11-1-1966

The German-Russians: Their Heritage and their Role in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod

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THE GERMAN-RUSSIANS:
THEIR HERITAGE AND THEIR ROLE IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
H-505

by

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November 1966

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CHAPTER I

AN UNKNOWN PEOPLE

Until recent decades, the fact that Germans resided in Russia was relatively unknown, much less that they had been colonists there for well over a century. With the outbreak of World War I German forces moving into Russia were surprised to find many German soldiers in the Russian military ranks; but not only were the German soldiers surprised but so was the world at large. Approximately two million Germans[1] still lived unassimilated in their colonial villages. Since Russia is a large land and because the Germans living there had not yet attained a status in literature and had severed practically all ties with their homeland as well, they had remained unknown to the outside world. Since then, however, they have come more and more to the attention of the world. During the Russian Revolution in 1917 and World War II, their existence there created an international problem.

Straddling the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many thousands of restless German families uprooted themselves in search of a better way of life, in search of free land. Over that span of time an estimated one hundred and

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[1]Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus; The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 14.

sixty thousand[2] came directly to the shores of America. Another fifty thousand[3] or more emigrated to Russia to sojourn there for approximately a century before they joined their predecessors in the new land overseas. Once again in the search for free land.

As a transient people living in Russia the German-Russians established no political or national loyalties. Under special privileges they lived but were unassimilated into the Russian culture on Russian soil. Removed by several generations from their homeland, they were almost a people without a country. Those who came to America from Russia wanted another chance to work out their destiny. Happily they found here a friendly government, ample opportunity to follow agricultural pursuits, freedom from oppression, and finally, appreciation for what they could contribute to America.

In their eagerness to satisfy needs of safety and physical well-being, they clung tenaciously to values proven in previous agrarian experiences. However, their new environment imposed strange ways upon them. In America they established homesteads and tilled the soil very much as they had in Russia. As before, they remained unassimilated and

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[2]Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1964), p. 5.

[3]Ibid.

lived apart from the main stream of American culture. For a decade it appeared as if they had merely transplanted their way of life from Russia to America. Their communities were thoroughly German, segregated as they were from American-speaking people.

With succeeding generations, however, problems of cultural fusion arose. Public education tended to drive a wedge between family members as children began to speak a different language. Especially distressing to German parents was the change in attitudes concerning folkways which the growing youth presented. Parents acquiesced at first in the hope that the "melting-pot" of America would solve these irrations. That hope was short lived. Cultural heritages are not quickly lost nor new ways appropriated without bitter pangs. Descendants of foreign-born emigrants have become alienated from their forebears and may have almost entirely lost their family heritages.

However, Americanization did not necessarily create such demands. Rather, it could be said that the heritages of many ethnic groups make up the composite American mind, in ways of thinking, acting in economic, political and social ways. The values contributed by the foreign-born in creating an American culture need to be reappraised and rewritten.

The thread of intermittent wanderings over two centuries was easily lost. Approximately two hundred thousand Germans from Russia came to America. Another million or

more of their kinsmen chose to remain; eventually to face revolution, war, starvation and, for many, annihilation.

If it were necessary to state a reason for this paper at this time, the reader's attention is directed to the following facts; first of all, the United States Census for 1930 reported a total of 303,532 German-Russians in the population of the United States.[4] Secondly, numerous Lutheran congregations within this country, including the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, have a membership which is solidly of German-Russian extraction. Thirdly, these people have drifted away from the Lutheran church, in many cases, because they were not understood.

The German-Russians and their descendants are with us to stay. They and their descendants now number more than four million. Their family heritage is little known and they have become separated from their forebears. This paper is being written to fill the gap.

It will be noted that in this paper the designation, "German-Russians" is used consistently. It is felt to be a proper designation; for they refer to themselves as Russland Deutsche and Deutsche Russlaender. Yet, in the interests of accuracy we need to remember that the colonists are Germans racially; and that they struggled against odds to keep that

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[4]S. Joachim, "Toward an Understanding of the Russia Germans." An address delivered to the Western Conference of the Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church. (mimeographed)

Blood-relationship with the Germans of Western Europe unaffected by their domicle in Russia. Therefore, it is careless usage of terms to refer to these people as "Russians" or to use any term that would imply racial identity with the native people of Russia. In the case of the term "Russian," the territory in which they resided is denoted, never racial or blood relationship.

This paper shall attempt to explain why so many German families during the middle of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries left their homeland to emigrate to America and to Russia. To show that the Germans who went to Russia preferred not to become full Russian citizens. Also what circumstances led to their voluntary exodus overseas, mostly in the seventies and eighties, in favor of lands overseas, chiefly the United States of America. This paper will then limit itself to a discussion of the Russian-Germans in the Dakota Territory; particularly those who joined the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Russia had received her government and her name from the Normans, more specifically Rurik, who after the death of his two brothers became sole regent. From Byzantium Russia received her culture, her art and letters, and her Christianity. Greeks exercised a strong influence over Russia and indoctrinated the people with the spirit of their empire. The greatest tragedy ever to befall an empire befell Russia when the Mongols were victorious at Kalka in 1224 A.D., and imposed their rule for two hundred years.

This Mongol domination resulted in the separation of Russia for hundreds of years from Western Europe and in her subservience to oriental influence. This caused Russia to mistrust foreigners from the West. We must bear this is mind if we would understand some traits in the Russian character to this day.

The great cleft between East and West was already apparent along Russia's Western border, where a tier of provinces had been incorporated into the Russian Empire. The exchange of thought which resulted from this caused many Russians to want more of the Western culture. Therefore, they looked to the countries that had it. They looked to Germany, England, France and Holland.

From time immemorial foreigners had crossed the Russian

borders to hunt and to fight, but not until the fifteenth century of our era did it become an established custom for Russia to call upon Western Europe for an infusion of new blood into the state. Ivan III (1462-1505) invited architects, engineers, goldsmiths, miners and doctors from Hungary and Italy. Ivan IV (1533-1584) dispatched an agent to Germany to induce technicians of all professions to come to Russia.

Czar Boris Godunov (1598-1605) called upon Germany, Holland and Denmark to assist him in establishing universities. Demetrius I (1605-1606) favored the colonization of Russia from Western Europe. Vassily Schuisky (1606-1610) was inimical to foreigners and even destroyed a suburb of Moscow where foreigners had settled. Michael Feodorowitsch Romanov (1613-1645) in a proclamation to all Russia expressed disdain for all Latins and Lutherans, and considered it his duty to protect the Church of Russia against this enemy. And yet, as soon as order was restored in the empire he called upon the English, French, Danes and Scots to settle in his empire. The same procedure was continued under Czar Alexis Michalaiowitsch (1645-1676). Russia needed the Westerners. Nearly every regime of government welcomed them with open arms. However, the Russian Church and the common people considered them a menace, abused them and heaped indignities upon them.

Colonization was carried out on a much larger scale

under the reforms of Peter the Great. He not only sent agents to other countries to induce colonists to come into Russia, but in 1679 he personally brought in more than one thousand technicians and military scientists. Subsequently, men of every calling came. His immediate successors continued this program.

However, not until the reign of Catherine II, herself a German, was the successful culmination of Peter's great plan reached. She reigned from 1762 to 1796. Her chief interests were education, law, government, and slavery reforms. Although a German, Catherine had become thoroughly Russianized. She was possessed of a tremendous energy which she faithfully used to create a new and greater Russia. She also saw the necessity of bringing immigrants from Western Europe into Russia. As early in her reign as December 4, 1762 she issued an invitation to all, except Jews, to come and settle in her kingdom. This invitation was inopportune.

The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) was still undecided. Then, too, Catherine did not guarantee any privileges to personal liberty and faith. The response she received was discouraging, but she was not one to be easily disheartened. Therefore, on July 22, 1763 she issued a second manifesto; and this brought such good results that it came to be regarded as the cornerstone of all colonization programs. Thus the stage was set for the German immigration into Russia.

