

Mennonites and their Peasant Neighbours in Ukraine Before 1900

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When the great day arrived, people from the neighbouring villages flocked in on horseback, or in buggies, to see the wonderful sight of a modern harvester; and as I drove it, I was followed by a crowd critically examining the ground to see how much [grain] had been thrashed out, and their verdict was "not half so much as by hand work." The Russian peasants following it were simply astounded [and] took off their caps and crossed themselves, devoutly praying that they might not have been present at an invention of the devil.¹

Historical research on the history of Mennonites in Imperial Russia has experienced a renaissance.² Using an ever expanding list of sources, scholars are continuing the work of David G. Rempel and others in rounding out our understanding of Mennonite society. However, given the new possibilities for research, much more needs to be done. Today historians recognize the importance of studying the Mennonite communities within the context of Imperial Russia.³ In the past, peasants, estate owners, and state officials have been portrayed as a supporting cast in a drama played out on the limited stage of isolated Mennonite villages and estates. There have of course been exceptions. The role played by Imperial administrators in the inner landed crisis among Mennonites in the 1860s and 1870s has received the scholarly attention it warrants.⁴

Less is known of relations between Mennonites and their more immediate neighbours: the peasants, estate owners and other "colonists" of the southern Ukraine, officially identified as New Russia until the Soviet period. Though one might assume that ethnocentric Mennonite scholarship alone is responsible for the benign neglect of research on the larger context of New Russia, this is not the case. Soviet historians too have given scant attention to the southern Ukraine as a whole

in the late Imperial period, and almost no attention to Mennonites or other ethnic groups.⁵ Thus the historian wishing to understand Mennonite relations with their neighbours in New Russia must first identify some of the key features of that larger society. An attempt will be made here to sketch one such feature of this larger world, and to illustrate its significance for understanding the Mennonite experience. In essence, this article suggests that before one can assess how Mennonite lives intersected with that of their peasant neighbours it is necessary to analyse and understand the dynamics at work in New Russian peasant sectors. This article adopts a long range view, spanning two hundred years from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century.

The lands of the southern Ukraine to which the first Mennonites came in 1789 had only recently come under the control of St. Petersburg. For centuries this region had been the home of sedentary Crimean Tatars, nomadic Nogai Tatars on the prairies immediately north of the Crimea, and semi-nomadic Cossacks of the Dnieper and Don rivers. Once under Imperial Russian control, authorities moved quickly in the eighteenth century to relocate European colonists onto these sparsely settled lands, while encouraging internal immigration as well.⁶ Over 30,000 foreigners — mainly from Central Europe — were persuaded to enter the Empire from 1762-1775, including Polish Jews, Albanians, Swedes, and a number of Germanic peoples.⁷ This number grew to approximately 100,000 by 1844, including 52,000 German Protestants, 27,000 Catholics (many of whom were also of Germanic origin), and 21,411 Mennonites.⁸

In contrast to the carefully orchestrated settlement of foreigners, the initial movement of Russians and Ukrainians into the region was largely spontaneous, constantly outstripping the state's efforts to control them. Though the formation of the independent Zaporozhian Cossack host had been the most visible manifestation of frontier independence prior to the eighteenth century, fugitives continued to arrive after Imperial authorities had established formal political control.⁹ Many, such as the dissident Dukhobors and Molokans, sought religious freedom,¹⁰ and in this regard there was a connection between the settlement of Mennonites and Orthodox sectarians in the southern Ukraine. Historian F. V. Livanov reported that Dukhobors and Molokans deliberately sought to settle close to the Mennonite Molochnaya colony after its founding north of the Sea of Azov in 1804.¹¹ Relations between these neighbors and Mennonites during the earliest stages of settlement appear to have been positive.

The state's acceptance of a plurality of settlers at this time reflected both the desire to populate the southern Ukraine rapidly, and the awareness that it lacked the means to regulate immigration. Authorities were concerned about the potential for social instability that such a diversity could create, and therefore relied heavily on noble estate owners to exercise social control and political stability in the south, and to that end provided generous land grants to nobles willing to relocate there. The average size of estates granted was enormous. To cite one example, 94 nobles received estate grants in 1776 in Ekaterinoslav district (in which the bulk of Khortitsa Mennonite villages would be founded 13 years later) at an average of 10,800 acres.

The challenge of establishing estate economies on these massive holdings was coupled with the difficulties faced in attracting serfs to settle on private lands.¹² The average estate in Ekaterinoslav province in 1858 had only 67 serfs, and 52 serfs in Tavrida province. Such low numbers, and the constant possibility that mistreated serfs would migrate elsewhere, forced nobles to provide more generous living arrangements for their serfs than occurred elsewhere in the empire. Accounts suggest that these serfs were allowed to cultivate as great a portion of demesne lands as they wished until the abolition of serfdom in 1861.¹³

While estate owners, serfs and colonists played important roles in the New Russian countryside, almost two-thirds of the rural populace comprised peasants living relatively independent lives on state owned lands. Officially identified as state peasants until 1866, they included Crimean and Nogai Tatars, single homesteaders (*odnodvortsy*), and several hundred thousand peasants who had been settled in military colonies in the northern reaches of New Russia. In almost all cases apart from the indigenous Tatars, these peasants had been granted fiscal exemptions in New Russia in exchange for military and other services.¹⁴ Among these, for example, the “Dniepr pilots” would have been close neighbours to the Khortitsa Mennonites. These peasants were freed from all fiscal and military obligations, and supplied with generous land allotments, in exchange for service in guiding boats and barges through the Dniepr rapids.¹⁵ Further, thousands of other peasants were resettled here by state authorities to alleviate the land crisis of the central Russian provinces.¹⁶

