various regions of the country and stipulated that the *OGPU* would oversee the establishment of collection points for the exiles, as well as their transportation to the camps. The decree also limited the amount of food and supplies that each exiled family could bring to the camps, and listed general instructions on the provision of food, water and medical aid to exiles while in transit to the camps.¹²

The *OGPU* Decree was an important milestone in the *OGPU*'s struggle to assume greater control of the *spetspereselentsy* population. For years the *OGPU* had competed with two other government agencies, the Commissariat of Justice-RSFSR and the Commissariat of Internal Affairs-RSFSR (*NKVD-RSFSR*), in administering the nation's prisons and labour camps.¹³ For much of the 1920s, the majority of inmates came under the jurisdiction of *GUMZ*, the prison agency of the *NKVD-RSFSR*. The *OGPU*, on the other hand, only had control of about ten percent of the prison population—approximately 30,000 inmates—under its agency *Spetsotdel* (Special Department). By 1929, however, the *OGPU* had taken custody of approximately 300,000 prisoners after the *NKVD-RSFSR* fell out of favour with the Stalinist leadership and lost its jurisdiction over prisoners serving sentences of more than three years. When the Politburo accused the *NKVD-RSFSR* of supporting anti-Stalinist forces and disbanded the agency in 1930, the government transferred even more administrative authority over prisoners to the *OGPU*. The *OGPU*'s gradual assumption of complete control over *spetspereselentsy* culminated on July 1, 1931, when a Politburo Commission transferred administration of all *spetspereselentsy* affairs to the *OGPU*.¹⁴

Although the *OGPU* assumed greater control over the country's inmate population between 1929 and 1931, this did not mean that it was always up to the task. From the outset of Stalin's dekulakization campaign, the *OGPU* routinely implemented ad hoc policies that resulted in unnecessary repression and numerous blunders in the identification and resettlement of the country's kulaks. In the early months of 1930,

the government and the *OGPU* also failed to prepare adequately for the construction and operation of the special settlements. Only in March and April of 1930, months after dekulakization was underway, did the government establish the Antonov-Saratovskii, Tolmachev, Shmidt and Bergavinov commissions to coordinate the affairs of the *spetspereselentsy*. By the time these commissions were up and running, however, thousands of kulaks had already been shipped to the Soviet taiga, where they faced a life-and-death struggle to survive in inhospitable conditions without adequate food, supplies, or shelter.¹⁵

The Antonov-Saratovskii, Tolmachev, Shmidt, and Bergavinov commissions were organized to improve the lives of the *spetspereselentsy*, but their efforts often failed to yield positive results. Personal rivalries and infighting between various members and the departments they represented often resulted in the implementation of ill-conceived policies that proved detrimental to the *spetspereselentsy*. Furthermore, these commissions and the Moscow planners who were assigned to design the special settlements were often guided by socialist and scientific theories. These theories envisioned the camps as experimental laboratories with the dual purpose of isolating kulaks from Soviet society and remolding them into acceptable Soviet citizens through hard labour. While these plans looked impressive on paper, they rarely considered the practical realities of life in the Soviet taiga. In the end, *OGPU* officials routinely found the suggestions of the commissions and planners to be of little practical value, and resorted to their own hastily devised measures and brutal tactics in constructing and administering the camps.¹⁶

Despite the colossal failure of the government, its commissions and planners and the *OGPU* to properly prepare and supply the special settlements, the flow of exiles to the Soviet hinterland did not slow down. Between January 1 and April 15, 1930, the *OGPU* arrested 79,330 kulaks, 5,028 clergy, 4,405 former landlords, mill and factory owners and 51,961 other individuals for a total of 140,724 arrests countrywide. The *OGPU* arrested an additional 142,993 individuals, 45,559 of whom were kulaks, between April 15 and October 1, 1930. As a result of these efforts, 555,532 individuals (115,231 families) were deported in 1930. The arrests and deportations did not stop there, however; by 1931 there were 1,243,860 individuals in the special settlements, and by January 1, 1932, the number had increased to 1,317,022. Although the number of *spetspereselentsy* in the special settlements exceeded 1.3 million in early 1932, the actual number of individuals who were exiled in 1930-31 amounted to 1,803,392, a difference of almost half a million people. Government records shed little light on what happened to these missing exiles, but there are several possible explanations. Some exiles, for example, died en route to or at the special settlements; other

spetspereselentsy escaped from the camps, while some were released and allowed to return home after officials determined that they had been mistakenly exiled.¹⁷

What is clear is that between 1930 and 1933 the government paid little heed to the needs and problems of the *spetspereselentsy* toiling in the camps. With its focus on collectivization and industrialization, the Soviet leadership viewed them as expendable slave labour that could easily be replenished with peasants from the countryside. It was only in late 1932 and early 1933, when famine conditions and epidemics were rampant in the special settlements, that the government finally responded with monetary, food, and medical commitments. By this time, however, tens of thousands of *spetspereselentsy* had already died as a result of starvation, disease, or exhaustion.

Identifying, Arresting and Incarcerating Mennonite Kulaks

Some of the first individuals in the country to be dekulakized and sent to the special settlements were Soviet Mennonites. Local officials in many Mennonite-populated regions routinely focused on Mennonite households to supply the three to five percent of the population needed to meet the kulak quota for their respective territories.¹⁸ These local officials included Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Jews as well as Mennonites. Most Mennonite officials worked in the village and district soviets and local government institutions, but a small percentage were also Communist Party members or candidates. These Mennonite officials identified Mennonite kulaks and religious leaders in their communities, imposed heavy taxes and grain quotas on Mennonite farmers, assisted in the confiscation and sale of Mennonite property, signed the orders that authorized the arrest of Mennonites and participated in the deportation of Mennonites to special settlements across the USSR.¹⁹ Mennonites were clearly not only victims of the dekulakization process, but also agents of the state who actively participated in cleansing the Soviet countryside of kulaks.

There were a number of reasons why Mennonites in some settlements were dekulakized and exiled in disproportionate numbers in the early 1930s. First, Mennonites generally had larger landholdings than their non-Mennonite neighbours. In Ukraine, for example, Mennonite leaders negotiated government concessions in the early 1920s to allow each Mennonite household to farm as much as 32 dessiatines (35 hectares) of land, which was twice as much land as the average Ukrainian peasant household was permitted.²⁰ With more land, Mennonites were obvious candidates for the kulak lists in their villages. A second reason why a higher percentage of Mennonites were

identified as kulaks was because of their past counter-revolutionary behaviour; Mennonite opposition to the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution, their support of the German occupation troops during the Civil War, and their demands for special treatment during the early 1920s made them obvious enemies of the state. A third factor had to do with ethnic hostility; anti-German sentiment pervaded almost every level of the government, and local officials routinely complained that German-speaking Mennonite settlements were infested with more kulaks than other settlements.²¹ In this kind of environment, Mennonite officials were under enormous pressure to dekulakize large numbers of Mennonite households to prove their loyalty to the regime and demonstrate that they were not giving preferential treatment to fellow Mennonites. A fourth reason for higher Mennonite dekulakization and exile rates was the strong religious and ethnic cohesiveness that existed in the Mennonite villages. Some officials believed that dekulakizing and exiling Mennonite religious leaders would drive a wedge between the Mennonite leadership and their congregations, ignite class warfare in the communities and persuade more Mennonites to join the newly established collective farms. Finally, dekulakization and exile proved to be an effective means of punishing Mennonites for their past emigration activities. The Mennonite desire to emigrate was especially strong in the fall of 1929, when more than 9,000 Soviet Mennonites from Siberia, Orenburg, the Caucasus, Kuban, Ufa, Memrik, Samara, the Crimea, and Ukraine fled to Moscow in an attempt to obtain exit visas. Their desperate plight made international headlines and created a foreign-relations crisis that embarrassed the Soviet government, prompting it to issue exit visas to more than 3,880 Mennonites in order to save face.²² In November and December of 1929 the more than 5,200 Mennonite refugees who did not receive exit visas were loaded onto cattle and freight cars, and transported back to their villages in sub-zero temperatures without adequate food or water. Many of those who survived the journey from Moscow were dekulakized within months of arriving home and exiled in 1930-31.²³

Exactly how many Soviet Mennonites were dekulakized and exiled between 1928 and 1933 is not certain. Greater access to former Soviet archives is revealing more information about what happened in Mennonite villages in the early 1930s, but to date historians have only examined Soviet records relating to the dekulakization of a few Mennonite colonies in Ukraine and Siberia. Until a comprehensive analysis of Soviet records from all colonies is undertaken, it is only possible to estimate the total number of Mennonites who were dekulakized and exiled. Some Mennonites were arrested in 1928 but it appears that few were actually exiled that year. More Mennonites, some of whom

participated in the flight to Moscow, were arrested in 1929, but most were not actually deported until 1930. During the height of dekulakization in 1930-31, a large number of Mennonite communities witnessed the dekulakization and exile of three to five percent of their population, the government-set targets in the Politburo Decree, but it is not clear whether all Mennonite communities suffered to the same extent. Dekulakization and exile continued throughout much of country in 1932-33 but it was not as severe or extensive during this period as it had been in 1930-31. On the basis of this and other information, it would appear that less than ten percent of the entire Soviet Mennonite population was dekulakized and exiled between 1928 and 1933. Given that estimates of the Mennonite population in the Soviet Union range from 91,000 to 118,000 in the late 1920s, the total number of Soviet Mennonites who were dekulakized and exiled between 1928 and 1933 was probably less than 11,800 individuals. Of the more than 2,142,700 exiles who were sent to Soviet special settlements between 1928 and 1933, Soviet Mennonites made up less than 0.6 percent of the entire exile population.²⁴

While the Mennonite contribution to the entire exile population was relatively small, Mennonites helped to fill the quota for every category of kulak in their communities.²⁵ Because the government believed that some kulaks were more dangerous than others, the dekulakization and exile experience was not the same for every Mennonite kulak. Most Mennonites identified as category 3 kulaks (the least threatening group of kulaks) were evicted from their homes in early 1930 and ordered to move into vacated peasant huts or abandoned buildings set aside for them by village authorities. They lived in these temporary accommodations while the government decided what to do with them.²⁶ In the Mennonite villages of the Khortitsa district, Ukraine, for example, category 3 kulaks were eventually moved to hastily established *zbornyis* (special kulak settlements) near their home villages in late 1930 and throughout 1931.²⁷ Here they were forced to build their own shelters and toil on local government projects, living a life of desperate poverty until they died or were eventually exiled from Ukraine in 1931-32.

The dekulakization procedure was different for Mennonite families categorized as category 1 or category 2 kulaks. The *OGPU* arrested the adult males in category 1 kulak households and held them in custody until deportation; their families were often forced to move into abandoned peasant huts or makeshift shelters until their deportation. A similar treatment was in store for category 2 kulaks, except that in the early months of 1930 it was the district soviets, not the *OGPU*, who supervised their arrest and detention. In some cases category 1 and category 2 kulaks were incarcerated for only a few hours before they were exiled; most adult male kulaks, however, spent days, weeks,

and in some cases months in custody before they were sentenced to periods of exile ranging from three to ten years. In letters to relatives, these incarcerated Mennonite kulaks reported on the life-threatening conditions that they endured in the unheated jails, temporary lockups, and rat-infested cellars. They also complained about being tortured at the hands of their guards, suffering attacks from fellow inmates and battling starvation, dehydration, disease and exhaustion.²⁸ If such letters stopped, families could conclude that their male relatives had succumbed to starvation, illness, or injury.

Transporting Mennonite Exiles to the Special Settlements

The next phase of the exile process, transporting kulaks to the special settlements, came under the jurisdiction of the *OGPU*. In Ukraine and Crimea the deportations began in early February 1930 when the *OGPU* sent requisitioned locomotives to designated collection points across the territories. Most of these locomotives were pulling long rows of cattle and freight cars that the *OGPU* scheduled to leave Ukraine with their kulak cargo between February 18 and March 22, 1930.²⁹ In the days leading up to the scheduled departures, *OGPU* officials rounded up kulaks and brought them to a rail siding or an open field designated as a collection point. The kulaks were held under armed guard in confiscated buildings or fenced off areas, often in sub-zero temperatures, until a final order concerning their fate was issued. In some communities, only category 1 adult male kulaks were exiled initially. In other settlements, the *OGPU* and local authorities rounded up entire Mennonite families and transported them to the collection points where their male relatives were held. These kulak households were ordered to bring hatchets, saws, spades, hammers, as well as enough food to feed their family members for several months, but each family was restricted to a maximum weight of thirty to thirty five *poods* (490 to 573 kilograms) for supplies.³⁰

Once the requisite number of kulaks arrived at the collection point, *OGPU* officers prepared to load them into the cattle and freight cars. Before embarking, however, the *OGPU* confiscated any money or jewelry that the exiles had, and ordered them to leave their food and baggage in specially designated luggage cars. The officials then divided the kulaks into groups of between forty and fifty people, and herded each group into one of the rail cars at gunpoint. After the human cargo was loaded, the doors of the cars were closed and locked. This “echelon” of kulaks—“echelon” was the *OGPU* term for a caravan of rail cars that transported kulaks into exile—now began its journey to one of the hundreds of special settlements scattered across the USSR.

