

Mennonites, Nationalism and the State in Imperial Russia

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Nationalism is a new phenomenon in human history, usually recognised by historians as emerging in the nineteenth century.¹ It is associated with the development of ideas and political ideologies of peoples, states and nations, and also with socio-cultural transformation involving the emergence of modern, industrialized societies from older agrarian forms. Nationalism, with socialism, reshaped the politics and society of nineteenth and twentieth-century Europe. Mennonites in Europe could not escape the impact of nationalism any more than they could resist the forces of socio-economic transformation. In spite of these interrelated factors, particular circumstances and features of nationalism vary so that the interrelationship between Mennonites and nationalism must be examined carefully. For any study of the Russian Mennonites, this is an especially difficult issue. In Imperial Russia the Mennonite confrontation with the state, nationalism and socio-economic transformation was extremely complex. The development of the Mennonite Commonwealth, itself in part a result of Mennonite interaction with the Imperial state, deeply affected Mennonite self-identity and its relationship with the various manifestations of Russian nationalism.

New Russia: Place, People and Mennonite Russianization

The Mennonites who emigrated from Prussia to Russia from 1788 onwards took with them established notions of identity and attitudes towards place, other peoples, states and rulers. In the Russian environment these were to be transformed as Mennonites became attached to the new land and its varied inhabitants. They acquired a feeling for place which they incorporated into their sense of belonging, and this provided an important basis for their later interaction with the Russian state and Russian nationalism.²

The most profound impact of place and peoples occurred in Khortitsa. Khortitsa provided Mennonites with insights into the Russian past and brought them into close association with Slavic peoples. Mennonites did not enter an empty land, devoid of peoples and meanings. Many of the local Little Russian peasants, once Cossack serfs, either became state peasants or were enserved by Russian nobles. As Orthodox peasant-Christians (*krestianie/khristiane*) they belonged to the true faith, neither Tatar-Muslim nor Polish Catholic, part of "Holy Russia." Holy Russia was a concept which emerged in political discourse in the sixteenth or seventeenth century and included older ideas of "Mother Russia" (*Matushka Rus'*), which form the basis of the concept of the Russian "Motherland" (*rodina*).³

The Molochnaia settlers' experience was somewhat different. Their steppe region was more barren than Khortitsa and the surrounding population more varied and alien, consisting of Nogai Tatars, foreign colonists, "German" and later Bulgarian, Orthodox peasant settlers, and members of Russian schismatic sects (see Table 1). Also, Molochnaia was settled from Prussia at a later period and over a longer period than Khortitsa, so some Molochnaia settlers, and to a greater extent Volga Mennonites who emigrated after 1850, were influenced by social and cultural changes in Prussia, including nationalism.

	<i>Ekaterinoslav</i>		<i>Taurida</i>	
	Number	%	Number	%
Little Russian	1,456,369	69	611,121	42
Great Russian	364,974	17	404,463	28
White Russian	14,052	0.7	9,762	0.7
Jews	99,152	4.7	55,418	3.8
Germans*	80,979	3.8	78,305	5.4
(Mennonites)	(23,922)	(1.1)	(25,508)	(1.8)
Moldavians	9,175	0.4		
Poles	12,365	0.6	10,112	0.7
Bulgarians			41,260	2.9
Other	<u>76,608</u>	3.6	<u>237,349#</u>	16.
Totals	2,113,674		1,447,790	

*Includes Mennonites

Includes Crimean Tatars

Table 1. Ethnic populations of Ekaterinoslav and Taurida provinces 1897

(From: *Handbook prepared under the direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office; No 52 Ukraine*. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920, 11; Mennonite figures from Adolf Ehrh, *Das Mennonitentum in Russland von seiner Einwanderung bis zur Gegenwart*. Langensalza: Julius Belz, 1932, 83-84.)

In both colonies, however, there were varying degrees of accommodation to the new environment. The reproduction of everyday life entailed a creeping Russianization of life and custom which became increasingly profound as each new generation adapted to the land, took advantage of changing circumstances and interacted with surrounding peoples.⁴ The rhythm of the seasons and the local calendar, secular and religious, determined Mennonite work patterns, increasingly so with the employment of Orthodox peasant workers. Dress, and especially food, were also heavily influenced. But this unconscious assimilation from below was also accompanied by more conscious influences from above, the most important of which was the Russian state.

Rossification: State, Tsar, Bureaucracy and Mennonite Identity from 1789

Mennonite emigrants to Russia entered a frontier region, but one clearly within an expanding state whose structure and authority had been greatly enhanced during the eighteenth century. The power of the Russian Tsar and state, although originally based in Moscow, had grown rapidly since the sixteenth century to lay claim not just to Russia and the Russian people (*Russkii*), but to All-the-Russias (*Rossiiski*), including the peoples of Great and Little Russia (later called Ukraine) as an inheritance of the kingdoms and princedoms of ancient *Rus'*.⁵ The concept of Tsar (and Tsarina) reflected the political influence of Tatar Khans, but the title was derived from Caesar, and linked the Tsar symbolically to the ancient rulers of Byzantium and Rome. Later, Peter the Great assumed the additional title of emperor in line with his desire to make Russia an imperial power in European affairs. His new title, and that of his descendants, was not that of Russian Emperor (*Russkii Imperator*), but Emperor of All-the-Russias (*Imperator Vserossiiskii*); Tsar not of Imperial Russia (*Ruskaia Imperia*), but of All-the-Russias (*Rossiiskaia Imperiia*). Thus the old idea of All-the-Russias was expanded by imperial ambition. By assuming the title of Emperor, Peter added the primacy of the autocratic Tsar-emperor and his imperial state (*gosudarstvo*) to the older concept of the Tsar of Holy, Orthodox Russia.⁶

From the eighteenth century onwards the peoples of Imperial Russia increasingly included not just the inhabitants of the old Orthodox Slav lands, but also those of the newly conquered territories or people invited from abroad: Slav and non-Slav; Orthodox and non-Orthodox; Christian and non-Christian. Mennonites, entering Russia from the end of the eighteenth century as foreign colonists, were subjects of Tsar and state and settled in New Russia, a new territory which complemented the older Russias.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Russia's rulers established forms of local government and centralised ministries which culminated in the bureaucratically controlled police-military-state of Nicholas I. The incorporation of new territories and peoples also required a degree of adminis-

trative integration.⁷ Mennonites were involved directly and indirectly in these changes. From the outset, their settlement had been a consequence of official policy, and their colonies were organised and controlled through bureaucratic organs of government.⁸ This incorporation and integration into the state involved a process of Rossification as surely as their association with people and place laid the basis for their gradual Russianization. Rossification implied allegiance to Tsar and state, not assimilation to a culture, the acquisition of a new cultural identity or conversion to Orthodoxy.⁹ As the Russian state expanded, peasants and tribes were incorporated as subject peoples, but before the nineteenth century only political elites were assimilated to the cultural values and ideals of the Russian nobility. Mennonites, as skilled peasants, were merely to be incorporated and integrated into the state, not socially or culturally assimilated.¹⁰

Allegiance to the Tsar posed few problems for most Mennonites. It was logical that the respect Mennonites had always directed towards kings be transferred to the Tsar. But new ideas were apparent such as the concept of the Holy Tsar, promoted by those in authority to provide additional legitimacy to the Tsar's autocratic power. The reverence that many Russian Mennonites felt towards the imperial family well into the twentieth century, is not disconnected from such notions. It was through the Tsar, as both ruler and God's representative, that Mennonites were at first attracted to Rossification, rather than through any abstract allegiance to the state or its bureaucracy.