The oldest state peasant villages, dating back to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, had been founded alongside sources of water in southern Ukraine, especially along the Bug and Dniepr rivers and their tributaries. As such locations were limited in this otherwise arid region, these villages grew to an often enormous size, dwarfing serf settlements. 35 state peasant villages in Kherson province averaged over 500 dwellings by 1859, and the number of such villages had grown to 97 by the late 1880s. By that time, Bol’shoi Tokmak, situated beside the Mennonite Molochnaya settlement, had over 2,000 homes and 13,000 inhabitants.¹⁷

New Russian rural society was, then, exceedingly varied and complex in its origins and early development. Yet the great scholar V.E. Postnikov noted that, in addition to differences between state peasants and serfs, one could nevertheless identify more generic characteristics of a New Russian peasant society as it evolved in the late nineteenth century.¹⁸ Stated most succinctly, New Russian peasants experienced relatively favourable conditions until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, whereafter an increased sense of vulnerability placed them on a collision course with other landowners in the region, including Mennonite daughter colonists and estate owners.

New Russian peasants continued to flourish even after their “emancipation” in the reforms of the 1860s — even as the provincial gentry found itself in difficulties. State peasants benefitted from initial settlement grants in the legislation of 1866 which allowed most households as late as 1877 to average approximately 40 acres; this was more than adequate for their needs. Consequently, many villages continued to allow peasant households in their villages

to seize and cultivate land on the principle of "squatters' rights."¹⁹

Here is an example taken from a mainland district in close proximity to the Mennonite settlement of Molochnaya:

With the abundance of land and the weak development of field crops, collisions between peasants were not possible... Whoever was richer and found it too comforting to manage their households on the fields closest to the village departed to the farthest fields or to "reserve" lands where they constructed a farm [*khutor*], dug a well, and ploughed and sowed what he wanted.²⁰

State peasants, then, had lands that were large enough to allow for the establishment of new settlements at the most distant portion of their collective landholdings.

At first glance, former serfs appear to have been worse off in the aftermath of their emancipation in 1861, as their allotments had been reduced to an average of 18 acres per household, or less than half that of state peasant allotments.²¹ And yet, given the manner in which estate owners avoided becoming directly involved in estate management by flooding the market with land for lease in the 1860s, former serfs did have adequate and affordable access to arable land.²² Indeed the high rate of redemption payments for allotment land — under the terms of the emancipation former serfs had been expected to pay for all lands that they had received — motivated former serfs to lease estate lands rather than pay the taxes owing on village holdings.²³

Several factors, especially that of demographic change, accounted for an abrupt increase in peasant difficulties after the 1870s. While population densities in New Russia were still relatively low compared with central Russian and Ukrainian provinces, no other region experienced similarly dramatic increases before 1900.²⁴ New Russia doubled its population between 1863 and 1897, surpassing the six million mark by the latter date.²⁵ This dramatic population increase led to decreased per capita peasant land allotments and an increased reliance by peasants on supplemental income. At the same time, New Russia lost its role as a frontier within the empire, as is indicated by the beginning of peasant emigration from New Russia to Siberia in the 1890s.²⁶

Peasant responses to mounting demographic pressures took other forms as well.²⁷ Official statistics indicate, and contemporaries confirm, that peasant grain yields increased from 1880 to 1900.²⁸ This was achieved in part through the adoption of new agrarian practices as peasants outpaced estate owners in the replacement of oxen with horses in field labour.²⁹ Peasants were also acquiring ploughs, reapers, and other implements which made possible more rapid and effective cultivation.³⁰

Yet New Russian peasants never relied totally on allotment lands for their livelihood, and most of their difficulties began beyond the village holdings. Supplemental income came traditionally from the large scale leasing of private estate lands, as well as seasonal employment on local estates. Peasants in Pavlograd district of Ekaterinoslav province, for example, increased their leased holdings from 92,880 acres in 1886 to 180,000 acres in 1905 in an effort to offset demands made by population increases.³¹ Fully 44% of all private estate holdings

were leased out in the neighbouring district of Alexandrovsk by 1900.³²

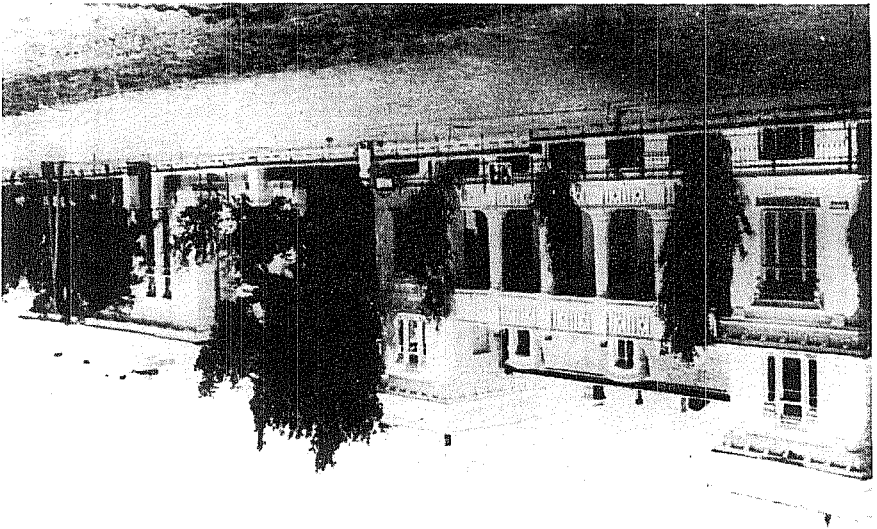
Land values rose accordingly. Previous lease rates of 80 kopecks to 1 ruble/desiatin in Berdiansk district had jumped to 3-4 rubles in the mid 1890s and to 25 rubles after 1900. By the latter year, a desiatin of land was selling for 250 rubles, whereas it had cost only 15 to 20 rubles in the 1880s.³³