A typical echelon consisted of forty to fifty cattle and freight cars, five to ten luggage cars, and one or two command cars for the guards. On April 1, 1930, for instance, over 2,000 kulaks, more than 450 of whom were Mennonites or Germans, were packed into cattle cars at the Mennonite village of Lichtenau, Molochna (Molotschna), Ukraine. This echelon included forty eight cars hauling exiles and their baggage, as well as a military car with guards and their supplies. Long echelons of cattle and freight cars also carried banished Mennonites out of Crimea in the spring of 1930; in one case, the Mennonite kulaks were brought to Simferopol where they were loaded onto fifty six cattle cars destined for the north. Between March 6 and 9, 1930 four echelons of Mennonite and non-Mennonite kulaks, 2,850 from the Zaporizhia region and 4,914 from the Melitopol' region, were transported out of Ukraine.³¹

Locked in the rail cars, the Mennonite exiles had no way of knowing what was going to happen to them or where they were going. Letters and diaries of Mennonites who travelled on the cattle and freight cars indicate that during the first months of 1930 most exiles from Mennonite settlements located on the western side of the Ural Mountains were deported to the Northern Territory (often to sites near Vologda and Arkhangel'sk), the Komi region, and areas along the northwestern slopes of the Urals.³²

A smaller percentage of Mennonites from the western side of the Urals were sent to Siberia during the first half of 1930. This was because government leaders in Siberia and Kazakhstan complained that they were too preoccupied with dekulakizing and resettling peasants from their own republics and did not have the resources to deal with kulaks from other regions of the country. These officials demanded additional government funding and concessions if exiles were to be sent to their republics. Siberian authorities, for instance, requested fifty million rubles to defray the settlement costs of imported exiles. Kazakh officials even convinced Iagoda to discontinue all deportations to Kazakhstan for a three-month period commencing in February 1930. Soon, however, Moscow grew tired of these demands for more money or moratoriums on kulak importations, and by the fall of 1930 the Soviet leadership forced Siberian and Kazakh officials to accept kulaks from other regions of the country. By the end of 1930, 76,130 exiles (15,590 families) had been relocated to Western Siberia, 55,792 exiles (12,047 families) to Eastern Siberia and 7,590 exiles (1,424 families) to Kazakhstan. The Soviet leadership began to increase the number of deportees to these regions in 1931; Western Siberia was now required to accept 241,313 exiles (54,360 families), Eastern Siberia 73,111 exiles (14,508 families) and Kazakhstan 253,637 exiles (49,555 families).³³ As a result of these developments, an increasing number of Mennonite deportees were transported to Siberia after the summer

of 1930. Regular shipments of exiles to Siberia continued well into 1933, but the exact number of Mennonites deported to this region is not known.

The journey to the Siberian special settlements was arduous, miserable and often deadly. To ensure that no one escaped, *OGPU* guards kept the doors of the rail cars locked; in some cases they also nailed shut the windows and ventilation openings. The cars were originally designed to transport cattle or freight, not people, and so the interior of the cars was unlit and poorly ventilated; the temperature ranged from stiflingly hot to bone-chillingly cold, depending on the season. With forty or more people crowded into a car, the *spetspereselentsy* often had to sleep in shifts or standing upright. It did not take long before most passengers were suffering from sleep deprivation and exhaustion. The absence of sanitary facilities in the cars exacerbated the situation. Passengers often had to use their food and water buckets for urination and defecation purposes; the buckets were invariably too small to accommodate everyone's needs, especially as more exiles became ill and began vomiting and suffering from diarrhea. Every few days or so, the guards provided some respite by opening the doors to the cars and allowing the prisoners to relieve themselves outside and catch a breath of fresh air.³⁴

The paltry food rations given to the passengers on the rail cars only exacerbated their misery. Since the *spetspereselentsy* were often denied access to their own food supplies while en route to the camps, they had to rely on whatever morsels the *OGPU* guards gave them. In describing his thirteen-day journey to a work camp in the vicinity of Tomsk, one Mennonite wrote that the people in his cattle car received soup four times and bread on only a few occasions. Another Mennonite exile related that he and his fellow exiles received water two or three times a day, but fish soup and bread only twice during their week-long trip. In some cases, exiles were denied any food for a week or more during their transit. With little or no nourishment, the most vulnerable inhabitants in the cars—the children, the sick, and the elderly—quickly succumbed to hunger, illness, exhaustion and exposure. The rail cars soon became death wagons, filled with the cries of suffering exiles and the stench of rotting corpses. In order to prevent the spread of disease, the *spetspereselentsy* tried to remove the corpses from the cars whenever possible; some pushed their deceased infant children through ventilation openings in the cattle cars while others hastily disposed of lifeless bodies in nearby ditches, fields or forests during one of the infrequent stops when the guards unlocked the doors of the cars.³⁵ To find consolation during this hellish nightmare, Mennonites sang hymns, said prayers, and held informal worship and funeral services en route to the camps.

The journey to the Siberian special settlements was especially long for Mennonites who were deported from the western regions of the country. In the case of Crimean and Ukrainian Mennonite exiles, the trip to Siberia usually took two to three weeks. Many of these *spetspereselentsy* did not know that they were travelling to Siberia until their echelon passed through the Ural Mountains. For the travel-weary exiles who had so recently been torn away from all that was familiar to them, the sight of the Urals must have been devastating; the Ural Mountains were not only a physical obstacle, but also a symbolic barrier separating the civilized, western regions of the country from the uncivilized wilderness of Siberia.

The experience of deportation was not the same for those who lived in Mennonite settlements in Siberia (i.e. near Omsk and Slavgorod). One reason is that the *OGPU* preferred to use horses, sleds, carts and barges instead of rail cars to transport Siberian Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* to Siberian labour camps. This was the experience of a number of German and Mennonite families from the Slavgorod area, who, after being *dekulakized* in February and March of 1930, were evicted from their homes in -40° Celsius temperatures and then ordered by the *OGPU* to prepare for evacuation. Fearing that their infants would not survive travelling in such frigid conditions, *kulak* parents begged *OGPU* officials to allow their children to be left with relatives or friends who had not been *dekulakized*. The *OGPU*, however, would have none of this; the *kulaks* were ordered to prepare their children for the coming journey and to pack two *poods* (32.8 kilograms) of flour per person, along with pitchforks, spades, axes, saws, sickles and scythes for the camps.³⁶ The *OGPU* then force marched the *spetspereselentsy* through heavy snow to another village forty *versts* (43 kilometres) away. Those who survived this frigid test of endurance were loaded onto horse-drawn sleds headed for the Siberian hinterland, along with other convoys of sleds carrying *OGPU* guards and their captives. Every so often the convoys stopped at villages where the travelers ate and slept, either in the shacks of local peasants or in hastily built snow huts and lean-tos. Rarely, however, was there enough food for everyone, and hunger soon became commonplace. Once again, it was the young, the ill and the elderly who succumbed to exposure and privation. Some were incapable of coping in these conditions and committed suicide before reaching the special settlements.³⁷

The *OGPU* also relied on Siberian rivers to move thousands of *kulaks* northward on boats and barges after the spring thaw. In May 1931, for example, the *OGPU* dispossessed Mennonite families from four villages (Rosenfeld, Alexandrovka, Novo-Alexandrovka and Ivanovka) west of Omsk, and ordered them to take their horses and wagons to a dock on the Irtysh River near Omsk. The Mennonite exiles

waited there for a week while the *OGPU* escorted more than a thousand other kulaks from the region to the dock. The *OGPU* then loaded the kulaks onto two large barges headed for the Narym region.

For almost a month the kulak families and their livestock tried their best to survive in the dark, damp, overcrowded bowels of the barges. For spiritual sustenance the Mennonite exiles sang hymns or held spontaneous worship services. For physical sustenance they were dependent on rations provided by their guards; each exile was allotted a mere two hundred grams of bread a day, which was occasionally supplemented with some flour, potatoes, gruel or fish. The women were sometimes allowed ashore to look for berries and firewood when the barges were temporarily docked; to ensure the return of the women, their families were required to remain on the barges. Only weeks later, after the barges had made their way deep into the Siberian hinterland and the likelihood of escape was more remote, did the guards permit kulak families to scavenge the shoreline for food.

In such dire circumstances, illness and death soon spread throughout the barges, with children and the elderly being the most vulnerable, but even young adults sometimes succumbed to the harsh conditions. To prevent the spread of disease, the guards allowed the corpses to be buried in shallow graves along the shoreline; families were given only a few minutes with their departed before they were ordered back onto the barges. The only respite from this voyage of suffering came when the barges docked at their final destination, and the survivors stepped ashore to begin a new life in northern Siberia.³⁸

The journey to the camps, whether by barge, sled, cart or train, was a test of endurance for the *spetspereselentsy* that proved deadly for some. For the *OGPU*, the transports to the camps served several purposes. First, the transports were an effective means for the *OGPU* to cull *spetspereselentsy* with the least potential for productivity—the sick, the old and the very young—from the work force population. It is unclear whether the intent of the *OGPU* policy was to deliberately cull the weakest exiles but the process certainly ensured that only the healthiest and strongest exiles entered the camps. Second, the transports had an important psychological benefit for the *OGPU*; the horrible conditions on the barges, sleds, carts and trains “softened up” the exiles, making them more compliant with *OGPU* orders and reducing the likelihood of resistance.

Setting up Camp in the Siberian Taiga

Those *spetspereselentsy* who survived the journey to the camps faced a new endurance test. Disoriented, exhausted, hungry and

frequently ill, most Mennonite exiles had no idea where they were when they disembarked from the barges, sleds, carts or trains. The *OGPU* often orchestrated the unloading process in the middle of a virgin forest or some desolate marshland, with no villages or people in sight; ostensibly this was to prevent the socially dangerous kulaks from contaminating the local population.

It was only days, weeks or months later that the exiles discovered where they were, which was often hundreds of kilometres away from the nearest village or city. From the letters of Mennonites exiled to the western regions of Siberia, it is evident that many of them were resettled in areas near Omsk, Kulomsina, Kornilovka, Chesnokovka, Polovinka (northwest of Omsk), Melkoye, Tara (Tarsky District), Tomsk, Monastyrka, Novosibirsk, Mariinsk, Podun, Tiazhin (Tyazhin), Takmyk and Narym.³⁹

Not all *spetspereselentsy* sent to Siberia were treated alike. Exiles sentenced to imprisonment were taken to local jails where they served their time. Other exiles were segregated for work in local industries and taken to their work sites. Most exiles, however, were ordered to work at special settlements. To transport the exiles and their possessions to the labour camps, the *OGPU* sometimes provided horse-drawn sleds or wagons. More often than not, however, the *OGPU* force marched their captives to the camps through mud, muskeg or knee-deep snow. These treks to the special settlements, which sometimes lasted for days at a time and extended for hundreds of kilometres, often became death marches for the participants. This was the fate of Mennonite exiles who were unloaded in the region of Tiazhin (east of Tomsk). The guards in charge ordered the *spetspereselentsy* to walk seventy five *versts* (80 kilometres), much of it through deep mud, to Kemerovo, which was the final destination for some of the exiles. The remaining exiles were then ordered to continue walking to yet another camp. Any women or children who were too cold, exhausted or sick to continue the journey were left for dead en route to the second camp. Those who survived the march to the second camp were then forced to walk back to Kemerovo. On the return journey, the exiles retrieved those women and children who had previously been abandoned, but had not yet perished. When the group arrived at Kemerovo, they were herded into rail cars and transported another five hundred *versts* (534 kilometres) to exile settlements near Narym.⁴⁰

The endurance marches usually led the physically and psychologically weakened exiles to nothing more than a remote clearing in the woods where the *OGPU* typically segregated adult male exiles (those between seventeen and sixty years of age) from their families until permanent barracks were constructed. The rationale behind this practice was to deter escape attempts while barrack construction took

place. The women and children were often billeted in the huts of local peasants or in nearby prisons, churches, synagogues or schools that had been confiscated for such purposes. In the meantime, the male exiles were ordered to construct barracks using the tools they had brought with them. They usually worked without proper clothing in sub-zero temperatures and lived in mud holes and makeshift shelters until construction of the barracks was completed. At exile settlements in the vicinity of Tomsk, for example, Mennonite men were separated from their families and transported over one hundred *versts* (107 kilometres) to a site where they lived in temporary shelters until they constructed new barracks.⁴¹ Still other *spetspereselentsy* worked and slept for days and sometimes weeks at a time without any shelter from the elements. Mennonite exiles at a camp near Omsk, for instance, slept under the open sky in temperatures that plummeted to -40° on the Reaumur scale (-50° Celsius) until barracks were built.⁴² These harsh conditions inevitably diminished the ranks of new *spetspereselentsy*.

Moscow planners initially anticipated that it would take up to four years to clear and prepare enough land for a camp, but now the *spetspereselentsy* were expected to do the same in a few weeks or months. The Siberian arm of the *OGPU* also set guidelines for the special settlements; each settlement was to have twelve to fifteen barracks inhabited by one hundred to two hundred families, and each family was to have ten hectares of land for growing crops and raising livestock. In theory, every camp was supposed to be administered by a commandant and guards, but this was not always the case. The district *komendatura*, the administrative headquarters that supervised the special settlements in a specific district, was often unsuccessful in recruiting commandants for all of the camps. In some regions, the *komendatura* was so short of commandants that it ordered each commandant to supervise a number of camps; some commandants were responsible for more than five thousand exiles scattered in various camps in one district. In such cases, camp guards were routinely left on their own to manage individual camps.⁴³

Many commandants and guards lacked adequate training or qualifications for their jobs. The government assumed that Red Army veterans and Communists with experience in the military, prison or secret police would run the camps, but few signed on to do so. This was hardly surprising, given the fact that the positions of commandant and guard were not well paid and required working in isolated locations with few amenities and an inhospitable climate. The government often had no alternative but to recruit less qualified candidates, such as semi-literate peasants, some of whom were alcoholics, sociopaths, or former criminals. The only training for most of these recruits consisted of a three-week preparatory course.⁴⁴

The commandant set the rules for camp discipline, and the *spetspereselentsy* had to obey the orders of the commandants and guards without question or hesitancy. They could not assemble or leave the camp without the commandant's permission. Commandants also set the work quotas, food rations and days of rest. Some were notoriously abusive in their treatment of *spetspereselentsy*, and imposed swift and harsh punishments, including summary execution, even for minor violations of camp rules.⁴⁵

To ensure that new arrivals to the camps had no doubt as to who was in charge, the commandants and guards often confiscated whatever food the *spetspereselentsy* brought with them. The *spetspereselentsy* were routinely denied food for several days or weeks after arriving at the camps. At a special settlement near Tomsk, for example, the commandant ordered guards to confiscate all of the food brought by the new exiles who were not given anything to eat during their first five days at the camp. The exiles were eventually given millet soup and one pound of stale bread per day, but these daily food rations were insufficient for the already starving exiles, and some resorted to begging from local peasants in order to survive.