However, unbeknown to most Mennonites, the state-bureaucratic system assisted in the establishment of a new sense of Mennonite identity and thereby further enhanced their identification with Russia. As Rossification implied political incorporation and administrative integration, rather than cultural assimilation, this could be achieved most conveniently through utilising the new subject's own language as the basis for bureaucratic interaction. For the Mennonites this language was defined as High German, the closest literate language to Mennonite Low German. Mennonites already used a German Bible and German hymnbooks, and religious services were conducted in High German. Religious High German, however, was not bureaucratic High German, and Mennonites had to gain competence in this new language to participate in local government.

Russian administration of the colonies was achieved through indirect rule. Lacking personnel to administer colonist affairs, Russian authorities left the implementation of local government regulations in Mennonite hands. While Mennonites in Russia had formed congregational-communities based on previous practices, local circumstances forced the establishment of village-communities and beyond these colony-communities. The administration of village and colony-communities was defined by Russian decree, complete with mayors, secretaries and councils. These new community forms and administrative procedures, seemingly under Mennonite control, came to be seen by Mennonites as distinctly their own and somehow essential in the identification of what it

meant to be Mennonite and to belong to a Mennonite community. This was precisely the intent of Russian officialdom. They did not want to deal with Mennonites at the level of congregational-communities, divided as they often were by petty religious disputes. To Russian officials Mennonites were a distinct people—"Mennonites"—one of many foreign "Colonists." During the first half of the nineteenth century, all "Colonists" of German descent were dealt with as distinct groups according to either their place of origin or subsequent place of settlement (ie. the Volga colonists), rather than collectively as "German."¹¹

This official attitude was consistent with Rossification as practised in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It assisted Mennonites to form a wider, more embracing sense of being Mennonite and belonging to a community apart from just faith; now they belonged to a congregational-community, a village, a colony and a recognized group of Mennonite settler-colonists. On the other hand, while officialdom integrated Mennonites into All-the-Russias, it did so by isolating them from Russian culture, and encouraging them to feel and act differently from their neighbours: Mennonites were different in language, society, and economy, not just faith.¹² This form of Rossification was to have an important influence on Mennonite self-identity and attitudes when the government later changed policy and attempted to integrate and eventually assimilate Mennonites into Russian society.

Official Nationality: "Nationalism" from Above, 1800-1860

Although in the eighteenth century the ideas of European philosophers had fascinated many educated Russians, enthusiasm for western philosophical ideas waned rapidly following the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. Particularly odious were ideas concerned with liberalism, republicanism and associated concepts of nationalism which stressed allegiance to a country and its people, rather than to a regime and its ruler. After 1815 European leaders, especially in the old autocratic states, attempted to distance themselves from Napoleon's reforming legacy and to suppress liberal, romantic ideas which, in an age of rapid economic transformation, called for national and social liberation. But even the rulers and bureaucrats of conservative states could not deny the benefits of rational administration and the harnessing of the wealth and resources of state and people. If revolution and populism were to be avoided, then state-engendered reform and state-imposed ideologies were useful both in administration and in countering forces opposed to the established order.

In 1832 the Russian Minister for Education, Count Uvarov, attempted to include nationalism in the state-sponsored ideology called Official Nationality (*Ofitsial'naia narodnost'*), to be based on the principles of Orthodoxy, Autoc-

racy and Nationality.¹³ The Tsar and Orthodox faith were well established features of Russian identity, but Nationality (*narodnost*'), although based on the well-known concept of "peoplehood," was new. By including the concept of peoplehood, Uvarov attempted to incorporate an idea of national consciousness into official ideology; nationalism, stripped of its romantic and liberal allusions, was to serve the state. The western idea of nation and nationalism had also entered the Russian vocabulary in the terms *natsiia* and *natsionalnost*'. There were now two terms to describe nation and nationalism and, as in the German distinction between *Volk* and *Nation*, one, derived from *narod*'—"the people"—suggested a popular folk identity, while the other appeared foreign, more political and official. Indeed, in Official Nationality the idea of nationalism involved a double meaning, a dynastic nationalism associated with the Tsar of All-the-Russias, and also a popular nationalism connected with things specifically Russian: language, custom and people. By appropriating the popular term *narodnost*', the government laid the foundation for its later support of Russification while also attempting to continue Rossification. In doing so, it established a paradox in official attitudes towards nationalism and a dilemma for government policy: Rossification and Russification were at odds with each other, so official support for either divided society, setting people against the state instead of promoting unity.¹⁴

Official Nationality was promoted through the bureaucracy, in public documents and official publications, and through schools. The 1830s and 1840s proved a period of intense interaction between the Mennonite leadership and Russian officials, especially enlightened bureaucrats in the Ministry of State Domains planning peasant reform.¹⁵ Through such contacts some Mennonites appear to have assimilated the ideas of Official Nationality, and this can perhaps best be seen in the patriotic poetry and letters written during the Crimean War (1854-56) by the administrator and teacher Heinrich Heese.¹⁶ How far Heese's opinions were shared by the general Mennonite population is unknown, but Russianization, Rossification and state-sponsored patriotism were gaining ground among Mennonites and the War certainly increased general patriotism and support for Tsar and state.

The War also increased patriotic fervour among the Empire's educated elite, but defeat brought renewed calls for reform of the Empire's institutions and society to re-establish the country's pre-eminence in European affairs. The Great Reforms (1861-1874), initiated by Alexander II, transformed state and society and raised hopes of further reforms. This was also a period of great cultural change, with increasing awareness among the intelligentsia of a distinctive Russian and Slav culture in the fields of art, literature and music. However, many of the reforms strengthened and extended the power of the state at the expense of particular privileges associated with social estates, ethnic minorities and other interest groups without creating a unified sense of nationhood. Economically the country remained backward and the peasants, although emancipated, were provided with insufficient land and resources to prosper.

Among educated Russians the unfulfilled promise of continued reform after 1880, increased recognition of Slavic languages and cultures mixed with the appeal of nationalism as a cultural and political force, resulted in the emergence of powerful new ideologies. Great Russian nationalism, Pan-Slavism, the promotion of populist and eventually socialist ideas, all called not for a reconciliation between state and society, but for further reform or revolution.

Russification:

Identity from Below, Acquiescence from Above, 1860-1905

Pan-Slavism, a movement based upon the assumption that "Slavs" shared common links of language, culture, history and later "race," in Russia developed into a powerful political force during the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Mostly propagated by sections of the conservative elite (Slavophiles), it rejected Western ways and instead emphasised the distinctiveness of "Slav" culture and identity. It claimed solidarity with Slavs outside the Empire who were to achieve liberation through Russian assistance. But, as based in Russia, it also emphasised the leadership and superiority of Great Russians and expressed an unwillingness to recognise the right of non-Great Russians in Russia, even fellow Slavs, to political independence or to distinctive linguistic and cultural identities.

Russian nationalists focussed primarily on the cultural and political concerns of Great Russians. Again, led by right-wing sections of educated society but often with aristocratic support, nationalists wished to transform the Empire's inhabitants into cultural Russians. This included the adoption of the Russian language, Russian customs and conversion to Orthodoxy. While insistent on cultural transformation, for many it also implied a reform of society and the state. Those who saw Russia as backward, wanted the country to resemble a Western European nation-state, with culturally homogenized, educated citizens living under democratic institutions in a modern industrialized society. Others, closer to the Slavophiles, rejected Westernization and instead wished Russia to discover (or "rediscover") its own path based on distinctive Russian customs: a popular democracy based on medieval institutions or the peasant commune and an economy rooted in simple agrarianism.

