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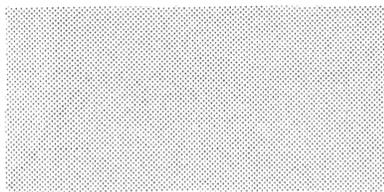
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Henriette Schellenberg

Singing is more than art, it also needs heart

The last notes of the idyllic *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth* had died down. In this section of Brahms *Deutsches Requiem* Robert Shaw's 250-voice chorus exalted all Christendom's love and longing for the tabernacles and courts of her Lord. Then the soprano's compassionate address to the blessed who mourn:

Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit
Aber ich will euch wiedersehen,
Under euer Herz soll sich freuen,
Und eure Freude soll niemand von
euch nehmen.
Ich will euch troesten,
Wie einen seine Mutter troestet.
Ich habe eine kleine Zeit
Muehe und Arbeit gehabt
Und habe grossen Tost gefunden.

This *Trost*, this solace, was expressed with deepest sensitivity and sincerity by coloratura soprano Henriette Schellenberg, her voice charged with wondrous emotions, with the promise of consolation, of hope, of joy that Zebaoth giveth and which no man taketh from you.

Oratorio is the field she has chosen for herself, the medium in which she finds

her greatest happiness in expression and where she is making her greatest contribution. "Singing in the *Requiem* was a very special performance for me. I loved the ideas I was singing and I worked very hard at conveying the emotion that is in the text. I always hope that the spirituality that is within me comes across because I mean every word of it, and I want to make it truly believable. For me there is not much point in singing just at an artistic level; that's just not enough. Nor is it for most of our people. I try to teach my students that to achieve beauty of tone is not the only important thing but also that we must communicate to others the feelings that are within us. The person has to come through."

That genuine sincerity is the motive for this singer is apparent and the resulting stability in personality and performance is not surprising. That this is coupled with undisputed talent and increasing excellence in achievement is cherished by audiences. Add to these

qualifications a dedication to hard work to make a success of an undertaking, and a wisdom that this not be allowed to exceed other, equally important priorities and you see an artist who is clearly headed for the goal she has set for herself.

What, in her early life, we wondered, was conducive to a future in music? Both Henry and Anna Cornies, Henriette's parents, came from musical families. Both their fathers were teachers and workers in the church. Henriette was born in 1947 in a sort of refugee camp near Stuttgart, Germany, where the family spent a few years after having left Russia to emigrate to Canada in 1948. In Winnipeg she, and her older brother and younger sister, lived with their parents in a tiny shack in East Kildonan. Short on money, they were, nevertheless, long on hope and ambition. They would have "typically immigrant sort of family gatherings for Christmas and other special times with everybody singing really good harmony."

They bought a "heap of a piano"

by Mary M. Enns

eventually and scraped up enough money every week to send Henriette to the Konrad Conservatory for piano lessons. She insists this is where she really learned to read music because of the volume of playing she was required to do, though it was at the expense of any real technique. Father played the violin as did their second daughter and together with Henriette they accompanied the clan singing. Piano practice was encouraged rather than forced, with mother sitting by listening. Her daughter remembers: "Mother was a good singer, always singing at her housework. Today I wonder how could she have done that! The last thing I want to do is sing while I do housework." Henry Cornies' great love was to conduct a choir, and he conducted the church choir for a time. When he took on the leadership of the Mennonite male voice choir he was convinced that that was *the* sound.

The decision to make music a serious study toward a career came during her second year of elementary school teaching. She was teaching all the music anyway and had already, as part of an education course, taken a summer class of voice with Herb Belyea at the University of Manitoba. She was 19. "It was my first encounter with voice lessons. Belyea was a wonderful motivator." And so she began teaching in a Transcona school as a "music specialist."

But teaching school was just not what she wanted to do. She hated the discipline problems she was experiencing with the older boys. When she was asked to sing on *Hymn Sing* she accepted with pleasure. She quit teaching school and began studies at the University of Manitoba School of Music.

Meanwhile she had met Prof. Theodore Lindenbaum of Detmold, Germany, during two summer sessions; one in Winnipeg, the other in Goshen, Indiana. Realizing her potential, he encouraged her to go and study with someone. "It was 1970. I was anxious to get out of Winnipeg and see the world anyway, so I decided to go to Detmold for a year. I stayed for four." She studied in opera school, she took Italian, French and German diction. She worked closely with Monica Driessler in aural training, with Lindenbaum, a voice technician, and with Prof. Guenther Weissenborn, voice teacher and accompanist to many of the great singers of that period, including baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. She immersed herself chiefly in the study of German Lieder, an area of music that she came to love dearly. "Right now oratorio is the direction I'm happy to go, but it's a little more confining. Some of the music is not that

obviously emotional. And it really is great singing things that are very sad or very happy." She finds some of the Bach and Handel subdued, the music rather more subtle. On the other hand, the German Lieder are appealing to her for their exquisite poetry and their emotional, explosive content.

In 1974, not yet having completed her vocal performance diploma at *Nordwestdeutsche Musikakademie* in Detmold, Henriette was hired by the Bavarian Radio Chorus under the leadership of Rafael Kubelik in Munich, Germany. Now she was making her living singing full time. On weekends she sang in church concerts. This continued for four years. Meanwhile she commuted to Detmold every three weeks, an 8-10 hour train ride, for a year until she had earned her diploma.