At camps that were already established and operational it was common practice to quarantine new arrivals in unheated holding cells with little or no food for days or weeks at a time. Camp officials justified this harsh practice as a necessary precaution for preventing the spread of disease in the camps. In many cases, however, this practice hastened the deaths of new arrivals to the camps.⁴⁶

Moscow planners and the *OGPU* established guidelines for the construction of permanent barracks, but in reality the barracks varied significantly in design and size from one camp to another. At some exile settlements the practice was for each family to build its own sod hut or shelter. One Mennonite reported that his family built a sod-covered hut six *archines* by eight *archines* (4.26 metres by 5.68 metres) in size without any nails or boards and without glass for the windows. Another Mennonite wrote that every family at his camp was allowed to construct a shelter no larger than three *fadens* (5.49 metres) in length and two *fadens* (3.66 metres) in width. Mennonite and German-speaking exiles built their huts close to one another whenever possible, forming Mennonite and German enclaves within the special settlements.⁴⁷

At other camps, families shared their living space with others. There were between eleven and twelve families in each of the barracks at special settlements in the vicinity of Chesnokovka (west of Omsk), while the barracks at other camps were much larger and housed several hundred or several thousand tenants in one building. Five thousand people, for example, reportedly lived in a multi-storey barrack at an exile settlement near Tomsk. In these very trying condi-

tions, Mennonite and German-speaking exiles often bunked together to create some semblance of ethnic community.⁴⁸

Overcrowding, lack of privacy and spartan living conditions were part of daily life for the *spetspereselentsy* living in communal accommodations. It was not uncommon for between thirty and eighty people to share a small room intended to house less than twenty people. The low barrack ceilings, the chronic shortage of furniture and beds and the absence of partitions to demarcate the living space of each family exacerbated the situation. The sleeping arrangements often involved children sleeping on top of each other, while the adults slept in shifts.

Noise, insects and inadequate heating facilities were perennial irritations in the barracks. In buildings where there were young children, the cries of infants were heard day and night, making it difficult for anyone to sleep. There were also the constant problems of bedbugs and lice; the moss used to fill the cracks in the barrack walls served as an ideal breeding ground for the insects. A widespread shortage of ovens for cooking meals and heating the barracks exasperated the situation; without ovens, the barracks were like freezers during the winter months.⁴⁹

These inhospitable conditions brought Mennonite exiles to the realization that they would have to depend on non-Mennonite exiles if they hoped to survive. The common experience of banishment and life in an inhospitable environment created a certain camaraderie among exiles of disparate ethnic backgrounds and the impetus to form strategic alliances outside their Mennonite circle. Life in exile compelled Mennonites to forge new communities where survival, rather than ethnic or religious considerations, was the primary concern.⁵⁰

Daily Life in the Special Settlements

In the early days of the dekulakization campaign, the Soviet leadership decreed that kulaks should be employed in the exploitation of important resources such as timber, minerals, coal and peat and the construction of industrial projects such as factories, railroads and canals to accelerate the nation's industrialization efforts. The government justified the imposition of the harsh work regimens and the exploitation of kulak labour as necessary for their transformation into socially useful labourers.⁵¹

For the majority of Mennonite kulaks resettled in Siberian special settlements, the experience entailed working as woodcutters in remote, densely forested regions of the taiga. At most special settlements, all exiles, with the exception of young children, the physically disabled and the elderly, were required to cut lumber. At a lumber

camp near Monastyrka (northwest of Tomsk), for example, all of the men between the ages of sixteen and sixty and all of the women between the ages of sixteen and fifty five worked in the forests. At another camp all men between the ages of fourteen and seventy five, as well as all women between the ages of fifteen and fifty five were forced to fell trees. Even new mothers were required to cut and stack lumber shortly after their babies were delivered; the only exiles exempt from cutting trees were those with a doctor's letter excusing them from such tasks. *Spetspereselentsy* who were medically unfit to cut trees usually worked together with elderly exiles to prepare meals, look after the younger children, collect firewood or work as housekeepers for camp officials.⁵²

Kulak children in some camps were permitted to attend local schools, but a persistent shortage of teachers and books meant that children did not receive a good education; much of their class time was devoted to learning communist slogans and listening to diatribes against kulaks or other enemies of the state. Most kulak children, however, had no access to schools and spent much of their childhood performing menial tasks around the camps until they were old enough to work in the forests.⁵³

Not all adult exiles had the same work regimen. Most *spetspereselentsy* were assigned the most strenuous work regimen (hereafter "basic work regimen"). Exiles who were assigned the basic work regimen were required to live in the camp and could not leave without special permission from the commandant except to work in the forest. A much smaller, more fortunate group of *spetspereselentsy* were promoted to less onerous work regimens (hereafter "lighter work regimen"). They achieved this special status by earning the favour of the commandant or guards, or because they had practical skills or specialized training that the camp administration found useful. Nurses, bookkeepers and teachers, for example, were often assigned lighter work regimens. Exiles with lighter work regimens usually received larger food rations, higher wages, and more days off. They were also more likely to work in nearby offices or factories instead of the forest; some were even given permission to be temporarily absent from the work site or live away from the camp for extended periods of time.

To ensure that *spetspereselentsy* completed their work regimens and followed camp rules, the commandant and guards depended on a certain class of exiles to serve as their liaisons, enforcers and informers. Sometimes referred to as *starosta* (elder) or *desiatnik* (foreman), these influential exiles ensured that the other exiles followed the commandant's orders; they also supervised work brigades, worked as assistant guards and provided the commandant and guards with information on headcounts and plans for escape, rebellion or sabotage.

In return for these services, the *starosta* and *desiatnik* were rewarded with lighter work regimens, additional food, higher wages or more days off.

Most *spetspereselentsy* hoped that they would be promoted to a lighter work regimen, but for many this proved to be an illusory dream. Camp officials rarely granted such promotions and often ignored their own promotion policies. They routinely violated government instructions on work quotas and limitations on the duration of the work day; the eight-hour work day, for example, existed on paper only.⁵⁴

The day-to-day routine of the basic work regimen in the Siberian lumber camps was not only exhausting, but also extremely dangerous. Leaving the camp in the early hours of the morning, the exiles were often required to walk long distances to their worksite as far as eight kilometres in one direction, frequently in bone-chilling weather. After arriving at their work site, the exiles were required to cut and stack trees for ten to fourteen hours, often with only a half-hour break for lunch. At some camps the daily work quota for each exile was to cut, split and stack one cubic metre of wood. At other settlements the basic work regimen was more onerous. One Mennonite lamented that every exile at his camp had to chop down thirty five mature trees and trim off their branches in order to meet the daily individual work requirement. A similar complaint was lodged by another Mennonite who wrote that every individual at his work site was ordered to cut down fifty trees per day.⁵⁵ Exiles often wrote that they had trouble meeting half of the work quotas assigned to them.

In some camps, the *spetspereselentsy* worked in brigades ostensibly to foster a socialist attitude among the workers. The brigades were often organized by gender but in some cases the guards allowed Mennonites and German speaking exiles to form their own German or Mennonite work brigades. Each brigade was also assigned a specific daily work quota that was usually unattainable. At a special settlement near Tomsk, a ten person crew was required to cut one hundred trees per day (the average trunk of each tree had to measure between half a metre and a metre in diameter). One of the Mennonite members of this crew lamented that his brigade rarely attained this quota, and that many brigades were able to cut less than forty trees per day.⁵⁶

The inhospitable climate and landscape of the Siberian taiga made it challenging, and in many cases impossible, for *spetspereselentsy* to attain their Herculean quotas. In the winter months, when the temperature routinely plummeted to -40° Celsius, exiles were often required to work in deep snow without adequate winter clothing or boots. Repeated exposure to such hostile winter conditions invariably resulted in recurring bouts of frostbite that sometimes led to gangrene, amateur amputation and premature death.⁵⁷

The advent of spring and summer did little to improve the working conditions for the *spetspereselentsy*. Warmer weather unleashed a scourge of mosquitoes and black flies that made it nearly impossible to work. The spring thaw also transformed the frozen Siberian taiga into muddy bogs and swamps, forcing the exiles to cut trees and stack lumber in hip-deep mud and water. Such working conditions invariably resulted in injury or death when tree cutters, whose movement was impeded by the boggy ground, were struck by falling trees.

Some work-related injuries and deaths were caused by camp officials. Commandants and guards routinely forced seriously ill and injured exiles to work long hours in difficult circumstances. *Spetspereselentsy* complained that guards forced them to work even when they were suffering from severe nausea, diarrhea, swollen feet, cut hands, amputated digits or terminal illness. Some guards callously left for dead any exile who collapsed from exhaustion, hypothermia or injury.

Commandants and camp guards were also harsh when punishing those accused of breaking camp rules. Such was the experience of a Mennonite exile who was placed in an unheated holding cell without food for two days when he was unable to work due to illness. It was also a common practice for camp guards to deny *spetspereselentsy* their food rations or order them to work additional hours if they failed to meet their quotas. At a camp near Podun (southeast of Novosibirsk), Mennonite exiles who did not achieve their work quotas during their designated work shift were required to work through the night until their quotas were filled. Some guards took delight in meting out punishments that required offending *spetspereselentsy* to perform awkward and often pointless tasks. One Mennonite reported that any exile at his camp who failed to meet a work quota or camp regulation was required to stand motionless on a tree stump for several hours; exiles who failed to do this had to carry a heavy load of bricks for an extended period of time.⁵⁸ At other camps, *spetspereselentsy* accused of committing minor infractions were incarcerated in local prisons or executed without trial.

Not all Mennonite exiles sent to Siberia worked in lumber camps. Some performed other forms of hard labour that were just as dangerous, including the following: constructing ice paths in the forests for hauling lumber; working in local pulp and paper mills; building rail lines and bridges through the taiga; toiling in deadly coal, copper, gold and quarry mines. Like the exiles in the lumber camps, these workers were also required to meet impossible quotas, and often worked without proper tools in dangerous conditions. Still other Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* worked as carpenters, blacksmiths, locksmiths, cooks, bakers, grave diggers, well diggers, agricultural workers,

livestock herders, night watchmen, bookkeepers, teachers and nursing assistants.⁵⁹

Some jobs were performed almost exclusively by female exiles. At camps near Tomsk, Mennonite women and girls washed floors in the camp administration barracks, cooked for guards and railway construction crews and worked in businesses and factories in nearby towns and cities.⁶⁰ Threats of violence or the offer of additional rations also compelled some female exiles to perform sexual favours for camp officials or male exiles; in some cases, these women and girls entered into permanent living arrangements with guards or male exiles to improve their lot in life.⁶¹ The extent to which Mennonite women and girls performed such favours or participated in such relationships is not known, perhaps because of the reluctance of Mennonite letter writers or diarists to broach such a delicate topic, but it seems quite likely that some Mennonite women must have resorted to this simply to survive.

Regardless of how Mennonites were employed in the camps, they were paid extremely low wages, if any, and given spartan food rations. In camps where exiles were paid for their work, the wages often amounted to only a few rubles per day. Mennonite woodcutters in the vicinity of Tomsk received only two rubles per day for their work. These wages were hardly enough to buy food for one person, let alone an entire family. To make matters worse, camp officials routinely refused to pay the exiles all of their wages. In the late fall of 1930, a Mennonite at a lumber camp near Monastyrka wrote that an average woodcutter was supposed to receive fifty two kopecks for every cubic metre of cut and loaded wood. He noted, however, that camp officials frequently deducted expenses such as rent for the use of the barracks or "voluntary donations" to *OGPU* coffers from exiles' wages which resulted in workers receiving only twenty five percent of their pay.⁶²

Surviving on such meagre wages was made more difficult by the inflationary increases in food prices between 1930 and 1933 brought on by the sharp reduction in food production during the early years of collectivization. At local markets in the vicinity of Tiazhin, for instance, flour sold for twenty rubles per *pood* in 1930; by 1932 the price had escalated to as much as 120 rubles.⁶³ These inflated prices often made it impossible for exiles to purchase enough food to feed their families.

At other Siberian special settlements, exiles received only food rations for their work. The kind and quantity of rations varied significantly from camp to camp. At a camp near Kornilovka (east of Omsk), an exile who fulfilled his daily work quota received a kilogram of black bread, 120 grams of porridge, a spoonful of sugar, and a piece of fish. At other camps the rations were even smaller. An exile working near Tomsk wrote that he received a mere four hundred grams of bread

and some porridge as his daily ration.⁶⁴ As one Mennonite exile wryly observed, the “food rations were such that we received too little to live on, but enough to stop us from dying.”⁶⁵ To supplement the sparse food rations, some commandants permitted the *spetspereselentsy* to pick wild berries, mushrooms and other vegetation, grow their own gardens, fish in local streams or lakes or beg for food from local peasants. In other cases, *spetspereselentsy* resorted to eating carrion, insects, weeds and tree bark to survive.

The rations of non-working (hereafter “non-able”) exiles—young children, the handicapped, the ill and the elderly—were a fraction of what working exiles received. In the vicinity of Chesnokovka, non-able *spetspereselentsy* were given between three hundred and four hundred grams of bread a day, while the workers were allotted eight hundred grams of bread a day. Similarly scanty rations were also apportioned to *spetspereselentsy* at a camp near Tomsk, where workers received a kilogram of bread per day while the daily food portions for non-ables consisted of less than 120 grams of stale bread and some millet soup. In a special settlement near Monastyrka, every working child received eighteen kilograms of food per month while non-able children were allotted only 10.8 kilograms. Most non-able exiles could not live on such meagre rations and had to depend on the generosity of others to survive.⁶⁶

Not surprisingly, the harsh realities of life in exile and the daily struggle for food led to the creation of unequal social relationships and new power structures in the special settlements. Every camp had its own hierarchy, however informal, and *spetspereselentsy* used whatever advantage or influence they had to move up in the camp’s pecking order. An exile’s social rank or accomplishments prior to deportation rarely determined his or her position in the camp hierarchy. Instead, factors such as an exile’s age, physical condition, gender, marital status, work capacity, number of dependents and relationship with the camp administration determined his or her status in the special settlements. No exile’s position in the camp’s pecking order was permanent, however, as illness or injury could mean a quick demotion in status.

