

The Eichenfeld Massacre: Recontextualizing Mennonite and Makhnovist Narratives

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In 1924 Nestor Ivanovich Makhno was arrested in Danzig “on charges of robbery and murder committed against German colonists.”¹ After his transfer to a prison hospital, Makhno escaped in early 1925, never to face trial for his accused crimes. In the jury of history, however, Makhno’s trial has proceeded apace, producing radically different verdicts depending on who is asked. For most Mennonites, Makhno is known as a notorious bandit whose name evokes memories of murder and terror.² By contrast, amongst certain sections of the Ukrainian population Makhno is considered a folk hero, having tenaciously defended the peasantry against both the White and Red armies.³ In his native town of Guliai-Pole more than one statue has been erected in his honour and in 2013 the central Ukrainian bank issued a commemorative coin featuring Makhno. Furthermore, amongst Western anarchists Makhno is commonly vaunted as a heroic figure.⁴

For the most part these two narratives, the Mennonite and pro-Makhnovist, have remained segregated, each drawing upon a rich array of sources but each remaining largely unacquainted with the other. As a result few studies have attempted to integrate the primary

sources of each narrative tradition into a unified account.⁵ This article hopes to contribute to the desegregation of Mennonite and Makhnovist narratives by employing sources from both traditions to tell the story of the Eichenfeld massacre. In this manner a more nuanced and multi-perspectival retelling of this tragedy is sought in which the roots of its evolution and the various factors that contributed to the escalation of violence in the area can be more clearly delineated. While not always in perfect agreement, this work builds upon the important research on Eichenfeld already conducted by Mennonite and Ukrainian scholars. In particular, the work of Marianne Janzen, John B. Toews, Natalia Venger, and Svetlana Bobyleva has been essential for this article.

On the night of Saturday, November 8 [N.S], 1919 a squadron of Makhnovist cavalry surrounded the Mennonite village of Eichenfeld.⁶ The village was blocked off at either end and a massacre ensued. By the time the riders left, 75 Mennonites lay dead, numerous women raped, houses burned to the ground and cartloads of personal belongings stolen. Over ensuing days the death toll rose to 136 in the surrounding area. On Tuesday the survivors, who had fled for safety, returned to Eichenfeld to bury their loved ones en masse in a series of twelve unmarked graves.⁷

Traditionally amongst Mennonites blame for the atrocity at Eichenfeld has been attributed personally to Makhno.⁸ It is assumed that Makhno, as the chief commander of his army, was in full control of its actions and must have therefore ordered Eichenfeld's liquidation. On the other hand, within the entirety of Makhnovist literature Eichenfeld is not given a single mention. Indeed, none of the major massacres of Mennonites are mentioned. It has thus been assumed by some of Makhno's sympathizers that he has been falsely accused of these actions.⁹

This article challenges both narratives to varying extents. On the one hand, it will be shown through numerous corroborating Mennonite eyewitness reports that Makhnovists were undoubtedly involved in the massacre. On the other hand, it will be argued that given the available evidence the massacre at Eichenfeld was more the result of local factors than a coordinated plan organized by Makhno. Through a close analysis of the primary sources it will be shown that a Makhnovist cavalry squadron perpetrated the massacre amidst a massive troop transfer between Alexandrovsk and Ekaterinoslav. This squadron combined with, and was perhaps enlisted by, the local Ukrainian peasantry who had become embittered against the colonies in the face of Mennonite collaboration with the Austro-German and White armies, and the establishment of an armed *Selbstschutz* [Mennonite self-defence militia]. Also explored are the internal conditions within the Makhnovist army in the weeks leading up to the massacre and

the possible impact of Makhno's violent ideological rhetoric on the events in question. These factors when examined together contributed to the breakdown of neighbourly relations between Mennonites and Ukrainians and help to account for the escalation of violence that led to the massacre at Eichenfeld.

The Eichenfeld *Selbstschutz*

Any account of Eichenfeld unavoidably involves an examination of the activities of the local *Selbstschutz* [Mennonite self-defence unit]. As in the other colonies, in the summer of 1918 *Selbstschutz* units were armed and organized in the Jasykovo colony by officers of the Austro-German occupation. Eichenfeld was a member village of Jasykovo.¹⁰ The embrace of the occupation and acceptance of armed self-defence units within the colonies was a direct response to the trauma endured by Mennonites since the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in November 1917. The colonies faced both "unofficial" robbery from local bandit groups, as well as "official" expropriations from the Soviet regime. While murder did not take on a mass character during this period, the mistreatment of the civilian Mennonite population was widespread. Jasykovo itself initially fell outside Makhno's territory but it nonetheless experienced a rash of attacks and robbery by the various forces operating within the area. In reaction to these initial experiences of the revolution, young Mennonites in particular began to question their forefathers' pacifism. When offered training and weapons by the Austro-German occupiers, many accepted with the intention of protecting their communities from further attacks.¹¹

In the whole of the settlement some 200 young men served in the *Selbstschutz* under the overall leadership of Peter van Kampen.¹² In Eichenfeld a group of eighteen men was led by Heinrich H. Heinrichs. According to Heinrich's brother, Cornelius, the group did not necessarily consider itself within the structure of the official *Selbstschutz*. He relates: "Eichenfeld never had a *Selbstschutz*. They never drove out, never practiced, and were never organized. Heinrich Heinrichs was always the leader whenever an emergency arose."¹³ A report in *Friedensstimme* likewise describes the Jasykovo *Selbstschutz* as "poorly organized and lacking in uniform leadership, military training and discipline."¹⁴ It is possible the group considered itself more of an impromptu force organized to respond to immediate threats as opposed to the much more disciplined and "official" *Selbstschutz* of the Molotschna colony.

It also appears that self-defence units were formed in Jasykovo at the behest of different occupiers. According to Eichenfelder Julius

Loewen, the German army imposed a draft on all men eighteen to thirty-five. Cavalry units of ten to twelve men were then organized in each village, with the remaining men serving as infantry. They were subordinate to a German commandant until the withdrawal of the occupation.¹⁵ Later, according to Heinrich Heinrichs' diary, the Red Army also encouraged the organization of self-defence:

In 1918 the *Selbstschutz* was organized by us, and I, too, had to join. The Reds had already been in our town. They gave us orders to form a *Selbstschutz* so that our village would experience less robbery from the little bands that had formed. We also received guns from the Reds, sent from their town to us.¹⁶

Regardless of its origins, the Eichenfeld unit was to subsequently incur the wrath of both Reds and Makhnovists.