Eight years is a good stretch for a young Canadian to spend in Germany. Not unnaturally, she began to feel a restlessness, a desire to be back home in Canada. Unwilling to return to school teaching, she was grateful when George Wiebe responded to her enquiry and offered her some part-time work at CMBC, as did Sylvia MacDonald, her former voice teacher. With the help of Canada Council grants she now studied

with people like Elly Ameling and Gerard Souzay. A year later she was a full-time faculty member at CMBC. Over a period of years she has taught voice, aural training, music theory and piano at the college. She has also appeared in an impressive roster of concerts.

"Right now is a beautiful time for me, though it's extremely difficult trying to juggle three definite careers; the singing, the family, the teaching. But my heart is in all three and I really want all three, now.

Right now she is in concert work as heavily as she can afford to be. But the older her children, Miriam, three, and Christina, 18 months, get, the more time she hopes to be able to devote to her career. She gives a lion's share of credit to Rudy, her husband, who because of an exceptionally supportive attitude to her work, has made the whole a workable situation.

Rudy and Henriette first met when both were studying in Germany. A native of Kleefeld, Manitoba, Rudy has been a student at MBBC and was then studying conducting in Detmold. Henriette was already in Munich, commuting regularly to Detmold. Their favorite memory of that period is a long walk

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they took together in one of Germany's beautiful cemeteries.

Quite by coincidence both returned to Canada in 1978, and both were invited to join the Winnipeg Singers. Both became part of a small social group that went to the Gondola Pizza in East Kildonan every Thursday after choir practice. Their friendship crystalized into a courtship and they were married in 1980. Now Henriette, instead of going back to school teaching to put bread on the table, was able to continue her music teaching. Today they have a good working arrangement together, although problems surface at times because both are always involved in musical work on week ends, usually in different places. Each of them is, however, understanding of the other's involvements. "Rudy is very ambitious for me, which is good, because I need to be pushed a little."

Rudy's career in choral conducting earned him a post at the Steinbach Bible College. He also conducts an oratorio choir there as well as the sanctuary choir at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. With pride his wife smiles: "He's doing very well and getting better all the time. He's also a wonderful cook and keeps house better than I do. I couldn't have had the children if he were not the kind of person he is with them. He does more than his share all the time."

Frustrations? The time factor. Henriette believes she is not singing as well as she can and will because like many others she has to scrounge for time, taking care not to let the singing career sell itself short because "that's the easiest to go down the drain. The children won't wait, the students have their designated time, so the singing gets pushed off into a corner. Fortunately concerts put pressure on me to work on that."

But that means summoning up energy, and two active children require energy, too. "I had both my children after 30 and that has its disadvantages because it seems harder to cope with the incessant noise from kids who are wonderful but oh so lively." She bursts into laughter, her big brown eyes sparkling: "That's one of the reasons I'm working — to keep my sanity."

Henriette admits to no such frustrations in her teaching career, in the teaching of eager young students of music. "I love that!" And there appears to be a wealth of talent there. She feels the students are getting good training in our Mennonite private schools. "But I see doom and gloom regarding the direction that our church music is taking, though some churches are guarding

their high standards. I'm concerned when the young sing mostly in unison with guitar accompaniment. Their choice of music is alarming."

In Winnipeg there is excellent exposure to professional singing with opera and big choral events. Henriette becomes enthusiastic: "I've had several students in the last couple of years who came as raw material. Victor Engbrecht has a tremendous background, with his father in the music field. Another is Phil Enns, who had spent a year in Bienenberg, someone who didn't know how to use his voice at all, but the potential was very obvious, and he's a hard worker."

Then Schellenberg says something surprising: "My own singing has really improved with my teaching. So many things are under the surface with a student. To bring that out one has to exaggerate these things. Listening to myself I realize what has to come out for me. One of the biggest things we as Mennonites need to overcome is this inhibition on stage. Working with my students on that has really helped me a lot. It's a matter of pushing the student, prodding, cajoling and encouraging him in his ability to communicate. People like Victor, Phil, Mary Jane Hiebert, they're so good at such a young age; they're

getting the kind of work now that they are wanting."

Henriette feels she ought to and would like to be working harder on herself, her technique, her repertoire, but that is where the time factor comes in. She has, she says, had some wonderful opportunities recently through Bill Baerg, MBBC, for concerts in Kitchener, in Toronto and Vancouver. To be working and contributing chiefly on the Mennonite scene "has been an unexpected gift. I consider myself fortunate to be working with people like George Wiebe, Bill Baerg, John Martens and Henry Engbrecht in the Mennonite churches and colleges. And singing with John Martens is always uplifting. He's such a rock, musically, such a fine musician."