Escalating land values were only partially attributable to a greater demand for land from the peasants. Also important was the recent spurt in land purchasing and leasing by the region's Mennonites who played a distinct role in the region's unfolding agrarian revolution of the late nineteenth century. Key here was an inheritance system unique to them within the region,³⁴ by which Mennonite landed property was considered indivisible.

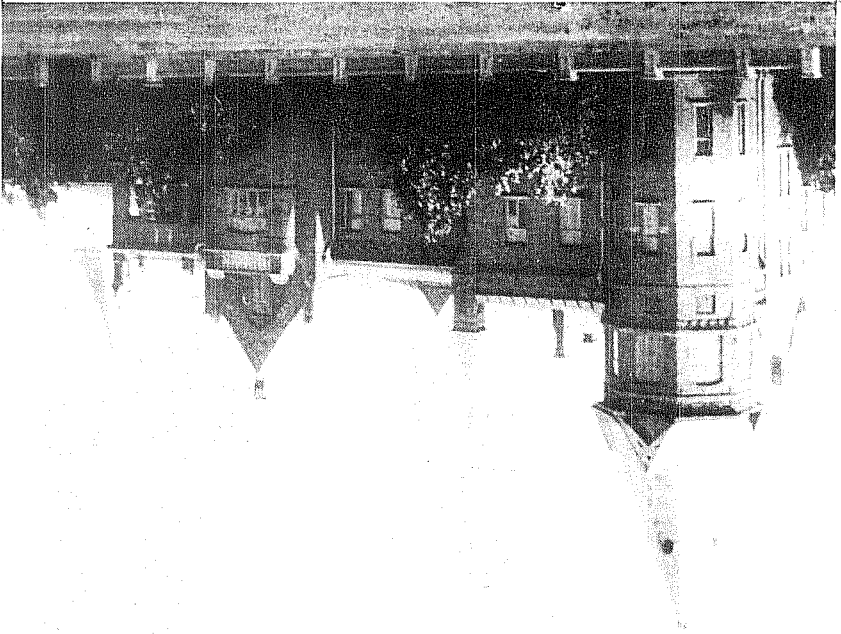
Not surprisingly, the maintenance of this system resulted in intense societal discord as many siblings and their kin were left without a secure economic base. Over 60% of Mennonite families in the Molochnaya settlement were landless as of 1841, and little improvement could be noted two decades later.³⁵ However, years of discussion within the Mennonite villages, along with the appeal to and intervention of Imperial authorities in St. Petersburg, culminated in a remarkable solution. As part of it, the original Mennonite settlements of Khortitsa and Molochnaya established villages for Mennonite landless on tens of thousands of acres of land which were either purchased or leased long term from the nobility.³⁶

The founding of these so-called "daughter colonies," or village settlements, was accompanied by a spurt in private estate purchasing by Mennonites and others. By the 1890s, for example, foreign colonist estates accounted for over 724,000 acres in the districts immediately north of the Crimea, with many of these new estates going to Mennonites. By that same time, Germans (officially including Mennonites) had purchased an additional 540,000 acres in the Crimea itself for village settlement.³⁷

