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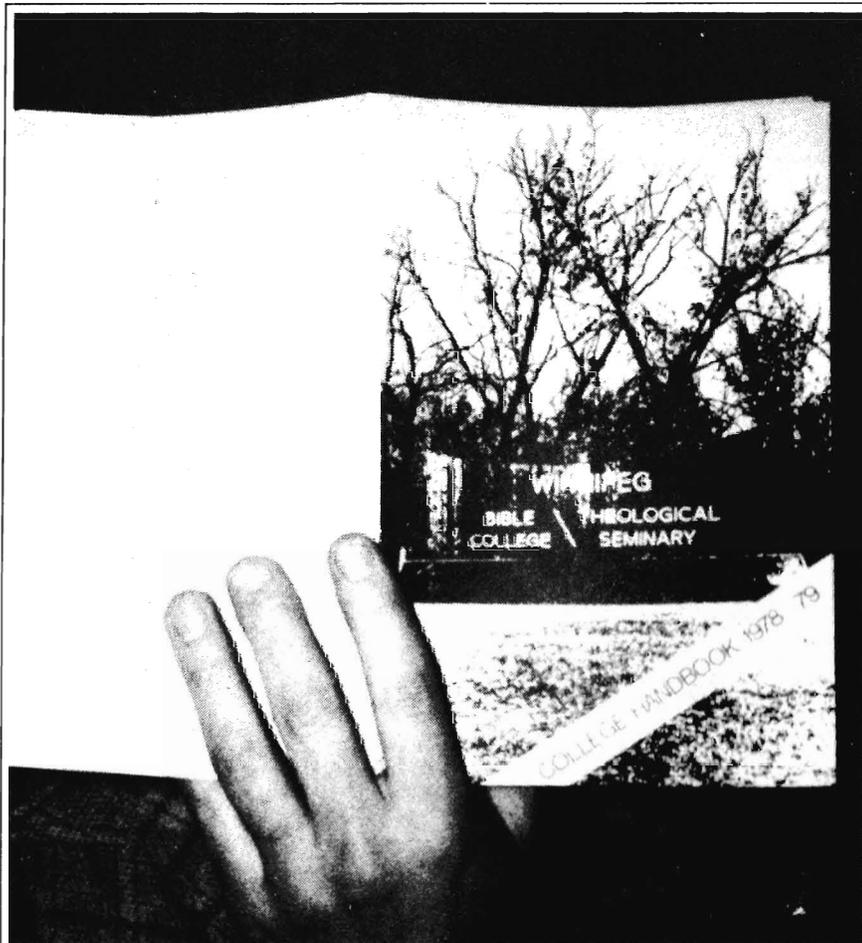
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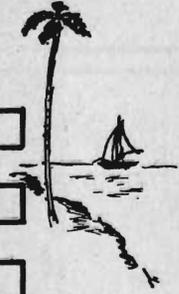
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SOME ARE BORN WITH IT,
 SOME ACHIEVE IT, SOME
 HAVE IT THRUST UPON THEM!

Two winners are declared this issue.

From among the 16 entries to the January puzzle, Evelyn Bergen of Mossdale Avenue was picked the winner.

And Mrs. H. Wiebe of Chalmers Avenue emerged the winner from among the 36 entrants to the February puzzle.

A cash prize will be going to each.

As well a note of thanks and apology to those who wrote to tell about the wrong answers in the last issue for the January contest.

The answers to the February Mix-Up are crisp, storm, arctic, biting, winter, and insects.

The letters are to be re-arranged and written in the squares to form words. Letters which fall into the squares with circles are to be arranged to complete the answer at the bottom of the puzzle.

A winner will be drawn at random from among the current entries and the prize awarded.

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by March 16, 1979.

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Send entries to:
 Mix-up Contest
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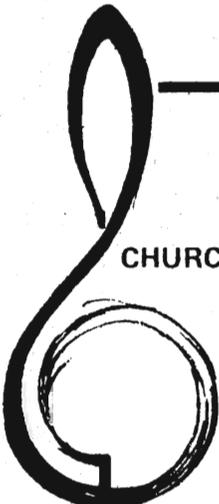
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mennonite mirror

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march 1979

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Leonard Barkman died in Steinbach on January 5, 1979, at the age of 58. He was probably the best-known political figure that has emerged from the Mennonite community in Manitoba. The son of a Mennonite minister, he moved from farming into trucking and then into a successful farm implement and auto dealership. He was elected to the Steinbach town council in 1951, and succeeded K. R. Barkman as mayor in 1958, at the age of 38. He was re-elected five times without opposition. In 1962 he was also elected to the Manitoba legislature for the constituency of Carillon, a seat that he held until defeated by Bob Banman in 1973. He was responsible for numerous improvements in his town and constituency and received the Good Citizenship Award from the Tourist and Convention Association of Manitoba in 1974. It was primarily his efforts which brought the Royal family to southeastern Manitoba in 1970.

The Mennonite Mirror does not publish obituaries, but from time to time it reflects on the life of individuals who have profoundly affected the Mennonite community. Leonard Barkman was such a person. The purpose of the accompanying article is not to praise him, or to criticize him, but to interpret his life for our readers. Publisher, Roy Vogt, met Mr. Leonard Barkman fleetingly on numerous occasions, but in late 1977 such brief encounters were augmented by a two-week trip to West Germany and Yugoslavia which he made with Mr. Barkman and other Mennonite businessmen. The impressions gained on this trip have in turn been supplemented by interviews conducted in Steinbach with friends and relatives of Mr. Barkman after his death. We think these impressions are worth sharing with our readers. The article on another Mennonite leader, J. A. Toews, has been written in a similar spirit.



Leonard Barkman was a politician in the service of the people

by Roy Vogt

Leonard Barkman was a politician. There are some who might not find such a description very flattering, but Leonard Barkman would not have minded. That, in fact, is what he was. He was a man to whom public life was a calling. He liked to be among people, and politics was simply the best way that he found to express that liking. Politics and auctioneering. There are people who went to his auction sales just to hear his spiel. Each article he sold was given his personal endorsement and appropriate send off, whether it was a new car from a rival's lot or a pair of oversized ladies' unmentionables.

There are persons in public life who would like to be called "statesmen" rather than politicians. Statesmen are politicians who like to deal with the big issues. They are most at home on the world stage, charting new courses in international waters, busying themselves with constitutional matters. Every nation needs a few such lofty dreamers. Not too many, but a few, because the human spirit is inspired by imagination and our futures are shaped by the good or bad dreams of the past.

Leonard Barkman worked best on a different plane. His real gifts lay in dealing with the small but sometimes urgent problems of ordinary people. Early

on he developed the habit of being available to anyone at certain hours during the week. He would listen carefully to the problem presented to him, ranging all the way from marriage breakdowns to low cattle prices. His voice would boom on the auctioneering block, but in public gatherings he would often become quiet and reserved, focusing his attention on the individual next to him.

In the midst of an animated group discussion he could change his tone and drop his voice quickly and naturally in order to carry on a more subdued conversation with someone seeking his help, much like Jim McSweeney on CFAM when he shifts from the reading of a fast-paced advertisement to the day's obituaries.

The difference between a statesman and a politician may also be compared to the difference between a good preacher and a good counsellor. We have heard of great preachers who were hopeless at dealing with the daily problems of ordinary people. They had their calling, and their preaching inspired many, but they couldn't unbend before ordinary folk in private. Good counsellors can unbend, and Leonard Barkman was a counsellor. He was a man without pretence, not greatly impressed by titles, either his own or others. Neither was he afraid of people who had backgrounds different from his. At a time when many Mennonites shunned contact with their French,

Ukrainian, and German-Lutheran neighbors—not so much out of prejudice as out of shyness and fear—Leonard relished his visits with these people and became close friends with many of them. When Edmond Prefontaine, the Liberal Czar of Provencher, thought it was time to transfer his political mantel to someone else, it was to his friend Leonard Barkman that he turned.

This didn't happen by accident, nor through any special gimmickry. Leonard had made inroads into other communities because of his genuine friendliness and his actioneering. He didn't need any special marketing techniques. We were asked by a young businessman in Steinbach a few years ago to explain the special tricks that men like Leonard Barkman used in winning friends, and customers, in the non-Mennonite communities. There are probably special techniques for this—after all, books are being written about how to win friends and influence people—but we don't think that Leonard thought in such terms. Whether as truck driver, implement dealer, town councillor, mayor, MLA, automobile dealer, or auctioneer, he genuinely liked people and the background of a person held no special significance for him.

Though he represented one party throughout his political career, he was not very interested in ideology. He was never very partisan and did not hide his respect for politicians from other parties who shared his grass-roots approach to their profession. This was related to his view that public life was basically a form of public service. You didn't enter into it in order to advance a particular party or ideology but to help others and to advance your community. This meant also that Leonard was puzzled and hurt when he experienced political defeat. He knew that political office was not conferred permanently on anyone, but he couldn't understand why people would want to switch one party for another, or one person for another as long as the office holder was doing his best to serve the community. What did it matter if the office holder was liberal or conservative, and why should one replace the other, as long as he was doing his job? He felt that his own reasons for being in office were sincere, and he found it difficult to understand why people would want to change.

Leonard Barkman was liberally compassionate towards others but he had a "conservative" attitude toward such old-fashioned virtues as personal responsibility and self-reliance. It is not surprising that one of his political heroes was the conservative liberal D.L. Campbell, who, together with another friend, Gil Molgat, visited Leonard in the hospital during his last months. This practical orientation toward politics can probably be traced back to his Mennonite roots. The good

deed is more important than six good political statements.