As she eventually gets more time away from the family Henriette would also like very much to go into recital work, which, until now, she has done so little of. With her talent, her dedication, her capacity for hard work, her love for music, her pleasure in sharing all this with others, it is to be hoped that that time is not too far away.

mm

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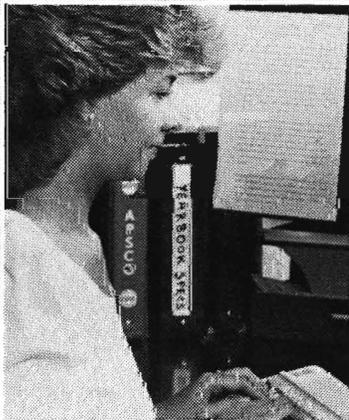
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"Where people make the difference"

Reflections on *The Shunning*

by Harry Loewen

A long-past religious practice among Mennonites has become the talk of Winnipeg and some southern Manitoba towns. Through the production of Patrick Friesen's play *The Shunning* both Mennonites and non-Mennonites have been reminded that there was a time — and among a few conservative groups it still happens today — when a member of a church could be ostracized and avoided (shunned) by the congregation, family and immediate society. Such shunning took place for either breaking some rule of the church or manifesting a proud and unyielding spirit, as happens in the case of Peter Neufeld in *The Shunning*.

The practice of applying the ban followed by shunning goes back to the early Anabaptists in the Netherlands and northern Germany. While Menno Simons, the leader of North-European Anabaptists, was not as severe as some of his fellow-elders in this matter, he too believed in, and practiced, banning and shunning. Shunning was the ultimate method used in an attempt to keep the church pure — "without spot or wrinkle," as Menno liked to call it. Shunning often included marital avoidance as well.

There is an interesting story about Swaen Rutgers of Emden, Germany, who in 1555 rebelled against this harsh practice among the early Mennonites. When her husband was banned for some unknown reason from the congregation and she was ordered by Elder Leenard Bouwens to avoid him and deny him "table and bed," Swaen refused to obey the order. The elder threatened to excommunicate her as well. Menno Simons and other mem-

bers of the congregation urged moderation, but when Swaen continued to resist Elder Bouwens she was banned from the congregation. Swaen Rutgers is no doubt one of the first women among Anabaptist-Mennonites who had the courage to rebel against an inhuman, thus less than Christian, practice.

The South-German and Swiss Anabaptists also practiced church discipline, including the ban, but they were less strict in the application of shunning which they considered to be too severe and a breach of Christian love and forgiveness. Among the more conservative Dutch, Prussian, and Russian Mennonites banning and shunning have persisted until fairly recent times. Among some U.S. and Canadian Mennonites the practice existed as late as the 1970s. In Manitoba this severe church discipline became a public scandal several years ago when the media exposed the practices of the Holdeman sect by interviewing banned members who were willing to talk about their experiences.

The play *The Shunning* has played to full houses in Altona, Steinbach and Winnipeg, with audiences composed of both Mennonites and non-Mennonites. Mennonite spectators who were interviewed by the media said they enjoyed the play and that as far as they knew such practice had taken place in the past but that it rarely happens today that someone is shunned.

Author Patrick Friesen, however, who grew up in Steinbach but today lives in Winnipeg and no longer is a church-practising Mennonite, said in a TV interview that the attitude among southern Manitoba Mennonites has not changed all that much. It was not altogether clear what he meant, but he seemed to say that while few churches today would avoid a member the way the hero of the play is avoided, in some respects and on another level Mennonites still treat some fellow-members

the way Peter Neufeld is treated.

Friesen's observation leads to reflections and comments with regard to the Mennonite churches' attitude toward those members who find themselves on the periphery or edge of official Mennonite beliefs and practices.

It is of course quite true that few churches today would deal with members the way Peter Neufeld in *The Shunning* is dealt with. However, there are other ways of ostracizing and shunning members who are considered undesirable or disturbing elements in the local church or in the wider Mennonite constituency. Moreover, the practical implications of such modern shunning may not be as dramatic as in Peter Neufeld's case, but they are nevertheless as serious and far-reaching. The following are but a few examples of how Mennonites are still being shunned.

Sometimes a member is ignored and excluded from the inner circle of church life because he is critical of the leadership of the church. Sometimes it happens that a member with insight and new ideas is not only avoided by both church and conference but also "silenced to death" by the church papers and magazines. We also know of instances where a principal of a Christian high school and teachers of Bible colleges were forced to resign because their understanding of the Gospel, among other reasons, did not square with that of the institutions or conference. There are, moreover, increasingly instances where educated and thinking members are pushed to the periphery or even beyond the edge of the religious community because they think for themselves and thus don't fit what the community considers correct dogma or practice. These examples could be multiplied.

It is ironic that religious leaders have been and are afraid of new light and love, and persecuted those who advo-

Light and Darkness: Imagery of *The Shunning*

cated and lived these two virtues. Jesus, for example, brought a new Gospel and loved sinners. For this he was nailed to the cross. In early Anabaptist history there was Hans Denck who preached and practised love for all men. As a result he was suspected of believing in universalism (the doctrine that God will ultimately save all men), and until fairly recently he was not quite accepted as a true Anabaptist by Mennonite historians. And closer to home, there was an elder in one of the Winnipeg churches who was "dealt with" and isolated by his constituency for following in the footsteps of Hans Denck. It is to the credit of the local church that it stood behind its beloved elder, defending him as a man of God and as an exemplary pastor.

