

Peace at a price?

MENNONITES IN PRUSSIA



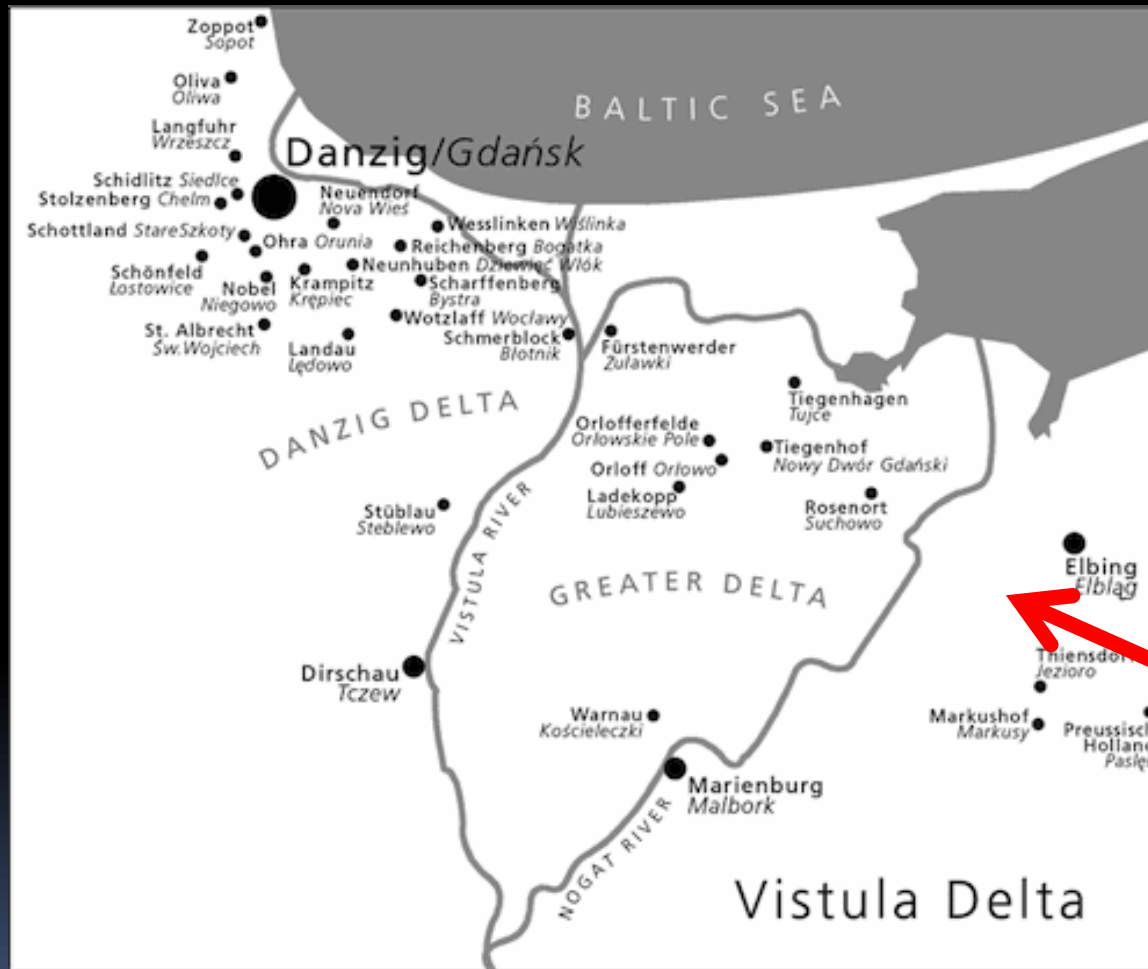
What's Prussia?



Prussian Map




Vistula Delta Settlements




Vistula Delta Settlements

- Mennonites were welcomed here because of their farming and irrigation skill, and settled on noble estates in Danzig.
- Close ties with the Dutch Mennonites were kept, with help from Menno and Dirk Philips and because of the good trade routes between the Dutch and Vistula delta cities.
- Mennonites remained in this area until WWII, they were then forced to evacuate from the coming Russians.
- Most Mennonites who went to Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries were from the congregations near Danzig.



Question: Did Mennonites acceptance of restrictions stop them from spreading, and change the nature of their church and evangelism?

- What changes do the Mennonites accept in moving to the Danzig area?
 - How are their beliefs different/actions, and remember according to their beliefs they should be the same, change compared to the Martyrs Mirror era?
- 

Restrictions Placed on the Mennonites During their Prussian Experience.


1. They were not allowed to marry outside their religion. If they did have a mixed religion those children lost the privilege of non resistance given to the Mennonites
2. They had to pay special taxes
3. They would be given rights as citizens and then have them take away again.
4. They were often restricted economically. They couldn't live in towns; they were not allowed to work in the towns. They were restricted from buying anymore farmland.

Restrictions Placed on the Mennonites During their Prussian Experience.


5. They were not allowed to evangelize the local population
6. They would be threatened with loss of privilege and expulsion if they did not pay a tax (black mail) The Dutch refused to help them because it was black mail.
7. They were not allowed to have public burials
8. They were not allowed to have public places of worship, later the churches they were allowed had to not look like churches, i.e. no decorations or steeples etc.



Mennonite church in Elbing, West Prussia
Elblag, Poland.JPG Dec. 9th /2011
<http://www.marienburg.pl/viewtopic.php?t=214>




Question: Did Mennonites acceptance of restrictions stop them from spreading and change the nature of their church and evangelism?

- What changes do the Mennonites accept in moving to the Danzig area?
 - How are their beliefs different/ actions, and remember according to their beliefs they should be the same, change compared to the Martyrs Mirror era?
- 




Mennonite Culture?

- **Mennonite Culture**
 - For the first time Mennonites start to be considered as a separate ethnic group. These differences are to an extent created by the restrictions placed on them as a result of persecution.
- 



Umbitter

- they are considered to be below the minister and the deacons in church “hierarchy”
 - they went from member to member before communion to make sure that everyone was in harmony with each other.
 - They were the marriage matchmaker, they carried the request to the bride and then waited two weeks for an answer.
- 

Churches

- Must be designed to not look like churches
- Women on one side men on the other.
- no paint
- no pulpit, just a raised platform and some chairs
- gave the sermon seated, no notes or book, and you did it in Dutch. (this switched to high German at the very end of 1800's)
- no musical instruments at the start, later they had organs with paid positions




[Elbing \(Poland\) Mennonite Church - 2005](http://www.gameo.org/images/Elblag-Mennonite-Church-2005.jpg/view)

Photo of a building used as a Mennonite Church in Elbing (Elblag), Poland beginning in 1590. Photo taken in 2005 by Victor Wiebe.

<http://www.gameo.org/images/Elblag-Mennonite-Church-2005.jpg/view>



Ministers


- no paid positions
 - promised to accept if called at your baptism
 - no pay meant ministers had more power
 - life time position
- 

Church Gov.

- congregational
- taxes and tribute payments were enforced by the church.
- Corporal punishment of servants was cause for church discipline
- No dancing, theatre etc. you might have your baptism refused.



Funerals

- not allowed oration, so they constructed long funeral poems set to a popular song.
- 

Food

- many traditional “Mennonite foods” find their origin in Prussia. There is a switch from the Dutch method of cooking, heavy emphasis on beef and milk products, to pork dishes.