Throughout the spring of 1919 the Jasykovo *Selbstschutz* distinguished itself by successfully repelling numerous bandit attacks. Adelsheim resident, David Penner, recalls, "Our *Selbstschutz* managed to defend us as long as the bands were not too large. The bands were held at bay on several occasions."¹⁷ In one incident a group of bandits attacked the estate village of Petersdorf. The Jasykovo *Selbstschutz* responded to the threat and prevented any large-scale damage. In turn, Jasykovo was confronted by a large group of bandits who demanded the *Selbstschutz* surrender their weapons. At the arranged spot of exchange the Mennonites turned their guns on the bandits, forcing them to retreat. A number of prisoners were captured and were to face trial in Ekaterinoslav but may have been prematurely executed en route.¹⁸

According to some pacifist Mennonites, the Jasykovo *Selbstschutz* became questionably aggressive in their protection of the community, enflaming already tense relations with their Ukrainian neighbours. Anton Sawatsky writes,

Our Russian neighbours were hungry and wanted to get some food from the pacifist Mennonites who had not gone to battle for three and a half years. They had not been obligated to lie cold and dirty in the trenches, get sick and die. They had not been forced to take up arms. They had done alternative service, and most of them had returned home safely at the end of the war. But Peter von Kampen had a strong *Selbstschutz*. When these hungry Russians came at night they were shot. Those who were only wounded lay in great pain until the morning when the Mennonites came and killed them. They never took prisoners.¹⁹

Sawatsky's recollections point to the rapidly deteriorating relations between neighbours and to the some of the roots of resentment felt amongst Ukrainians towards Mennonites. Bandits or not, the killing of hungry neighbours would have only encouraged an environment which fostered non-compromise and violent revenge.

When the Soviets occupied Jasykovo later that spring, they also demanded the turnover of all Mennonite arms. The majority of the *Selbstschutz* acquiesced but the Eichenfeld group chose to conceal their weapons.²⁰ During this period Eichenfeld faced a growing threat from both the Reds and local peasantry. The Reds held rich landowners as hostages to extract "contributions" from the colony, even taking prisoners for months at a time.²¹ In another instance, according to Eichenfelder Susanna Klippenstein,

Some riders came and threatened to set our village on fire. They had it surrounded so that no one could get out. A plane flew over us. A lot of people were standing on the street. I don't know what they demanded, or why they didn't set fire to the village, but everyone was thankful that we were saved once more.²²

Here we see a clear precedent to events that would later occur in Eichenfeld. Unfortunately there is no indication as to the exact identity of the riders or why they wanted to destroy the village.

In July 1919 the Reds ordered the young men of Eichenfeld to assemble, but the call went unheeded. The following morning 300 troops surrounded Eichenfeld. Apparently mistaking the troops for bandits, Heinrichs' group reemerged to repel the Soviets without a single casualty. A number of Reds were killed and the invaders were forced to flee. Only in the aftermath of battle did Heinrichs realize the attackers were government forces. C. Heinrichs explains:

When it was over we found out the government had sent this group. We sent a delegation to [Ekaterinoslav] and told them we were sorry but that we had thought they were bandits. We wanted to make good but no arms were surrendered. The government came and examined but nothing was ever done.²³

Another critical incident in the evolution in the village's destruction also involved the Eichenfeld *Selbstschutz*. In the wake of the above debacle, the Reds dismissed the locally elected soviet and imposed their own handpicked soviet in Nikolaipol, under the leadership of a Commissar Snissarenko. It was at this point that one of Heinrichs' comrades, Daniel Hiebert, may have turned traitor, passing the names

of *Selbstschützer* to Snissnarenko in return for a position in the local soviet. Hearing of Hiebert's betrayal, the Eichenfeld group decided to eliminate the soviet. In the words of Cornelius Heinrichs, "the group decided to clean up these men. Heinrich Heinrichs was the leader – they decided they would kill everybody, take no prisoners and not one person would utter a word."²⁴ Three members of the soviet, including Hiebert and Snissnarenko, were murdered, however, a fourth managed to escape by hiding in an oven. Upon reporting to his superiors, a delegation was sent to Eichenfeld to investigate the matter. It was at this time that Heinrichs left Eichenfeld.²⁵ According to David Penner, in the aftermath of this incident the district soviet, needing to place blame, "arrested two to three men in each village and took them to Ekaterinoslav where they suffered a great deal."²⁶ Shortly thereafter the Reds were forced to retreat from the region in the face of an advancing White army. Nonetheless, the actions of the Jasykovo *Selbstschutz* throughout spring 1919 would contribute to providing a rationale for the Makhnovist assault on the village later that fall.

It is also important to note that at the end of May, the occupying Red army received "substantial reinforcements from Batko Makhno's soldiers" in the Chortitza-Jasykovo area.²⁷ An alliance had been struck between Makhno and the Bolsheviks, which temporarily put the Makhnovists under the command of the Red army. Thus, the Makhnovists were well-acquainted with the incident at Eichenfeld, who according to Rempel were "pretty well convinced that the earlier execution of three militia men had been the act of the settlement's *Selbstschutz* and most likely by members of the Eichenfeld unit." Furthermore, Rempel relates that "it was obvious that [the Makhnovists] had collected much intelligence during their earlier presence in our midst concerning families whose sons had been members of the once armed organization or had during the summer joined the White Army."²⁸ The antagonism that evolved during this period between the *Selbstschutz*, Red army, Makhnovists and hostile local groups set the stage for the tragedy that would unfold when the Makhnovists returned that fall. In particular, it appears that the incident involving the murder of the local soviet was ostensibly later used as a reason for singling out Eichenfeld.

The Makhnovist Army

Amidst the collapse of the White Army's rearguard in October 1919, the Makhnovists, advancing eastward from Uman, established themselves in the Mennonite colonies. Eichenfeld came under Makhnovist occupation on October 25.²⁹ To fully understand the evolution of events

that culminated in the massacre, we must set Eichenfeld in the broader context of the Makhnovist occupation. Anarchist and Makhnovist participant, Peter Arshinov, reports the mood of the army in October:

They literally swept through villages, towns and cities like an enormous broom, removing every vestige of exploitation and servitude. The returned pomeshchiks [estate owners], the kulaks [wealthy peasantry], the police, the priests ... all these were swept out of the victorious path of the Makhnovist movement ... All those known to be active enemies of the peasants and workers were condemned to death. Pomeshchiks and kulaks perished in great numbers.³⁰

A large degree of vengeance underpinned the growth of the Makhnovist army in autumn 1919 as it swelled to as much as 100,000 men. House searches, robbery, rape and murder characterize Mennonite descriptions of the Makhnovist occupation. In total more than 800 murders occurred over a six-week period between late October and early December. Economically the colonies were devastated by the Makhnovists' demand for food, lodging and clothing. Finally, at the end of the occupation a typhus epidemic spread from the Makhnovists to their Mennonite hosts. By the New Year, typhus had decimated the army and killed thousands of Mennonites.³¹

The rapid growth of the army – which was only a fifth of its size prior to its occupation of the colonies – created huge organizational problems. For one, the army came to be composed largely of local forces, some of which were of a dubious character. A large number of Reds caught behind enemy lines, nationalist units and independent groups now fought under Makhnovist leadership. Historian Michael Malet writes that at this time, “criminals entered the army for what they could get out of it, especially plunder in the towns.”³² The problem was made worse by the fact that Makhno commonly dynamited the city prisons and released its prisoners. Chortitza resident David G. Rempel writes that in Alexandrovsk “one of the first acts of the Makhnovites was to release the inmates from the city prison and then blow it up.”³³ Furthermore, the Makhnovists had recently integrated a large force of “Grigorievites” in July-August 1919, who had been notorious for their anti-Semitic pogroms.³⁴