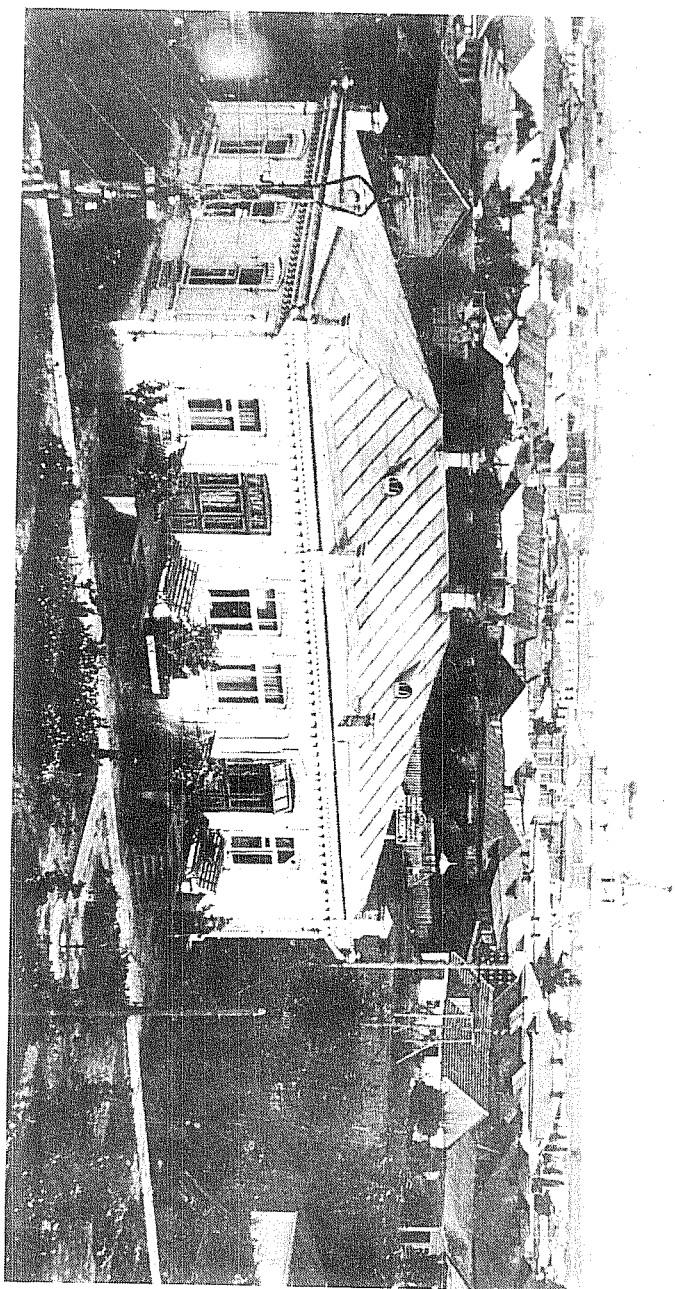
Revolutionary change in Mennonite agrarian practices in the second half of the nineteenth century also had an immediate, if ambivalent, impact on the region's peasants. One way to measure change in Mennonite agricultural practices is in the rise of cultivated land among Mennonite farmers. James Urry notes that "before 1840 in Molotschna only 5 to 10 *dessiatins* had been cultivated, mainly for self-sustenance; by 1865 this land had increased to 25 *dessiatins* as commercial crops were sown; by 1888 45 *dessiatins* were cultivated." Increased cultivation had been stimulated by the rise in grain cultivation, and the corresponding adoption of labour saving technology.³⁸ Whereas Mennonites adopted labour intensive practices in the first half of the nineteenth century, the switch to capital intensive agriculture after the 1850s lessened the need for hired labour, especially when compared to the less efficiently managed estates of the Russian nobility.³⁹ The Mennonites' widespread adoption of reapers, steel shared ploughs, and threshing machines, along with their active participation in estate management, meant that the advantage had shifted rapidly away from local peasants by the 1890s.⁴⁰ This new found prosperity in estate and colonist agriculture is revealed by the fact that a small labour market was rarely noted after 1890, whereas it had been an oft cited complaint earlier.⁴¹ The region's



Home of the Thiessen family in Halbstadt, South Russia
(Photo Credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives)



Reimer estate in the vicinity of Altenau, South Russia
(Photo Credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives)



Home of the Wilhelm Dyck family, Millerovo, South Russia, 1906

(Photo Credit: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives)

peasantry viewed these circumstances negatively, and initially focused their anger on the thousands of migratory labourers who annually arrived from the northern Ukrainian and Russian provinces.⁴²

The steady increase of Mennonites with intensive agrarian practices now resident on private estates and villages throughout New Russia, accentuated tensions with local peasant neighbours who were hard pressed for land. This was less so with Mennonites from the "mother colonies" of Khortitsa and Molochnaya who had long been positively regarded as agricultural innovators not only by state officials,⁴³ but also by peasants living in adjoining villages. Several reasons account for these positive relations. As noted above, the Molochnaya Mennonite settlement had attracted Orthodox sectarians to settle nearby. Among these, Molokans were also influenced by contacts with other non-Orthodox Christians, including the Quaker William Allen, in 1800. Molokans and Dukhobors were considered more industrious than Orthodox peasants, and this may partly explain why they readily adopted Mennonite agricultural innovations. Neighbouring peasants also relied on Mennonite artisans to repair implements, whereas in some villages contact with the Mennonite firms stimulated similar peasant artisan initiative.⁴⁴ As a result, the transformation of Mennonite agriculture in the late 19th century resulted in a parallel development among peasant neighbours who lived alongside Mennonite settlements for generations. Going through the changes together reinforced civil relations.⁴⁵

Such was not the experience, however, with peasants living on or near recently acquired Mennonite landholdings, resulting in the removal of noble estate lands from the rental market; a market upon which peasants had long depended. This was especially the case with those peasants (*desiatinshchiki*) who had received no land, or so-called "beggarly allotments," at the time of their emancipation, making them completely dependent on lease arrangements.⁴⁶ Although Mennonites viewed themselves as agricultural innovators in these newly acquired daughter colonies, and although their practices would have paralleled those used in the Molochnaya and Khortitsa settlements, peasants considered their role to be that of usurpers constricting peasant livelihood.⁴⁷

Growing peasant friction in southern Ukraine at the dawn of the twentieth century, then, was the result of increased difficulties in obtaining the supplemental incomes necessary to eke out an existence.⁴⁸ These tensions were first manifested in arguments between rich and poor peasants over access to village allotment lands.⁴⁹ Rapidly escalating land values in Berdiansk district (home of the Molochnaya Mennonite settlement) caused local correspondents to comment that "traditional village life is disintegrating into two enemy camps, and the struggle between them currently occupies the leading place in rural public life [*v obshchestvennoi zhizni derevni*]." ⁵⁰ Contemporary allotment figures conceal the fact that the mass of poorer peasants, because of insufficient seed, livestock, or machinery, were annually compelled to lease out their lands to more prosperous fellow villagers. Relations between villagers were often further embittered when peasants attempted to lease out the same land parcels to several different leasers in exchange for seed advances.⁵¹

Social tensions within the village spilled over into matters of general management, including the question of whether land division should be based on the number of living souls or on the number of souls registered in the census of 1858.⁵² The difficulty in determining the manner of land division was such that villages delayed making a decision on land redistribution, and tensions increased.⁵³ If a consensus had emerged among New Russia's allotment peasants in the late nineteenth century, it was that the problems causing these intra-village tensions originated in rapidly changing agrarian practices outside of their communal holdings, and that internal social tensions could be eased if the problems outside the village were solved. This is exactly what the region's peasants would seek to do in 1905, and again in 1917, when they engaged in "black" repartitioning of all land.