CHAPTER III

AUSWANDERUNG

The period from the late eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century was a period of great unrest in Europe, especially in Germany. One of the newspapers of the day describes it thus:

> In the richest and fairest parts of Europe there rules such discontent that whole families resolve to quit their fatherland. The spirit of restlessness and dissatisfaction is so general and so widespread that it must have a more profound cause than human foolishness. Whoever seeks there alone the cause which drives men from the land of their fathers knows little of men. We are bound by the eternal bonds of Nature to the ground upon which life welcomed us and we enjoyed our happiest years, where our parents and kinsmen rest, and so many departed friends; and only a power stronger than all these attachments can break so strong a bond. Though we prove to the discontented that they are wrong to think themselves unfortunate, the truth lies for them in their hearts. He must be truly unfortunate who will give up a certain present for a doubtful future, his homeland for an alien country, the known for the unknown. The best argument one could bring to counter the passion to emigrate would doubtless be to treat men so that they would wish to stay.... What can be done in this terrible circumstance in which men can desire their own annihilation? Emigration is a sort of suicide, for it divides us from all that gives value to civilized existence....Woe to the land whose people, like prisoners in their dungeons, can be held only by a close watch and the threat of punishment.[1]

What prompted so many Germans to leave their German com-

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[1] "Rhenish papers," quoted by Mack Walker, Germany and the Emigration: 1816-1885 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. xii.

munities to settle in Russia? Stumpp lists four basic motives which accounted for the large evacuation: (1) political, (2) economic, (3) religious, (4) personal.

Three German provinces were especially hard pressed and impoverished due to recurrent wars: Hessia, West Prussia, and Württemberg. They also furnished the bulk of immigrants once the exodus was in progress. In Hessia alternating conflicts between French and German troops devastated the land. The recurrent wars added undue burdens upon the people; foreign troops were constantly harboring upon German soil. Furthermore, during the Napoleonic wars, German youth were compelled to enter the French military service, many of whom avoided being drafted by emigrating to Russia as a means of securing their freedom. Wasteful living of counts added further burdens to the overtaxed populace. The exodus from the southern provinces, especially from Württemberg, was heavy as these provinces were especially hard pressed in carrying more than their share in furnishing military personal, payment of the cost of war, as outlined in the Napoleonic Peace Treaty, the terms of which added further distress.

Economic conditions also created pressing problems for the citizens. Specifically, Hessia, Vogelsgebiet, Rhinelowlands, and Württemberg were primarily affected by these adverse economic needs. Inadequate crops, infertility of the soil, lack of grasslands, high rent, adverse climatic conditions, all of these culminated in creating a tense reaction-

ary attitude which had ripened to the point of bare endurance. The glowing promises of Russia's wealth against the poverty of the homeland tipped the scales and the exodus was underway. The Germans were swayed by the challenging words of Catherine the Great: "Our lands hold riches of all kinds of minerals and metals, woods, rivers, seas for commerce which promote shipping, manufacturing and other activities." The contrast was unmistakable: poverty at home, riches in Russia.

While the exaggerated promises in Russia intensified the motive to emigrate, the basic cause stemmed from hard times in the homeland. The aftermath of several wars combined with occasional crop failures and general discontent were basic motives for emigration. In addition, the catastrophic year of 1816 added fresh fuel to the fire. In that year man and beast alike suffered from lack of food, a year in which the natural sequence of seasons seemed reversed: frozen wells in May, then incessant rains which rotted the fields, and whatever had remained was devoured by pest and mice, stock slaughtered for lack of fodder, shortages in the vineyards and field which necessitated eating straw, hay and bark of trees, all of which were baked together with bran for bread. Man had no explanation for such disruption of nature's laws.

While those conditions were essentially serious to the peasant farmers, other phases of the economy were likewise affected, thus producing unemployment, social distress, crit-

ical attitudes toward the state, and pressure to forestall any future recurrences. Under those dire living conditions the promises of good times in Russia were easily distorted; the farmers and those in need were the first to look toward the east as a solution of their present problem. The need for living space received undue emphasis. Everywhere and everybody seemed to believe "Wir sind bis zur Stunde ein Volk ohne Raum." Against the background of the geo-political situation, they envisaged their need to seek better conditions elsewhere.

The need for living space, Raumnot, was more applicable to the Mennonites, although it was often and frequently given as a motive by others for national expansion. In the case of the Mennonites land restrictions as well as political limitations forced them to seek settlements elsewhere, even though they had enjoyed many years of peaceful existence in Danzig and West Prussia. Living in closed settlements, they needed reserve lands for future development commensurate with the internal increase of families. Likewise their insistence on military exemption was an undeniable prerequiste; when these were withdrawn by edict, they were compelled to move and sought refuge in the Black Sea Area. Belatedly newer concessions were made in Germany; but it was too late to stop the emigration to Russia.

It would be difficult to separate religious motives from others, as they are always intertwined and cannot be too

sharply distinguished. Many smaller groups were not wholly satisfied with the organized church. That dissatisfaction can be regarded as a religious motive for emigration. Meanwhile political and economic unrest was very closely allied to their emotional life. That many individuals and even smaller groups expressed dissatisfaction with the church in identifying themselves as Pietists, Separatists, Chiliasts, etc., indicated they wanted an environment with more freedom for religious expression. Since religious discontent existed and became more and more pronounced, it crystalized into a trend to break away from the organized church.

However, this reaction against the organized church was not characteristic of all provinces. Württemberg seemed to be the only province in which the religious motive was combined with the tense political and economic problems. For instance, in Hessia all religions were equally tolerated; though religious differences may have existed, they were not important as a basic motive for emigrating. Except for the Mennonites and Herrnhuters who migrated to the Volga settlement, no religious contentions were apparent. In Württemberg, however, religion was an important factor in giving impetus to migration. The Schwabian people who inhabited the province were by nature a religious folk. Their emotional life failed to find adequate nourishment within the confines of the organized church, so they found the common fellowship of smaller groups for meditating and expounding of Scriptures more to their needs than was offered by the prescribed tradi-

tions of the established church. The warmth and understanding gained from these devotional gatherings became the essence of their religion. Certain men among them became distinguished leaders. In the Russian colonies later, pietistic tendencies played important roles in shaping the development of new churches.

The pietistic faith was also very dominant among the Separatist who promoted the separation of church and state. One extreme wing took a very strong position against the state, even saying it was corrupt, and loyalty to it should be abandoned. Also, they said the church was impotent in matters pertaining to human salvation. Those agitators were not only under surveillance of the police but frequently were arrested and jail sentences imposed. These measures taken by the state, however, failed to curb them; in fact, it even tended to make them more violent in their reactionary position. Though they were considered to be good citizens otherwise, in their religious convictions they were most stubborn.

The pietistic faith was also very pronounced among the Chiliastic group, a third offshot. Their distinction consisted in the extreme literal interpretation of certain passages of Scripture which dealt with the establishment of God's reign upon earth for a thousand years called the millenium, to be ushered in with the appearance of Jesus himself. They even designated the time and the place of Jesus'

appearance to usher in the kingdom of God. His visible appearance was to be in the year 1833, with the possible leeway in 1836, at Mt. Ararat in the east; for according to legend Noah's ark was to have been anchored there. They considered this doctrine basic to all Christians, for all faith, for all believers, for all Bible readers.

Many devout believers were attracted by that prophecy and made haste to go to eastern Russia to be the first viewers of the event. Alexander the First, Czar of Russia, was considered a good Christian, for he believed in the prophecy. In addition he gave them support; he also founded the Evangelical Bible Association in promoting the Christian cause. For his high devotion to the Faith the believers designated him as the "white eagle" in contrast to the "black angel" or the anti-Christ in Napoleon. Thus the Caucasus in Southern Russia became a favored area of emigration for those religiously-minded folk. They staked all their faith on Jesus' visible appearance in His second coming. No campaigns by land or railroad agents were needed here to promote their cause; it was enough to have faith in that prophecy and Jesus became the prime mover.

Even in modern times, the problem of initiating Christian faith and devising means of sustaining it through church and private devotion, continues to be a concern for descendants of those early believers. How to induce, nurture and maintain religion through conventional and tradi-

tional cults was not adequately reappraised. For those simple folk of the nineteenth century, in emigrating to Southern Russia, it nevertheless served as a powerful motive.