This large force of disparate groups occupying an expansive territory frequently resulted in the breakdown of troop discipline. Looting and drunkenness became a common complaint amongst regimental commanders. Commander Petrenko issued the following order: “Requisitioned and confiscated goods are for the use of the whole army, not just for the benefit of individuals who may have joined

our army in order to sabotage it.”³⁵ Other commanders, such as Dorosh, felt completely helpless as they watched the spread of “banditism” through the army.³⁶ In November Alexandrovsk city commandant A. Klein - himself of partial German background - was sent to the front as punishment for public drunkenness.³⁷ A number of commanders were also executed for organizing Jewish pogroms.³⁸ With regard to Mennonites, Belash describes an incident in late October 1919 in which Makhno intervened with a commander near Berdyansk to stop the murder of “German colonists”.³⁹ Furthermore, Makhno himself issued an appeal to immediately halt all drinking, looting and violence against civilians, writing,

Either you and I will fight to the finish with the enemies of the people – a fight which requires the wholeheartedness and honour of each insurgent, or we’ll part ways for good. I want your response – not just in words but in deeds. The Revolution we’re defending demands it, and in the names of its conquests so do I.⁴⁰

On October 9, 1919, Makhno ordered the destruction of all alcohol in the army’s possession due to its affect on troop discipline.⁴¹ The Army Staff published further appeals and arrests were made but the situation remained unmanageable.⁴² The commander of the 1st Donetz Corps, A. Kalashnikov, summarized the situation when he wrote in an appeal to the army: “When we arrived in Katerinoslav province, we saw the light, but we weren’t able to seize the opportunity. We’ve turned that light into something vulgar, disgusting...”⁴³

The *Kontrrazvedka*

In late October the 4th Regional Congress of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents met in Alexandrovsk. During the congress a “Draft Declaration of the RPAU (m) on Free Soviets” was issued.⁴⁴ This important document gave a clear ideological vision for the movement including the following statement concerning the judicial process:

A system of real justice must be organized, but it must be a living, free, creative act of the community. The self-defence of the population must be a matter of free, living self-organization. And so any moribund form of justice: judicial institutions, revolutionary tribunals, codes of penalties, police institutes, Chekists, prisons – all this must collapse under its own weight.⁴⁵

Commenting on this passage Ukrainian anarchist historian V. Azarov remarks:

On the one hand, this is an understandable protest of the anarchist-Makhnovists against the punitive organs of the State. But on the other hand, such a formulation of the question of justice leads to the dictatorship of emotional impulses, the tyranny of momentary rage, and opens the possibility of manipulation of “people’s justice” by special-interest groups. In other words, it leads to lynch law. Furthermore, it allows any kind of abuse to flourish on the grounds of the “just struggle with the exploiting classes.”⁴⁶

Azarov goes on to identify the civilian section of the *kontrrazvedka* [the Makhnovist secret service] as embodying the worst manipulations of “people’s justice”.

The civilian *kontrrazvedka* was charged with ferreting out “anti-Makhnovist elements.” It was a ubiquitous organization that at its height claimed one in ten Makhnovists as members, and made extensive use of civilian informants. According to M. Hutman, an eyewitness to the Makhnovist occupation of Ekaterinoslav, “pillaging took place under the pretext of searches for hidden weaponry. A common type of pillaging [by the *kontrrazvedka*] was the looting of the quarters of Denikinist officers that had been liquidated by the Makhnovists.”⁴⁷ It is important in this regard to remember that for all practical reasons the Makhnovists considered *Selbstschützer* as “Denikinists”.

Mennonite literature widely attests to the presence of the *kontrrazvedka* in the colonies and its role in hunting down *Selbstschützer*. Numerous Mennonite sources make mention of the *kontrrazvedka* by name and give examples of their search for weapons and *Selbstschützer*. For example, Rempel, who briefly billeted three *kontrrazvedka* members in Nieder Khortitza, writes,

As self-proclaimed members of the counter-intelligence ... intent on ferreting out White Army members and other traitors to Batko Makhno and his revolutionary movement, they were the most obnoxious and ruthless of all the village’s unbidden occupants. Aside from eating, they slept all day, then towards evening left for their escapades, to hunt down counter-revolutionaries, and to search houses, pilfering whatever touched their fancy or simply because they enjoyed tormenting innocent people.⁴⁸

Rempel further relates that “Makhnovites justified their ferocious attacks as part of their relentless search for Abram Löewen [a notorious *Selbstschützer* at large].”⁴⁹ Neufeld’s journal entry for November 2 similarly relates, “... it’s getting more and more dangerous. Makhno has ordered his intelligence agents to finish off without mercy every person of hostile views.”⁵⁰

At Eichenfeld a similar pattern emerged, in which the “search” for Heinrichs and his unit was used to rationalize the total destruction of the village. Schroeder confirms that, “the immediate excuse used by the Makhnovtsy was that the young men of the villages had during 1918-1919 formed self-defense units.”⁵¹ Significantly, Schroeder, like Rempel, relates that the Makhnovists were well acquainted with the details of Heinrichs’ activities and the identities of the group’s membership.⁵²

Given the known presence of the *kontrrazvedka* in the colonies and their role in ferreting out *Selbstschützer* it is a possibility, although cannot be conclusively proven, that it was involved in the Eichenfeld massacre. In particular the murder of Heinrichs Sr. early on the day of the massacre is suggestive of a *kontrrazvedka* action. As such, further research is needed to ascertain the exact extent of the *kontrrazvedka*’s presence and role in the Eichenfeld massacre.

Makhno’s Orders

In the days leading up to the massacre a series of key troop movements occurred, which explain the military context in which Eichenfeld occurred. On November 4, in the face of Denikin’s retreating army, Makhno’s Chief of Staff Viktor Belash reports that the decision was made to evacuate Alexandrovsk in favor of Ekaterinoslav.⁵³ Such a large-scale transfer of troops involved marching the 1st and 2nd Army Corps northwards through the Mennonite colonies of Chortitza and Jasykovo.⁵⁴ En route various units were stationed in the colonies along the west bank of the Dnieper, occupying an eighty mile strip from Chortitza to Ekaterinoslav.⁵⁵ According to Belash, the transfer was complete by November 9 with heavy fighting ensuing for control of Ekaterinoslav. Belash further states that part of the 2nd Army corps was deployed to the village of Fedorovka, a Ukrainian village near Eichenfeld, on the eve of the massacre.⁵⁶

According to Belash, Makhno himself left Alexandrovsk for Ekaterinoslav on November 6, ahead of the troop movements. However, prior to leaving Makhno produced a list of eighty persons to be executed before the evacuation. On November 5 the following declaration appeared in the Makhnovist daily *Put’ k Svobode*:

The bourgeoisie is all laughs as it sees our failures on certain fronts. I will give them my final word: the bourgeoisie in their futile arrogance hope for our defeat and the victory of the Don and Kuban Whites. I tell you our setback in this area will be the death of the bourgeoisie. To accomplish this I have taken action.

In the hands of the remaining chiefs of defense for the city of Alexandrovsk, Kalashnikov and his adjutant Karetnik, have been invested with the task of eliminating the bourgeoisie and their minions. Death to the bourgeoisie! Death to all their minions! Long live the liberation of the working class! Long live the Social Revolution!

Army Commander Bat'ko Makhno
4 November 1919, Alexandrovsk⁵⁷

Those on Makhno's list were arrested, which included Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, industrialists and even railway unionists.⁵⁸ Belash was needed to authorize the death sentences, but refused to do so in direct disobedience of Makhno. The prisoners were released on their word that they would not collaborate with the Whites.⁵⁹

The order was clearly intended for the city of Alexandrovsk but appears to have been felt in the countryside as well. Roughly corresponding to the time of the order's publication are the following entries from Neufeld's diary:

November 4 [October 22]: Shocking! Today the big Cossack [a commander] who was here a few days ago came back. He grandly announced that the pretended neutrality of our Mennonite villages would no longer be tolerated. The struggle had now entered a crucial stage and they were prepared to force the issue: it was either for or against. We must now decide whether we'd stand and fight on their side or be counted with their enemies the Whites. If the latter, then we were to be wiped out to the last man.