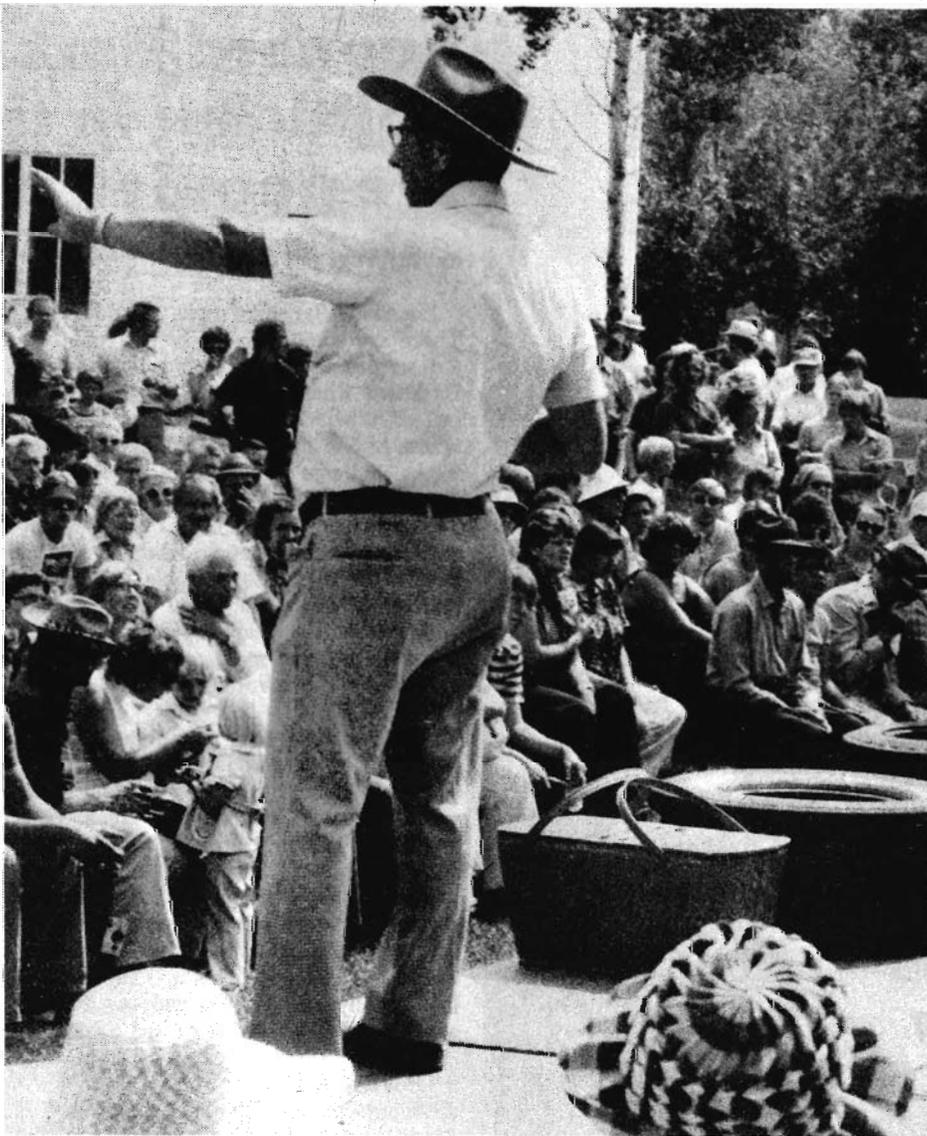
Another sign of his small-town Mennonite origins may be the unusual reserve that he sometimes displayed in working with individuals. He played his cards close to his vest and was reluctant to commit himself too quickly or dramatically on issues which he felt weren't settled. On our trip together he commented freely, and often humorously, on things that we experienced, but though I knew that he often didn't feel well, and was disturbed by things happening in his Mennonite community back home, he conveyed little of his personal feelings. Our communites, with their open gossip lines and quick retribution, have taught us to be on our guard. It seemed to me that auctioneering had provided a necessary release for the natural energy and enthusiasm that Leonard possessed. His quick wit also showed itself in individual encounters. A mother of six children, with absolutely no political ambition, warned him once to vote the right way on the question of daylight saving time or

she would run against him in the next election, to which Leonard responded immediately: "If you run against me, Mrs. . . ., I will step aside and throw my whole support behind you". He had won the argument without indicating how he would vote.

On our trip he would describe with great feeling, and humour, the overwhelming desire that he had for a good piece of smoked ham. He made all of our mouths water as he described the joy that such a ham brought to him. Soon we too were waiting to order a ham at the next restaurant.

This was how he worked. He showed his enthusiasm for a project or idea and won people over—with no special oratory or tricks. This was his gift to political life and to the community which he served. He was a humble servant and one that we will remember with respect for a long time.

Roy Vogt is publisher of the Mennonite Literary Society Inc., and a former Steinbach resident.



Leonard Barkman Auctioneer

J.A. Toews always remembered as minister, teacher, moderator, but most of all as brother

by Harry Loewen

John A. Toews was still relatively young when he died suddenly last January, only 66 years old, well below the 70-year average for Canadian males. He died as he had lived—in the midst of a busy schedule as minister, professor at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, and moderator of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America. His expressed wish to die in the midst of his activities, without a prolonged illness and a difficult old age, was fulfilled. He must have been truly a beloved of his God.

I remember John A. Toews (or simply J. A. as he was affectionately called by students and friends) as a teacher, a colleague and friend. As a teacher at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in the 1950's he taught us among other things church history, systematic theology, and the Book of Acts. I do not remember a single lecture for which he was not thoroughly prepared, teaching his subjects with obvious love and enthusiasm. Strong's *Systematic Theology* with its fine print and at times dry analysis would have been less attractive to most of us students, had J. A. not whetted our appetite by disagreeing with Strong on many points and showing that Anabaptist theology was more biblical than Calvinist theology.

I felt highly honoured when in the 1960's I was called to the faculty at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, thus becoming a colleague of my respected former teacher. J. A.'s interest in me and

in my academic specialty, history and German literature, was genuine. He never caused me to feel that my "secular disciplines" were less important in the school's curriculum than the so-called "queen of sciences", theology. "We are all contributing to the building of the Kingdom of God", he encouraged me repeatedly.

Whenever J. A. came to my office or invited me to come to his to share with me some concerns, joys, or insights into some new truths, I always felt that I was in the presence of a good and truly great man. It was not unusual to see J. A. putting his hand on the shoulder of a student or colleague and speaking gently and with interest about some personal matter or asking about his family. Whenever he addressed me with "Brother Harry", I knew he was including me among his many friends.

There came a time in 1967 when J. A. decided to resign from Mennonite Brethren Bible College where he had for many years given freely of himself and his vast experiences and knowledge. He told me that he had learned that no one is indispensable in the Kingdom of God and that the work would continue after him. He did not complain or accuse anyone—but I felt that he left the college with a heavy heart.

There are those who believe that Toews was in his younger years conservative in his thinking and somewhat dogmatic in his approach to certain issues. While this may be true in part, it is undeniable that within the past 12 or 15



years he had grown more mellow, understanding, and tolerant. His many experiences as a leader, minister, father, and scholar, as well as his family (a gentle and loving wife and five intelligent and educated sons and daughters) contributed to the humanness we came to appreciate in the man we loved. The respect that J. A. had always enjoyed turned later to affection from those whose lives he had touched.

Last fall when I had occasion to speak at Mennonite Brethren Bible College's chapel period on the characteristics of Anabaptism, I pointed out that the radical reformers practiced a biblical humanism. Knowing that "humanism" was open to misinterpretation, I expected some of the faculty members to "corner" me about what I had said. After chapel it was J. A. who commented on the concept, pointing out that he too wanted to be a "Christian humanist", for that was, after all, the essence of Christianity. "Had not Christ become truly human", J. A. asked rhetorically, "in order to share and redeem humanity?"

There was no doubt about Toews' deep involvement in, and love of, the Mennonite Brethren brotherhood, having laboured and agonized with it, researched its history, and helped to guide it for many years. But if we looked a bit deeper into his heart, as we were privileged to do from time to time, we could see there imprinted the words "Mennonite brotherhood". Among the Mennonite Brethren, his was one of the few clear voices which did not tire of calling his fellow Mennonite Brethren back to the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage and distinctives. He transcended all narrow denominationalism, seeking to co-operate with the wider Mennonite community and beyond.

John A. Toews was no Mennonite Moses nor a Menno Simons. He was not even a charismatic leader of the Mennonite people. It is not in the tradition of

Anabaptism to develop leadership-cults, and it certainly would be contrary to all that J. A. stood for if he were now to be made into a titan of Mennonitism. John A. Toews was a knowledgeable and loving brother to all those who took their Mennonite-Christian faith and life seriously and a prophetic guardian of Anabaptist values in his church.

Toews' favorite Bible passage was 1 Corinthians 13, having proclaimed its "faith, hope and love" throughout his life. In the life and proclamation of Toews this biblical faith, hope and love took on special meaning: a faith that was based on the Mennonite Christian tradition; a hope that looked to Christ as the author and finisher of that faith; and a love that embraced all Mennonite brothers and sisters and the Church at large. His memory will remain an encouragement to all who knew him.

Harry Loewen is professor of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

The following is an excerpt from a eulogy written by John Toews to read at the funeral of his father J.A. Toews. This excerpt gives the perspective of the family to the work of Rev. Toews.

Father's public life is well known and has been described by others. As family members, of course we have a rather distinctive perspective. For us father always transcended his particular roles and positions. We understand this private man, our father, not as smaller or less universal, but in some way as larger, more complex and more universal than the public figure. Father's spiritual development and personal growth never ended. I had almost finished college when I witnessed my father's graduation at the University of Minnesota. But this openness of his intellectual development was also an indication of a more profound and significant openness. During the last

decade he was clearly aware that he was entering into a new phase in his life—not one that would deny his past, his untrifling struggle for the retention and revival of the central values of the Mennonite Brethren form of the Christian faith—but that would complete it by transcending it and raising it to a new level. We noticed this shift in emphasis in what we often called his "mellowing", his growing sense of the secondary importance of the doctrinal and denominational differences which might have divided us and his wholehearted focus and concentration on the unity in Christian love where all of these differences lost their abrasive power. It is difficult to define father's "new course" precisely. The battler in him, the man who insisted that Christian faith always implied a commitment to certain spiritual and moral values which could never be compromised, did not really weaken or disappear. Rather, he more and more insistently emphasized that those commitments which we can't compromise are precisely those which bind us all together in a community of compassion, understanding and love. mm



During the war years J.A. Toews visited a CO camp at White Court, Alberta, and shown with him in this picture are Abe Kroeker, left, and Henry Heidebrecht, right, now of Winnipeg.