Besides the political, economic and religious motives which prompted emigration, personal inducement also facilitated it. Foremost were the royal intermarriages which established favorable court relationships and thereby encouraged colonization. The imperial link between the German and Russian rulers was very close because of those intermarriages. Alexander I of Russia was the nephew of King Frederick I of Germany who highly favored Russian emigration. Communication between the royal courts opened the way for better understanding of their mutual problems of settlements and of establishing colonies. Germany and Russia at that time were on friendly terms. In later times, however, that relationship also militated severely against maintaining those good relationships.

Another personal motive was the inducement which came from the earlier individuals and settlers in Russia who corresponded with friends and relatives in the homeland. Thus, as we view the background and motives for that mass movement to Russia, there were, on the one hand, a combination of unfavorable conditions in Germany, and on the other hand, imperial sanction on the part of the royal courts. The interrelationship of all those factors constituted the dynamic social complex within which the emigration took place.

CHAPTER IV

COLONIALIZATION

There were two main reasons why the Russian government invited foreign farmers, especially Germans, to settle in their country. First, they wished to have the productive lands around the Black Sea cultivated; and second, they hoped to use the colonists to form a barrier against future Asiatic invasions. So on December 4, 1762 Catherine II made her first proclamation inviting foreign settlers to Russia. This invitation met with little success, perhaps mainly because she guaranteed them no freedoms. So on the 22nd of July, 1763, Catherine again made a proclamation. This time she went into great detail elaborating the privileges which would be granted to such colonists.[1] This manifest was the seeming answer to the hopes of the German farmers. Russia became somewhat of a "Promised Land" where there would be no problems. This sentiment was even expressed in songs of that time.[2]

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[1] See Appendix A for a translation of the Manifest of July 22, 1763.

[2] An example of one of these songs is given below.

Wo die Leute von Deutschland sind nach Ruszland gesogen

Lastzt uns nur das Frühjahr sehn
Und die schöne Sommerzeit.
Wer will mit nach Ruszland ziehn,
Der mach' sich zur Fahrt bereit.

The invitation permitting emigration was published in newspapers of European countries, including England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Holland, German free cities, and small German states. In 1764 the government decided to employ professional colonization agents. A Bureau of Guardianship of Foreign Colonists, with an annual appropriation of two hundred thousand rubles, was established to deal with all governmental problems arising in connection with the col-

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Den der Kaiser hat ausgeschreiben,
Dasz er Deutsche haben will,
Grund und soviel mitzuteilen,
Als sie nur besitzen woll'n

Ruszland ist eine schöne Gegend,
Hier eine rechte Schinderei.
Und da werden wir anlegen
Weinberg' an dem schönsten Rhein.

Nun adje, jetzt wollen wir ziehen,
Jetzund ist es hohe Zeit.
An die Donau wollen wir ziehen,
Denn sie ist von hier nicht weit.

Kommen wir an die russische Grenze,
Kriegen wir Pasz und Reisegeld.
Zehn Jahr sind wir frei von Gaben
Und auch frei von Standquartier.

Und da geben wir keine Soldaten,
Wir unsere Kinder nicht.
Ruszland ist eine schöne Gegend
Für die Schreiber und Advokaten.
Denn die haben viel dabei.

(quoted by Paul Traeger in Die Deutschen in der Dobrudscha; zugleich ein Beitrag zu Geschichte der deutschen Wanderungen in Osteuropa (Stuttgart: Ausland und Heimat Verlags-Aktiengesellschaft, 1922), p. 18.)

onization program.[3]

The new recruiting machinery produced abundant results, especially among the German people. Farmers, doctors, pharmacists, carpenters and various other professionals came from Saxony, Thuringia, Württemberg, Baden, Hessen, Bavaria, Poland, Silesia and the Prussias. From 1764-1767 more than one hundred colonies were founded along the Lower Volga.[4]

When the Black Sea finally came under Russian control permanently in 1781, after alternating wars for centuries between the Turks, Asiatic invaders and other nomadic groups, the German colonists had already made a beginning in colonization of the area and had demonstrated their industry especially on the Volga. From this time on every effort was then put forth by the Russian regime to bring German farmers to the Black Sea area also, to create colonies, develop agricultural possibilities, and to improve the Russian economy. When the appeal was made for German colonization in the Black Sea area, it brought an immediate response. The new colonists came under the same law and special privileges which the Volga Germans enjoyed. But, due to financial difficulties the Russian colonization program had to be cur-

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[3]Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus; The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 14.

[4]Ibid.

tailed in 1810 and discontinued in 1819; but it is estimated that this program of colonization cost the crown a minimum of 5,199,813 rubles.[5]

The accompanying map shows the extent and areas covered by German colonization until it had reached its completion. The colonial expansion covered a wide geographical area, extending approximately fifteen hundred miles. Since climatic, as well as soil, conditions varied to some extent in this extensive area, life in the various colonies developed according to their own specific characteristics. In general, however, all colonies were naturally agrarian, and the inhabitants consistently remained farmers. In areas where vineyard or forest work offered the only alternatives to farming, economic life developed those resources; otherwise all German colonies in Russia concentrated predominantly on grain farming. Although some cultural differences existed between the various colonies, no alienation ever arose between them. Such differences as did exist--in dialect, date of colonization, religious practices--were not vital differences. Again, in general, the Germans remained highly homogeneous. The Mennonites, which were not really Germans, however, represent an exception, for they had strict religious, political, and social philosophies which set them off as special

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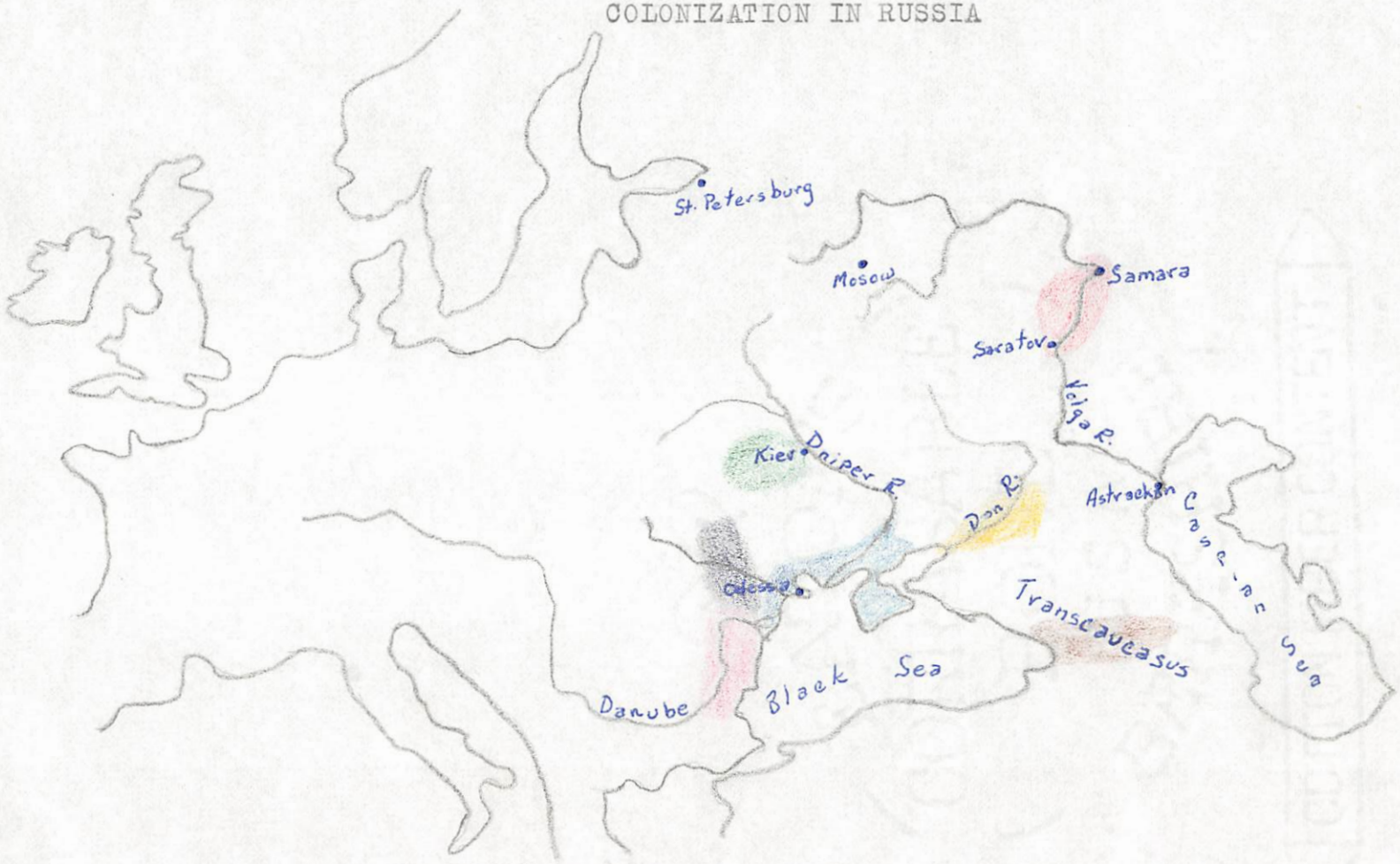
[5]Frommhold Hunnius, Die ev.-luth. Kirche Ruszlands (Leipzig: Verlag von Justus Naumann, 1877), p. 78.

