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Germans from Russia in Colorado
Study Project

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Germans from Russia in Colorado Staff

FROM: Jim Long

SUBJECT: Field Report of Rempel Visit and Research at
Hoover Institution, January 5-18, 1976

On 5 January 1976 I met with Prof. David Rempel at his home, 414 Claremont Way, Menlo Park, California. He was a most congenial host. Our four-hour discussion was most informative for both of us. Prof Rempel especially encouraged the GRIC Study Project's efforts at materials collections and oral history.

Prof. Rempel related his personal background and career. He was born in Lower Khortitsa, Russia, circa 1900 and emigrated in 1923. He earned his masters at the University of Wisconsin and Ph.D. at Stanford in 1933 or 1934. In 1934 he got a teaching position at San Mateo College. Even though his original research interest was the Mennonites in Russia and his 1933 dissertation was entitled, "The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia," his major teaching experience was in American constitutional history. Only since his retirement in the mid-1960's has he been able to devote full time to the study of the Russian Mennonites. Summer 1976 is the scheduled publication date of Rempel's 1932 dissertation. Two college presses are interested in publishing it. It should be purchased for the CSU Archives. Prof. Rempel also has published recently about Russian Mennonite sources and archives in the Mennonite Quarterly.

Prof. Rempel provided invaluable insights on his ten-week 1962 research visit to the Soviet Union. He attributed his success in access to numerous Soviet archives to the "thaw" of 1962 and unexpected support from an American citizen with close ties to Khrushchev. Rempel gave me numerous references to Russian language materials on the Germans from Russia. Interestingly, he even



Rm. B-350 Social Sciences Building 303/491-6854, 6334



Jim Long Field Report - January 20, 1976

Page 2

corresponded with Grigorii G. Pisarevskii in the 1930's and learned that Pisarevskii had published 4-5 books on colonists in Russia, most of them limited editions.

Of special importance to the GRIC staff is that Rempel had fulsome praise for the Library of Congress holdings on the German colonies. He has spent many summers researching at the Library of Congress, and has volunteered to provide specific references to facilitate our research. I informed him that GRIC would request this information in the near future.

My bibliographic work at Hoover was very successful. I would estimate about 150 Russian-language article and monograph entries compiled while at Hoover. I will soon turn these over to Sid for the office card files. Included are a few English and German citations.

My research at Hoover revealed more Russian research on and knowledge of the German colonists than I had expected. Much of the research is quite sound and well-researched. Beginning about the 1890's and continuing until 1917 more anti-German articles and works appeared in Russia. There are also gaps in the study of the colonists. There is only a dearth of scholarly research after the 1860's. The best work has been done on the period from the original settlement in Russia until the 1860's. There has been some research on the 1920's period and the founding of the German Autonomous Republic, but the Germans in Russia disappear from view after that time.

I have ordered some microfilm and Xerox copies of some of the better materials found in the Hoover collection. Eventually they will be deposited in the GRIC collection.

I found little material in the Hoover archives pertaining to the colonists. The only relevant archives were the American Relief Administration Operations in Russia. These archives chronicle the 1921-23 relief program in Russia. There were A.R.A. offices in Saratov and some of the other cities on the lower Volga (i.e., Pokrovsk). The famine, according to A.R.A. records, was most severe among the German colonists. These archives are interesting and valuable, but unfortunately are limited to the 1921-23 period and the subject of the famine.

Finally, I had a most enjoyable evening with Arthur Flegel of the AHSGR. All in all, it was a most productive research venture.

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