November 5 [October 23]: We feel as if we have been condemned to death and are now simply waiting for the executioner to come. Those who are not sunk in apathy are thinking of escape. But we have been notified that anyone caught three steps from his house will be shot without warning. Actually there are so many armed riders around that any attempt to escape would mean certain death.⁶⁰

Neufeld's next entry describes the massacre at Eichenfeld.⁶¹ Whatever Makhno's intentions regarding the publication of the November 4th order, its practical effect on the rank-and-file of the army could only have aggravated already existing tensions. Already on November 1 [October 19] Neufeld recorded that the squad leader stationed in his home claimed that a number of "Germans" had been hung near Einlage for shooting at Makhnovists. The Commander further related to Neufeld "in confidence" that the "commanders had had a tough time preventing their troops from taking revenge against all the villages."⁶² In this tense environment Makhno's order could only have functioned to exhort the army and *kontrrazvedka* in venting their frustrations on those labeled as counterrevolutionaries.

Another "order" of Makhno to emerge in relation to Eichenfeld points in a different direction. In the days leading up to the massacre a traveling tent mission of evangelical Mennonites and converts held meetings throughout the Jasykovo settlement. A number of the missionaries went to Eichenfeld and were murdered on the night of the massacre. According to the memoirs of N. Astakhov, a Ukrainian convert to the missionaries and survivor of the massacre, Makhno personally gave the missionaries permission to evangelize throughout the region. In the aftermath of the massacre, Astakhov even tried to arrange a second meeting with Makhno.⁶³ Astakhov further relates that in the Nikopol *volost* itself, "after some difficulties Brother Dick received permission (from the Makhno officials) to hold tent meetings, and the first was held that afternoon."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, despite this official "protection", the tent missionaries were not spared, apparently targeted for their evangelizing presence.

However, the fact that Makhno and his authorities granted permission to the tent mission raises many questions. Why did Makhno and other Makhnovist authorities grant safe passage in the first place? And why were these orders ineffectual in protecting the missionaries? These are questions in need of further investigation, but it does suggest that Makhno and the higher level Makhnovists were not directly involved in ordering the massacre.

Makhno's violent rhetoric targeting "kulaks" and other "enemies of the people" certainly encouraged the escalation of violence against the Mennonites and thus bears responsibility in this regard. However, as can be seen from the internal documents of the Makhnovists themselves, as well as Mennonite eyewitnesses, control over the insurgent army was increasingly precarious. Excessive drinking, looting, the abuse of civilian populations, and anti-Semitic pogroms were all poisonous presences within the army by the fall of 1919, despite repeated attempts by Makhno and high-level commanders to impose discipline. The problem of discipline was further compounded by the

sudden injection of disparate elements into the army. Red partisans, nationalists, Grigorievites and a host of local groups temporarily allied with the Makhnovists. Each group had its own competing agenda and was spread out over a large territory, making communications very difficult. This situation taken into perspective suggests that many units in the fall of 1919 were functioning semi-independently. Thus, while they fell under the overall rubric of Makhno's army, they did not always strictly adhere to the orders of the Makhnovist high command. The failure of the tent missionaries' note from Makhno to provide protection likewise suggests decisions were often made at the local level and that the rank-and-file did not necessarily wait for authorization from on high.

The Massacre

On the morning of November 8th a large number of Makhnovist troops passed through the villages of Jasykovo en route to Ekaterinoslav. David Quiring recalls "thousands of men" marching through the village between 9am and 4pm. Around 10am the Makhnovists' first action was to kill a man they may have believed to be Heinrich H. Heinrichs.⁶⁵ They in fact murdered Heinrichs' father, who bore the same name as his son. It appears that the killers of Heinrichs moved on from the village and were separate from the group that perpetrated the massacre later that evening.

A steady stream of Makhnovists moved through the village over the course of the day making demands for food and stealing anything they saw fit. At dusk, as the column of men began to thin, a cavalry squadron entered Eichenfeld at full gallop.⁶⁶ Elizabeth Warkentin recalls that "a guard was set at either end of the village so that no one could escape."⁶⁷ In the massacre that followed, all landowners and their sons over the age of sixteen were systematically executed. When the killing was finished seventy men and five women lay dead.⁶⁸ Over the next ten days the death toll rose to 136 in the whole of the Jasykovo settlement.

In the aftermath of the killing, peasants from the surrounding area descended upon Eichenfeld, taking anything of value. Raisa Gurazda, relates the story of her mother, who witnessed the pillaging:

Later some daring people from neighbouring villages came, after everything was deserted. They took all the doors and windows. The Germans had everything of the best quality ... Not a single German home remained standing in the village they were torn down ... It was like a 'black hole'. The bricks were scattered around. It was desolate and the cats slunk about, and the dogs.⁶⁹

As for the survivors, after three days the dead were gathered from the streets and buried in a series of twelve mass graves. Eichenfeld had ceased to exist.

The perpetrators appear to have targeted the male landowning population. Eichenfelder H.W. Klassen recalls: "Grandmother lived at the end of the village not in the farmer's row. [She was an *anwohner*, landless]. Because of this, my brother and father stayed alive."⁷⁰ That the *anwohner* were spared on ideological grounds is further confirmed by David Quiring's account. Quiring's memoirs are unique in being the most detailed eyewitness account of the massacre. Quiring also came face to face with the commander in charge of the massacre numerous times throughout the evening.⁷¹ At the height of the massacre Quiring was assigned the chilling task of informing each household that they were to bake bread for the Makhnovists. While performing his grim duty, Quiring was brought before the Makhnovist commander:

I murmured and prayed for strength and grace to bear the fate that would be announced for me. The commandant placed his revolver to my forehead. He asked if I owned land ... I owned neither land nor house. Mrs. Franz Klassen had to verify all my answers and so I was released. He commanded one of his soldiers to see me safely to the street.⁷²

Later that evening Quiring met the commander again at his brother's home:

They grilled my brother Klass. I interceded on his behalf. They freed him too, since he had no material possessions. Then came Jacob's turn. He was asked if he owned land. He said yes. The commandant shouted and ordered him to remove his clothes. How pale he became! He saw death before him ... We knew that they would execute him ...⁷³

The above accounts strongly suggest that the massacre was motivated by class antagonisms. From the surviving evidence it appears that the attackers were following orders to execute all landowning males but to leave the landless unmolested. At least two Eichenfelders survived the massacre by taking refuge in the homes of *Anwohner*. In a similar manner to H.W. Klassen's account, Katherina Harder, with her mother and sister, "fled to the end of the village to the Schmidts. There were not landowners and therefore were not being attacked by the Makhnovite bandits."⁷⁴ Another survivor, Abram Dombrowsky, managed to save his life as a teenager by telling his captives, untruthfully, that he was a worker. Tragically the male members of his family were murdered within earshot.⁷⁵

