

Negotiating with the Soviets: Alvin Miller of American Mennonite Relief, 1920–26

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October 1, 2021, marked exactly one hundred years since the signing in Moscow of the “Agreement Between the American Mennonite Relief Administration and the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.” This historic “Moscow Agreement” effectively opened the door for Mennonite relief aid to be sent, first to Mennonite settlements in Ukraine, and later eastward to Mennonite settlements throughout Central Russia and Siberia. The Agreement was signed by Lev Kamenev, one of the most senior officials of the Communist Central Committee, and Alvin J. Miller, the man at the centre of negotiations with Bolshevik authorities in Moscow, and later in Kharkov, Ukraine, in the fall of 1921. Miller was a highly educated and remarkably talented individual with gifts and skills ideally suited for his negotiating and leadership roles in Russia. In February 1922 he would become the director of all American Mennonite Relief (AMR) programs in the Soviet Union, a position he held until 1926.¹

Alvin Jacob (“Ajax”) Miller (1883–1981) was born on the Miller family farm near Grantsville, Maryland, a small Amish Mennonite Community, about a hundred miles southeast of Pittsburgh on December 11, 1883. Alvin’s father, Joel J. Miller (1844–1915), was for many years a leading minister and bishop in the Amish Mennonite Church. After teaching in public schools for several years, Alvin began studies at Goshen College, Indiana, in 1908 and graduated with

a BA in 1911. The following year he went to Columbia University in New York City where he completed an MA. After another two years of teaching, Miller returned to Columbia University in the fall of 1914 to complete another year of graduate studies in pedagogy and social psychology. He would then join the Faculty of Education at Kent State Normal School (known later as Kent State University) in the fall of 1915. He taught there on and off for a total of thirty-nine years, finally retiring in 1974, at the age of ninety.



Figure 1. Alvin J. Miller

In 1918, at the end of the First World War, Miller (aged thirty-six) volunteered with the Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers to provide relief and reconstruction service in devastated areas of France.² He and some fifty other American Mennonite men served under the administration of the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) and the American Red Cross.³ Recalling this time of service many years later, Miller wrote that Mennonite workers in France developed the conviction that they should render this kind of Christian service in the name of the Mennonite church. “It was our strong conviction that we owed this to our historical past, and also to the future generations of Mennonites.”⁴

This “strong conviction” resulted in a three-day conference of forty-eight Mennonite relief workers in the community of Clermont-en-Argonne (about 250 kilometres east of Paris), from June 20 to 22, 1919.⁵ Miller later wrote that “the Mennonite relief work in Russia [truly] had its original inception . . . at [this] conference.”⁶ At the conference a committee of four men, led by Miller, was appointed

to confer with Herbert Hoover, head of the American Relief Administration (ARA) and Col. William N. Haskell of the American Red Cross in their Paris offices about possible fields of service for a separate Mennonite relief organization.

Hoover (1874–1964), who would later serve as the thirty-first president of the United States from 1929 to 1933, was appointed program director of the ARA when it was formed by the US Congress on February 24, 1919. The ARA provided four million tons of relief supplies to inhabitants of the war-torn countries of central and eastern Europe, and later Soviet Russia, in the years after the First World War. Haskell (1878–1952), who had served with the American Red Cross in Europe during the War, later became ARA director, first in Romania and later in Moscow.⁷

After their meetings in Paris, Miller and two colleagues travelled to the Odessa region of southern Ukraine in August 1919 to investigate the needs and possibilities for Mennonite relief work.⁸ They were probably the first American relief workers to enter Russia after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. They returned to central Europe in October and Miller remained in Germany over the winter. In mid-April 1920, he met with members of the Russian Mennonite *Studienkommission* in Berlin, shortly after their arrival in Germany. The purpose of this Study Commission was to solicit food and other relief aid for Russian Mennonites in the wake of the Great War, Revolution, anarchy, and civil war, and to investigate possibilities for the mass migration of suffering Mennonites out of Russia. Benjamin Unruh, secretary of the commission, wrote that the meeting with Alvin Miller was very meaningful and later acknowledged Miller's important contribution in opening the door for relief work in Russia.⁹