In shunning their undesirable members, churches, institutions and conferences not only inflict pain upon the outcasts and act in an unchristian spirit, but they also deprive themselves of the spiritual benefits that could come to them through the activities of their critics. By shunning the thinkers and so-called radicals and heretics (persons who hold controversial opinions), the church is both stifling new insights and spiritual progress and admitting that it is far from following Jesus, who was the greatest radical, critic and heretic of all time. mm

In conversation with poet Patrick Friesen a few years ago, he remarked that he had often thought, while growing up, that the Mennonite conception of God was of a searchlight in a concentration camp, a light that roved over the darkness seeking out evidence of missteps and errors. Watching the PTE production of Friesen's *The Shunning* recently, I was reminded, rather insistently, of his comment.

Light seems to me to be one of the controlling metaphors of *The Shunning* in its stage version. From Peter's opening speech, where he recalls his mother's hoe "slashing down like a sun" as she weeds the garden, light and its effects occupy the characters. The play is set in July, a very hot July, we are told. Peter comments that the glowing sun in the fields burns him "black into soil" and that he sees so much of the sun that his sweat never dries.

Light defines not only the setting of the play, but also the terms of the world with which Peter is asked to concur. It

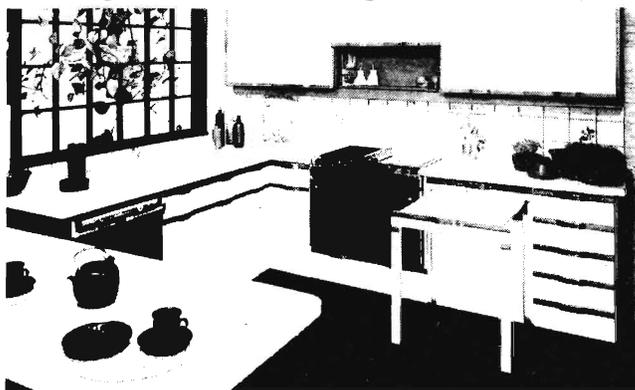
seems to him that his church requires him to accept a vision of reality that has neither warmth nor softness in it. In one of the most dramatic moments of the play, Peter, listening to Rev. Loewen quoting yet another passage of scripture, turns on him and shouts, "All this cold, hard light!" Light, repeatedly associated in literature, including biblical literature, with knowledge, takes on a malevolent quality in *The Shunning*. One may know the literal words of the gospel cold, but without the warmth of human compassion and love, that knowledge is merely, in the words of St. Paul, "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

Peter's conflict with his church begins with his refusal to accept the doctrine of a literal hell. But Peter fails to find peace, not because he refuses to accept the terms his church has set up, but because he cannot move past those terms. His brother Johann, the survivor, is willing occasionally to shield his eyes from the sun, and glory in such sights as his wife walking home from church. Peter, however, sees that the light, the reality his church asks him to accept, does not embrace the human hungering of the night. Precisely because he accepts their terms, he requires himself to choose between the cold, hard light and eternal darkness.

The staging of *The Shunning* borrows the metaphors of the poetry. Helen, who narrates the events of Peter's shunning, stands behind a screen of bars, caught in a spotlight. For her, the light is a trap. The knowledge of what is the right response to Peter's apostasy prevents her from acting on her instincts to move toward him in love. No longer is the couple permitted to lie together in bed, "swaddled in moonlight." Even in this most intimate place of human contact, the light searches them out, the sun "leaning in the window" like some peeping Tom.

In the final sequence of the play, Helen and Peter kneel together to sing the hymn, *O God, our help in ages past*. Peter sings with her strongly in the first stanza. He can understand the God that is "a shelter from the stormy blasts and our eternal home." But he walks out of the house as Helen continues to sing. At the conclusion of the hymn, we hear a single gunshot. Peter's is the dream that dies at break of day. mm

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Neatly crafted but tragic

Reviewed by Ruth Vogt

Those in the community who missed the PTE performance of *The Shunning* missed a real treat. For myself, having previously read Pat Friesen's narrative poem of the same name, and been deeply moved by the tragic story, I wondered just how Friesen's adaptation to a stage play would work. It works magnificently. The small, intimate facility of PTE, with the audience seated on three sides of the stage, is particularly suited to this essentially psychological drama. In such a setting the audience is very quickly drawn in to the inner lives of the four people involved in the action.

The play works because it deals with a powerful story, and because the playwright focuses on one central issue with little divergence from this issue. The movement toward the tragic ending is gripping and relentless. The play also works because of Pat Friesen's wonderful way with words. The poetry is never lost in the drama. One wants to listen — to savour every word. And finally, the play works at PTE because of the fine performances of the actors: Peter Smith as Peter, the central figure in the drama, and Maggie Nagle as his wife, Helen. Simply clothed, with an economy of overt dramatic movement, the two involve the audience completely in the issue which destroys them and their close relationship. Stephen Walsh plays the part of Loewen, the minister determined to cure Peter of the sin of pride; and Robb Paterson is excellent as Johann, the younger rather simple-minded brother of Peter, who tries pathetically, but is totally incapable of understanding the unyielding nature of his brother.

