

# mennonite mirror

volume 13 / number 6

february 1984



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# ForeWord

# mennonite mirror

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Editor Al Reimer described his interview with Canadian author Andreas Schroeder as the "easiest" he has ever conducted in that Schroeder not only writes well but speaks clearly and articulately about the events that were formative in his career. It is clear from Dr. Reimer's article that Schroeder is someone who has already packed into his relatively short life experiences and adventures that would fill several more "normal" lifetimes. Yet it is from this rich experience, and Mr. Schroeder's unique talent that the stuff of writers is made of. Canadians will be reading more about, and by, this writer.

They say that retirement represents a new career in the lifetimes of most people, and no truer example of this is Rhinehart Friesen who, since his retirement as a physician, has embarked on a new career as a writer. *Mirror* readers have already read his series describing early Mennonite experiences in southern Manitoba; in his article in this issue Dr. Friesen uses entries from an existing diary and his creative prose to weave a story that explores the events and feelings of those who emigrated from Russia late last century. The illustrations are by Lena Sawatsky, of Winnipeg.

Most Canadians tend to assume that "high-tech" and "biotechnology" are activities that are carried on somewhere else — usually the U.S. The Personal Word article on Bert Friesen shows that this isn't so. One of the finest examples of the benefits of long-term research and its economic, as well as health, benefits is here in Winnipeg.

There are a lot of letters from readers in the Your Word section. Ed Unruh's review last month of *And When They Shall Ask* comes under specific comment.

Harry Loewen has contributed two book reviews that examine topics that should be of interest to Mennonite interested in ideas. This issue also contains selections in High and Low German.

We think we have given you something to reflect on in this edition of the *Mirror*.

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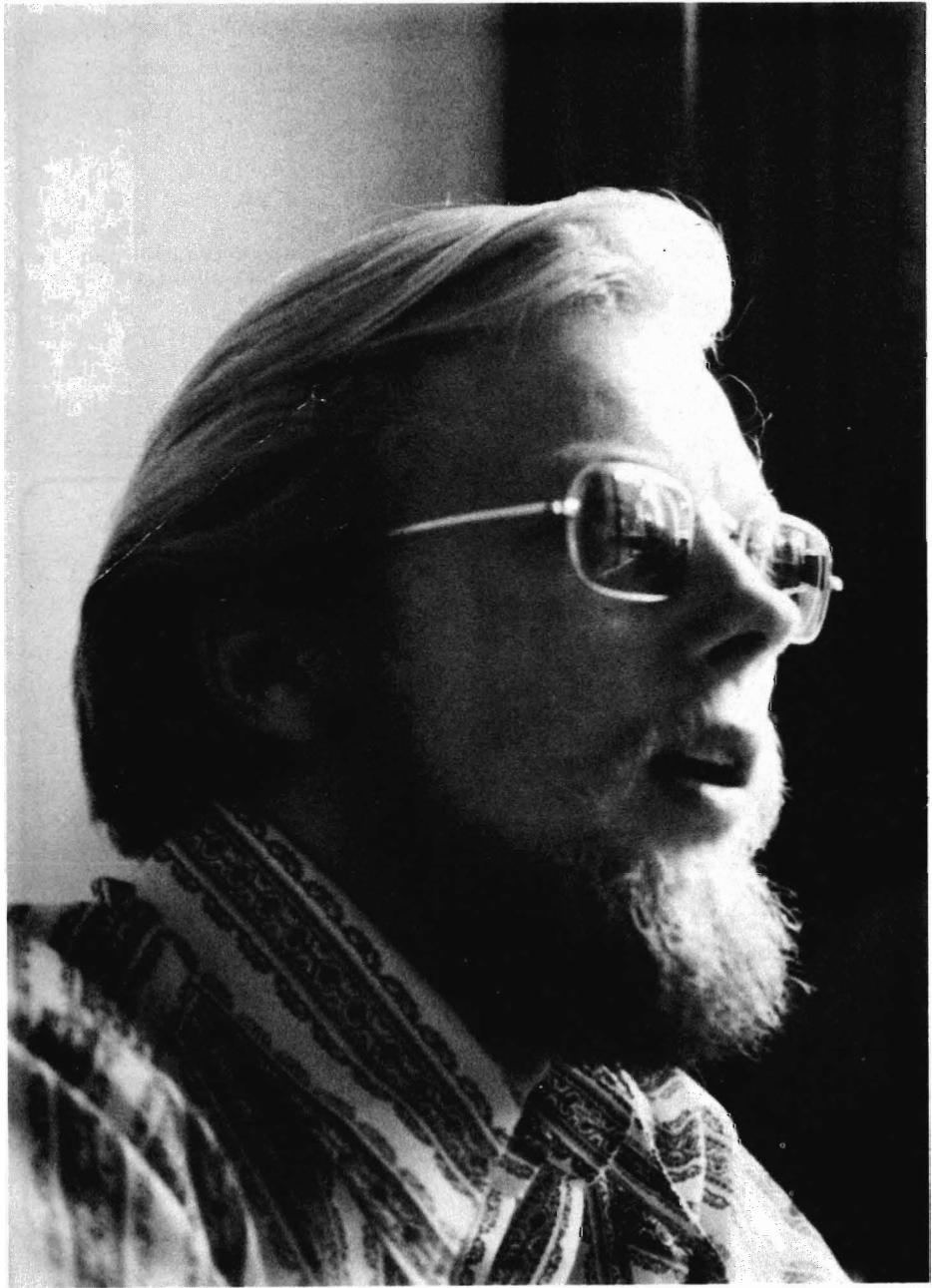
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# Andreas Schroeder:



What you notice first as you step into Andreas Schroeder's office is the "hi-come-on-in" smile that lights up his boyish face. Then, rising to greet you, a blond, slight figure in a bold-check bush shirt. A jutting beard lends masculinity to features almost too delicate for a man in his upper thirties. An open, infectious personality is alive and working in a face that artlessly blends choir boy innocent with street urchin shrewd. But the pixie expression also reveals glimmers of a more complex and thoughtful nature, and of a mind that is quick and sure.

Only cold-fish landlords, bailiffs and prison guards (and he has experienced all three types) could meet Andreas Schroeder and not warm to him at once. He looks so irrepressible, sounds so hearty and with it. Once you start listening to his story you realize that he has already packed several lifetimes and careers into his less than four decades. There have been some extraordinary highs and lows for him. Somehow you get the impression, though, that he not only enjoyed the highs but took the lows in stride as well. Even in prison, a fellow inmate once demanded to know why he looked "so damn cheerful all the time."

He describes himself modestly as "free-lance writer, editor, translator." Actually he is regarded by many as one of Canada's most promising writers in the under-forty group, with five books out and several more on the way. Even his versatility is impressive. He has at various times and/or simultaneously been a poet, literary critic, columnist, playwright, journalist, editor, teacher, administrator, broadcaster and novelist. Today he devotes himself mainly to the

# Look Homeward, Writer

by Al Reimer

writing of fiction and to his family, which consists of wife Sharon (Brown) and two lovely little daughters. He is a rapidly maturing, hard-working professional looking for the big book that will catapult him to the front rank of Canadian writers.

From Mission, B.C., Schroeder is spending the winter here as the first writer-in-residence at the University of Winnipeg. As such, he is expected to make himself available on a part-time basis for help and consultation to students of creative writing, while devoting the rest of his time to his own writing. His one-year appointment provides him with a modest salary paid jointly by the Canada Council and the university. For a free-lance writer with a family the financial security, even if only for a year, offers a welcome respite from an almost chronic state of financial insecurity.

In his small, fourth-floor office in Manitoba Hall overlooking the back of the Bus Station, he puts in long hours on his new word processor trying to finish not one but two novels that have been "in progress," as writers say, for several years. Eyes beaming, he confides that he has "worked well" during the first half of his stay. He reports that by working industriously through almost the whole Christmas break while the University was closed, he was able to complete the 300-page manuscript of his novel *Dust-Ship Glory*. The novel is based on the true story of a strangely driven Finnish homesteader-hermit called Old Tom Sukanan, who in the middle of the prairie near Macrorie, Saskatchewan, miles from the nearest river, built for himself in the early thirties an ocean-going ship that he in-

sanely hoped to sail back to his native Finland. Unfortunately, Old Tom died — literally starved to death — before he could complete his mad project.

This is the kind of visionary, off-beat literary subject Andreas Schroeder revels in. He likes people of rare imagination and enterprise no matter how strange. He likes them even better when they are also outsiders and rebels with causes. He is naturally drawn to people who are not inhibited by pressures to conform, or who resist the power structures of society altogether. He himself is suspicious of all establishments, whether political, economic, academic or religious. He is his own man not because he was born to privilege but because he has fought long and hard to make himself free.

His background could not be more sedately Mennonite. Conservatively and clannishly Mennonite. His people were Danzig Mennonites displaced by the Second World War to Germany, where Andreas was born at Hohenegel in 1946, the oldest of three children. His mother had been trained as an organist and nurse in Berlin, his father was a cabinet maker. The Schroeder family came to Canada with the rest of their clan in the early fifties. And it was as a clan that they purchased huge tracts of farming land in the Fraser Valley near Agassiz, determined to maintain their group solidarity and identity. They didn't have their own church so they went to church in Chilliwack via a four-hour (one way) ferry trip every Sunday. Finally, Grandfather Bartel, patriarch of the clan, established their own church in an old house abandoned in a flood. There Grandfather preached to a congregation in which everyone was re-

lated. Andreas has forgotten the sermons but he remembers the rain seeping through the leaky roof.

The Schroeder farm went bankrupt when Andreas reached adolescence. He vividly recalls the heart-breaking sight of his father dutifully cleaning and polishing the family car about to be repossessed, along with everything else, by the bailiffs. Then his father sitting dazed and chagrined on the floor, totally destroyed by the experience, while the callous bailiffs went about their business of taking over this weird foreigner's assets. It was the end of the Schroeder family's rustic dream.

So they did what bankrupt farm families usually do, they moved to the city — Vancouver in this case. The move coincided with the ferment of the sixties and the awakening of the boy's own rebel nature. The city was a revelation to him, of course. He could now go to German school and run around with Mennonite kids whose families had recently returned from Paraguay. As a budding intellectual he also discovered books in English beyond all imagining. He began scribbling lyric poetry and reading heavy philosophy. He also threw himself frenetically into the Young People's activities at the First United Mennonite Church which the family attended. "I became a foam-at-the-mouth fanatic," he says with a smile. He adds that he was already well on the way to schizophrenia, a condition, by the way, which he believes to be very useful to the writer.

But by senior high school the schizophrenic pressures were becoming too strong for young Schroeder to handle. He switched his religious loyalties from his family church over to a Baptist

church organized by immigrant *Reichsdeutsche* who were culturally sophisticated and still retained close ties with Germany. In this environment he found for a time a common focus for his intellectual and spiritual interests. It was an exciting time for him. He read Tillich and Bonhoeffer and ardently discussed the "death of God" issue. Ideas flew around like bullets in a war among these German Baptists and it was all very exhilarating for the young intellectual adventurer from the Fraser Valley.

University seemed like the logical next step and Andreas went, but with only reluctant approval from his parents. They were not opposed to university in principle, but saw it as proper only in the training of young people for "useful" careers like teaching and nursing. Young Schroeder had other ideas. He became the first member of his clan to go to university in a "directionless direction." The notion of becoming a professional writer would have been branded as "irresponsible" by his people.

That, however, was exactly the air he began sniffing when he got there. Soon he was throwing himself with reckless abandon into the creative maelstrom set in motion by the creative writing program newly organized at UBC by Earle Birney, one of Canada's best-known po-

ets. It was the turbulent period of the late sixties when students, writers and other artists were taking rabidly anti-intellectual and anti-academic stands, professing to despise everything except the rawest street wisdom. Stimulated by all the student talent around him, experimental and gung-ho, Schroeder had found his element. A natural hustler and hustler, he began writing like crazy. By his second year at university he was not only taking a full load of six courses but writing for newspapers in all directions: free-lance features, film criticism and a regular column for the *Vancouver Province*, and up to four and five book reviews a week. He even did a local radio show. He also began writing radio plays and before graduating founded and edited *Contemporary Literature in Translation*, a literary journal that became highly respected and that he continued to edit for the next ten years. While still a student he published two collections of poetry, *The Ozone Minotaur* (1969) and *File of Uncertainties* (1971), followed in 1972 by *The Late Man*, a book of short stories.

While he was launching his literary career full speed ahead, his personal life, he now admits, was becoming more and more chaotic. Having already broken with all organized religion, he

was now acting like a "primo jerk," so that his friends as often as not had to rescue him from his own excesses. Not only had he turned his back contemptuously on his Mennonite background, he had dropped even his family ties. As he puts it now, "I was looking for the cannon I could ram myself down the barrel of and catapult myself as far away as possible from all things Mennonite." He got so desperate, he says, that he would look into his hand and think, "I'm going to take this pill and I'm never coming back."