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A play's the thing to give the accent a low-German ring

by Wilmer Penner

On March 15, 16, and 17, 1979, the Landmark low German drama group will be presenting its fourth annual drama *Daut Schtraume Schalldoak* at the Landmark Collegiate in Landmark, Manitoba. *Daut Schtraume Schalldoak* is a love story that takes place at threshing time in Musdarp. The keen observer, upon hearing some of the music in the play, may recognize it as a translation of Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinafore*. For the rest, it will simply be a sometimes humorous, sometimes almost serious story of low-German speaking Mennonites in Musdarp.

For those who may be asking, how all this low German stuff got started, here's the answer. It all started at an annual banquet of the Landmark Collegiate Alumni Association at which a number of alumni members began reminiscing about their roles in various high school dramas. It wasn't long before someone made the comment that it sure would be fun to perform one of these dramas again. Nothing came of the idea that year but it had been planted in their minds. At the next annual banquet conversation again centred on the idea of re-performing some of the old high school dramas. This time, the idea germinated (almost). One member suggested "Why not in low German?" This idea received an enthusiastic response and the following spring a group of the alumni association put on their first performance in low German at the Landmark Collegiate.

The program consisted of a series of short skits and plays with liberal amounts of low German songs interspersed throughout. The music was performed by a local group known as Locusts and Wild Honey (or better known as Heischratje and Willa Hoenig). The enthusiastic response of the audience provided the impetus for the group to continue next year with low German drama. It performed Arnold Dyck's *Koop en Bua in Dietschland* as dramatized by Wilmer Penner, a member of the drama group and director of all the performances to date. This story, when performed on stage, again met a warm response from an audience who had come from as far away as Kansas to see it. (When several visitors from Kansas saw the Friday night performance, they immediately telephoned home and the remainder of the family drove from Kansas in time to see the Saturday night performance.)

Last year, the group again put on a series of short plays and skits along with music and songs by the *Heischratje and Willa Hoenig*. While the first per-

formance by the group had contained only one short play that had been written for the group, this time most of the plays were written by people expressly for performance by the group. One of the most notable of these was Mrs. K. Friesen.

Questions often asked of this drama group are "who" and "why". The people involved are by and large members of the Landmark Collegiate Alumni Association. However, from the beginning husbands and wives of members have joined in, as have others interested in low German drama. The group is an interesting one in that about half the members live in Landmark, the other half in Winnipeg and as a result rehearsals have alternated between the two places.

Why have people gotten involved in low German drama? The reasons are varied. For some, it's the enjoyment of

performing on stage, especially in the low German language. For others it is an attempt to promote the low German language and as a result strengthen this important aspect of the Mennonite culture. For still others it is an opportunity to dramatize both some of the humorous and some of the serious aspects of the Mennonites, their life and their culture. Regardless of what the reasons are, one thing is obvious: all members of the group thoroughly enjoy what they are doing.

As mentioned earlier, the drama group this year is tackling its most elaborate and difficult job to date. When the group performs *Daut Schtraume Schalldoak* on March 15 to 17 at the Landmark Collegiate in Landmark, it is expected to be the best performance yet and one that will bring much laughter, happiness and fond memories of yesterday to the hearts and minds of the audience.

Wilmer Penner is a member of the Mirror editorial committee and proponent of low-German.

Winnipeg group pioneers Alaska bus tour

Circle Tours Ltd., a subsidiary of Grey Goose Bus Lines Ltd., left on June 28, 1978 with 42 passengers for Alaska. Driver, Al Schuman and hostess, Vivian Walker, veterans of the tours program, were unusually keyed up. They realized the importance of this premiere tour being a successful one, laying a solid groundwork for future northern tours. Since then reports from passengers indicated that this Alaskan adventure was, indeed, a success.

Initial plans for the first tour from Winnipeg to Alaska were made in the fall of 1977. Many people do not realize just how great a tourist attraction Alaska has become. With fewer properties to choose from in Alaska during the peak season, it is more difficult to obtain hotel space there than in Hawaii. This is one illustration of the extent of Alaska's popularity.

Circle Tours runs tours to popular destinations all over North America and the office is now busy with bookings for the 1979 Winter program, tours which can take you as far south as Brownsville on our Texas - New Orleans Tour. Also offered are the ever-popular Florida - Pine to Palm Tours and of course the annual California Rosebowl Tour which leaves Winnipeg December 26. There are two other California tours to choose from: the California - Arizona Tour, and the San Diego - San Francisco Tour. These programs form the backbone of Circle Tours.

Along with the excitement of a new tour comes the risk of not knowing quite what to expect. For this reason, Circle Tours approached only people who had been on previous tours. These people were informed that this was the company's first tour to this area and that some things, such as hotel accommodations and restaurants, might not meet with Circle Tours usual standards. In every case, because the enthusiasm was so high, this was acknowledged as being no problem. The group became pioneers—they were going to be the very first bus from Winnipeg, going to explore the great Northlands of Alaska. As it turned out, the following weeks more than met their expectations.

Within two weeks from the time that Circle Tours made the June 28th departure known to former passengers, the entire coach was booked! A week later there were enough people on a waiting list to warrant an extra section. This was done and approximately one month later the required hotel space etc. was confirmed.

Meanwhile, as the day of the departure on the first tour approached, some problems did arise. For example, approximately 30 days prior to departure Circle Tours office discovered that it would be impossible after all, to obtain hotel reservations in Skagway, the famous gateway to the Klondike Gold Rush. This reserva-

tion was crucial, since reservations on the famous White Pass & Yukon Route railway had already been confirmed. This is the scenic link between Whitehorse and Skagway, crossing the White Pass one of the routes of the "Trail of '98" to the Klondike. The train trip is 110 miles long. A short stop is made at Lake Bennett, while passengers enjoy a Gold Rush meal served Klondike style. Since there are no roads from Whitehorse to Skagway the bus had to 'dead-head' from Whitehorse to Haines (approximately 30 miles south of Skagway). Without hotel reservations in Skagway, the office had to obtain space in the nearest available location, Haines, Alaska. However, the only way to get there was to fly. Though Skagway was once a booming city of 20,000, the population today is a mere 700 and we can imagine that the type of service offered to a community of this size is nothing like what the average urban resident is accustomed to. Nevertheless, four passengers crossed that bridge and flew on the "white knuckle" flight. This experience proved to be a highlight on the trip. Passengers told of breathtaking scenery as they flew along the "Inside Passage", between towering peaks of snow-capped mountains.

Captain Jim of the 'Yukon Lou', a replica paddleboat, provided some entertaining moments and some interesting sights while sailing along the Yukon River. One point of interest was the graveyard of original paddlewheelers or sternwheelers, which were the major mode of transportation during the Gold Rush era. The climax of the tour was a Salmon Bake luncheon on Captain Jim's Moosehide Island. This was followed by a short visit to the only legalized gambling hall in Canada—Diamond Tooth Gerties.

The Alaska Marine Highway follows the same route traversed by the thousands of Sourdough gold seekers of the fabled "Inside Passage". Stretching from Seattle, Washington to Skagway, Alaska, the Inside Passage is an incredibly beautiful string of bays, sounds and channels—almost completely sheltered from the ocean throughout its entire length. On this particular tour, service was provided by the "Malaspina", a 750 passenger capacity ship. Four passengers were accommodated in deluxe cabins and had a chance to see the colorful coastal communities of Juneau (the capital of Alaska), Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan, before final disembarkation one and one half days later, at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. The comments of one passenger best expresses the sentiments and feelings about this trip: "Alaska is an immense and vast country that has intrigued us for a long time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making such a soul-shaking excursion possible." mm

Rudy Wiebe shows how literature and ideas open a window to life

by Mary M. Enns

Rasputin is someone Rudy Wiebe has probably not been likened to lately. Yet that's exactly what happened when he was introduced at the evening reading sponsored by the English department and the chair of Mennonite studies, University of Winnipeg.

"Rudy Wiebe," said Dr. Al Reimer, "was recently described by a critic as Canada's most 'visionary novelist. He is a kind of prophet who envisions the deeper significance of human experience in its most epic form." Turning to the guest speaker, then to the audience, he quipped: "you can see he resembles an Old Testament prophet. As a matter of fact he bears a strong resemblance to Tolstoy. Come to think of it, he even looks like Rasputin! I'm not sure what this proves, but possibly that men of different times and temperaments can resemble each other. Or it could mean that they may meet in the same man. What we need is exactly this kind of fictional myth—maker in novel-writing, so that we may understand the Prairie experience better." He also quoted Wiebe's belief that what the prairies need are "not poems, but great, black, steel lines of fiction."

Hearing the author in the reading of his *Chinook Christmas*, this lovely tale of Mennonites in Alberta, reminded the audience strongly of Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales* in style and content. Wiebe, who has written chiefly in a serious vein, is now experimenting with a style flavoured with crystal-sharp humor and poignancy. The humor and pathos in this story fell on appreciative ears in spite of a fair amount of German used, which the many non-Mennonites could not understand. This tale, and the following *The Angel of the Tar Sands* will be a part of the text Wiebe is writing for *Alberta: A Celebration*, a book to be published by Hurtig of Edmonton for Alberta's Diamond Jubilee in 1980. This book is being touted as one of the best of its kind to come out of the West.

Wiebe's final reading was a passage from *The Scorched Wood People*. It is a novel on a subject very close to Wiebe's heart—the story of Louis Riel. In the

discussion which followed, Wiebe answered probing questions with droll honesty. e.g. "Mr. Wiebe, someone has said that if you wrote about the Jews as well as you write about the Mennonites you'd be a rich man." "Yes," Wiebe shot back, "Mennonites don't buy books!" Discussing Riel he said: ". . . I take Louis Riel very seriously. I do not believe he was insane. Sir John A. MacDonald was quite right in hanging him, for he was too powerful a figure. Riel was morally right, too. He wanted to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and he wanted to do it on the Prairies—Manitoba got the best of Riel's brilliance."

Wiebe is not bound by geographical spaces. In the past, in the interest of the enormous research he did for his novels, he has thought nothing of packing up his family and taking them across the Prairies, to the northland, and to the isolated Indian communities of Northern Ontario and then down into South America to live. Here he bled relatives, friends and strangers dry of tales of their still warm and vivid past in Russia and Northern China.