The Shunning is the story of a Mennonite farmer who finds the teaching of the church about Hell to be inconsistent with his view of a loving and forgiving God. For this apostasy he is disciplined by the church. Rev. Loewen visits him and urges him to change his mind. He is unable to do so. Finally, the most cruel of punishments is inflicted on the man. He is to be shunned. This should quickly help him to change his attitude and conform to the community. Shunning means that all normal forms of human contact are forbidden. Even his beloved wife must refrain from contact, and leave the marital bed. Torn

Review of "The Shunning" by Patrick Friesen.
Presented by Prairie Theatre Exchange.

between love for Christ, and love for her husband, she opts for Christ, and watches in agony as he slowly breaks down under the strain of isolation, yet defiantly refuses to give in to the pressure. Close to the end, after Peter goes on a senseless killing rampage of the henhouse, she hopelessly acknowledges that she will no longer concern herself about him — since he has chosen to abandon Christ, he will have to meet his fate by himself. Unable to bear the spiritual isolation, yet unable to change his mind, Peter takes a shotgun and kills himself. The play is so carefully crafted that the audience is prepared for this tragic ending, which could have been melodramatic, but is not.

The utter simplicity of the setting and the original music score by John McCulloch, together with the fine acting of the cast, all combine effectively to create a drama that grips one emotionally and forces one to come to terms with the central issue. Director Kim McCaw is to be commended, together with all the other participants, for a particularly fine production.

The Shunning, unlike the popular "sit-coms" on television, is not a drama which one can sit back and relax and enjoy, feeling comfortable about oneself and the world. Rather, it serves the purpose of all true drama, forcing one to sit up and search one's soul and ponder the message that is being presented. Is this drama about us, modern urban Mennonites living comfortably in the city in the second half of the twentieth century? What do we do with the independent thinkers in our community? Do we allow them to express their opinions, to challenge us and to continue to work in our midst? Are we ever guilty of a modern form of shunning, of social isolation which leaves the questioner on the fringe and alone? Our traditional method of dealing with non-conformists has been to remove them from our midst, so that we never have to deal with the challenges they are presenting. Though there are few Mennonite congregations today that would officially shun a rebel, and though much is said and done in the Mennonite community in the name of love, Friesen forces us to ask whether there is something cold and judgmental at the core of our religion.

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mirror mix-up

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C E R A

 A P E L

 R E T A

 A L S T E

 A R C E T



OOOOO is not an absence of war: it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.
 Spinoza, 1670

This edition we announce the winner of the contest published in the September edition: from the 46 entries, Tina Isaak, of Carman, was selected the winner. A cash prize has been sent.

The answers to the September contest are novel, comic, farce, amuse, laugh, and humor.

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

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

Entries must be sent to the Mirror office by November 26, 1985.

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**Send Entries to:
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mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

by Elmer Suderman

CONTRACT WITH THE DEVIL

The devil once offered me anything I asked in exchange for my soul. "Go to hell," I wanted to say, but always a sucker for a bargain, I considered his offer. "I'll tell you what: I'll trade my soul and even sign the contract with my blood if you'll help me write a book of poems, no, one poem will do, that will be remembered after I have sizzled in hell a thousand years." My wife laughed: "Well, I guess I won't have to worry that you'll go to hell."

I AM NOT THE JOB I WAS

I am not the Job I was. I do not swing my cane as I walk, proud, respected, honored by all. I do not see what once I saw: cattle too numerous to count and sheep and camels. My credit at the bank is as dried up as this myzballa. I have no children. Can anyone tell me what's going on here? I do not know where or who I am. I have lost my name. Does anyone here know me? I do not recognize my own voice. Who can tell me who I am? The dust in my eyes obscures the God I worshipped. Has anyone here seen God? Who can tell me who He is?

LIKE WILD GEESE

Like wild geese honking north faint and high and far away our lives skein out into the darkness into V shapes no shapes then V shape wearily recapitulant into no form cold sound no sound.

JOB'S DRAMA

I am, I've heard, a character in a play, one of the greatest ever written, they say. I throw my anguished lines into the desert air and know this is no play, this desert no stage. The sorrow's too real, the pus from the sores too putred, the itch and pain too intense. Grease paint could not accentuate my look of pain. My sackcloth's no costume I can take off when curtain falls for me. Or for you. We are characters, all of us, in the same play.

Visitor to Swaziland sees curious mix of ancient and modern

The following is the first of several letters written from Swaziland by Dr. Victor Peters, whose son Karl is teaching there. As MM readers have come to expect, Dr. Peters' wit and keen powers of observation are working as well as ever.

by Victor Peters

Every day the news media report on Africa. It is either a famine in Ethiopia, apartheid in South Africa, a military coup in Nigeria, or some other disturbing development. To know more about this so-called "dark" continent would be a rewarding pursuit, but my motive for going there was different.

We all know the Bible story of Jacob. When he heard that his son Joseph was in Egypt, he said: "It is enough. I will go and see him." The account reports that Jacob "took his journey with all that he had." My son Karl, through a Canadian service organization, had taken a teaching position in the Kingdom of Swaziland. Like Jacob, I said, "Let us depart to Swaziland." I too took all I had, passport and visa, traveller's cheques, and American Express and Visa credit cards. Unlike Joseph, Karl was not the chief Honcho of the Pharaoh. Karl had been assigned to a Catholic school in the remotest corner of Swaziland. But unlike Joseph again, Karl had a VW. While some of the roads here have seen little change since the days when the pyramids were built, we do get around.