In the meantime he completed his degree in comparative literature and creative writing and began on an M.A. But he did not remain on the UBC campus for that. Instead he began a period of wandering that took him to Lebanon. There he lived in self-imposed exile for almost two years with a tribe of Bedouins in the desert. Even then he did not lose touch with the outside world. Regularly, he mailed in his writing assignments to his instructors at UBC. He claims that most of his teachers and fellow students didn't even know he was no longer on campus, although they must have wondered why they never saw him.

Whatever else he did or did not do during this uncertain period of his life,

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Schroeder did complete his M.A. in 1971, came back to Canada and proceeded to build himself a house (he has his father's knack for carpentry) at Mission, B.C. But the worst was yet to come. Just as he was settling down to a more regular kind of life in rural B.C., he was arrested on a soft-drug charge and sentenced to two years in prison. Paroled after serving eight months, he brought out of prison the detailed rough notes for a book that was published in 1976 as *Shaking It Rough: A Prison Memoir*, one of the best and most popular "prison" books ever published in Canada. It has also been his most popular book to-date and is to appear soon in a paperback edition.

Today that grim part of Andreas Schroeder's life is well and safely behind him. Stretching out behind his desk, hands behind his head, logger's boots planted on a desk corner, he contemplates his past with characteristic honesty and candor, trying to make sense of those early "experimental" years. He knows that in a philosophical sense he was trying to reach for something higher during that time, perhaps for the forbidden. At the same time, he also knows that he was trying to escape from something, perhaps even from the inescapable self. He also knows that there is always a price to be paid, and that he is perhaps lucky that the price wasn't higher than it was in his case. He does, though, give the impression of a man who knows how to look creatively at every experience he has had, no matter how bleak or unpalatable it may have been at the time.

An air of personal stability and mature awareness — yes, you feel that as you listen to his rich flow of reminiscence and analysis. His fine facility with words is a pleasure in itself. By no means all writers are as articulate in conversation as he is. Almost too articulate. If it weren't for the man behind the words, so substantially there.

He lives contentedly these days with wife Sharon and their two small daughters, but you can tell that he will never relax into middle-class *Gemütlichkeit* completely. There will always be about him a bit of the outsider, the anti-establishmentarian. His wanderer's pack will keep hanging behind the door, ready if needed. He will never suffer fools gladly or turn a blind eye to hypocrites. Sharon, his charming mate, shares his passion for candor and unpretentiousness. She is an accomplished person in her own right, with an impressive record as an administrator who has set up new recreational programs for children

and adults in B.C. and Toronto. She is currently also working on a book that will cover the whole history of "parenting" in Canada.

When you ask Andreas Schroeder whether he still thinks of himself as a Mennonite or as a Mennonite writer, he does not dismiss the question as irrelevant or turn it aside with a demeaning quip. He turns thoughtful, chooses his words carefully. As he sees it, he has for some time now been describing "a fairly wide loop" in his life without intending to "close the circle" to his Mennonite past completely. He is intrigued by what he remembers about that past and finds he has much more "distance" on it now. Now he can even go to a Mennonite church and "be thoroughly interested in what I hear." But he also feels frustrated, and sometimes thinks of himself as a kind of Mennonite "tourist" who has been away from home in some exotic place only to find when he returns after twenty years that everything has changed, that those he left behind haven't "waited" for him. He can even admit now to being "jealous of my Mennonite background."

Schoeder claims that as a writer his background has given him "something to work off of." Where his early books

tended to be abstract and un-autobiographical, he has been steadily moving in a more realistic and autobiographical direction, especially since *Shaking It Rough*. The "micro-novel" *Toccata in D* that he is now completing is "shamelessly autobiographical," something he couldn't have done earlier. Without saying so directly, he gives the impression of a writer who is prepared to confront his deepest and darkest selves, willing to cut to the emotional bone of his personal experience no matter how much it hurts.

Perhaps a "wide loop" is the closest anyone can ever get to closing the circle of his past. One thing is certain, if honesty, integrity and disciplined talent can get a writer to come to terms fully with his past, then Andreas Schroeder will come as close as any writer to closing the circle. And perhaps even become a "Mennonite" writer in the process.

mm

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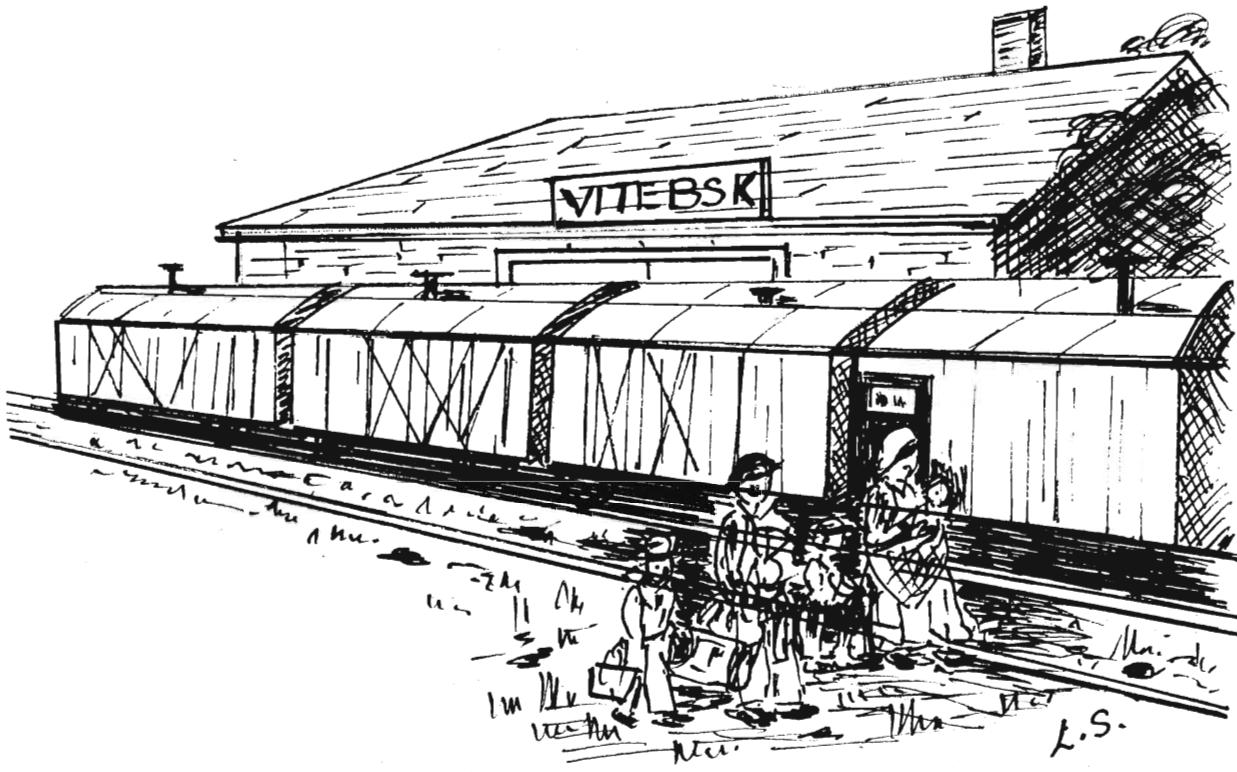


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# Exodus

## A Pioneer Episode

### 1874

by Rhinehart Friesen

We left our home on June 15, 1874. It was raining when we were driving away. We came to Abram Harders during the night.

"Stop crying, Margaretha." Jacob Friesen's words were gruff but he meant them to be kind. "We all agreed we had to move to America. There can be no turning back now."

"But I meant to put some flowers on my father's grave just one more time. Who will tend it now?"

"Your father's been dead for many years. Let the dead be. Think rather of the children and try to keep them warm and dry."

"But of all the things we'll never see again, why do I find it hardest to leave our graves?"

*June 16. Drove to the Nikolajewska Railway Station. Boarded the train cars at four in the afternoon.*

"So this is what a train looks like! Can it really pull all those cars at once?" Anna, Margaretha's sister, looked at the engine doubtfully.

"I saw one once before when I went to Mariupol with Jacob. It didn't have so many cars. But we need this many if we're all going to get on. Jake, stop hanging on to my skirt; the train won't come off of the track and bite you." Like all the other mothers, Margaretha was having a hard time keeping the older children off the track and at the same time reassuring the younger ones that there was nothing to be afraid of.

"I'm afraid of it too," Anna admitted. "It makes such strange noises. And such dirty black smoke. Help me wipe this cinder out of my eye. But hurry, the baggage is loaded and the people are starting to get on."

*June 17. Stopped for a few minutes at Kharkov at eight a.m. Stopped for a few minutes at Belgorod at eleven. Arrived at Kursk four-thirty p.m. Boarded another train at five-thirty. Arrived at Orel eleven-thirty p.m. Two children died this night, a daughter of Abram Loeppky, and Abram Groening's son.*

"I wonder how many more children

will die before we have decent homes and can take proper care of them again. I wish I could do something about Sara's upset stomach. Roasted buns soaked in coffee are hardly suitable food for a baby who really should still be nursing." Margaretha had breast-fed the older three children for well over a year. "Maybe it was the worry and confusion of getting ready to emigrate that made my milk dry up so soon this time. Peter and Jake, sit still or the conductor will put you off the train."

Jacob, too, was upset by the death of the two children. "It was mainly because of the children that we decided to leave Russia. How could we expect to make good Mennonites out of them if the Czar repudiated the Privilegium granted to our forefathers nearly 100 years ago? But if some of them die on this long trek it will still be better for them than if they stayed in Russia and lost their immortal souls."

Margaretha was too occupied with the children to want to get involved in

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another discussion of the Privilegium. She had heard about it so often in the past year or two that she almost knew by heart how it not only granted them land in perpetuity in Russia but also gave them complete freedom of religion including the right to teach their own language in their own schools, exemption from military service, the privilege of affirming rather than swearing oaths, and, in general, giving them almost complete self-government. It was these favorable terms that had induced their Dutch-Flemish ancestors to leave Prussia after living there for two centuries.

*June 18. Boarded the third train at four p.m. Stopped for several minutes in Karachev at seven and in Bryansk at eight-thirty.*

*June 19. Stopped at Smolensk at five a.m. Arrived at Vitebsk at nine a.m. We met our Aeltester (Bishop) and Cornelius Enns there. Boarded the fourth train at eleven. Stopped for several minutes in Polosk at one-thirty p.m. Arrived in Duenaburg (Daugavpils) at seven. Boarded the fifth train at eleven p.m.*

"Is there no end to this, Jacob? Day after day, train after train, being herded from one train to another like cattle on the way to market. I'd give anything just to be able to shoo the children out of the door to play by themselves a while."

"Try to be patient, Margaretha," said Jacob to calm her. "I agree it's unpleasant living on a crowded train. Just keep reminding yourself that we'll soon build another home for you."

"A big brick one like we left behind in Friedrichsthal? With a flower garden in front and a fruit orchard at the back? I've packed some pits of peaches and apricots and mulberry seeds for silkworms —"

"They say it's much colder where we're going," Jacob interrupted her. I hope we'll be able to grow at least the things we need to keep ourselves alive."

*June 20. Stopped in Vilnius at seven a.m. We went through a dark mountain. Went through another longer dark mountain. Stopped for several minutes in Wirbalen at two p.m. Drove over the boundary to the Prussian city of Eitkun at three. Boarded the sixth train at four. Stopped for a few minutes in Insterburg (Cheryakhovsk) at six. Stopped for several minutes in Koenigsburg (Kalinengrad) at ten in the evening.*

*June 21. Arrived in Berlin at four p.m. Our train was attached to another train which was carrying our other brethren and we continued our journey together at eight p.m.*



L.S.

"When you wish you were back home, remind yourselves why we left," Preacher Stoesz exhorted in an impromptu church service. "Do you want to see your sons marched off some day with rifles, to kill and be killed in a war that doesn't even concern them? Do you want your children to be taught Russian by Russian teachers in Russian schools? How could they then read God's Holy Word in Luther's precious Bible? Or how could you converse with them in your old age? Do you want the Czar's administrators to live in our villages and order our day to day living? How could we then maintain our wholesome Mennonite way of life?"

"Remember the Israelites. We are God's chosen people as they were. Their wanderings in the wilderness lasted forty years. Ours should not be much longer than forty days. We must not grumble over our hardships because they are much lighter than theirs were."

"Let us pray for His help and guidance in doing His will."

*June 22. Arrived in Hamburg at four a.m. and went into the Tehrhof. It was a six-storey building. We were in the sixth storey.*

*June 23 and 24. In the Tehrhof.*

"It sure feels good to be able to go for

a walk and get some exercise for a change." Jacob was sharing his outing with Erdman Penner.

"Let's not waste all our time walking," suggested Erdman. "I haven't had a drink of good beer since we left home. Let's go into this inn and see what it has to offer." After they had been served he continued, "No, it's still not as good as my own brew. I use the well-known recipe of our Aeltester. But then Mennonite breweries have had a very good reputation for hundreds of years whether we lived in Holland, Prussia, or Russia. I hope we won't lose the knack in America."