MAJOR AREAS OF GERMAN COLONIZATION IN RUSSIA



KEY

- --Volga Germans
- --Black Sea Germans
- --Wohlynia
- --Bessarabia
- --North Caucasus Germans
- --South Caucasus Germans
- --Charabin or Dobrudscha

colonists; they also remained the most pure because of their inflexible traditions. As all the original colonies outgrew their natural boundaries, daughter colonies would spring up to accommodate the expanding population. Before too many decades the daughter colonies even outnumbered the mother colonies, became more widely scattered, but remained essentially similar to the mother colony. From a mere few the number of specific colonies grew to over two thousand.[6]

The chronological sequence from the earlier to the later founding of colonies in Russia, by areas, is: (a) Volga colonies, between 1763-1768; 1804-1810; (b) Black Sea area, between 1789-1824; (c) South Caucasus, between 1817 and following a mother colony from Württemberg; (d) North Caucasus, a daughter colony from the Volga and Black Sea; (e) Wohlynia founded in 1863 from Schleswig and Poland; and (f) Germans in Siberia, in the twentieth century, combined inhabitants from the older established colonies.

A brief sketch of each of these areas will show their distinctiveness. The first German colonies in Russia were established on the Volga River, between the two cities of Samara and Saratov, with two major peaks, one between 1763-1768 and another between 1804-1810. In a real sense the special privileges to German colonists as outlined and legalized by Catherine II were now put on trial as these years brought

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[6]Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (Netherlands: Royal Van Corcum Ltd., 1964), p. 28.

large groups of German families into the land for the first time to experiment with colonization. The Volga Germans were therefore the first to take advantage of those special privileges.

The Volga colonists found that wide contrasts existed in climate and natural resources. One time nature would bestow endless riches in the form of bumper crops, then again cause hunger and starvation in times of drought. When climatic conditions were favorable the land would be the most attractive and beautiful in field and farm, but then, too, it could become a desert in seasons of heat and drought.

The colonists were more backward in cultural advancement than their European forebears. The Volga German was still primitive in his outlook on nature. What was laid down by the Almighty, he reasoned, could not be interfered with by man. The suggestion of controlling drought through technical means of artifical irrigation would fall upon deaf ears. The farmer tilled the field to the best of his knowledge, but thereafter he stood like a helpless child and trusted a higher power to take over. He was naive and childlike. While he may have known how to read time in the position of the sun and stars, in the understanding of pestilence, crop failures, war, revolution, change of weather, rain, drought, snow, wind, heat, storms, he was highly superstitious.

The Volga settlements started under Catherine II, with 104 colonies with about 23,184 inhabitants, grew so that by

1800 there were approximately 400,000 inhabitants and 668,896 by 1914.[7] Sons and daughters marrying formed a joint family unit, with all property held in common. In time the natural increase in population led to smaller acreage per family, restricting each family more and more in ownership of land. Because the German-Russians enjoyed special privileges it encouraged them to colonize elsewhere.

Large colonies were founded in the Black Sea area by 1804. This Russia desired since she needed to develop Odessa as a seaport. That Odessa was already an attractive and potential city is shown in the rapid increase in population from 60,000 in 1832 to 604,223 by 1939.[8] Under German guidance, the city began to spread, gaining in population from a mere aggregation of various culture groups (Italian, Greek, Albanian) of nine thousand in 1802 to more than thirty-five thousand in just one decade.[9] Before colonies were established, distinguished individual Germans had already played roles in civic and commerical life of the city, in the schools, hospitals, professions, and other cultural activities. Gradual restrictions to their freedom were applied to those urbanized non-colonists to become more thorougly russified.

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[7] Ibid., p. 30.

[8] Ibid., p. 30.

[9] Ibid., p. 27.

The great influx of Germans to South Russia came from the province of Württemberg where religious unrest existed in addition to other tensions. Especially prominent among the religious dissatisfactions were those voiced by the chiliastic Christians. It should be noted that southern Russia possessed fertile land and colonists had unrivalled opportunities to transform the wide open space into arable farm lands. In time 214 colonies had sprung up with another thousand daughter colonies.[10] The rapid increase in population was followed by a corresponding expansion in industry and productivity. While the crown granted them millions of acres of land, private purchases exceeded that amount seven-fold.

The large group of Mennonites found its way into southern Russia also. In their wanderings they already had an undeniable good record of high achievement as agriculturalists. Formerly living in Prussia and Poland they distinguished themselves as an industrious and honest people also. At first they stood in a very favorable light with the Russian rulers, but as before, they always became objects of envy and gradually lost their toleration. They had come from Danzig and West Prussia to establish colonies at Chortitza in 1789, Halbstadt, Malotschna in 1804 and later at Samara (1859). While they resided in the Black Sea provinces in closed colonies, they remained very aloof and had little influence upon the

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[10] Ibid., p. 31.

Ukrainian peasants. As farmers they remained unexcelled in wheat culture and were among the pioneers in making this area the wheat granary of the world.

Many of the German settlers, who had come from the province of Württemberg, had started for the Caucasus; but not all reached their destination because of poverty, sickness, robbers and inability to adapt to climatic conditions on the hazardous journey. It took those who arrived several years before they could make any agricultural progress. Due to the hilly land, they resorted to the raising of cattle; vineyards had to be started as they could not rely entirely on wheat farming. Because of the rugged and mountainous terrain much basic reconstruction needed to be made--building of canals for irrigation, surface reconstruction for roads and vineyards and fruit trees. An exception to other Dörfer, they built two-story houses and drank wine.

The North Caucasus was settled as a daughter colony from the Volga and Black Sea areas, while the South Caucasus drew inhabitants from both as well as from the mother colony of Württemberg.

The Polish nobles requested Germans to settle in Wohlynia, but they continued to move eastward until they had reached the borderland of Russia. When they were requested to assist in fighting the Russians and they refused, the Polish forced them to move on, and they finally settled in Wohlynia and Kiev, but remained in open settlements rather

than closed colonies. Their assimilation remained incomplete, although they continued to share the life and culture of their neighbors, mostly as farmers.

The initial decision of colonization in Russia included many problems, both when the colonists left Germany and when they arrived in Russia. While the following description of hardships encountered in transportation may not be typical of all emigrations to Russia, in individual cases it did exist. The ill-conceived belief that Jesus' second coming would occur in southern Russia aroused many chiliastic groups from Württemberg to hasten there without realistic planning for safety in transportation or how to meet the expected problems on arrival. For one group the trip lasted for two summers and one winter. Some went via the Danube while others went overland. All suffered from sickness and untold hardships, trekking across on foot or by wagon with their scant belongings; often times human help was needed to support the weakened horses. However, in many cases methods of transportation, facilitating the exodus and planned arrival were in the hands of appointed overseers. At best the transfer of so many thousands of families in groups for longer periods of time and over long distances to be litterally dumped upon open prairies was fraught with many inconveniences, hardships and distressing new experiences. The only certain expectation upon arrival at their appointed destination was to see the vast spaces of empty steppes.