While class primarily motivated the massacre, an element of anti-Germanism also manifested itself during the tragedy. For example, Quiring recalls one individual who “frequently came into the room cursing and mocking. He said that all the Germans should be killed.”⁷⁶ In Franzfeld [within Jasykovo], Gerhard Redekopp was likewise confronted by a Makhnovist who declared it was his duty to “kill all Germans.”⁷⁷ Redekopp and four others were subsequently killed. It is possible that those rank-and-file Makhnovists who harboured anti-German feelings used the event to vent their ethnic hatreds to one extent or another. Certainly some Mennonites came to the conclusion that “the Germans were murdered because they were Germans.”⁷⁸

Paradoxically, some survivors report “Germans” amongst the Makhnovists. Quiring writes of an encounter with a Makhnovist who “suddenly began to speak High German. I realized he was a [German] Catholic.”⁷⁹ Another survivor, Katharina Penner, remembers recognizing to her horror a Mennonite by the name of Schmidt consorting with the “apparent leader of the band.” Schmidt proceeded to assault Penner. Years later Penner encountered Schmidt again as a Soviet official. She writes, “How could such a scum of humanity, one who could massacre his own people, be accepted in a leading role in the Soviet governmental department...”⁸⁰

Whoever participated in the massacre, be it Ukrainians, Makhnovists, Germans or Mennonites, it is safe to assume that the vengeful nature of the massacre allowed individuals to indulge in a host of “reasons” they felt may have justified their actions. Thus, while at the command level the action was justified as a punishment for the *Selbstschutz* and rural bourgeoisie, at the individual level it offered an occasion to pursue petty personal vendettas or afforded an opportunity to “kill the Germans.”

Local Motivations

Reflecting on the massacre Gerhard Schroeder writes, “Eichenfeld was a very prosperous Mennonite colony, thus constituting a highly desirable prize for looting by Makhno’s men and then to be turned over for wholesale plunder to some of the neighbouring peasant villages.”⁸¹ In many Mennonite histories Makhno is held personally accountable for the massacre. Yet when the primary sources are carefully examined, there is strong evidence that the neighbouring Ukrainian peasantry played an important role in the tragedy as well.

First, there is the widely attested fact that immediately following the massacre, residents of the surrounding Ukrainian villages, in particular Fedorovka, looted Eichenfeld. This information is contained

in virtually all eyewitness accounts including the Ukrainian oral histories collected by Svetlana Bobyleva. Second, we have eyewitness testimony that the Jasykovo colony was being harassed by local bandits prior to the arrival of the Makhnovists, and that they even threatened to burn down Eichenfeld on one occasion. Perhaps speaking of the same bandits, H.W. Klassen writes: "One day a robber band came to plunder from our village ... Later this same band joined with Makhno to bring this village to its knees."⁸² David Penner likewise writes, "Several individuals from the group beaten back at Eichenfeld had apparently joined Makhno's band. They now requested Makhno that they be allowed to take revenge on Eichenfeld for the earlier defeat in spring."⁸³ Katharina Penner also writes that "the Batjko Makhno band was only a part of this widely scattered group standing at the ready ... where the bandits had decided on this bloody Mephistophelian act."⁸⁴ These accounts point to the fluidity of forces in the fall of 1919. The line dividing civilian and military, Makhnovist and Red was frequently ill-defined. The accounts also suggest that a section of the local peasantry were the instigators of the massacre and enlisted the help of the Makhnovists to carry it out.

David G. Rempel, who lived in Nieder Chortitza and was the nephew of H.H. Heinrichs, felt that "the act of revenge may have involved more than regular members of Makhno's army, it may have included representatives from neighbouring peasant villages now finally able to even the score with a resident of Eichenfeld who had insulted or injured him in past years."⁸⁵ Rempel concludes that despite "the virtually unanimous verdict among Mennonites that the nightmarish experiences of Eichenfeld and the surrounding communities were part and parcel of the Makhnovshchina ... it is safe to assume that many of the worst excesses in Eichenfeld, [etc.] were carried out by peasants of neighbouring villages."⁸⁶ C. Heinrichs confirmed Rempel's conclusion in a letter to him in which he asserted that responsibility for Eichenfeld "rested more with the neighbouring peasants than with Makhnovstys per se."⁸⁷

Rempel attributes the peasantry's underlying motivation to "loot and land hunger."⁸⁸ Situated in a highly fertile area Jasykovo quickly became very prosperous, arousing, according to Rempel, "envy and resentment among many of the neighbouring peasantry who no longer were able to rent smaller or larger pieces of land from their former gentry landlords."⁸⁹ Unwittingly, the daughter colony of Jasykovo placed itself in the direct line of fire in the years leading up to the revolution. This is an important observation on Rempel's part, which points to the heart of the breakdown of Ukrainian-Mennonite relations. Further research specific to the exact conditions of the peasantry surrounding Eichenfeld is necessary but if Federovka followed the patterns of the

rest of the country then land hunger and poverty would have been widespread. The oral histories collected from the area describe the “Germans” as substantially more affluent than the Ukrainian villages. One interviewee recalls that the “Germans had everything of the best quality ... With us everything was run down, disheveled, dirty. With them, everything was cultured.”⁹⁰ The interviewees also point out that Mennonite land was superior to Ukrainian land. An interviewee states that “Catherine the Great gave all the good land to the Germans,” while another comments: “Here in the village of Fedorovka the soil was sandy, so the Germans didn’t take it.”⁹¹ With the breakdown of social order during the civil war, these clear material discrepancies would have made the colonies an obvious target and an object of envy amongst the poorer sections of the peasantry.

Compounding any bitterness that may have evolved from socio-economic inequalities, there is evidence suggesting that colonists from Jasykovo actively participated in the punitive expeditions of the German occupation in 1918. A Ukrainian report from the area states:

There appeared a detachment of the German-Austrian army joined by German colonists from the Nikolaipol volost [the volost of Jasykovo] and the German landowners of the Novopokrovskoi volost, who were armed with machine guns and rifles. They would enter each village and collect all citizens without exception who were shot and beaten mercilessly.⁹²

The reasons ostensibly given for these raids were to retrieve stolen property and land, but they often took on an excessively violent dimension that only contributed to the deteriorating relations between the colonists and peasantry. David Penner reports that,

immediately after the first units of the German occupation army arrived in Nikolaipole wealthy farmers and estate owners persuaded the head of this unit to arrest the leaders of the new movement and their like-minded cohorts and to summarily execute them. Eleven persons, Germans and Russians, were executed ... This had terrible consequences for the initiators as well as the inhabitants of the district.⁹³

Another Eichenfelder who left the village during the German occupation offered these reflections in his diary:

The clear understanding should have told people that it was impossible for a small heap to resist the great majority ... In October 1919, 85 people were hacked to pieces with sabers

there, partly shot to death. A true Bartholomew-night. I do not want to sit in judgment over my own people, but I believe that one had not made the surrounding Russians into friends in the good years, but rather to enemies and this murder was the answer.⁹⁴

Unfortunately the perspective of the local peasantry cannot be directly measured. Illiteracy was widespread amongst the peasantry at this time, making primary peasant sources rare. Additional research within the Ukrainian archives may reveal insights into the local peasantry's relations with the Jasykovo Mennonites, but until such discoveries are made we are faced with substantial gaps in the historical record. As such, informed conclusions must be based upon the available evidence. A reliance on primarily Mennonite commentary, however, can sometimes produce a caricature of the local peasantry, which often appears as a nebulous force lurking at the edges of the Mennonite world. Similarly, they can appear singular in their intent to destroy the colonies. However, the peasantry was not a homogenous group but varied greatly along class, ethnic and religious lines. Likewise, the peasantry's ideological worldview was complex, varied and frequently shifting. Not all peasants supported the Makhnovist program. As one Ukrainian from Federovka recalled, "Poor Ukrainians treated Makhno as a guest, and the rich treated him as an enemy."⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the commentary and reflection provided by Mennonite eyewitnesses suggest that a certain segment of the local peasantry had become deeply embittered towards their neighbours.