In June 1920, Miller was invited by the American Red Cross to travel to Crimea to organize a Red Cross unit in Simferopol to deal with a cholera epidemic. This was his second trip into Russian territory. In late August, less than three months later, the Simferopol unit was closed as hostile Red Army forces moved into the Crimean Peninsula from the north. Miller returned to Constantinople and then travelled to western Europe for medical treatment.¹⁰

While Miller was serving in Crimea that summer, thirteen representatives of the various relief committees of the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, and (Old) Mennonite conferences met in Elkhart, Indiana, on July 27–28, to discuss the possibility and advisability of sending relief workers and supplying aid to their fellow believers in Russia and Ukraine. In the afternoon session these representatives deemed it “well and desirable to create a Mennonite Central Committee whose duty shall be to function with and for the

several relief committees of the Mennonites in taking charge of all gifts for S[outh] Russia, to make all purchases of suitable articles for relief work, and to provide for the transportation and the equitable distribution of the same.”¹¹

The members of the temporary executive committee, including P. C. Hiebert as chairman, Levi Mumaw as secretary-treasurer together with H. H. Regier, were instructed to request all Mennonite conferences to approve plans for a relief effort by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) at their annual summer conference meetings. A meeting of representatives from the five conferences who approved these plans was called for September 27 in Chicago. Here they elected a new executive committee consisting of Hiebert, Mumaw, and Maxwell Kratz. MCC outlined its duty as acting “for and with the several Mennonite relief committees in the direction of the joint relief work to be carried on in South Russia.”¹²

Even before this organizational meeting was held, the first delegation of MCC relief workers, including Orie O. Miller, Arthur W. Slagel, and Clayton Kratz, left New York for Constantinople on September 2 in order to establish a Mennonite relief unit. On October 2, Orie Miller and Clayton Kratz were permitted to travel to the port of Sevastopol in Crimea. From Sevastopol they made their way some 400 kilometres north to the Molochna settlement to meet Mennonite leaders and discuss plans for the proposed relief work. Orie Miller returned to Constantinople on October 25, while Clayton Kratz stayed on in Halbstadt and was never heard from again. Unfortunately, the tragic story of his martyrdom cannot be told here.¹³

Before sailing to Constantinople, Orie Miller had written to Alvin Miller and invited him to join the Mennonite relief unit there. After completing his medical treatment in Vienna, Alvin Miller accepted the invitation and arrived in Constantinople on January 29, 1921, to join Orie Miller and Slagel. Orie soon recognized Alvin’s unique skills and assigned him the task of negotiating with Soviet authorities for official permission to get relief supplies and Mennonite relief workers into Russia. Alvin had already displayed his gift for getting to top officials in his earlier meetings with Hoover and Haskell in Paris. Now in Constantinople Alvin first met with members of the Soviet mission and with American ARA leaders, who were favourable to Mennonite cooperation.¹⁴

On April 6, 1921, Alvin Miller and Slagel boarded the Greek-owned English freighter SS *Albatross* bound for Novorossisk on the eastern Black Sea coast to continue preparations for potential Mennonite relief work in Ukraine and southern Russia. This was now Miller’s third trip into Russian territory, but it soon became apparent that relief aid would have to enter the Soviet Union not via the

Black Sea but from farther north.¹⁵ Even as they travelled along the Black Sea coast Miller and Slagel already saw and heard reports about serious famine conditions beginning to spread throughout the country. These conditions were the result of several factors, including “a drought, the chaos caused by the revolutions of 1917, the ravages of the World War and the Russian Civil War, and Bolshevik food requisitioning in the countryside.”¹⁶

