

mennonite mirror

volume 14/number 2

october, 1984



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Fore Word

This edition of the *Mirror* was in its last stages of assembly over the Thanksgiving weekend. We can be thankful we live in a country which allows us to publish our own magazine and through it to maintain our own ethnic and/or religious identity. In more than half of the countries of the world this would not be allowed. But there is always a specific reason for thanks, in fact it's a reason that is there each month, because once again the articles and advertisements and the production details came together at more or less the right time to result in a magazine that's on schedule. At the same time, however, there is always a moment of worry just as the "camera ready" copy is released for printing: "Are we sure we have caught all the major errors?" Usually there aren't any "big" errors, and for that we are grateful.

This edition opens with an article by Al Reimer in which he describes the 60th anniversary celebration of the Thomashof in Karlsruhe. The experience gave him a new appreciation of the people involved and the unique work of this institution. It has a record that is enviable for its diversity and continuity.

Perhaps one of the most moving events for Mennonites on tour in the Soviet Union occurs when members of a tour group meet relatives they have not seen for decades, or may not ever have seen. Sig Enns explores this in his article on his tour of the Soviet Union this past summer, noting that he was impressed at the numbers of relatives who came long distances to see members of family from Canada.

John Friesen began a three-part series on "civil disobedience" in the June issue that specifically dealt with his participation in an anti-nuclear peace march in Toronto. In that first instalment he outlined his reasons for participating in such a march and describes the events at the beginning of the protest. In this issue he describes what happened next and how it felt to be arrested. He observes that official authority in Canada can be just as ruthless as in any dictatorship, the only difference may be that it is not as savage here.

Also in this issue is a translation into Low-German of a story by William Busch from Jack Thiessen, complete with drawings, for the enlightenment and amusement of our readers.

Not every article is mentioned here — in fact there are six items not mentioned; find them, read them, and you may be impressed.

The cover: A photo of a sculpture by Hungarian artist Margit Kovacs, entitled *Now Which is the mother, and which the daughter?* Roy Vogt refers to the artist in his *Observed Along the Way*.

Late acknowledgement: The four photographs on the September cover were taken by Harold Jantz, currently editor of the *MB Herald*, who attended the Mennonite World Conference.

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Subscriptions cost \$10 for one year, \$18 for two years; send your address label along with a cheque payable to Mennonite Mirror, 203-818 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, R3G 0N4.

mennonite
mirror

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Mennonite Mirror

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Notice of Annual Meeting

Mennonite Literary Society, Inc.

Place: St. Regis Hotel, 285 Smith St., Winnipeg
Oak Room

Time: Friday, November 16th, 1984, 6:00 p.m.

- Agenda:
1. Dinner
 2. Brief business meeting
 3. Musical Entertainment
by Heidi Geddert, soprano

Price: \$12.50 per person

All persons interested in the Mennonite Literary Society, Inc. and in the publication of the *Mennonite Mirror* are warmly invited. Please call the office, or complete the form below, by **November 6th** if you plan to attend.

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I plan to attend the annual meeting on November 16th, 1984, and enclose \$_____ to cover the cost of the dinner.

Please return this form by November 6th.

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• WINNIPEG MENNONITE COMMUNITY Orchestra has announced a fall concert for 8 p.m., Oct. 27 at Young United Church. The concert will feature works by Russian composers Liadov, Glazunov, Prokofief and Mussorgsky. Guest soloist is Andrew Klassen, 20, a music student at the University of Manitoba, playing the Glazunov Concerto for saxophone. Also featured will be a Russian choir and bass soloist performing the coronation scene from Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov. Conductor is John C. Klassen.

Let All You Do Be Done In Love: at the Thomashof

By Al Reimer

Walking rapidly to the Mannheim Hauptbahnhof on a chilly May morning to catch the 7 a.m. train to Karlsruhe, I wonder why I'm doing this. Will it prove to be one of those confused, boring days spent milling about among strangers, smiling politely, pretending to have a good time? Anniversary celebrations of institutions have never been my favorite cup of tea. Thomashof? I've barely heard of the place. But I couldn't turn down the hearty invitation from my good friend Gudrun Harder (wife of my writer-friend Johannes Harder) to attend the 60th anniversary of the *Bibelheim der Mennoniten Thomashof* on the outskirts of Karlsruhe. Before her recent marriage, Gudrun had been the director of the home for seven years.

I needn't have worried. The day turns out to be anything but wasted. I am met at the Karlsruhe station by Gudrun's son-in-law Hermann, who whisks me in his pickup truck down to the suburb of Stupferich where the opening plenary session is to be held. As a member of the choir Hermann has to be there early for a final run-through. We are the first ones there, but other choir members begin to arrive and soon the rehearsal under conductor Adolf Schnebele is underway, complete with the brass ensemble Germans love so dearly. I sit near the back listening, impressed with the discipline and thoroughness of the rehearsal.

Later, with the church beginning to fill up, I am introduced as "Professor Dr. Reimer from Canada" to a smiling, comfortably rounded gentleman who promptly leads me to the front pew to sit among the dignitaries and speakers. I find myself squeezed in between the burly form of Herr Eberhard Pilz, an official of the *Evangelische Landeskirche* in Baden and one of the speakers, and Professor Dr. Gerhard Hildebrandt, an elegant, gray-haired man in a

dark, well-cut suit, who is a professor of Slavic Studies at the University of Göttingen and also slated to speak.

As the proceedings warm up and speaker after speaker takes the pulpit I sit back and enjoy the enthusiastic oratory delivered in caramel-smooth German. As the service draws to a close I suddenly wonder whether the silver DM coins in my pockets will be enough for the collection bag. The only alternative is a 100 DM note, and that is a little rich for a visiting Canadian scholar who has to make his funds last over a six-week stay in Germany.

After the service I wait for Gudrun, whose smile lights up scores of faces around her as she greets old friends.



Gudrun Harder, director of Thomashof, 1975-82.

Then we squeeze into her car for the drive to Thomashof and lunch. I listen while Gudrun, in her animated way, tells me more about Thomashof to add to the things she has already given me to read about the place where she says she spent some of the most rewarding years of her life.

Gudrun and I barely get into the Thomashof before she is literally borne away on a tide of friends and former colleagues into the depths of the home, while I am left to float among the shoals of guests. I wander around inspecting the premises while keeping an eye out for the place where lunch is being served. The crowds are becoming thicker and livelier. I'm struck by the number of children and teenagers (dressed in jeans as they are all over the world). Around a long book-display table people are balancing soup bowls while chatting with friends or just browsing among the books. Beyond the table I spot the dining hall and queue up quickly for my bowl of soup and *Brotchen*.

After lunch I join the guided tour of the Thomashof conducted by Frau Dyck, the wife of Director Bernd Dyck. The facilities are impressive, with the rooms for senior citizens neat and just large enough. Everything appears tiptop and tidy in the proverbial German way. The elderly people—women mostly—who are on display look friendly and dignified and seem not at all bothered by the many prying eyes. Outside on the lawn patio a lively flea market is underway. The day is bright and clear and surprisingly warm now, and everybody is having a relaxing time waiting for the afternoon session to begin.

The Thomashof began in 1710 as a small farmstead carved out of the woods near Karlsruhe. In time it became a wayside inn for wood haulers. In 1894 it was converted into a regular hotel, with a social hall for dancing and parties

added to it a few years later. In 1918 David Horsch, a Mennonite from Lamprechtshof, purchased the place, added a third story and turned it into a *Kurhaus*, a spa or resort hotel.

Horsch sold the hotel in 1924 to a group of prominent Mennonites headed by Christian Schnebele of Worms, Michael Horsch, Hellmansberg, and Johannes Wiebe, Starnberg, for 70,000 gold marks, on condition that it would henceforth be used to further the Christian cause, primarily among Mennonites. In June, 1924, the Thomashof was formally dedicated as a Bible school and rest centre for the Mennonites of south-western Germany. David Horsch was appointed chairman of the board and remained at that post for the next 20 years.

Through the decades the Thomashof has served a variety of Christian purposes and functions. Early on, during the winter months, Bible courses were offered to lay persons, young people, teachers and ministers. The leading instructors were Christian and Adolf Schnebele Sr., but there were also other well-known Mennonite instructors like Professor Benjamin H. Unruh, Jacob Kroeker, Abraham Braun and Samuel Gerber.

From its inception the home displayed a healthy ecumenism by opening its doors as a social centre and meeting place to pastors and others from nearby non-Mennonite churches and organizations. In the summer months the Thomashof was fully utilized as a recreation centre and vacation home, as it still is today to some extent. There were also daily worship services for the guests and a chance for members of various congregations to fellowship and to spread the gospel.

Thomashof also became in its early

years the permanent headquarters and rest home for the Mennonite deaconess nursing service which had been established by the Baden Verband (union of congregations) back in 1904. Here the sisters could spend their vacations or come to recuperate after periods of strenuous service or illness. In the course of time a female supervisor was appointed for the sisters. While this type of service is now on the wane due to a lack of volunteers, these dedicated deaconesses have done sterling work over the years. With the order celebrating its 80th anniversary on this occasion, four of the six surviving sisters were able to be present at the afternoon session. One of the two bedridden sisters has a record of 70 years of service as a nursing deaconess.

From its second year, part of the Thomashof was set aside as a home for elderly people. At first only five, then from ten to twelve persons were cared for in the home. Today there are around 30 senior citizens living at the Thomashof. Since 1960 the Bibelheim has also served as the regular sanctuary for the Karlsruhe-Thomashof Mennonite Congregation, with the result that the congregation has taken an even more active interest and role in the activities of the home.

Originally consisting of only one three-story building, the Thomashof has grown into a well-planned complex of wings and buildings. In 1956 a second building — *Waldheim* — was opened as a dormitory for the nurses, but in the mid-70s it was renovated as a home for handicapped persons. The assembly hall was renovated in 1963 and again in 1979-80, and in 1966 *Gartenheim* was added for permanent residents, as well as a new kitchen and dining hall. Under construction at the present time is a resi-



Waldheim, Thomashof.

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dence for the director and his family.

In the early years the Thomashof went through some bleak periods financially, with the board of directors often forced to pay bills out of their own pockets. At one stage, in fact, the home came close to being sold because of the chronic lack of funds. During World War II Thomashof was commandeered as a hospital and not released back to its owners until 1946. Somehow there were always enough German Mennonites of sufficient faith, energy and devotion to keep the home going. Today Thomashof is largely self-supporting and efficiently operated by a council representing the 22 Mennonite congregations of the Verband.

