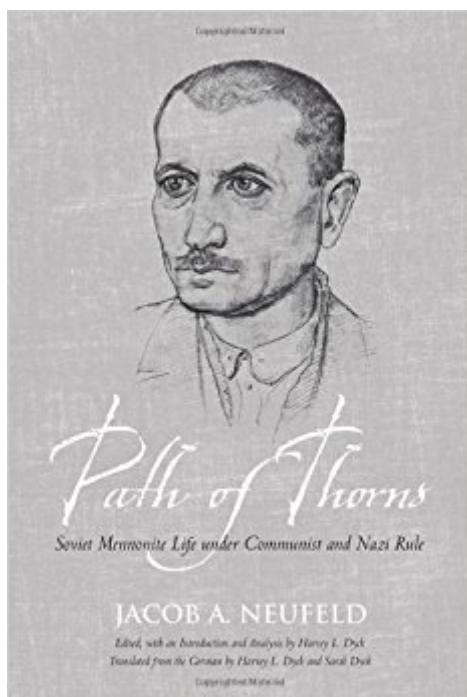


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Path Of Thorns: Soviet Mennonite Life Under Communist And Nazi Rule (Tsarist And Soviet Mennonite Studies)



Synopsis

Under Bolshevik and Nazi rule, nearly one-third of all Soviet Mennonites — including more than half of all adult men — perished, while a large number were exiled to the east and the north by the Soviet secret police (NKVD). Others fled westward on long treks, seeking refuge in Germany during the Second World War. However, at war's end, the majority of the USSR refugees living in Germany were sent to the Soviet Gulag, where many died. *Paths of Thorns* is the story of Jacob Abramovich Neufeld (1895–1960), a prominent Soviet Mennonite leader and writer, as well as one of these Mennonites sent to the Gulag. Consisting of three parts — a Gulag memoir, a memoir-history, and a long letter from Neufeld to his wife — this volume mirrors the life and suffering of Neufeld's generation of Soviet Mennonites. In the words of editor and translator Harvey L. Dyck, “Neufeld's writings elevate a simple story of terror and survival into a remarkable chronicle and analysis of the cataclysm that swept away his small but significant ethno-religious community.”

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“*Paths of Thorns* is a welcome English language addition to the Mennonite story and poignant reminder of the brutality that humans are capable of, while also capturing some of the best of Mennonite faith and human kindness.” (Hans Werner Journal of Mennonite Studies vol 35:2017) “*Paths of Thorns* is easily the most substantial published first-person account of

Soviet Mennonite life from the 1920s through the Second World War. (Benjamin W. Goossen *Nova Religio* vol 20:02:2016) A highly readable translation of Neufeld's writings. Dyck offers new insights into how Soviet interrogators weaved grand narratives, drawing friends and colleagues to implicate each other and themselves in fabricated crimes. This adds a deeper understanding of the world in which Neufeld's experiences unfolded. (Aileen Friesen *The Russian Review* vol 73:04:2014) The book provides an important firsthand account of life in the gulag and a unique perspective on the Nazi invasion of Ukraine. (Colin P. Neufeldt *The Mennonite Quarterly*, April 2015) Harvey Dyck has done a splendid job of translating Neufeld's dense and intelligent prose and offering an insightful analysis. (Royden Loewen *University of Toronto Quarterly* vol 84:03:2015)

Jacob A. Neufeld's fascinating memoirs vividly reveal the various experiences of Russian (Ukrainian) Mennonites from the time of Stalin's collectivization campaign in Soviet Ukraine, through World War II, to the Mennonite exodus from Soviet territory to Germany and then to Canada. This book will be a remarkable historical source for those who are interested in the everyday life of a small religious minority which survived not only the *inferno* of Soviet modernization after the N.E.P., but also the hell of the war and tragedy of repatriation from one country to another. (Sergei Zhuk, Department of History, Ball State University) "Path of Thorns is a chilling and personal reminder of the immense suffering imposed on inhabitants of the Soviet Union by both Stalin and Hitler as well as a testament to the impossible moral dilemmas faced by those who were sucked up into the maelstrom of this history. (Mark Jantzen, Department of History, Bethel College, Kansas)

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