

FATE OF THE GERMAN BAPTIST PASTORS

Russian Volhynia, 1929-1938

There were about a dozen pastors ministering in Russian Volhynia in the late 1920s and early 1930s when the repression broke out. The pastors were the first to go. Most were arrested, imprisoned, exiled or shot. Some fled or simply disappeared. A few managed to get out before the borders were closed. The pastors and their families are listed in order according to the time of their fate in Russia.

1926



Emil J. Bonikowski, Nowo Rudni

Immigrated to Canada in July 1926 and served churches in Saskatchewan. Retired in 1941 and moved to Kelowna, BC. He died on October 20, 1967 in Medicine Hat, AB at the age of 86. Family: wife, Maria, and 16 children, Erich, Oscar, Erwin, Alma, Helmut, Agnes, Frieda, Arthur, Bill (still living in Kelowna) Rubin, Harry, Alice-Lillian, Helen, Bruno, Agnes (named in memory of her sister who died as a young child) and Benno. Maria died in Kelowna of cancer in 1959.

1928



Eduard A. Wuerch, Cholosno,

Immigrated to Canada in 1928 and served a number of churches in western Canada. He retired in 1936 and moved to Vancouver, BC, where he died on June 26, 1941. Family: wife, Matilda, and children, Arthur, Bernard, Alice, Angelica (still living in Oregon) and Willie. Matilda, died in Vancouver, BC in 1944.



Adolph A. Bandzmer, Mosiejewka

Immigrated to Canada in 1928. Served churches in the Michigan area and died in Detroit, MI on February 25, 1966. Family: wife: Paulina, and twelve children, Tusnelda, Otto, Olga, Jonathan, Adolph, Friedrich, Arnold, Ida, Tabea, Herta, Eugen (still living in British Columbia) and Erna.

1929



Johann J. Fuchs, Nowo Rudni.

Arrested November 20, 1929. Exiled to a Gulag in the North. Never heard from again. Wife: Maria, and four children, Richard, Friedrich, Uma and Linda, fate unknown.

1930



Robert R. Petasch, Zhitomir

Arrested on December 1, 1930 in Odessa, South Russia, while on denominational business. He was banished to the North for a term of five years in a Gulag. Fate unknown. Family: wife, Adelgeida and one daughter, Gertruda. Fate unknown. Alice Baumbach seems to recall that Adelgeida made a trip to the north to visit her husband. Nothing more is known.

Friedrich J. Baumbach, Klossin (No picture). Fled in 1930/1931. Fate unknown. Family: wife and children (names unknown).

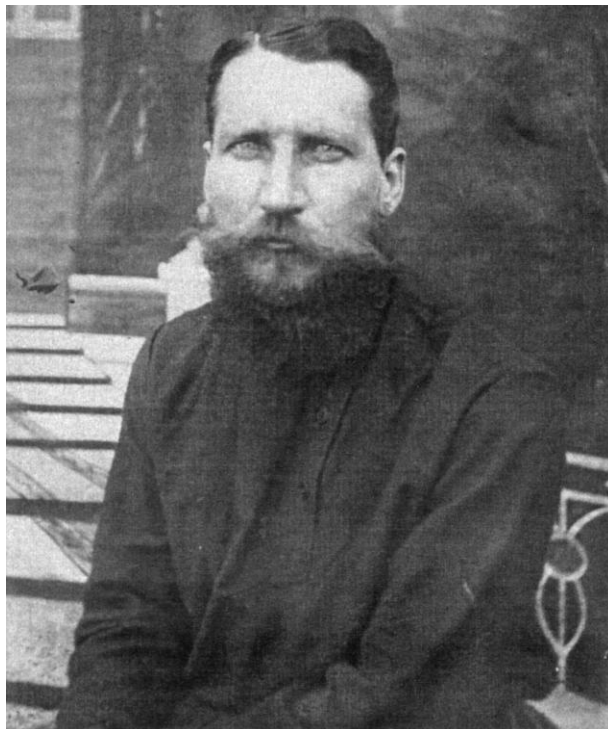
1931



Friedrich A. Bandzmer, Mosiejewka.

Arrested September 12, 1931. Exiled to a Gulag in the North for five years. Survived and returned to Volhynia in 1926. After that he vanished without a trace. Presumably he was re-arrested and either shot or exiled. Hugo Lueck, a brother-in-law, thinks he was shot on June 6, 1939. Wife: Augustina and one daughter, fate unknown.

1932



Abram P. Mantler, Horstschick.