In the early months of 1921, Bolshevik authorities still denied the existence of famine in Russia even though reports and photos published in the West showed otherwise. However, as conditions worsened, Bolshevik leaders finally allowed the famous Russian writer Maxim Gorky to issue a public appeal for foreign aid on July 13, 1921. He concluded his appeal with these words: “I ask all honest European and American people for prompt aid to the Russian people. Give bread and medicine.”¹⁷ On July 25, Herbert Hoover replied to Gorky’s appeal, writing that subject to certain conditions the ARA was prepared to enter upon this work.¹⁸

One day earlier, Miller had left Constantinople by train with plans to enter Russia via Riga, Latvia. At the Italian-Swiss border he purchased an American newspaper and learned that the ARA had been asked to give aid to starving Russia and that a high official of the organization would proceed shortly to the Baltic states to confer with a special representative of the Soviet government. Miller continued on his train journey hoping to meet this unnamed “high official” at ARA headquarters in Paris. When he arrived at the ARA office in Paris, Miller learned that Walter Lyman Brown, the head of the ARA in Europe, was in London and would be leaving within a day or two for negotiations in Riga. Miller telephoned Brown immediately and arranged an appointment for later that day in London. Then he was lucky to secure a seat on a six-passenger aircraft bound for London.

At the London ARA office, Miller met with Walter Brown and his assistant Philip H. Carroll, who was already devising plans for the handling of shiploads and trainloads of food supplies. This meeting in London was important because it acquainted the ARA leadership with the fact that Mennonite representatives had already made contact with Soviet officials in southern Russia. As P. C. Hiebert notes, “Carroll was later on to be the first man in charge of the work in Russia and was also for a considerable time the head of the supply department through which the food supplies were delivered to our Mennonite organization.”¹⁹

Miller’s next step was to contact the Soviet mission in London to secure an entry visa. With the assistance of Ruth Fry, head of the Quaker Friends War Victims Relief Committee in London, he was

able to meet with Mr. Klishko at the Soviet mission. In a letter of August 8, 1921, Miller outlined the proposed plans for relief work in south Russia and requested an entry visa. He received his visa together with a full-page special letter to present at the Foreign Office upon his arrival in Moscow. Miller was able to accomplish all of this within only a few days!²⁰

From London, Miller travelled to Geneva on August 15 to attend a conference of relief organizations called by the International Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. Here Fridtjof Nansen was invited to serve as High Commissioner for Refugee Relief of the League of Nations. While in Geneva, Miller also received messages from Rev. Hylkema to the effect that the Dutch Mennonites (Doopsgezinden) were also interested in carrying on relief work in Russia.

Miller left Geneva and departed for Riga on August 20, the very same day that Walter Brown and Maxim Litvinov signed the so-called Riga Agreement outlining the proposed famine relief work of the ARA.²¹ For unknown reasons, Miller experienced great difficulties getting his Russian entry documents approved, but as he wrote later, "determined perseverance with quiet courtesy had won the point."²² One week later, on the evening of August 27, Miller finally arrived at the Windau train station in Moscow together with other American ARA personnel. They were met by Comrade Volodin from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and given accommodations at the prestigious Savoy Hotel, close to the Kremlin, the Foreign Offices, and the Cheka (secret police) headquarters.²³

Prior to his meetings with Soviet officials, Miller met with C. F. Klassen and Peter Froese, the two most prominent Mennonite leaders in Russia at the time, to gain their insights. Here he also met Mary Brieger Reimer, who would later become C. F. Klassen's wife. She was a brilliant and highly educated young woman, fluent in five languages, who would serve for many years as Miller's secretary in his Moscow office.²⁴

On August 29, Miller presented the letter of introduction he had received in London together with a memorandum outlining the proposals for relief work to officials in the Soviet Foreign Office. Ten days later, on September 9, Miller was finally able to meet with Lev Kamenev, the chairman of the Moscow Soviet and the head of the Central Commission for Combatting Famine. Kamenev was a highly educated Russian Jew, and the two men conversed in German. Kamenev replied to Miller's proposals on September 15, agreeing to allow relief work under three conditions: the supplies would be allowed to enter the country free of any duties, these supplies were to be guaranteed against any kind of confiscation or requisition, and

the transportation of supplies (and personnel) in Russia would be done at the expense of the Soviet government. Miller responded the following day, writing that “the conditions in general terms as contained in your letter are quite acceptable so far as they go.” Further negotiations went on for another three weeks.²⁵