What can one say about the role played by Mennonites in the larger drama unfolding in southern Ukraine at this time? Several observations seem appropriate:

By 1900 Mennonites had reached a point where a combination of factors jeopardised their continued wellbeing in the Empire. Most peasants with whom Mennonites would have interacted in the late Imperial period would have considered them to be a part of "privileged Russia."⁵⁴ There were certainly grounds for that impression. Almost all Mennonites believed, for example, in private as opposed to communal property rights. Furthermore, Mennonites seemed to incorporate most of the values of the Imperial justice system into their own, rather than subvert it with contrary internal norms, as happened in peasant communities throughout the Empire.⁵⁵ While this does not mean that Mennonites had become individualists lacking in community solidarity, it does suggest that their values and practices alienated Ukrainian peasant neighbours.

Even so, Mennonites by 1900 had become fearfully aware of the strict limits to their association with privileged Russia. Contemporary Mennonite writers clearly saw that the rise of Russian nationalism presented an "awesome external [force]"; and it was this formidable threat which was unleashed during World War I.⁵⁶ Despite Mennonite efforts to portray themselves as loyal subjects of the Empire, the intense nationalist fervour evoked at that time, and the discriminatory legislation of 1915-17 which resulted from it, demonstrated the degree to which privileged society had identified these erstwhile Dutch Anabaptists as German foreigners.⁵⁷

Peasant neighbours formed their impressions of Mennonites primarily upon social and economic bases, and here the results were ambivalent. On the one hand, the older colonies of Molochnaya and Khortitsa had established favourable relations with peasants in adjoining villages, some of whom were Orthodox sectarians who had deliberately settled close to Mennonites. These peasant villagers adopted many of the agrarian innovations introduced by Mennonites in the second half of the nineteenth century, and thereby maintained positive relations. On the other hand, negative relations appear to have existed between peasants and newly formed Mennonite estates and daughter colonies. In these cases, Mennonites entered new rural microcosms with meteor-like speed, giving neighbouring peasants little time to adjust to the abrupt removal of lease lands upon which they had previously relied. Mennonites also had little difficulty finding sufficient agricultural labourers for their

economies in the rising tide of seasonal migrants from the north, itself a source of anger to local peasants. Feelings of usurpation and resentment, therefore, would have been strong in peasant villages of the southern Ukraine.

Lastly, it is one of the ironies of history that Mennonites lived as model citizens of the Empire and still lost out after 1917—hence their lingering sense of injustice. They prided themselves on being good subjects, and had even relied on Imperial help to sort out a bitter landed crisis. Its resolution through the establishment of daughter colonies brought internal social peace to Mennonite villages for the first time in decades. It is also clear that, within their settlements, Mennonites strove to maintain a sense of community cohesion. One can also appreciate their desire to maximize efficiency and profits by using labour saving technology and to work the land themselves rather than lease it out to adjoining peasant villages.

Such conditions may not have presented any difficulties to the Molokan and Dukhobor settlements beside the Molochnaya. But by 1900, the majority of peasant neighbours considered Mennonite communities to be a part of a privileged Russia in which peasants had no stake and with which they had even less patience. Over a century of development had left Mennonites between a rock and a hard place, alienated from both privileged Russia and peasant Ukraine.

Notes

An earlier version of this paper was presented at a symposium marking the bicentennial of Mennonites in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union, held in Winnipeg in November 1989. I wish to thank those at the symposium as well as colleagues at Conrad Grebel College, especially Werner Packull, for suggestions and comments. Research for this paper was in part carried out under the Canada-USSR Exchange Agreement for 1987 and 1988, and benefitted from subsequent funding from the Department of External Affairs, Ottawa.

¹George Hume, *Thirty-Five Years in Russia* (London, 1914), p.60. (Hume's record of the introduction to a reaping machine to Mennonite colonists in New Russia in 1861).

²See Harvey L. Dyck, "Odyssey to Odessa: Fresh Sources and Perspectives in Russian Mennonite Studies," in *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 65(October 1991), 437-438; and John S. Oyer, "Mennonite Historical Writing Over the Past 40 Years: Reflection," in *Mennonite Historical Bulletin*, 52(April, 1991), 4.

³James Urry, *None But Saints. The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg: Hyperion, 1989), 17.

⁴For excellent examples of this contextualization, see Harvey L. Dyck, ed. and transl. "Russian Mennonitism and the challenge of Russian nationalism," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 56(1982), 307-341; and James Urry, "The Russian State, the Mennonite World and the Migration from Russia to North America in the 1870s," *Mennonite Life*, 46(March, 1991), 11-17.