The afternoon program is less formal and less serious than the morning service. There are informal speeches and reminiscences, interviews, and an amusing "behind-the-scenes" skit by younger members of the staff. It consists of broad comedy delivered with much amateurish gusto: high school stuff, but engaging, even touching. There are several "interviews" with Lutheran pastors and other non-Mennonite leaders whose association with Thomashof goes back many years. A large man in a wheelchair eloquently describes how

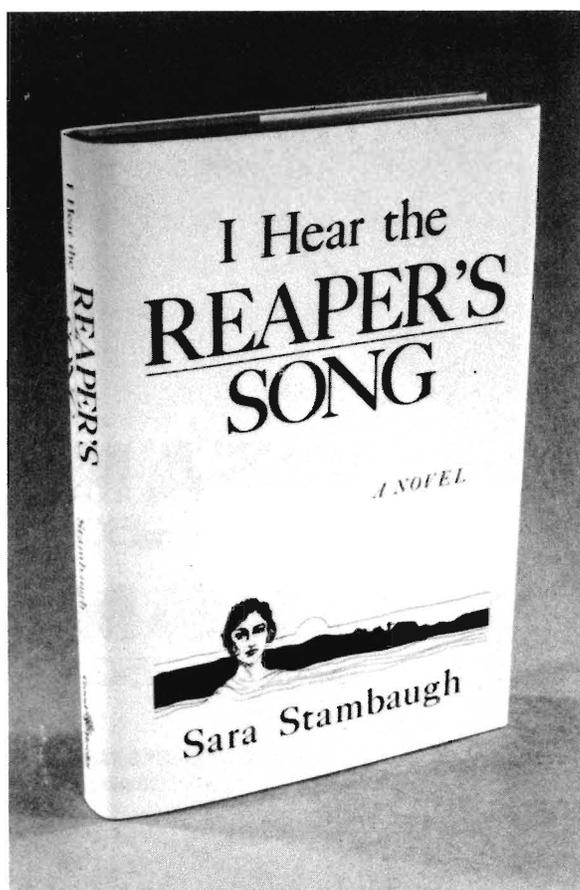
handicapped persons in the home are able to live useful, Christian lives.

They make me feel good these people. I have the same feeling here that I have with Mennonites I meet when I go to the Soviet Union, a feeling of having been transported back in time to a world where life is simpler and the people friendlier, more spontaneous, less com-

plicated. These German Mennonites have the same warm, open manner and direct approach to others. They greet each other with such unfeigned joy, shaking hands and embracing vigorously. So aware of each other they are, reaching out, touching, caring, beaming affection and love in all directions. Can it be that we Canadian city



The "Flohmarkt" at the 60th anniversary of Thomashof.



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— John L. Ruth

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Mennonites have lost some of that personal warmth by encasing ourselves in hard shells of social sophistication and class consciousness?

I feel genuine regret when it's all over and the people begin to depart. I chat briefly with Bern Dyck, the director of Thomashof. Not only is he justifiably proud of the Home's past but quietly optimistic about its future, including its ecumenical readiness to serve various churches and groups whether Mennonite or not. "Our lives and service in Thomashof will bear fruit so long as we use as our guide the biblical motto 'Let all you do be done in love,'" he has written in his most recent report of the home.

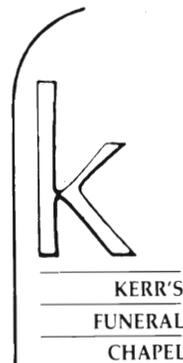
I believe him. This is the kind of place that not only welcomes believers but makes them. And where else could one attend a Mennonite church festival where representatives from other non-Mennonite churches would be invited as friends, supporters and colleagues to help celebrate? When I am finally reunited with Gudrun Hader, who has been a guest of honor throughout the day, I thank her most sincerely for inviting me to be part of these heart-warming proceedings.

On the train back to Mannheim I re-

flect on the day and on the people I heard and met. Why did these strangers, albeit fellow-Mennonites, make such a strong impression on me? It wasn't just the Thomashof as an institution, impressive though it is, but the people who embody it to whom I feel myself so powerfully drawn. An impression is growing within me that European Mennonites, with their much longer traditions and more turbulent history, have developed a maturity and flexibility of approach to their faith and institutions, as well as a tolerance and compassion for others, that we Mennonites in North America cannot always match. These people seem to have humbler expectations for their lives and a more down-to-earth concern for the rights and needs of others. History and various oppressive regimes have taught many of them the hard lesson of survival, but that does not seem to have robbed them of either hope or the instinct for sharing whatever blessings have come to them.

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And They Came From Afar: Some Reminiscences of a Tour to the Soviet Union

By Siegfried Enns



During a recent trip to the Soviet Union by a group of 40 Mennonite travellers hosted by Roy Vogt, John R. Friesen and Al Reimer, our group formed one dominant impression that will not soon be forgotten. And that is the number of relatives who came from afar to show up in Yalta, Zaporozhe, Tashkent, Moscow and Leningrad as the tour group arrived in each of these cities. In some instances this involved better than a thousand miles of travel for the relatives by train or plane, and in one instance a shorter distance by car.

All in all some 34 relatives and friends came to visit 19 members of our tour group. It was heart-warming to witness each new encounter. In almost every case it was a meeting of people who had never before seen each other in their lives. Yet a ready feeling of kinship surfaced so quickly in the short day or two that relatives were able to be together that all felt as though they had known each other much longer. The language of communication of necessity had to be German or Plautdietsch (except for Louisa Loeb and Gerhard Dyck who speak Russian fluently). Where linguistic competence failed, however, empathy, love and friendship helped fill the unspoken thoughts.

It was in the lovely city of Yalta in the Crimea where the first relatives arrived. They were cousins of Hedi Epp of Winnipeg. Almost everyone in the group got to meet this warm young couple either in our hotel or while swimming in the Black Sea. These meetings provided an opportunity for picture-taking and sharing of experiences.

There was within the group a real sense of search for ethnic heritage as well as the desire to visit with friends and relatives. In addition, there was in most of us a sense of adventure in just travelling and being in that far away

country, that historic Russia we had heard and read so much about. The train ride from Kiev to Zaporozhe, for example, under a full harvest moon on a warm August night across the steppes of the Ukraine, surely fostered such a feeling of heritage.

On the train there was much visiting from compartment to compartment (we had a whole coach to ourselves), and singing late into the night along with numerous glasses of hot tea served with lemon by a most congenial and friendly train attendant ("Chai" was also all we could buy on the train). The thought and sentiment came to many of us that this could very well be the same railway track which almost 60 years ago had carried a very different train full of emigrants — our parents — out of this country they had once loved. In fact some of us must have travelled this route as children, for there were seven or eight of us in the group who were born in the Ukraine. As we reflected on these things we could not help but speculate how very different each of our own lives would have been had our parents not been able or perhaps not chosen for whatever reason to emigrate in those long-ago years.

One of the members of our group, Gerhard Dyck of Winnipeg, was born and lived until the age of 12 in the city of Zaporozhe. On this trip he was accompanied by his 23-year-old son Karl. For Gerhard to be able to walk along the streets of Schoenwiese — now part of the large industrial city of Zaporozhe — and to talk about his childhood experiences lent a certain immediacy to our pilgrimage. Here in Zaporozhe we swam in the legendary Dnieper River with its marvelous sandy beaches, crossed over the mighty dam (which once caused the flooding of the Old Colony villages of Einlage and Krons-

weide) to the Island of Khortitsa where in the old Mennonite cemetery we found several tombstones with familiar names. On the Island we also visited a recently opened museum of the highest calibre which displayed the history of the area, including the time of the early Tartars, the Cossacks, and yes, even an interesting corner devoted to the "Mennonite Period" before the Revolution. The curator was pleased to tell our group from Canada how he had himself assisted in removing the Hoepner Monument from Khortitsa for transport to Steinbach. And of course we had to have our pictures taken under that famous 700-year-old Oak Tree in the town of Khortitza.

Excitement in our tour bus was sustained throughout a day of travel from the former Old Colony area, which included Khortitza and Schoenwiese (the Schoenwieser Gemeinde was the original German name of the First Mennonite Church of Winnipeg) to the former Molochnaya Colony. En route Al Reimer provided us with a most informative historical perspective of the region. Olga, our tour guide for this portion of our journey, did not at all mind sharing the mike with Professor Reimer. She was able to list the names of the several villages such as Tiegengagen, Muntau, Halbstadt, Ladekopp, and others. While some of them, like Ladekopp, have disappeared in an urban sprawl, here and there we were able to see traces of Mennonite Wirtschafthen. In Halbstadt we were ushered into the old Heinrich Willms residence, which is now being used as a cultural centre. We also walked on the grounds of the former *Maedchenschule* and were even permitted to view the classrooms inside. Oh sweet yesterday! How quickly have flown the years, how dra-

matically so much has changed!

In Tashkent the largest contingent of relatives greeted our arrival even though it was well after midnight. Part of the group of twelve were relatives of Jake and Kathy Hildebrand, Rudy and Lena Williams, and Elvira Epp, all from St. Catharines, Ontario. The rest were relatives of Dr. Peter Enns, of his wife Selma and her brother Siegfried Enns, of Karen and Wally Dirks, and of Dr. Erwin Penner and his wife Anna, all of them from Winnipeg.

The next day was Sunday and most of our tour members were eager to attend the quite modern Baptist church in Tashkent. The large church was completely filled. Our group was given a place of honor in the choir loft alongside the excellent local choir. With the soloists using microphones, the Baptist choir made the church ring with their spirited, mellifluous singing. Our group was asked to sing some En-

glish hymns, so we became an instant, unrehearsed choir under the capable direction of Roland Sawatsky of Winnipeg, who also sang the solo parts. Our spontaneous choir gave creditable renditions of Amazing Grace and Lord, I Want to be a Christian. It was a stirring moment for us, and the Russian congregation seemed to enjoy it too. Rev. John R. Friesen of St. Catharines and Rev. Abe Neufeld of Steinbach conveyed greetings from Canada in German with Rev. Traugott Quiring, a Mennonite minister in the church, giving a simultaneous translation into Russian. It happened to be a baptismal service, which made it an even more special occasion. There were at least four sermons, all in Russian, and the service lasted from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., but the interest of the con-



Editor's Note: These three fine poems were inspired by the recent group tour of the Soviet Union described elsewhere in this issue by Sig Enns.

Yalta

Ladies and gentlemen
this is your tour guide speaking.
Trust me. I'm a good guide.
I know this place, these people
are my friends.

We hide our dead
dream well, smile, let you pass.
No one asks to be loved. Look
closely, you may recognize
a scarred face
a brother you thought you lost.

Don't be afraid.
You won't wade in blood or touch
torn limbs with your smooth hands.
All that is past, guns packed away
streets swept clean of betrayal.

Look, wheatfields
cherry orchards, to your left
please note the vineyards, to your right
the Black Sea.

You'll be quite safe. The air
is still, guaranteed to heal old wounds
and the sea, if you trust it, the sea
holds you like a lover. Don't be afraid.

When the sun sets, the city
glitters for your pleasure. Here
on the dark beach, the moon
a large translucent pearl
trails pale glory just beyond your reach.

Ladies and gentlemen
I promise satisfaction.
Sweet wine, our best
bread and songs. Please
come this way.

by Sarah Klassen

Duty free

I'm not home yet. Before the next flight
I must buy booze
six-stringed balalaikas, anything
to fill space between the place I go to
and the place I leave behind.