In the meantime, on September 17, Rev. Jacob Koekebakker, representative of the Algemeene Commissie voor Buitenlandsche Nooden (ACBN) of the Doopsgezinden in the Netherlands arrived in Moscow with the intention of negotiating a separate relief work contract between the ACBN and the Soviet government. His coming brought new problems to the ongoing negotiations. Kamenev’s secretary Max Levien, who was also fluent in German,²⁶ declared that the government had no intention of drawing up a separate contract with another Mennonite group and urged that the work of the two be combined into one, citing the joint efforts of English and American Quakers.²⁷

Details were finally worked out and the “Agreement Between the American Mennonite Relief Administration and the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic [RSFSR]” was signed by Lev Kamenev and Alvin Miller on October 1, 1921. The detailed nineteen-point contract also included an appendix which stated that all the terms of the preceding AMR contract were “valid and binding in equal degree” between the Holland Mennonite Relief and the RSFSR and the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic.²⁸ The signing of the contract was transmitted at once by cable to Levi Mumaw at the MCC office in Akron, Pennsylvania, and Miller noted that “constant emphasis was put on our policy of feeding all the neediest in our territory regardless of race or religion.” He therefore felt it important to correct an error in the text of the later 1935 book *The Famine in Soviet Russia*, where H. H. Fisher wrote that Mennonites devoted their funds to the relief of members of their faith in Russia.²⁹

Bolshevik officials in Moscow assured Miller that the agreement would apply with equal force in all parts of Russia, but officials in the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic thought otherwise. Benjamin B. Janz, a prominent leader of Mennonites in Ukraine, came to Moscow in late September bearing a letter for Miller from Mr. Kowaljew, the Ukrainian commissar of foreign affairs, requesting a meeting in the Ukrainian capital Kharkov to discuss potential Mennonite relief activities in Ukraine.

Miller, accompanied by Benjamin Janz, arrived in Kharkov on October 13. After consulting with members of the Foreign Office, Miller was invited to meet with Mr. Yermostchenko, the second-highest ranking official in the Ukrainian Central Executive Committee. Miller described him as “a Slav, not well educated, and of a

somewhat rough exterior. He was straightforward in manner, almost to bluntness, and seemed to have considerable ability." They went over details of the earlier agreements for many hours. The following day Miller met with Christian Rakovsky, chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars. The so-called Kharkov Agreement was signed on October 20 by Miller, Rakovsky, and Yermostchenko.³⁰ In less than two months Miller had achieved the remarkable goal of opening the door to years of relief aid for suffering Mennonites in Ukraine and all of Soviet Russia.

After negotiations in Moscow and Kharkov were completed, Miller left for Berlin on October 2 to communicate (without Soviet interference of any kind) with Levi Mumaw at the MCC head office in Scottdale as well as to meet with Benjamin Unruh and Dutch Mennonite representatives in Haarlem.³¹ Miller arrived back in Moscow on December 3 and continued to work with ARA personnel and Soviet representatives to get relief supplies into the country. This task took many more weeks than expected.