"I've joked with the Aeltester that his excellent brew makes it hard for us to obey his advice not to drink too much," responded Jacob. But remembering that Erdman had a reputation for doing just that, he changed the subject. "Our trek has hardly started but already many of the people are complaining and some are even suggesting we should turn back."

"They will have much more reason to complain before it's finished. But there's no way they can go back. They sold everything they owned at giveaway prices. What else could they expect

when everybody was selling and there was nobody to buy? But even if they had the wherewithal would they want to go back? Do they think more delegations to the Czar would induce him to change his mind and let us keep our rights?"

"No, Erdman, our abject petitions have made us the laughing stock of the Russians and even some of our more compliant brethren."

"Mind you, Jacob, our pleadings had some effect. The Czar relaxed his terms a little. He now is willing to let our young men serve their time in noncombatant ways like the forestry or medical services. But that will likely only last until the next war. And he offered the privilege of teaching a little German. What that means to me is that we'll still lose our way of life. The process of russification will just take a little longer."

"I'm sure you're right, Erdman. And so was Preacher Stoesz. There's no other way but to go on."

*June 25. Boarded the ship at six p.m. Sailed along the Elbe River.*

*June 26. Sailed on the North Sea.*

*June 27. Arrived at Grimsby at eleven a.m. Went into the custom house where we were examined. Boarded the train at*

*two and arrived in Liverpool at nine-thirty p.m. and immediately went into the Traktehr.*

"I sure hope America is cleaner than England. All those coal mines and factory chimneys make the whole country black."

"No, Margaretha, you needn't worry about too many mines or railroads. I just hope it isn't so much of a wilderness that we will have to live like the Indians."

"At least I hope we'll have enough water to be able to keep ourselves clean again. And food! We can't live on roasted Zwieback all our lives."

"There I have good news for you. Our tickets on the big ocean liner include meals."

*June 28-July 1. We were in the Traktehr in Liverpool.*

"Some people are buying things in Liverpool," said Jacob to Peter, "but I think the prices are too high. What do you say, Erdman?" Jacob and Peter were married to Erdman Penner's sisters so the three men were closely related, although not by blood.

"It's almost as hard to transport things from here as from home. They might as well not have sold their belongings in the first place. I'm hot and tired from walking around on these waterfront streets. Let's have a beer in this pub before going back to those crowded immigration accommodations."

"Erdman," said Jacob when they were comfortably seated, "you keep saying you might not stay in Manitoba. Why not?"

"Well, as you know, Aeltester Wiebe and other leaders came to me to help with the transferring of money and other business details. They thought the knowledge of finances and worldly things that I acquired during the ten years I managed that large estate near the Black Sea would be valuable to them."

"But you, too, have a growing family. Doesn't it bother you to think of little Erdman having to go to war some day? And aren't you afraid your girls will become russified and maybe even marry Russians?"

"Yes, I've considered those things. But the Czar has already relented considerably. Probably as the years go by the Mennonites who stay in Russia will reach a tolerable arrangement with the government again. What I intend to do is help you get settled in Manitoba and look around. If it is the paradise on earth that the land agents say it is, then I'll stay. If not, I can take my family back to our pleasant life on the estate."

"Yes, you became rich and they say the Czar was considering raising you to the gentry," Peter said, and added plaintively, "I worked myself into the ground for years and am still poor. Why did the five villages of our Berghthal Colony not prosper like the older colonies?"

"When our parents left the Old Colony in 1836 the problem was overpopulation. As you know, one stipulation the Czar made when he gave the Mennonites their land in 1789 was that the original holdings of 175 acres could not be broken up but had to be passed on to one heir or sold intact. In a short time this led to a class of well-to-do *Wirts* (landowners) and an ever-increasing number of poor landless ones who subsisted as well as they could as hired help, herdsman, and so forth. It was the poorest and least skilled of these landless ones who were encouraged to go to a rather poor tract of land to start a daughter colony. Although they received some advice and financial help from the Old Colony for several years, before they overcame their early disadvantages they had their own landless ones to support. Jacob was one of the relatively fortunate ones because he followed a family tradition of flour milling."

"But according to the Preachers we are leaving Russia for religious reasons."

"Of course you are, Peter. But doesn't the thought of everybody getting 160 acres and becoming a *Wirt* make it easier?"

"Do you think it's true that there is enough land that all our children and grandchildren will be able to get homesteads when they grow up?"

"I've looked at maps, and there seem to be millions of acres available."

"It sounds too good to be true," Peter closed the conversation as they stood up to leave.

*July 2. Boarded the big steamship at eight a.m. and began our voyage at one p.m.*

*July 3. Stopped at Queenston at ten a.m. and left at four p.m. Till Thursday we could see land or mountains.*

*July 4. A storm developed. Almost everybody got sick. In our family only our father stayed well.*

*July 5. Neither storm nor sea sickness have let up.*

*July 6. The storm has abated and most of the people got up again.*

"Oh Anna, even if you are my sister I'm ashamed to have you see the state

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things are in with us. I tried as hard as I could to look after the children even though I thought I was going to die from vomiting. But when the chamber-pot skidded across the floor and overturned, I just couldn't try any longer and gave up."

"You stay lying down until you feel better, Greta. I'll look after your family for you. What else are sisters for?"

Nearby Peter and Jacob were discussing the storm. "Captain Watts says he doesn't pray much and doesn't think his prayers count, but he thinks the prayer session Preacher Stoesz held below deck saved us from sinking."

"He explained to me," Jacob said, "that he was especially worried because this Spring they cut the *Peruvian* in two and lengthened it by inserting a piece. He was afraid it might break apart at one of the joints. He also explained how they compounded the engines, which makes them so efficient that they can carry enough coal that they don't need the wind at all."

The usually stolid Peter tried to be humorous. "Until they can do without the wind that causes sea sickness and the coal that makes all this smoke and soot, I won't be impressed by their progress or want to set foot on a ship again."

*July 7. More waves and sea sickness.*

*July 8. The water is very calm.*

*July 9. It is quite cold. Those who had a winter coat wore it. We saw icebergs during the night.*

*July 10. We stopped at the city of St. John in Newfoundland today at six a.m. and left again at eight. It is a nice pleasant morning. Now it is getting foggy and there are many icebergs. We travel very slowly and even stopped several times because of the ice.*

*July 11. A very pleasant day.*

"Greta, won't you please try to get up on deck today," Anna urged. "The fresh air will do you good and you might even be able to eat a little again. Remember, the food on the ship is free. It's wasteful not to eat it."

"Mostly flour soup and bread and butter! It's enough to take away your appetite even if you're not sea sick. But maybe I have more than just sea sickness. Come closer and I'll whisper what I think is wrong with me. I hope I'm mistaken and don't want everybody to know just yet."

*July 12. A two-year-old daughter of Peter Friesens died at eleven a.m. She was lowered into the water at one p.m. Arrived in Halifax at one-thirty p.m.*

"If it had been Sara who died, Jacob,

would have brought her to land to have a proper burial. I don't like the thought of the body in the cold water with smelly fish and slimy things around it. And no grave to remember her by."

"She had sores like pocks. Captain Watts was afraid if the authorities saw the body they would not let us land for forty days. Don't say any more about it. We don't want to be kept on the ship."

*July 13. Departed early in the morning at three o'clock.*

*July 14. A fairly severe storm today.*

*July 15. Arrived in Quebec at eleven p.m.*

*July 16. We got out of the big steamer and went into the immigration house.*

"Hold still, little Anna." Margaretha was combing the children's hair with a comb dipped in vinegar. "Let's try not to let anybody know what we're doing. I'm too ashamed to admit that we have lice."

"You needn't be concerned about them seeing you," Jacob declared. "I'm sure everybody has lice by now. What else can you expect from living so long on such crowded trains and ships?"

"I hate not being able to bathe or even wash properly. Many haven't changed clothes since we left home. What's the use if there's no way to wash them? And now that they're infested with lice I'd like to boil them all. But how can I? How much longer will we have to go on living like this, like animals?"

"Try to keep your spirits up, Greta. I know you're not feeling well. You're not eating any more than Sara is. Even though it's English food and not our kind, the dinner they gave us here was the best meal we've had since we left home."

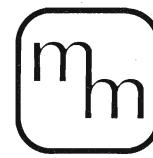
*July 17. Boarded a train at four a.m. and arrived in Montreal at six p.m. Got out of the train and went into the immigration house for a meal. We boarded the second train at nine p.m.*

*July 18. Arrived at Toronto at five p.m. Got out of the train and went into the immigration house. Cornelius Ginter's child died at ten p.m.*

*July 19. The child was buried at nine a.m. Also at nine a daughter was born to Peter Hieberts. Boarded the third train at one p.m. and arrived in Collingwood at seven. There wasn't room for all of us on the ship so we stayed for the night in the railway station.*

*July 20. After breakfast we went into the immigration house. David Friesen's daughter died during the night between the twentieth and the twenty-first.*

*July 21. Peter Friesen's son died at five in*



# mirror mix-up

## RATHE

HEART

## PUDIC

CUPID

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ARDOR



IN SPRINGTIME IT'S  
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ON VALENTINE DAY, IT'S  
TWO LIPS  
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Marlin Reimer of Rosenfeld won the December contest and was drawn from 48 entries.

Anne Barkman of Blumenort, was drawn from the 55 entries to the January puzzle.

A cash prize is sent to each winner.

Answers to December are pious, angel, prayer, candle, belief and peace.

Answers to January are clean, break, dream, unity, accord, and make none.

Now turn your attention to this month's puzzle.

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; the drawing to the right provides a clue.

A winner will be drawn from among the contest entries and the prize awarded.

**Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by February 20, 1984.**

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the afternoon.

*July 22. We had a funeral for the two children today.*

"Erdman, we've talked a lot about the privileges the Czar was taking away from us in Russia. What kind of new Privilegium have we been given in Canada?"

"As you know, Jacob, last year our delegates visited America, inspected a number of tracts of land, and discussed our immigration with Government officials. I have a copy of the letter they were given in Ottawa before they came home. I was just looking at it and noticed that it was dated July 23, 1873, exactly a year ago."

"I've heard of it. But what, exactly, does it say?"

"It speaks of the tract of land reserved for us and that every man can ask for 160 acres and of the reduced fares and other assistance they will give us."

"But what about our religion and the other things that the preachers are so concerned about?"

"I'll read you some parts. It starts with, 'An entire exemption from military service.' Then there is all this about homestead land. Then it says, 'The fullest privileges of exercising their religious principles is by law afforded to the Mennonites, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever; and the same extends to the education of their children in schools.' Then it also says we can make affirmations instead of taking oaths."

Jacob considered for a few moments, then said, "I wonder how long it will be before they, too, break their promises."

*July 23. We boarded the steamship at five p.m. and steamed away.*

*July 24. Sailed in nice weather.*

*July 25. Kornelius Ginter's daughter died at one p.m. We arrived at Sault Ste. Marie. The dead child was given to strange people for burial. We left at three in the afternoon.*

*July 26. Except for fog which we had during most of the day, this day was quite pleasant.*

*July 27. Arrived in Duluth at ten a.m. Got out of the ship and went to the railway station. Left at three p.m.*

*July 28. Arrived in Moorehead at seven a.m. We encamped on the bank of the Red River and waited for the ship.*

*July 29. Still on the bank of the Red River.*

Peter reported an interesting encounter. "He was an American land agent trying to sell land. I think he works for a railway company. He said we should go to Kansas or Nebraska because it's not so cold there in winter."

"But what about the freedoms we've been granted in Canada?" Jacob wanted to know.

"He said in the United States you don't need any special privileges. There is complete separation of church and state, and everybody has complete freedom of religion according to their constitution."

"I'd rather trust a person than a constitution, and presidents change too often," offered Margaretha. "Before the Mennonites left Prussia they dealt mainly with Katherine the Great. Now we are getting our promises from another woman, the great Victoria. I think I'd rather trust her than any president."

"So would I," agreed Anna. "I saw a big painting of Queen Victoria in the Immigration Building in Collingwood. In her black silk dress and white bonnet she looked *gemütlich* like a somewhat fat Mennonite grandmother. She looked as if we could trust her."

*July 30. At three p.m. several families got into a barge which carried the baggage and drifted down the Red River. Our parents and some other families stayed in Moorhead to purchase provisions and left two days later.*

*July 31. At four p.m. the steamship in which our people were travelling caught up with us and fastened our barge to the ship.*

*August 1. Stopped for several minutes at Frankfurt (Grand Forks).*

*August 2. Steamed along the Red River. August 3. Disembarked at a point adjacent to our land at eight p.m.*

"Poor Sara. She's so weak she can't even stand up any more. I'm afraid we'll soon lose her like all those other children. At least we'll have her grave to tend if we do."

"Maybe milk from the cow Jacob brought on the barge from Moorehead will help her," Anna encouraged Margaretha.

"I can never thank you enough for all you did to help me during the long trip when you had your own four children to look after. It's quite obvious by now that the reason my sea sickness was so bad is that I'm expecting again."