Currently he lives in Calgary. He has been, for the past year, the writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary. Asked whether he had personally benefitted by such a move he said. "Yes of course I've got a lot more writing done. I teach no classes but see a great many people and their manuscripts and their writing problems."

Movie scripts have been an important part of his writing career. His *Some Day Soon* was shown twice on television. At the moment he is working on the movie script *Mad Trapper*, the story of Albert Johnson.

All of Wiebe's manuscripts have been sold to the archival department of the University of Calgary. He is presently projecting a novel which he hopes to have out by next fall. Most provinces are using his *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, which he refers to as "a young man's first book, written out of his own experience", in their High School curriculum. *Stones from Western Canada*, *Temptations of Big Bear* and *Blue Mountains of China* are

used in university courses.

And what does he think of his books? "Of course they're good novels," he says. "The act of publishing a book is the most egotistical thing in the world. Why be modest?"

One of the privileges of his position is that he can allow himself the luxury of a lecture tour. In this instance he came to Winnipeg on the invitation of Peter Peters, principal, Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute. At the end of the lecture series, teachers and students felt they had benefitted from their guests' informal, lucid and astute sharing of this unique writer's literary talent and insights.

In Ruth Vogt's class he dealt with the "Process of Writing". He discussed each of his major novels and their preliminary research in turn, as well as *The Tudor King*, a major feature-length film in the making. When Mrs. Vogt asked what had bothered the Mennonites about *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, he answered quietly: "They felt it to be the destruction of the Mennonite image!" He illustrated the importance of conflict and contrast in writing. Ugliness must be shown in order that beauty be seen, evil must be realistically dealt with so that the good be clearly seen. "A novelist tries to give you an idea of what life is like—realism, the flavor of it." To be sure, Wiebe's novels are realistic enough.

In Gareth Neufeld's class they discussed the Riel story. In Lora Sawatsky's class *Peace Shall Destroy Many*. In Irma Epp's class Wiebe spoke of the Indians response to Christianity. He read his *In the Beaver Hills*, the tale of Maskepetoon, a pacifist Indian chief who died over a hundred years ago, a Christian martyr in a Black-foot camp.

Wiebe addressed the Home and School Association of MBCI on "What is a good literature program in a Christian High School?" He challenged the audience with "What should we expect our child to read at high school?" He discussed some of the things books have been censored for: sex, improper politics, stance toward war and peace, religion, race, language (profanity), attitude toward socially unacceptable behaviour, or else generally inappropriate adolescent behaviour. In discussing what a moral education is, we came to realize that we have a responsibility to teach

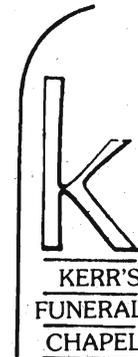
children to be reflectively aware of the world around them. There is a tendency for parents to assert their rights, e.g. the Holdeman in Alberta or the parents of the Huron County who transfer responsibility to the school. Wiebe submits that in a Christian high school we should be able to handle problematic literature better than in other schools because the children have been taught in the home, and also because we have Christian teachers to instruct our children. When Wiebe was a student at a Christian high school, books were severely censored. If, indeed, he were once again at school, he said he would like to read "books that help me remain curious, developing agility of the mind; books that teach about the world, and if books like *Catcher in the Rye* had been studied, and explained I would have been better able to cope with situations that arose later in life. Too often we protect our students too much. Teach realism consistently." He would like to read "Books that help me gain standards of good literature and to understand the great thinkers and writers of all times. We must teach in such a way that we can trust young readers to discover good reading if it is available. "Books," Wiebe says, "need to stretch my imagination, my fancy, and let me encounter the evil and good in the world. Beauty is learned by contrast. Don't judge a book by snippets but read the entire movement of the book, the broad emphasis. Obscenity is an individual matter." He stressed that inner immunity is not developed by isolation from evil, and as a person develops, the guard rails become less necessary.

Wiebe spoke of teachers who had

strongly influenced his writing career. It is to be expected that some excellent writers may eventually emerge from his sensitive and aware teaching in the art of writing. mm

Mary Enns is an editorial committee member of the *Mirror*.

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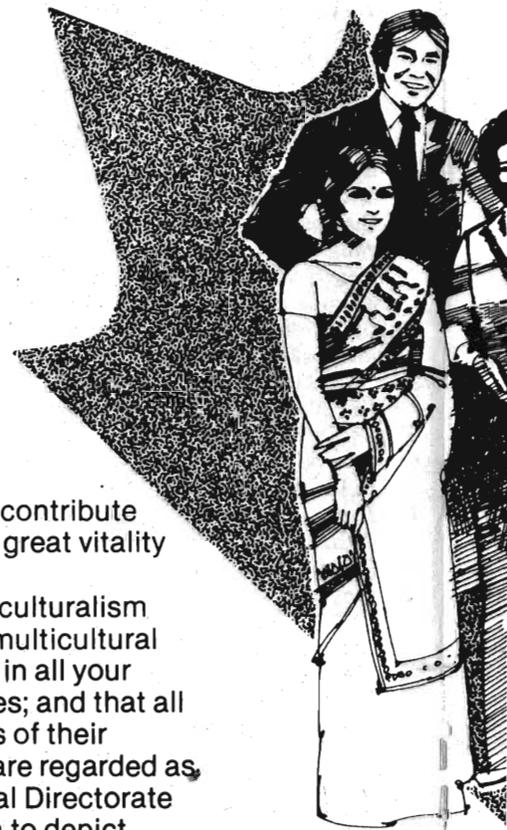
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Part two:

Waiting to leave as chaos follows chaos

This is part two of a two-part series translation of one person's experience after the revolution in Russia.

On September 25, 1925, a violent storm tore the roof from our house. The wood was so badly damaged that it was not salvable. New lumber was at that time unavailable but, even if it had been, we would not have had the means to pay for it. We had to cover the attic with a thick layer of ashes to make the house habitable. Had the weather been dry we would have experienced few difficulties, but that fall we received more than the usual amount of rain. Frequently the cover of ashes did not remain waterproof and everything in the house became soaked. All this was unhealthy, especially for the children.

It was in this year that our Tina began to attend the local school. That autumn there was an epidemic of scarlet fever and Tina also contracted the disease. She came home very ill on the 24th of October. There was no doctor in our area at the time and we knew little about such illnesses: We failed to take the necessary precautions and so it was not long before all five children came down with the sickness. Tina and Mary suffered the most. Tina overcame the fever finally and gradually improved. Mary developed complications and died November 29, 1925. With the other children, there were various after-effects, particularly skin infections. Not until New Year's, 1926, were they all more or less well. Tina was then able to return to school.

In 1926, there was much talk of emigration and many of our people left for Canada that year. This could be done with little difficulty at the time. There was a "Mennonite Society" in Moscow which proved to be most helpful to those who did not have the necessary funds. These emigrants could make arrangements to pay their travel costs over a period of years following their arrival in Canada. We were unprepared to leave at that time.

In the fall of 1926, an agricultural co-operative was founded in P_____. I served this organization briefly as presi-

dent and then also as treasurer. In 1927, this society was merged with a number of other similar organizations. The head office of this larger co-operative was moved to K_____ and for this reason I ceased to actively be involved. In 1928, we also founded a livestock association in P_____ and I again served this society as treasurer.

Conditions worsened considerably from 1927 to 1929; a black cloud seemed to hang over the people. One could sense that something extraordinary was about to happen. Because of this oppressive atmosphere, which seemed to affect everyone, there arose once again a strong desire to emigrate, a desire which seized all the German colonies in Russia. Many people sold all they had for give-away prices while others even left their beautiful homes unsold. These people lived for months in the vicinity of Moscow, waiting for permission to leave. Many thousands of Germans gathered there. We, too, were prepared to leave by this time and so I travelled to Moscow to look into the matter.

While I was in Moscow, toward the end of October, the then president of the Supreme Soviet, M. I. Kalinin, granted permission for all to leave. When I heard this, and it was further confirmed by well

informed people, I returned home immediately. It was my intention to sell everything and, together with my family, return again to Moscow. It didn't take us long to make the necessary arrangements. Although there were some at home who tried to prevent our departure, we set out, with our own wagon, for S_____. There I put our belongings on the train to Moscow.

When the train arrived, we were refused permission to board because we were carrying too much baggage. This was a mere pretext; an order had obviously come from Moscow to stop the departure of all Germans. What was to be done? It was difficult to decide. We returned to S_____ because we believed that, with time, it would still be possible to proceed. And so we spent a week waiting in vain. Then, as conditions did not seem to be improving, I once again prepared to travel to Moscow. I was determined to find out exactly what the prospects for emigration were. At the very least, I felt I should go in order to retrieve our belongings.

To get to Moscow this time I was forced to begin my journey by walking. I travelled almost entirely on foot as far as B_____ where I was able to board a train. However, my problems were far

The Recollections of A. P. are based on a journal kept by the author in Russia from 1900 to 1954. They begin with the memories of his childhood and a way of life that was to end forever for the Mennonite colonists in Russia with the Revolution of 1917. The Recollections are one man's faithful account of some of the events which transpired during this fifty-year period. This account, written in 1976, is also a retrospective glance, a second look at the record, as it were. The reader can sense at times, the pain that such a re-examination of the past obviously brought with it.

The author was born in 1886, in a village situated not far from the present city of Dnepropetrovsk. At the age of fourteen, he moved with his parents to the region where he resides to this day. His journal preserves a small but significant part of the history of the Mennonites in Russia after the migrations of the 1920's. The settlement described is of interest to historians because it has survived more or less intact as a colony to the present day. Unfortunately, the area remains closed to tourists.

The identity of the author has been withheld and the names of his children, relatives and friends have been changed. Many of the place names have also been deleted. This has been done in order to protect those still living in the Soviet Union.

Peter Pauls, translator

from over. Soon after leaving S_____, two officials stepped into our car and proceeded to examine the passengers' papers. I had no papers with me and knew they were looking for Germans. Fortunately, the door had been left unlocked and so I was able to disappear quickly and quietly. Because it was completely dark at the time, I climbed to the roof of the train car and travelled in this way through a number of stations. Had it not been so dark, I would not have risked it. Before we reached P_____, I dismounted from my perch, while the train was still in motion, and re-entered my car. The search was over by this time and I was able to relax and even get some sleep. I arrived in Moscow late the following day without any further adventures.