The goal of this article is not to stand in judgment of the victims but to better understand the dynamics that led to the Eichenfeld massacre. Blame for what occurred at Eichenfeld ultimately rests with the perpetrators who carried out the murders. However, actions on both sides of the Ukrainian-Mennonite divide contributed to the escalation of violence. The initial attacks by local bandit groups; the embrace of the Austro-German occupation and then the White army by the Mennonites; the establishment of the *Selbstschutz* and the Eichenfeld unit's attack on the local soviet; the robbery, harassment, hostage-taking and abuse of civilian Mennonites by the Reds and Makhnovists; the violent rhetoric of Makhno; the land hunger and gross social inequalities facing Ukraine at the time all helped to pave the way to the tragedy at Eichenfeld.

The majority of victims likely had nothing to do with the *Selbstschutz* or the punitive expeditions, and for the murdered it does not matter whether their killers were Makhnovists or neighbours. But for the historian, understanding how situations evolve and why massacres unfold is a grim but necessary task, if only to point to warning signs for

future generations. The bitterness engendered through social inequalities, and the failure of broader society to adequately address these inequalities, is always in danger of rapidly evolving into a situation where acts of revenge once considered inhuman become routine and interpreted as necessary.

In the end, the concept of putting Makhno on trial is sorely inadequate. As this article has striven to show, the broad and complex factors that contributed to the Eichenfeld tragedy extend far beyond the culpability of one man. As such, a simple verdict of guilty or not guilty does injustice to the event if it does not thoroughly address the many social factors that paved the path to Eichenfeld.

When placed into the broader context it is precisely Makhno's personal insignificance in the evolution of events that is most shocking. While Makhno's rhetoric of violent class warfare may have indirectly encouraged his troops' actions at Eichenfeld, it is in the breakdown of neighbourly relations between Mennonites and Ukrainians where roots of the conflict may be glimpsed. This was a process that began before the arrival of Makhno and his men, and even before the German occupation, as Rempel suggests, finding its origin in the resentment associated with land hunger and poverty. With the collapse of order in the countryside the situation escalated with the peasantry's turn to "banditry" and the Mennonite turn to "self-defence." Both were perceived by the other as aggressive actions against their respective communities and used to rationalize further violence and dehumanization of the enemy.

Perhaps what is needed is a movement away from the overemphasis on Makhno and towards the broader social and economic factors at play. Such a movement acknowledges how Makhno contributed to the degeneration of events but does not find him singularly guilty. In this context Makhno is a small part of a larger whole involving the broader collective choices of Mennonites and Ukrainians alike, which led to Eichenfeld and similar tragedies. In this way we may begin to move towards a greater understanding of how it was that pacifists took up arms and revolutionaries perpetrated massacres in the name of freedom and equality.

Notes

- ¹ Michal Przyborowski and Dariusz Wierchoś, *Nestor Machno w Polsce* (Poznań: Oficyna Wydawn Bractwa "Trojka", 2012), 91. The authors' account is based on the official police report, AP Bydgoszcz, Okręgowa Komenda Policji Państwowej w Toruniu, sygn. 157/303, k. 125.
- ² For Mennonite perspectives on Makhno, see relevant sections from: Dietrich Neufeld, *A Russian Dance of Death* (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1977); Gerhard

P. Schroeder, *Miracles of Grace and Judgment* (Lodi: Gerhard P. Schroeder, 1974); Gerhard Lohrenz, *Storm Tossed: The Personal Story of a Canadian Mennonite From Russia* (Winnipeg: Lohrenz, 1976); John B. Toews, ed., *Mennonites in Ukraine Amidst Civil War and Anarchy* (Fresno: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2013). John Morrow's documentary *And When They Shall Ask* (1983) also provides an excellent example of the traditional Mennonite perspective on Makhno.

- ³ The local museum in Guliai-Pole takes such a perspective and has an extensive exhibit dedicated to Makhno. Tourists may also visit the former home of Makhno's brother, which has a statue of Makhno in the garden and a small display of Makhno pictures and memorabilia. For a collection of lore native to Makhno's region see: Ivan Kushnirenko and Volodymyr Zhylyns'kyi, *Hop, Kume, ne Zhurys' ...* (Zaporozhye: Dniprovs'kyi Metalurh, 2008). For a highly romanticized cinematic depiction of Makhno see Nikolai Kapta's film *The Nine Lives of Nestor Makhno* (2005).
- ⁴ For example see: Daniel Guerin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 98-101; Alexandre Skirda, *Nestor Makhno: Anarchy's Cossack* (Oakland: AK Press, 2004).
- ⁵ An exception can be found in the work of Ukrainian historian Natalia Venger. In particular see: N.V. Venger, "The Mennonite Challenge to the Soviets," *Preservings* 27 (2007): 14-22; "Ievreis'ki ta menonits'ki pohromy na pivdnyi ukraïny do pytannya pro typologiyu ta semantyku podii 1919 r.," *Humanitarnyi zhurnal* 3-4 (lito-osin' 2011): 138-147.
- ⁶ The date of the Eichenfeld massacre is frequently cited as October 26, 1919. This date corresponds to the old style Julian calendar used in Russia prior to the revolution. The new style Gregorian calendar was adopted by the Soviet regime on February 1, 1918; however, many Mennonites continued to use the old style calendar for their record keeping. The new style calendar is approximately fourteen days ahead of the old style. For the purposes of this article I have chosen to convert all dates to the modern calendar system. For a detailed discussion of how the different calendar systems pose unique difficulties for studying Eichenfeld see: Sean Patterson, *The Makhnos of Memory* (M.A. thesis: University of Manitoba, 2013): 110-113.
- ⁷ For an official list of the victims see: Harvey L. Dyck et al., eds., *Nestor Makhno and The Eichenfeld Massacre* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2004), 105-112.
- ⁸ For example, Dyck, Staples and Toews write: "On Saturday, October 26, 1919, a band of roughly 400 Makhno troops arrived in Eichenfeld. Makhno was not with them, and it cannot be proved that he directly ordered their activities that day. Still, their disciplined, purposeful actions and clear-cut criteria in singling out their victims bespoke careful planning, and in Makhno's territory, Makhno was the chief planner. Makhno exercised close military discipline over his forces, and it is almost unimaginable that the Makhnovites carried out the massacre without his approval." *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 33.
- ⁹ For example, Alexandre Skirda assesses the accusations of Makhnovist banditry as follows: "It is consequently noticeable that none of the charges of banditry aired by this one or that, stands up to a serious examination of the facts. In spite of all that, how are they to be explained? Perhaps in terms of the age-old fear that the rural bourgeoisie and squire-archy felt of the dark, nameless peasant mass, these 'yokels' whose wrathful vengeance they rightfully feared." Skirda, *Nestor Makhno*, 337.
- ¹⁰ Jasykovo, established in 1868 as a daughter colony of Chortitza, was situated along the main road between the major cities of Alexandrovsk (Zaporozhye) and Ekaterinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk). The colony consisted of five villages, each designated with a German name, Russian name, and a number: Nikolaifeld/Nikolaipol (#1); Franzfeld/Varvarovka (#2); Adelsheim/Dolinovka (#3); Eichenfeld/Dubovka

(#4); Hochfeld/Morosovo (#5). Nikolaipol was the colony's administrative center, as well as the name of the overall district [*volost*]. The district also included Mennonite estates such as Petersdorf, Reinfeld and Paulheim. Makhnovists also attacked these settlements in 1919.