I've emptied my bags, doled out
good clothes, phrases, mundane
details dragged half around the world.
Absurd gifts. In return I'm offered tears
stories dredged from cold forests
dense with death. No, I say
they're beyond my means, they won't fit
my luggage. I decline frail shells
assorted remnants of stillborn dreams.
How would I get them home?

These shops are air-conditioned.
The girl speaks my language, she knows
me, I've been here before. She shows
me gold
shaped into chains and flowers.
Fills my hands with amber.

— s.k.

Samarkand market

I've cornered her
against yellow melon mounds
God's image propped on a wood crutch.
She leans into the shade
with rough grace her right hand
fends off flies. She lights a cigarette.

The red and blue cloud-patterned
dress hangs limp
around the useless leg.
A ragged cloth covers her head.
She squints into the smoke.

From behind piles of dried apricots
I take aim, centre the furrowed forehead
eyes raised in cool defiance
of the fierce sun. I make no sound
scarcely move. She doesn't know
she's caught, trapped
by an alien from a strange land.

I'll display my prize
this frayed queen of the market
splendid against white sheers
music maybe, soft candlelight dancing
lightly on her creased cheek.

— s.k.

gregation never flagged. Even though most of us couldn't understand the sermons all of us felt richly blessed by this unique worshipping experience.

Peter Enns was met by three cousins (two were brothers of Dr. Peter Mierau in Winnipeg). My sister Selma and I had no difficulty finding that mystical feeling of kinship with our late mother's brother's two daughters, our cousins. It was good to visit their comfortable apartments, to get to know Uncle Jasch Reimer, and to visit our aunt's new grave (she died at 84 about a month before our arrival). We also enjoyed having them along on a short tour of the city and have them share a meal with us in our hotel. How quickly the two days sped by and how grudgingly we said goodbye to relatives we had just met the day before.

In Leningrad Martha Wiebe of Winnipeg was joined by her uncle, a retired veterinarian. The last visitor to meet us was a cousin of Wally and Mimi Reimer of St. Catharines. Their cousin had travelled almost 1,000 miles from Mursk just to spend two days with Mimi and our group.

Like other tour groups who have preceded us to this fascinating but at times frustrating land, we will long remember our experiences in the Soviet Union. Those of us who had relatives to meet will have them to remember as an added bonus. One member of our group — Arkie Wiens of Winnipeg — had the double pleasure of meeting his cousin Hans in the Soviet Union and then welcoming him as a guest (with his wife) here in Canada shortly after we got back. We found that we were well served by our local guides in the various cities we visited, and will also remember them — Yuri in Yalta, Kate in Budapest, Sasha in Kiev, Olga in Zaporozhe, and Nina in Leningrad. Above all we shall remember Ludmilla, our most competent and accommodating Intourist guide who remained with us throughout. We will also long remember each other, the forty of us from various parts of Canada who became a tightly knit family of friends and who hated to part from each other when it was all over. We will also remember the competent and good-humored leadership of our tour hosts.

Already the Winnipeg members of our group, joined by three from Ontario, have held a reunion and exchange of pictures and slides, and we look forward to a more complete reunion and sharing of memories in future.

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mirror mix-up

APER



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Let's be filled with
GRATITUDE, not



There were 31 entries to the September Mix-up, and from among the correct entries, Verna Sawatzky, Winkler, was selected the winner.

A cash prize is sent to each winner.

Answers to September are learn, grade, guide, tutor, course, and education.

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 at 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 November 1, 1984.

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October 9th, 1984

by John Friesen
**PART TWO:
ARREST AND DETENTION**

A First Experience in Civil Disobedience

All of us were moving forward together toward the fence. The police on the other side were poised, ready for us. The police nearest the fence rushed towards it, determined to physically repel the first 'attackers.' I reached the five-foot fence and managed to jump up and perch on top of it for a brief moment. And here was my first physical encounter with a policeman. He rushed up to me, and in the finest John Wayne tradition, landed a roundhouse punch right on my nose, sending me toppling back over the fence. I quickly picked myself up from the ground and approached the fence again. This time there was nobody to greet me. The punch-happy policeman was by this time further on, eagerly punching others. It looked like this morning's assignment was a real treat for him.

Once on the other side I remembered our instructions were to proceed in an orderly fashion, walking, not running, toward Litton's administration building. Walking briskly, I managed to get quite far without being apprehended. All around me I saw others being tackled by the police. Usually the trespasser would immediately go limp and then two policemen would drag them away, towards the buses and police vans parked near the building. The action around me as I continued my brisk walk, looked more like a pick-up game of tackle rugby. By now I was getting close enough to the building to make me consider what I would do if I got there. Of course I would go inside, find the President of Litton Systems, Ron Keating, and tell him that I was there to arrest him for criminal actions.

At that moment in my fantasy I was hit from behind by two policemen. I immediately let my body go limp and was dragged off to the area behind the buses, out of sight of the supporters, on-lookers, press, and TV cameras on the other side of the fence eighty yards

away. By this time most of those that were to be arrested were already there, sitting or lying down on the pavement. Some were being interviewed and searched by their arresting officers, others were conversing quietly with their neighbours or the police.

One of the tactics that was discussed in preparation for this action was to be open and straightforward, to resist any urge for confrontation, and attempt to engage the police in conversation about the nature of our actions and the reasons for them.

Much of this was happening. Some police were responding to these attempts, others weren't. Some of the police had difficulty in dealing with this attitude. There appeared to be some frustration in the face of our non-confrontational attitude and lack of belligerence. In a number of cases I saw this frustration result in rough and hostile behaviour when there was no provocation whatsoever.

My arresting officer was named Quigley and his badge number was 1502. He informed me that I was under arrest and he searched me. I tried to remain relaxed, friendly, and attempted to have conversation with him. His behaviour was quite reasonable and he was civil enough, but he was not very talkative.

From my position, sitting on the pavement, leaning against the right-rear tire of the bus, I could easily look underneath the bus and see back to the fence and the supporters and press people who were still there. I watched a policeman on horseback bulldozing his way, for no apparent reason, through this crowd of people. Perhaps he felt this was an ideal opportunity for some on the job training in crowd control and horsemanship.

I also watched two policemen dragging a young woman towards us across the pavement. They were dragging her

backwards, their arms under her shoulders, in the proper way. Then I saw one of the policemen reach across with his free hand and pull her along by her long brown hair.

Numbers were called out to have our pictures taken with our arresting officer. In previous trials where larger numbers of people were arrested the court often could not make the charges stick because the police were not even able to tell the court who they had arrested.

I also watched, with anger and alarm, the behaviour of two men in green parkas, to whom people were taken after they were photographed. They threw them up against the side of the bus, forced their arms up high, and searched each male protestor. But this was no ordinary search. Instead of simply feeling for whatever they were looking for, they jabbed and punched the ribs of each person. Then they grabbed both arms and forced them up high behind the back. That this was inflicting pain on the victims was obvious. Then the wrists were handcuffed and, amazingly, leg irons were attached to the ankles of each male. I had seen pictures in newspapers of murderers being escorted by the police, sometimes with their wrists handcuffed behind their backs, but never with leg-irons! Then we were put aboard the bus.

The men in green parkas (one of whom especially enjoyed inflicting pain) wore no identifying marks or badges. When someone pointed out their violent and brutal behaviour, the

The first instalment of John Friesen's experience in an organized public protest involving civil disobedience was published in the June, 1984, edition. In that article he outlined his reasons for joining such an activity and he ended his article just as the demonstration began.

police officer in charge simply smiled and said that it had nothing to do with him, that they were not under police jurisdiction. So who were these thugs? Members of a motorcycle gang hired to intimidate us? They were certainly vicious enough. So the police had hired others to do their dirty work for them — the violence and brutality would not be blamed on 'Metro's Finest.' These thugs obviously knew what their role was, and they played it well and with passion. They had been brought in to punish and to intimidate, and that they did.

When my number for the photograph was called, Quigley grabbed my shoulder and yanked me up off the ground. I reminded him that such behaviour on his part was entirely unnecessary and that he knew it. He turned to me and said, "My superior is over there, watching." It seemed the police had been ordered to 'play rough' even if unnecessary.

After my picture I was led by the police to the men in green parkas who did to me exactly what they had done to all the others.

The spirit of those already on the bus was far from a depressed one. Although there was a certain sense of uncertainty, the group was noisy and spirited. I suppose we felt determined not to be too easily suppressed and intimidated by society's enforcers and thugs. It wasn't long before we were all singing — usually rousing union songs of solidarity. Some were skinny enough (I not among them) to slip their legs back through so their handcuffs were in front. A young friend sitting directly behind me in the last row of the bus was bending over trying to get a shoe back on his foot when suddenly, from the front of the bus one of the green-parkad men (the vicious one) rushed down the aisle, picked him up from his seat, threw him around the back of the bus and then violently and brutally dragged him to the front of the bus and threw him out. A hush fell over us as we watched with amazement this brutal and vicious behaviour.

Soon all the men were aboard our bus, the women were in paddy wagons, and we were off to the police stations.

All of the violence and intimidation during and after the arrests was out of sight of the press. Of course the whole situation could have been handled with civility and within the bounds of decent behaviour. The protestors had co-operated. There was no active resistance on our part. The whole action had been carried off with amazing discipline and

totally in the spirit of non-violence. Protestors were attempting to remain civil, friendly and open, although the actions and attitudes of some of the police often made that very difficult. It was clear that the authorities were not interested simply in handling the situation as smoothly and civilly as possible. Quite the opposite, their plan was to use force where possible, perhaps to provoke a reaction that would justify greater violence on their part. In the final analysis, their purpose was to intimidate the participants in the hope of 'teaching them a lesson.'

When we arrived at the station we were taken off the bus three at a time. The disembarking procedure must have taken almost 45 minutes. I was one of the last to leave the bus. Before my turn came some of us had a chance to talk to one of the men in green parkas (the less vicious one). During a quiet, non-confrontational discussion he admitted he was glad we were doing what we did. He recognized the danger of the nuclear arms situation and saw the need to resist it. It was from him I first found out that they were employees of the Province of Ontario, from the Department of Correctional Services. They were members of OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, of which I also was a member. Only a few days earlier San O'Flynn, the president of OPSEU, was the guest speaker at the nomination meeting where I was nominated the federal candidate by the Parkdale/High Park NDP for the upcoming general election.

Once inside the police station we were ordered to kneel three at a time on a bench, where we were again searched (for the third time) and had our leg-irons and handcuffs removed. The atmosphere of authoritarianism was thick inside the station. We were never spoken to civilly. Never asked to do anything, always ordered to, and these orders were usually barked out. The vicious man in the green parka was also there, making smart remarks and cackling euphorically. When we heard some cell doors clang shut in the next room, he laughed loudly and in a sneering, threatening tone said, "How would you like to have your fingers mashed in there?!"

Before being taken to the cells we were processed, asked our names, addresses, etc. Our legal counsel had told us that the only information we would be required by law to give the police was our name and address. Each individual could decide to what extent to co-operate. The officer questioning me remarked that I was the "grand-daddy of the bunch." I remember thinking about that some time later and wondering, not why I was there with others younger than myself, but rather why others my age or older were not there.