The founding of the five Schwabian colonies in South Russia abounds in material of ill-planning, mostly so because too many shared the extreme religious beliefs in the apocalyptic transformation of the world order in which man had no stake. They defied all good counsel as they left Württemberg, May 10, 1817, fifteen hundred families in Harmonien groups to wander to South Russia to witness the appearance of Jesus.[11] A decade before, other Schwabian colonists had preceded this last group of colonists; they had settled near Odessa. Upon their arrival the fifteen hundred families were to be detained over winter and housed with their kinsmen, for uprisings were in progress in the Caucasus and colonization was considered unsafe. Upon their insistence, however, Alexander granted their request to attempt settlements; but three hundred families remained at Odessa with the Hoffnungstal colony. The rest moved on to Tiflis where uprisings of the native Mohammedans protested allegiance to the Russians. Although they were unwelcome, the colonists proceeded. Even before their arrival they had suffered unusual hardships aboard ships. They were extremely crowded; food was scarce and sickness arose. On land they had to be quarantined; but their emotional fanaticism seemed beyond control as they proceeded. Once they attempted to settle at Tiflis, unfavorable climatic conditions and malaria fever proved too strong and hundreds died. For the winter they were housed

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[11] Ibid., p. 34.

by the Armenians. In the spring, they began to build earthen huts, adopt the customs of the natives, accept the climatic conditions, deal with malaria fever, drink only preboiled water and learn to live in extreme heat.

Their immediate neighbors, the Mohammedans, were less friendly than the Armenians, for they were placed in an ugly mood when Russia and Persia entered into the war. Since Russian inhabitants were disliked, they considered the Germans as coming from Russia. They would fall upon the Schwabian settlements, killing many, driving some away, and taking others as slaves. After peace was restored, the Schwabian settlers preferred to remain in the cities where they had already sought refuge, but the authorities forced them to return to their colonies.

While the Schwabian settlements presented extreme problems in becoming colonized, certain features were characteristic of all the colonies in Russia. For all colonists the open country presented no problem, for they had been accustomed to life on the farm. Only in Wohlynia, in South Caucasus and some parts along the Volga wooded areas could be found; otherwise, the German settlers populated the open steppes. Then, too, they had come with the devout purpose of developing farms and fields, heretofore unattempted but with great potentialities. Since only a sprinkling of the trades people were among them, the majority had no other choice than to become farmers and pursue agricultural activities. For at least the first two generations they concentrated on soil

cultivation and establishing a farm economy.

The Russian climate offered greater fluctuation in extreme heat and cold, with higher and lower seasonal changes. The German colonists had to accommodate themselves to the rigor of the climate, but the Russian steppes as such had never presented a serious problem too different from their German homeland. The primitivity, however, of those plains with no sign of human habitation--at least in the beginning, no farm life, no economic activity--taxed even the strong of heart. Before a crop could be expected, and it would be a small one, their life was insecure. Raw nature could not be coerced to meet their human needs, for it was quite impersonal; and there were pests of all kinds, locusts, hail and floods, crop failures--all these came in the course of their settlements. For future survival some community planning had to be made as precaution against those inevitable hazards. Diversification of the economy had to be considered rather than remaining highly specialized in grain farming.

At best the early years of colonization were trying years in all respects. Though Russian subsistence was made available to the newcomers, their continued survival nevertheless depended upon self-reliance, thrift, hard work. But as colonial life took on the complexion of human activity, houses arose and the soil was cultivated; and everywhere nature began to respond to the efforts of man to create a civilization. Thus finally, years of happiness and prosperity arrived, but it was to be short-lived.

CHAPTER V

EXODUS

The year 1871 was a fateful year. By edict the Manifesto of 1762 under Catherine the Great, giving the Germans special privileges as colonists in Russia, was abrogated. From this time forth they no longer enjoyed living in Russia. After approximately sixty years they were placed under the same laws as all citizens and the special privileges which they were to enjoy for "eternal times," as phrased by Catherine, had come to an end.

Until this time the German colonists had really no basic grounds to uproot themselves once again, as they had done a century before in leaving Germany. The Manifesto of Catherine the Great extended a warm welcome to colonize in Russia and extended them favors beyond all expectation. They succeeded well in their agrarian enterprise and achieved a higher standard in agriculture and culture in general than the native Russians. Colonial settlements studded the land and changed the landscape of Russia everywhere. There was evidence of their progress in schools, churches, well ordered villages and expansive farm lands. Relative peace and prosperity characterized Russian life everywhere. Their colonies grew in number from a few in the early years to several thousand.

While some unsatisfactory conditions existed in Russia,

they did not specifically affect the Germans. For instance, too much land had fallen into the hands of the gentry, which led to the inevitable serfdom. Nevertheless, the system had several unwanted by-products--high taxation, mismanagement and graft associated with land. This the Germans especially disliked because the farmers had to assume too much of that burdensome load. But since the colonists remained relatively separated from the main stream of Russian culture, they could tolerate the unjust system.

Among the reasons which motivated the Germans to leave Russia in favor of lands overseas, especially to the United States of America, four are outstanding: (1) general unrest, (2) the Ukase of June 4, 1871, (3) Russification, and (4) land hunger coupled with land need, Raumnot.

A general restlessness existed among the colonists as early as 1847, at which time several families migrated to the United States.[1] Although things fared well with them in their new land, their small group felt stranded and lonesome. With cheerful letters they hoped to attract others to join them in the pioneering venture. Some did. However, several decades passed before the exodus of Germans from Russia caused any serious dislocation of families. General restlessness was especially pronounced among the pietistic groups who longed for more recognition and freedom than was

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[1] Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1964), p. 92.

possible among their Russian neighbors.

The Ukase of June 4, 1871 by the Czar proved the greatest motive for emigration; it caused the most widespread unrest among all the colonists. The special privileges assured by legal act under Catherine the Great for "eternal times" for all German colonists coming to Russia came to an end under the new edict. The Germans could no longer live in closed settlements or maintain their former local autonomy but now were placed under the jurisdiction of the Czar. The greatest jolt of all was their loss of military exemption--this particularly was disastrous to the Hutterites and the Mennonites. For approximately a century they had enjoyed military exemption under the Czar, one of the chief inducements to emigrate to Russia from their war-ridden homeland in Germany. It was also the kind of military service to which the Germans could not yield. The regular service required years in training, with a rigorous discipline bordering on inhuman brutality. Every Russian village had to render recruits every five years, which the Russian youth evaded whenever possible. Many would flee to German villages to hide under roofs in attics to escape being drafted. It was not lack of loyalty to their government that prompted them to hide but rather the corporal punishment involved.

In place of the special privileges for "eternal times" came the new Russification program: "one land, one language, one people." Perhaps they had enjoyed too many privileges

too long. The suddenness with which they were deprived was too thorough-going. To Russianize the non-Russian colonists and "culturize" them seemed justifiable, but with this effort came also the demand that they change their German names by adding Russian endings. That was utterly unacceptable. Then, too, Alexander III followed his unwise edict in 1881 that further German immigration from Germany should cease and present colonies be resettled from the borders to the interior. Thus, in a political sense the edict of 1871 was the chief tangible ground for wanting to emigrate from Russia. It was further reinforced by other edicts, November 20, 1880 and February 21, 1897. The new Russification program was too sudden and too radical.

In 1886 the Russian officals first began to exert pressure to have the Russian language taught in the schools. This was difficult at first. Over half of the teachers were not familiar with the Russian even though some progressive ones had taught the language as early as 1830.[2] After 1881, the German schools were placed under the state Department of Public Instruction. In the 1890's all subjects, except religion, German, and church music, had to be taught in the Russian language. This was never fully realized.

The principal grievance against the Russification edict

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[2]Frank H. Epp, Mennonite Exodus; The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonite Since the Communist Revolution (Altona: D. W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1962), p. 25.

was the obligatory military service. This struck hardest in the Hutterite and Mennonite communities; but even among the non-Mennonites the stand against war was likewise very strong, especially so in the pietistic groups with whom it was a religious principle to have peace and freedom. The Mennonites sent five delegations to St. Petersburg during the 1873-1875 period to gain concessions. Their cause was not helped by the fact that some of the major spokesmen could not present their petition for exemption from military service in the Russian language.[3] Concessions were made. The 1874 law provided for non-combatant service, such as forestry and industrial work in time of peace and hospital services in time of war.