Arrested December 3, 1932. Exiled to a Gulag in Nyandoma, region of Archangelsk, for three years. Released and joined his family in Central, near Stalingrad. Re-arrested on January 20, 1938 and shot April 15, 1938. Wife: Helena and children, Klara, Ernest, Heinrich (still living in Germany) resettled to a *Trudarmee* in Kazakhstan.



Johannes K. Wessel, Sorotschin.

Fled to East Prussia in 1932 where he served a number of churches. Immigrated to America in 1950 and settled in Milwaukee, WI where he served as pastor. He died on August 25, 1973 in Marburg/Lann, Germany while on vacation. He was 73 years of age. Family: wife, Olga, and 12 children, Oswald, Willibald, Adelheid, Adelgunde, Walfred, Waltraut, Harry, Ruhland, Friedhelm, Lydia, Werner and Ehrengard. Ten of the children are still living. Olga died December 12, 1982 in New Port Richey, FL.

1933



Reinhold F. Wuerch, Klossin.

Arrested April 1, 1933 after he fled from the church in Rudkowski Futter and went into hiding for several months in Radysmol. Sentenced to five years of hard labor at the Volga-Moscow Canal. Worked in a Government lumber camp for a number of years. In 1940 he re-joined his family in a little village near Omsk. He died of natural causes in Dzambul, Kazakhstan on December 15, 1969 at 86 years of age. Family: wife, Adelle, and three children, Evald (still living in California), Maria and Wilhelm.



Gottlieb A. Wessel, Nowo Rudni.

Fled to Germany in the fall of 1933 and settled in Kassel, where he founded the mission *Brucke zur Heimat*. He died in Germany on June 6, 1987 at the age of 90. Family: wife, Pauline, and three sons, Konrad, Walter and Victor.

1934



Wilhelm. R. Schmidgall, Neudorf

Fled to Kharkov in Eastern Ukraine in 1934 where he concealed himself as a night watchman on a collective farm. He was eventually tracked down in 1936 and arrested and brought to trial. He was given five years, but apparently died in prison before the sentence could be carried out. Family: wife, Karoline, and seven children, Wilhelm, Emilia, Luisa, Emma, Lillie, Adella and Edgar. Karoline retreated with the German Army in 1943 and in 1945 was repatriated to the Beresniki in the Ural Mts. She died of tuberculosis in 1952.

1936



*Eduard A. Hornbacher,
Iwanowtisch/Zhitomir.*

Arrested April 13, 1936 and sent to a Gulag in Karlag, Kazakhstan for five years. He was released and returned to Zhitomir. In 1941 he revived the church in Zhitomir, which he served, until he retreated with the German Army in 1943. He was separated from his family in 1945 when they were repatriated to Asia. Hornbacher made his way to Canada during this period and in 1967 was reunited with his wife in Germany. He died of a heart attack on April 20, 1977. Family: wife, Victoria, and two daughters, Gertrude and Anneliese (both still living in Germany). Victoria died in 1991.



Ernst S. Fritz, Cholosno

Arrested on December 9, 1936 in Kirowo, South Russia, where he was imprisoned for some time. Later transferred to Odessa, tried and sentenced to a Gulag in the North. Last contact with his wife was in June 1941. Fritz was previously arrested in 1932 and again in 1935. Family: wife, Emilie (died in Leninisk-Kusnetzki, Siberia) and three children, Reinhold, Delila and William. Delila and William are both still living in Germany.



Heinrich J. Baumbach, Sorotischin.

Arrested June 4, 1937 and shot on September 19, 1937. Family: wife, Karoline and son, Paul (still living in Canada). Karoline died in Khotin, Chernovitsy region, general vicinity toward the Carpathian Mts.



Heinrich M. Mueller, youth missionary-at-large.

Originally arrested in December 1932 and imprisoned in the Zhitomir prison for five months. Released and re-arrested on May 4, 1934. Exiled to a Gulag on the Baltic-White Sea Canal. Released in 1936 and returned to Zhitomir. Re-arrested on June 25, 1937 and shot on November 21, 1937. Family: wife, Berta, and adopted daughter, Sophia, fled to Omsk in 1938, where Berta died of breast cancer on June 27, 1953. Sophia died in Omsk, Siberia December 12, 2003.



Andreas A. Tasch, Blumental.

Arrested June 5, 1937 in the Donetz region in eastern Ukraine, to which he had fled earlier. Brought to trial in Kiev and shot September 19, 1937. Family: wife, Marta, and three children, Valdina, Assaph and Erna, who were resettled to Kazakhstan. The NKVD files contain a letter that was written by one of the children from Kazakhstan to the KGB in Zhitomir seeking information about Tasch, but there was no response. Presumably they all died there.