⁵The most important historian of the southern Ukraine remains E.I. Druzhinina. Cf. the following works by E.I. Druzhinina: *Servnoe Prichernomor'e v 1775-1800 gg.*, (Moscow, 1959); and *Iuchnaia Ukraina v period krizisa feodalizma, 1825, 1860* (Moscow, 1981). In Druzhinina's best work (*Iuchnaia Ukraina v 1800-1825 gg.* (Moscow, 1970), for example, Mennonites appear at the initial settlement stages (126-128), and only in passing thereafter (for ex. p. 242 on Johann Cornies). Mennonite history has recently attracted the attention of several faculty and graduate students at Dnepropetrovsk State University (DSU), demonstrated by Alexander I. Beznosov, "K istorii Nemetskikh kolonii

Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii v nachale 20-kh god. XX veka," in A.V. Sherstiuk, ed., *Voprosy Germanskoi Istorii. Politicheskoe razvitiie, neizuchennye problemy* (Dnepropetrovsk, 1990), 54-60. For example, Tatars were also a forbidden subject, as was communicated to me by colleagues of the DSU in May-June of 1991.

⁶On this initial settlement period, see E.I. Druzhinina, *Severnoe prechernomor'e*; Hans Auerbach, *Die Besiedelung der Suedukraine in den Jahren 1774-1787* (Wiesbaden, 1965); and Roger Bartlett, *Human Capital. The Settlement of Foreigners in Russia 1762-1804* (Cambridge: University Press 1979).

⁷Bartlett, p. 66; and Druzhinina, *Severnoe Prichernomo'e*, pp. 68-69.

⁸A.A. Skalkovskii, *Opyt' statisticheskago opisaniia Novorossiiskago kraia*, ch. I (Odessa, 1850), p. 327.

⁹The Host was destroyed by Imperial authorities in 1775. Isabel de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 360.

¹⁰For example, the census for a newly formed administrative unit in southern Ukraine in 1765 suggested that it included 864 Orthodox Russians, and 6,759 dissidents (Raskol'niki). See V.M. Kabuzan, *Zaseleniie Novorossii (Ekaterinoslavskoi i Khersonskoi gubernii) v XVIII - pervoi polovine XIX veka (1719-1858 gg.)* (Moscow, 1977), pp. 104-105.

¹¹D.I. Bagalei, *Kolonizatsiia Novorossiiskago kraia i pervye shagi ego po puti kul'tury* (Kiev, 1989), 63-76; and F.V. Livanov, *Raskol'niki i Ostorozhnikhi. Ocherki i razskazi*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1872), 213-218.

¹²Bagalei, pp. 71-72; and Kabuzan, p. 138.

¹³I.I. Ignatovich, *Pomeshchich' i krest'iane nakanune osvobodzheniia*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1910), pp. 198-200. The freedom serfs had to work estate lands was such that, at the time of the emancipation, neither nobles nor their serfs could say how much land had actually been worked by the latter.

¹⁴There is a rich literature on these varied groups, including E.I. Druzhinina (1970), 93-126; John L.H. Keep, *Soldiers of the Tsar. Army and Society in Russia, 1462-1874* (Oxford, 1985), ch. 12; A. Schmidt, *Khersonskaia guberniia. Materialy geografii i statistiki Rossii sobrannye ofitserami general'nogo shtaba*, vol II (St. Petersburg, 1862), pp. 321; and Judith Pallot and Denis J.B. Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement in Romanov Russia 1613-1917* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), ch. 2.

¹⁵*Materialy dlia otsenki zemel' Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii*, vol. I, pt. 1 *Ekaterinoslavskii uezd* (Ekaterinoslav, 1899), 109-110.

¹⁶On state leniency to fugitives who settled on state lands, see Bagalei, p. 68. On state resettlement from the central provinces, see Schmidt, vol. II *Khersonskaia guberniia*, 335-337.

¹⁷V.E. Postnikov, *Iuzhno-russkoe krest'ianskoe khoziaistvo* (Moscow, 1891), ch. 3. Postnikov believed that the very size of the state peasant villages contributed to the consistently lower yields compared to the region's, despite having more land per household. On lower yields, see also N.M. Druzhinin, *Gosudarstvennye krest'iane i reforma P.D. Kiseleva*, vol. II (Moscow, 1958), 423.

¹⁸Postnikov, *Iuzhnoe russkoe*, p. 4.

¹⁹This form of land seizure was also noted in Siberia and the northern guberniias of European Russia: other areas with more spacious land holdings. See *Sbornik materialov dlia izucheniia selskoi pozemelnoi obshchiny*, tom I (St. Petersburg, 1880), pp. x, 3-4; and A.A. Kaufman, *Krestianskaia obshchina v Sibirii* (St. Petersburg, 1897), pp. 53-58; *Sbornik statisticheskikh svedenii po Tavricheskoi gubernii*, tom IX, *Pamiatnaia knizhka Tavricheskoi gubernii*, ed. by K.A. Verner (Simferopol, 1889), ot. III, pp. 19-20; and F. Shcherbina, "Zemelnaia obshchina v Dneprovskom uezde," in *Russkaia mysl*, no. 4, 1880, p. 42.

²⁰*Sbornik statisticheskikh svedenii po Tavricheskoi gubernii. Statisticheskaia tablitsy o khoziaistvennom polozenii selenii: t. I, Melitopolskogo uezda*, vyp. I (Simferopol, 1885), p. 45.