Camp officials—the commandant, camp guards and administrative staff—were at the top of the camp hierarchy. The commandant had the final say in all matters, but collectively the commandant and the guards represented the ultimate authority of the camp as they exercised the power of life and death over the inmates. Just below the camp officials in the hierarchical structure were exiles who achieved the status of *starosta* and *desiatnik* as well as others promoted to lighter work regimens. The advantages that came with their positions, such as better rations and easier work regimens, gave these individuals better odds of survival. Moreover, the *starosta* and *desiatnik* usually had

the ear of the camp administration, and their influence could help to advance or demote the status of other *spetspereselentsy* in the camp. A negative report from a *starosta* or *desiatnik* about an exile's attitude or behaviour could result in the exile receiving increased work quotas, smaller food rations or corporal punishment.⁶⁷

Lower in the camp hierarchy were exiles who were assigned to the basic work regimen. These *spetspereselentsy* constituted the largest group in the social structure of the camps, and performed the lion's share of the work. Not everyone within this group was the same, however, and subclasses of *spetspereselentsy* arose within this sector. Single young males who did not have children, siblings or parents in the camp usually fared better than their co-workers with dependents. Their youth and physical strength gave them an advantage in meeting their work quotas, and they usually received larger food rations. Without dependents they had more food for their own consumption than male workers who had to share their rations with family members.

Some of the most disadvantaged in the basic work regimen group were female exiles. In the male dominated world of the special settlements, female exiles constituted their own subclass in the camps. Camp officials often treated female exiles as less valuable and more expendable than male exiles. Consequently, the rations for female workers were often disproportionately smaller than those of their male counterparts. Because many women and girls could not meet the daily work regimens assigned to them, their small food rations were further reduced, which significantly increased the likelihood of premature death for both them and their dependents.

Female *spetspereselentsy* also performed much of the domestic work in and around the barracks. After completing their regular work shifts, female workers were generally expected to prepare family meals, care for dependent children, wash and mend clothes, clean the barracks, gather firewood, as well as plant and tend a garden. Not surprisingly, their work day often stretched long into the night. Unless they were gravely ill, injured or handicapped, women and girls received little assistance from their men folk to complete these domestic chores.

Some of the least fortunate women were those without an able-bodied husband or male relative who could earn rations and provide protection, and those whose husbands or male relatives were seriously injured, ill or handicapped. These women were more vulnerable to exploitation, and often took on work such as cooking, cleaning, washing laundry or mending clothes for camp authorities or other exiles for more food or money.⁶⁸

At the very bottom of the camp hierarchy were the non-able exiles: children, the elderly, the ill, the injured, the handicapped and those

in custody. Camp authorities routinely viewed this lowest strata of *spetspereselentsy* as an unnecessary drain on camp resources, and deliberately gave them inadequate and infrequent food rations. Not surprisingly, they were often the first to succumb to starvation and death.⁶⁹

Perhaps the most at risk in this vulnerable group of *spetspereselentsy* were the children who were often at the mercy of the adult prisoners. It was not uncommon for infants and small children to be left alone in the barracks for much of the day while their parents worked outside, leaving them susceptible to injury and neglect. Unsupervised children were also easy prey for adult exiles bent on abusing them physically, psychologically or sexually.

The children who often suffered the worst abuse and had the lowest life expectancy were the orphans of kulak exiles. Most camp officials often saw the orphans as a troublesome nuisance, and did whatever was necessary to remove them from their camps. In some cases, camp officials contacted the relatives of orphans to retrieve the children and bring them back to their home villages. In other cases, the officials made arrangements to have exile families or local peasants informally adopt the orphans. More often than not, camp authorities relocated the orphans to nearby orphanages located outside the camps. Underfunded and mismanaged, these orphanages routinely operated in makeshift accommodations without adequate heat, food and personnel. The children lived a hand-to-mouth existence in the orphanages where death was an ever-present threat. For those who survived, their time in the orphanages was a transforming experience. It often stripped away their ethnic, religious, social and familial identities and transformed many of them into socialist workers for the nation's factories, and recruits for the Red Army and secret police.⁷⁰

There were other factors that sometimes determined an exile's status in the special settlement. One of these factors was ethnicity. Ethnic hostility was commonplace throughout much of the USSR, and anti-German discrimination and attacks were commonplace in Mennonite-populated regions. Mennonite exiles who tried to separate themselves from the non-Mennonite camp population—by speaking Low German, living in Mennonite or German enclaves in the camps, practicing Mennonite religious beliefs or participating in Mennonite or German work brigades—sometimes raised suspicion and evoked hostility from exiles who were not members of this ethnic in-group. This sometimes had a negative impact on the status of Mennonite exiles in the camp hierarchy, especially during the first few months of camp life when these Mennonites had not yet established relationships and reputations with non-Mennonite *spetspereselentsy*. Unfortunately, the letters and biographies of Mennonite exiles do not indicate the extent

to which ethnic hostility was imported into the special settlements; they only hint that anti-German sentiment existed.⁷¹

An exile's relationship with criminal elements and organizations could also determine his or her place in the pecking order of the camp. One of the most notorious criminal organizations in the exile settlements was the *vory-v-zakone* (thieves-following-a-code-of-honour). Emerging in the 1920s, the *vory* operated like the mafia, controlling the lives of *spetspereselentsy* with its own set of rules and acts of criminality and terror. *Vory* members routinely extorted tribute—rations and money—from exiles, stole their food and personal possessions, beat up *spetspereselentsy* who refused to abide by *vory* rules and murdered those accused of helping camp authorities. In *vory*-infested camps the status of an exile was often determined by membership in or acquiescence to the criminal fraternity. While the extent to which Mennonite exiles participated in or were victims of such criminal organizations is not known, it is clear that the terror and brutality experienced by exiles was intensified in those camps where criminal societies were operating.⁷²

Reasons for Hope

Despite the desperate conditions in the Siberian special settlements, Mennonite exiles did have reasons to persevere and hope. For some, hope came in the form of food packages and letters containing money from friends and relatives at home or elsewhere in Europe or North America. These packages and letters quite literally made the difference between life and death for *spetspereselentsy* on the brink of starvation and despair. Mennonites banished to Siberia reported time and again that the packages and letters “saved their lives.”⁷³

This mail, however, did not come without a price. Camp officials regularly imposed hefty duties, as much as thirty rubles, on any letter or package addressed to *spetspereselentsy*, and exiles without enough money to pay such duties were denied access to their mail. Even those who did have the wherewithal to pay the duties often discovered that government censors and camp officials had pilfered most, if not all, of the food in the packages and money in the letters.⁷⁴

Theft of the food and money enclosed in the exiles' mail was routinely accompanied by government censorship and outright destruction of the correspondence itself. Although exiled Mennonites received most of their correspondence and packages in 1930, mail delivery became sporadic and sometimes nonexistent thereafter. Mennonites banished to camps near Tomsk complained that by 1931 most of their mail was never delivered to them. Fewer letters and packages

made their way to Mennonite exiles after Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in early 1933. Having declared the Nazi regime its mortal enemy, the Soviet government came to regard ethnic German exiles as potential Nazi sympathizers, and thereafter destroyed much of the correspondence written in German, regardless of whether it came from Europe or North America.⁷⁵

Mennonite exiles who received money from relatives and friends outside the camps sometimes discovered that they were not able to use the funds to buy food or other items that they desperately needed. At camps where exiles were given food rations instead of wages for their work, they were often prohibited from purchasing food or other commodities from local inhabitants or shops, and local peasants and store owners were strictly forbidden to sell anything to exiles living in the region. In letters to loved ones, Mennonites at camps in the vicinity of Monastyrka and Tomsk lamented that they were starving, but were not permitted to purchase anything from neighbouring villages.⁷⁶

Even in camps where Mennonites were allowed to purchase commodities, hunger and starvation were still part of day-to-day life, and desperate exiles begged for food whenever the opportunity arose. This was the experience of Mennonites in special settlements near Tomsk and Omsk who were repeatedly denied their daily rations for days or weeks at a time, and had to rely on the sympathy and charity of local inhabitants for any extra morsels of food. *Spetspereselentsy* could not panhandle whenever they wanted, however; they could only do so with the permission of the commandant, and then only on their days off. *Spetspereselentsy* usually faced the added challenge of having to walk a long distance, in some cases more than twenty kilometres in one direction, to the nearest village before they could begin asking for handouts.⁷⁷ These obstacles notwithstanding, some exiles tried to panhandle whenever possible. As one Mennonite at a camp near Tomsk wrote, "as long as the people continue to give to the beggars, they [the exiles] ... will live."⁷⁸

Key to helping many Mennonite exiles to persevere in such difficult circumstances was their religious faith. This is clearly evident in their letters which were infused with declarations of their trust in God, descriptions of their experiences as persecuted Christians and proclamations of their hope of everlasting life once their earthly tribulations were over. Opportunities for Mennonites to practice their faith varied considerably from camp to camp. In special settlements where the commandant did not strictly enforce rules prohibiting religious practices, Mennonites routinely held worship services and Bible studies in the barracks or nearby forests. At other camps, however, commandants enforced every regulation prohibiting religious observance. They required exiles to work on Sundays and religious holidays,

and punished *spetspereselentsy* for participating in private religious practices such as reading the Bible. But even in the most religiously oppressive camps, officials failed to stamp out religious observance entirely. At great personal risk, Mennonite exiles held secret religious services at night to worship God and maintain a thread of continuity with their past life.⁷⁹

Life in the special settlements compelled Mennonite exiles to take stock of their priorities in matters of faith. Years in exile forced them to evaluate their religious heritage, abandon those traditions and practices that were no longer relevant and hold tight to those that were essential. Without their religious leaders to guide them, Mennonite exiles assumed leadership roles in matters of faith; they also allowed Mennonite women to assume leadership positions, leading family devotions and informal religious services when Mennonite men were not present. Mennonites also began relying on believers from other Christian traditions for guidance, and sought spiritual consolation in non-Mennonite fellowships. Other Mennonite exiles could no longer see how religion was relevant to their lives, and abandoned the faith altogether. Their apostasy sometimes came at a great price, however, as non-believers were often shunned by believing friends and relatives.⁸⁰

The dream of returning home and being reunited with loved ones was another motivation for exiles to persevere and survive. For some, this dream became a reality much sooner than they expected. Camp officials infrequently released exiles *en masse*. Such was the experience of Mennonite exiles at a camp near Tiazhin who were loaded onto freight cars in the spring of 1930 and transported to the Narym region. Without notice, officials opened the doors of the rail cars, advised the *spetspereselentsy* that there was a shortage of food, and told them that they were free to go. The only condition that the guards stipulated for their release was that the *spetspereselentsy* had to leave the Tomsk region within two days. Those exiles with money immediately purchased train tickets to leave the region. Unfortunately, some of these exiles were arrested and transported to other camps after they failed to produce proper travelling papers to train officials. Many of those without money to travel home by train met an even more disastrous end. Because of food shortages in the area, over eighty of the exiles died in a ten day period as a result of starvation and disease.⁸¹

At other camps, authorities implemented more systematic guidelines to determine which exiles were to be released early. In many instances it was the elderly and the children who were the first to leave the settlements. In September of 1931, *spetspereselentsy* at a camp near Narym were told that adults over the age of sixty and children under the age of fourteen were free to return home. At another camp it was men over sixty, women over fifty, and children under sixteen

who were released. While some children and elderly exiles seized the opportunity to return home, many did not. Leaving the exile settlement often meant leaving close family members behind in the camp, and the majority of children and elderly people were not in a position to travel or support themselves without the help of family members. As a result, released Mennonites sometimes turned down the opportunity to leave the special settlements because they believed that life in the camps with those they loved was better than freedom without family.⁸²

Some exiles, deciding that waiting for a future release date was futile, took steps to actively resist the camp administration. Some *spetspereselentsy* participated in *vystuplenie* (incidents) and *bunty* (riots) against camp officials in an effort to improve work and living conditions. One of the most volatile riots was the Parbigskii uprising in the Narym region which began on July 29, 1931 and continued for almost a week. Between 1,500 and 2,000 *spetspereselentsy* took control of several camps after seizing axes, rifles and clubs, and launched an attack against the *komendatura* responsible for supervising approximately 33,000 exiles in the Narym region. The *OGPU* eventually captured the rebellious exiles, but not before seventy nine *spetspereselentsy* and four government officials were killed. Although the degree to which Mennonites were involved in such incidents and riots is not known, it is clear that Mennonite exiles would have been eyewitnesses to such events and suffered the resulting repercussions.⁸³

For other exiles, escape from the camps was the only reasonable option. Shortly after the first echelons of exiles began arriving at the camps in early 1930, exile escape became an increasing problem for the *OGPU*. In February 1931, the *OGPU* reported that almost 72,000 *spetspereselentsy* in the country (21,000 from Siberia alone) were at large. The number of escapes escalated in 1932-33 when famine conditions ravaged the country. The famine meant diminishing food rations for exiles and a surge in epidemics and mortality rates in the special settlements. Faced with the prospect of starvation, more than 207,000 *spetspereselentsy* took flight in 1932, and almost 216,000 escaped in 1933.⁸⁴

Mennonites who fled the camps did so in spite of numerous risks and dangers. The most obvious was that escapees who were caught were severely punished. Captured escapees were often incarcerated for days at a time in unheated holding cells without food, and subsequently sentenced to extended periods of hard labour. Some captured escapees were executed. Regardless of whether or not an escape was successful, the reality was that any attempted escape jeopardized the lives of relatives and friends left behind in the camps; they were assumed to have colluded with the escapee and were therefore punished for their supposed role in aiding the errant exile. The Siberian taiga also

posed a formidable danger for those on the run. Few could survive its harsh conditions without proper food and clothing, especially during the winter months. And finally there were the Ural Mountains, which seemed to be an insurmountable barrier to those who tried to cross them without the benefit of train tickets, travelling papers or money.⁸⁵

