



# **Path of Thorns: Soviet Mennonite Life under Communist and Nazi Rule (Tsarist and Soviet Mennonite Studies)**

*Jacob J. Neufeld*

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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."

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