These claims to cultural identity and autonomy outside the officially state-sanctioned ideology alarmed many Tsarist officials. Claims to popular cultural ideas were suspect, especially as educated Russians increasingly turned against Tsar and state. To the government any ideas which did not acknowledge the fundamental power of the Tsar and his state were dangerous and were to be suppressed. This was especially so under Alexander III, when new reactionary policies were formulated and earlier reforms were slowed or

reversed. Disturbed by the continuing popularity of nationalist ideas in Western Europe, all manifestations of nationalism, even Great Russian, became suspect. The slightest signs of emergent national consciousness among inhabitants of Russia's western borders were suppressed. The Polish rebellion in 1863 revealed the dangers of non-Russian nationalism and the government soon moved against other possible sources of nationalist sentiment among non-Great Russians: all publication and teaching in Ukrainian was banned and the Orthodox Church was strengthened; Catholics on the Empire's western borders, especially Orthodox Catholics, were persecuted. The established privileges of non-Russians, such as those in the Baltic states, were restricted or removed. Jews were singled out for special treatment: restricted, persecuted and subjected to vicious pogroms, many emigrated with the dubious blessing of the government.¹⁸

Official policies against non-Russians often pleased both Russian nationalists and Pan-Slavists and helped deflect demands for reform. The suppression of local diversity and privilege also assisted the centralisation and integration of the state. All peoples were subject to the same regulations, all were liable to conscription into the armed forces and all administration was in Russian. Following the Great Reforms, the preference given to the Russian language, and in official employment to those competent in Russian, engrained administrative Russification. If increased cultural Russification also resulted from adaptation to the new administrative demands, the government saw that as an added advantage; negative discrimination against non-Russians went hand-in-hand with the positive affirmation of Russianness.¹⁹ Rossification now became part of a general Russification which to most minorities of European background seemed concerned more with the removal of their cultural autonomy than with mere administrative efficiency.

The widespread official suspicion of even Russian nationalism meant that the legal rights of people were not to be increased at the expense of the absolute power of Tsar and state; what was required were subjects (*poddannye*), not citizens (*grazhdane*).²⁰ The extension of education, economically essential to a modern state and useful in the making of loyal citizens, might also open minds to radical ideas and encourage democratic desires. Industrialisation and trade might increase the wealth of the state, but this path too was fraught with political danger: subservient peasants were to be preferred to an educated, mobile workforce. Worse, all these changes appeared from Western experience to encourage liberalism and irreligion and opposition to the established orders. Thus nationalism threatened the state, the autocracy and Orthodoxy. Far from being able to mobilise nationalism or the other social or political movements associated with a rapidly transforming society, alienated from its educated intelligentsia and faced with an increasingly complex and growing multiethnic population, the Tsar and his officials found themselves isolated from their subjects and found the range of political options open to them increasingly limited.

The Mennonite Commonwealth: The Challenge of Russification and Nationalism 1860-1905

The Great Reforms greatly disturbed Mennonite communities. To a generally conservative people any change was suspect, but more so when change involved the removal of special privileges, most notably the privilege not to render military service. This was a challenge to the Mennonite principle of non-resistance, but it also altered the relationship between Mennonite communities and the Tsar, who had "promised" them, in perpetuity, freedom from military service. Most Mennonites proved unable to grasp the significance of the Reforms, or that military conscription was but part of a larger reform movement. Some leaders believed that if only they could reach the Tsar in person the wrong could be put to rights. But it eventually became clear even to the most naive Mennonite monarchist, that the removal of their privileges was condoned by the Tsar. The fact that the established privileges of other groups in society were also removed by the reforms, and that this trend would continue, was of little concern to Mennonites; many rejected Russia, its Tsar and government and emigrated to North America.²¹

Those Mennonites who remained received an extremely generous concession from the state: the right to avoid military service and instead to serve in a forestry service. This right, enshrined in law, was a special right, theirs alone. It also removed Mennonites from one of the major institutions nineteenth-century states utilised to integrate ethnically diverse populations: military conscription.²² As the Forestry Service was run by and for Mennonites, it further separated them from other subjects of the Empire, even from other foreign colonists with whom they had been administered. In other respects, however, in local administration, courts and education, Mennonites increasingly were integrated into the state. Even here, though, Mennonites maintained as much control as possible. Wherever local administrative cantons (*volosti*) included only Mennonites, they ran their own local courts and administered their own schools.

The experience of dealing with the state during the Great Reforms and the emigration and organisation of the Forestry service, revealed clearly to Mennonite leaders that Mennonites lacked political unity. Still largely divided along congregational-community lines, they possessed no central institutions to deal with the state. Those Mennonites who remained in Russia after 1880 began to organise to meet any new challenges and to maintain separate communities in an increasingly prosperous southern Russia. The basis of a Mennonite Commonwealth was established, a state-within-a-state, further strengthening that sense of being Mennonite and belonging to a Mennonite community which had developed earlier.²³

Up to the early 1880s Mennonites felt secure. They viewed themselves as the Tsar's loyal subjects, serving the state during the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) and expressing outrage and grief when the Tsar Liberator, Alexander II, was

assassinated in 1881. Still working on the assumption that the state favoured Rossification and that the degree of Russification required of them was limited to administrative matters, Mennonites accepted Russian as the language of official communication. Increased economic activity encouraged a greater knowledge of Russian in business and spoken Ukrainian in everyday dealings with local peasants, who now were essential to Mennonite agricultural production. Russianization increased as Little Russian servants entered Mennonite households. But this sense of security did not last long. By the mid 1880s Mennonites were made aware of Russian nationalism and Pan-Slavism through their involvement in debates over the "German Question" in Russian society.²⁴

The "German Question" had emerged quite early in the nineteenth century but after 1870 it involved both internal concerns with "German" influence in Russian politics and external foreign and strategic issues. Following German unification and Russia's humiliation at the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the view increased that Germany, not Austria, was the potential enemy on Russia's western borders.²⁵ As nationalistic and Pan-Slavist sympathies increased, official and unofficial concerns over the allegiance of the inhabitants of Russia's western border provinces were extended to include the provinces of New Russia.²⁶ Such fears were increased by extensive colonist purchases of land in New Russia following the Great Reforms. In the provinces of Kherson and Ekaterinoslav the Assembly of Nobles expressed concern with the rapid decline of noble landholding at the expense of "German" colonists, including Mennonites. Such local issues, aired during the 1880s in the regional press, soon spilled over into wider debates in the national journals.²⁷

In 1889 a Russian nationalist and publicist, A. A. Paltov, toured southern Russia with the aim of exposing the dangers to Russia of "foreign" colonists of German descent, including Mennonites. These non-Russians, he claimed, were typically "German," unwilling to learn Russian or to adapt to the country. Worse, they owed allegiance not to the Tsar or to the Russian people, but instead to the new German Empire. Mennonites and other colonists were purchasing land and expanding their control of business and industry in an area of increasing strategic importance on the Empire's western borders. They were also corrupting peasants, encouraging them to abandon their heritage of blood and faith, converting them to Protestantism and threatening the Orthodoxy essential for Russian identity and security of the state. To Paltov this was part of a larger German conspiracy to subvert the Empire.²⁸

Following the Great Reforms, Mennonites had indeed strengthened their cultural Germanness, mainly to maintain High German, the language of faith so essential for the continuance of their identity. At first they attempted to cooperate with other "German" colonists, especially in developing German schooling, but this failed due mainly to religious differences. Improved German instruction increased Mennonite appreciation of German literature, especially its poetry and songs, as choral singing became popular. Culturally, rather than politically, Mennonites saw themselves as connected to a broad tradition of

Germanness linked with Germany but extending into Russia. Many Germans in Russia had provided loyal service to Tsar and state for generations, particularly Baltic Germans. To be a Russian-German was an acceptable identity in late-Imperial Russia, in spite of the rising tenor of Great Russian nationalism. Mennonites referred to themselves as Mennonites, as Colonists, German-Mennonites and Russian-Germans. Popular Russian stereotypes of Germans as an orderly, hard-working, simple people, if somewhat dull and unimaginative, combined with Mennonite ideas and customary practices to further enhance their sense of a "German" identity.