Despite these risks and dangers, many *spetspereselentsy* still saw escape as better than a life of forced labour, hunger and premature death. In planning their escape, exiles used a wide variety of strategies, some of which were more successful than others. Some strategies were simple: make a mad dash for the woods when the guards were distracted, or escape at night when there was less chance of being seen. Others were more ingenious when making their getaway. At one camp in Siberia, officials asked for volunteers to travel a hundred *versts* (107 kilometres) to a distant village to obtain goods and food supplies for the camp. The exiles who volunteered to make the trip were issued travel permits before they left for the village. Along the way, however, the exiles (whose ranks included several Mennonites) broke free from their guards. With their travel permits in hand and help from local inhabitants, they boarded a boat sailing for Omsk. Some were eventually able to make their way home.⁸⁶

Most *spetspereselentsy* who escaped from the camps found life on the run to be very difficult. Without maps, compasses, travel documents, food or adequate clothing, Mennonite fugitives wandered around in unfamiliar terrain for days or months at a time, often in knee-deep snow and sub-zero temperatures. Those who did not find food or shelter quickly succumbed to exposure and starvation. Miraculously, there were a few Mennonite escapees who managed to endure the trek through the Siberian hinterland and succeeded in returning to their home villages, some of which were as far away as Ukraine and the Crimea. A Mennonite who escaped from a camp in the vicinity of Tomsk survived the Soviet taiga, crossed the Ural Mountains and made his way home to Rudnerweide, Molochna, Ukraine. Another Mennonite in the Tomsk region was even more ambitious in his escape. After fleeing from his camp and travelling by wagon, train and ship to his home in Neukirch, Molochna, he left for the Amur region where he planned to cross the Soviet border into China and make his way to North America.⁸⁷

The good fortune of Mennonite fugitives who succeeded in returning to their home villages suddenly changed if they were recognized and recaptured by local authorities. In the majority of cases, the recaptured fugitives were imprisoned or sent back to the special settlements. This was the experience of one Mennonite exile who returned to his home village after he and some of his family members were given permission by camp officials to take some of his children to a physician in a

nearby Siberian village. Shortly after his arrival home, the fugitive was arrested and imprisoned in an Omsk jail. To avoid the possibility of detection, some Mennonite fugitives bypassed their home villages entirely and fled to more remote regions, such as Samara, Soviet Turkestan or China. Since the mail was censored, savvy escapees also avoided corresponding with family members at home. By taking these precautions, an escapee on the run could sometimes avoid recapture.⁸⁸

Reasons for Despair

While the possibility of life beyond the camps motivated some exiles, the daily camp realities of starvation, disease and death sapped others of their will to survive. Starvation and disease were ubiquitous in the special settlements between 1930 and 1934, but at certain times they were more pervasive. A terrible period of starvation ravaged the special settlements in the spring of 1930 when exiles were being deported to camps in large numbers but the government had not yet established the infrastructure to supply food and other necessities to the camps. By late spring the death toll was so high at some camps that government officials and the *OGPU* tried to reduce mortality rates by allowing old women and children under fourteen to return to their home villages.⁸⁹

The worst period of starvation was during the famine of 1932-33. Local *OGPU* officers had warned senior Moscow officials in late 1931 of impending famine conditions in the camps and the increasing number of deaths in the special settlements. Moscow officials, however, did little to ameliorate the emergency; for them, meeting government production quotas took precedence over the long-term fate of the *spetspereselentsy*. As a result of increasing nation-wide shortages, regional and local camp authorities had no alternative but to decrease exile food rations. Soon after these decisions were implemented, Mennonites at special settlements in Siberia reported that starvation was a leading cause of mortality in their camps.⁹⁰

Unsanitary conditions that contributed to the outbreak and spread of disease in the camps also took an enormous toll on camp populations. The lack of adequate food rations combined with extreme exhaustion made the exiles vulnerable to infection and illness, and the crowded barracks were the perfect incubators for fatal illnesses such as typhus, scurvy, grippe, tuberculosis, dysentery, scarlet fever and pneumonia. At a camp near Omsk, fifty people in the same barrack succumbed to typhus in late August of 1932. A severe outbreak of scurvy affected *spetspereselentsy* at a camp near Melkoye (southeast of Omsk) in mid-1932, and an epidemic at a camp near Narym resulted in the

deaths of one hundred people over a five-week period. In many cases, the corpses were left to rot in piles outside the camps or were hastily buried by surviving family members in shallow, unmarked graves in the Siberian taiga.⁹¹

With illness, starvation, and physical exhaustion taking its toll on camp populations, it did not take long for the exile settlements to teem with *spetspereselentsy* on the verge of death. In the early spring of 1930, a Mennonite reported that an average of three to five exiles died every day in his camp near Tomsk. As many as twelve children per day died at another camp near Tomsk. High death rates were also recorded at a camp near Tiashin where three hundred children (fifteen percent of the population) died within the first month of exile. Another Mennonite exile reported that approximately 3,000 of the 20,000 exiles in the local region had died prematurely.⁹² For a large number of exiles, death became the only escape from the camps.

Camp authorities had few means and little desire to help the *spetspereselentsy* who were starving, ill or injured. In some camps, the most seriously ill exiles were housed in a special infirmary barrack; only rarely was a sick exile transferred to a medical facility. Those few who were treated in hospitals reported that the facilities were overcrowded, understaffed and unsanitary. At other special settlements, the exiles were denied any medical attention whatsoever. Sometimes this was because the nearest physician was too far away from the camp to warrant transporting an exile such distances. Other camp officials adopted a policy that prohibited *spetspereselentsy* from receiving any medical attention regardless of how close a doctor or hospital was to the camp.⁹³

As the incidence of starvation, disease and death increased, problems of theft and physical violence became more commonplace in the camps. Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* routinely complained that the theft of food rations and personal property was endemic in the camps, especially during the 1932-33 famine. There were also rumours that exiles were committing extortion or murder for a few morsels of food. Some reportedly resorted to cannibalism to ease their hunger pangs. With so little food to feed their families, some *spetspereselentsy* participated in infanticide and euthanasia to end the suffering of loved ones; others committed suicide to end their own tribulations. The extent to which Mennonite exiles in Siberia participated in such activities is unclear, but at the very least Mennonite exiles must have witnessed such activities.⁹⁴

The Soviet government refused to admit any responsibility for the situation, and blamed the *spetspereselentsy* for the desperate conditions in the camps. Government spokesmen and OGPU officials routinely accused the exiles of trying to create a mass famine in the special settlements in order to ignite a counterrevolution and

overthrow the Soviet leadership. While the *spetspereselentsy* were convenient scapegoats for the catastrophe erupting in the camps, they continued to die in startling numbers. Between January 1932 and December 1934, the population of the country's special settlements declined from 1,317,022 to 1,072,546 exiles, even though large numbers of new kulaks were added to the exile population each year (71,236 in 1932 and 268,091 in 1933).⁹⁵ The drastic decline in the number of *spetspereselentsy* was primarily due to premature death and escape. The conditions in the camps only began to improve in late 1933 after the government finally restored the food ration allotments for exiles to their pre-1933 levels. By this time, however, thousands of Mennonites had already died in the Siberian special settlements.

Some Final Observations

Although the Soviet government's treatment of kulaks in the early 1930s resulted in the destruction of millions of innocent lives and arguably constituted a crime against humanity, Soviet leaders never faced international judicial prosecution for their criminal actions.⁹⁶ With the international community preoccupied with the Great Depression and reluctant to intervene in Soviet domestic matters, the Stalinist regime could implement systematic and destructive policies that not only sought to eliminate the kulak as a social class, but also resulted in a colossal waste of money, resources and human lives. Between 1930 and 1932, the government obtained an average of less than 570 rubles from the property expropriated from each dekulakized household; during the same period, the government spent about a thousand rubles for every kulak household that it exiled and incarcerated in the camps. As the historian Lynne Viola explains, "The economic situation hardly improved over time, clearly demonstrating the folly and wastefulness of forced labor and the unimaginable costs, financial and human, of the attempt to settle remote northern territories where the environment simply could not sustain such populations. The result would be a continual restocking of the special settlements with new waves of enemies. ..."⁹⁷

Soviet Mennonites were some of the first exiles to populate the Siberian special settlements in the early 1930s, and the Soviet regime's dekulakization and exile campaign had profound consequences for both the Mennonite communities and their exiles. For Mennonite communities, the government's all-out attack against kulaks and its violent arrest and exile of Mennonite families incited widespread terror and panic in the Mennonite communities. No one could predict what the government would do next, whose name would appear on

future kulak lists or when the *OGPU* and local officials would organize another echelon of kulaks for deportation. The chaos and fear that now overwhelmed the Mennonite settlements certainly served the government's purposes: it destabilized the Mennonite villages and created an atmosphere of distrust, panic and confusion that eventually drove the vast majority of the poorest Mennonite families onto collective farms.

The deportation of Mennonite religious leaders and wealthier peasants also resulted in the decapitation of the Mennonite leadership cadre in many settlements. From the perspective of local officials, the eradication of the Mennonite leadership was necessary for several reasons. First, it removed the most strident and influential opposition to collectivization, making it easier to convince poor Mennonite families to join local collectives. Second, it demonstrated to ordinary Mennonite peasants that Soviet authority, not the Mennonite leadership, now controlled the political and social agenda of the Mennonite communities. Third, it initiated the process of supplanting Mennonite institutions with Soviet institutions. For Mennonites the removal of their leaders was a serious blow to the political and religious cohesiveness of their communities. With their leaders gone, Mennonite peasants were extremely vulnerable to the enormous pressure to support the conversion of their settlements into Soviet collectives.

The Soviet government's efforts to socialize Mennonite communities included co-opting Mennonite officials to help administer the exile process. By acting as agents of the state, these Mennonites became the solvent that dissolved many of the religious, economic, political and social ties that had traditionally united Mennonite communities. These Mennonite officials helped to identify Mennonite kulaks in their villages, confiscate Mennonite property, expel Mennonites from their homes and assist in their arrest and incarceration. Some Mennonite officials even signed the orders that authorized the exile of fellow Mennonites. In participating in this process, these Mennonite officials undermined the traditional authority of Mennonite institutions and leaders, while at the same time legitimizing the state-sponsored violence directed against Mennonite enemies of the state. Mennonite participation in the administration of the dekulakization and exile process also sent another message to the Mennonite settlements: those who worked for the regime not only received government wages and benefits, but were also less likely to be dekulakized. This message proved convincing as an increasing number of Mennonites joined local soviets, government agencies and Communist Party cells after early 1930.

The government's brutal deportation campaign was also an important catalyst in transforming traditional agricultural practices, economic structures and social hierarchies in Mennonite settlements. The sight of cattle and freight cars, sleds and barges transporting

kulak families to special settlements compelled most of the remaining Mennonite peasants to abandon Mennonite agricultural and economic practices, and to sign on as members of local collective farms. The exile campaigns also signalled the destruction of existing social hierarchies in the Mennonite communities and the introduction of new ones. Membership in a collective farm, government agency or Communist Party cell rather than the size of landholdings and livestock herds now determined a person's place in the pecking order of the Soviet countryside. Finally, the deportations left deep emotional and psychological wounds for those who witnessed the exile of family members, neighbours and church leaders. Those individuals left behind in the villages faced the challenge of an uncertain future without the help of their deported loved ones, a particularly grim task for widows, single women and orphaned children who were especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

In the end, the deportations accelerated the transformation of Mennonite communities into Soviet collective farms. The exile process helped to erode the ethnic identity of Mennonites, dissolve the cohesiveness of their communities and initiate the integration of these communities into the larger Soviet peasantry.

What impact did the exile process have on those Mennonites who were deported? For many Mennonite kulaks, exile was a family affair. The Soviet regime viewed "kulakness" as a hereditary disease that was passed on from one generation to the next; thus, it was not only kulak parents but also their children who had to be deported. In this respect, the government's treatment of kulaks was often worse than its treatment of the country's most serious criminals. The inclusion of women and children in the process also proved to be an effective means for compelling male kulaks to be more compliant to *OGPU* demands in order to minimize the suffering and hardship of family members.

The exile process also permanently separated Mennonite kulaks from their extended families and communities. The identification of these Mennonites as kulaks, their disenfranchisement, loss of property, arrest and incarceration were necessary to brand these Mennonites as enemies of the state. As such, Soviet policy dictated that they had to be relocated to remote regions of the country like Siberia to prevent them from further contaminating their home villages. The deportation process had a profound psychological and emotional impact on Mennonite kulaks; they were now isolated from their communities, stripped of their communal identity and support systems and branded as social outcasts—all important factors that aided in the re-forging of these kulaks into compliant labourers. This experience must have been all the more disheartening and painful for those Mennonite kulaks

who knew that the decision to exile them had been made by fellow Mennonites working for the Soviet state.

The exile process also culled the most vulnerable of the deported Mennonites. The inhuman conditions on the vehicles and vessels that transported them into exile and the death marches into the Siberian hinterland ensured that many infant children and most handicapped, elderly and ill individuals never reached the camps. The high mortality rate among vulnerable exiles early on in the exile process proved beneficial to the government for a number of reasons: it ensured that the government did not have to feed or care for the most vulnerable and least productive exiles for very long; it ensured that the only the strongest *spetspereselentsy* arrived at the camps; and finally, it helped to wear down the exiles' will to resist.

But it was not only the vulnerable exiles who were culled from the ranks of the deportees. The paltry food rations, inadequate housing facilities, minimal medical attention and harsh working conditions at the special settlements ensured that life for even the strongest of exiles was nasty, brutish and short. In this respect, the culling of exiles was not confined to the transport of kulaks to the camps, but continued throughout their time in the camps in the early 1930s. In the end the Soviet government's process of re-forging the country's kulaks proved to be so brutal that it led to the premature deaths of thousands of Mennonite kulaks and the destruction of their families. Authorities could have prevented these premature deaths by providing adequate transportation, food, shelter and medical attention to those toiling in the special settlements. Their deliberate refusal to do so constituted nothing less than premeditated, state-sponsored murder.