"In difficult times God's little blessings seem inconvenient, don't they? But it's just at such times that we should be most thankful for them. If so many die we must replace them so there will be somebody to carry on. That is God's will. But we mustn't waste time talking. There is so much to do. For one thing, we must find some way to deal with these mosquitoes. I don't see how we can live in this country with them."

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# observed along the way

by Roy Vogt



## At the Turn of the Year, 1983 to 1984

• We are now well into that dangerous year of Orwell, 1984, but it is memories of Christmas and the New Year that crowd into my mind as I resume this column. My diary begins with that hectic period just before Christmas.

• One of the sadder chores in the pre-Christmas season is to supervise examinations at the university. I feel sorry for the students who have to jump the hurdles that we have set before them. I always wish them skill, instead of luck, but I can see from the anxiety on some of their faces that luck is being counted on as a substitute for both skill and diligence.

We have been warned to look out for "professional" exam writers: bright students from outside our class who are hired to write the exam for a weaker student in the class. Apparently growing enrollments and larger classes have made this a major problem. I wouldn't recognize the faces of all the students in my class so it is not impossible for someone else to slip into their place at the examination table. Nevertheless, I gaze carefully at all of the faces. Most of them are familiar, but one student looks out of place. He seems too self-assured and I don't recognize him at all. I take special note of his face and name; when I mark his paper I will check whether it is considerably better than the marks obtained by that student in previous work. My fears turn out to be groundless: the student gets 25 marks out of 100, in keeping with his previous performance. Either he actually wrote his own exam, or he hired someone who is no better than he is. As we say in economics, the buyer beware!

• Much more enjoyable before Christmas are the numerous luncheons and open houses to which one is invited. I always feel uneasy about large parties but I usually manage to sneak into a quiet corner somewhere for a private discussion. I like to find out where other people have been recently, how they are coping with children, if and why they enjoy getting older, and whether they have any money left at the

end of the month. That usually fills up a whole evening. I particularly enjoy a luncheon honoring Frieda Unruh who, for ten years, has used common sense and numerous business skills to keep the *Mirror* from cracking. A "progressive dinner" one evening, which begins with soup in Fort Garry and ends with rhubarb pie and ice cream somewhere in the sticks behind Kildonan, takes all of us pretty close to the cracking point. Three evenings are spent in the country, in places like Neepawa, Cook's Creek, and Pinawa, where a full moon outside and a delicious meal inside cement bonds of friendship. Depending on whether the car starts later, that spell is not easily broken.

• A few days before Christmas are ruined by two things: a terrible loss by our Jets to the Edmonton Oilers, and a 24-hour bout with the flu. The Jets, however, make up for that loss by playing two superb games between Christmas and New Years, and the flu is ultimately accepted as a just punishment for trying to stuff too many peanut butter cookies into an aging body. Why has my wife become such an expert with heavy German-Ukrainian-Mennonite cuisine? One never gets too full on see-through British roast beef slices. The year's supply of Prishee that she made with a friend before Christmas will undoubtedly prove to be a major problem — especially since it is already clear that they won't last till Easter.

• This is also the season for travel, and a time when travel is most difficult. I am stuck for more than a day in eastern Canada after meetings of the Economic Council of Canada. I have always been curious to know whether Christian virtues like patience increase with age, and I know of no better test than how one copes with long delays in airports. Hell surely can hold no greater terror for the restless and impatient than an airport crowded with people unable to go anywhere. I won't reveal how I'm doing with that test.

• Christmas is somewhat lonelier this year than usual because others are travelling. Our son is in Cairo and assures us by telephone that he would sooner be home. It's nice of him to say

that. We didn't realize how spoiled we had become by his custom of cutting a tree for us in the sandilands forest. It was usually stately and tall, though last year we hurt his feelings by referring to it as a Christmas *bush*. This year I am forced to buy one, by the foot, which partly explains why it is so short that it fits into the trunk of our car. It is the first time that I bend down to put the crown on the tree.

Fortunately most of us are home, and we spend a very good Christmas with my parents in Steinbach. Christmas Eve is again highlighted by the candlelight service in our church, and later a simple meal of Werenicki at Rasputin's restaurant.

• The time around Christmas is largely spent doing what we enjoy most: reading, listening to records, skiing, and visiting. Books on modern Canadian art and a new recording of works by Pachelbel fill many enjoyable hours. The video set is used more than usual at home and \$2 movie nights lure us downtown. We especially appreciate movies like *Terms of Endearment* and *Ordinary People*, though my favorites for 1983 are *Fanny and Alexander* by Ingmar Bergman and *Educating Rita*. At home we also enjoy the London Symphony and Irmgard Baerg recording of the *Mennonite Piano Concerto*. Ben Horch has often told me of the tremendous power of the *Kern Lieder* (core songs) sung by Mennonites before they were swamped by kitchy American romance hymns, but I must confess that I didn't entirely believe him until I heard this recording. A live performance at St. John's College of Auden's Christmas poem, *For the Time Being*, set to music by Chester Duncan, proves to be very stimulating as well. There is also time in this season to read the interesting articles in my accumulated *Atlantic* magazines. Here is writing that you can dig your teeth into. I must confess that I also like reading the lengthy obituaries in our German paper, *Der Bote*, where one regularly encounters lives that were rich with hope, suffering, and courage — recorded simply but very movingly. Many of our people have a tremendous history.

• The New Year is brought in at the home of friends, where lively music and conversation keep us going to the wee hours. Without trying to analyze this too much, I am always intrigued by the response of human beings to music. Some march to it (the militants), some clap (the shy ones), some jump (the polka dancers) while others, like myself, are moved to see if they can float to it. Unfortunately, natural desires are not necessarily matched by ability; others have judged my "dancing" to be a classic case of courage over competence. Nevertheless, I can easily sit and watch while people jump to the polka, but put on a schmalzy James Last fox trot — to which I would never sit and listen — and my feet slide out ahead of me, and my poor partner is asked to trip along in the light fantastic. I know that there are Mennonites who frown on all this, but I have never been able to understand this fear of feet shuffling to music. We used to be afraid of billiard tables too, but now they are found even in our senior citizen's homes. If you want to live dangerously get involved in business, politics, or in academic disputes. Even church meetings can be dangerous, though I would not recommend that we prohibit them on that account.

• Most of the afternoon on New Year's Day is spent listening to a five-hour CBC radio program on George Orwell, which Eric Friesen helped to produce. It is a superb evocation of one of the great writers of this century.

• At precisely 4:30 p.m. on the first Thursday in the New Year I breathe a tremendous sigh of relief as I type the last word for an economics book on which I have been working for a long time. I am sure the writing was not nearly as painful as labour, but the delivery

of a completed manuscript bears some resemblance to the birth process. The good thing is that the "baby" can now be turned over to the publishers for nursing.

• A Monday evening in January brings Dr. Victor Peters and his son Karl to our church for an illustrated talk on their recent visit to China. This is an excellent supplement to the monthly letters that we receive from friends in China.

• Unfortunately, 1984 has already brought pain as well as joy. There is a death in the family of friends, and our aging parents are forced to conclude that they can no longer cope in their own home. Bethania will be a warm haven for them, and we are extremely grateful for its care, but it is nevertheless a sad juncture in their lives as well as in ours. I think of some lines by Rilke: "The

power of nature fades, the leaves fall; our earthly lives fade, we too are fated to fall; but let us be thankful that there is Someone who holds all this falling in His hands!"

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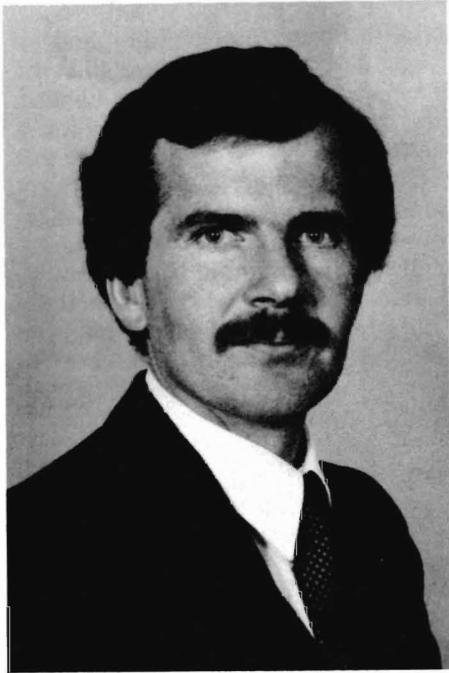
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# a personal word



## BERT FRIESEN

When Bert Friesen was still an undergraduate student in an honors chemistry student, a minister once asked him how he reconciled his faith with his interest in chemistry. At that time Dr. Friesen said he had no coherent answer, but since then he has come to see how scientific endeavor can contribute to life and health.

Dr. Friesen is currently director of the Winnipeg Rh Institute Plasma Fractionation laboratory, a high-technology bio-medical enterprise that saves lives through the manufacture of Rh immune serum and other blood products.

Manitobans know more about biotechnology than they know about Rh disease — one is the promise of the future, the other a dim memory of the past, if it is remembered at all. Yet it was the contribution of Manitobans to the treatment and prevention of Rh disease that is responsible for the establishment of the fractionation enterprise that Dr. Friesen currently heads.

The Rh work in Manitoba began in the 1940s, when Dr. Friesen was still a young lad growing up on his parents' farm near Kane. In that decade Dr. Bruce Chown, a Winnipeg pediatrician now age 90 and living in retirement in Victoria, began his efforts to save the lives of infants affected by Rh disease, a disease that occurs when a father with

Rh positive blood and a mother with Rh negative blood conceive a child with an Rh positive blood factor. After the first such pregnancy, the mother's immune system develops antibodies that "attack" the developing child in her womb.

The lab that Dr. Chown set up was involved in detection, treatment, prevention, blood group research, and related activities. In medical and clinical circles it established a formidable reputation for the quality of its work. Physicians such as Dr. Jack Bowman, who maintained a life-long interest in Rh disease and who is now chairman of the Rh Institute board, and Dr. Rhinehart Friesen were recruited to the work.

Bert Friesen says he was one of three high school graduates who moved to Winnipeg from Kane in 1965 to attend university. He graduated from his honors program in 1969, continued in a graduate program which he completed in 1971.

In 1971 Dr. Friesen said he faced a career choice — the opportunity to join the Rh Institute to work on the development of a new plasma fractionation technique, or become a research associate in cereal chemistry. He chose the Rh Institute and thus embarked on a career that made use of his scientific expertise and developed other skills as a manager and negotiator.

About the time that Bert Friesen was working on his master's degree, the Rh Institute decided to begin the manufacture of Rh immune globulin, the serum that prevents Rh disease, using a recovery method Dr. Chown had seen in Europe. The method, called column ion exchange fractionation, had the potential of recovering up to 90 per cent of the required antibody from blood plasma, a marked improvement over the then "traditional" method which recovered between 60 and 70 per cent.

Dr. Friesen worked with the institute in the construction of its first facility, a rather small structure on the Fort Garry campus of the U of M that opened in 1973. He worked on the new technique to develop it as a production process so that by 1977 the institute earned the preliminary license for its Rh immune globulin, an achievement that was followed in 1980 with final licensing.

During the 70s the "seed" of an idea was also planted to expand the institute's activities into the manufacture of other blood plasma products using the new technique. The idea grew, was

nurtured with the successful completion of a pilot study, and brought to fruition with the opening in the fall of 1983 of a more than \$5 million fractionation facility that will process up to 50,000 litres of plasma annually; it is one of three such plants in Canada.

Dr. Friesen said the opening of the new plant last year would never have occurred had it not been for the work of Dr. Chown, Dr. Bowman, and the successful application of the new technique and the successful licensing of the Rh immune globulin.

He also said that the science and technology that makes a new product possible must also be matched by an appropriate "political" environment. Dr. Friesen said that it was necessary to convince a small army of people in an endless series of meetings of the viability of the new method, of the feasibility of setting up a production facility for one blood product in Manitoba, and then of expanding the product line to other blood products, and so on. This is only the first stage, the next is to convince essentially the same people to put up the money to make the idea a reality. Dr. Friesen was involved in the negotiations leading to the maturing of the institute, while at the same time supervising the daily work of the staff. Considerable organizational, managerial, and diplomatic skills were acquired in this process.

It should also be noted that Dr. Friesen found the time to complete his doctoral program in chemistry, graduating in 1982.

In any discussion with Dr. Friesen about his work it is clear that there is a quiet sense of pleasure in his accomplishments and in what the Rh institute has been able to do in blood research and Rh disease prevention. At the same time, however, Dr. Friesen notes that the encouragement of many people has been an essential component in his career.

Dr. Friesen likes his work at the Rh Institute because he can work with his hands in the lab, apply his knowledge of chemistry to the solution of biomedical product development, and organize people to achieve objectives that result in the improvement in the quality of lives of Canadians.

Dr. Friesen and his wife, Lee, live in Fort Richmond with their three children and attend the Charleswood Mennonite Church.