Polish Volhynia, 1921 to 1940

The situation in Polish Volhynia was quite different. Because western Volhynia was under Polish control after World War I, beginning with the Treaty of Riga in 1921, there was no repression in the 1940s. The churches were open and the pastors were free to minister until shortly after Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, although several pastors retired or immigrated out of the country prior to that. In the latter part of December and early part of 1940 the

German people, including the remaining pastors, were resettled to Occupied Poland in the Warthegau. At that point the churches were closed down.

1930



Johann Krause, Kolowert.

Immigrated to Rio Grande do Sol, Brazil in 1930. Died in the mid-1970s in Brazil. Family: wife and children, names unknown.

1939



Wilhelm F. Tuczek, Rozyszcze.

Resettled to Occupied Poland on December 19, 1939. Died of cancer in Lodz on November 9, 1943. Family: wife, Therese, and seven children, Reinhold,

Alois, Berthold, Walter, Bruno, Engeltrude, Lily and Antoinette. Therese died December 18, 1980 in Burnaby, B. C.



Martin M. Jeske, Lucinow

Retired in Korist in June 1938 and resettled to Occupied Poland in December 1939. He died in Lodz on December 5, 1941. Family: wife, Emilie, and two children, Ottilie and Wilhelm.



Ferdinand Weber, Kostopol.

Resettled to Occupied Poland in December 1939 and eventually made his way to Germany. He died in Calberlah, Germany in 1974. Family: wife, Adina and three children, Paul (killed in WW II), Emmi (still living in Germany) and Dickard. Adina died in 1969. He remarried to years later.

1940



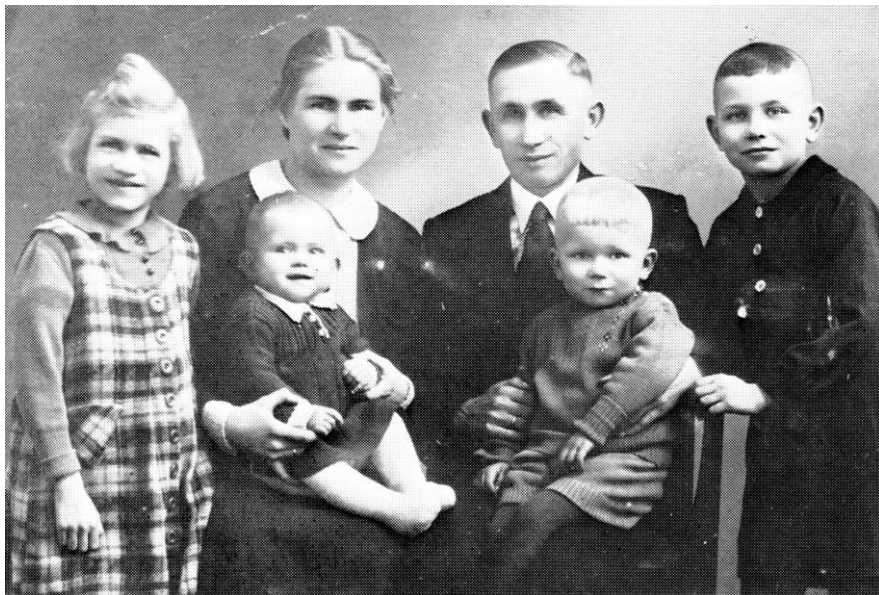
Herbert W. Hirschfeld, Lucinow.

Resettled to Occupied Poland in January 1940. Immigrated to Chicago, IL in 1951. Retired in 1976 and died a natural death in Cape Girardeau on December 28, 2001 at the age of 92. Family: wife, Ann (still living in Tennessee), and two sons, George and Theodore.



Adolf A. Sommerfeld, Kolowert.

Resettled to Occupied Poland in January 1940 and later made his way to Germany. He died in Stade Germany on September 19, 1956. Family: wife, Pauline, and children, Marta, Olga, Hugo (still living in Wisconsin), Bruno and Lydia.



Robert L. Kluttig, Porozow

Resettled to Occupied Poland on February 2, 1940. Immigrated to Edmonton, AB. In 1956. Served churches in Alberta and British Columbia until his retirement in 1969. Died in Edmonton, AB. On November 29, 1995. Family: wife, Olga, and Christa, Siegfried and Karla (still living in Alberta).

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