²¹*Statistika pozemel'noi sobstvennosti i naselennykh mest' Evropeiskoi Rossii. Po dannym obsledovaniia, proizvedennogo statisticheskimi uchrezhdeniiami Ministerstva Vnutrennikh Del' po porucheniiu Statisticheskogo Soveta*. Vol. VIII (St. Petersburg, 1880), 18-26; 52-58; 62-63; 84-89, and 92.

²²Contemporaries portrayed New Russian estates at mid century as being like ships without sails or rudders after a great storm, with the great storm being the emancipation of 1861. See "Khoziaistvennyiia zametki," *Zapiski imperatorskogo obshchestva sel'skogo khoziaistva izhnoi Rossi* (1863), pp. 201-203.

²³*Sbornik svedenii po Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii*, T. III, *Slaviansoerskii uезд* (Ekaterinoslav, 1886), p. 48; *Materialy dlia otsenki zemel' Khersonskoi gubernii*: T. III, *Aleksandriiskii uезд* (Kherson, 1888), pp. 165-66; and *Materialy dlia otsenki zemel' Khersonskoi gubernii*; T. IV, *Tiraspol'skii uезд* (Kherson, 1889), p. 127.

²⁴A wonderful image of this transformation is provided in A. Markovskii, "Iz iuzhnoi Rossii," *Zemledel'cheskaia gazeta 1899 goda* (#12, 1899), 242-245.

²⁵*Statisticheskii vremennik Rossiiskoi imperii* (St. Petersburg, 1866), pp. 12-13, 26-27, and 30-31; A.G. Rashin, *Naselenie Rossii za 100 let' (1811-1913) g.g.* (Moscow, 1956), pp. 44-45; and *Pervaia vseobshchais perepis naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897g.* (St. Petersburg, 1903), vol. 13 (Ekaterinoslav), p. 1; vol. 47 (Kherson), p. 1; and vol. 41 (Tavrida), p. 1..

²⁶For example, Tsentralnyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv SSSR v Leningrade (hereafter TsGIA) fond 1824, opis 223, delo 200 gives the account for Kherson province in 1893. Most peasant emigrants were bound for Siberia.

²⁷Emigration also had an ethnic component to it, as was noted in the 600-800 Tatars who moved out of the Crimea in the early 1890s. Noted in TsGIA 1284, op. 194, d. 89.

²⁸1901 kommissii, p. 171; and *Svod statisticheskikh svedenii po sel'skomu khoziaistvu Rossii i kontsu XIX veka*, vyp. I (St. Petersburg, 1902), pp. 124-125; and N. Kablukov, *B usloviakh razvitiia krest'ianskago khoziaistva v Rossii*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1908), p. 336. See also A.O. Fabrikant, *Rabochii vopros v sel'skom khoziaistve Novorossii*, vyp. I (Petrograd 1917), p. 27.

²⁹TsGIA f. 1284, op. 223, d. 239, p. 34; and Witte for Kherson Province, p. 76.

³⁰The acquisition of newer implements was often determined by proximity to those estate owners and Mennonite colonists using them. The latter were especially influential in this regard, as their own implement industry provided a further stimulus, as well as the possibility for ready replacement parts. TsGIA f. 1284, op. 223, d. 239, p. 5; A. Markovskii, "Iz iuzhnoi Rossii," in *Zemledel'cheskaia gazeta 1899 goda*, #12 (1899), 243; and V.I. Postnikov, *Iuzhno-russkoe*, 6-7.

³¹P. Kutov, "Zemlevladienie Pavlogradskego uезда," *Vestnik sel'skogo khoziaistva*, #13 (26 March 1906, p.8

³²*Materialy dlia otsenki zemel' Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii*, T.II, *Aleksandrovskii uезд*, (Ekaterinoslav, 1902), p.65.

³³N.I.N., "Iz Berdianskogo uезда," *Vestnik Tavricheskogo Zemstva*, # 1/2 (January 1905), pp. 62-63. It was generally conceded that peasants were being hurt by rising rates. This is noted in, for example, the governor's report for Ekaterinoslav province for 1901 in TsGIA f. 1282, op. 3, d. 545, p. 24 ob. See also G. Boiko, "Iz Khersonskogo zemstva" *Zemledel'cheskaia gazeta 1899 goda*, #20 (15. V. 1899), p. 429. A desiatin was a measure of land, approximately 2.7 acres.

³⁴On Ukrainian and Russian peasant inheritance practices, see Christine D. Worobec, *Peasant Russia. Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period* (Princeton: University Press, 1991), ch. II-III.

³⁵Postnikov, *Iuzhnoe russkoe*, p. 309; Urry, *None but Saints*, ch. 11; David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia. A Sketch of its Founding and Endurance, 1789-1919" (Concluded) *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 48 (1974), pp. 5-6; and David G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia. A study of Their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789 to 1914" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1933), p. 182.

³⁶For the complete solution, see Dyck, *A Mennonite in Russia*, 60-61; and Urry, *None But Saints*, ch. 11-12. Dyck (*A Mennonite in Russia*, p. 62) has calculated that an average of six Mennonite villages were established annually between 1869 and 1914.

³⁷Postnikov, *Iuzhnoe Russkoe*, 293, 299. Mennonites purchased these lands from Russian nobles, and it was the later's departure from the Crimea especially which prompted increased concern about Mennonite land expansion in the south.

³⁸James Urry, "Mennonite Economic Development in the Russian Mirror," *Mennonites in Russia, 1788-1888. Essays in Honour of Gerhard Lohrenz*, ed. by John Friesen (Winnipeg, 1989), p. 106.