On February 24, 1922, Miller travelled to Khortitsa to meet with Arthur Slagel and local officials to begin feeding operations. One week later the two travelled to Halbstadt for meetings with Molochna Mennonite officials. Unfortunately, the supplies, which Slagel shipped from Constantinople in January, did not arrive in Alexandrovsk until March 11, one day after Miller had departed for meetings in Moscow. Nevertheless, the first feeding kitchen was able to begin operation in Khortitsa on March 16, and days later in Halbstadt and other villages. The relief operations in Ukraine and Crimea were directed from one centre, the district office at Alexandrovsk (now Zaporizhzhia), where Slagel established the first relief unit and his headquarters in 1922. The twenty-three rail cars of food relief supplies sent by the Dutch Doopsgezinden arrived on April 15. Willink and other Dutch aid workers began food distribution on Easter Sunday.³²

At the end of May, Miller and MCC chairman P. C. Hiebert travelled eastward to the Volga to organize relief work among Mennonites and other settlers in the Samara and Orenburg regions. At the same time, C. E. Krehbiel undertook to organize clothing distribution operations in these various regions for the fall and winter of 1922-23.³³

MCC feeding operations during the first year were centred in Ukraine and in the Volga settlements of Samara and Orenburg. Famine conditions in the two large Siberian settlements of Slavgorod and Pavlodar were not as serious during this year but deteriorated near the end of 1922 and early 1923. In April 1923, a delegation of three men from the Siberian Mennonite settlements came to

Moscow to meet with Miller to request food and clothing for the approximately 17,000 people of their colonies. Relief aid operations continued in Siberia throughout 1923 and 1924.³⁴



Figure 2. AMR personnel. Standing, left to right: Alexandrovsk office staff Heinrich Epp, Mary Heinrichs, Heinrich Sawatsky, Jacob Sudermann, Heinrich Martens, Mrs. H. Martens, and Gerhard Peters. Seated: C. E. Krehbiel, Alvin J. Miller, P. C. Hiebert, and Arthur W. Slagel.

ARA shut down feeding operations in Russia on June 15, 1923, after it was discovered that Russia had renewed the export of grain.³⁵ AMR feeding operations in Ukraine went on until August 1, and after these feeding operations ceased Arthur Slagel left for America. As the relief kitchens closed, the next stage of the relief effort focused on an extensive program of agricultural reconstruction.

On July 8, 1922, P. C. Hiebert, C. E. Krehbiel, Alvin Miller, and Arthur Slagel met in Moscow to work out a plan for the Reconstruction Agreement, which was accepted by Soviet authorities in August 1922.³⁶ G. G. Hiebert, an experienced farmer from California, arrived in early August to take charge of agricultural reconstruction. The shipment of twenty-five American Fordson tractors and plows purchased at the Ford plant in Detroit arrived from New York on September 9 and within days plowing operations began in the

Khortitsa and Molochna regions. The Soviet government provided fuel and seed grain. By December 1, in just six weeks, the twenty-five tractors had plowed a total of 4,327 acres.³⁷ An additional twenty-five Fordson tractors were shipped to Ukraine in time for plowing and seeding operations for the next year. During 1923, the tractors plowed over 9,100 acres; considerable plowing under AMR auspices was also done in the spring and summer of 1924. All tractors were eventually sold to various Mennonite settlements, with payment being made in grain. This grain, in turn, was used for relief work. Despite some problems, the tractor project provided for a substantial increase in food production and thus helped to alleviate famine conditions.³⁸

As feeding operations wrapped up in mid-1923, the emigration movement from the Khortitsa colony and its daughter settlements began. The first train of emigrants left on June 22. By July 30, four large groups totalling more than 2,500 persons had left for Canada.³⁹ Emigration continued in 1924 when more than 5,000 persons left the country, the majority from the Molochna colony and its daughter settlements. Emigration from other regions in Ukraine and Russia continued in 1925–1926 and by the end of 1926 more than 17,000 Mennonites had made it to Canada.⁴⁰

Though Miller would have been consulted by B. B. Janz, Peter F. Froese, C. F. Klassen, and others involved in the emigration, he was only marginally involved in this process. He did participate regularly in the meetings of the Moscow Mennonite Fellowship and sang in the choir, led by the well-known conductor Franz C. Thiessen.