Immediately upon my arrival, I took the electric train to the place where my brother Martin was already lodged with his family. Since I had become familiar with that part of Moscow during my first visit, I had no trouble finding my brother's quarters. However, when I arrived there, I learned, to my dismay, that my brother and a number of other men had been arrested. We were to discover later that most of them had merely been sent back to their home districts. Nevertheless, some of these never saw their families or their homes again.

During my second night in Moscow, the authorities began to forcibly put many of the Germans on trains that were to take them back to their former homes. What a distressing sight! It was a cold winter day with a strong north wind and occasional snow flurries but all those mothers with their little children had to wait under open skies until the train cars arrived. Then, finally, they were allowed to board and to warm themselves. Because I knew many of these people, I stayed with them for a time but I was unable to do anything to alleviate the suffering all around me.

The next day, toward evening, I travelled to downtown Moscow and boarded the express train for home. I had already sent back our belongings when I realized that there would be no emigration. During my absence, my family had remained in S_____. Now we all had to return to P_____. My brother Jacob and my brother-in-law Henry W_____ came for

us. Fortunately, our house had not yet been sold and so we were not forced to move in with others. However, all our furniture and victuals were gone. For a time, then, we experienced considerable hardship.

In 1930, the collectivization began. I won't describe here the manner in which this was carried out. All this is generally known. Instead of working in a collective, I went to work as a bookkeeper in a cheese factory. It wasn't a particularly good position, but I preferred this employment to my other alternatives. Also, this job freed mother from much heavy manual labour on the Kolchoz.

In the fall of 1937, during my vacation, I travelled to A_____ to visit some of our relatives. The trip itself was pleasant and provided a welcome change. However, conditions had become somewhat unsettled again. A number of our people had been arrested, for no apparent reason, and then had simply disappeared. Among these unfortunates was my brother Abram.

In late August, 1938, Tina and Karl moved to E_____ in order to continue their studies. I had just been dismissed from my job with the Consumers' Society and so I was able to accompany Tina to her new school. On my way home, I stopped again at A_____ to visit Henry W_____ and Aunt Katherine who had moved there only a few months earlier. When I arrived, I found my friends in great distress. Henry W_____ and John S_____ had both been taken away by the "Black Ravens." These men have never been seen or heard from since. Needless to say, my leave-taking was a sad one.

Soon after my return from this trip, I accepted the post of treasurer with the P_____ High School. In this position, I served also as librarian until 1941. With the outbreak of World War II, the cost of living rose so sharply that we could hardly live on my income. To make matters even worse, I was dismissed by the school on November 1, 1941. Also, that fall my brother Hans and a number of other men were spirited away by the "Black Ravens." Those were dark days for me personally. There were times when I could see little point in going on with life.

It was a difficult time for all of us. Tina had come home soon after the outbreak of

the war; there was no thought of continuing her studies at such a time. Karl had been conscripted into the army in 1940 and had been, from the very beginning, involved in the heaviest combat. We heard from him quite regularly at first. It must have been very hard for him in the front lines. Then the letters suddenly stopped. On the 20th of August, we received the official notice. In the general retreat at the beginning of the war, Karl's unit, along with many others, had been forced to withdraw to Leningrad. During this retreat, on July 20th, 1941, near the town of N_____, he sacrificed his youthful life. He was not even twenty years old! It was a terrible blow for the entire family, particularly for mother. She never really recovered from the shock.

But all this, even if difficult, was bearable. It was to become even worse. In November, 1942, all German girls and also many German women who did not have children under three years of age were inducted into the "Workers' Army." Our Tina was also among these unfortunate conscripts. There were some heart-breaking moments. Many women whose husbands had already been drafted now had to forsake their young children and travel to O_____. There they had to live and work in terrible conditions. Poorly fed, and in the coldest winter weather, these women were forced to dig deep canals in the frozen ground. Ironically, all that these poor women had to endure was totally unnecessary; these canals were later filled in again without ever being used.

By the summer of 1943, many had deserted from the Workers' Army because of bad treatment and poor food. Our Tina, too, could not cope with the inhuman conditions and so she came home without leave in June, 1943. For a considerable period of time, nothing was done about it. She went to work as a teacher but was dismissed, because of her desertion, early in 1944. In March, 1944, all deserters were ordered to return to their designated places of work. Upon Tina's return to O_____, she was arrested and imprisoned. She was given a sentence of seven years. Actually, she was better off in prison than in the Workers' Army. In January, 1945, I travelled to O_____ to bring Tina and some of the other women



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there what food and money we could spare. We had tried a number of times, through the mail and through other people, to send Tina something but always without success. That particular winter was unusually harsh and I accomplished my mission only after experiencing many discomforts and inconveniences.

Our younger daughter, Frieda, did not fare much better than Tina. She also was drafted and sent to N_____. After a few months, she came home on leave but then did not return when her leave expired. She managed to find temporary employment as a teacher in another area and worked in hiding there until the end of the war. All this time, I was living in constant fear; I was often interrogated, sternly warned and even threatened. Fortunately, nothing ever came of all these confrontations. After the defeat of Germany, there was a general amnesty not only for those who had deserted from the military but also for those who had escaped from the Workers' Army. Frieda gained her freedom at this time and came

out of hiding. Tina, too, was released under this amnesty and returned home in August, 1945.

In 1953, mother became ill. During the winter of 1954, she began to sink rapidly. She frequently suffered acute pain. On the 17th of March, we brought her to the hospital in K_____. After she had spent ten days there without any noticeable improvement in her condition, the doctor advised us to take her to the state hospital in G_____. The doctor provided us with the necessary admission papers and then released her. We brought her home on the 27th of March.

One night, then, from the 27th of March to the 28th, mother was again at home. Early on the 28th, we set out for G_____. Jacob B_____ accompanied us on this trip. We arrived at the hospital that same evening and she was admitted immediately. I remained in town to await developments. I did not have long to wait. Her illness became so much worse following her admittance that the doctors

recommended surgery. The operation confirmed their suspicions; it was cancer of the stomach. Immediately after this ordeal she felt reasonably well and I even began to hope that she might recover. On the second day after the operation, she was in especially good spirits.

On the third day, the 2nd of April, I saw instantly as I approached her bed that her condition was deteriorating. She was fully conscious, however, and able to speak. Her first words were, "The end is near." And so she lay, completely calm and saying very little. A few hours later, her breathing became irregular and she quietly and gently went to her eternal rest. I will never forget those last hours with her. As soon as she was gone, I sent a telegram home requesting transportation. On the 3rd of April, Jacob L_____ came for us and on the 4th we brought her home. On the 6th of April, 1954, we surrendered her to the earth. It is now 23 years that I have been alone. We had such a beautiful, happy life together. **mm**

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Manitoba news

John Enns, principal of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate since 1972, has resigned from the position of principal effective June 30, 1979 to take on a teaching position at Westgate. The board accepted the resignation with regret, at the same time expressing its gratitude to Mr. Enns for having provided stable and visionary leadership during years when the school faced several major crises in enrolment and financing, and during the major expansion of the gymnasium and related facilities. Under his leadership, Westgate has grown to an enrolment of 190 students from Grades 7 to 12 and has excellent facilities to give the student a well-rounded education. The Board welcomed Mr. Enns' decision to stay on with Westgate in a teaching position.

Alfred Penner, social studies teacher at West Kildonan Collegiate will be seeking the nomination of the Progressive Conservative party in Rossmere Constituency where a bye-election is expected soon in order to fill the seat left vacant by the appointment of Ed Schreyer as governor-general of Canada. For the past two years Penner has served as chairman of the Winnipeg municipal hospital board and also as the moderator of the River East M.B. church.

Eric Fast, whose name appeared in last month's Manitoba News is teaching in Lusaka, Zambia.

The University of Winnipeg Wesmen have, for the first time since 1969 won their own Wesman Classic Tournament. In an exciting final the Wesmen defeated the University of Victoria 81 to 72. Coach **Bruce Enns** was more than delighted.

The CMBC Board announced two significant developments in staffing. **Henriette Cornies** now in part-time instruction of voice and piano will become a full-time staff member, while **Waldemar Janzen** will be spending his 1979-80 sabbatical year as assistant pastor of the St. Catharines United Mennonite church.

C.A. DeFehr passes

On Sunday, February 11, at the age of 97, C.A. DeFehr of Winnipeg went to be with the Lord. The aged former church leader had been in failing health for several years. During a lifetime of active involvement in a variety of Mennonite Brethren and wider Mennonite church endeavours, DeFehr gave generously both in advice and leadership, and with funds. He was a key figure in the development of several schools, the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, the Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute, the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, and also served with distinction in the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization.



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Taxes: drawing the line about rendering unto Caesar

by Roy Vogt

More than four hundred delegates from the General Conference Mennonite Church, plus several hundred visitors from other branches and institutions of the church, met in Minneapolis on February 9-10 to discuss Christian civil responsibility in a highly militaristic society.

For years now, several dozen Mennonites in the United States have protested their country's heavy military expenditures by refusing to pay a portion of their federal income tax equal to the proportion of the federal budget devoted to military purposes. The Internal Revenue Service, which is the government's tax collection agency, has chosen to deal with these apparent acts of civil disobedience in a relatively mild way. Instead of taking the protestors to court, it has removed the amount owing in taxes from their bank accounts or from other assets. An open legal confrontation has thus been avoided. The persons making these protests have been self-employed, which

means that they are responsible for paying their own taxes. Because of this their protest has remained a personal affair between themselves and the government.

The tax-protest movement took a new turn a few years ago when a General Conference employee, Cornelia Lehn, asked the Conference not to withhold from her income that part of her taxes which she felt was used for military expenditures. Because she was not a self-employed person she had to involve her employer—the General Conference Mennonite Church—in her act of civil defiance.

The officers of the conference didn't know what to do. One group within the leadership favoured the granting of her request. Another group opposed it. It was recognized by everyone that if the Conference agreed to her request it would itself become a participant in an act of "civil disobedience."