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**review**

## An Important Book on a Radical Separatist

A review by Harry Loewen

Murray L. Wagner's monograph *Petr Chelčický* confirms the view that the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century were part of a medieval sectarian, free church tradition. While there is no discernible direct historical link between the Waldenses, the Bohemian Brethren, and the Anabaptist-Mennonites, there are significant doctrinal similarities between these and other late medieval reforming groups. Following A. Molnár, Wagner calls these medieval and Anabaptist reformation efforts the "first reformation" in contrast to the "second reformation" which includes Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. The radicals of the "first reformation" recognized the Bible as sole authority, tried to live by the Sermon on the Mount, emphasized a heavy cost in discipleship, stood against a secular world, and contradicted many "of the intentions of the 'second' or 'classic' reformation" of the mainline reformers (p. 158).

This study of the life and thought of Petr Chelčický (d. 1450s), a South Bohemian (Czechoslovakia) farmer, begins with an enquiry into the background of and possible influences upon the Czech reformer. Wagner argues that while Chelčický must be seen against the turbulent period of fourteenth and fifteenth-century Czech history and religious reformation drives, Chelčický pursued an independent course. Responding to the Hussites and Taborites who fought for Czech nationalism and independence, Chelčický advocated a sectarian New Testament Christianity similar to that of Anabaptism some seventy-five years later. Remarkably, this Bohemian farmer not only criticised the militant followers of Jan Hus, the Bohemian reformer who in 1415 died at the stake, but also took issue with certain

theological views and practices of the learned theologians and reformers of his time.

What did Chelčický and his followers believe? In Chapter IV Wagner deals with nine of Chelčický's literary works in which the reformer addresses himself to major religious-ethical issues. Chelčický rejected physical warfare, arguing that a Christian must fight spiritual battles only. He made no distinction between defensive warfare and military aggression. Chelčický also rejected the notion of a societal Christianity, the *corpus christianum*, which had developed during the Middle Ages. Christians, according to Chelčický, must obey civil governments, if they do not require behavior contrary to biblical precepts, but Christians cannot become involved in politics and governments. Chelčický was most critical of feudal lords and the powerful who oppress the weak and the working people.

Similar to the later Anabaptists, Chelčický believed that the "Constantinian merger of church and state marked the fall of the church" (p. 96). This Bohemian radical was a revolutionary, but "the only revolution Chelčický an-

nounced was the coming kingdom within the hearts and minds of those who have gathered apart from the world, guarding against its intrusion and abiding under the discipline of Christian love" (p. 99).

While Chelčický had serious doubts about the baptism of children and insisted that children be instructed in the Christian faith to make their baptism valid, he retained the practice of infant baptism. He also kept the belief that Christ was really present in Holy Communion. Like Luther later, Chelčický acknowledged only three sacraments, baptism, communion, and penance. He rejected purgatory, condemned the trade of indulgences, challenged the swearing of an oath and public courts to settle disputes, and believed that the church consists of local communities of believers who followed Christ in obedience.

Wagner lists 56 known works written by Chelčický but discusses only some of the major ones in some detail. The reformer's thoughts on such things as the love of God, humility, witnessing, conscience, and the seven cardinal sins — all dealt with by this radical — could have been summarized and discussed by the author of this monograph more exhaustively. As it is, the reader can only guess at what this reformer thought about these and other important issues.

This valuable and well-written book includes several photographs of pertinent Bohemian towns and places, copious notes at the end, a list of sources and literature cited, and a useful Index of names and subjects. No serious student of the radical reformation can afford to ignore this book.

Murray L. Wagner, *Petr Chelčický. A Radical Separatist in Hussite Bohemia. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History No. 25. Foreword by Jarold K. Zeman (Scottdale, PA/Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1983). Hardcover; 219 pages; price in Canada \$23.95.*

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## A Touching Mennonite Story for Young People

A review by Harry Loewen

The Swiss Volhynian Mennonites occupy a middle position between the Swiss-German Mennonites and the Dutch-Prussian Mennonites. The Swiss-German Mennonites emigrated in the 18th century to North America. The Prussian Mennonites migrated around 1800 to southern Russia. The Swiss Volhynian Mennonites originated in the Berne, Switzerland, region and eventually settled close to the Russian Mennonite colonies. Their story, as told by Solomon Stucky, a Swiss Volhynian Mennonite himself, is both interesting and important.

The Swiss Volhynian Mennonite beginnings go back to the Reformation period of the 16th century in Switzerland. Because of severe persecutions near Berne, these Swiss Anabaptists fled to and settled in Alsace, France, and the Palatinate, Germany, where they were tolerated because they were good farmers. In these areas they came under the influence of the Amish Mennonites.

In the 18th century the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites accepted an invitation from the Polish nobles to settle in the Volhynia area which was located between Poland, Austria and Russia. Here they were joined by other Mennonites from Prussia and elsewhere. When Volhynia became part of the Russian empire, the Mennonites of this region shared the fate of the Russian Mennonites. In the 1870s the Volhynian Mennonites, together with the Russian Mennonites and Hutterites, left for South Dakota and Kansas. Later some descendants of these people, including the author, moved to southern Ontario.

The book is a popularly written general history of the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement in general and the story of the Stucky family in particular. The story was thus written with a twofold purpose: To explain to young people what the Anabaptist movement was all about and to relate the family story of the Stuckys to the children and grandchildren of the author. Using a popular, simple style, the author tells his story chronologically, interspersed with the

experiences — which are portrayed creatively (fictionally) — of old and young members of the Stucky clan. The "eye witness accounts" of the various characters within the broader historical account make the characters' experiences within their societies and cultures immediate, realistic and believable.

Stucky is both objective and sympathetic with regard to the faith and life of Mennonites. On occasion, however, he permits his view of life to shine through his account. For example, Katharina as a young girl soon to be married wonders why she cannot express her happiness and joy in a dance as non-Mennonites do. Then she muses: "I think I understand, but sometimes I wonder why it must be so. I shall always know that God created the many coloured butterflies to dance in the sun, and in my heart I shall dance with them whenever I see them" (p. 94). And in a chapter entitled "The Book and the Plow", Stucky observes: "The call to mission is seen by most present-day Mennonites, not as a call to make converts, but to minister to human need, to alleviate human suffering, and to restore dignity to human life" (p. 186).

The book is well written, relatively free of misprints, and includes six pages of photographs, a map of the Volhynia region, and a chart of Swiss Volhynian Mennonite migrations.

Solomon Stucky, *The Heritage of the Swiss Volhynian Mennonites* (Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1981). Paperback; 222 pages; \$7.95.



### night falls

wanting to touch  
but never possess  
let me just study you  
forever  
let me caress  
your tones and textures  
let me shade your greys  
with a Muse's invocation  
and after this  
we shall dance  
dance to our colours  
let our hair breathe the wind  
o we shall dance  
and laugh like soft mad children  
we shall name the guilt  
and go beyond  
we'll walk the wire  
and never fall  
  
in the mist of dawn  
we shall straddle extremes  
we shall ride our dreams  
following the Sirens' call  
  
and when morning comes  
and there is too much light  
let us kiss and praise the night  
when we were one  
no unhappy partings  
only the sweet memory  
lingering on our lips  
throbbing through our limbs  
sustaining us until  
yet another dusk

Jeff Loewen

# New Books

*Bears for Breakfast: The Thiessen Family Adventures* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1983) by Nan Doerksen is an illustrated collection of stories for young children. It is available from Christian Press, 159 Henderson Highway, Winnipeg, Man. R2L 1L4 for \$2.25.

*Ein Leben für den Herrn: Biographie und Predigten von David Borisovich Wiens* (Herausgegeben von dem Historischen Komitee der Kanadischen Konferenz der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinden, 1983), written by the former editor of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* Erich Ratzlaff, tells the story of a well-known Russian radio minister. The book is available from the Christian Press for \$7.00.

*Swords Into Plowshares: A Collection of Plays About Peace and Social Justice* (Elgin, Illinois: The Brethren Press, 1983), edited by Ingrid Rogers, is an anthology of 27 skits and one-act plays on topics such as: Jesus as Prince of Peace, Early Anabaptist and Quaker Peace Heroes, The Threat of Nuclear War, Racial Prejudice, War Taxes, World Hunger, Human Rights Violations and others. The plays can be used as chancel dramas, programmes for meetings, and as dramatic witness to peace and justice concerns in many settings. Each play is followed by suggestions for discussion and activities related to the play's theme or focus. The book can be ordered through local bookstores.

*Slavery Sabbath War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1983) by Willard M. Swartley, raises questions of how individual scholars interpret the Bible and the methods they follow. Emma Richards, copastor of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church writes about this book: "In a highly readable style the author shows how opposite sides of each issue can be supported through the use of biblical texts. Through each chapter and issue, the reader is confronted with the question of how cultural setting and traditional teaching determine biblical understanding. This is an excellent resource for those who assume they accept the whole Bible and follow its teaching on these issues. Highly recommended." This 368-page paperback costs \$19.15 in Canada and can be ordered through local bookstores.

*What Would You Do? A Serious Answer to a Standard Question* (Scottdale, Pennsylvania and Kitchener, Ontario: Herald Press, 1983) is "A Christian Peace Shelf Selection" written by John H. Yoder of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana. From the backcover of this highly readable 119-page booklet: "As a peace-loving Christian, what would you do if someone attacked your grandmother, wife, daughter (or grandfather, husband, son)? — Grab a gun? — Shoot the intruder before the intruder shot you? — React with creative surprise, denying that the intruder has the last word in defining the problem? . . . Yoder explores the logic and illogic of a passive response. Viewpoints on the subject and examples from life are included ranging from Dale Aukerman to Leo Tolstoy, from Joan Baez to Tom Skinner. Faced with the difficult choice, what would you do?" The book can be ordered through local bookstores.

P.S. Did you know that there is a new Mennonite journal in existence? *Journal of Mennonite Studies* appeared for the first time in 1983. The first issue, 208 pages, includes some twelve articles on many aspects of Mennonite studies (for example, sociology, economics, history, political science, literature, geography, religion, etc.) written among others by Leo Driedger, Cal Redekop, Roy Vogt, John Redekop, Harry Loewen, Waldemar Janzen and Gerald Friesen. The *Journal* may be ordered by writing to: The Editor, *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9. Subscription price (one issue): \$6; two years (two issues): \$12; three years (three issues): \$18.

— Harry Loewen

## UNKNOWN HONESTY

"I've said it before and I'll say it again," the businessman lectured his competitor. "There may be many ways of making money but there's only one honest way."

"And what's that?" the competitor asked.

"Just as I thought," the first crowed. "You don't know."



## "FRONTLINE PEACEMAKING"

### Resources

- **HARRY HUEBNER;** Professor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College
- **"ROAD LESS TRAVELED";** an M.V.S. musical group
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## THEY HAVE TO BE GUILTY

In the otherwise well written review of *And When They Shall Ask* which appeared in your magazine of January 1984, there were two statements that struck me as odd. We read: "What is not at all discussed in *And When They Shall Ask* is the extent to which the Mennonites themselves are to blame for what happened during the Russian Revolution . . ." and later on: "There is a darker and less pleasant side to the Mennonite experience in Russia that must be explored if one is to be honest about Mennonites in Russia . . .". Strange, but not original statements.

I came to Canada in 1925 and since then from time to time have heard the same thought expressed by some of our people, but always by such who have not been in Russia but have grown up and lived under the benevolent protection of the Canadian realm.

In despair thousands of Mennonites, Catholics and Lutherans in 1929 came to Moscow with their families leaving all their worldly goods behind and pleading with the Soviet authorities to permit them to leave the land. For a brief time this stirred the conscience of the world. Our daily papers reported on these events. I lived at that time in Gretna, Manitoba. Some of the local citizens deeply sympathized with those refugees in Moscow. Money was being collected to help them. But not everybody shared such sentiments. Mrs. W., a Mennonite, who lived in a fine two-story house, when approached for a donation said: "I will make no contribution to this, otherwise I will make myself guilty too. God is punishing the Mennonites of Russia for their harsh attitude to their Russian employees. I will not interfere in this."

The United Farmers in Saskatchewan stated: ". . . if the Soviet government is threatening to deport them to Siberia it is probably because they refuse to obey the laws of the country . . .". Dr. Anderson implied that, "Mennonites were probably the only ones that did not wish to conform to the laws of the country . . ." (*Mennonite Exodus*, pp. 245-247).

This kind of attitude is applied not only to the Mennonites. When a woman is raped in our country there are always some individuals who suspect that she must have provoked the attack.

One of the individuals interviewed in the film *And When They Shall Ask* stated in essence that the Mennonites on coming to Russia had signed a document that they would not evangelize among the Russians hinting that this great sin bore later on evil fruit. But the historic fact is that such a document has never been signed and such a promise has not been asked of them nor has it ever been given. I have written on this in detail in *The Mennonites of Russia and the Great Commission in A Legacy of Faith* edited by C. J. Dyck and published by Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kansas. (Pages 171-191) "They should have evangelized the Russians" said the same interviewee. Why did the Mennonites of Canada and the U.S.A. not evangelize their environment when they had all the freedom for this they possibly could have wished? Why single out the Mennonites of Russia?

