



**Mennonites After
the Revolution**

Mennonite Central Committee

- Drought years in 1920,1921 lead to a severe famine in Southern Russia and Siberia. In Siberia the effects continue on till 1923.
- The Soviet government is suspicious of MCC and only allows them to give aid on the condition that they supply food to everyone.
- MCC agrees, they distribute food primarily in Mennonite areas but do give it to all people in the area.



Why would the Communists be suspicious and restrictive of MCC's aid work?

Problems facing Mennonites after WWI

- o **Famine**
- o **Atheist Government:** Communist are specifically opposed to Christianity
- o **Fear:** collectivization, nationalization, loss of property, loss of community.
 - New Economic Policy of Lenin gave people some hope that small amounts of private property would be allowed but there are fears it will not be allowed in the future.



Emigration



- o Many Mennonites are anxious to leave the USSR but finding a place to go is difficult.
- o USA: does not want large waves of immigrants, they have settled most of their western farmland.
- o Mexico: is going through its own revolution and political disturbances. Some Mennonites go there but not large numbers.
- o Canada: Mennonite pacifism during WWI and their resistance to “nationalism and education” have created a back lash against their immigration.
- o Cory Funk: Mackenzie King makes a deal to get votes and after his victory in 22 Mennonites are allowed into country.

Canadian Colonization Board

- Run by David Toews
- Canadian Pacific lends money for the immigrants, Mennonites in Canada “co sign”
- Rigid health inspection occurs in Europe, Latvia/Riga

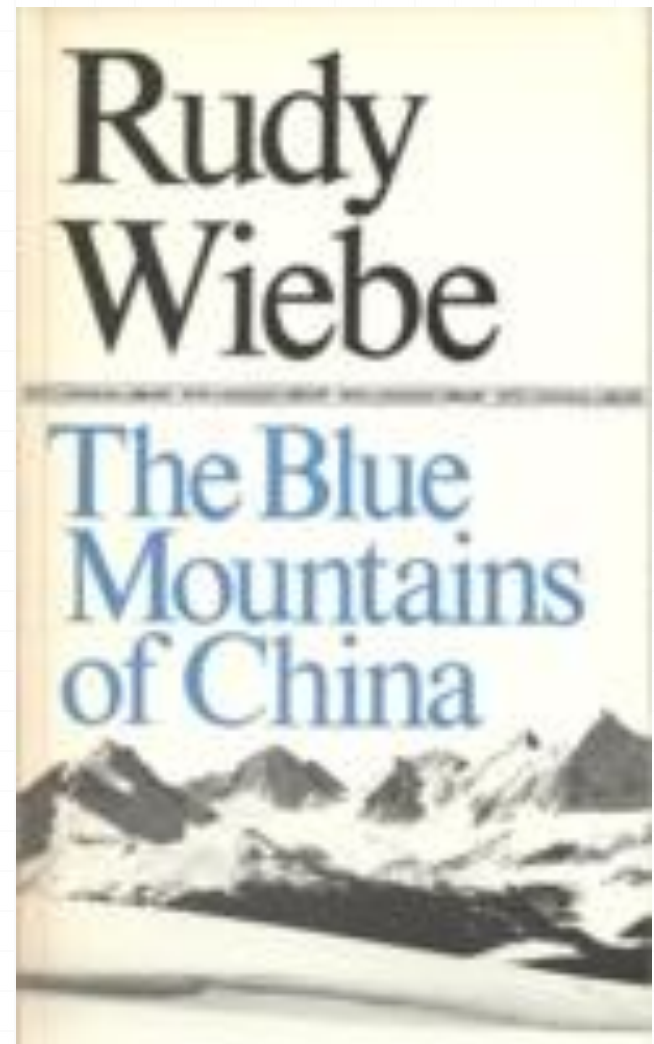


Soviet Permission

- Soviets reluctant to allow emigration.
 - Allows alternative facts to be told
 - Destabilizes population and control of it.
 - Emigration is allowed from 23-28, 21000 leave in total.
 - 2/3 of those who leave do so on credit.
 - It becomes seen as disloyal if you apply, last trains are sent straight to Siberia.