Survival was the primary focus for Mennonites who lived at the camps for any length of time. Surviving the hostile environment of a Siberian labour camp was no easy task, and only those Mennonites who adapted to the harsh realities of camp life quickly had any hope of staying alive. Adapting meant learning the rules of camp life as quickly as possible and finding a place within the camp hierarchy; it also meant learning to trust and depend on fellow exiles, regardless of their religious or ethnic backgrounds, in the struggle to live another day. It did not take long before Mennonite and non-Mennonite exiles cooked, ate, worked and worshipped together; in some cases they lived together, started new families together, and shared their last days on earth with each other.

Survival and adapting to camp life also meant having to deal with the daily violence that plagued the camps. The most destructive source of this violence was the Soviet regime, the *OGPU*, the camp commandants and the guards; the regime's vindictive policies, coupled with the often callous and sadistic treatment meted out by camp

officials constituted government-sanctioned violence against its own citizens. Fellow exiles, especially in *vory*-dominated camps, proved to be another source of camp violence. In the cruel world of the special settlements, exiles quickly resorted to extortion, theft and murder in order to stay alive. Such conditions made it very difficult for Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* who tried to live as pacifists; their beliefs were tested on a daily basis, and their refusal to participate in violence made them easy targets for abuse and exploitation. Some Mennonites found it necessary to abandon their pacifist and religious beliefs in order to survive, and likely perpetrated acts of violence against fellow exiles in an effort to stay alive. It is also conceivable that some Mennonite exiles participated in abortion, infanticide, mercy killing and cannibalism. Life in the camps forced these Mennonites to become violent, desperate individuals who lived by a new set of rules.

While the camps succeeded in re-forging thousands of Mennonite kulaks into expendable, Soviet slave labourers, not all Mennonite exiles were content to be passive victims of this process; many found ways to resist the camp authorities. One form of resistance was writing letters to relatives or friends to describe the conditions in the camps. The practice of religious faith, even in its simplest expression, was both a coping mechanism and a form of passive resistance to the camp hierarchy. Finally, those Mennonites who took part in riots or escaped from the camps engaged in forms of active resistance against the Soviet state.

And what happened to those Mennonite *spetspereselentsy* who survived their term in exile? It depended on when a kulak completed his or her term of exile and whether or not government officials were convinced that the kulak had been re-forged into an “exemplary, rehabilitated worker.” Until January 25, 1935, Soviet law only permitted exemplary, rehabilitated kulaks who had shown themselves to be “honourable” labourers to return to their home villages after completing their term in exile. Those who met these qualifications still had to deal with the irreversible consequences of years in the camps: permanent injuries, poor health, fractured families and deep psychological scars. These *spetspereselentsy* also had to endure the stigma that came with having been exiled kulaks. This “kulak stigma” followed these exiles for years, making it difficult for them to enter collectives, acquire housing, find employment, advance in their occupation, obtain higher education or apply for government programs and benefits. In some cases, the stigma of having been a kulak made it impossible for Mennonite exiles to remain in their home village, forcing them to move to other regions of the country to start a new life.

The time came, however, when even exemplary, rehabilitated workers were not always permitted to return home after their term of exile was over. The Soviet regime enacted a series of laws between

1932 and 1935 that made it increasingly difficult for rehabilitated *spetspereselentsy* to return to their villages, effectively removing their main incentive to toil in such difficult conditions. On January 25, 1935, the Central Executive Committee enacted an amendment to existing legislation that categorically prohibited all *spetspereselentsy* from leaving their place of exile; those who tried to leave were charged under Article 82 of the penal code, a provision that dictated up to three years in prison for anyone who left a place of incarceration.⁹⁸ These new penal restrictions tied the rehabilitated Mennonite exiles to the Siberian soil surrounding the special settlements, essentially re-forging them into Soviet serfs who had no alternative but to continue providing labour service to the Stalinist regime.

Notes

- ¹ This paper was first presented at the “Germans of Siberia: History & Culture” Conference in Omsk, Russia in June, 2010. The author thanks Lynette Toews-Neufeldt, Wesley Berg, and the *JMS* reviewer for their comments and suggestions in preparing this article.
- ² Derzhavnyi arkhiv Zaporizkoi oblasti (hereafter “DaZo”), Fond 235, Opis 5, Sviazka 76 (hereafter DaZo: 235/5/76). At the February 22, 1930 meeting, the Osterwick village soviet decided that the following Mennonites should be exiled out of Ukraine: Heinrich B. Rempel (Osterwick), Johann I. Klassen (Osterwick), A. A. Funk (Osterwick), Jakob G. Wölk (Osterwick), Isaak A. Klassen (Osterwick), Peter P. Zacharias (Kronsthal), Abram H. Siemens (Kronsthal), Abram A. Petkau (Kronsthal), Isaak E. Bergen (Kronsthal) and Gerhard P. Dück (Kronsthal). Johann I. Klassen (Osterwick) was initially sentenced to death, but this was commuted, and instead Klassen and his family were ordered to be exiled to Siberia. The Osterwick village soviet also determined that the following Mennonites should have their property confiscated: Gerhard P. Harms (Osterwick), Abram P. Harms (Osterwick), Peter J. Wiens (Kronsthal), Franz P. Jansen (Kronsthal), Gerhard J. Sawatzky (Kronsthal), David J. Klassen (Kronsthal) and Heinrich D. Hildebrand (Kronsthal).
- ³ *OGPU* is the acronym for *Ob”edinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie* (Unified State Political Administration) and it served as the secret police from 1923-34.
- ⁴ *GUITLTP* (*Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel’no-trudovykh lagerei i trudovykh poselenii* or Main Administration of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Settlements) was the prison agency for the *OGPU* from 1930-34. In 1934 the Soviet government created the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs-USSR (*NKVD-USSR*) which took control of *GUITLTP*. In 1936 the *NKVD-USSR* renamed *GUITLTP* as *GULAG* (*Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei* or Main Administration of Camps). *GULAG* served as the prison agency for the *NKVD-USSR* from 1936-46, and for the Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1947-56. Michael Jacobsen, *Origins of the Gulag: The Soviet Prison Camp System, 1917-1934* (Lexington KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 146-48.
- ⁵ V.P. Popov, “Gosudarstvennyi terror v Sovetskoi Rossii. 1923-1953gg,” *Otechestvennye arkhivy* 2 (1992): 20-31; Lynne Viola, *The Unknown Gulag* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 102; Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Picador, 2007), 101, 193-207; Cynthia

A. Ruder, *Making History for Stalin: The Story of the Belomor Canal* (Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), 209-10. In their letters and diaries, Soviet Mennonites often referred to those sent to the labour camps as “*Verbannter*” (exiles), “*Ausgesiedelt*” (evacuated ones), or “*Aussiedler*” (evacuees).

- 6 Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russian and Ukrainian scholars have published an impressive number of primary source documents from former Soviet archives and libraries. Some of the most important collections of archival records focusing on the creation and administration of special settlements in the early 1930s include the following: I. N. Afanas'ev, V. P. Kozlov et al., eds., *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga: konets 1920-kh-pervaiapolovina 1950-kh godov: sobranie dokumentov v semi tomakh*. 5 vols. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2004-2005); V. P. Danilov, R.T. Manning, L. Viola et al., eds., *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni: Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie: Dokumenty i materialy, 1927-1939*. 5 vols. (Moscow: Rosspen, 1999-2006); V. P. Danilov and S. Krasil'nikov eds., *Spetspereselentsy v Zapadnoi Sibiri 1933-1938*. (Novosibirsk: EKOR, 1994); A. Kokurin and N. V. Petrov eds., *GULAG (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei), 1917-1960* (Moscow: Izd-vo “Materik”, 2002); A. Kokurin and I. N. Morukov, eds., *Stalinskie stroiki GULaga: 1930-1953* (Moscow: Izd-vo “Materik”, 2005); A. Berelowitch and V. A. Danilov, eds., *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD, 1918-1939: Dokumenty i materialy*. 4 vols. (Moscow: Rosspen, 2003); S.S. Vilenskii, A. Kokurin et al., eds., *Deti GULAGA 1918-1956* (Moscow: Izd-vo “Materik”, 2002). Some collections that have been translated into English include the following: Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Cathy A. Frierson and Semyon S. Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

Greater access to records in former Soviet archives and libraries has also enabled western scholars to publish interpretive accounts of life in the exile settlements. The most important of these include Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, Jacobsen *Origins of the Gulag*, and Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).

Collections of letters and diaries form the bulk of published accounts of the Mennonite experience in Soviet labour camps in the early 1930s. The largest collections of Mennonite letters from the labour camps are found in the following periodicals: *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* (hereafter *MR*), Winnipeg MB; *Der Bote* (hereafter *DB*), Winnipeg MB; and *Zionsbote* (hereafter *ZB*), Hillsboro KS. While these letters provide a wealth of information, it is clear that many of them were edited before they were published in *MR*, *DB*, and *ZB*. This raises questions concerning what information was removed from the letters before they were printed and what happened to the original letters.

Another important source of Mennonite letters from the special settlements is Anne and Peter Barga's, *From Russia with Tears: Letters from Home and Exile (1930-1938)* (Winfield, BC: Anne and Peter Barga, 1991). The letters in this collection were from non-Siberian camps located west of the Ural Mountains, many of which were in the Perm region. Ruth Derksen Siemens republished many of the Barga translations of these letters in her book *Remember Us: Letters from Stalin's Gulag (1930-37) Volume One: The Regehr Family* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2007).

Some important Mennonite diaries and biographical accounts of the exile experience in the early 1930s include: A. A. Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 2 vols. (Winnipeg MB and Clearbrook BC: 1949, 1954); Susanna Toews, *Trek to Freedom*, trans. H. Megli (Winkler, MB: Heritage Valley Publications, 1976). A fascinating description of life in the Vologda and Arkhangel'sk labour camps is Jakob Martens, *So Wie Es War* (Winnipeg MB: John Froese and Gerhard Martens, 1963). Valuable memoirs dealing with Mennonite exile life in the late 1930s include: John B. Toews, ed. and trans., *Journeys: Mennonite Stories of Faith and*

Survival in Stalin's Russia (Winnipeg MB: Kindred Productions, 1998); Aron P. Toews, *Siberian Diary of Aron P. Toews with a Biography by Olga Rempel*, trans. Esther Klaassen Bergen, ed. Lawrence Klippenstein (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1984).

Mennonites who emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany in the past thirty years have also written their accounts of exile life in various journals, including *Aquila* which is published by the Hilfskomitee Aquila. Many of these accounts focus on the religious persecution of Soviet Mennonites and Baptists, and are, in many respects, *martyrologies*.

Unfortunately, few historians have endeavoured to provide a comprehensive interpretative analysis of these primary source accounts of the Soviet Mennonite labour camp experience in the early 1930s. John B. Toews provides some insights in *Czars, Soviets & Mennonites* (Newton KS: Faith and Life Press, 1982). My earlier attempts to explain this experience can be found in the following works: Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Fate of Mennonites in Soviet Ukraine and the Crimea During the Soviet Collectivization and the Famine (1928-1933)," 2 vols. (Edmonton: 1989); Colin P. Neufeldt, *The Fate of Mennonites in Ukraine and the Crimea during Soviet Collectivization and the Famine (1930-1933)*, Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1999); Colin P. Neufeldt, "Through the Fires of Hell: The Dekulakization and Collectivization of the Soviet Mennonite Community (1928-1933)," *The Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998): 9-32.

- ⁷ I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*. 13 vols. (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1946-1951), 12:167.
- ⁸ For accounts of dekulakization measures in Mennonite communities in Ukraine, Crimea, the Caucasus, the Urals, Neu-Samara, Siberia, and other Mennonite-populated regions in the USSR in 1928-29, see *MR*, 18 April 1928, 11; *MR*, 18 September 1929, 12; *MR*, 9 October 1929, 12-13; *MR*, 11 December 1929, 6; *MR*, 18 December 1929, 13-14; *DB*, 25 January 1928, 3; *DB*, 11 April 1928, 3; *DB*, 2 May 1928, 3; *DB*, 9 May 1928, 3; *DB*, 30 May 1928, 3; *DB*, 19 September 1928, 3; *DB*, 4 October 1928, 3; *DB*, 29 November 1928, 3; *DB*, 31 July 1929, 3; *DB*, 18 September 1929, 4f; *DB*, 23 October 1929, 4; *DB*, 30 October 1929, 4; *DB*, 13 November 1929, 4; *DB*, 20 November 1929, 4; *DB*, 27 November 1929, 4; John B. Toews, ed. and trans., *Letters from Susan: A Woman's View of the Russian Mennonite Experience (1928-1941)* (North Newton KS: Bethel College, 1988), 38, 58; A.I. Savin, ed., *Etnokonfessiia v Sovetskom Gosudarstve. Mennonity Sibiri v 1920-1930: Emigratsiia i repressiia. Dokumenty i materialy* (Novosibirsk: POSOKh, 2009); Colin P. Neufeldt, *The Fate of Soviet Mennonites in Ukraine and the Crimea, 1928-1929*, M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1989.
- ⁹ Lynne Viola, V. P. Danilov, N. A. Ivnitskii and Denis Kozlov, eds., *The War Against the Peasantry, 1927-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 207-9, 228-30; V. Vasyľev and L. Viola, eds., *Kollektivizatsiia i krest'ianskoe soprotivlenie na Ukraine: noiabr' 1929-mart 1930 g.g.* (Vinnytsia: Lohos, 1997) 147-51; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 54; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 22-23.
- ¹⁰ *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni*, 2:103-4; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 24-25.
- ¹¹ Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, 23-24. In June, 1929 the Politburo accepted the plan to create a vast system of corrective labour camps for the purpose of colonizing the remote regions of the country and exploiting their natural resources through prisoner labour. *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:61-63.
- ¹² *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 1:94-104. The OGPU Decree also stipulated that exile operations in the North Caucasus and Volga regions were to begin on February 10, 1930; deportations in Ukraine and the Central Black Earth areas were to commence on February 15.