I have lived in Russia and not in seclusion. I dealt with our people for years, day in and day out and in areas where service and money was concerned. I have learned to know them. Many of us there were far from perfection but as a group the Mennonites of Russia in no way were less humane, less spiritual, less well meaning than any other Mennonite group I have come to know.

If anyone knows about "Their darker and less pleasant side" why not come out with it? I would love to read it. Why hint that something is being hidden by our history writers? I have read practically everything that has been written about the Mennonites of Russia. I read for instance Friesen's voluminous book more than once from cover to cover and with all footnotes. None of these writers, including me, has ever made an effort to whitewash our people. Those reports are truthful although they may be limited as everything else is that we human beings do.

Gerhard Lohrenz  
Winnipeg

## A DISSERVICE

I have noted the review by Ed Unrau of *And When They Shall Ask*. I would challenge his statement that "Mennonites were as blind to the vast poverty of the common people and the need for social reform as the nobility".

This statement prompted me to reread parts of the Autobiography of my Grandfather, Mr. C. A. DeFehr and would quote from his book as follows: "Through the years and through my many contacts with the Russian peoples, including the intelligentsia, busi-

ness people, or workers, government officials, the warm ministerium, and the Russia Churches, I have learned to love the Russian people. I had always tried to treat my workers so that none could justly have a cause against me. And during the time of the Revolution I found this to be the case."

On a farewell visit to his factory, then under Communist control, he says, "when the workers saw me, they left their jobs and came to me expressing their regrets that we were planning to leave the country. The departure from the factory and from Millerovo was a difficult moment for me."

The statement does a disservice to the effort of many "wealthy Mennonites" including my Grandfather, Johann Cornies who worked and contributed to the improvement of the lot, not only of their own people but the Russian people that they lived with.

Yours truly,  
B. B. Fast, M.D.  
Winnipeg

## CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

In the January issue of the Mirror, the managing editor reviews the film *And When They Shall Ask*. I am commenting on his open criticism of the Mennonites in Russia during the "Golden Age." It is surprising how people who admittedly were not present during the revolution seem to have all the answers (hindsight) of what the Mennonites did to (encourage?) the revolution. I am a third generation Canadian Mennonite also, but many relatives of mine suffered and were annihilated during that time. I have yet to hear of mistreatment of the native Ukrainian. I read of the great humanitarian work of Johann Cornies and his achievements were not confined to the improvement of the agricultural environment to Mennonites. His works indicate that they benefited all agriculturists in the Ukraine and beyond. All Mennonites were not wealthy. Many were very poor, but the general Mennonite community helped them resettle in other areas and create other productive Mennonite settlements. What else could they have done? Should they have divided their land, depriving their children and fellow Mennonites and given it to the natives? I see socialistic trend in our enlightened and educated Canadian Mennonites today, that might very well act as catalytic agents for an uprising against so-called capitalistic entrepreneurs in Canada. We see them marching side by side with groups financed by the Soviet Union, protesting against the action of our duly elected

government in Ottawa, in their handling of the armament question. Whose side would they be on if the invasion of Canada were at stake? This puts a very grave responsibility on their shoulders.

Let us give credit where credit is due. If we go back 100 years and criticize the action of our people in Russia, then we should also go back to 1780 and give credit to those who braved the trek from Poland to Russia and cultivated and worked very hard to build homes and turn the wild and unproductive land in the Ukraine into the granary of Russia. The descendants of those pioneers might not have appreciated those efforts to the extent that they should have. Have we not a similar attitude in Canada today among the descendants of the 1870s immigration and the 1923 remnants of the Russian revolution who were able to come to Canada?

I believe we should all be thankful for being able to reside here and even to become entrepreneurs (bad words) and to live and exist mainly as a result of their pioneering a totally uncultivated area and establishing a solid base, both in agriculture and business. Let us, therefore, not make mountains out of molehills with respect to the "Golden Age" in Russia, but rather concentrate on being faithful stewards of the gifts and talents that a Gracious God has, and is bestowing upon us.

A. J. Thiessen  
Winnipeg

#### RESPONSE TO LETTERS

*It was, and still is, the opinion of the reviewer, Ed Unrau, that the film **And When They Shall Ask** is a competently-made and worthwhile documentary. Indeed, more than eight-tenths of his review made this point. At the same time, however, he felt it necessary in the remaining portion of the review to point out that this film presents a particular point of view that may not stand up to more detailed scrutiny. For example, the film script repeatedly uses "golden age" to describe the Russian Mennonite experience, a choice of expression that is unfortunate and misleading because it has the effect of creating in the minds of the unwary an image of Mennonites living in simple peace and harmony in an earthly Eden. The use of "golden age" as a descriptive term also denies the existence of serious social and economic problems within the Mennonite community that robbed it of its internal unity and undermined its Christian witness. The film itself raises in an incidental way one such problem in the passing reference of one of the witnesses to the*

*way the Mennonites treated their servants.*

*An interpretation of history demands that the historian look at all the "facts" and to fit them into an interpretive pattern that is fair and honest. This means that the story will include both the pleasant and the unpleasant in its explanation of the experiences. The letters published in this edition clearly show that Mr. Unrau has stepped on a sensitive issue. Many Mennonites prefer to believe in the purity of the "golden age," rather than face the painful task of coming to terms with the problems and inconsistencies in their past that comprise what the reviewer calls the "darker side" of the Mennonite Russian experience.*

*The foregoing letters also imply that Mr. Unrau was not qualified to comment on the film because neither he nor his immediate relatives were part of the Russian experience described in the film. This is an absurd assertion in view of the film's stated objective. **And When They Shall Ask** was made so that those who did not live through the experience could in some vicarious, though inadequate way, share the experience and the emotions with their other Mennonite brothers and sisters who did. That the film was successful in this objective is noted in the reviewer's concluding comment where he says that for the first time he acquired a sense of what it felt like to flee.*

#### SEXISM DECRIED

*It never ceases to amaze me that in this day and age educated, well-intended people still believe that the presence of a husband gives credence and value to the creativity and hard work of women.*

*I was dismayed to read the final statement of "Preparing for Christmas in Mennonite Kitchens" (vol. 13 no. 4/83) by Mary M. Enns, which reads "From our kitchen to yours a very Merry Christmas and may your husband think he married the best cook in Christendom". This statement is inately exclusive and sexist.*

*It has been my experience as a social worker that society benefits the most when people, regardless of age, sex or race, are afforded equal value in life. It is in our day to day interaction with others that we subtly impart attitudes and impressions. A publicly distributed journal has an obligation incumbent with its place to not encourage or foster value-laden statements about social roles that give value to some people in society by the acquired good graces of others. Regressive statements like the*

one in Ms. Enns' article, although seemingly innocuous, reinforce inequalities between men and women.

Let me suggest that the writer could have written, "From our kitchen to yours a very Merry Christmas and may the important ones in your life think of you as the best cook in Christendom!" This allows for an appreciation of caring and love that transcends the limitation of societal roles.

Yours truly,  
Ionna Thiessen  
Winnipeg

#### WRITER'S RESPONSE

*Let me hasten to clarify a statement which was least of all intended to ring exclusive and sexist. Allow me also to accept with nary an outcry the 45 strokes with a wet noodle that is coming to me. Ionna Thiessen is absolutely correct in insisting on, what boils down to a fact, that not only women be identified with the culinary art and its base of operation, and, could not a man or a child get in there and bake up a storm? Indeed they can and they do. We were pleased when an elderly man called our office and he had not only read the article, but tried the recipe. And my favorite male child fixes the best salad I know of. His nine-year-old sister bakes sugar cookies for Christmas — the only Christmas baking done in that household. As for me, hopeless traditionalist, yea romanticist that I am, especially in the glorious advent Christmas season, my husband is just going to have to allow me sole queenship in my tiny kitchen, because I can think of no fonder duty than to bake Christmas cookies for family and a host of friends to come and taste. And so, from our home to yours — a very Happy New Year and why don't you get into the kitchen and make popcorn — together — and consider ourselves blessed to be together.*

Mary M. Enns

*(Incidentally, a typographical error crept into the recipe for Honey Cookies in Glazur. It should read **the secret of the glaze is to cook (not cool) it long enough**. . . . Also, any honey based cookie should be removed from the pan almost immediately after baking.)*

#### Nochmals, Missbrauchte Wörter

In seiner Kritik scheint VGD ein Kenner der deutschen Sprache zu sein, nicht aber der deutschen Mundart oder idiomatischen Ausdrucksweise. Er beanstandet folgenden Satz: "Zunächst will Lenin den tiefsten Frieden, um so im Trüben fischen zu können."

Ruhiges Wetter und Wellenstille (also

eine Art Naturfrieden) sind die besten Voraussetzungen für gutes Fischen. Der Satz ist inhaltlich und auch sprachlich richtig. Wem der "Friede" nützlich ist, hängt davon ab ob man Fisch oder Fischer ist.

Auch beanstandet VGD den Ausdruck "Aufklärung und Hetze", dass sie unmöglich zusammen gehören. Wenn "Aufklärung" auch "Licht und Klarheit" — also Wahrheit — bedeutet, so befindet sich in bewusster Hetzerei gewöhnlich auch etwas Wahrheit oder wenigstens Halbwahrheit, sonst ist die Hetzerei nicht effektiv.

Im gewissen Sinne misbraucht VGD selber einige Wörter. Er schreibt z.B.: "So entsteht Entstellung und, letzten Endes, Propaganda." Als ob "Propaganda" noch schlimmer sei als "Entstellung". Im Volksmund mag dem so sein, sprachlich aber bedeutet Propaganda nur "Werbung", also "Mission treiben" und hat mit Entstellung nichts zu tun.

Victor Peters

## Leserbriefe

Werter Editor,

Ich lese gerne den *Mirror*, die Beschreibungen von unseren Vorfahren, und von der Arbeit und Erfahrungen in der Mission hier und auswärts. Roy Vogts "Observed along the Way" lese ich und es ist mir auch wichtig, wenn Probleme, kirchliche und soziale, die uns Mennoniten betreffen, verhandelt werden. Der Aufsatz „An Alarming Mediocrity that's Settling like Mildew on Mennonite Congregations“ ist mir und vielen von den alten Lesern unverständlich. Wäre es möglich, dass dieser Aufsatz in klarer deutscher Sprache erscheinen könnte? —

Grüssend, Tina Berg (Winnipeg)

### (Zu „Unsere Aussicht“)

Dieses Gedicht gereicht dem Verfasser zu Ehren und Ansehen. Auch hochgradig Gegrommte unserer Gemeinschaft, ob sie wollen oder nicht, müssen diesem Gedicht das Prädikat „Vorzüglich“ erteilen.

Schreiber dieser Zeilen traf erstmalig anno 1926 auf Mennoniten, nicht in Gronau anno 1948, sondern an der Molotschnaja (Halbstadt). Diese Menschen, die ich dort antraf, habe ich bis dato, d.h. anno 1983 nicht vergessen und mit vielen dieser Menschen habe ich heute noch stumme Zwiesprache, obzwar deren Gebeine bereits Jahrzehnte in Sibiriens Weiten bleichen. Sie alle, ohne Ausnahme, würden mit mir einstimmig die Worte aussprechen: „Es ist zu schön um wahr zu sein, denn alle

Märchen beginnen mit dem Satz, Es war einmal!“

H. Schirmacher,  
Winnipeg.

### Etwas Zum Schmunzeln

Zu einem berühmten, als Original bekannten Pfarrer im Berliner Westen kommt eine aufgeregte Dame. „Herr Pfarrer, mit meinem Mann ist was nicht in Ordnung. Sein Gedächtnis muss gestört sein. Ich spreche und spreche mit ihm oft stundenlang über eine Sache, und zum Schluss merke ich, dass er überhaupt keine Ahnung hat, wovon ich geredet habe.“ „Det ist keene Jädchtnisstörung,“ brummt der Pfarrer, „Det is'ne jute Jottesjabe!“

Ich glaube, dass Plautdietsch schreiben auch eine Gottesgabe ist und es zu lesen ein Genuss ist.  
(eingesandt von H. Goertz)

### THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Several articles in Mennonite periodicals, including the *Mirror*, as well as some contributors to the discussion at the event itself, seem to skirt, but not face head on, the real issue. That issue, subtleties aside, is theological. But lest we relapse into the self-righteousness and intolerance of the past, it behooves us to note three things among others: 1) there are substantial theological differences within each of the two conferences; 2) there is wide agreement between many adherents of both groups, as the title of Dr. Walter Unger's paper acknowledges; and 3) there exists ambivalence on the part of some individuals regarding the basic Christian doctrine of salvation in Jesus Christ, as well as its Mennonite interpretation.

These observations were corroborated one week later at Hepburn, Saskatchewan, during the Conference of the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. Both events in my opinion were profitable; recognizing differences realistically can serve to facilitate further progress toward better understanding and appreciation.