- 11 For a full treatment of the *Selbstschutz* phenomenon see: Lawrence Klippenstein, *The Selbstschutz: A Mennonite Army in Ukraine: 1918-1919* (Dnipropetrov'sk: Dnipropetrov's'kyi natsional'nyi universytet, 2007). John B. Toews, "The Origins and Activities of the Mennonite 'Selbstschutz' in the Ukraine (1918-1919) *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46 (1972): 5-40.
- 12 *Friedensstimme*, September 7, 1919, 3; Jakob A. Dyck, "Einer der dabei war," B.B. Janz Papers, Group I 15 D, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Winnipeg. The exact relationship between Kampen and the Eichenfeld *Selbstschutz* is unclear. Cornelius Heinrichs, for instance, claims Kampen had nothing to do with the *Selbstschutz*, while others, like Anton Sawatsky, describe Kampen as deeply involved in the events at Eichenfeld. Whatever the case, it appears Kampen, like H.H. Heinrichs, went into hiding prior to the massacre. See: Letter from Cornelius Heinrichs to Marianne Janzen, 2; Anton Sawatsky, "Reminiscences," Collection 5500, item 4, Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, MB. See also: Dyck, "Einer der dabei war".
- 13 Letter from Cornelius Heinrichs to Marianne Janzen, 3. Copy in author's possession. The narrative presented in this article surrounding the Eichenfeld *Selbstschutz's* activities leading up to the massacre closely follows the research of Marianne Janzen. See: Marianne Janzen, "The Eichenfeld Massacre - October 26, 1919," *Preservings*, 18: 2001, 25-31. I would like to thank Marianne for generously sharing with me her personal research on Eichenfeld.
- 14 *Friedensstimme*, September 18, 1919, 3.
- 15 Julius Loewen, *Jasykowo: ein mennonitisches Siedlungsschicksal am Dnjepr* (Winnipeg: E. Loewen, 1967), 41.
- 16 Heinrich H. Heinrichs, diary, in the possession of Marianne Janzen, Winnipeg, MB.
- 17 David Penner, "Report on Adelsheim, Zaporozhye Region," in Toews, *Mennonites in Ukraine*, 149.
- 18 Dyck, "Einer der dabei war," 1.
- 19 Anton Sawatsky, "Reminiscences," 2. While Sawatsky was not a firsthand eyewitness of the massacre, he was present in Jasykovo at certain times and was in close contact with Eichenfelders, including the wife of Peter von Kampen. Sawatsky's narrative differs slightly from that of the Heinrichs family. For example, the murder of the local soviets is more attributed to van Kampen than Heinrichs. However, given that C. Heinrichs was a direct eyewitness and participant of the events in question, preference has been given to his narrative.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Loewen, *Jasykowo*, 44.
- 22 Susanna Warkentin Klippenstein, "Recollections," interviewed and transcribed by Marianne Janzen, 2. Copy in author's possession.
- 23 Letter from Cornelius and Margaret Heinrichs to Marianne Janzen, n.d.
- 24 *Ibid.*; Jacob A. Dyck, a resident of Eichenfeld, confirms Heinrichs' story of Hiebert's possible betrayal: "But there were traitors even among us Mennonites. A man, whose name I won't mention, went to the Red army and gave them the name of the young men who did the shooting." Dyck, "Einer der dabei war," 1; Writing about the same events David G. Rempel, the cousin of H.H. Heinrichs, remarks that "rumours about Eichenfeld's self-defense units' complicity in this act of revenge were true." H.H. Heinrichs lived in hiding for a number of weeks at Rempel's grandmother's home in the aftermath of these murders. David G. Rempel, "I too was there and mead I drank ...," *Preservings* 21 (December 2002): 3.
- 25 According to David G. Rempel and Heinrichs' own memoirs, Heinrichs hid within the colonies until the middle of June when the White army secured control over

- Khortitsa Island. Heinrichs escaped to the island whereupon he enlisted in the White army. In the aftermath of the civil war, Heinrichs successfully immigrated to the United States, where he worked for the Ford Motor Company in Detroit. He died in Detroit in 1941. *Ibid.*, 6; Heinrich H. Heinrichs, diary, 1-3.
- ²⁶ Penner, "Report on Adelsheim," 150.
- ²⁷ Rempel, "I too was there and mead I drank ...", 3.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ²⁹ Isaac Epp, "A Time of Darkness," in Dyck, et al., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 46. Originally published as Isaac Epp, "Dubovka," *Vorwärts* (December 21, 1923), n.p. Loewen gives a date of October 24th for the village of Franzfeld. Loewen, *Jasykowo*, 44.
- ³⁰ Peter Arshinov, *History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918-1921* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1974), 148.
- ³¹ Peter Letkemann, "Mennonite Victims of Revolution, Anarchy, Civil War, Disease and Famine, 1917-1923," *Mennonite Historian* 6 (1998), accessed March 2013, <http://old.mbconf.ca/old/historian/98-06/feature-2.html>. See Belash's description of the typhus epidemic in Viktor Belash, *Dorogi Nestora Makhno* (Kiev: RVTS "Proza", 1993), 383. According to Belash, Makhno himself was delirious with typhoid by early January. Belash, 417.
- ³² Michael Malet, *Nestor Makhno in the Russian Civil War* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 91-92.
- ³³ David G. Rempel, *A Mennonite Family in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 222.
- ³⁴ Like Makhno, Ataman Nikifor Grigoriev led an independent insurgent army during the civil war. He was known for his shifting alliances and anti-Semitism. His troops murdered 3000 Jews in Elizavetgrad in May 1919. In July 1919 Grigoriev attempted to recruit Makhno for an uprising against the Reds. At a meeting between the two leaders on January 27, Makhno had Grigoriev publicly executed for crimes against the Jewish community. See: Nestor Makhno, "The Makhnovshchina and Anti-Semitism," in Nestor Makhno, *The Struggle Against the State and Other Essays*, ed. Alexandre Skirda (San Francisco: AK Press, 1996), 35-37; Arshinov, *Makhnovist Movement*, 138-140.
- ³⁵ Viktor P. Danilov and Teodor Shanin, *Nestor Makhno: Krest'yanskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine: 1918-1921* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), 257.
- ³⁶ From an archival document cited in Mikhaïlo Koval'chuk, *Bez peremozhstv: Povstans'kyi rukh v Ukraini proty bilohvardiis'kykh viis'k henerala A. Denikina* (Kiev: Vydavnychyi Dim Stylos, 2012), 148.
- ³⁷ Voline, *The Unknown Revolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1990), 644-645.
- ³⁸ V. Azarov, *Kontrrazvedka: The Story of the Makhnovist Intelligence Service* (Edmonton: Black Cat Press), 24.
- ³⁹ Belash, *Dorogi Nestora Makhno*, 357.
- ⁴⁰ Mikhaïlo Koval'chuk, "Borot'ba povstankoi armii N. Makhna proty bilohvardiis'kykh viis'k henerala A. Denikina v lystopadi - hrudni 1919 r.," *Kyivs'ka Starovyna* 4 (2010): 30.
- ⁴¹ Nestor Makhno, *Memoires et Écrits*, ed. Alexandre Skirda (Paris: Ivrea, 2009), 484.
- ⁴² Koval'chuk, *Bez peremozhstv*, 148. See also Makhno's orders on army discipline between October 9 and November 18, 1919 in Makhno, *Memoires et Ecrits*, 484-486.
- ⁴³ Danilov and Shanin, *Nestor Makhno: Krest'yanskoe dvizhenie na Ukraine*, 261-262.
- ⁴⁴ RPAU (m) stands for "Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovist)".
- ⁴⁵ Azarov, *Kontrrazvedka*, 25. The original document is reproduced in full in Alexandre Skirda, *Nestor Makhno*, 368-380.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