- ¹³ In the early 1920s, the prison agency of the Commissariat of Justice-RSFSR was *TSITO* (*Tsentral'nyi ispravitel'no-trudovoi otdel* or Central Corrective Labour Department) and it operated until 1922. After 1922 the Commissariat of Justice-RSFSR did not manage any prisons until 1930 when it was given jurisdiction over *GUMZ* (*Glavnoe upravlenie mest zakliucheniiia* or Main Administration Places of Confinement). *GUMZ* operated until 1931 when it was succeeded by *GUITU* (*Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh uchrezhdenii* or Main Administration of Corrective Labour Institutions). The Commissariat of Justice-RSFSR operated *GUITU* until it was disbanded in 1934. The *NKVD*-RSFSR administered two prison agencies in the 1920s and 1930s. One agency was *GUPR* (*Glavnoe upravlenie prinuditel'nykh rabot* or Main Administration of Forced Labour) which operated between 1920 and 1922. The other was *GUMZ* which was managed by the *NKVD*-RSFSR between 1922 and 1930. When the Soviet government disbanded the *NKVD*-RSFSR in 1930, the Commissariat of Justice-RSFSR assumed jurisdiction over *GUMZ*. The *OGPU* operated three prison agencies in the 1920s and early 1930s. One agency was *Komendatura* which operated until 1921, the second agency was *Spetsotdel* (Special Department) which existed between 1921 and 1930, and the third agency was *GUITLTP* which the *OGPU* operated from 1930 to 1934. The *NKVD*-USSR assumed control of *GUITLTP* in 1934. *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:61-63; 2:61-76; Jacobsen, *Origins of the Gulag*, 146ff; David R. Shearer, "Social Disorder, Mass Repression, and the *NKVD* during the 1930s," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 42, nos. 2, 3 an 4 (April-December 2001): 505-8.
- ¹⁴ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:61-63; Jacobsen, *Origins of the Gulag*, 1-3, 70-72, 119-20; Applebaum, *Gulag*, 48-50; Klevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, 9, 17; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 59, 128.
- ¹⁵ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:101-2; *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni*, 2:333, 354-55, 377-78, 380-82, 432-34, 449, 466-67; Lynne Viola, "The Other Archipelago: Kulak Deportations to the North in 1930," *Slavic Review* 60, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 730-32.
- ¹⁶ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:103-7; *GULAG (Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei)*, 1917-1960, 65-67; Lynne Viola, "The Aesthetic of Stalinist Planning and the World of the Special Village," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 4, no. 1 (2003): 101-2. See also *Stalinskie stroiki GULaga: 1930-1953*, 65-67.
- ¹⁷ *Sovetskaia derevnia glazami VChK-OGPU-NKVD, 1918-1939*, 3:312-14, 327-29, 484; *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 1:105-6, 115-16, 124, 127; 5:107-24, 136-40; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 151-52, 196; R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger, Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 47.
- ¹⁸ For the Soviet Mennonite experience of dekulakization and collectivization in Ukraine and the Crimea, see Neufeldt, *The Fate of Mennonites (1930-1933)*.
- ¹⁹ DaZo: PR 7/1/72; PR 7/1/101b; PR 7/1/118; PR 7/1/115; PR 7/1/117; PR 7/1/119; PR 7/1/120; PR 7/1/120a; PR 7/1/129; PR 7/1/131; PR 7/1/136; PR 7/1/140; 235/3/28; 235/1/811; 235/3/47; 235/5/79; 1/2/49; 1/2/307; 1/2/348; Colin P. Neufeldt, "Separating the Sheep from the Goats: The Role of Mennonites and Non-Mennonites in the Dekulakization of Khortitsa, Ukraine (1928-1930)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 83 (April 2009): 231-33.
- ²⁰ John B. Toews, ed., *The Mennonites in Russia from 1917 to 1930: Selected Documents* (Winnipeg MB: Christian Press, 1975), 117-22; John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: the Story of Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia* (Scottsdale PA: Herald Press, 1967), 77; Terry Martin, "The Russian Mennonite Encounter with the Soviet State, 1917-1955," *Conrad Grebel Review* 20 (Winter 2002): 21.
- ²¹ DaZo: 9/879/41; 235/3/40; 235/1/756; 235/3/23; John B. Toews, "Early Communism and Russian Mennonite Peoplehood" in *Mennonites in Russia, 1788-1988: Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*, ed. John Friesen (Winnipeg MB: CMBC Publications, 1989), 275-85; Neufeldt, "Separating the Sheep from the Goats," 287-89.

- ²² C. C. Peters, ed., *Vor den Toren Moskaus: oder Gottes Gnaedige Durchhilfe in Einer Schweren Zeit* (Yarrow BC: Columbia Press, 1960); A. I. Savin, "Emigratsiia mennonitov 1929 goda SSSR v svete dokumentov Arkhiva vneshnei politiki RF," *Nemtsy Sibiri: Istoriia i kul'tura* (Omsk: Omskiĭ gos. pedagogicheskiĭ universitet, 2010), 312-22; *Etnokonfessiiia v Sovetskom Gosudarstve*, 247-49; Harvey L. Dyck, "Collectivization, Depression and Immigration, 1929-1930," in *Empire and Nations: Essays in Honour of Frederic H. Soward*, eds. Harvey L. Dyck and H. Peter Krosby (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 158-59; P.P. Vibe, *Nemetskie kolonii v Sibiri: sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii aspekt* (Omsk: Omskiĭ gos. pedagogicheskiĭ universitet, 2007), 229-31; Erwin Warkentin, "The Mennonites before Moscow: The Notes of Dr. Otto Auhagen," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 26 (2008): 212-14; Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Flight to Moscow, 1929: An Act of Mennonite Civil Disobedience," *Preservings* 19 (December 2001): 35-37. Of the 13,000 or so German-speaking refugees in Moscow in November of 1929, there were ninety five Baptists and Evangelicals, 743 Catholics, 2,481 Lutherans, and more than nine thousand Mennonites.
- ²³ *MR*, 18 December 1929, 1, 11; *MR*, 4 December 1929, 6; *DB*, 29 January 1930, 4; *MR* 29 January 1930, 7; *DB*, 12 February 1930, 4. There are striking similarities between the experience of the Mennonite refugees in Moscow in late 1929, and the exile and resettlement of kulaks in the USSR in early 1930. Their experience foreshadowed the plight of millions of Soviet kulak families in the years that followed, and raises the question as to whether the Mennonite flight to Moscow was the catalyst for Stalin's call to "liquidate the kulak" in December 1929.
- ²⁴ For data concerning Soviet Mennonite populations in the late 1920s, see Adolf Ehrht, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: 1932), 152-54; Peter Braun, "Einige Zurechtstellungen zu Dr. A. Ehrts 'Das Mennonitentum in Russland'," *Mennonitische Blätter* (May 1932): 53-55; Cornelius Krahn and Walter W. Sawatsky, "Russia." *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. 1990, accessed 09 August 2010, <http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/R87.html>.
- ²⁵ The control figures of kulak households to be exiled from regions in Ukraine with large Mennonite populations were as follows: 472 kulak households (2,360 people) from the Zaporizhia region; 1,147 kulak households (5,735 people) from the Kryvyi Rih region; 701 kulak households (3,505 people) from the Dnipropetrovsk region; 891 kulak households (4,455 people) from the Melitopol' region; 982 kulak households (4,910 people) from the Mykolayiv region; and 1,136 kulak households (5,680 people) from the Kherson region. The control figure of kulak households to be exiled from Ukraine was 11,930 (59,550 people). Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv hromadskyx obednan Ukrainy. Kyiv (hereafter "TsDAHOU"), Fond 1, Opis 20, ch. II, Sviazka 3142 (hereafter "TsDAHOU: 1/20/II/3142"); 1/20/II/3744; 1/20/II/3192; 1/20/II/3190; 1/20/II/3153.
- ²⁶ *MR*, 10 December 1930, 6; *DB*, 29 July 1931, 4; *DaZo*: 235/3/48; *DB*, 20 May 1931, 5; *DB*, 10 June 1931, 4; B. H. Unruh, "Bericht XXV," Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies (CMBS), Winnipeg MB, 29 April 1931, 1-3; Neufeldt, *The Fate of Mennonites (1930-1933)*, 68-70.
- ²⁷ Colin P. Neufeldt, "The Zbornyis of Khortytsia, Ukraine: The Last Stop for Some Kulaks Enroute to Stalin's Special Settlements," in *Confronting the Past. Ukraine and its History, 882-2009. A Festschrift in Honour of John-Paul Himka on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday*, eds. Andrew Gow, Roman Senkus and Serhy Yekelchuk, *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* (forthcoming).
- ²⁸ *DaZo*: 235/5/72, 235/5/71; *DB*, 7 May 1930, 4; *DB*, 14 May 1930, 4; *DB*, 5 August 1931, 4; *MR*, 2 July 1930, 8f; *MR*, 23 September 1931, 6f; *MR*, 6 September 1931, 6f; *MR*, 8 April 1931, 7.
- ²⁹ *Kollektivizatsiia i krest'ianskoe soprotivlenie na Ukraine*, 171-73; *MR*, 7 May 1930, 7. For accounts of Mennonite families who were exiled in 1929, see *MR*,

- 26 June 1929, 12; DB, 25 September, 1929, 4; Neufeldt, "The Fate of Mennonites (1928-1933)," 1:78-79.
- ³⁰ DB, 9 April 1930, 4; DB, 30 April 1930, 4f; MR, 30 April 1930, 8-9; MR, 7 May 1930, 7; MR, 28 May 1930, 8-9; DB, 23 April 1930, 4; DB, 7 May 1930, 4; DB, 14 May 1930, 4; MR, 2 July 1930, 8; Neufeldt, *The Fate of Mennonites (1930-1933)*, 82-84. See also Heinrich Görz, *Die Molotschnaer Ansiedlung* (Steinbach MB: Echo-Verlag, 1954), 6; Jacob A. Neufeld, *Tiefenwege* (Virgil ON: Niagara Press, 1954), 43; DB, 29 April 1931, 4; MR, 12 August 1931, 4; MR, 6 September 1931, 6; DB, 1 July 1931, 4; MR, 23 September 1931, 6.
- ³¹ *Kollektivizatsiia i krest'ianskoe soprotivlenie na Ukraine*, 202; DB, 30 April 1930, 4; DB, 7 May 1930, 4; MR, 7 May 1930, 7; DB, 11 June 1930, 3; MR, 11 June 1930, 7; MR, 18 June 1930, 8; MR, 10 September 1930, 6; MR, 17 September 1930, 12; DB, 29 April 1931, 4; DB, 5 August 1931, 4; Unruh, "Bericht XXIV," 18 June 1931, 6; Klassen, "My Siberian Exile and Escape," Winnipeg MB, 1; Toews, *Trek to Freedom*, 15. According to a secret operational department of the OGPU, 12,539 kulak families (57,720 people) were evacuated from Ukraine between February 18 and March 12, 1930; other data indicates that 12,673 families (58,411 people) were evacuated from the republic during this period. *Kollektivizatsiia i krest'ianskoe soprotivlenie na Ukraine*, 211; Viola, "The Aesthetic of Stalinist Planning," 114.
- ³² DaZo: 235/5/76; 1429/1/44; ZB, 23 April 1930, 11f; DB, 26 March 1930, 4; MR, 9 April 1930, 6; DB, 23 April 1930, 4; DB, 30 April 1930, 4; MR, 30 April 1930, 8; DB, 7 May 1930, 4; DB, 21 May 1930, 4; DB, 28 May 1930, 3; MR, 28 May 1930, 8; MR, 4 June 1930, 6; ZB, 18 June 1930, 1; ZB, 25 June 1930, 1; DB, 27 August 1930, 3; MR, 3 September 1930, 3; MR, 1 October 1930, 10; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:49, 60, 43, 49, 62, 77, 95, 106, 167, 149, 167, 230, 236, 274, 276, 347; 2:103, 140-41, 158, 197, 204, 205, 302-4; Martens, *So Wie Es War*, 23-25; Unruh, "Bericht XX," 20 November 1930, 4-6; Borgen, *From Russia with Tears*, 143-45, 187-89, 198-200, 454-56, 476-78, 488-90; Peter Letkemann, "The Fate of Mennonites in the Volga-Ural Region, 1929-1941," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 26 (2008): 186-88; Neufeldt, "Through the Fires of Hell," 18-20.
- ³³ *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni*, 2:421, 747-48; *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:117-18, 121-22, 136-40, 151-55; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 26-27, 196. Siberia was divided into two regions: Western Siberia and Eastern Siberia. Western Siberia included the following nine regions: Omskii, Novosibirskii, Slavgorodskii, Tarskii, Barabinskii, Kamenskii Rubtsovskii, Biiskii and Barnaulskii. Eastern Siberia included two autonomous republics (Tannu-Turva and Buriat-Mongolia), an autonomous region (Oiroitiia), and the following ten regions: Tomskii, Krasnoiariskii, Kuznetskii, Khakassii, Achinskii, Minuskinskii, Kanskii, Tulunskii, Irkutskii and Kirenskii.
- ³⁴ DB, 30 April 1930, 4; DB, 7 May 1930, 4; MR, 17 September 1930, 12; MR, 3 June 1931, 7; MR, 12 August 1931, 4; MR, 6 September 1931, 6; Unruh, "Bericht XI," 7 April 1930, 5; MR, 2 March 1932, 7, 11.
- ³⁵ DB, 11 June 1930, 3; MR, 2 September 1931, 6; MR, 11 June 1930, 3, 7; MR, 6 August 1930, 11; MR, 28 May 1930, 8; DB, 11 June 1930, 3; MR, 3 June 1931, 7; DB, 16 September 1931, 4; DB, 28 October 1931, 3; MR, 12 August 1931, 4; Abram Kroeker, *My Flight from Russia* (Scottsdale PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1932), 77-78; Neufeld, *Tiefenwege*, 43.
- ³⁶ Otto Auhagen, *Die Schicksalswende des Russlanddeutschen Bauerntums in den Jahren 1927-1930* (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1942), 51, 55, 126, 140, 151. For other accounts of Mennonites who were exiled by sled, see MR, 14 May 1930, 9; MR, 18 June 1930, 8; DB, 1 November 1933, 3-4.
- ³⁷ Auhagen, *Die Schicksalswende*, 154-58.
- ³⁸ "Das Tagebuch aus der Verbannung von Franz Voth," 141-43; Marina Unger, "Interview with Elisabeth Dueck," Ukraine, 2007. For other accounts of Mennonites who were exiled by barge, see MR, 3 September 1930, 12; MR, 5 November 1930, 10.