³⁹This does not mean that Mennonites did not require labourers; rather that fewer were required than when Russian estate owners had managed the estates. On Mennonite estate owners and hired

labour see Al Reimer, "Peasant Aristocracy: The Mennonite *Gutsbesitzertum* in Russia," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 8(1990), 83-84.

⁴⁰Urry, "Mennonite Economic Development," pp. 107-109. On general trends for this period, see R. Munting, "Mechanisation and dualism in Russian agriculture," *Journal of European Economic History* (1979), 743-60.

⁴¹1888 god v sel'skokhoziaistvennom otnoshenii po otvetam, poluichennym ot khoziaiev, vyp. II. (St. Petersburg, 1888), pp. 5, 10, and 14; and 1903 god, vyp. IV (St. Petersburg, 1903), pp. 25, 27, and 29. Many estate owners by the late 1880s had actually begun to record annual labour surpluses. For example, 1888 god, vyp. II (St. Petersburg, 1886), pp. 7, 12, and 15; 1889 god, vyp. II (1889), pp. 5, 7, and 9; 1895 god, vyp. IV (1895), pp. 36, 37, and 41; and 1901 god, vyp. IV (1901), pp. 27-30. Also L.M. Ivanov, "O kapitalisticheskoi i otrabotochnoi sistemakh v selskom khoziaistve pomeshchikov na Ukraine v kontse XIX v.," *Voprosy istorii selskogo khoziaistva i revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rossii* (Moscow, 1961).

⁴²Thus New Russian peasants viewed peasant labourers from the northern provinces as usurpers. For an example of one such confrontation between local and migratory peasant labourers, see V. Khizhniakov, "Sel'skie rabochie na rynkakh Khersonskoi gubernii," *Zhizn*, Vol. I-II (January and February, 1900), 166.

⁴³On this, see Harvey L. Dyck, "Imperial Servitor and Mennonite Hero: Light and Shadow in Images of Johann Cornies," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 2(1984), 9-28.

⁴⁴Livanov, *Ostorozhnik i raskol'niki*, vol. II, pp. 178, 165, and 455 f.

⁴⁵Postnikov, *Iuzhnoe-russkoe*, 293.

⁴⁶*Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Odesskoi oblasti* (hereafter GAOO) f. 634, op. I, d. 840, pp. 18-18ob; TsGIA f. 1282, op. 3, d. 463, p. 33; and TsGIA f. 1284, op. 223, d. 192, pp. 19ob-26.

⁴⁷Postnikov, *Iuzhnoe russkoe*, 290-291.

⁴⁸On this, the Governor for Kherson province himself doubted in 1905 that one could make a connection between lowered grain yields and peasant unrest. Noted in TsGIA, f. 1263, op. 4, d. 52, p. 14.

⁴⁹Em. Kogon, "Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v Ekaterinoslavskom uезде v 1905 g.," *Letopis revoliutsii*, No. 6 (33) 1928, p. 171. See also pp. 183 and 187 for similar comments.

⁵⁰N.I.N. 'Iz Berdianskogo uезда, "Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva, no. 1/2 (January 1905), pp. 63-64.

⁵¹"Selo Spasskoe," *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva*, no. 8/9 (April/May 1905), pp. 120-121; and "Selo Kairy," *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva*, no. 19 (October, 1904), p. 48. Also A.M. Anfimov, *Zemel'naia arenada v Rossii v nachale XX veka* (Moscow, 1961), p. 25.

⁵²Such a dispute was noted in the village of Rozhdestveskoe, situated in Dneprovsk district of Tavrida province. See "Selo Rozhdestvenskoe," *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva* no. 6 (March 1905), p. 33.

⁵³As such delays hurt precisely those peasants who were coming of age and seeking to establish themselves, the conflict - as in the 1880s - was one of the generational more than class dimensions. For example, the village of Mat'veevka in Tavrida province had, in its last land division of 1896, excluded all males under six years of age. See *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva* (May/June 1905), p. 110; and *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva* (#8/9 1905), p. 126. On the peasant *peredel'* and the rationale behind it, see Boris N. Mironov, "Sotsial'naia mobilnost' i sotsialnoe rassloenie v Russkoi derevne XIX - nachale XX vv.," *Problemy razvitiia feodalizma i kapitalizma v stranakh Baltika* (Tartu 1972), pp. 172-173; and M.M., "Kak vedytsia krest'ianskie peredely zemli na iug Rossii," *Vestnik Tavaricheskogo Zemstva*, #1 (July 1903), pp. 45-48.

⁵⁴I use the terminology found in Teodor Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century*, Vol. 2, *Russia, 1905-1907. Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. Estate owners and provincial officials are included in privileged Russia.

⁵⁵Peasant belief, for example, that property "rights" were not determined by property deed, but by family and community needs, pointed to a fundamental violation of Imperial, and Mennonite, property norms. See the recent article on peasant justice by Cathy Frierson, "Crime and Punishment in the Russian Village: Rural Concepts of Criminality at the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Slavic*

Review, 46 (Spring, 1987), pp. 55-69. To cite but one example, peasant justice required punishment for those stealing from other peasants, but did not consider the theft of a landlord's wood to be a crime.

⁵⁶ Dyck, "Russian Mennonitism," p. 316.

⁵⁷ Rempel, *Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia*, pp. 52-53; and John B. Toews, *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites* (Newton: Faith and Life Press, 1982), pp.74-76.