By December 1924 conditions had improved to the point that MCC concluded steps should be taken to cease operations under the American AMR umbrella. By this time, the agricultural reconstruction operations of both the Verband der Bürger holländischer Herkunft in Ukraine (VBhH) and the Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV) in Russia were in full stride.⁴¹ Finally, in August 1925 the MCC executive decided to cease operations in Russia altogether by October 1. Miller was instructed to close the accounts and deliver a final report to the MCC head office in Scottdale. However, due to ill health and other issues, he was unable to proceed as quickly as had been hoped. He finally had to leave Moscow on July 12, 1926, to have his health issues dealt with in Germany and Switzerland. He did not arrive home in the US until May 1927.⁴² He returned to the family farm to recuperate and work on his report, which was published in 1929 by P. C. Hiebert and Orie Miller in *Feeding the Hungry: Russia Famine, 1919–1925*.⁴³



Figure 3. The Moscow Mennonite Fellowship choir. Alvin Miller is standing in the back row, third from the left; conductor Franz C. Thiessen is seated in the centre.

From 1927 to 1930, Miller assisted with the work of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization and other colonization committees helping to place Mennonite immigrants on Canadian farms and selling second-mortgage farm lien bonds to American Amish and Mennonite buyers to raise money for this venture. His personal archives include extensive correspondence, documents, and reports covering this work.⁴⁴

Miller returned to teaching full time at Kent State University from 1936 to 1954, with the exception of two years during the war when he took a leave of absence to serve as director of the educational program for the National Conference of Christians and Jews. He retired from full-time teaching in 1954 but continued to teach selected courses on a part-time basis for another twenty years until he finally retired completely at the age of ninety and returned to his “home territory” in Grantsville, Maryland. During the last fifty years of his life, he was almost “forgotten” in Russian Mennonite circles, except when he resurfaced briefly in 1962 and 1963 with three articles about the beginnings of Mennonite relief work in *Mennonite Life*.⁴⁵ He died in Kent, Ohio, on November 9, 1981, and is buried in the Maple Glen Cemetery in Grantsville.

Alvin J. Miller’s simple gravestone describes him as an “educator” and as a “pioneer relief worker for Mennonite Central Committee.”⁴⁶ He was well suited to both roles because of his interest in the study of social psychology, his lifelong commitment to higher

education, and his deep religious convictions. Miller was also a good listener, communicator, and negotiator, and on numerous occasions displayed his “special gift” for getting to officials at the top of the political ladder to attain positive results for Mennonite aid work more quickly. In this regard, he compares most favourably to other Mennonite middlemen and ambassadors such as Benjamin H. Unruh and Cornelius F. Klassen.

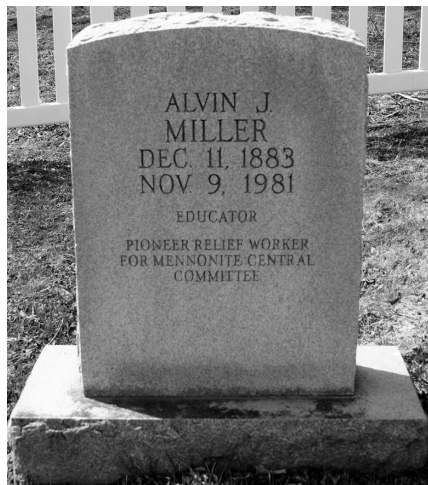


Figure 4. Gravestone of Alvin J. Miller

In conclusion, I personally need to offer a heartfelt thank you to Alvin Miller and Arthur Slagel and the rest of their AMR team members for providing food, clothing, and medical aid to many of my ancestors in Khortitsa, Osterwick, Franzfeld, Nikolaipol, and other parts of the Soviet Union. If it had not been for this aid they may have perished, and I might not be here today!