Except for the roads Swaziland is a paradise. I have been here for over a month and the temperature during the day has not been under 70° nor over 80°, you neither shiver nor perspire. Karl lives in the middlevelt with the best of all climates. No mosquitos, few flies. The windows and doors remain open, no screens. (You close them at night of course to keep out lizards and snakes.) The landscape — rolling hills — is beautiful, and the natives are friendly. The

sisters, who run this school and also a clinic, have an orchard which I can see from my window as I write. First a patch of pineapple, then high up on the trees are avocados as big as two fists put together. Two rows of trees look almost like Christmas trees decorated with what the ancient Greeks called "golden apples" (oranges); next to them is a row of banana trees. Two hundred yards behind our house is an open market where a dozen women squat and sell all the different kinds of vegetables you can imagine.

There are of course some drawbacks, but not worse than those experienced by Adam and Eve before The Fall: no tele-



Woman with child in Swaziland.

vision, no newspapers, no hot running water. We do have electricity from 6 to 9 in the evening (supplied by a Diesel-driven generator), and fresh meat on Wednesday. Most of you will not remember the good old days in the Canadian West, before refrigeration. Farmers had beef-rings. They wanted fresh meat in summer, especially during threshing time, so they took turns butchering a steer or hog once a week. On that day all the neighboring farmers would go to this particular farmer and get their share of meat.

Rural Swaziland has a variant of this practice, except that its farmers do not take turns in slaughtering. Instead there is a butchery every 10 km or so, and on Wednesday Karl, Henry (a native teacher) and I drive to the nearest butchery. Since they have to teach until 2 o'clock, we left late in the afternoon. Last time the first butchery we got to was out of meat, so was the second. The third one had meat.

Now when you visualize a butchery, forget about Swift's. It's a building about twice the size of an outhouse. There is a door at the back and a wide opening in front. Behind the opening hangs the carcass on one side and the butcher stands on the other. You hand the butcher some money and he carves a chunk of meat and hands it to you. Henry knows the choices cuts and points out what he wants. Since he is highly respected, the butcher complies willingly.

In the evening we plan to have a steak dinner. Unfortunately more acquaintances drop it. Soon we are a party of blacks, coloreds (mixed parentage) and whites. During dinner the conversation turns to religion. I get the surprise of my life when I hear them discuss Rev. Jimmy Swaggart and the son of Oral Roberts, both great healers and speakers in tongues. Both of them have held meetings in Swaziland and both are accepted as some kind of *mutj*-men, a combination of miracle worker, medi-

cineman and faith healer. In the cities they have television. Karl and I have sat in a bar, sipped our beer and watched Jimmy Swaggert from a TV-set perched in the corner. He is as often on Swazi television as he is at home, denouncing sin, while the natives grunt approval and drink their coke and whisky or coke and cane (a kind of vodka made from sugar cane).

Indeed, many of the traditional beliefs here and Christian rituals are not exclusive. What better way of getting rid of evil spirits than by drowning them in immersion baptism. The main Christian church among blacks in Swaziland and South Africa are the Apostolic Zionists (no connection with Israel), emphasizes healing, tongues and three-fold baptism. Its priests are also prophets, inspired instruments who may also

reinterpret Scripture. Much of their church service consists of extravagant night-long singing and dancing. Automobiles are rare in Swaziland. Since the services are conducted during the night from Saturday to Sunday, you see on Sunday mornings many worn-out Zionists struggling to get home, among them the bearded priests with their long sticks and colorful flowing garb. Life is not dull in Swaziland.

mm

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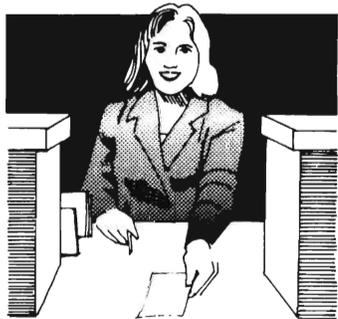
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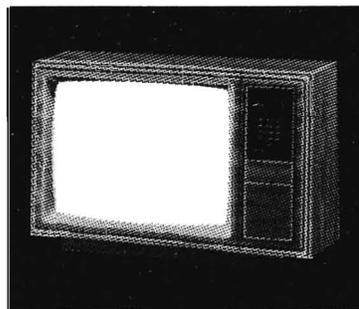
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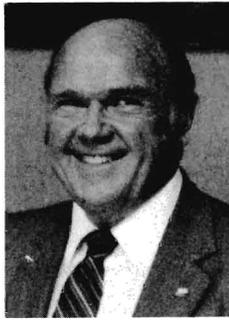
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C. P. Loewen



C. P. Loewen, 1926-85: A personal tribute

Cornie P. Loewen, 59, prominent Steinbach businessman, died peacefully at his home in Steinbach on Sunday, October 20. He was the founder and chairman of the board of Loewen Windows, Steinbach's largest business enterprise, with branches in Edmonton, Calgary and Saskatoon. Mr. Loewen was widely known not only as a businessman but as an active Christian who devoted much of his time to church and missions work and who travelled widely in the service of MCC and other Mennonite service organizations. Funeral services were held in Steinbach on October 24, with around 2,000 people in attendance.

by Al Reimer

C. P. "Cornie" Loewen of Steinbach was one of my oldest friends. We got to know each other in Sunday school and in Tante Anna's Kindergarten class. We started school together in Miss Mary Kornelson's Grade One class in the prim white elementary school building that stood where the town hall stands today. In those early years I was always a little envious of Corky. He lived in a big house on Main Street and his father owned the large lumberyard that ran almost back to Hanover Street where I lived. Every day he brought to school and ate with serene relish a huge, shiny red Delicious apple that made my mouth run just to look at. We didn't have those at home. On the schoolyard he excelled in soccer and softball, even though he was a chubby little guy who didn't look very athletic.