While this increased Germanism appeared to support Russian nationalist claims that Mennonites and other colonists had failed to integrate, in reality there was increasing assimilation into Russian society. The strengthening of the Mennonite Commonwealth through the continued development of a sense of a separate identity, as well as through Mennonite prosperity, could not be denied. Through their economic activities Mennonites had assumed a place of prosperity and influence in multi-ethnic New Russia and they often looked down on those less successful or less "cultured" than themselves with an air of arrogant contempt.

Mennonites, however, were surprised and concerned by the attacks on their loyalty, which continued until the mid-1890s. Xenophobic accusations that cultural Germanness implied political allegiance to Germany were without foundation and easily refuted.²⁹ Throughout this period Mennonites were kept well informed of these developments as the Russian press articles were translated and commented upon in the German-language newspapers of Petersburg and Odessa, many by Abraham A. Neufeld, the noted Khortitsa Zentralschule teacher.³⁰

In the final decade of the nineteenth century, then, Mennonites were well aware of the challenge of Russian nationalism and of the increasingly negative opinion of their presence held by some educated Russians. But the attitude of the state remained unclear. There were obvious signals from government that any Mennonite expectation for continued special treatment was no longer realistic. From the mid-1880s all school instruction, apart from religion and German, had to be in Russian, and this often involved the employment of non-Mennonite teachers.³¹ The government continued to persecute minorities like the Jews and further to remove the privileges of Baltic Germans, Poles and even Finns, imposing the Russian language in administration and education.³² Rossification increasingly now involved officially sanctioned Russification.

Constitutional Government and Commonwealth, 1905-1914

Continued expansion of Russia during the nineteenth century, especially in Central and Eastern Asia, and Russian imperial ambitions had profound impli-

cations for internal and external relations. In 1904-05 a disastrous war with Japan, combined with internal social, economic and political problems, resulted in rural unrest and urban disturbances. The resulting Revolution of 1905 forced the Tsar to grant constitutional reforms: an elected parliament (Duma), the formation of political parties and greater civil rights, including religious toleration and freedom of the press. Although in the years up to 1914 the Tsar's government attempted to alter, restrict and even to remove many of the rights granted during the crisis of 1905, the Empire entered a new era of officially-sponsored reform. In the same period rapid economic change combined with greater political freedom to hasten social change. In this highly volatile atmosphere, Mennonites were presented with many new challenges, including renewed nationalism.

Following the 1905 Revolution many restrictions against minorities, including those on cultural distinctiveness, were removed and old privileges restored. For instance, Ukrainian was recognised as a distinctive language and publication in Ukrainian was permitted; Finnish rights, removed before 1905, were restored. For a time official Russification was in retreat.³³ But the granting of such rights resulted in a counter-reaction, especially from conservative Russian nationalists. The government needed the support of such conservative allies and soon the integrative policies pursued before 1905 were renewed. After 1907, when the government hoped it had secured the support of a more conservative Duma, many of the rights and freedoms promised to all Russians were again restricted or removed, minorities were harassed and Russification resumed.

However, the desire of many groups for a degree of autonomy within the Empire could not easily be suppressed. Nationalists, as well as political radicals and conservatives, increased their demands, often encouraged by the actions of Tsar and state. Right-wing politics became associated with extreme forms of Russian nationalism, combining conservatism with racist claims that Great Russians possessed an innate right to dominate non-Russians. Elites of various ethnic minorities promoted their own nationalisms and agitated for a degree of cultural and/or political autonomy, although they were often bitterly divided over matters of ideology and courses of action. The struggle between government and political groups often centred on competing claims to speak on behalf of "the people" (*narod*): those who favoured a constitutional future for Russia claimed to represent the emerging citizens of a multi-cultural, federated state; right-wing nationalists claimed to represent true Russians and the reestablishment of ancient Slav institutions; left-wing groups claimed the support of the working class for a new socialist society.³⁴ Government, of course, claimed it acted on behalf of the loyal, conservative subjects of the Tsar.

Mennonites reacted in a number of ways to the new opportunities and challenges presented by political change, government policy and reform. The Mennonite elite quickly became involved in politics, selected their own candi-

dates for election and some even attempted to form "parties," either alone or with others, ex-colonists or religious groups.³⁵ At first minority groups were promised separate places in the Duma, and some Mennonites argued that they too should be given special places, a clear indication of the extent of their perceived self-identity. They were disturbed that in the first and second Dumas (1906; 1906-07) they failed to secure special recognition or representation. While in the third and fourth Dumas (1907-12; 1912-17) changes to the electoral system clearly favoured conservatives and Great Russians, Mennonites did have the satisfaction of seeing two Mennonites elected.³⁶

Mennonite political activities and allegiances in the period after 1905 reflect internal differences of opinion concerning the relationship between themselves as a people, the state and Russian nationalism. There was a growing sense of Mennonite peoplehood, reflected in their use of the term *Völklein* (little people) and the strengthening of the social and cultural institutions of the Commonwealth, especially in education, welfare services, management of the Forestry Service, the regulation of congregational affairs and between different religious conferences.³⁷ These changes were necessitated not just by the changing political situation, but also by socio-economic developments, including increasing social differentiation within Mennonite society and Mennonite emigration to Central Asia and Siberia.³⁸ Such social differentiation and dispersal threatened the distinctive character of Mennonite identity and their ability to act as a cohesive people to confront the challenge of reform and continued integration into Russian society through informal Russianization and formal Russification.

The Mennonite elite of "Church" (*Kirchliche*) Mennonites, mainly younger teacher-preachers knowledgeable about Russian conditions, favoured separate Mennonite development, on Mennonite terms, within a multi-ethnic Russia. Politically they tended to be conservative and it is no surprise that initially many supported the most conservative political union outside the "nationalist" camp, the Octobrists. In its early days the Octobrist group favoured a constitutional monarchy, recognised the rights of national communities "within limits" and freedom of the press and religion.³⁹ Most "nationalist" groups emphasized the unity of Russia and conservatism, the continued autocratic power of the Tsar, Russification, the exclusion of Jews and other minorities from public life, and the strengthening of the "official" religion, Orthodoxy. Nationalist political groups would deny Mennonites' independence and threatened their faith, while liberal and socialist groups promised to reduce Mennonites to the status of common citizens in which their special privileges/rights might be subordinated to the will of the masses. But Mennonites were far from united in their political allegiances or in their support for the continuance of a separate socio-cultural Mennonite Commonwealth.