Yet, general loss of privileges and autonomy caused thousands of these German-Russians to migrate at this time. Some Mennonites also migrated to the semi-independent Asiatic Turkestan, which Russia had conquered recently and which was not yet subject to Russian military service. For a time all the Mennonite colonists were ready to leave. Only the aggressive intercession of the Czar's personal representative, General von Totleben, himself a German Lutheran, stemmed the emigration movement.[4]

As a present motive, land hunger outweighed the anticipated land need. By the end of the nineteenth century land

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[3] Ibid., p. 26.

[4] Ibid., p. 26.

need had not yet become a serious matter, although conditions worsened with the steady increase of population among the German colonists. From the initial fifty thousand or more of the first generation immigrants, the number rose to around two million by 1914. Similarly the colonies increased from a few hundred to 3280 during the same period.[5] That rapid increase of population necessiatated a corresponding acquisition of newer lands. But, since Russia is a large land the pressure of population expansion had not yet become a pressing problem. However, it tended to create tensions, for land became more scare and only the well-to-do could afford to purchase new lands with the increase of land value from a mere five rubles per acre to more than five hundred.[6] For those who rented land it was no longer profitable to do so.

During the peak of emigration to lands overseas of those German colonists, land hunger outweighed land need as a reason for their exodus. Land as such had been so vital to their existence. They lived on it, tilled the soil and survived physically because without it survival was impossible. Land and survival were inseparable correlations.

In addition to contributing to the physical needs, land also had a psychological bearing on life; the hunger for land added prestige to one's status. With the possession of

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[5]Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1964), p. 94.

[6]Ibid., p. 95.

land, a family's prestige rose in the community. The struggle for prestige then was a great inducement to enlarge one's fields.

Associated with their physiological and psychological need for land were favorable conditions overseas in North and South America, Canada, and later in Mexico, which intensified their land hunger. Had Russian soil been poor, ill-adapted to farming, such news from foreign lands would have had logical appeals. But Russian land was of the best. Their vision became directed to the new world when enticing promises were extended to new immigrants. As early as 1872 Canada had passed favorable immigration laws to attract foreigners. It offered 160 acres of land to the homesteader after three years residency for only $10.00. Even earlier, similar lasws existed in the United States with the passage of the Homestead Act. South America and Mexico, also, proposed favorable conditions for emigration.

The German-Russians had fallen short of realizing their dreams. Even though they had been uprooted from Germany for a century, they had not become fully integrated in the Russian way of life; for they could not identify themselves with the Russians, as they had no similarity in race, nationality, language, or religion. Meanwhile, they had enjoyed the abundance of land; but when political complications became too distressing for continued peaceful co-existence, it culminated in a crisis. Once their combined motives for emigration had reached a climax, the exodus was under way.

CHAPTER VI

NEW WORLD

More than two hundred thousand German colonists left Russia following the Ukase of June 4, 1871 by Czar Alexander III. Periodically groups of families numbering several hundred, cast their lot to migrate to the United States for better or for worse. Such huge dislocation of families involved many unforeseen problems and untold hardships. Once they were on the move, their spirits were steeled to accept the future without turning back. Except for a few ill-planned courses, the majority followed the judgment of delegated emissaries who had explored the lands overseas and brought back their reports.

The colonists looked for a country which would provide two favorable conditions. First, since they were agricultural people, they needed farm lands in the new country. They consistently chose lands with agricultural possibilities. Second, they wanted favorable political conditions which would insure their freedom without restrictions. Since several countries offered those favorable conditions, they had considerable leeway in their final destination. However, their initial settlements were almost exlusively in the United States to be followed over a period of time to other lands.

The composition of emigrant groups was dominated by

young married couples. Many single men joined them as they faced the two-fold problem of getting a good start in their farming venture and also evade being drafted into the Russian army. A fair sprinkling of single women also followed, but generally they remained with their families and preferred not to break their ties. In the case of older people, they often accompanied their kinsfolk, not wanting to be left behind, or followed them after they had become established in the new homeland.

Before the large scale immigration was set in motion, some individuals as well as small family groups had already found suitable living conditions in the United States. As early as 1847-48, and periodically in 1853, 1865, 1869, German colonists preceded the large exodus which started in 1873 and lasted up to World War I when the move was temporarily disrupted, only to be resumed again in the early twenties.

Almost every state attracted some German colonists from various Russian provinces, but they concentrated especially in the states of Ohio, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Wisconsin, Illinois, the two Dakotas, and California. From the Black Sea area, 116,540 German colonists came to America, 96,000 of whom settled in the Dakota Territory, with barely a sprinkling of over five hundred from the Volga colonies.[1]

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[1] Adolph Schock, In Quest of Free Land (Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum Ltd., 1964), p. 117.

One of the first large scale migrations to the United States came from southern Russia--the Black Sea area--in 1873, principally from the colonies of Worms and Rohrbach. In the United States they built the community of Odessa, South Dakotta. Other groups were to follow inthe next decades. By a combination of circumstances the first settlers were destined to found their homesteads in the Dakota Territory. Several factors contributed to that choice.

The heart of the Dakota Territory had been left untouched by earlier pioneers settling in America as it seemed undesirable for farm purposes. In a debate in 1850 Daniel Webster said: "What do we want with this vast worthless area, this region of savages and wild beasts, of deserts, of shifting sand and whirlwinds of dust, of cactus and prairie dogs? To what use could we ever put those great deserts of endless mountain ranges, impenetrable and covered to their base with eternal snows?" It belonged to that large Plains area, known as the American desert before the Civil War. No one had cared to live there; and only the goldseekers on their way crossed it. Likewise, in time the stage coaches went through it; and finally a transcontinental railroad cut across this area. Then, too, it was the land of the American Indian with whom the white man did not wish to associate. However, it was excellent grazing ground for millions of buffaloes before they were ruthlessly slaughtered for sport.

When the Dakota settlers arrived, the buffaloes were no longer roaming those prairies in large numbers but were most-

ly confined to more sheltered areas along the Missouri River. The prairies, however, were still actually littered with their bones, reminders of their existence in bygone days.

At the time the buffaloes began to disappear from the Territory, ranchers were giving up raising cattle there since it was no longer profitable. The demand for range fed cattle had fallen off in the eastern markets. Sheep raising could not fully supplant the cattle, so much territroy became available for agriculture. Coupled with those changes came also the building of transcontinental railroads which attracted labor.

Once the Territory seemed ready for settlements, various agents promoted it by appealing to potential immigrants at home and in Europe. Land agents in the employment of railroad companies sought to induce newcomers to take up farming on those plains, thereby bridging the gap that existed between east and west. The completion of a transcontinental railroad across that Territory depended upon the settlement of the Dakotas. The rigors of frontier life, coupled with Indian hostilities, had kept the white settlers in safer areas. By 1880 the heart of the Dakotas was still an open field for homesteaders. In cooperation with the land agents were also immigration officials who undoubtedly represented certain personal interests. In a sense immigrant groups were at the mercy of those agents as they accepted reduced transportation fares to the very heart of the Dakotas, to be lit-

erally dumped off at the spur end of the railroad. Into this vacuum came the German-Russians. Subsequent waves of immigrants came in significant numbers, spreading out in a fan-shaped manner to become homesteaders and permanent settlers. It was not characteristic for them to build claim shanties to be left behind, sell the land to a prospective buyer and move elsewhere. They unloaded, stayed, and built houses.

CHAPTER VII

MISSOURI GOES TO THE DAKOTAS

Church confession and residence in a Russian province served to guide the colonists in establishing their new settlements in America. For while all immigrants had been Germans living in Russia, they were nevertheless grouped according to residence in colonies and membership in a church confession. Some of the colonies were either consistently Roman Catholic or Evangelical; while some did have both confessions in the same colony. In addition to belonging to specific colonies, they were identified according to the larger land areas as Volga-Germans, Black Sea Germans, etc. Those marks of identification as belonging to a specific colony, a larger province and church membership were retained as distinguishing characteristics in their settlements in the new world.