- ³⁹ DB, 16 April 1930, 4; DB, 30 April 1930, 5; MR, 21 May 1930, 8; MR, 11 June 1930, 7; DB, 18 June 1930, 3; ZB, 18 June 1930, 1; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11; DB, 16 July 1930, 5; MR, 2 July 1930, 8; MR, 23 July 1930, 2; DB, 30 July 1930, 3; MR, 6 August 1930, 11, 14; DB, 20 August 1930, 3; MR, 5 November 1930, 9; MR, 26 November 1930, 11; MR, 21 January 1931, 6; MR, 11 February 1931, 7; MR, 4 March 1931, 6; DB, 15 April 1931, 4; MR, 4 May 1931, 6; MR, 7 October 1931, 6; MR, 23 December 1931, 6; MR, 6 April 1932, 6; DB, 22 June 1932, 4; MR, 27 July 1932, 7; MR, 10 August 1932, 6; Unruh, "Bericht XXIII," 3 February 1931, 1-2; Unruh, "Bericht XXI," 28 December 1930, 1; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:62, 153, 202, 203, 289; 2:162, 164, 285; Isaak W. Reimer Papers, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg MB, 1267-68, 1714-15. One Mennonite reported that there were more than a thousand Mennonite exiles living in the Tomsk region by the spring of 1930. It is not clear, however, how many of these exiles were from Siberia or had been imported from other regions. DB, 18 June 1930, 3. Otto Auhagen, an agricultural attaché at the German embassy in Moscow, reported that a train from southern Ukraine brought forty four cattle cars (with 1,760 people) to the Omsk region in March 1930. Among the Russian and Tatar families in the railcars there were also 358 German families. Auhagen, *Die Schicksalswende*, 124-25.
- ⁴⁰ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 3:67, 99; MR, 21 January 1931, 6; Kroeker, *My Flight from Russia*, 75-76; DB, 30 July 1930, 3; MR, 24 June 1931, 6.
- ⁴¹ Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 2:102; Unruh, "Bericht XXIX," 18 June 1931, 6; DB, 10 December 1930, 3.
- ⁴² Isaak W. Reimer Papers, 1267; MR, 18 June 1930, 6; MR, 20 January 1932, 6.
- ⁴³ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:147-51; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 78-80, 82.
- ⁴⁴ Applebaum, *Gulag*, 257-58.
- ⁴⁵ Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 93-95, 106-8; Jacobsen, *Origins of the Gulag*, 120-21.
- ⁴⁶ DB, 7 May 1930, 4; DB, 11 June 1930, 3; MR, 2 July 1930, 8; DB, 28 January 1931, 3.
- ⁴⁷ DB, 1 November 1933, 3; MR, 17 September 1930, 12; DB, 17 December 1930, 3; MR, 6 August 1930, 11; Unruh, "Bericht XX," 20 November 1930, 6; DB, 28 October 1931, 3.
- ⁴⁸ MR, 3 August 1932, 7; DB, 21 May 1930, 4; MR, 23 July 1930, 2; MR, 17 September 1930, 12; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11; MR, 1 April, 1931, 7.
- ⁴⁹ Klassen, "My Siberian Exile and Escape," 1; DB, 21 May 1930, 4; MR, 2 March 1932, 7,11; DB, 16 April 1930, 4; Unruh, "Bericht XXI," 28 December 1930; MR, 3 August 1932, 7; Kroeker, *My Flight from Russia*, 75-78.
- ⁵⁰ MR, 27 August 1930, 16.
- ⁵¹ Jacobson, *Origins of the Gulag*, 141; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 92, 102.
- ⁵² MR, 1 April 1931, 7; MR, 18 May 1932, 6; DB, 13 May 1931, 4; Unruh, "Bericht XXIV," March 1931, 3; Unruh, "Bericht XXV," 29 April 1931, 8; MR, 10 June 1931, 7; DB, 3 June 1931, 4.
- ⁵³ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:168; MR, 3 August 1932, 7; DB, 17 December 1930, 3; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 16 March 1932, 5; Unruh, "Bericht XIII," 3 February 1931, 9; Unruh, "Bericht XIII-A," 3 March 1931, 4-5. See also Michael Kaznelson, "Remembering the Soviet State: Kulak Children and Dekulakization," *Europe-Asia Studies* 59, no. 7 (November 2007): 1163-65; Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 133.
- ⁵⁴ Jacobson, *Origins of the Gulag*, 125; Klevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, 46; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 94.
- ⁵⁵ Unruh, "Bericht XXIV," March 1931, 1; ZB, 24 September 1930, 10; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 3 February 1932, 2; MR, 10 June 1931, 7; DB, 3 June 1931, 4.
- ⁵⁶ DB, 30 July 1930, 3; MR, 27 May 1931, 7; Unruh, "Bericht XXI," 28 December 1930, 1; MR, 8 April 1931, 7; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 2:309.
- ⁵⁷ DB, 16 April 1930, 4; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:48-49, 342-43; 2:304; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 29 April 1931, 4; MR, 18 June 1930, 8.

- ⁵⁸ MR, 1 April 1931, 7; MR, 11 March 1931, 9; Unruh, "Bericht XXI," 28 December 1930, 1-2; Unruh, "Bericht XXV," 29 April 1931, 4; MR, 21 January 1931, 6; Unruh, "Bericht XXIV," March 1931, 3; Unruh, "Bericht XX," 20 November 1930, 6-8; ZB, 27 August 1930, 11.
- ⁵⁹ Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:279-81; 2:316, 340; MR, 18 May 1932, 6; MR, 8 April 1931, 7; MR, 11 February 1931, 7; DB, 20 January 1932, 3; MR, 6 September 1931, 6; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11; MR, 10 February 1932, 6; DB, 22 November 1933, 3; DB, 17 May 1933, 6.
- ⁶⁰ DB, 16 July 1930, 5; MR, 3 August 1932, 7; DB, 10 May 1933, 3; MR, 6 April 1932, 6; MR, 3 September 1930, 3; MR, 3 June 1931, 6.
- ⁶¹ Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 108-9; Applebaum, *Gulag*, 257.
- ⁶² DB, 30 July 1930, 3; DB, 22 February 1933, 3; MR, 8 June 1932, 6; MR 10, February, 6; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 20 April 1932, 3; DB, 28 October 1931, 3.
- ⁶³ MR, 6 August 1930, 11; DB, 1 November 1933, 3.
- ⁶⁴ MR, 4 May 1932, 6; MR, 10 February 1932, 6; MR, 5 November 1930, 9; MR, 2 July 1930, 8.
- ⁶⁵ Klassen, "My Siberian Exile and Escape," 1.
- ⁶⁶ MR, 3 August 1932, 7; MR, 2 July 1930, 8; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; MR, 1 April 1931, 7.
- ⁶⁷ DB, 13 May 1931, 4; Unruh, "Bericht XXIV," March 1931, 3; DB, 21 May 1930, 4.
- ⁶⁸ DB, 16 July 1930, 5; MR, 3 August 1932, 7.
- ⁶⁹ DB, 5 August 1931, 4; DB, 16 March 1932, 5; DB, 27 January 1932, 4; DB, 16 March 1932, 5.
- ⁷⁰ *Spetspereselentsy v Zapadnoi Sibiri 1933-1938*, 45-46; Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 114-15; Figes, *The Whisperers*, 125-26; Applebaum, *Gulag*, 324-25. Gerhard and Helen Sawatsky (see endnote 2) of Kronsthal, Khortitsa were exiled to Siberia with their children in 1931. After Gerhard and Helen died in a labour camp near the Ural Mountains, two of their children, Katie and Cornelius, were sent to a local orphanage about twenty kilometres away from the camp. Here the two young Mennonite children endured horrible conditions: they lived in lice-infected buildings, wore burlap clothes, begged for food, lived on garbage scraps, and almost starved to death. After six months in the orphanage the two children were rescued by their older sister Helen, who brought them to her village to live with her and their brother Gerhard. By this time, however, Cornelius was in such poor health that he died shortly after leaving the orphanage. Anganetha (Sawatsky) Pauls, interview by Harry Pauls and Lydia Huebert, Abbotsford BC, January 2011; John Sawatzky, *One Out of Three; How My Family and I Survived Russian Communism* (Mountain Lake MN: John Sawatzky, 1996).
- ⁷¹ MR, 18 June 1930, 6-9; DB, 7 May 1930, 4; DB, 14 May 1930, 4; DB, 11 June 1930, 3; DB, 20 August 1930, 3; MR, 20 August 1930, 6; MR, 27 August 1930, 13; DB, 17 December 1930, 3; DB, 28 October 1931, 3; DB, 6 April 1932, 3.
- ⁷² Federico Varese, "The Society of the Vory-v-zakone, 1930s-1950s," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 39 no. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1998): 515-16, 522-23; Federico Varese, *Russian Mafia: Private Protection in a New Market Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 160-62.
- ⁷³ DB, 3 August 1932, 3; DB, 14 September 1932, 4; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 16 September 1931, 4; MR, 9 March 1932, 6; MR, 14 September 1932, 6.
- ⁷⁴ Unruh, "Bericht XXV," 29 April 1931, 5-7; Unruh, "Bericht XX," 20 November 1930, 4-6; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 17 June 1931, 4; DB, 27 May 1931, 4.
- ⁷⁵ MR, 4 March 1931, 6; MR, 7 September 1932, 6; DB, 1 July 1931, 4; MR, 18 February 1931, 6; MR, 27 May 1931, 6; Meir Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs – ein Fall doppelter Loyalität?* (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1984).
- ⁷⁶ MR, 2 July 1930, 8; DB, 18 February 1931, 3; MR, 2 July 1930, 8.
- ⁷⁷ MR, 6 August 1930, 11; Unruh, "Bericht XIII," 3 February 1931, 1; DB, 13 April 1932, 5; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11.

- ⁷⁸ MR, 4 March 1931, 6.
- ⁷⁹ ZB, 18 June 1930, 8; MR, 25 March 1931, 6; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:49-51; 2:113; *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 6:109.
- ⁸⁰ DB, 20 January 1932, 3; DB, 4 February 1931, 3; MR, 1 April 1931, 7; DB, 28 October 1931, 3.
- ⁸¹ DB, 30 July 1930, 3; Unruh, "Bericht XIV," 1 July 1930, 1; DB, 20 August 1930, 3.
- ⁸² MR, 10 August 1932, 6; DB, 16 July 1930, 5; DB, 9 December 1931, 4.
- ⁸³ *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni*, 3:172-74; S.A. Krasil'nikov and O.M. Mamkin, eds., "Vosstanie v Parbigskoi komendature: Leto 1931g." *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 3 (1994): 128-38; Davies and Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger*, 42-43.
- ⁸⁴ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:144-45; 6:113; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 117, 125, 133-35, 232; Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag*, 54-56.
- ⁸⁵ DB, 16 March 1932, 5; DB, 16 March 1932, 5; DB 27 May 1931, 4; DB, 22 November 1933, 3.
- ⁸⁶ Unruh, "Bericht XXV," 29 April 1931, 2; DB, 1 November 1933, 3; DB, 27 May 1931, 4; DB, 3 August 1932, 3.
- ⁸⁷ MR, 27 July 1932, 7; MR, 5 November 1930, 9. Anganetha Sawatsky from Khronsthal, Khortitsa was exiled with her family to Siberia in 1931. After her parents died, Anganetha escaped from her labour camp, but was recaptured and incarcerated in another labour camp. She escaped from this second camp and eventually made her way back to her home village. Anganetha (Sawatsky) Pauls, interview by Harry Pauls and Lydia Huebert, Abbotsford BC, January 2011.
- ⁸⁸ DB, 1 November 1933, 3; DB, 27 January 1932, 4; DB, 20 January 1932, 3; DB, 27 May 1931, 4.
- ⁸⁹ MR, 21 May 1930, 8; DB, 16 July 1930, 5; Unruh, "Bericht XIII," 6 June 1930, 11; MR, 18 June 1930, 7-8.
- ⁹⁰ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:194-201; DB, 20 April 1932, 3; ZB, 7 June 1933, 8; MR, 2 March 1932, 7, 11. During the 1932-33 famine, the officials at some camps allowed children under fourteen years of age to return home. Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 1:342; 2:140.
- ⁹¹ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:455-69; MR, 7 October 1931, 6; DB, 22 June 1932, 4; DB, 22 June 1932, 4; MR, 24 August 1932, 6; MR, 10 August 1932, 6; DB, 31 May 1933, 4; ZB, 24 May 1933, 11; DB, 1 March 1933, 3.
- ⁹² DB, 18 June 1930, 3; DB, 16 July 1930, 5; MR, 6 August 1930, 11, 14; MR, 3 September 1930, 13; MR, 5 November 1930, 10; MR, 2 September 1931, 6; ZB, 2 July 1930, 11.
- ⁹³ MR, 7 October 1931, 6; DB, 22 June 1932, 4; MR, 17 August 1932, 7; *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:469-78.
- ⁹⁴ MR, 23 December 1931, 7; DB, 5 August 1931, 4; Töws, *Mennonitische Märtyrer*, 2:304; Frierson and Vilensky, *Children of the Gulag*, 120, 128.
- ⁹⁵ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 4:324; Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 148.
- ⁹⁶ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Crimes Against Humanity in International Criminal Law*, 2nd rev. ed (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1999), 62, 69.
- ⁹⁷ Viola, *The Unknown Gulag*, 184.
- ⁹⁸ *Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga*, 5:210-11.