One of the results of the 1905 Revolution was the passing of a decree on religious tolerance which removed restrictions against schismatics and allowed, for the first time, withdrawal from the Orthodox faith. Freedom of

religion was also enshrined in the 1906 Constitution. Mennonites had always enjoyed freedom of faith, but evangelical activity among non-Russians had been restricted and banned totally among Orthodox subjects. After 1905 certain evangelical Mennonites, especially among the Mennonite Brethren, saw new evangelical opportunities outside the Mennonite world as they now could associate openly with Russian Baptists and legally evangelise among Orthodox people. In 1905, P.M. Friesen, a member of the Mennonite Brethren, formed a political party in the Crimea, the Union of Freedom, Truth and Peace, with other Mennonites and certain evangelical Russians, including Baptists.⁴⁰ But "Church" Mennonites tended to view these activities as a threat to the community as they directed effort away from the Mennonite world and provided Russian nationalists, and an increasingly reactionary government, with further reason to question Mennonite loyalty.

Russian conservative nationalists were particularly annoyed by the religious toleration decree and the freedom it gave to non-Orthodox groups, especially non-Russians, in the politically sensitive western borderlands. They viewed Orthodoxy as one of the central principles of national identity, the state and the autocratic power of the Tsar.⁴¹ The involvement of Mennonites and other German colonists in the formation of the Russian Baptists in the 1860s had long been pointed to by Russian nationalists as a sign of "German" disloyalty. Orthodox bishops, especially in southern Russia, had joined the criticism and after 1905 the evangelical activities of some Mennonites appeared to confirm their worst fears. After 1908 the government reviewed its policy of religious toleration and the Ministry of the Interior systematically investigated the activities of religious minorities, including Mennonites.⁴²

The Mennonite elite was well aware of the dangers of increased political nationalism and of conflict over religious matters. A careful watch was kept on political developments in government and the Duma. As military finances and organization were reviewed by government and Duma after 1907, Mennonites issued new statements on nonresistance and sought support for their continued exemption from military conscription.⁴³ To meet the religious challenge, "Church" Mennonites reorganised their scattered congregations, redefining practice and stressing the religious basis of the loyalty of their members.⁴⁴ More disturbing were indications that Mennonites were no longer to be recognised as a confessional group, but as a "sect." This term had ominous associations in Russian history as sectarians had long been viewed as subversive, a threat to Orthodoxy, the state and more recently to Russian nationalism.⁴⁵ The need for Mennonites to unite their religious factions and to stress the broader cultural basis of their peoplehood was increasingly apparent.

Another way the Mennonites attempted to promote Mennonite unity and express their loyalty was by publishing accounts of their history in Russia. After 1905 a number of such works appeared in newspapers and journals and as separate books, all stressing the importance of Mennonites in the development of the country.⁴⁶ P.M. Friesen's massive work, originally intended as a

historical account of the formation of the Mennonite Brethren, was expanded into a more general history with a section specifically devoted to Mennonite patriotism.⁴⁷ Before 1914 more works were planned, including school texts. But all these accounts were written in German, not Russian as nearly all Mennonites considered a continued adherence to German essential for their faith and aspects of their culture. This was in spite of continued Russianization and an increasing knowledge and use of the language as a result of wider access to higher education.

The freedom granted after 1906 for groups to associate and form organisations also witnessed the establishment in Russia of German societies, ostensibly to promote German language and culture.⁴⁸ Some of these organizations though had political overtones, not surprising in an age when German nationalism became more conservative and when ultranationalist German pressure groups reached out to the so-called "Germans abroad" (*Auslandsdeutsche*). Initially a few Mennonites joined South-Russian German cultural groups, but within a year no Mennonites are listed as members, probably because of their political implications. However, the existence of such organizations merely increased Russian nationalists' suspicions of Russian-Germans. International developments before 1914 intensified Russo-German political tensions and the theme of "German" traitors at home and the danger to Russia's western frontiers caused by their presence, was again debated in the Russian press. Some of these debates were translated and republished in the Mennonite press.⁴⁹ Land issues were of particular concern to nationalists who called for restrictions on land purchases and ownership in western provinces by "Germans." In response, in 1910 and again in 1912, the government introduced legislation on these issues, but its proposals were rejected by the Duma.⁵⁰

Before 1905 the impact on Mennonites of Russian nationalism had been restricted mainly to administrative matters and to distant press reports; after 1905 its impact began to be felt in everyday life. Although the proponents of Great Russian nationalism still came mostly from the nobility and intelligentsia, with the increasing social diversification of the Empire before 1914 nationalist rhetoric influenced all sections of society. Most Mennonites still lived in rural areas and associated more with peasants than with educated Russians. If they encountered Russian nationalism at first hand it was mostly in urban areas, largely from Great Russians or highly Russianized non-Russians belonging to the upper or professional classes. Local peasants remained tied to local identities and old allegiances and possessed little knowledge of the nationalisms espoused by Russians or other educated non-Russians, such as Ukrainians. After 1905, changes in peasant life begun following emancipation in 1861 were accelerated by increased education, literacy and greater mobility in search of work, but it is unclear if nationalist ideas deeply affected peasant opinion. "Official" encouragement of hatred towards non-Russians, especially Jews, certainly filtered down to peasant communities before 1914, adding to an increasingly volatile situation fuelled by unresolved agrarian problems, and

peasant distrust of landowners and government officials.

In southern Russia, around the established Mennonite colonies, peasants generally had good relations with their Mennonite neighbours. But in areas settled by Mennonites after 1861, on land purchased either as colonies or by private individuals, relations with local peasants were often more strained. Here peasants considered the land theirs by right and regarded Mennonites as interlopers. In this atmosphere nationalist claims that "German" land purchases should cease and that the land they occupied be expropriated, paralleled peasant aspirations to land, even if the bases for their respective claims were different.⁵¹

Apotheosis of Nationalism: War and Revolution, 1914-1917

When war was declared in July 1914, Mennonites responded like true patriots and their newspapers carried articles expressing Mennonite loyalty. Throughout the war, large sums were contributed by Mennonite communities and individuals to support humanitarian causes. Young men volunteered for service in the medical services and eventually almost half those conscripted volunteered to serve in this capacity rather than in the Forestry.⁵² But soon Mennonites, along with other non-Russians, were subject to chauvinistic attacks by Russian nationalists and to restrictive regulations and laws enacted by the Tsar's government. The government was concerned over the loyalty of peoples associated with its "enemies," not just people of German, Austrian, Hungarian or Turkish nationality, but also those claimed to be "descended" from such foreign stock, like Russian-German colonists. Within months of war being declared all publication in German was banned and regulations were passed to restrict the use of spoken German in public; the Mennonite German-language press closed.

Restrictions against minorities were introduced mostly under special provisions of the Fundamental Laws which allowed the government to issue regulations and laws without the immediate approval of the Duma. In February 1915 the government introduced legislation to confiscate all lands and property of people of enemy descent in border areas of the Empire. Members of ultra-nationalist and monarchist parties supported the government as did the peasant representatives of both right and left factions, although their interest was in the redistribution of any seized land. As with the pre-war legislation, a majority of the Duma rejected the legislation and many liberal members protested against the legislation.⁵³ But the government took little notice; it expanded and strengthened the legislation and proceeded to implement it in western Russia.⁵⁴

Mennonites responded to nationalist fervour and to the threat of expropriation by stressing their loyalty, publishing further accounts in Russian detailing their historical contributions to Russia and claiming by that they were of Dutch

(*Holländerei*), rather than German descent.⁵⁵ The Mennonite leadership mobilised its political forces and through contacts in the Duma and with members of the government, put its case for exemption from the expropriation laws. By one means or another they succeeded and in late December 1916 the Ministry of Justice exempted Mennonites from the legislation. Early in 1917, following the fall of the Tsar, the Provisional government abolished all previous "restrictions based on religion and nationality" promulgated under the Tsars, and removed any further threat of expropriation.⁵⁶