Notes

- ¹ P. C. Hiebert and Orie O. Miller, eds., *Feeding the Hungry: Russia Famine, 1919–1925* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929), 446–52.
- ² Guy F. Hershberger, “Mennonite Relief Commission for War Sufferers (Mennonite Church),” in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1957, [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Mennonite_Relief_Commission_for_War_Sufferers_\(Mennonite_Church\)&oldid=92757](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Mennonite_Relief_Commission_for_War_Sufferers_(Mennonite_Church)&oldid=92757).
- ³ Guy F. Hershberger, “Reconstruction Work (France),” in *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*, 1959, [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Reconstruction_Work_\(France\)&oldid=104856](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Reconstruction_Work_(France)&oldid=104856).

- ⁴ Alvin J. Miller, "Relief Work in Revolutionary Russia," *Mennonite Life* 17, no. 3 (July 1962): 128.
- ⁵ Hershberger, "Reconstruction Work (France)."
- ⁶ A. J. Miller, "Relief Work," 128.
- ⁷ Wikipedia, s.v. "American Relief Administration," last modified July 6, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Relief_Administration, and Wikipedia, s.v. "Herbert Hoover," last modified Nov. 21, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_Hoover. See also H. H. Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919–1923: The Operations of the American Relief Administration* (New York: Macmillan, 1927).
- ⁸ Benjamin H. Unruh, "Emergency Relief," in *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, vol. 1 (1913 [1924]), 574–75.
- ⁹ John Unruh, *In the Name of Christ: A History of the Mennonite Central Committee and Its Service, 1920–1951* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1952), 12–16; Benjamin H. Unruh, "Die Auswanderung der niederdeutschen mennonitischen Bauern aus der Sowjetunion," unpublished manuscript, Hoover Institution Archives, no. 48016, 215–17.
- ¹⁰ A. J. Miller, "Relief Work," 129.
- ¹¹ "Report of the Joint Meeting of the Mennonite Relief Committees, Elkhart, Ind., July 27, 1920," *Gospel Herald*, Aug. 19, 1920, 413–14.
- ¹² J. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ*, 12–16.
- ¹³ Orie Miller, "The First Essay into Russia and the Subsequent Work in Constantinople," in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 90–99; Paul Erb, *Orie O. Miller: The Story of a Man and an Era* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969), 144–46. On the fate of Clayton Kratz see Sidney King, "In the Footsteps of Clayton Kratz," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 62, no. 3 (Jan. 2001): 1–4.
- ¹⁴ Erb, *Orie O. Miller*, 150.
- ¹⁵ A. W. Slagel, "The Novorossisk–Rostov Trip," in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 111–16. Further details of the trip and contacts with Mennonites from Millerowo and Kuban are found in Alvin J. Miller, "The Door Opens for Relief Work in Russia," in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 170–71.
- ¹⁶ Bernard M. Patenaude, "American Famine Relief in Soviet Russia and Anti-Bolshevism, 1921–23," in *Hungersnöte in Russland und in der Sowjetunion 1891–1947: Regionale, ethnische und konfessionelle Aspekte*, ed. Alfred Eisfeld, Guido Hausmann, and Dietmar Neutatz (Essen: Klartext, 2017), 237–54; Arthur W. Slagel, "Causes of the Famine," in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 204–6.
- ¹⁷ "Gorky's Appeal," Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, accessed Nov. 29, 2021, <http://soviethistory.msu.edu/1921-2/famine-of-1921-22/famine-of-1921-22-texts/gorkys-appeal/>.
- ¹⁸ See Hoover's reply in the *Virginia Chronicle*, July 25, 1921, <https://virginia-chronicle.com/?a=d&d=NPO19210725.2.16>. See also Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, 548–54.
- ¹⁹ A. J. Miller, "The Door Opens," 118.
- ²⁰ A. J. Miller, "The Door Opens," 120–23.
- ²¹ Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 441–46.
- ²² A. J. Miller, "The Door Opens," 126.
- ²³ A. J. Miller, "The Door Opens," 129–34.
- ²⁴ On C. F. Klassen, see Herbert & Maureen Klassen, *Ambassador to his People: C. F. Klassen and the Russian Mennonite Refugees* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1990); on Mary Brieger Klassen, see Maureen S. Klassen, *It Happened*