So in the Territory of Dakota, towns began to spring up, often bearing the same name as the settlers' home village in Russia. In 1873 one group of approximately five hundred settlers came from the area near the Black Sea to settle north of Yankton, South Dakota. The impetus for that settlement had come from a group of German-Russians who had settled near Sandusky, Ohio a few decades earlier. The group finally settled north of Yankton and founded the town of Odessa. But gradually newer immigrants joined them from South Russia.

Within the span of five or six years, other communities arose adjoining Odessa, including Menno, Freeman, Marion, Scotland, Tripp, Parkston, Delmont, Dakota City. As railroads continued to extend their lines, other trading posts developed into villages and towns. In South Dakota, Ipswich and Eureka were at the spur end of railroads and became important trading centers, with midway towns at Roscoe, Hosmer, Leola. Artas, Herried, Java and Greenway were established from Scotland families.

As the course of settlements was extended northward it crossed the boundary of future North Dakota. In 1884 Jewell became a strong community, straddling the two states. Other communities took form toward the north and west--Zeeland, Ashley, Wishek, Lehr, Danzig, Napoleon, Kulm, Gackle, Medina, Windsor, Underwood, Goodrich, Coalharbor. Crossing the Missouri River other communities were founded at Hebron, Glen Ullin, New Leipzig, Mott, New Salem, Elgin. Practically all of these towns had come into being by the close of the century. The descendants of these settlers still make up the greatest percentage of the population of Hutchinson, Mc Pherson and Edmunds counties in South Dakota, and in North Dakota include Morton and McIntosh counties.

As the Dakota Territory opened to settlers, pastors of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod began making trips, as Reisepredigern, in a search for any Germans of the Lutheran faith. These pastors came from Minnesota and Iowa. As they

began to find small pockets of Lutherans they would establish preaching stations. To this end, Rev. John F. Doescher was commissioned in 1874 to serve the Dakota Territory, with Yankton as his base.

From the Crimean peninsula on the Black Sea a small group of immigrants arrived in Yankton, South Dakota, in 1874. They found a place thirty miles north of Yankton where they settled. Shortly after their arrival they wrote to their friends and relatives, still in Russia, encouraging them to come. The following year the second group arrived to rejoin those who came first. These people met regularly on Sundays and conducted their Lesegottesdienste, or reading services. What a joy it was to them to find a Lutheran pastor, Rev. Doescher, who was willing to serve them. In 1876 they founded, under the leadership of Rev. Doescher, Die Evangelische Lutheraner Dreienigkeitsgemeinde U. A. C. This was the first Lutheran church of the Missouri Synod in South Dakota. At the same time Rev. Doescher was conducting services at 26 preaching stations scattered in eight counties.

That it was possible for Rev. Doescher to organize a new congregation among these settlers after being in contact with them for such a short time is clearly understood from his letter to the Mission Board of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod describing the spiritual condition of the immigrants, saying:

> The people of these settlements professed themselves members of the Lutheran church and desire to have

> the ministry of the church established among them. A great part of these rejoiced to have found in America the pure Word of God. They love and esteem the sacred office of the ministry. There are several among them who are models in every respect. They instruct their children in the Word of God. In short I can say with a cheerful heart that our beloved Lutheran church has gained a firm foothold in Dakota. All glory and honor be to God.[1]

Thus work among the Germans, and particularly among the German-Russians began, at Trinity Lutheran Church in Heilbronn, South Dakota. Whenever the pastor could not be present, these people continued with their "Reading Services." The story of Heibronn was to be repeated over and over again as more congregations of German-Russians were founded.[2]

After two hundred years of wandering these people finally found a home. To this day the have continued to influence the lives of many.

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[1] 75th Anniversary (1876-1951). Anniversary booklet published by and for Trinity Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Heilbronn (Hutchinson County), South Dakota. This congregation is now disbanded. Information about its history may be had at Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri; or the Archives of the South Dakota, Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in Freeman, South Dakota.

[2] See Appendix B for a tabulation of those congregations of which it could be determined that they were started by German-Russians or had members who were German-Russian, at the time of their founding.

APPENDIX A

THE MANIFEST OF 22 JULY, 1763[1]

By God's Grace

we, CATHERINE II,

Empress and sole Sovereign of all the Russias of Moscow, Kiev, Validmer, Novgorad; Czarina of Kassen; Czarina of Astrachan; Czarina of Siberia; Baroness of Plescau; Grand-Duchess of Smolensk; Duchess of Estonia and Livonia, Carelia and twer, Jugorien, Peimien, Wjatka and Bulgaria and many others. Baroness and Grand-Duchess of Novgorad, the low-lands of Tscheinigor, Resan, Rostov, Jaroslav, Belooseria, Vdoria, Obdoria, Condinia, and the whole Northside District and Baroness of the Jurian lands, of the Cartalinian and Grusinian Czardoms, and also of the Gabardinian lands; Duchess of Tscherkessian and Gorian and of many others, Heiress and Sovereign.

Since it is well known to us concerning the wide circumference of the territories of our empire, we therefore learn among other things that not a small number of those areas still lay undeveloped--which easily could be made useful for settling and living for the human race. Most of

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[1] Translated by Vernon Schindler and Prof. Philip J. Schroeder from Dr. Karl Stumpp's Die deutschen Kolonien im Schwarzmeergebiet dem früheren Neu-(Süd-)Ruszland (Stuttgart: Ausland und Heimat Verlags-Aktiengesellschaft, 1922), pp. 25-28.

those territories in their natural state conceal an unexhaustible supply of all kinds of minerals and metals. Because they are sufficiently endowed with woods, rivers, lakes, and have outlets to seas, therefore they are very favorable for the development and the promotion of shipping, manufacturing, and various other industries. This has prompted us to issue this manifest, which for the benefit of all our loyal subjects was published December 4, of the past year, 1762. Since however, we announced in that manifest our willingness only in summary to the foreigners who might have a desire to settle in our empire and make it their home, therefore for a better understanding we proclaim the following edict, which we now lay down in earnest and command to be fulfilled.

1

We permit all foreigners to come into our empire to settle in all provinces wherever it pleases them.

2

These strangers can register after their arrival not only in our residence (St. Petersburg) at the offices which are set up especially for that purpose for the foreigners, but may also register with the government in the other ports of entry into our empire at each one's convenience. Or where there are no governers, they may register with the commanding officers.

3

Since there may be among those foreigners, who desire to settle in Russia, people who do not own sufficient property to pay the necessary traveling expenses, therefore these can contact our secretaries in the foreign residences who will send them not only at our expense without delay to Russia but also shall supply them with traveling money.

4

As soon as those foreigners have arrived at our residence, and are registered at the office or in one of the ports of entry, they are asked to announce their true decision--namely what their real desires are--and whether they wish to be registered as merchants, or as guild members, and to become citizens--especially in which city. Or whether they desire to settle on free and productive land and ground as entire colonies, or villages for agricultural or profitable businesses. Then all those people shall receive their designation, without delay, according to their will and desire. And it can be seen from the following lists where and in which parts of our empire free and suitable lands are available for settling. And besides those listed lands there are many more large tracts of land to be found, which we shall, in the same way, to be settled wherever one desires for one's convenience.

5

Immediately upon the arrival in our empire, each foreign-

er, who wishes to settle and registers at either the offices which are set up for that purpose for the foreigner, or in one of the ports of entry into our empire, has to announce as it is stated above in the fourth paragraph: first of all, his true intent; and then, to swear allegiance according to his religious rites.

6

In order that those immigrants who are going to settle in our empire recognize our good will, advantages and benefits which will acrue to them the imperial will is herewith set forth:

1. All immigrants settling in our domains will have free exercise of their religion according to their own religious customs and usages and to such of the colonists who will occupy rural regions rather than urban areas it is further granted that they have the right to erect churches and bell towers and to supply such preachers, priests and other clerics as are deemed necessary. No monasteries are to be erected, however. Colonists are warned, of course, that they are to exert no form of propagandizing designed to induce resident Christians to defect from their religion. The governmental authority with all the power inherent in its laws would proceed against such action. This provision does not apply to Mohammedans in lands contiguous to the domains occupied by the colonists. As for them, efforts may be made in an evangelical manner to invite them to become Christians or they may voluntarily become subject.