After being processed we were taken

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to the cells. About 35 of us occupied five small cells, measuring perhaps five feet by seven feet, and one larger cell two or three times that size. We were to remain for the rest of the day here in our cells. Spirits were still high and we spent much of the day singing boisterously, and surprisingly well it seemed to me.

Throughout the day an interesting game between us and our captors was played. We were taken out of our cells, one by one, to be questioned by a detective. The strategy of the police was apparent. They had too many people there to handle and would have liked to get rid of us, but under their conditions. If we stayed longer than a day, then we would have to be transported to the Detention Centre, and they were not ready for such a sudden increase in their population. No doubt the police would have liked to get rid of most of us but keep some of us in for 'special treatment.' A few of the group had been threatened with criminal charges, for things like drawing a peace dove on the wall of the cell with a crayon. We never knew for sure whether these charges would be pressed. Our charge of trespass, not being a criminal charge, was less serious. Also, a number of those arrested had been arrested previously for civil disobedience. The police were probably hoping they could force these offenders to post bail before being released. Naturally we found this to be unfair and offensive. Our position was that everyone should be treated the same.

When we were individually offered to be released, each one of us refused the offer. As each person was returned to his cell by a police officer, the rest of us would burst into applause and another rousing chorus of 'Solidarity Forever.' The sound of our singing must have reached through the whole building, and as the day went on, and we refused to co-operate and leave as indi-

viduals, our message of solidarity got stronger.

When I was called for my 'interview' I had a fairly pleasant chat with the detective. He asked me questions about my occupation. I told him immediately I would tell him nothing beyond my name and address. He understood very well what I was doing and did not question me any further.

We had been prepared for this tactic of treating certain members of the group differently than others. The police were attempting to separate us according to our status and previous involvements. We had agreed that we would not allow them to have the information to make it possible for them to do that. Not only was it tactically wrong to co-operate in this, but also morally wrong. We were not required by law to give the police any further information. Some of the group went further and refused to co-operate with the police even in giving their correct name. To avoid giving false information, which could be interpreted as a criminal, and more serious, offence, some gave obviously fictitious names such as John Doe, Melba Toast or Louise Riel.

In these interviews we were warned that if we did not co-operate in our release, we could be there for a number of days, and that some of us might have to post bail in order to leave. Most of us replied that we'd stay as long as necessary, that we would all leave together or not at all. This strategy of 'solidarity' was useful in strengthening our spirits and in the end would prove to be the correct one tactically.

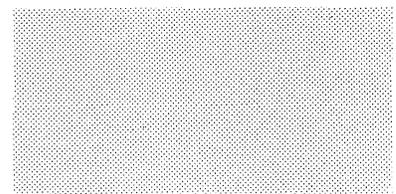
At lunchtime we were herded, about ten at a time into a garage, where we had to sit on a dirty cement floor, and eat a tasteless sliced bread sandwich and an apple. While we ate, two motorcycle cops stood guard at the large door which was closed. Another officer stood guard at the inside door. He laughed derisively and reminded us that we

were lucky to get anything to eat at all. "You're lucky we don't feed you what we feed the (expletive deleted) horses."

Hours later, the Justice of the Peace arrived and began interviewing us, two at a time. My friend John Meyers and I were the second twosome to see this silly, stern and officious bureaucrat. He got upset and angry at my lack of reverence and my gall at laughing and telling him that he had no choice but to release us all. We reminded him that we would all leave together, or all stay together, and that we were prepared to stay for more than just a couple of days. My partner and I were among the first to be interviewed, and after that negotiations began in earnest. Within hours the final negotiations for our release were completed. A patient support person named Dwyer Sullivan, served as the 'go-between' for us and the police. One final demand we had was that the women who were being held at the other station would be extended the same deal. We were told that everything would be done to ensure that would be the case. In our final huddle we decided to accept that and go to the other police station once we were released. If the women were not given the same condition we would then consider doing

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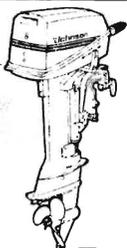


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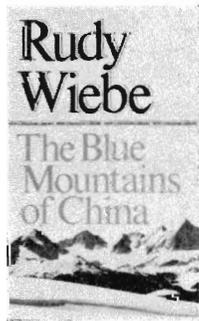
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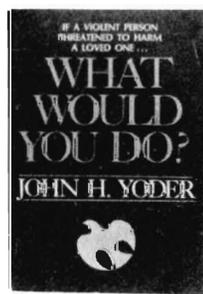
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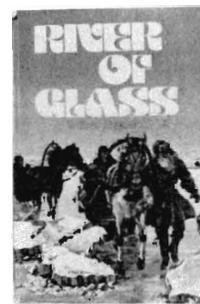
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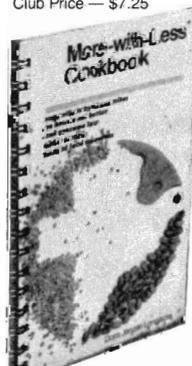
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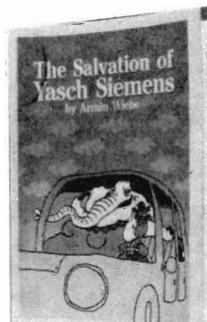
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another action at the station, forcing them to arrest us again. So at approximately 8 p.m. that evening we were released.

When we were processed that morning, our belongings were put in envelopes, to be returned on our release. When I was released I received nothing back. When I asked about it I was simply sworn at and then ignored.

That daylong stay in the cells was an eye-opener for me. It was the first time in my adult life that I felt really helpless, very much a victim, treated not as a human, but rather as an animal, stripped of dignity. We were there at the mercy of a group of people who themselves were to a large degree de-humanized, many also victims of a backward institution.

When we came out of the station our support persons were there, waiting for our release. They had been on hand, informing our families and friends what was happening during the day. We got into cars and headed over to the other police station to see if the women were being released. By the time we arrived there, they were also being released. A rather long and unusual day was finally coming to an end.

Would I do it again? This was a question I asked myself at the end of the day. At the time my feeling was that I would not want to repeat this experience for some time. Although it was somewhat stressful, especially for those of us who were experiencing it for the first time, it was not really a great sacrifice, or a great chore, or by any stretch of the imagination a daring confrontation with the authority of the state. After all we were in Canada where people need not be afraid of having their rights violated. We know we will not be tortured, or disappear. We went in with the knowledge that our basic rights would not be violated as they might be in the Soviet Union, in South Africa, or in Latin America. So in comparison to similar actions of dissent in such countries, our effort could hardly be seen as a risky one.

But the experience also confirmed in me the notion that we cannot take comfort in this situation. The victims of ruthless and arbitrary violations of human rights right here in our free and democratic Canada have certainly had their eyes opened, as have many Canadians who understood what the War Measures Act really meant. I also understand that our government is quite capable of the same kind of violence and ruthless denial of human rights as any of those governments that we feel so

superior to, *should the circumstance warrant it*. And surely, if that is to be the criterion for introducing such measures, then those nations we accuse today of such violations, are perhaps only following the same course we ourselves would take. It is not entirely unlikely that should our governments continue in their present policies of nuclear madness, and should peace-seeking Canadians continue to dissent through increased actions of mass civil disobedience, that our so-called democratic and free system would turn quickly into the same sort of police state so many of us detest. But of course, only if necessary!

It was nice to get back to my family, which was eager to hear what had happened since I left home very early that morning. The boys got an explanation of why their father had 'gone to jail' that day. They seemed to understand quite well what it was all about. I had previously arranged with Pauline and the boys that should things not go as expected, that I would stay 'in' for five or six days. So they were glad things did go as anticipated. I'm sure the boys, Geoffrey who is 11 years old, and Chris who is 8, get at least some comfort out of the fact that their parents are concerned about the future and are willing to take action to protest against a terrifying situation, one that they as children, had no part in creating, yet will inherit.

Actions such as this, along with other peace activities, also give us adults some comfort. I have little doubt that such actions are only a small and meagre beginning to a growing protest by millions of people around the world over the next few years. I also know that without such protest there is not the slightest hope that those in control of this disaster-headed planet will change its direction and steer it back from the abyss.

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John Friesen, formerly of Winkler, now lives with his wife Pauline and family in Toronto, where he performs, writes, teaches, and is involved in community work and political activism. He was the NDP candidate for a Toronto riding in this past federal election.

Part Three: **In Court**

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observed along the way

• It is the first week of September, and once more I see before me a mob of young people starting out on a university education. As they take their places I look at them and wonder what kind of expectations they have about the next few years. It is becoming harder each year to pick out individual faces. A decade ago the average class had between 50 and 60 students. This has now crept up to 80, and in the class that I face today there are 100 students. What one can do in such a situation is to dispense *information* to the students, but it is virtually impossible to work individually with them and to hone their learning skills. There is, unfortunately, no easy solution to this problem. The students are getting an inferior education, not because standards have dropped or because they are lazier than they used to be, but because the number of students has grown much more rapidly than the number of teachers. The big problem is not packing students into limited space but pretending that real learning is taking place in the absence of personal, intensive, intellectual interaction between students and teachers. Unlike many European countries we want to produce higher education for the masses, not just for the relatively few who are unusually gifted. We will either have to increase funding to match that goal, or change the goal. In the meantime, despite numerous problems the university remains an exciting place in which to work. I can think of nothing more stimulating than having even a dozen students in a class who are eager to explore new ideas and issues with each other and with their professors. The best ones will not be thwarted by any system: they go on thinking, questioning, challenging, and affirming.

• Early September is election time in Canada, and what an incredible result it produces! Canadians don't seem to change their mind very often, but they occasionally do so very decisively. My wife and I spend a few evenings going door to door for Lloyd Axworthy in the Fort Garry riding. Early in the campaign it appears to us that there is a good chance that he will lose. There is gloom and apparent disorganization in the campaign office. Toward the end, however, there is a perceptible change in voter attitude; it seems that a lot of

"undecideds" have finally decided that Axworthy does not deserve to lose. The results on election day bear this out. Most other Liberal candidates do not fare so well. We are destined to live under a Conservative sun for at least four years. I shed no tears over this. I happen to believe that Canada is blessed with a large number of fairly competent and decent people in all three of the major political parties, and within the normal confines of government decision-making power they will likely make similar decisions. There may be too much emphasis on personality and not enough on issues in our political campaigns, but since political leaders are obliged to develop major positions with their new caucus *after* an election, their reluctance to state positions before an election is at least somewhat justified. If such caution is also politically opportune, then it is so largely because we voters really prefer to deal with personalities and not with issues. The politicians know what we really want. The fact is that the personality of a politician *is* important. What a politician says, for example, about helping the poor, may be a less reliable guide to his ultimate actions than the perception that one has of his general attitude to underdogs in society. One of the real problems, as I see it, is not that modern media like television focus our attention on personalities, but that they provide us with a badly distorted impression of those personalities. In this last election both Turner and Mulroney came across to me as somewhat hollow men; with Turner there was too much waffle, and with Mulroney too much syrup. But friends who know both men intimately, and whose opinion I trust, convinced me that both are much better than that. Given the whole demeaning process of getting and staying elected I marvel at the quality of most people who get into politics these days. Surely their most common weakness must be a greater than average dose of masochism.