- ⁴⁷ Cited in Azarov, *Kontrrazvedka*, 27.
- ⁴⁸ Rempel, *A Mennonite Family*, 230-231.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 229.
- ⁵⁰ Neufeld, *Russian Dance of Death*, 38.
- ⁵¹ Schroeder, *Miracles of Grace and Judgment*, 115.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 116.
- ⁵³ Belash, *Dorogi Nestora Makhno*, 370.
- ⁵⁴ Mennonite sources confirm such a massive troop transfer between the cities. Loewen, *Jasykowo*, 45; Epp, "A Time of Darkness," 46. David A. Quiring, "The Days of Terror in the Village of Eichenfeld," in Toews, *Mennonites in Ukraine*, 141. Originally published as David A. Quiring, "Die Schreckenszeit in dem Dorfe Eichenfeld, Sued-Russlan, im Oktober 1919," *Mennonitische Rundschau* 49, no. 31-41 (1926): n.p.
- ⁵⁵ Belash, *Dorogi Nestora Makhno*, 223.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 375. Oral histories from this region, collected in 2001 by Svetlana Bobyleva, confirm that Makhnovists were present in the village of Fedorovka. Dyck et al., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 81-89.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 371-372. Belash cites the order as having been published in the November 5 issue of *Put' k Svobode*.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 372.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.* Since Belash is the only source we have of this event it is impossible to know if he actually countermanded Makhno's orders of execution. Belash wrote his memoirs under Soviet supervision and may have been attempting to skirt responsibility for any murder of civilians.
- ⁶⁰ Neufeld, *Russian Dance of Death*, 43.
- ⁶¹ Neufeld gives the date of November 6 [October 24] for the massacre suggesting that he either entered the date incorrectly initially or backtracked and logged the date incorrectly at a later time. Regardless, Neufeld's description of the massacre accurately corresponds with reports and may therefore be considered reliable. Neufeld, 44-46.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 38.
- ⁶³ N.I. Saloff-Astakhov, *Interesting Facts of the Russian Revolution, or In the Flame of Russia's Revolution with God and the Bible* (New York: 164 Second Ave., 1931), 103. Astakhov, was informed that Makhno was stationed north near Ekaterinoslav, thus further confirming that Makhno was not present in Eichenfeld during the days around the massacre. However, Astakhov does report the arrival of Makhno's "highest commanding staff" at Nikolaipol a few days after the massacre.
- ⁶⁴ Abram Kröker, *Bilder aus Sowjet-Russland* (Striegau in Schlesien, 1930), 13.
- ⁶⁵ Quiring, "Days of Terror," 143; Margaret Epp, *But God Hath Chosen* (Hillsboro: Board of Missions of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, 1963), 14.
- ⁶⁶ Quiring, "Days of Terror," 143; Elizabeth Harder Warkentin, "Eichenfeld," Interviewed and transcribed by Marianne Janzen, 1.
- ⁶⁷ Elizabeth Harder Warkentin, "Eichenfeld," 1.
- ⁶⁸ For an official list of victims see: Dyck et al., *Nestor Makhno*, 105-112. A further six men and one women were murdered in Eichenfeld in the ten days after the massacre. A final Eichenfelder committed suicide, bringing the total number of victims to 83.
- ⁶⁹ Dyck, et al, *Nestor Makhno*, 82-83
- ⁷⁰ H.W. Klassen., "Remembrances of Eichenfeld-Dubovka, Jasykovo, 1919," translated by Marianne Janzen, in Janzen, "The Story of Eichenfeld," 175. Copy in author's possession. The original was published in German in the Mennonite newspaper *Der Bote*.
- ⁷¹ Quiring does not name the commander, however, in a separate source Katharina Penner gives the name of "Morosov". Heinrich Friesen, "Bartholomew Night in

- Eichenfeld,” trans. Arthur Toews (unpublished manuscript), 13. Copy in author’s possession.
- ⁷² Quiring, “The Days of Terror,” 144.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ⁷⁴ Dyck et al., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 70.
- ⁷⁵ Abram Dombrowsky, “Something Out of My Life,” trans. Marianne Janzen, 1. Originally published in *Der Bote* (1926): n.p. Copy in author’s possession.
- ⁷⁶ Quiring, “Days of Terror,” 144.
- ⁷⁷ Epp, “A Time of Darkness,” 47.
- ⁷⁸ Friesen, “Bartholomew Night in Eichenfeld,” 12.
- ⁷⁹ Quiring, “Days of Terror,” 143.
- ⁸⁰ Friesen, “Bartholomew Night in Eichenfeld,” 13.
- ⁸¹ Schroeder, *Miracles of Grace and Judgment*, 116.
- ⁸² H.W. Klassen, “Remembrances of Eichenfeld-Dubovka, Jasykovo, 1919,” 175.
- ⁸³ Quiring, “Days of Terror,” 150.
- ⁸⁴ Friesen, “Bartholomew Night in Eichenfeld,” 12.
- ⁸⁵ Rempel, “I too was there and mead I drank ...”, 27.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁸⁸ This assessment mirrors Neufeld’s conclusions regarding the local context of the Zagradovka massacre. Neufeld, *Russian Dance of Death*, 77-78.
- ⁸⁹ Rempel, “I too was there and mead I drank ...”, 25.
- ⁹⁰ Dyck et al., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 82, 83.
- ⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 83.
- ⁹² B.V. Malinovskii and T.V. Malinovskaia, “Nemtsy-zemlevladel’tsy v sotsial’nykh konfliktakh perioda Ukrainskoi Narodnoi Respubliki i Ukrainskoi Derzhavy getmana P.P Skoropadskogo (1918 g.) in S. Bobyleva, ed., *Voprosy germanskoi istorii* (Dnipropetrovsk: RVV DNY, 2007), 136-137.
- ⁹³ Penner, “Report on Adelsheim,” 149. Penner’s account is confirmed by a report in *Friedensstimme*, May 18, 1919, 7.
- ⁹⁴ Excerpt from the diary of an anonymous Eichenfeld resident. Margaret Krup, letter to author, July 8, 2012.
- ⁹⁵ Dyck et al., *Nestor Makhno and the Eichenfeld Massacre*, 88.