2. Those immigrants who have settled in our domains shall not be required to contribute to our nation's treasury; nor shall they be subject to any type of service to the state. In a word, they shall be free from any and all forms of taxation; no troops will be billeted with them. This provision is interpreted as follows: those settling in urban areas, registering as craftsmen or tradesmen in St. Petersburg, neighboring areas in Livonia, Estonia, Ingermanland, Carelia and Finland or in Moscow receive a five-year ememption. In addition each and every individual who makes a bona

fide settlement of a longer duration shall have a six-month residence permit, free of charge.

3. Furthermore, government encouragement will be extended to all immigrants who wish to establish farms, work at crafts, manufactures, factories and other facilities; tangible support will be extended especially to such as contemplate the erection of such facilities for future benefits. These advantages are designed especially for the erection of factories and facilities that have not been in existence in Russian domains in the past.

4. For the erection of houses and the acquisition of the needed animals and tools and equipment for farming operations the government will make the required financial advances for a period of ten years interest free. After the ten-year period the capital shall be repaid according to an amortization plan of three equal payments in the course of three years.

5. The large colonies and land areas settled by groups shall have their own internal jurisdiction according to their own consensus, with the exception that such colonists are required to submit to the civil jurisdiction--that is to the laws as they obtain in our empire. Should the colonists wish to be represented by one of our representative men, to aid them in getting accustomed to the new surroundings and new conditions and to achieve liaison with neighboring peoples and for protection, such person shall be given a well-disciplined guard of soldiers for this purpose.

6. It is further granted that colonists who will settle permanently in our domains shall be privileged to bring into the country their chattels and personal properties duty free. This provision requires that such chattels and personal properties are not brought into the country for sale but for the use of the colonists. If, however, colonists have a surplus of such goods and wish to offer them for sale, such items in the value of up to 300 rubles are also duty free. In case of a removal from Russia after a ten-year settlement, duty will be charged on items brought in as well as on items going out from our empire.

7. All immigrants shall in no wise be coerced to enter military or civil service except as is required for the usual local duties; but even these are not imposed until the expiration of the respective free-years provision. Voluntary enlistments receive an emolument of thirty rubles in addition to the regular soldiers stipend.

8. If upon reporting to the registration office for im-

migrants a colonist should decide to go into the interior of our domain for the purpose of settlement money for food and transportation to the destination will be furnished.

9. Such colonists who in our domain erect factories or other facilities for production of materials not heretofore produced in Russia are given free use of inland seas and are not to be charged border taxes and may ship such materials out of the country. The exemptions to remain in force for ten years.

10. Foreign capitalists who erect in Russia facilities for manufacturing are granted the privilege to purchase serfs and farmers as needed for the manufacturing.

11. All aliens who have established themselves in our domains in colonies or on large land areas are granted the right to inaugurate market days and annual fairs without tribute or tax.

7

Not only those who have come into our empire shall be privileged with all the above benefits and institutions, but also their children and descendants--even if they are born in Russia. In that case, the years in which they are exempt from taxes shall be counted from the day of the arrival of their ancestors in Russia.

8

After the above years are past, all foreigners who have settled in Russia are obliged to pay the usual taxes, which are not burdensome, and civil obligations as our other subjects do.

9

Finally, to any foreigner who has settled and has submitted himself to our rule and who desires to leave our empire, we grant freedom (permission) to do so at all times,

under this condition: that he shall be obliged to pay a percentage of his property which he gained in our empire into our treasury; namely, for those who have lived here from one to five years, we establish one-fifth; for those who have lived here in our country from five to ten years, or more, we establish ten per cent. After that we permit everyone to travel without hindrance, wherever he wishes.

10

In case, one of those foreigners who desires to settle in Russia, desires to gain special benefits and privileges, beside the above, they must apply in writing or in person, for that purpose, to the foreign office which will present the case to us immediately. Then we, according to circumstances, shall not hesitate to issue the most honorable resolutions. And each can be assured of our justice.

Given in Peterhof, in the year 1763, on 22nd of July, in the Second year of our Reign; the original has been subscribed by Her Most Roayl Majesty, as follows,

Printed by the Senate the 25th of July, 1763

APPENDIX B

LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSIOURI SYNOD CONGREGATIONS FOUNDED BY GERMAN-RUSSIANS[1]

Name of Congregation	Location	Yr. Founded	Source of Information
Trinity (D.)[2]	Heilbronn, S. D.	1876	*[3]
St. John's	Kaylor, S. D.	1882	*
Zion (D.)	(Emmanuels Creek) 4 miles S.W. of Tripp, S. D.	1890	**[4]
St. Paul's	Scotland, S. D.	c.1899	**
Emmaus	Tripp, S. D.	1901	**
Immanuel	Long Lake, S. D.	1906	*
Immanuel	Creighton, S. D.	1910	*
Immanuel	Willow Creek, N. D.	1889	***[5]

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[1] To gain information for this paper, 239 letters were sent to most of the congregations in South and North Dakota of the Lutheran Church--Missouri. There were 31 replies, from which much of the above was compiled. See Appendix C for a copy of this letter.

[2] Those congregation which have (D.) behind their name are no longer in existence, but have merged with other congregations.

[3] One asterisk (*) means the information was found in an anniversary booklet of the congregation.

[4] Two asterisks (**) means the information was supplied by a pastor, in a personal letter, in response to the letter sent to the congregations of South and North Dakota--as stated above.

[5] Three asterisks (***) means the information was found in Lambert J. Mehl's Missouri Grows to Maturity in North Dakota.

Name of Congregation	Location	Yr. Founded	Source of Information
St. Paul's	Monango, N. D.	1894	**
St. Paul's	Otter Creek, N. D.	1897	***
Trinity	Beulah, N. D.	1898	***
St. Matthews	Hazen, N. D.	1898	****[6]
St. John	Zap, N. D.	1901	***
Zion	New Salem, N. D.	1902	***
St. Peters	Selfield, N. D.	1902	***
St. Matthews	Mazen, N. D.	1903	***
St. Matthew's	Napoleon, N. D.	1907	* & **
St. James	Golden Valley	1907	***
St. Paul's	Beach, N. D.	1909	***
St. Paul's	10 miles N. of Dodge, N. D.	1910	***
Zion	Glen Ullin, N. D.	1924	***
Redeemer	Grassy Butte, N. D.	1925	***
St. James	10 miles N. of Mazen (Krem), N. D.	1926	*** & *
Trinity	20 miles N.E. of Mazen, N. D.	1926	***
Redeemer	Dickinson, N. D.	1928	***
Grace	Lehr, N. D.	?	**

[6]Four asterisks (****) means the information was found in Benjamin M. Holt's A History of the North Dakota District.

CONCORDIA SEMINARY
801 DEMUN AVENUE ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI 63105

APPENDIX C

10 October 1966

Dear Pastor:

The seminary now requires that each fourth year student write a research paper, as a free elective. I have chosen to study the German-Russians who immigrated to the Dakota Territory shortly before the turn of the century. As part of this paper, I would like to include a list of Missouri Synod congregations which were either started by these people or contained large numbers of them. Prof. Schroeder, my adviser, has suggested that I write you for some assistance in this area. If either of these situations fits your congregation's history, I would like to know of it. I would also be interested in knowing of any congregation, now non-existent, which falls into this same category.

I would also be more than happy to receive any information you or your members might be able to supply concerning the life of these people in Russia, their life as settlers in the Dakota territory, or the early history of your congregation.

Correspondence may be addressed to me at the following address:

Vernon Schindler
c/o Foundation for Reformation Research
6477 San Bonita
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

Sincerely yours,

Vernon Schindler

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Letter from Rev. Philip Molnar, Spearfish, South Dakota, dated November 1, 1966.

Letter from Rev. George W. Mock, Tripp, South Dakota, dated November 8, 1966.

Letter from Rev. G. H. Fiechtner, Hazen, North Dakota, dated November 17, 1966.