The question was taken to the 1977 General Conference sessions at Bluffton where it was resolved that the question would be studied further within the church and submitted to a special conference in eighteen months. This is the conference that convened in Minneapolis in early February.

The question that the conference faced was: should the General Conference Mennonite Church support the war-tax resistance of individuals like Cornelia Lehn by refusing to be a tax collector for the U.S. government?

The hundreds of young and old people who came to this conference knew that this involved much more than just a tax resistance question. By facing up to the challenge of Cornelia Lehn (and other employees for MCC who have taken a similar position) the General Conference Mennonite Church was forced to examine its own mission, whether and to what extent the church should defy the civil authorities, and the degree to which a corporate body can identify with the radical demands of individuals in its midst.

For many reasons this conference proved, in the opinion of this writer, to be one of the most significant conferences of the Mennonite Church in recent years, because it faced these questions squarely and responsibly. The two days were marked by wide-open debate, carried on in a spirit remarkably free of rancour. This was due to several factors: the preliminary work that had been done in

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many congregations, the temperate chairmanship of Elmer Neufeld, the willingness of virtually all participants to stick with issues not personalities and to accept conclusions that fell short of what was desired. So many of our churches conferences have become primarily business conferences, where the budget is the most important item on the agenda and the absence of vigorous debate on issues is hailed as a sign of peace within the brotherhood. This conference was refreshingly different. Those of us who went somewhat reluctantly, attracted mostly by a nagging sense that the issue was important and needed to be tackled, but not convinced that much searching would go on—were extremely encouraged by

what happened. Never have we been prouder of the ability of our people to tackle a difficult problem with great passion and fairness. We personally were far from satisfied with the final resolution, but the personal and theological integrity with which the debate was carried on helped to alleviate some of the disappointment.

A few of the delegates argued that the church should never disobey the government. This was definitely a minority viewpoint. Many more felt that the church should not disobey the government on such a matter as payment of taxes. The command of Jesus to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mark 12:17) was cited most often in defence of this. Some younger church delegates indicated personally that they disagreed with such a strict interpretation of this text but had been bound by their congregations to vote against any defiance by the Conference on this issue. Some delegates urged the church to support the prophets in their midst by refusing to withhold taxes. As might have been expected, a compromise resolution was finally passed. This resolution reads: "Moved that we request the General Board of our Conference to engage in a serious and vigorous search to use all legal, legislative, and administrative avenues for achieving a conscientious objector status from the legal requirement that the Conference withhold income taxes from the wages of its employees. If no relief can be found within a three-year period they shall again bring the question to the attention of the General Conference." This motion passed by a vote of 1,218 to 134. mm

Mythtery book of B. B. Janz

WITH COURAGE TO SPARE. THE LIFE OF B.B. JANZ (1877-1964), by John B. Toews. Winnipeg: The Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America, 1978. Pp 185. Pb. \$5.60, Hb. \$8.

Reviewed by Harry Loewen

At a time when the Mennonite churches and conferences seem to lack knowledgeable, resolute and prophetic leadership, John Toews' biography of a Mennonite leader is refreshing and encouraging. We do well to be reminded that when the need among the Mennonites was great, there were men who rose to the occasion and pointed the way out of the difficulties. In reading *With Courage to Spare* one learns with a sense of elation that the Mennonite people, traditionally strangers to the world of politics, had at least some leaders and men of influence who knew how to deal with hostile and often bungling government officials.

In clear prose and with the sweep of a professional historian, Toews tells the dramatic story of a Mennonite Moses who helped the Russian Mennonites to find a new home in North America, and who in Canada, in the face of great odds, built up congregations, worked sacrificially toward solving settlers' problems, fought to preserve the Mennonite principles of peace and non-resistance during World War II, and counselled numerous individuals with regard to their faith and life. After the war B.B. Janz agreed to travel to South America in an attempt to affect reconciliation and stability among the strife-torn Mennonite congregations there.

With regard to Janz's involvement with the Mennonite conscientious objectors (CO's) and with those who fell prey to the war spirit of the 1940's, the author has succeeded well in portraying a most loving and human man and pastor. B.B. Janz's many letters of compassion, encouragement and admonition testify to the fact that Janz was not only a statesman but also an older brother who helped his younger brothers to grow in the faith.

The detailed description of Janz's loneliness and suffering toward the end of his life is most touching. The man who in his earlier years had influenced and even ruled individuals, committees, congregations and conferences realized with some bitterness that changing times, values and a new generation which "knew nothing of Joseph" had left him behind only to waste away and die.

In reading the story of B.B. Janz the

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man and Mennonite statesman, one has the feeling that here is a myth in the making, a beautiful and no doubt useful myth, nevertheless a myth. Unintentionally perhaps, Janz himself began the legend with his massive correspondence and memoirs ("... I have come to stand at the helm of the people!" p. 38), often written, significantly, in the third person (pp. 14, 15). Being a man of vision and possessing prophetic insight, Janz no doubt saw his role in life at the crossroads and in the cross currents of historical developments within the Mennonite world.

John Toews, obviously close to, and most sympathetic toward, his hero, and writing the biography for the Board of Christian Literature of the General Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of North America, uses all available evidence to portray B.B. Janz as a greater figure than many of his contemporaries saw him.

Reminiscent of Martin Luther's dramatic conversion, Janz is portrayed as struggling at great length with doubts and a deep consciousness of his sinfulness until a flash of light from the Word of God illumines his soul and he at last finds forgiveness and peace. Other than his difficulties as a young teacher, it never becomes clear why Janz found his conversion so difficult. As the story progresses the author uses the protracted agonizing experience of his hero to show that it explains, at least in part, Janz's later understanding of religious faith, the church, and Christian ethics. In his search and struggles Janz is even compared to Menno Simons and Conrad Grebel (p. 157). It is debatable, however, whether Janz's conversion was all that different from the conversions of many other Mennonites, excluding of course the easy pop-conversions produced by mass evangelism which Janz rightly held suspect.

Another myth-creating aspect is the impression given in the book that Janz stood virtually alone and almost single-handedly brought about the deliverance of the Mennonites from Russia. According to the biography it was Janz who travelled in search of solutions and met with important government officials, often agonizing over the slow progress in the negotiations; it was Janz who communicated with the outside world with regard to the plight of his people in Russia; and it was Janz who at last succeeded when all else seemed to have failed. There is no doubt that B.B. Janz deserves much credit for his tireless activities on behalf of the emigration efforts in the 1920's, but surely he worked together with other persons of the Union of Citizens of Dutch Lineage, of which he was the chairman, and with people in Germany and North America. In the Epilogue the author claims that "B.B. Janz always stood

within a community" (p. 155), but the biography obviously fails to show adequately Janz's co-operation with his brethren. He is largely seen as using individuals and committees to advance the objectives which he had set for himself and which he believed to be right.

Not even the family of B.B. Janz is portrayed as having been a part of the man's activities and world. Not until Chapter XIII (Life's Tragedies) does the reader become fully aware that Janz had a wife who stood behind the successful man; and even here the reader has merely come to witness the death of Maria which will deprive the suffering man of his much needed support. Of the rest of the family only son Peter comes to the fore, apparently in order to show that the many burdens which B.B. Janz had to bear were made even heavier because of the difficulties in the family.

While the author's first-hand knowledge of, and closeness to, his subject enabled him to see B.B. Janz from within, as it were, in the interest of historical objectivity he could have been more critical of the man and his work. For example, it should have been observed that in the some twenty years in which Janz led the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church and influenced the ethical life of the Mennonites in Western Canada, an almost repressive spiritual atmosphere was de-

veloped and sustained from which Mennonite Brethren churches are still trying to recover. The emphasis on mere externals, sin, and worldliness, often led to strife and suffering among young and old in the Coaldale church and elsewhere.

This absence of a critical stance is most apparent in the treatment of Janz's relations with MCC. Janz's criticism of MCC's policies and theology, however justified, should have been counter-balanced by showing "the other side." As matters stand, Janz appears as the man who was always right and all those who disagreed with him or ignored him were wrong.

In 1976 the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of its existence. In a published booklet, reviewing the history of the church, B.B. Janz is mentioned as one among many individuals who helped to build the congregation and the community. Is this how his contemporaries saw him and how the people who worked with him remember the man? If so, then this appraisal of the man is in the spirit of Anabaptism and, no doubt, in the spirit of B.B. Janz himself. *With Courage to Spare*, while well and interestingly written, appears to be an "official" biography, written in the interest of the Mennonite Brethren Conference with the intention of setting up a model for church members to follow. **mm**

DAUT KJEMMT ENDLICH DOCH AUM RAICHTEN

(From Reuter's "Dat kuemmt endlich doch an den Rechten")

— De oole Postmeista Miller fraijt
Daem Jung, de ahm de Breew utdraijt:
"Hast du daem Breef besorjt, Jehaunn?" —
"Jo, Herr" — "Uck daem, de aun
Daem Jehaunn Krischan Engel wea,
De bie Schnieda Block es en de Leah?
Hast du de Wohnung dann jefunge?" —
"Jo, Herr" auntwaut't he, boold besonne,
"Jo, Herr, doch met daem oole Breef,
Doa jingj mie daut tooeascht gaunz scheef,
De Sach, de wea sea biesterig,
Wiel, en de Loagastrot, doa wohnt hee nich
Un wohnt en langet Enj wieda aum Straund;
Un uck nich raichts, — nae! linkja Haund;
Un wohnt uck nich em dredde Stock —
Nae, hee wohnt unje em Kjalla;
Sien Meista es nich Schnieda Block,
Sien Meista de heet Schnida Talla;
Hee selwst, hee heet nich Krischan Engel,
Nae, hee heet Ann-marieche Trutje Rest,
Un 't es uck kjeen Schiedabenjel —
Nae, Herr, 'ne oole Wauschfru es 't".

The foregoing is transcribed into the Plautdietsch dialect by Reuben Epp from Fritz Reuter's "Dat kuemmt endlich doch an den Rechten", written in the dialect of Mecklenburg. One wonders what Reuter, in the early 1800's, knew about things to come in the postal service of the 1970's.