- in *Moscow: A Memoir of Discovery* (Winnipeg: Kindred Productions, 2013), 17, 78–81.
- ²⁵ A. J. Miller, “The Door Opens,” 142–47.
- ²⁶ Wikipedia, s.v. “Max Levien,” last modified Dec. 6, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Levien.
- ²⁷ A. J. Miller, “The Door Opens,” 148–49.
- ²⁸ Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 446–52. See also the article by Ad van de Staaïj in this issue.
- ²⁹ Alvin Miller to Levi Mumaw, letter, Oct. 25, 1921, Levi Mumaw Files, Mennonite Central Committee Archives (MCCA), Akron, PA, IX-1-1, box 2; A. J. Miller, “The Door Opens,” 149–52; Fisher, *Famine in Soviet Russia*, 165.
- ³⁰ For further details on this agreement see A. J. Miller, “The Door Opens,” 152–165.
- ³¹ Correspondence between Miller and Mumaw can be found in the Levi Mumaw Files, MCCA, IX-1-1, boxes 2/9 and 3/1. Notes on meetings in Berlin can be found in B. Unruh, “Auswanderung der niederdeutschen mennonitischen, 522f. Minutes of the meeting in Haarlem on Nov. 8–9, 1921, are found in the Stadsarchief Amsterdam 1118/018.
- ³² Further details on the Dutch operations will be found in the article in this issue by Van de Staaïj.
- ³³ C. E. Krehbiel, “Clothing Distribution in Russia,” in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 260–76.
- ³⁴ Alvin J. Miller, “Relief and Reconstruction in Siberia,” in Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 312–22.
- ³⁵ See Wikipedia, s.v. “American Relief Administration.” See also Charles M. Edmondson, “An Inquiry into the Termination of Soviet Famine Relief Programmes and the Renewal of Grain Export, 1922–23,” *Soviet Studies* 33, no. 3 (July 1981): 370–85.
- ³⁶ Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 460–64.
- ³⁷ Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 298–99.
- ³⁸ Hiebert and Miller, *Feeding the Hungry*, 300–307; J. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ*, 20–23.
- ³⁹ Peter H. Rempel, “Records of the Emigration of Mennonite Refugees from Chortitza (1921–1923) from the Archives of Johann P. Klassen (1888–1975),” *Mennonite Historian* 45, no. 4 (Dec. 2019), 5, 8.
- ⁴⁰ Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, MB: D. W. Friesen, 1962), 139–202.
- ⁴¹ On the work of the VBhH see John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: Mennonite Emigration from Soviet Russia, 1921–1927* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1967); John B. Toews and Paul Toews, eds., *Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage in Ukraine (1922–1927): Mennonite and Soviet Documents* (Fresno: Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 2011). On the work of the AMLV see Peter Letkemann, “The Files of the Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein (AMLV),” *Mennonite Historian* 32, no. 3 (Sept. 2006): 4–5.
- ⁴² J. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ*, 22–23.
- ⁴³ A. J. Miller, “The Door Opens,” 116–203, and A. J. Miller, “Relief and Reconstruction,” 312–22.
- ⁴⁴ Alvin J. Miller Papers 1912–1930, Mennonite Church USA Archives, Elkhart, IN, box 1, folder 4 – Licenses to sell Farm Lien Bonds, 1927, 1928, 1930, and

box 2, folder 6 – Correspondence regarding Russian Mennonite and Farm Lien Bonds, 1928.

- ⁴⁵ Alvin J. Miller, “The Beginning of American Mennonite Relief Work,” *Mennonite Life* 17, no. 2 (Apr. 1962): 71–75, “Relief Work in Revolutionary Russia,” *Mennonite Life* 17, no. 3 (July 1962): 126–31, and “Clothing the Naked” *Mennonite Life* 18, no. 3 (July 1963): 118–21.
- ⁴⁶ Miller’s gravestone can be viewed at Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/37729488/alvin-j-miller1>.