Cornie dropped out of school early, his talents already required in the family business. When I was expelled from high school one year, my father grimly got me a job at C. T. Loewen's Lumberyard. I hated the drudgery of piling

lumber and cement sacks all day, but occasionally got a respite by being assigned as Cornie's helper on the delivery truck he drove to Winnipeg daily. The hours spent driving and being in the city made those "bonus" days that didn't feel like work. By that time Cornie and I didn't have all that much in common, I suppose. His thoughts were mainly on business and other serious matters like religion and the church. Mine were mostly on girls, books and on my secret ambition to be an artist of some kind or another. I couldn't wait to get away from Steinbach, while Cornie accepted it and couldn't wait to begin his inherited business role in it. And yet there remained an unspoken bond between us. I respected his quiet competence and essential decency; he was surprisingly tolerant of my rebel views and teenaged contempt for the familiar. His future, of course, was assured, mine very much up in the air.

By the time I achieved respectability and a career in Winnipeg, Cornie was already running an ever-expanding lumberyard and window factory with the same cheerful, unassuming efficiency and quiet faith in the inevitable rightness of things that he has always shown in the past. We remained good if distant friends. Whenever my wife and I visited Cornie and Anne (another old school friend) they were generous hosts and treated us with warm friendliness and Cornie's special brand of lively interest.

For all his impressive achievements in business, Cornie Loewen remained a down-to-earth and uncomplicated human being. He was always genial, loved people, and had a casual, disarming personal manner that was absolutely genuine. And although he was a hard worker, he was anything but a prisoner of his own success, a workaholic condemning himself to a life sentence in his

office. He carried his boyhood love for active sports into middle age and remained a better than average golfer and skier. He loved flying and was a skilled pilot until a balky heart forced him to give up his license.

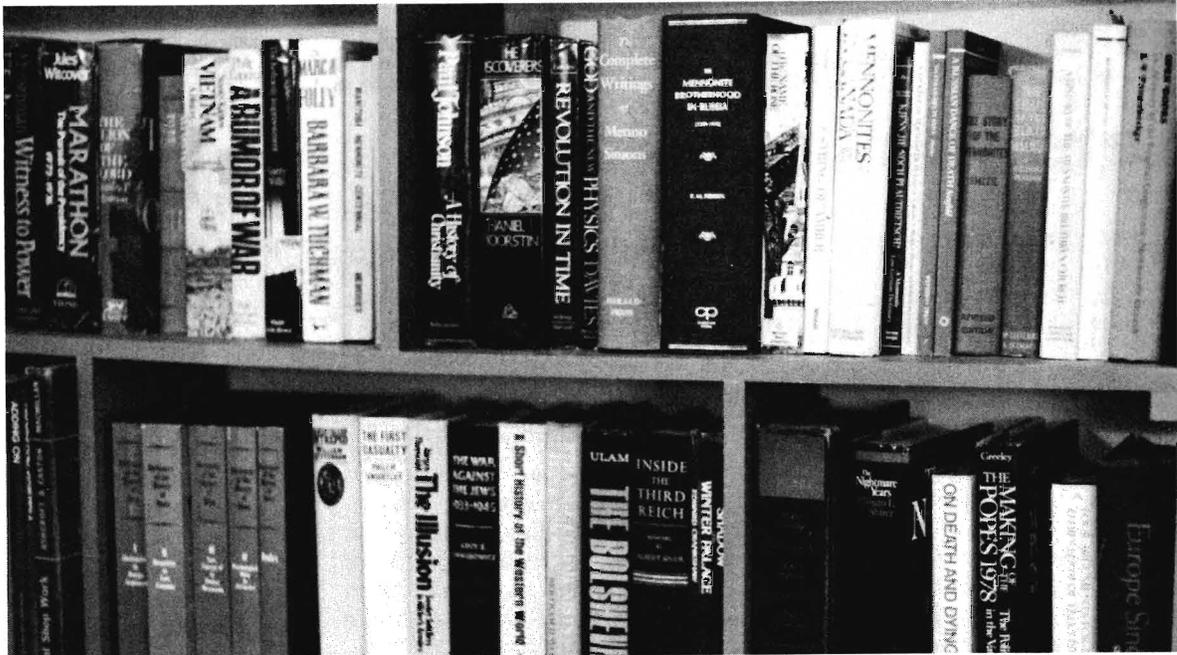
Above all, Cornie was a humane, compassionate Christian who never lost sight of the essentials in life. Born to privilege, command and money he certainly was, but none of that ever went to his head. When C. P. Loewen spoke of the family business (and his own) as a stewardship held in trust from God nobody who knew the man and his beliefs was sceptical or suspected hypocrisy. Cornie had inherited that philosophy from his father and took it as literally as a man can take anything. He was a Christian businessman and he proved it every day of his life. He shared the Steinbach business establishment's abhorrence for trade unions, but he had long since put his employees on a profit-sharing plan. Cornie and Anne lived in a secluded new house on the northern edge of town and he travelled a lot, but otherwise his lifestyle differed little from that of the workers in his factory.