Ein Blick in die Vergangenheit

geschrieben von Bruno Penner,
St. Elizabeth, Manitoba

Wer einmal an der Weichsel in Estpreussen bei Danzig bis 1945 gewohnt hat, wird wohl in stillen Stunden noch so manches Mal in Gedanken durch die frühere Heimat wandern. Erinnerungen werden wachgerufen: das Heimatdorf, der Weg zur Kirche, zur Schule, zu Verwandten und Nachbarn, sowie die weitere Umgebung. Alles dies bleibt wohl unvergessen. Die Landschaft breitete sich zu beiden Seiten des Weichselstromes aus, an der Mündung lag die Hansestadt Danzig und an der Nogat die Stadt Marienburg mit der Burg der Ordensritter. Es ist ja bekannt, dass seit 1560 Mennoniten an der Urbarmachung dieses Gebietes beteiligt waren. Die Erfahrungen im Bau von Entwässerungsmuehlen mit den dazugehörigen Graeben hatten diese Siedler in Holland gewonnen. So ist nun in vielen Jahren harter Arbeit eine bluehende Provinz daraus geworden. Auf dem fruchtbaren Boden wurden Raps, Weizen, Zuckerrueben sowie Futtergetreide angebaut. Milchkuehe und Pferde einschliesslich Nachwuchs weideten im Sommer auf guten Wiesen und die Milch wurde zur Verarbeitung in die Molkerei geliefert. Die Pferde hatten harte Arbeit zu leisten. Im Fruhjahr mussten sie zur Bestellung der Felder ran, und in der Ernte mussten sie die mit Garben beladenen Leiterwagen zur Scheune ziehen. Im Herbst kam dann die Ruebenernte, welche in nassen Jahren recht schwierig war; auch sollte der Boden vor dem Winter gefluegt sein. Die Pferde waren treue unentbehrliche Helfer fuer den landwirtschaftlichen Betrieb. Heute tut der Traktor diese schweren Arbeiten. Der Weichselstrom mit seinen Nebenflüssen hatte nicht viele feste Bruecken, so wurden denn an vielen Stellen Seilfaehren benutzt, um Fahrzeuge von der einen Seite des Flusses zur anderen Seite zu bringen. Solche Faehre konnte 4 zweispännige Fuhrwerke tragen und wurde von einem Mann Tag und Nacht — mit Abloesung — bedient. Das Geraet zum Hinueber-

ziehen war ein Stueck hartes Holz, an einem Ende zum Handgriff gearbeitet, waehrend das andere Ende etwas staerker und mit zwei Einschnitten versehen war, welche auf das Drahtseil passten. Dieses einfache Geraet wurde zum Ziehen benutzt und bei der Ankunft auf der anderen Seite auch als Bremse. Da die Weichsel Stroemung hatte, war das Uebersetzen einfacher. Die Faehre wurde vom Ufer mit dem schon beschriebenen Holzgeraet weggezogen, dann etwas schraege gestellt und die Stroemung trieb die Faehre zum anderen Ufer hin.

Fuer den Personenverkehr sowie fuer Gebrauchsgueter stellte eine Kleinbahn die Verbindung zwischen den Staedten und Doerfern her. Auch beförderte diese Kleinbahn im Herbst die Zuckerrueben zur Fabrik. Da der Zug zweimal taeglich hin und zurueck fuhr, ergab dies eine gute Gelegenheit fuer Schueler zum Mitfahren, um eine hoehere Schule zu besuchen. Wenn man hier fern der Heimat Bekannte von zu Hause trifft, dann wird noch recht oft die Fahrt zur Schule erwaeht. Der Badestrand an der Ostsee war ebenfalls mit dieser Bahn zu erreichen und manche froehliche Fahrt ist unternommen worden. Das Tempo dieser Bahn war nicht zu schnell, denn im Volksmund sagte man "Blumen pfluecken waehrend der Fahrt verboten."

Mennoniten waren in allen Berufen zu finden — als Kaufleute, Landwirte, Beamte, Lehrer und Handwerker. Was konnten unsere Frauen und Muetter nicht alles selbst zu Hause herstellen! Zum Weihnachtsfest wurden die schoensten Pfefferkuchen gebacken sowie Marzipan hergestellt. Zum fertigen Marzipan gehoerte eine leicht braune Oberflaeche, welche mit einem gluehenden Pflugschar hergestellt wurde. Kam mal ueberraschend Besuch auf den Hof, dann war in kurzer Zeit ein Teller frisch gebackener "Schmandwaffeln" fuer die Gaeste da.

Im November wurde auf Vorrat eingeschlachtet. Heute hat jeder Haushalt einen Kuehlschrank und eine Gefriertruhe, damals gab es

diese Einrichtungen noch nicht, man kannte nur Salz und Rauch, um Fleisch fuer laengere Zeit haltbar zu machen. Es war jedoch immer ein Genuss, wenn die fertigen Wuerste und Schinken aus der Raeucherkammer geholt wurden und auf ihren Geschmack geprueft wurden.

Lehrer Dirschauer aus Ladekopp hat die Heimat an der Weichsel in einem Gedicht beschrieben, welches hier angefuehrt wird.

WERDERLANDSCHAFT

Wo der Linde dichte Reihe schattig
jeden Friedhof saeumt,
An den stolzen Vorlaubshoefen von
vergangnen Zeiten traeuemt,
Wo sich Weizenfelder breiten — un-
absehbar, meilenweit,
Und wo Zuckerrueben kueden von
der Ernte Fruchtbarkeit.

Wo ein Menschenschlag gediehen,
aufrichtiger Wesensart,
Die er neben Treu und Glauben
durch Jahrhunderte bewahrt,
Liegt umschlungen von der Weichsel
und der Nogat Silberband,
Lieblich wie ein Goettergarten: Wer-
derland, mein Heimatland.

Jeder, der es lassen musste, ach, wie
war das Scheiden schwer,
Bleibt im Herzen ihm verbunden,
trennt ihn auch gleich Land und
Meer,

Traeuemt vom Reichtum seiner Flu-
ren, die ihn lebenslang verwoehnt,
Von dem Gruen der Nehrungswael-
der, die die weisse Duene kroent.

Werderland im Festtagskleide, wenn
der Raps in Bluete steht,
Wenn der Wind in sanften Wellen
ueber Aehrenfelder weht,
Wenn die Bienen eimsig summen,
und die Lerche froehlich singt,
Wenn das Gold der Abendsonne hin-
term Weichseldamm versinkt,

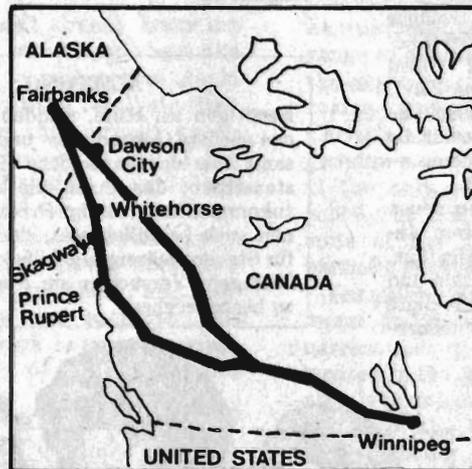
Wenn aus Feldern steigt und Baeu-
men honigschwer der Bluetenduft,
Und wenn Elbings blaue Hoehen
gruessen durch die blaue Luft.
Nie verblassen diese Bilder, nie, so-
lang die Trennung waehrt,
Und am heimweh kranken Herzen
Bitternis der Freude wehrt.

Werderland, du Land der Sehnsucht,
Traum von frohem Jugendglueck,
Moege ueber dir nur walten gnaedig
wieder das Geschick,
Doch wer zu dem letzten Schlummer
heim nicht kehrt aus fremdem
Raum,
Traeume auch in fremder Erde seinen
ew'gen Heimattraum.



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MENNONITES MUST BECOME CHURCH AGAIN

Dear Sir:

I have read the Mirror from the very beginning of its publication and still enjoy it very much. Those in-depth articles about us Mennonites and our Christian biblical faith are particularly interesting and valuable. I was indeed happy to read that the new editor committed himself

to much the same editorial policy in future.

When we read our Mennonite history the way it happened in close to 500 years it must, I think, become clear to us that we started as a church, although it happened mostly in central and northern Europe. Then our ancestors were persecuted very harshly. They fled where possible and then settled in certain countries where they were welcomed or at least tolerated. Living as a separate group they naturally became a people,

not just a church. . . .

Now in Manitoba we became involved more and more with our environment and our only hope of survival is that of becoming mainly a church again as our first ancestors so long ago. . . . Naturally to be also a people as well as a church has its drawbacks as we saw in the Ukraine, but it also has its advantages, as G. Lohrenz pointed out.

Sincerely
P.J.B. Reimer
Rosenort

More EDITORIAL

full range of verbal expressions is as stupid and self-defeating as it would be to limit a painter's colors or to deny a composer the use of certain notes or harmonies.

An adolescent in our society who doesn't already know the full vocabulary of street language and something about the mechanics of sex by the time he gets to high school would have to be an imbecile. Teachers of literature teach students how to respond meaningfully to language they already know. Margaret Laurence, whose novel *The Diviners* is one of the novels under attack, has written: "I wish that the people who want to ban certain novels would talk to some of the many Grade 12 and 13 students with whom I have discussed my writing. These students have read the novel they are studying—all of it, not just snippets here and there, and they have no difficulty, under the guidance of sensitive and informed teachers, of seeing that this work is an affirmation (and I think a serious and a moral one) of faith in life and humanity."

The real question is not why certain writers insist on using profanity and explicit language. The real question is: What kind of people express themselves in such language and why?

Any person who thinks that somebody who never uses "bad" language is good, or that somebody who habitually uses "bad" language is bad is exactly the kind of naive person who should be studying literary works that employ language in its full range of expression. One of the characters in *The Diviners* is the garbage collector Christie Logan, who uses profanity and coarse expressions because he doesn't know any better. Yet Christie is a thoroughly good man, almost a great man, with a genuine moral vision who expresses his insights and emotions in the only vocabulary he possesses. His best utterances achieve an eloquence and nobility which are deeply moving in spite of the verbal crudities they contain, perhaps even partially because of them.