Russian nationalist fervour increased during the war with numerous attacks in books and articles against minorities, especially those of "German" descent, including Mennonites. A number of individuals defended the Russian-Germans, including a Lutheran minister, Pastor Jakob Stach, and an eminent professor in Moscow, Karl Lindeman. In Mennonite settlements anti-German sentiments were apparent: merchants and peasants toured the colonies and indicated how they would take possession of Mennonite land and property once their owners were "removed" to Siberia. Mennonites were confused and concerned by events; some contemplated emigration once the war ended. The manner in which government and society turned against Mennonites made many question their earlier support for Tsar and state and challenged their sense of belonging to Russia. But Mennonites who served in the medical services were exposed to quite different influences from those who remained in the colonies or who served in the Forestry. Whereas the Forestry Service protected young Mennonites from most external contacts, those in the medical services came into contact with Russian society and politics. Mennonites who served in the Moscow offices of the medical service were at the heart of political opposition to the government, centred on the *zemstva* organisations; those on the hospital trains and hospitals interacted with a wide cross section of Russian society. These experiences furthered the process of Russianization and Russification, and also radicalized some Mennonites.⁵⁷

As political opinion in Russia shifted away from support for the Tsar and his government, Mennonites followed. This change in political allegiance, which for most Mennonites began only during the war, was hastened by the discriminatory legislation, by the chaos and confusion of the war and the general incompetence of government and the local bureaucracy. When the Tsar and his government fell in 1917 the event was accepted by many Mennonites with expressions ranging from resignation to open enthusiasm. For younger Mennonites, serving their country or at school, and for many among the business and educated elite, the Revolution raised hopes of a new, democratic Russia where the rights of minorities would be upheld. But for older Mennonites, most of whom were conservative farmers raised in a period of reaction, there was suspicion of democratic ideas, appeals to the rights of citizens and the rhetoric of revolution and reform.

In the sudden rush of freedom following the Revolution many political movements emerged or reemerged and nationalism reasserted itself among

many minority groups.⁵⁷ Once vilified and persecuted by the government, Russian-Germans met to organise themselves into an ethnic political force on an All-Russian basis at the regional level, as in southern Russia and on the Volga, and at the local provincial level.⁵⁸ From the outset Mennonites were involved, but sent their own delegates and often were named separately in the titles of the various new groupings. For instance, in April 1917 a Central Committee of Citizens of German Nationality and Mennonites (*Bürger deutscher Nationalität und Mennoniten*) was established in Moscow. In Odessa a Union of South-Russian German-Russians also included Mennonites and as the Provisional Government prepared the country for new, democratic elections to a constituent assembly, further attempts were made to unite Russian-Germans into a cohesive political force. Differences in political affiliation, in regional organisation, culture and religion, soon resurfaced. Mennonites increasingly asserted their claims to special status and autonomy, arguing that they were Dutch, not German by descent and only German by culture, that their faith was different from other colonists and that their tradition of non-resistance needed to be guaranteed in any new political structure.⁵⁹ A Mennonite political nationalism, apparent in the expansion of the Commonwealth before 1914, began to assert itself, hoping to achieve a degree of independence in a new federal Russian republic.

In August 1917 Mennonite delegates from across the old Empire assembled in a congress to discuss their future in the new Russia. The discussions and debates revealed the degree of social and political difference that existed among Mennonites, particularly between the young men who had served in the medical services and the older colony and religious leaders. The old order wanted a return to pre-war ways, the new men demanded reform of Mennonite society and closer integration into the Russian world.⁶⁰ But beyond the Mennonite settlements events were moving rapidly; the political vacuum left by the fall of the Tsar had removed any form of authority and law and order from the countryside. With the collapse of the Provisional government following the Bolshevik seizure of power, the temporary invasion and occupation of the Ukraine by the Central powers, the emergence of peasant anarchy and the outbreak of civil war, any further discussion of Mennonite independence within a Russian democratic republic became meaningless. The eventual establishment of Soviet control in 1921 made it impossible. The old Russia had vanished for ever and a new form of state, with very different attitudes towards the social and cultural autonomy of minorities, was to present Mennonites with new challenges.⁶¹

Conclusions

The Mennonite experience of nationalism in Russia was mediated primarily by their relations with the Imperial state. Initially Mennonites were not only

granted a high degree of cultural autonomy by the state, but in fact were encouraged to develop administrative and social institutions beyond those required for the reproduction of religious community. This was consistent with the practice of Rossification, which required compliance with the authority and institutions of Tsar and state, incorporation and administrative integration, but not cultural assimilation. Mennonites were generally willing to conform to these demands and were extensively Rossified. Gradually, their own identity was reshaped through interaction with the state, and their sense of being and belonging expanded from its religious core to include a broader range of markers of peoplehood. When the state changed its attitude to minorities and initially for administrative convenience attempted to integrate them into a single system, Mennonites resisted, gaining new concessions from the state and adopting new strategies to maintain their independence. As the state shifted from Rossification to Russification, and as popular nationalism threatened the continuance of their cultural distinctiveness, Mennonites extended their own institutions to form almost a state within the state. Rapid socio-economic change and conformity to industrial social forms also favoured the development of a more integrated, homogeneous society. But although Russification from outside was resisted or accommodated on Mennonite terms, internal Russianization involving constant adaptation to the local socio-cultural environment increased with each generation.

The fall of the Imperial system and the failure to establish a state which permitted the continuance of their separate, almost "national" community, created a crisis of identity for Russian Mennonites.⁶² The Russia with which they had identified had vanished, to be replaced by a state whose view of society and religion was anathema to their vision of life. In emigration Mennonites mourned the loss not just of their former material well-being, but also of place and people (*die Heimat*) with which, through Russianization, they had come to identify. They also felt the loss of their political and social independence. Just being Mennonite and belonging to a Mennonite community defined primarily by faith was now insufficient for the continuance of community.

The peculiar interaction between Mennonites, the state and nationalism in Imperial Russia influenced the organisation and society of not just the descendants of Russian Mennonites in North America, but also other Mennonite and related groups. The passion for organising bureaucratic institutions, the urge for centralisation while preserving a high degree of local autonomy, a willingness to negotiate with worldly governments and to become involved in external politics, support for higher education and the promotion of ethnic difference in areas other than just religion, are all part of the North American Mennonite's Russian inheritance. The relationships developed with the state and nationalism therefore were not entirely negative: they helped ensure a different kind of Mennonite survival in the modern world other than the strategies of continued separation, withdrawal and emigration adopted by

many groups to escape the homogenising influences of modern industrialised nation states.

Notes

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¹ The literature on nationalism is immense and growing. I have always found most stimulating Ernest Gellner's *Nations and nationalism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1983 and the general historical overviews of Peter Alter, *Nationalism*. London: Edward Arnold, 1989, E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and states: an enquiry into the origins of nations and the politics of nationalism*. London: Methuen, 1977. For an excellent overview of nationalism in eastern Europe, including European Russia, see Raymond Pearson, *National minorities in eastern Europe 1848-1945*. London: Macmillan, 1983.

² On the settlement and development of the Mennonite world in Russia see David G. Rempel, *The Mennonite Commonwealth: a sketch of its founding and endurance 1789-1914*. Np: Privately Published, 1974; originally published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 47, 1973, 259-308; 48, 1990, 5-54 and James Urry, *None but saints: the transformation of Mennonite life in Russia, 1789-1889*. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1989.