On a drastically different topic, I found Victor Peters' Low German story about Gnadenthal immensely amusing (Dec. issue of MM). As one of the successors of the late Mr. Schaefer, I discovered that the first episode described by Peters was already a legend in Gnadenthal in the early 1950s. Characteristically the second episode was much less conspicuous in local folklore. On second thought, Peters' observation in his last sentence about the difficulties of being a teacher among our people, is not so "untheological" after all.

Wm. Schroeder, Winkler

## BETHANY IS SITE OF MENNONITE SCHOOL MEETING

The Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Saskatchewan was the site of the third biennial Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools (CAMS) Teachers' Convention. A total of 150 teachers and administrators from 15 Mennonite schools from elementary to post secondary participated in the Remembrance Day weekend convention. They came from as far away as Waterloo and Clearbrook. The main feature of the convention was a set of four workshops for teachers dealing with Anabaptism and the Curriculum, Creative Teaching and Ethics, Evangelism, and Communication Skills. The workshops were an excellent occasion for the sharing of ideas and concerns about private school education by teachers from various settings.

The keynote addresses by Dr. Ken Davis, dean of Trinity Western College in B.C. stimulated a lot of discussion by his treatment of the topic "Preparing Students for a Changing World." His key concept was that secular humanism (which was never clearly defined) pervaded our political cultural and even our religious life. He saw humanism particularly evident in the World Council of Churches. A question near the end of the convention characterized the uneasiness that many felt when someone asked how one could speak for two hours about the state of the world and never make reference to the nuclear buildup and militarism. While he may have been billed as an Anabaptist scholar it was clear that he did not share the tradition of Mennonites. Most participants agreed that Davis had raised vital concerns and had provoked a great deal of wholesome discussion.

For many the highlight of the weekend was the closing fellowship evening that concluded with a communion service led by James Dunn, director of Higher Education for the General Conference Mennonite Churches. Dunn led each day's devotions with an interesting mixture of personal testimony, biblical exegesis and exhortation.

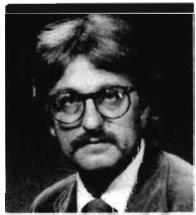
CAMS, the sponsor of this event, sponsors a CAMS Music Festival on alternate years. The next one takes place in Clearbrook, B.C. on April 27, 28 and 29, 1984.

*Report by Rudy A. Regehr  
Chairman, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate*



# manitoba news

**John Reimer**, of Grunthal, recently placed second in an international 4-H livestock judging seminar at the Canadian Western Agribition in Regina in early December. He is the first Manitoban ever to have placed among the top 10 winners. John is the son of Henry and Elizabeth Reimer of Grunthal.



**Jim Reimer** graduated with a Ph.D. in theology from St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, on November 26, 1983. Reimer is currently a theology professor at Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo, and also teaches at Toronto School of Theology and Waterloo Lutheran Seminary. He is married to Margaret Loewen Reimer, associate editor of the "Mennonite Reporter" and they have three children; Christina, Thomas and Micah. He is a son of John and Mary Reimer of Aldergrove, B.C. and son-in-law of Al and Anne Loewen of Altona.



On Sunday, Nov. 6, 1983, **Randy Klassen**, formerly of Kelowna, B.C., was ordained to the ministry of the Berghaler Mennonite Church of Altona. He will serve as assistant to the pastor, Rev. Walter Franz.

The Rural Municipality of **Rhineland** became 100 years old on January 8, 1984. A centennial committee has been established by the reeve and council. Residents and former residents are asked to submit interesting photos or stories to the municipal office.

A study conference on leadership and authority was held at CMBC in Winnipeg, January 29-31, 1984. Six major presentations were given.

Mennonite Central Committee Executive Secretary **Reginald Toews** has announced that he is not available for reappointment at the end of his current three-year term. That term ends January 1985. Toews was originally appointed to this position for a two-year term, then agreed to extend his term for a third year. Announcing his decision to staff and the MCC executive committee at meetings here December 16 and 17, Toews noted that his three years as executive secretary "have been good ones." He notes that "there are many factors that go into a major decision like this. However none of them have to do with my confidence in MCC or in the staff. Rather they have to do with me and my sense of God's calling in my life." Reg Toews is a native of Steinbach, Manitoba.



**John C. Klassen** has been appointed conductor of the Mennonite Community Orchestra for a two-year period. The orchestra is planning a spring concert for April 15.

Delegates at the **MCC (Manitoba) annual meeting** in November voted to construct a new MCC building for itself and for MCC (Canada). The present building is inaccessible for handicapped individuals, cannot be expanded and has limited parking facilities. Construction plans await approval of the MCC (Canada) annual meeting. Delegates also discussed refugee concerns; and decided to send a letter of approval to Prime Minister Trudeau regarding his recent peace initiative.

The peace and social concerns committee of MCC (Canada) has issued a statement questioning the testing of the cruise missile in Canada. The statement declares that "The cruise missile is a serious matter in the world today —

because the cruise missile has changed the way that nations think about war — It flies close to the ground, and can strike with deadly accuracy . . ."

The arrangement whereby five alternative schools operate within Calgary's Public School System will not be continued after the current school year. The five include a Plains Indian, a Hebrew, an I. L. Peretz, and two Christian schools. School Trustee elections on October 17 changed the composition of the Board from 5-to-4 in favour of alternative schools to 7-to-2 against. During the election campaign, a group calling itself "Save Public Education," argued vigorously that schools based on religion or ethnicity generated social intolerance. Proponents of pluralism in education say that the public system, in spite of its supposed neutrality, has an ideology which isolates children from their particular value communities and then assimilates them into the larger society, and that God, if he matters at all, is to be restricted to the personal areas of life.



**Bill Unruh**, former Winnipeg resident and University of Manitoba graduate, has been winning honors for the quality of his work in theoretical physics. In recent months he has won the 1983 Herzberg medal, the E.W.R. Steacie prize, and an E.W.R. Steacie fellowship. The latter two are awards that given in memory of the same man but are quite different. Of the two, the fellowship is the most valuable in that provides funds so that the holder may relinquish his teaching responsibilities for up to two years and spend the time in research. Dr. Unruh was one of four Canadians to win the fellowship this year. After graduating from the U of M, Unruh went on to earn his master's and doctoral degrees at Princeton and is currently at the University of British Columbia. The thrust of his work is the study of the effects that quantum mechanics and gravity have on each other, including such things as the "Black hole" phenomenon.

## COMING EVENTS

- February 24-25:** Annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba.
- February 27-March 2:** Institute for Church Ministries at MBBC.
- March 2-4:** Seventh annual "Peace-it-Together conference", CMBC, registration \$15.
- March 16:** Benefit dinner for Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School.
- April 14:** Mennonite Community Orchestra Spring concert.
- April 27-29:** CAMS Choir Festival in B.C.

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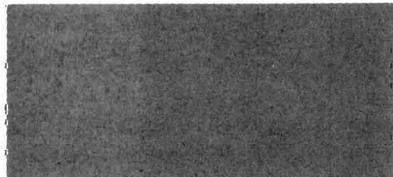
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# zur diskussion



## Wie stehen wir zur politischen Ideologie?

Man hört in Kanada oft, dass zwischen den beiden grossen Parteien des Landes wenig Unterschied besteht. Mennoniten wählten früher meist Liberal, weil diese Partei, zusammen mit der CPR, für die Auswanderung aus Russland verantwortlich zeichnete. Man hat eine Dankwahl abgegeben, eine gut und billige Pflicht, wie man glaubte.

Das liegt aber schon weit zurück. Wir sind inzwischen wohlhabend geworden und beteiligen uns allgemein in der kanadischen Gesellschaft. Auch in allen politischen Parteien stecken Mennoniten, oder mindestens Kanadier mennonitischer Herkunft.

Einerseits ein ganz natürlicher Vorgang. Aber wieso sollte eine religiöse Gemeinschaft, die durch Märtyrium und eine schwere Geschichte gewandert ist, so ohne weiteres sich in alle Himmelsrichtungen verteilen, sobald es um ideologische Fragen geht? Gibt es wirklich keinen Unterschied?

Dazu hat unsere Bruderschaft sich nicht klar geäussert. Politwissenschaftler, wie etwa John Redekop, geben zu verstehen, dass alle Parteien etwas Gutes an sich haben (und wahrscheinlich auch das andere), aber zu einer Stellungnahme kommt es nicht. Stimmt es aber nicht doch, dass es tatsächlich Unterschiede gibt, und zwar solche auf die wir als Mennoniten und Christen besonders aufmerksam sein sollten?

Nur ein Beispiel: Im *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, das von unserem Parlament ausgearbeitet wurde, stehen manche Sätze, die wir mit ganzem Herzen unterstützen können, besonders deswegen, weil diese Sätze auf das Wohlergehen unserer Mitmenschen zielen, und besonders auf solche, die Unrecht leiden oder gelitten haben.

In anderen Sätzen dagegen blickt eine andere Perspektive durch, nämlich die des eigenen Rechts. So z.B. bei der Frage des Rechts über Privateigentum. Wie kommt es, dass Mennoniten —

auch unter der Politikern — dieses Recht so hoch einschätzen?

Wenn man daran denkt, wie unser Land bevölkert wurde und wie die Einheimischen oft besiegt wurden, und noch dazu darüber, dass diese wunde Frage noch sehr offensteht, dann scheint es doch unerklärlich, dass ausgerechnet Mennoniten sich hier in eigener Sache engagieren sollten.

Von den Indianern (und nicht von Karl Marx) müssten wir vielleicht noch einmal lernen was eigentlich schon in der Bibel steht, dass man die Erde, Land und Wasser und Luft, nicht kaufen kann. Aber man verschreibt sich allzu leicht einer Ideologie, die lehrt, dass alles feilgeboten werden kann, dass alles geschäftlich zu erledigen ist. Wer von einer solchen Ideologie ausgeht, der wird letztenendes willig sein, seinen Kindern eine verpestete Erde zu verkaufen.

Ohne notwendigerweise Sozialisten zu sein, müssen wir das Gemeinwohl und die Rechte des andern an erster Stelle behaupten. Eine entartete 'konervative' Ideologie, die von einer geschäftlichen Selbstsucht angetrieben wird, sollte für Mennoniten nicht gut genug sein.

mm

## PLAY WRITING COMPETITION

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre announces a play-writing contest with a prize of \$500 for an acceptable original play on a Mennonite theme in either German or English, preferably written by a Mennonite. Deadline for submission: June 1, 1984.

The successful play will be produced by WMT in its 1985 season.

For further information contact: Dr. David H. Riesen, 422 Kingston Crescent, telephone 247-6268 or Mr. Alfred Wiebe, 73 Smithfield Avenue, telephone 338-7263.

# Erzählung aus dem Leben

Eine wahre Geschichte erzählt von Mary M. Enns

Wie auch viel andere Mennoniten in Manitoba stammen Jacob und Sophie Dueck aus Russland. Er wurde 1910 in Trubezkoya und sie 1915 in Schoenau, Sagadowka, geboren. Nach ihrer Hochzeitsfeier im Jahre 1933 wohnten sie zehn Jahre lang in Sagadowka. Diese Heimat mussten sie während des Zweiten Weltkrieges verlassen, als die deutsche Armee 1943 ihren Rückzug aus Russland antratt. Mit ihren Kindern, Heinrich, Lili und Helmie flohen sie nach Polen, wo sie im Wartegau ein Jahr blieben.

Hier wurde Jacob Dueck in die deutsche Armee eingezogen und nach Krachow verschickt. Der briefliche Kontakt war selten und es war eine schwere Zeit, aber Sophie hatte es gelernt, ihr festes Vertrauen auf Gott zu setzen. Mit den Verwandten ging nun die Flucht nach westen weiter. In der Nähe von Lenzen fanden sie Zuflucht in den Arbeiterhäusern bei einem alten Schloss.

Die Ankunft von Russischen Soldaten machten der Ruhe ein jähes Ende. Diese nahmen sofort Haus und Hof ein und die Familien mussten sich anderswo Unterkunft suchen. Doch war auch etwas Gutes dabei, denn Sophies Schwester konnte durch Nähen etwas verdienen und Sophie selbst hüttete die Kinder. Zudem blieb ihre erste Sorge die Frage, ob ihr Mann noch am Leben wäre und wo.

Als der Sommer zu Ende ging, setzte man den Trek fort und sie kamen nach Berlin, wo Auswanderungspläne umgingen. Vom Russischen Kommandanten kam aber der Befehl, dass alle Flüchtlinge in Brandenburg nach Russland zurückmussten — ein furchtbarer Schlag!

Die kleine Gruppe machte sich heimlich auf den Weg zur Amerikanischen Zone, wo sie in einem alten, zerstörten Haus Unterschlupf fanden. Jetzt begann eine viermonatige Hungerszeit, in der Eltern und Kinder auf der Suche nach Nahrung gingen. Ihre Kenn-Karten konnten sie nicht vorweisen, denn darauf stand ja, dass sie aus Russland stammten. Sie suchten also, borgten, tauschten und bettelten, in Kälte und Gefahr. Eine Frau teilte mit ihnen ihre Brotkarte.