Language should set us free—our minds, our hearts, our moral faculties—not condemn us to life sentences in the narrow cells of prejudice, fear and hatred. If good literature written in the language of real human beings, does anything at all it is to unlock those narrow prisons of the mind and lead us out into the fresh air and sunshine of tolerance and understanding.—AR

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SOME THOUGHTS ON CENSORSHIP AND BANNING BOOKS FROM SCHOOLS

Censorship—or the threat of it—like death and taxes is always with us in one form or another. Censorship is as old as civilization itself. Censorship can be defined broadly as an organized or official program or law to control the free expression of ideas in such sensitive human areas as religion, politics and the arts. The censor is a person who thinks he knows what is best for people's minds and hearts. Interestingly enough, he is always confident that he himself will not be corrupted by coming into contact with the ideas and books he is convinced will corrupt others. Dressed in his moral asbestos suit, he can safely wade through fires that would burn others. Or so he thinks.

Some forms of censorship will always be necessary, of course. Only completely free, completely virtuous people could live without any form of external control. Parents have to act as censors to their children, teachers to students, governments to citizens, and so on. But there is a constant danger that these censoring functions, necessary as they are, will become tyrannical, oppressive and, at times, vicious forms of thought control. It is no coincidence that the least obnoxious forms of censorship are found in the most liberal and open societies, and the most oppressive forms of censorship in the most autocratic closed societies. The most positive and least dangerous form of censorship is self-censorship. And the best way to acquire that positive power is through the kind of enlightened system of education, both at home and in school, which enables people to become mature, tolerant and independent in their judgments.

Of all forms of censorship the most insidious, and hence the most dangerous, is censorship in the arts. Religious and political censorship—especially physical persecution—may drive believers and political opponents underground. But rarely, if ever, will it stamp them out completely. The early Christian church prevailed in the face of the harshest persecution. After 60 years of systematic repression Christians and political dissidents in the Soviet Union are more active than ever. Tyrannical governments—witness Iran—get overthrown in spite of savage measures to put down opposition.

The case of art and the artist, however, is different. In a sense the artist is the freest member of society because he has ranged most widely and openly over the geography of human experience. But he is also the most vulnerable member of society because he can only function in the open. If he starts hiding things he is no longer honest, because by definition, he has to "tell it like it is" and that means he has to expose himself in public. Because he is essentially a communicator he cannot work underground.

The clever tyrant, including the ruthless censor, knows that only too well. That is why freedom of expression is one of the first things curtailed when a dictator takes over (the Nazis burned books in the thirties). In fact, literary censorship has always been considered more crucial than censorship in the other arts. Communication through language is everybody's business. Other arts like music and painting are communicating languages also, but people tend to be more tolerant, possibly because they are considered to be more neutral arts. They are less often a censor's target than literature. Literature

deals with words, and rare is the person who does not respond to words in one way or another.

There is nothing fixed or sacred about word meanings; they tend to change with time, and thus language keeps changing constantly and words that are respectable in one period are considered disreputable in another, and vice versa. It is things that are fixed not words. Many people, including the people who would like to censor literature, confuse words and the things they stand for. To do that is as naive as to fall prey to any other superstition. To be frightened or disgusted by words or expressions is to be a prisoner of language, to confine oneself to a narrow mental cell instead of using language to set the mind free from fear and prejudice.

I am led to these reflections on censorship, especially literary censorship, by the current movement in various communities, including Mennonite, to remove the works of some of the best authors of our literature from school libraries. The attempt to purge Canadian high school libraries of the books of such novelists as Hugh MacLennan, W.O. Mitchell, Margaret Laurence and our own Rudy Wiebe is more than a well-intentioned but misguided act of censorship. The pretext is that the novels of these authors contain words and expressions that are offensive to good taste and, worse, are obscene and blasphemous. But it's only a pretext.

Behind the pretext lurks a more serious motive. That motive is to bring the "free" artist to heel, to cripple his power, to make him speak not honest often uncomfortable truths, but to force him to mouth the comforting, "uplifting" moral propaganda that these self-appointed censors deem fitting for adolescent minds. Having become used to their own mental prisons, they want to make sure that the next generation is confined to them also.

But the sincere, well-intentioned people who want to purge school libraries on moral grounds are too short-sighted to see that they are really working against their own intentions. Rudy Wiebe's novels, to take the example of a Mennonite writer, are religious in the profoundest sense of the word. That they contain words and expressions which most Christian Mennonites would not themselves use in no way alters that fact. Wiebe is making his characters talk as those characters would talk in real life—which of course does not mean that he himself uses such language or that he condones it. It only means that he is a writer of integrity—artistic as well as moral integrity. To have all his literary characters speak like Sunday school teachers would falsify those characters, to make them mere puppets. It would also be an act of moral distortion because to make literary characters express themselves realistically in their own distinctive vocabulary and style is to make them reveal what they are inside—whether good, bad or indifferent.

To protect teen-aged students from the real world by presenting them carefully laundered versions of reality and "truth" in literature is more than misguided, it is morally irresponsible. Good literature constitutes one of the truest and most precious images of human experience we possess. To distort and flatten that image by forbidding writers to use the

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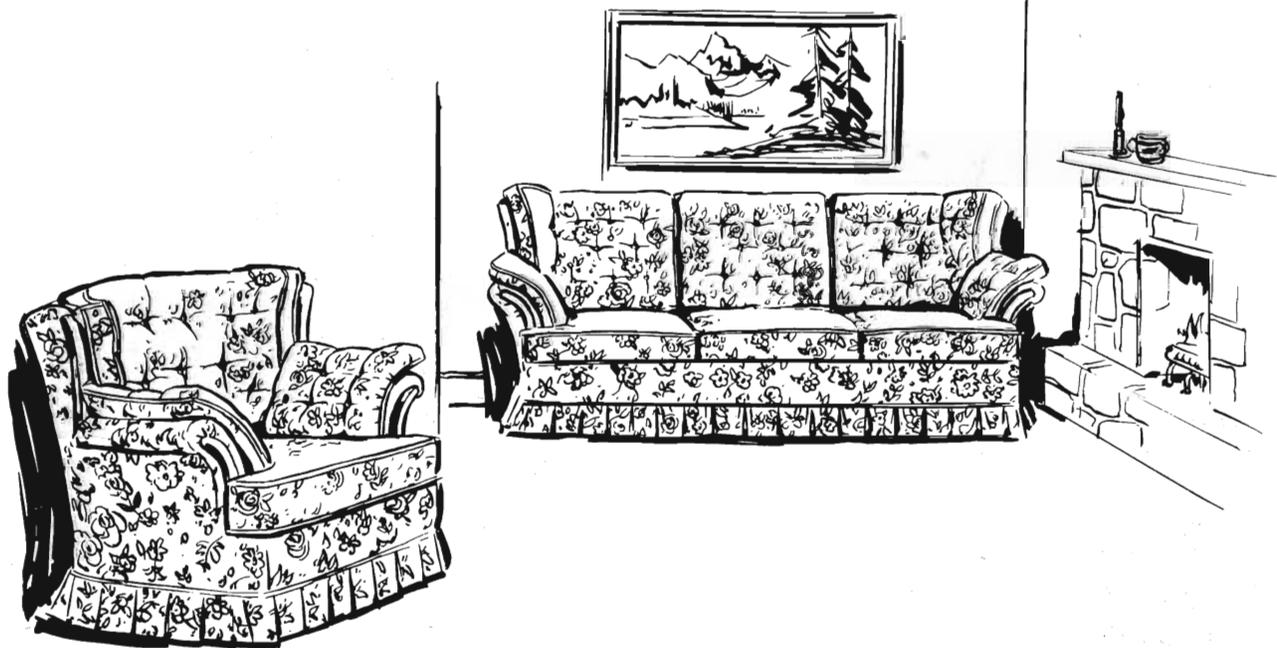
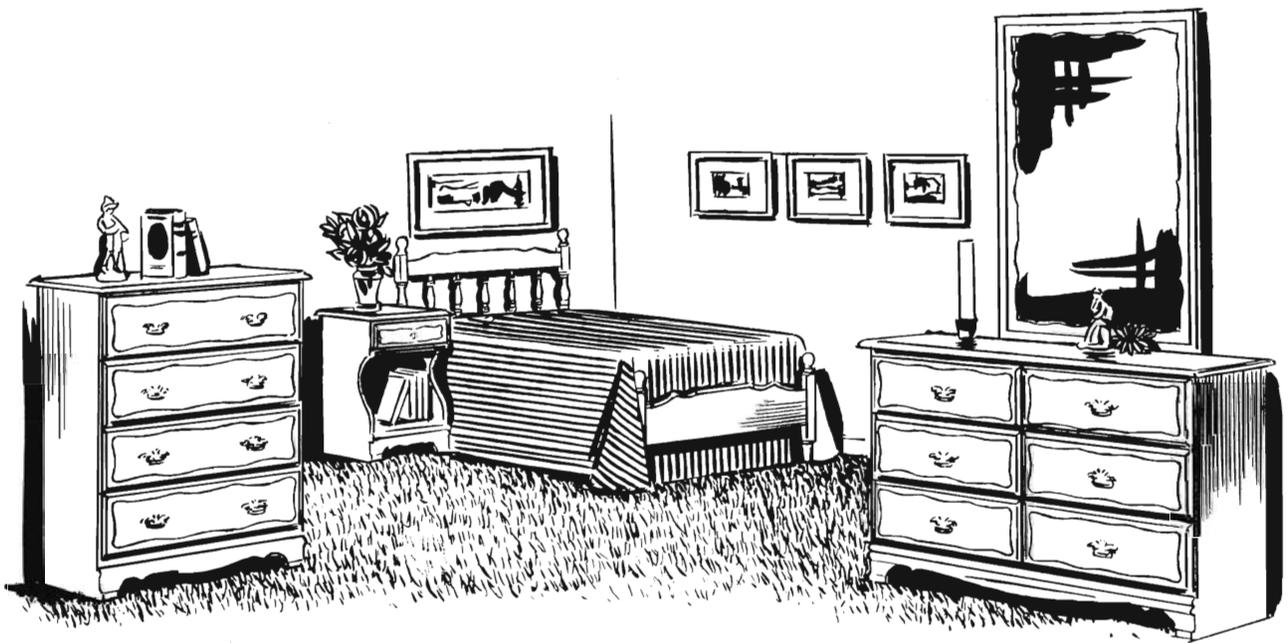
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