³ On Holy Russia see Michael Cherniavsky, *Tsar and people: studies in Russian myths*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961 and on "motherland" Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia: the feminine myth in Russian culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

⁴ On Russianization see Urry, *None but saints*, 273; on the similar adaptation of Volga Germans to their physical and cultural environment, see James W. Long, *From privileged to dispossessed: the Volga Germans, 1860-1917*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988, 49-55.

⁵ This section owes a great deal to the discussion of these historical-semantic issues in Ladis K.D. Kristof, "The Russian image of Russia: an applied study in geopolitical methodology." In Charles A. Fisher ed., *Essays in Political Geography*. London: Macmillan, 1968, 345-87.

⁶ Kristof, "The Russian image of Russia", 349-50.

⁷ George L. Yaney, *The systematization of Russian government: social evolution in the domestic administration of Imperial Russia, 1711-1905*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973.

⁸ See Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth*, 55-60; Urry, *None but saints*, 70-74, 103-04.

⁹ I have adopted the term Rossification from Kristof, "The Russian image of Russia", 349-50, who contrasts it with Russification: attempts to make individuals and groups culturally Great Russian.

¹⁰ One authority has suggested that until the middle of the nineteenth century, the intransitive form of the Russian verb *obruset'* may be translated as "to become Russian," in contrast to the later use of a more active form of the verb, *obrusit'* meaning "to make Russian." Edward C. Thaden, "Introduction." In Edward C. Thaden ed., *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, 7. This indicates that Rossification was developed into policies of a more wide-ranging and active form of Russification (*obrusenie*), at least in European Russia, during the second-half of the nineteenth century. Russification involved cultural assimilation as well as territorial incorporation and administrative integration into the state essential in the formation of a nation-state; cf. Raymond Pearson, "Privileges, rights, and

Russification." In Olga Crisp and Linda Edmonson eds, *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, especially his discussion of problems associated with use of the term Russification (88-90).

¹¹ Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth*, 37; Urry, *None but saints*, 97.

¹² See Roger P. Bartlett, *Human Capital: the settlement of foreigners in Russia, 1762-1804*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, 213; Urry, *None but saints*, 71.

¹³ Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959.

¹⁴ Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality*, 124, 130-31, 137-38, 271; cf. Hans Rogger, "Nationalism and the state: a Russian dilemma." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 4, 1962, 253-64.

¹⁵ Urry, *None but saints*, Chapters 6-7.

¹⁶ On Heese's nationalism see George K. Epp, "Russian patriotism among nineteenth-century Russian Mennonites." *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 4, 1986, 120-34, and on Heese and other Mennonite reactions to the War, James Urry and Lawrence Klippenstein, "Mennonites and the Crimean War, 1854-1856." *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 7, 1989, 9-32.

¹⁷ See A. Walicki, *The Slavophile controversy: history of a conservative utopia in nineteenth century Russian thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975.

¹⁸ There are numerous accounts of these policies and actions, especially in the "nationalist" histories of the groups concerned. See Leonid I. Strakhovsky, "Constitutional aspects of the Imperial Russian government's policy toward national minorities." *Journal of Modern History*, 1941, 467-92 for the policy issues and for a general overview of their impact, Pearson, *National minorities*, 76-83; 100-04.

¹⁹ Pearson, "Privileges, rights, and Russification," 94.

²⁰ Pearson, "Privileges, rights, and Russification," 92.

²¹ On the general background, Urry, *None but saints*, 207-18 and James Urry, "The Russian state, the Mennonite world and the migration from Russia to North America in the 1870s." *Mennonite Life*, 46, 1991, 11-16.

²² The other foreign colonists were conscripted and as a consequence Russianization increased; on its impact on the Volga Germans see Long, *From privileged to dispossessed*, 35-37.

²³ Rempel, *Mennonite commonwealth*; Urry, *None but saints*, Chapter 13.

²⁴ On the "German Question" see Ingeborg Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich: zwei Jahrhunderte deutsch-russische Kulturgemeinschaft*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1986, 329-57, and Terry Martin, "The German question in Russia, 1848-96." *Russian History*, 18, 1991, 371-432; cf. Long, *From privileged to dispossessed*, 55-62.

²⁵ On the shift in foreign policy see George F. Kennan, *The decline of Bismarck's European order: Franco-Russian relations, 1875-1890*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, and David Saunders, *Russia in the age of reaction and reform 1801-1881*. London: Longman, 1992, Chapter 10.

²⁶ E.C. Thaden, *Russia's western borderlands*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; on the inclusion of New Russia and changing attitudes to "German" colonists see Martin, "The German question in Russia," 403-33.

²⁷ On the background to these local debates see Martin, "The German question in Russia," 424-33.

²⁸ Paltov wrote under the pseudonym of A.A. Velitsyn. His articles, serialised in the nationalist journal *Russkii Vestnik* in 1889-90, were published as a book in 1893: *Nemtsy v Rossii: ocherki istoricheskago razvitiia i nastoiashchago polozeniia nemestkikh kolonii na iuge i vostoake*

Rossii. St Petersburg: Izdanie russkago Vestniki; excerpts dealing with Khortitsa appear in Harvey L. Dyck (ed. and transl.), "Russian Mennonitism and the challenge of Russian nationalism, 1889." *MQR*, 56, 1982, 307-41; cf. Long, *From privileged to dispossessed*, 59-60, and Martin, "The German question in Russia," 426-27.

²⁹ Most notably by the Ekaterinoslav Russian landowner and future member of the Duma P. V. Kamensky in his *Vopros ili nedorazumenie: k voprosy ob inostrannykh poseleniakh na iuge Rossii*. Moscow: A. A. Levinson, 1895; cf. Dyck (ed. and transl.), "Russian Mennonitism," 314-15; Martin, "The German question in Russia," 432-33.

³⁰ On Neufeld (1862-1909) see *Mennonite Encyclopedia* 3, 848-49; the contributions of Neufeld, and other Mennonites and colonists to these debates deserve closer study.

³¹ In the Baltic provinces similar changes occurred; see Strakhovsky, "Constitutional aspects", 482. After 1895, every Mennonite schoolchild would learn from their German language reader that "Unser Vaterland ist das große Rußland. Es ist das größte Reich der Erde..." followed by a prayer for the Tsar, see Kornelius Unruh and Karl Wilhelm, eds *Deutsches Lesebuch für evangelische Elementarschulen in Rußland*. (2nd Edition). Neuhalbstadt: Peter Neufeld, 1900, 84-85.

³² On attitudes to Jews and other non-Russian minorities see Hans Rogger, *Russia in the age of modernisation and revolution 1881-1917*. London: Macmillan, 1983, Chapter 9; on the Baltics and Finland see Strakhovsky, "Constitutional aspects" and the essays in Edward C. Thaden ed., *Russification in the Baltic provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, and more generally Violet Conolly, "The 'nationalities question' in the last phase of tsardom." In George Katkov et al. eds, *Russia enters the twentieth century 1894-1917*. London: Temple Smith, 1971, 152-81.

³³ See Strakhovsky, "Constitutional Aspects," 470; George Y. Shevelov, *The Ukrainian language in the first half of the twentieth century (1900-1941): its state and status*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989; see also the discussion by Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Russian nationalism and Tsarist nationalities policies in semi-constitutional Russia, 1905-1914." In Robert B. McKean ed., *New perspectives in Modern Russian history*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, 250-77.

³⁴ See Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian constitutional experiment: government and Duma, 1907-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973, 215-222.

³⁵ See Leonard Friesen, "Mennonites in Russia and the revolution of 1905: experiences, perceptions and responses." *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 62, 1988, 42-55; the Volga Germans also made similar demands, see Long, *From privileged to dispossessed*, 205-06.