• The melancholy spirit that accompanies the Fall season comes to us in various forms this year. It comes to us in the wind that sweeps over the lake. This year it seems to change later than usual. On the last weekend in August it feels as though we are still in mid-summer; but by the first weekend in September there is an entirely different feeling. Fall has arrived. As we go for long walks in the woods the leaves begin to change color, and the evenings in the cottage become wonderfully quiet. The day we close the cottage for the winter we hardly say a word all the way home. The cycle of one more year has come to an end. In our visits to our aging parents we experience another cycle. Life itself forms a remarkable circle. When we are born most of us are fortunate to have parents who care for us when we are virtually helpless. Later our growing independence first challenges and then matches theirs. Then the cycle is completed when their independence diminishes and they can lean on us. There is sadness in this cycle but when it is filled with love it can be profoundly beautiful. On our visit to Budapest in August we were introduced to the work of one of the great Hungarian artists of this century. Her name was Margit Kovacs. She spent many of her years with her aging mother, and some of her finest sculptures portray the tender relationship between a mature daughter and her frail mother. The most beautiful one shows the daughter leaning over her bent mother with great compassion. The artist entitled it, "Now which is the mother, and which the daughter?" (see cover).

• The Fall season is also a good time to spend at home reading. A new novel by one of my favorite writers, Morris West, explores the deep psychic problems of a woman too obsessed with herself to live out her genuinely good intentions. I still think that Morris West's very first novel, *The Devil's Advocate*, in which he probes the nature of true holiness, is one of the finest books I have ever read. Also found quite en-

grossing this Fall is a book on the invasion of Grenada, by a quite thorough English correspondent whose English, surprisingly, is quite bad. I find it almost impossible to sort out my feelings about the U.S. intervention in Grenada.

• At this time of the year various organizations come to life again. The *Mirror* itself slowly but surely creaks back into action after the usual Fall planning meetings. Working meetings are also held to start a Mennonite Book Club and to plan for the future of the Mennonite Village Museum in Steinbach. A visit to Eugene Derksen's ranch makes the latter very enjoyable.

• The visit of the Pope to Winnipeg in mid September gives us a unique opportunity to become reacquainted with another Christian tradition. I am intrigued by the pope's personality, particularly its apparent contradictions. Here is a man with a tremendously compassionate heart for the world, and yet a remarkably closed heart to the aspirations and rights of women. But perhaps this shouldn't surprise us. We all have our contradictions, and perhaps "great" men (and women) are destined to have great contradictions. I have found this to be true of leaders that I have known both in the church and outside of it. One of our past university presidents was a man sincerely dedicated to the pursuit of truth, but even more — so it seemed to us — to the pursuit of money. One of

the truly great leaders of the modern Mennonite Church, the late Harold S. Bender, had a great heart for his church, but he could be unbelievably insensitive to the feelings and needs of others. Natural leaders almost inevitably become empire builders, masters of the grand scale but neglecters of those little component parts that we call human beings. To apply this judgment to Pope John Paul, however, would be an injustice. I remember a friend of mine, of Mennonite background, who met the pope as part of a private audience a few years ago, and when the pope came and shook his hand he looked deeply and directly into my friend's eyes, as though his whole attention was riveted only on him. My friend had what might be called an illuminating experience. The power of the Catholic church today to side with the poor and the dispossessed is due at least partly to the courageous vision of this pope. We Mennonites have every reason to be humble and grateful in the presence of such a Christian leader.

• A Saturday evening in late September provides pleasure of another kind. The Manitoba members of our Russian tour group, supplemented by some surprise arrivals from Ontario, meet at our home to show their slides and reminisce about their experience. I am amazed once again at the tremendous spirit of this group of people. They have all

learned to enjoy themselves and to accept the visit to Russia as a rare and beautiful gift from God. Many of the members admitted that in the past month and a half images of that trip have come back to them almost every day.

• Now that my wife is back teaching at Westgate she often brightens up the end of the day with "gems of wisdom" from her students. Let me end this month's column with one of them. Question: "What do you get when you cross sunflower seeds with marijuana?" Answer: "A trip to Altona."

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Mennonite History Not Sufficiently Critical of the Past

A review by Harry Loewen

Horst Penner's *Weltweite Bruderschaft*, first published in 1955, proved both useful and popular not only in Germany but also throughout the world where Mennonites still read German. Even in the Soviet Union the book was copied by hand by those who wished to preserve their Anabaptist-spiritual heritage (p. 5). The popularity and usefulness of this history was attested by its three editions (1955, 1960, 1972).

Now the book has appeared in a new edition, reworked and enlarged by Horst Gerlach and Horst Quiring. What is new is Section A in which Quiring introduces the reader to the Reformation and Anabaptism (pp. 7-15), and Section F in which Gerlach and others deal with the Mennonite brotherhood in Europe and South America since 1945 (pp. 207-308). The editors do not explain why they have not updated the North-American story of the Mennonites, which has not been advanced beyond World War II.

The bibliography of the earlier editions has been left intact, with nine titles written between 1975 and 1982 added. In looking at the new titles one wonders why non-historical and popular works are included (F. Berthold, M. Holzach) and more serious historians and theologians like Hans-Jürgen Goertz, a German Mennonite, are not even mentioned.

Section F, the expanded part of the book, is in many ways the most disappointing section of the otherwise well-written story. Instead of presenting a balanced account of the World War II period and its aftermath, the author, Horst Gerlach, is often one-sided, vague and ambivalent in his statements and conclusions. Only a few examples shall be cited.

We are told that during the Third Reich some 180 young people under the

direction of Theo Glück wrote circular letters in which they discussed religious themes and issues of the period (p. 252). The reader would like to know what was discussed and with what results. Surely it is important to know what some Mennonite young people thought about the application of the Gospel in a politically charged environment.

The author is somewhat apologetic in his references to those Christian groups who were oppressed by the Nazi regime and the German Mennonites' inability or unwillingness to come to their support and acceptance (p. 252). A more detailed analysis and even criticism of this attitude would have been in place.

At times the author seems to downplay the willingness of Mennonites to support National Socialism on the one hand and to emphasize the German military's sympathy for Mennonite beliefs and practices on the other. Thus some of the South-German Mennonites because they were largely farmers and civil servants welcomed Hitler's coming to power in 1933 (p. 251). However, the German military, we are told, respected the Mennonite principle of non-swearing, allowing Mennonites to affirm (p. 251). During the war German troops even attended Russian-Mennonite worship services, and a military painter painted some 20 portraits of Mennonites in Chortitza! (p. 271).

With regard to "Mennonites and the Jews," the author tries to be factual and fairly objective, although he is much too general and all too sketchy. While German Mennonites did not protest Hitler's treatment of the Jews, we are given to understand, they certainly refrained from activities and abuses against them. The author quotes from letters which indicate that in Germany anti-Jewish activities were not as bad as some foreigners believed (pp. 253-54),

and that in the Soviet Union some Jews who had joined the Communist party oppressed the Mennonites (p. 254). We are told that there must have been Mennonites who failed to act according to Christ's spirit; however, out of 1,000 letters the author found only two where this was the case (p. 255).

How did Mennonites outside of Germany view National Socialism? The author states: "Some Mennonites . . . abroad (especially in Canada and South-America) were — at least at the beginning — enthusiastic about the [Nazi] ideas. Some became guilty, some tried to practice Christian love under extreme conditions" (p. 256). It seems to me that this is too general and vague at best. The work of Frank H. Epp, Hans-Jürgen Goertz and Jonathan Wagner shows in detail that some Mennonites in Germany and abroad were caught up in the new ideology, at least for some time.

At times this reviewer felt uneasy about the author's use of language with regard to Germany's role during the war. German bombers, for example, apparently bombed Rotterdam by mistake (p. 236). Germany's attack upon the Soviet Union becomes a *Feldzug* (campaign), and the military's occupation of the Ukraine is a *Befreiung* (liberation) of Mennonites (p. 271). While Mennonites experienced the coming of the Germans as a liberation from Soviet Communism, this was the language used by the German military command and comes as a surprise in a book published in the 1980s.

Much of post-World War II German literature seeks to come to terms with the Nazi past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). Unfortunately, this Mennonite history instead of expressing sorrow and repentance for failing to be better witnesses during a dark period in history, often seems to justify Mennonite passive submission to the political and ideological powers that be.

Aside from the above reservations and criticism, *Weltweite Bruderschaft* with its many good photographs and maps will continue to be an adequate first introduction to Mennonite history for the Mennonite lay reader. Horst Penner, the author, and the editors are to be commended for the time they spent in writing and revising this history.

Horst Penner, *Weltweite Bruderschaft. Ein mennonitisches Geschichtsbuch*. 4. Auflage überarbeitet von Horst Gerlach and Horst Quiring (6719 Weierhof: Verlag Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1984). Hardcover; 332 pages.

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your word

"MENNONITE ROUTE" SETS LIMIT TO U.S.S.R. VISITS

In July of this past year I led a tour to the Soviet Union. As one part of the tour we visited the regions of the former Mennonite settlements of Molotschna and Chortitza. In Zaporozhje the city close to both these settlements we were informed by the local Intourist office that a "Mennonite" route had been established for both Molotschna and Chortitza settlements to which all Mennonite groups would have to restrict themselves. Getting other special trips or visiting other than the prescribed villages they said would not be possible in the future. The guide asked me repeatedly to communicate this information to people who might wish to visit these settlements in the future so that the tourists would know what they could expect and would not be disappointed if they would not be able to see other villages in these settlements. I believe your readers may wish to know this information.

In the former Molotschna settlement this present prescribed route for Mennonite groups begins at Halbstadt (Molochansk), and in this area includes the former village of Petershagen, a view of its old church, as well as Muntau and its hospital, which is still in use. From Halbstadt the tour goes over Tokmak to Landskrone, Hierschau and Waldheim. A stop is made in Waldheim and from there the tour proceeds to Gnadenfeld. From Gnadenfeld the tour goes to a collective farm on the site of the former village of Grossweide. The collective farm extends to include the land belonging to the former villages of Pastva, Franzthal and Rudnerweide.

In the former Chortitza settlement the tour encompasses some of the sites of former villages which now lie within the larger city boundaries of Zaporozhje. The tour includes a visit to the great oak, to the schools in Chortitza/Rosenthal; the girls' school, boys' school and teachers' college, to the island of Chortitza on which there is the remnant of a Mennonite graveyard, and to the large housing development which stands on the site of the former village of Burwalde.

For both settlements, Molotschna and Chortitza, we were told emphatically

and repeatedly that requests to visit any other villages either by the whole tour, or by individuals in taxis would not be granted. We were told that local people do not appreciate tourists coming through the villages and taking pictures. We were told that exceptions would be made if the person requesting a special trip had relatives in that village.