Im Jahre 1946 kamen sie in ein Durchgangslager für Flüchtlinge. Sechs Monate später erschien Peter Dyck als sie in ein anderes Lager in Berlin, Lichtenfeldwest, versetzt wurden. Un-

geduldig warteten die Flüchtlinge auf die Möglichkeit, für das Schiff 'Volendam' gemeldet zu werden. Eines Abends rief Peter Dyck alle Familienvorsteher, jetzt meistens Frauen, zusammen. Er musste es ihnen melden, dass das Schiff 'Volendam' schon geladen sei und bald abfahren würde. Weil sie aber in der Russischen Zone waren, könnten sie nicht mitkommen.

Doch auf das Weinen und Beten der Betroffenen kam ein baldige Antwort: wieder würde man bei Nacht und Nebel entkommen. Ganz leise wurden die Flüchtlinge in die amerikanischen Lastwagen geladen und am Bahnhof in Frachtwaggon gebracht. Kinder sollten schlafen, damit kein Geräusch zu hören sei. Endlich waren sie am Hafen und konnten die 'Volendam' besteigen.

Drei Wochen dauerte die Überfahrt nach Argentinien, wo sie zuerst ein paar Wochen in Zelten verbrachten, bevor sie mit dem Zug nach Paraguay weiterreisen konnten. Hier herrschte Revolutionsunruhe. In Ascuncion, wo sie Herberge fanden, hörten sie fortwährend das Schiessen der nahen Soldaten. Sollten sie dann nie mehr von der Kriegsangst befreit werden?

Endlich bekamen die Duecks ein kleines Häuschen in Gnadenthal im Chaco. Das Leben ging weiter, aber ohne den Vater war es doch keine vollständige Familie. Sie wussten allerdings, dass der Vater noch am Leben sei, aber wo wussten sie nicht. Das hat aber das MCC ermittelt, nämlich, dass Jacob Dueck sich nach dem Krieg in England befand, in Yorkshire. Dort erhielt er Briefe von seiner Frau und so kam er dann auch, auf der 'Charleton Monarch' nach Paraguay.

An einem Sonntagmorgen machte sich Sophie mit ihren Kindern auf den Weg in die Kirche. Da nähert sich ihnen ein 'buggy' und, zu ihrem grossen Erstaunen, sitzt gerade vorn dran der geliebte Gatte und Vater. Lili, jetzt elf Jahre alt hatte ihren Vater vier Jahre lang nicht gesehen, kannte ihn aber sofort. Der junge Heinrich wurde fast krank vor Gemütserregung. Die ganze Gemeinde nahm Anteil an der Freude der Familie.

Zehn Jahre lang kämpften sie nun mit den Schwierigkeiten der Landwirtschaft

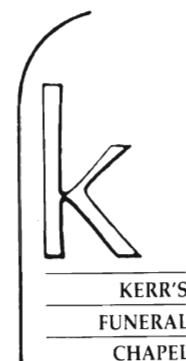


im Chaco. Sie pflanzten Erdnüsse, Baumwolle, Manjoc, Hirse oder auch Kaffir. Recht schwierig war es mit den Ameisen und den vier Zoll langen Heuschrecken. Aber der Segen blieb auch nicht aus, sie bauten sich ein Haus von selbstgebackenen Ziegeln und, im Jahre 1949 kam noch ein Sohn, Jacob, dazu.

Heinrich indessen, erwachsen und verheiratet, hatte Gelegenheit nach Canada zu ziehen, von wo aus er für die Auswanderung der ganzen Familie sorgte. Sie kamen 1958 in Winnipeg an und besorgten sich auch gleich Arbeit, Sophie in Salisbury House und Jacob auf einer Hühnerfarm in North Kildonan. Heute leben sie im Ruhestand, schulden- und sorgenfrei und dankbar einem lieben Himmlischen Vater, der sie auf unvergessliche Wege geführt und nie verlassen hat.

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# Auls enn Gretna MCI Revolution Utbroak

von John C. Neufeld

Daut ess so auls daut enn dee Weltgeschichte jeit. Desto wieda enn dee Vergangenheit sich dee Jeschichte toojedroacht haft, desto meea jeroat dee enn Verjaetenheit. Oba dee waut ditt Erlebniss enn Gretna mettjemoakt habe, woare daut nie verjaete.

Ditt wea enn dee dartje Joare auls wie mett "Bennetbuggies" foare onn ferr teen cent dee Stund schwoa obeide, wann wie Jletj haude aewerhaupt Oabeit to finje.

Daut Schooljoa wea too enj. Daut Schoolfast wea uck aul jewäse. Dee measchte fonn dee featisch Schiela weare aul no Hus jefoahre. Enn dee oole "Biscuit Box" (soo nand maun donn dee oole School) wea daut tsiemlich stell jutowerde. Bloos dee Dean onn fieleicht noch een haulwet Dutsent Schiela weare noch enn dee School. Onn nich aula fonn disse weare däm Dean siene baste Frind. Ditt wea dee latste Nacht ferr aulem. Morje tiedich sull daut no Hus goane.

Dee Klock schloag twalw onn aules wea mustje stell. Uck dee Dean haud sich aul too Ruh bejäft, lag emm Bad onn schnoatjt sich eent. "All quiet on the western front," haud hee noch soo bie sich jedoch auls hee ennschleep.

Uck "Knups" Tiesse, eena fonn dee Schiela (maun nand am soo wiels hee eene knupsje Naes haud), wea aul emm sawenden Droom auls daut mett eenmoal enn däm Dean siene Atj eascht lud piept onn donn daewad auls wann dee School unja Beschuss fonn eenem Schlachtschepp wea. Tiesse foa opp ut dem Schloap, sprunk no dee Dää, moak dee fäsechtich oap, onn auls hee Pulwa ritjt donn roopt hee enn dän Gang nenn, "Revolution, dee Roode sent hiea." Hee moak schwind dee Dää too onn wull aufluare waut doa noch koame wudd. Oba aules wort stell onn doa bleef "Stille nach dem Sturm."

Aum näjsten Morje saut Tiesse bie dem Dean aum Freestecksdesch, onn hee froag dem Dean soo een bät mett een schmustajet Jesecht, "Na waut wea daut doa enn diene Atj ferr een Jebaula?"

"Du horch eenmoal," saed dee Dean too Tiesse, "auls daut Dintj doa ferr miene Dää losjintj, donn foa etj unja dee Datj onn etj hab dee Nacht äwa nich eenmoal rutjetjijt". Auls hee ditt saed tijtj hee Tiesse soo verdachtich fonn dee Sied aun.

Joahre ferjinje. Tiesse onn dee Dean haude sich aul seit dem Iuden Aufscheid nich mea jeseene. Tiesse haud sienien ejnen Husstaund jejrind onn haud eene Famielje fonn fief Tjinja. Nu pasead daut aun eenem scheenen Sommadach daut sich dee Dean mett Tiesse onn siene Famielje tooptroff.

"Tjinatjes, nu koamt moal schwind aula häa. Nu woa etj junt moal fetalie woo schlajcht jun Paupe wea", säd dee jawaesne Dean; onn am strolde mau soo dee Oage daut hee nu Moal mett Tiesse aufraetjne kunn. Onn nu fertald hee waut sich enn dee latste Nacht enn dee M.C.I. toojedroacht haud.

Dee Dean wea gaunts enn dem Gloowe daut Tiesse donn eenmoal ferr Joare dän grooten firecracker ferr siene Dää loosjeloate haud, onn noch doatoo soo eena dee doa gaunts mordsjemaes piept.

Oaba Tiesse docht soo bie sich, Wann du denkst daut etj daut jedoane hab dann bliew mau doabie. Etj sie onnschuldich, oaba meist wensch etj mie daut etj uck soo eenen gooden Biefaul jehaut haud.

Tiesse haft Joare lang fersocht ditt Jeheemniss too leese, onn daut haft sich rutjestalt daut dee Übeltaeter sich enn dee scheene Province Manitoba fer-kroape habe. Noada well hee nich doaopp enngoane. Hee well uck tjeen-em MCI er dän scheenen Läwensowend ferdoawe. Hee fersejchat onns daut hiamett ditt Kapietel aufjeschloate ess onn woat uck soo dee Vergangenheit äwajäft woare.

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## The Russian Experience is a Grand Fabrication

*The persecution of Mennonites in Russia never happened. Any stories of pillage, rape, murder, and other atrocities are just a fabrication designed to keep Mennonite anti-communist passions at a fever-pitch.*

Any "historian," Mennonite or not, writing an article enlarging on the foregoing would be dismissed as a lunatic. The majority of Mennonites would not even bother to take such ideas seriously because they would see the absurdity of denying the facts of history — historical events that many themselves participated in.

Yet in a quite different context, Mennonites and others are denying that a certain historical event ever happened and are dismissing any supporting historical information as a "fabrication." The "event" in question is the Jewish holocaust of the Second World War.

In 1983 Canadians read a succession of news articles reporting how James Keegstra, an Alberta high school teacher, was able to deny before class after class the facts of the holocaust. Once his unusual curriculum was discovered, he lost his job. During the same months Canadians read how the national Social Credit party refused to suppress the anti-Semitic spirit in their midst, Keegstra being only one of several leading party members with such views.

One of the Manitoba news stories arising from the Keegstra affair was an article in the *Free Press* describing the extent to which literature denying the Jewish holocaust is being distributed in Manitoba, particularly in its southern region. The article quoted several southern Manitoba Mennonites who, if their quotations were reported accurately, indicated at least some agreement with the idea that the Jewish holocaust never happened, and that any historical information describing the death of six million Jews is at least an exaggeration if not a fabrication.

The Keegstra affair, however, appears to be only the most recent and visible example of anti-Semitism, something that has been an unpleasant part of Western civilization for centuries. Until the past few years, the literature denying Hitler's "final solution" to the Jewish question was written by people who were generally dismissed as "crackpots." Within the past half-dozen years books have been written by people with impressive credentials, and thus the material is literate, appears to be well-researched, and is therefore more credible.

The first thing the anti-holocaust propagandists do is deny the event itself — the Nazis never killed six million Jews. Then when someone points out that non-Jewish historical sources of good reputation (in particular, captured Nazi documents), show that Jews indeed died, the propagandists counter with some rather absurd arguments.

One of these is the assertion that while there may have been some deaths, millions of the "missing" Jews were actually hidden by other Jews and continue to be hidden by a worldwide network of Jews. The Nazi documents are described as forgeries.

This then leads quite naturally into the "plot theory" which contends that there is a worldwide conspiracy of Jews to fabricate the record of the holocaust to enhance the survivability of Israel as a nation. This plot theory assumes that Jews are in control of all major world political institutions, either directly or indirectly, and control the world's information media. When asked for tangible evidence, the anti-holocaust propagandists have none, except the circumstantial evidence that arises by conveniently interpreting current events.

Even the eyewitness testimonies of those who survived the death camps are dismissed — the "survivors" are part of the plot, being paid to lie with funds from the vast pool of Jewish wealth.

The purpose of this editorial is to point out that the foregoing arguments can also be used to deny the Mennonite experience in Russia earlier this century. First, the event never happened. Then one can say that the stories are a fabrication of our church conference leaders to ensure that our anti-communism remains fervent. Finally, the eyewitness accounts are also part of the conspiracy. Indeed, in an extreme moment, one might even suggest that some of the money used to produce the film *And When They Shall Ask* was used to buy the "right" story from the eyewitnesses whose words were recorded with great emotion.

In other words, if the Jewish holocaust didn't happen, then our own Russian Mennonite experience didn't happen either.

**Ed Unrau**

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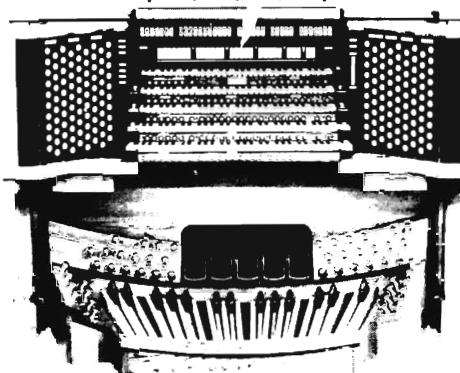
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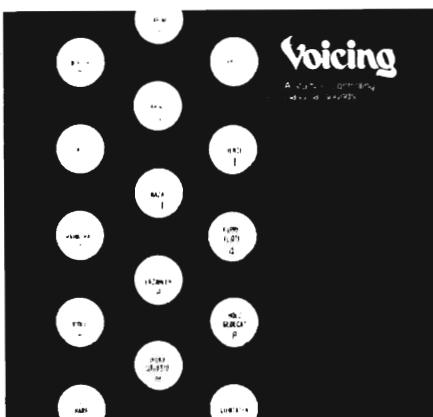
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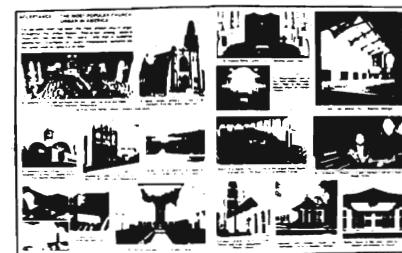


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