³⁶ On the favouring of Great Russians in later Dumas, see Löwe, "Russian nationalism and Tsarist nationalities policies," 268-69; on the issue of representation Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth*, 92; Friesen, "Mennonites in Russia," 51-52.

³⁷ On the use of the term *Völklein*, Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism", 317, n36; Friesen, "Mennonites in Russia," 554-55; on the institutional changes James Urry, "The cost of community: the funding and economic management of the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth before 1914." *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 10, 1992, 22-55.

³⁸ On Mennonite social change see James Urry, "Prolegomena to the study of Mennonite society in Russia 1880-1914," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 8, 1990, 52-75.

³⁹ As the Octobrists became an organized political movement, the attitudes of some of its members changed and they became more nationalistic: see J.F. Hutchinson, "The Octobrists and the future of Imperial Russia as a great power." *Slavonic and Eastern European Review*, 50, 1972, 220-37; Ben-Cion Pinchuk, *The Octobrists in the Third Duma, 1907-1912*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974.

⁴⁰ A.I. Klibanov, *History of religious sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917)*. Transl. by E. and S.P. Dunn. Oxford: Pergamon, 1982, 317-18, 320.

⁴¹ See Löwe, "Russian nationalism and Tsarist nationalities policies," 267-69, 271.

⁴² The leading official assigned to this work was S.D. Bondar, who attended Mennonite conferences and wrote a number of studies of religious minorities, including a book on the Mennonites, *Sekta mennonitov Rossii, v svyazi s istoriei nemetskoï kolonizatsii na iuge Rossii*. Petrograd; see also John Eugene Clay, "Bondar, Semen Dmitrievich." *The Modern Encyclopedia of Religions in Russia and the Soviet Union*. Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, Vol 4, 1991, 156-57. On increasing government surveillance of religious minorities, including Baptists, and their persecution see also John Shelton Curtiss, *Church and state in Russia: the last years of the Empire, 1900-1917*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1940, Chapter 8.

⁴³ On military affairs see Hosking, *The Russian constitutional experiment*, Chapter 4; Hutchinson, "The Octobrists", 225-30; Pinchuk, *The Octobrists*, Chapter 4; on the Mennonite response, David G. Rempel, "An introduction to Mennonite historiography." *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 48, 1974, 433.

⁴⁴ See the comments of Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism", 317, n35 on the new Mennonite handbook for ministers published in 1911; this was drawn-up in direct response to a government review of regulations concerning religious groups in 1910. Rempel, "An introduction to Mennonite historiography," 433.

⁴⁵ On the issue of Mennonites as a "sect" and attempts to unite see contemporary Mennonite press reports and Peter M. Friesen, *The Mennonite brotherhood in Russia (1789-1910)*. Fresno: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978, 629-641; Rempel, "An introduction to Mennonite historiography," 431-2; *Mennonite Commonwealth*, 93 and Abe J. Dueck, "Mennonite churches and religious developments in Russia 1850-1914." In John Friesen ed. *Mennonites in Russia, 1788-1988: Essays in honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*. Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989, 175-77.

⁴⁶ Rempel, "An introduction to Mennonite historiography;" Urry, *None but saints*, 26-27; see also Al Reimer, "The print culture of the Russian Mennonites, 1870-1930." In John Friesen ed. *Mennonites in Russia, 1788-1988: Essays in honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*. Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1989, 221-37.

⁴⁷ Friesen, *Mennonite brotherhood in Russia*, 578-625.

⁴⁸ On German associations at this period in Russia see Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 377-90.

⁴⁹ See John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites*. Newton: Faith & Life Press, 1982, 51-55.

⁵⁰ Various proposals to restrict non-Russians from purchasing and owning land included not only "Germans," but also Jews and others, see Löwe, "Russian nationalism and Tsarist nationalities policies", 257. On the Octobrist's rejection of the legislation, see Hutchinson, "The Octobrists," 232-33. On the wider issues involved see David G. Rempel, "The expropriation of the German colonists in south Russia during the Great War." *Journal of Modern History*, 4, 1932, 49-67; David G. Rempel, "A response to the 'Lost Fatherland' review." *Canadian Mennonite*, August 13, 1968, 9-10.

⁵¹ See Leonard G. Friesen, "Mennonites and their peasant neighbours in Ukraine before 1900." *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 10, 1992, 56-69, especially 63, 64; the peasants' claims were based on their perception of hereditary rights and social issues, rather than because of any nationalist sentiments.

⁵² Toews, *Czars, Mennonites and Soviets*, Chapter 5; Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 476-77; see also Al Reimer, "Sanitätsdienst und Selbstschutz: Russian-Mennonite non-resistance in World War I and its aftermath." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 11, 1993, 135-48. Over 11,000 Mennonites had been conscripted by 1916.

⁵³ On the opposition and debates see Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 506-07;

⁵⁴ Rempel, "The expropriation of the German colonists;" Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im*

Zarenreich, 495-523.

⁵⁵ See Rempel, "A response," 11; Rempel, "An introduction to Mennonite historiography," 435; as early as 1890 a Khortitsa Mennonite had claimed that they were Dutch, not German (Urry, *None but saints*, 262n,75), although as far as I am aware this was not debated openly before the War.

⁵⁶ Rempel, "A response," 11; as Rempel points out one factor behind the government's decision was the important service Mennonites were performing in alternative service; the right to alternative service had been reaffirmed in 1916; see also Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 477-78.

⁵⁷ See Reimer, "Sanitätsdienst and Selbstschutz: Russian-Mennonite non-resistance in World War I and its aftermath," 140-143.

⁵⁸ For recent assessments of nationalism in the revolution, see Stephen Jones, "The non-Russian nationalities." In Robert Service ed., *Society and politics in the Russian Revolution*. London: Macmillan, 1992, 35-63 and Ronald Grigor Suny, "Nationalism and class in the Russian revolution: a comparative survey." In Edith Rogovin Frankel, Jonathan Frankel and Baruch Knei-Paz eds, *Revolution in Russia: reassessments of 1917*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 219-42. On the importance of nationalism during the Revolution and Civil War see Richard Pipes, *The formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and nationalism 1917-1923*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1964.

⁵⁹ Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, Chapter 11; see also Ingeborg Fleischhauer. "The ethnic Germans in the Russian revolution." In Edith Rogovin Frankel, Jonathan Frankel and Baruch Knei-Paz eds, *Revolution in Russia: reassessments of 1917*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 274-84.

⁶⁰ Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 552-553.

⁶¹ Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth*, 99; Fleischhauer, *Die Deutschen im Zarenreich*, 553-54; see the minutes of these meetings, which only in part reflect the real tenor of debates, in *The Mennonites in Russia, 1917-1920*, ed. John B. Toews. Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1975.

⁶² The relationship between Mennonites, the state and nationalism in the Soviet period would have to take into account the Communist Party's nationality policies and the degree of autonomy given to republics and autonomous regions in the Union's new political structure, the rapid rise of nationalisms during the 1920s and the sudden end of support for such policies and the forced establishment of a new "Soviet" identity from the 1930s onwards; see H  lene Carrere D'Encausse, *The great challenge: nationalities and the Bolshevik state, 1917-1930*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 1991. For Mennonites in Ukraine the most significant factors during the 1920s were the tremendous increase in Ukrainian nationalism, recognition of Mennonites as "German" people with certain rights to cultural autonomy, and social and religious persecution which prevented the reestablishment of prerevolutionary Mennonite institutional independence.

⁶³ For a general overview of this crisis see James Urry, "Who are the Mennonites?" *Archives europ  enne de sociologie*, 24, 1983, 241-62.