These are the routes we were allowed to take. Other groups in the past year or two have been following almost precisely the same routes. I am aware that very occasionally a group may be allowed to deviate slightly from this prescribed "Mennonite" route. Such deviations should, however, be considered exceptions. People who travel to this area should not expect that such exceptions will be granted them.

Within these boundaries, Intourist provides a well organized, informative tour. The local guides are knowledgeable, friendly and helpful. The local historian in Molochansk provides good local information. The collective farm at Grossweide hosts groups very graciously and provides a delicious meal.

A tour to the Soviet Union is always interesting and educational. People who go should, however, be realistic about what they can see and do.

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Coming Events

October 12-13: Manitoba Women in Mission retreat at Camp Assiniboia.

October 19-21: Retreat for deacons and families of Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, at Camp Assiniboia.

October 23-24: J. J. Thiessen Lectures, CMBC, Winnipeg.

October 27: 8:00 pm Young United Church Winnipeg Mennonite Community Orchestra.

November 17: CMBC Oratorio performance.

November 23-24: MCC Manitoba annual meeting at Altona Berghaler Church.

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manitoba news

Nuclear Eschatology

Prof. Gordon D. Kaufman, noted Harvard theologian, will deliver four public lectures at the University of Winnipeg.

With "Theology for a Nuclear Age" as the main theme, Kaufman will speak on the following topics:

Thursday, November 1, 1984: 1) The Nuclear Crisis and Christian Theology (3:30 P.M.); 2) Theology as Imaginative Construction (8 P.M.) Friday, November 2, 1984; 3) Toward the Reconciliation of God (11:30 A.M.); 4) Toward the Reconciliation of Christ and Salvation (8 P.M.).

The lectures are sponsored by: religious studies, University of Winnipeg; department of religion, University of Manitoba; Faculty of Theology, University of Winnipeg; Canadian Mennonite Bible College; Canadian Nazarene College; and Chair in Mennonite Studies, University of Winnipeg.

All lectures will take place in Room 3G00, University of Winnipeg.

Betty Dyck, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church and editor of the church news magazine, *The Bethel Bridge* for six years, has undertaken to write a biography of A. M. Nicolson, who established the first United Church in northern Saskatchewan in 1930, and later entered politics in order to help his impoverished parishioners. Mrs. Dyck has written articles and poetry for the *Mennonite Mirror*, and has written several local history books.

Ross Bender, a pastor in Denver, Colorado, is the new president of the Mennonite World Conference. **Jake Pauls**, pastor of Bethel Church in Winnipeg, is vice-president representing North America. **Helen Kruger** of Kitchener, Waterloo, is the new recording secretary of the executive committee. **Victor Adrian**, director of the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services in Winnipeg, is a member at large on the executive committee.

Karl Friesen, formerly of Winnipeg and a graduate of MBCI, performed brilliantly as goaltender for West Germany in the recent Canada Cup series. He has now returned to Rosenheim, Germany, for the 1984-85 season. He is holding discussions with the New Jersey team of the National Hockey League, but has not as yet signed any contract with this team.

Else Barg, who had worked for many years as a chaplain and social worker in Winnipeg, has been appointed director of pastoral care of St. Joseph's Hospital in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Else is a member of the Charleswood Mennonite Church.

Art and Helen Fast, of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, and **Ed and Norilyn Epp** of Bethel Church, left in August for two-year English-language teaching assignments in Shenyang, People's Republic of China.

Harry Froese, a former teacher at MBCI, has been appointed MCC country director in Nigeria. He and his wife **Lorna** are serving in the second year of their term.

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Carol Ringer, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, has been elected president of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. The council promotes World Day of Prayer, devotional life for women, and focuses on social issues concerning women in Canada.

Fifty-two workers participated in a Mennonite Central Committee orientation in Akron July 17 to 27. Forty-two are beginning assignments in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. Ten are beginning assignments in North America. Thirteen of the overseas orientees are serving under SALT (Serve and Learn Together) International, an MCC program for young people ages 18 to 22 interested in serving overseas for one year.

Manitoba young people serving under SALT are:

Sandra Heppner of Altona. She will be working as a teacher assistant at a School for the Deaf in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. Her parents are Henry and Tina Heppner of Altona.

David Peters of Portage la Prairie. He will be working with Colony Menno's Indian resettlement program in Paraguay. His parents are Jake and Frieda Peters of Portage la Prairie.

L. Julie Suderman of Winkler. She will serve as a secretary in Mishabezi, Zimbabwe. Her parents are Abe and Tina Suderman of Winkler.

Wanda Bueckert of Austin, Man., will serve in Paraguay, working with mentally handicapped children. Her parents are Ernie and Mary Bueckert of Austin.

Lee Kirk of Winnipeg will serve in Brazil, working on maintenance and with the children of a day care centre. His mother is Elvera Kirk of Winnipeg.

Rosalie Koop of Landmark will serve in Bukburn, Nigeria, working as a secretary. Her parents are Ron and Violet Koop of Landmark.

Cathy Peters of Winnipeg will be in Calcutta. She is the daughter of **Peter H.** and **Margaret Peters**, who are beginning a term as MCC country directors in India.

Conrad Peters of Bethel Mennonite Church will be serving for one year with the SALT program in Vancouver, B.C.

Mennonite Brethren Collegiate reports an enrollment of 431 students for the current school year, approximately the same as last year. **Peter Brown** resigned in the spring and is presently studying at Fresno Seminary. **William Reimer** has returned following a three-year leave of absence, in which he served a term as MCC country representative in Nigeria.

KOOP 'N BUA MAKE CELLULOID DEBUT

*The first time ever — a film in Low German! Dueck Film Productions Ltd. released its latest production **Koop 'N Bua Enn Dietschland**, a short comedy in the Laurel and Hardy tradition.*

On the surface the film is in the lighter vein, but it poses some interesting religious and philosophical questions, such as, "Who is a true Mennonite?" Watching and listening to those that follow the language will be an event in itself!

Filmed in "Germany" at Merteens of Winnipeg, the cast includes the original Landmark Players whose Low German plays have entertained audiences across North America.

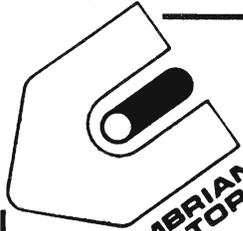
Wilmer Penner, director of the Landmark Players, adapted the Arnold Dyck material and wrote the screenplay. David Dueck is the producer and Allan Kroeker, of Winnipeg directed this 15-minute film.

The film will be premiered as part of "An Evening of Mennonite Music and Entertainment" at the Centennial Concert Hall, Thursday, November 29, 1984. Tickets for the fund-raising evening will be \$10. Included in the program will be the Mennonite Singers conducted by Bill Baerg, as well Irmgard Baerg will perform the 2nd movement of the Mennonite Piano Concerto.

Jake Epp of Steinbach was re-elected to parliament in the constituency of Provencher, receiving about 60 per cent of the popular vote. He was described in *Maclean's* magazine as having "acquired a reputation for being a thoughtful and sensitive administrator and a highly principled politician." He has been named to the Federal Cabinet, with the Health and Welfare portfolio.

Among three Manitoba musicians who placed second in the National Competitive Festival of Music, held August 27-29 in Regina were: **Tracy Dahl**, 22, soprano, and **Thomas Wiebe**, 18, cellist. Each won a \$500 cash award, presented on behalf of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, sponsor of the Festival.

Peggy Regehr of Winnipeg has been appointed the first staff member of the Committee on Women's Concerns in Canada. Her half-time assignment began in September. The CWC is a committee of the MCC Peace Section. She will be a resource on women's issues in Canada.



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A New Church Is Born

Often I have attended a church anniversary, but I had never attended the birth of a church. "Church Planting" is what it is called today. Born in Chicago is the Manor Community Fellowship, a Mennonite Church, located at the corner of Spaulding and Sunnyside.

The dedication services was held on August 26, 1984, in the Albany Park Baptist Church building which has become the home also of the Manor Community Church. Because of the shortage of church buildings in this area, it is not uncommon to find three or even four names outside a church building. Sharing this building is also a Korean congregation which worships from 1-4 p.m. leaving the period from 5-8 p.m. open for this Mennonite congregation.

There were guests visiting this ceremony from Elkhart, Bluffton, Iowa, and from some of the local Mennonite churches.

Then came the picture-taking of the little flock which will call this church theirs. This is the photo which will go into the archives of the church and which will be retrieved at all anniversaries in the years to come.

It will be the photo which will be studied and wondered over: Who was the lady in the back row who had a little son? There is a chance someone will remember. Years from now these faces will have changed and the children in the front two rows will have grown, and be raising children in the same church. Isn't that the way it happens? Maybe it is the way it is supposed to happen.

Who are these people who have stepped on a limb and want this church to be? They number 37: 23 adults, 14 children in 15 households. They come from various religious backgrounds: 10 Mennonite (7 "Old"; 3 Russian); 6 Catholic; 4 Lutheran; 3 other. They range in age from infant to age 70. Only three were born out of the U.S. while the adults have lived in the U.S. over 20 years.

The first Pastor of the Manor Community Fellowship is Gary Martin from Goshen and his assistant is Ulli Klemm. The church will be affiliated with the Illinois (MC) and Central District (GC) Conferences.

Manor Community Fellowship joins

19 other Mennonite churches in the Chicago area, or CAM (Chicago Area Mennonites). There are 13 Mennonite Churches in the city of Chicago, making Chicago the city to have the largest number of Mennonite churches, next to Winnipeg.

The neighborhood in which Manor finds itself is located in the north-west side of Chicago and it is a conservative estimate to say that there are at least 50 nationalities represented in this area.

In discussing church planning with Gary Martin, he explained to me that the urban churches will be growing as they accommodate the young people who leave the rural area to find employment or attend school in the city. He feels that in 10 to 20 years the church should be self supporting.

by **Lydia (Warkentin) Mathes**
formerly of Steinbach

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate reports a near-capacity enrollment of 269 students. New staff members include **Lorne Friesen**, who replaces Ed Epp, now teaching in China, and **Lily Barg**, library technician.

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Besuch Bei Bückers, 1984

Im letzten Jahr brachten wir einen Bericht Harry Loewens über einen Besuch in Deutschland, in dem er den Hof und die Familie aufsuchte, die ihm vor vielen Jahren nach der Flucht aus Russland und nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg eine erste Heimat im Westen wurde. Von diesem Besuch tief beeindruckt, kehrte er diesen Sommer mit seiner Frau dorthin zurück.

Von Harry Loewen

In diesem Sommer hatten meine Frau Gertrud und ich die Freude meine alten und doch so neuen Freunde Alfons und Hilde Bückers in Gemen, Deutschland, zu besuchen. Letztes Jahr als ich sie nach 35 Jahren wieder sah, versprach ich ihnen, auf ihre freundliche Einladung, in diesem Jahr mit meiner Frau, die sie noch nicht kannten, zu kommen.