- o Some Mennonites manage to emigrate to Germany in 1930
- o Some escape to China





Soviets blamed “kulaks” for the slowness of the changes in society and used them as scape goats for propaganda. Mennonites would have owned property and thus been Kulaks.

Collectivization, Liquidation of Kulaks

- o As an attempt to create a new society, (and maintain power) the Soviets tried to remove any opposition to their ideas and power. Landowners/Kulaks were killed or exiled.
- o E.g.
- o Chortitza: 1929 population 12 000
- o By 1940: 1500 mostly men were “exiled”, almost none returned

Holodomor

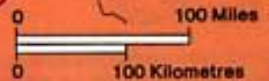
- o In order to get money for industrialization and to remove nationalist Ukrainian opposition, Stalin deliberately starves the Ukraine. 3- 6 million people in S. Russia die.





* Not part of the Ukrainian S.S.R. until 1939

--- International boundaries, 1959 --- Oblast boundaries, 1959
 - - - S.S.R./A.S.S.R. boundaries, 1959 Ukrainian ethnolinguistic boundary



World War II



- **Soviet plan was to remove German/Mennonite populations from S. Russia away from the advancing Germans.**
- **Molotschna most of the men between 15-65 were sent east before the Germans arrived. The women were sent east to different places. Chortitza was captured by the Germans before that could happened.**

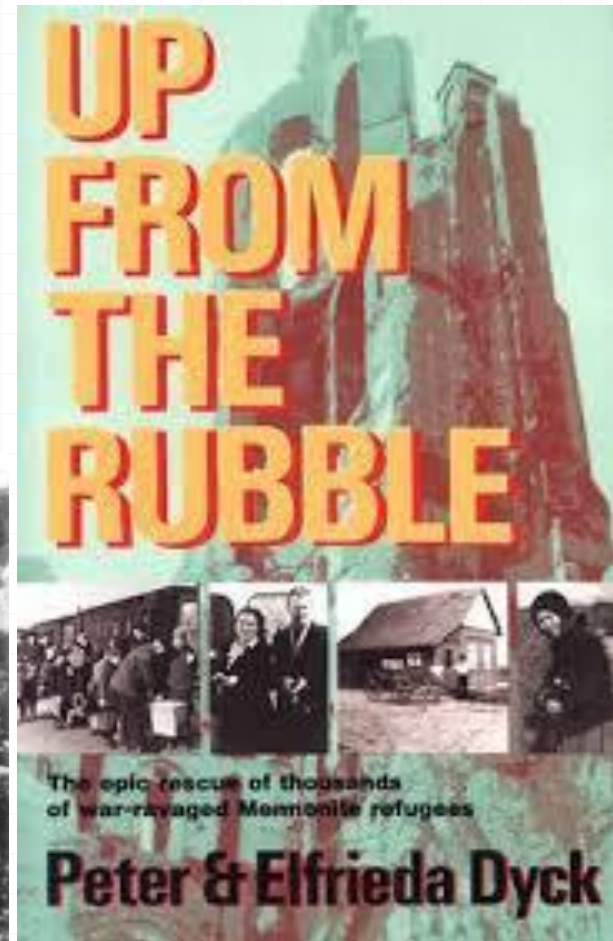


Great Trek



- o 1943: The Germans begin to lose the war, everyone who can retreats with the German army back westward.
- o 1945: When the war ends Stalin wants all “Russian” refugees back, more than 20 000 were forced to return.
- o Read: the portion from “Up From The Rubble”.

Up From the Rubble P. 87-99



**Maestricht
(Netherlands)**

Dresden

Lodz

Apostolovo

Proskurov

**Nieder
Chortitza**

**Ulm
Salzburg
Liezen
Murau**



Post War Emigration

- o M.C.C. Helps about 12 000 refugees emigrate to Paraguay, Canada after the war
- o In the 1960's the German governments begin to sponsor emigrants from Russia who have a German passport or citizenship. They are called Umsiedler.
- o Many Mennonites were given German citizenship during the war, some of them now find their way to Germany.



Mennonites in USSR

- After 1940 Christians were allowed if registered.
- Radical believers who refused to register were not allowed and were persecuted.
- Many Mennonites merged with the Baptist movement in Russia
- 60 settlements survived in the Orenburg area and they managed to maintain a “Mennonite” identity till the present day despite persecution.