Mit einem gemieteten VW-Käfer kamen wir an einem späten Juli-Nachmittag auf dem Bückers-Hof an. Hinter den Schuppen auf dem Felde wurden noch die Reste der Ernte beendet und das Stroh auf den Stallboden gebracht, wobei auch Hilde tüchtig mithalf. Doch als Alfons und Hilde uns kommen sahen, ließen sie alles stehen und liegen und begrüßten uns mit Umarmungen und freundlichen Worten. Auch Gertrud, die Bückers nur von meinem Erzählen her kannte, wurde von meinen Freunden aufs freundlichste aufgenommen.

Die paar Tage, die wir im Hause unserer Freunde verbrachten, verbanden für uns alle die Vergangenheit und Gegenwart in bedeutender Weise. Immer wieder fing Alfons sein Erzählen (und Alfons ist, nebenbei, ein hervorragender Erzähler) mit den Worten "Weißt du noch, Harry? Das mußt du doch noch wissen" an. Vieles wußte ich noch, aber vieles hatte ich auch schon vergessen. Wenn man ein ganzes Leben lang in demselben Ort wohnt, bleibt einem mehr in der Erinnerung von dem, was dort geschehen, als wenn man, wie ich, den Ort vor Jahren verlassen hat und inzwischen in der Fremde und in

einem neuen Lande hin und her gezogen ist. Jedenfalls hatte ich so manches aus der Vergangenheit vergessen, doch Alfons und Hilde riefen mir vieles aus jener Zeit zurück.

Für Alfons und Hilde, die katholischen Glaubens sind, sind Menschlichkeit und Christentum eins. Beides haben sie aus ihrem väterlichen Erbe und aus den Schicksalsschlägen des Lebens mitbekommen. Alfons erzählte uns von seinen schweren Erfahrungen während der Kriegszeit und seiner Gefangenschaft, Zeiten in denen der Mensch oft unmenschlich handelt. Als er damals sah, wie Menschen ihre Mitmenschen misshandelten, entschloss er sich, nie einen andern Menschen, wer und was er auch sei, unter seiner Würde zu behandeln. Schon die alten Bückers lebten nach diesem Grundsatz. Als meine Mutter und Geschwister kurz nach dem Kriege im Bückerschen Hause Obdach fanden, wurde uns von der Familie viel Liebe und Güte erwiesen. Auch heute noch handeln Alfons und Hilde nach dem Bibelwort: "Einer trage des andern Last, denn so werdet ihr das Gesetz Christi erfüllen." Und das vornehmste Gebot nach Jesus ist, ja die Liebe. Onkel Johannes, zum Beispiel, der schon jahrelang bei Bückers als Bauernhilfe zu Hause ist und nun alt, schwach und gebrechlich geworden ist, wird von den beiden Geschwistern liebevoll, ja fast mit Würde, gepflegt und versorgt. Hilde ist ihm sogar beim An- und Auskleiden behilflich und behandelt ihn, der kein Verwandter ist, wie einen Vater.

Obwohl man auf einem Bauernhof immer viel zu tun hat, besonders wenn Vieh da ist, das besorgt werden muß, nahmen sich Alfons und Hilde für uns Zeit und fuhren mit uns in die Nachbargenden und ins nahe Dorf Heek, das ich noch von früher kannte. Vor etwa 36 Jahren besuchten wir da 'atholische Predigten, die uns damals sehr ansprachen und zum geistlichen Nutzen waren. Bei diesen Fahrten fuhr Alfons fort dies und jenes zu erzählen und Hilde stimmte ihm bei, stellte Fragen, und lachte wie damals vor mehr

als dreissig Jahren. Krankheit und Tod in der Familie haben ihr nicht den Humor und das Lachen und Scherzen genommen. Hilde konnte natürlich nicht der Versuchung widerstehen, meine Frau und mich mit "ihr seid ja nun schon Großeltern" zu necken. Sie schenkte uns sogar einige "Regeln" für "Einen Opa und eine Oma," die wir versprochen schön zu befolgen!

Auch freuten wir uns, daß wir einige Nachbarn wenn auch nur kurz besuchen konnten. Heinrich Leusbruck erkannte ich gleich wieder, und seine Familie machte einen sehr guten Eindruck auf mich. Familie Rulle sind liebe Leute, mit denen wir uns schön unterhalten konnten. Das "Bauerngold", das sie aufs Feld fuhren machte uns Städtern nichts aus, ist es doch da um den Erdboden zu bereichern.

Einen tiefen Eindruck machte auf mich die Werkstatt in der Vater Bückers vor Jahren Wagen und Wagenräder baute. Ich erinnere mich an den fleißigen Mann, wie er und sein Sohn Alfons den großen Hammer schwangen und die Speichen aus Eichenholz in die Achse trieben. Die stillgelegten Sägen und die ruhenden Werkzeuge an den Wänden und in den Kästen erinnerten an eine vergangene Zeit und an das Leben selbst, das nicht stehen bleiben will. Wie es in dem Lied heißt: "Es eilt die Zeit und wir, wir müssen mit ihr eilen, kein stille stehen hier, kein Ruhen, kein Verweilen."

Natürlich mußten wir auch den Friedhof der Gemeinde Gemen besuchen. Die schön gepflegte Grabstätte der Familie Bückers drückt nicht Hoffnungslosigkeit und Tod aus, sondern symbolisiert vielmehr Glaube, Hoffnung und Liebe. Die Liebe der Geschwister für ihre Eltern, Onkel und Schwestern lebt weiter und verbindet somit die Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und eine lichte und freudige Zukunft. Das hl. Antonius Kapellchen in der Nähe zeugt nicht nur von göttlicher Hilfe in alter Zeit, sondern auch von Gottes Güte und Fürsorge heute und immer.

Vor dem Abschied wurden noch einige Aufnahmen gemacht und einander alles Gute gewünscht. Alfons meinte, daß ihm der Abschied immer etwas schwer falle, uns natürlich auch, besonders wenn es zu lieben Freunden kommt. Doch bleiben sich Freunde immer nahe, auch wenn viele tausende Kilometer und ein Ozean sie trennen. Die Freundschaftsbande, die geschlossen wurden bleiben fest und die Hoffnung sich wieder zu sehen, wird nicht erlöschen. **mm**

Dee Brell

fonn Jack Thiessen



Too Meddach, soo bie twalw eromm
Sad sijch too Desch, dis Oomtje Bromm.



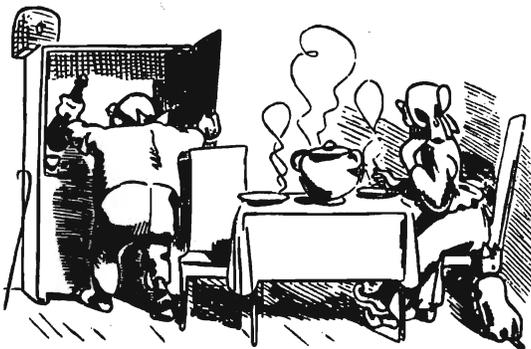
Hee kjitjcht festemmd, enn earnst enn stell
Daut Supptje aun derjch siene Brell.



Enn derch dee brell, gauns schoap enn kloa
Finjt enne Supp een langet Hoa.



"Na," sajcht dee Fru, "soont kjemmt mol fää,
Best mie doch goot? Sie nich dedwää!"



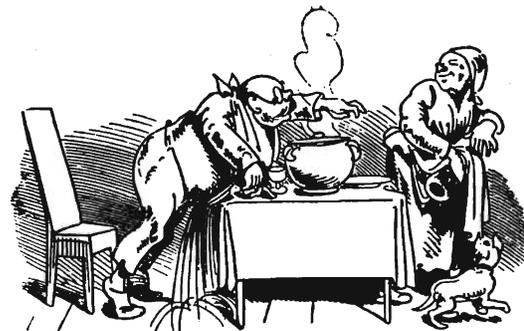
Hee kjitjcht sich omm, dann jeit dee Laups
Nom Schaup, holt sich 'ne Buddel Schnaups.



Hee drintjt, doch ennalijch soo stankat,
Daut am de Worscht nich eenmol jankat.



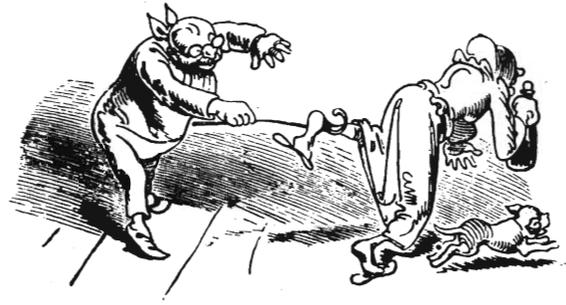
Uj, dentjt dee Fru, fangt sijch too järeme,
Enn well dee Buddel am wajchnäme.



Doch fuats ess nu de Spos febie,
"Fuats jefst dee hää, etj prijel die!"



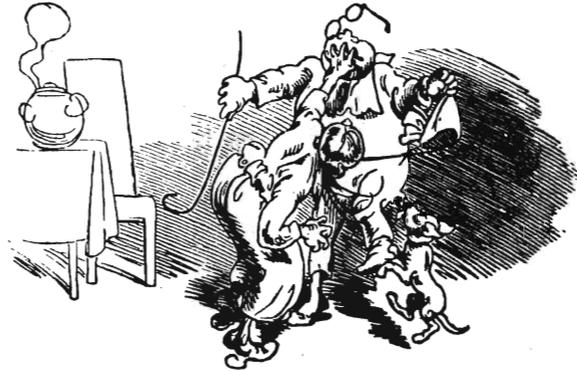
Hee jeit nu loos, hee haft'et drock
 Enn nemmt too Haund sien Gonestock!



Dee Fru, bloos wajch, ahr weppt de Scheestje,
 Dee Dus fangt ar schwind aum Pereestje.



Hee heiwt ar eent mett sienem Stock,
 Doch traft dee Buddel staut dem Rock.



Woo woat dee Fru nu daut woll gone?
 Na seet mol aun, fangt tridjtooschlone.



Haft siene Brell, enn freit sich seea,
 Äa Maun steit doa, sitt nuscht nijch meea.



Hee taupt 'eromm, dis blinja Maun
 Sien Wief, sien Fiend nijch finje kaun.



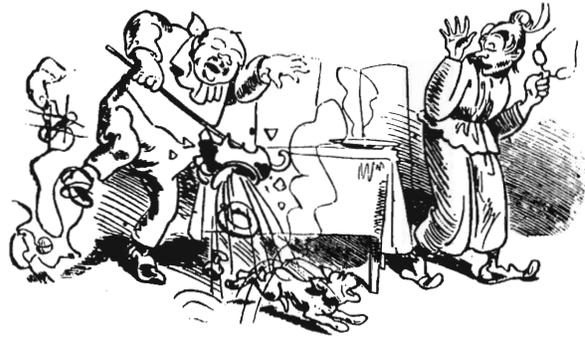
Hee jeit foll Wutt schwind derjche Stowe
 Dann "Autsch" febrennt hee sich aum Owe.



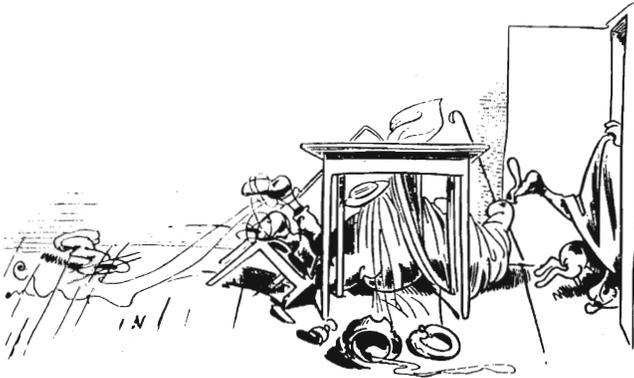
Hee dreit sich omm, ess seea fetjs,
 Febrennt doabie dee Sinndoagsbetjs.



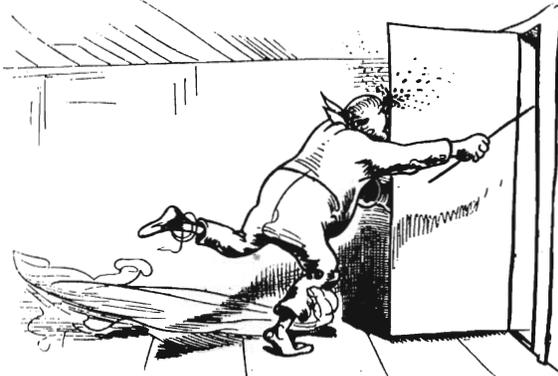
Nu haft dee Oola sich eascht domm
Enn heiw t enn schleit fuats aules omm.



Dee Suppterien, dee Worscht, daut Faut
Schleit hee nu twei, dee Hund woat naut.



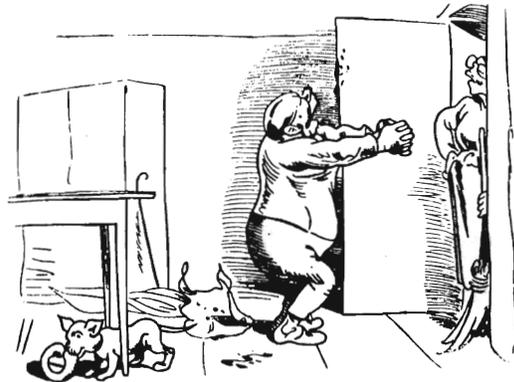
Enn Fru enn Hund bloos wajch fomm Maun,
Dee fellt mett Stool ar hinjeraun.



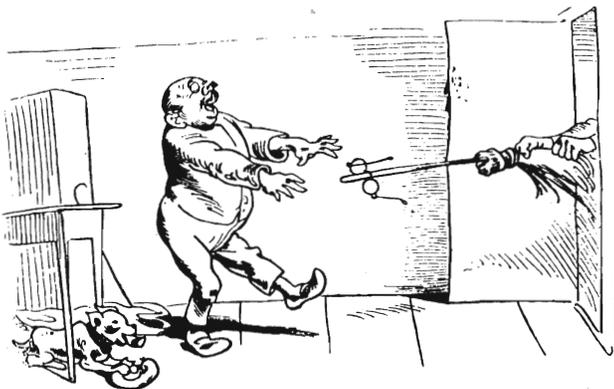
Gauns eiwrjich rannd, delenjd, dedwaa
Dee dolla Dus jlitj enne Daa.



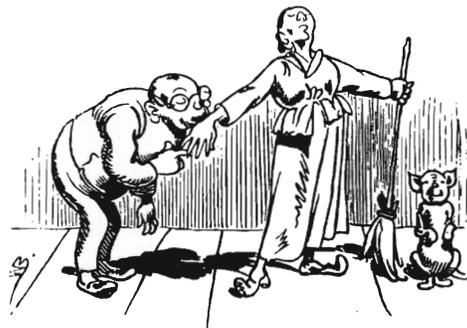
Nu kjemmt daut Enj, daut sitt nijch goot,
Ut Näs enn Mul rand am daut Bloot.



Enn gauns foll Deemut sajcht "Etj well,
Doch bitte jeff mie miene Brell!"



Enn nemt foll Freid, dis oola Bock
Dee Brell fonn ärem Gonestock.



Enn nu freit sich daut koasche Wief.
Dee Worscht haft Taup, dee Hund emm Lief.



our word

What Did the Pope Say to Mennonites?

Pope John Paul II has come and gone. What, if anything, did his visit mean to us Mennonites? Surely many of us must have been as impressed by this forceful world figure in our midst as millions of other Canadians were. Some of us, on the other hand, may have regarded him through Anabaptist-colored glasses as an over-glorified symbol and false relic from a church we left centuries ago precisely because it had too many self-serving symbols and false relics. Did the Pope's visit really have something genuine and powerful to say to us, or did we remain indifferent or even hostile to the man and his message brought to our shores at an expense considered by some as exorbitant and wasteful?

One fact is indisputable. This "Pilgrim Pope" has become the dominant figure of our age, a dynamic superstar of the adoring masses whose visits become national and media events of unprecedented scale. Not even Michael Jackson or Billy Graham or the American president can command such vast audiences. Perhaps few of us went to the trouble of going to Birds Hill Park to see the Pope conduct a mass in person, or even bothered to watch him zip by in his famous Popemobile in downtown Winnipeg. But most of us must have spent at least some time watching this fascinating, charismatic man and church leader on television, admiring his actor's voice and presence, his astonishing mastery of tongues, his incredible stamina in going day after unfaltering day through grueling hours of travel, speeches, meeting people and conducting masses.

Of course, one could hear the detractors and scoffers in the background: that the Pope's visit had to be largely paid for by the Canadian taxpayer; that the papal tour was a clever propaganda ploy to strengthen the hold of the Catholic Church in Canada; and that the Pope himself is nothing more than an unscrupulous, reactionary politician trying to subvert liberal movements such as women's rights, abortion on demand, church reform and even freedom of thought and worship. In Abbotsford a dishevelled, wild-eyed man (hopefully not a Mennonite) carried a crude sign at the papal rally that read: "Don't listen to this man. He is accursed."

Not all these complaints can be ignored or neatly denied. But they can be set in perspective by people of good will, including Christian Mennonites. Yes, Canadian taxpayers are presumably paying well over half of the estimated \$50-million costs incurred by the Pope's visit. There were also reliable estimates that the tour would generate well over \$100 million in business overall (although that would be no consolation to the local food and souvenir entrepreneurs who lost their free-enterprise shirts at Birds Hill Park). So much for the crassest of the objections.

Some of the arguments against the Pope and his visit are more subtle and more difficult to deal with. For disapproving Mennonites the strongest critical charge is undoubtedly the one set off between the two opposite poles of the Pope as deified man-God, and as symbolic embodiment of the worldly Church of Rome. We can all agree that the Pope is a mere mortal like the rest of us and should not be regarded as a surrogate for God. Much to his credit, however, this pope

does not seem to elevate himself above his own humanity, showing instead a taste for simple private life (preferring a bowl of borscht to a catered five-course luncheon here in Winnipeg, as one example).

On the other hand, it must be conceded that as a symbol of his church he represents not only spiritual power but a good deal of political power as well. As the head of his church he is liberal and innovative in the way he carries out his pastoral duties all over the world, but he also seems to turn a blind eye to some of the liberalizing trends identified and affirmed by the Second Vatican Council on such issues as the role of women in the Catholic priesthood, divorce, priests in politics, and liberation theology.

But to view the Pope only as a political figure and symbol of power is to do him a great disservice, not to mention to ourselves as Anabaptist-Mennonites. As Christians we ought to be willing to evaluate the Pope both in human terms as a practising Christian and as a universal symbol of Christianity cutting across doctrinal lines, historical controversy and even theological differences. Surely by any Christian standards, even the most evangelical ones, the Pope is an exemplary man of God and a great missionary who wins souls for Christ and renews and rejuvenates the Christian faith of millions of Catholics and non-Catholics wherever he goes. His sincerity and bed-rock faith are plain for all to see, and his ringing Christian message speaks for itself. "True living is found in God," he preached in Vancouver, "and you discover yourself in Christ. And to know Christ is to know God. And in order to know your real self you have to know Christ." That is straight gospel preaching of the kind we Mennonites should be able to respond to.

There is also a positive side to the Pope as symbol that we should not overlook. No one on earth reaches bigger audiences than Pope John Paul. As a symbol of Christianity he is listened to with more respect and credibility than anyone else. He offers words of hope and comfort to the oppressed and rejected in society. He delivers stirring homilies against the evils of materialism, courageously defends minorities (our native people and depressed fishermen, for example), denounces tyranny and exploitation and pleads for peace and an end to the obscenity of nuclear armaments. He affirms the value of all life, extols human dignity and worth, and praises the sanctity of the family. And always he comes across as a shining symbol of spiritual uplift and moral purity.

Perhaps at times it all seems "too commercial, too excessive," as a young man in Montreal claimed, but what other public figure has such an influence for the good on so many people? Certainly not Michael Jackson, another mighty media symbol with a vast, hysterical following. All he can do is gyrate his rubber body through wild contortions while singing loud rock songs in a hysterical voice that is neither male nor female. And yet he is held up by many parents of teenagers as a worthy role model because he does not smoke, drink or do drugs!

So in spite of our historical distrust of Catholicism, we Mennonites should have been able to relate to Pope John Paul as a passionate, compassionate Christian whose career is dedicated to unceasing and unflagging service to God. His visit here should have convinced us that we can accept him as a potent symbol of Christianity without for a moment compromising or forgetting the important issues of faith that caused our Anabaptist forefathers to leave what they considered to be a corrupt and fallen institution.

Pope John Paul's personal motto is: *Totus tuus*, All to you (Lord). What better motto could any practising Christian adopt?

— AR

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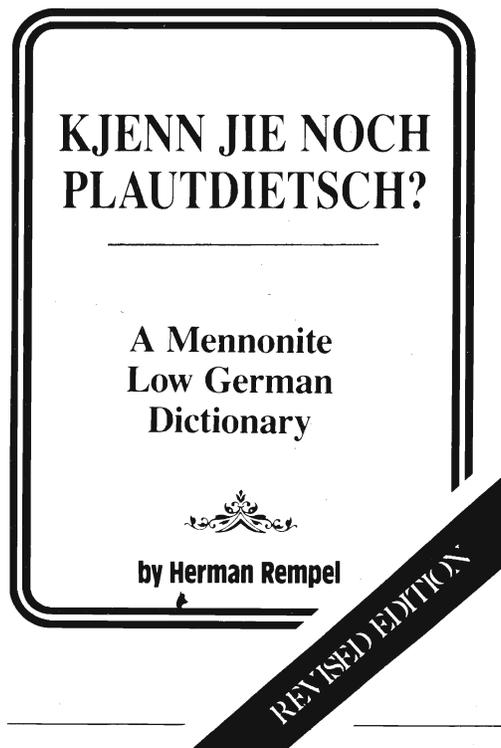
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