Devoted as he was to his family, business and community, Cornie's Christian vision was the most ambitious part of him. He practised a Christian form of *noblesse oblige* that was far-reaching but characteristically self-effacing. He spent countless hours on various church and mission boards, and travelled countless miles all over the world — especially in African countries — inspecting MCC projects and providing constructive advice, moral support and practical assistance. His energy, vision and self-sacrificing dedication even with his failing heart, marked him as a man who would have been considered special in any community or time. Steinbach was lucky to have had him for its own.

As a boy I admired Corky Loewen and envied him a little. As a man I admired him even more, and if I still envied him a little it was not for his public success but for his private qualities as a man and a Christian. Around 2,000 mourners in a town of 8,000 people attended his funeral. The largest church in Steinbach was filled to capacity half an hour before the funeral service began. And I am sure that most of them, like me, were there to pay their last respects to a valued friend rather than to a prominent pillar of the community.

Rest in peace, Cork. You showed us where the tree is, let others eat the apples now. **mm**

***Books give not wisdom where none was before,
But where some is, there reading makes it more.***
— Sir John Harrington



The Mennonite Literary Society, Inc., a non-profit organization, began as Brock Publishing Company in 1971. The Society's main purpose is to print a magazine, **The Mennonite Mirror**, but it also supports the publication of books of interest to the Mennonite community. The **Mennonite Mirror** has been published monthly since 1971 and enters more than 5,000 Mennonite homes.

Books published by the Literary Society are the following:

- 1977 *A Russian Dance of Death* by Dietrich Neufeld
- 1979 *No Strangers in Exile* by Hans Harder
- 1981 *Mennonite Images* ed. by Harry Loewen
- 1982 *Meditations on a Place and a Way of life* by Ken Loewen and Margaret Loewen Reimer
- 1983 *A Beloved Physician Cornelius W. Wiebe* by Mavis Reimer
- 1983 *A Sackful of Plautdietsch* by Al Reimer, Anne Reimer and Jack Thiessen
- 1984 *Stumbling Heavenward* by Urie A. Bender
- 1984 *Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch?* by Herman Rempel
- 1985 a novel now in publication by Al Reimer

The Society was also involved in the publication of *From Russia with Music* by Wesley Berg. Several new books are planned for 1986.

The Mennonite Literary Society finances its work in the following ways:

- Subscriptions to the Mirror
- Advertising
- Donations
- Individual Book grants for partial funding from the Multicultural arm of the Secretary of State

We require a minimum of \$10,000 a year in donations to support the Mennonite Mirror and to publish several books a year. To improve our publishing program we need financial support from the Mennonite community.

... literature rests on a foundation of general acceptance, and it is dependent on the civilization in which it is produced, as painting and sculpture are not; the painter may find a sympathetic buyer for his single picture, but the writer must find at least a few hundred buyers for his book, or his career is at an end.

— Robertson Davies (Voice from the Attic)

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review

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The Singing Ennses Soar Again

a review by Al Reimer

The Enns Family and Friends Singers Present The Circle of Friends Revisited, Muriel Richardson Auditorium, Winnipeg Art Gallery, October 25 and 26th, 1985.

Yes, folks, the singing Enns clan has done it again! Like one of those legendary circus families performing on the high wire or trapeze, this mighty Enns team never faltered as they took their ensemble act through another dazzling evening of popular stage entertainment at the Muriel Richardson Auditorium. This time there were 37 of them, and with their usual Enns chutzpa (*Driestheit, opp Plautdietsch*) they made the Art Gallery ring with old favorites like *Drunten im Unterland, Stenka Razin, and On that great gettin' up mornin'*. The opening songs were accompanied by informal color slides of the family on trips or simply enjoying nature. In between songs they recited poems in three languages, told funny stories and anecdotes and deftly picked the hearts of their capacity audiences for two nights running.

In an age of increasingly sophisticated entertainment, where else could you find a public performance as delightfully old-fashioned, shamelessly sentimental and artistically wholesome as this? Unlike their last one two years ago, this Enns program had no overt theme, but was designed simply to create, as clan leader Brother Ernest put it, "an atmosphere of *Gemütlichkeit*. It had all the variety, spontaneity and casual charm of a family sing-song around the old parlor upright. One suspects that the Enns clan still does this sort of thing every time they get together. In their enthusiasm, offhandedness and sheer joy of performing they are amateurs, all right, but with a difference. Putting together a program like this requires an immense outlay of time, energy and dedication, as well as considerable talent. And these singing Ennses have all those qualities and then some.

As usual they sang familiar German,

English and Russian folksongs and Negro spirituals in no particular order but always with zest and the kind of innate good taste that is characteristic of this group. The highlight of the evening for me and for most of the audience, I'm sure, was Brother Harry's thrilling rendition of *Stenka Razin*, accompanied by brothers John and Henri on the guitar and balalaika, respectively. Harry Enns' ringing bass is still in fine estate and song and singer suited each other to perfection. The Five Brothers — Ernest, Sig, Harry, John and Henri combined for a hilarious "old men's" version of *Love's Old Sweet Song*. I also enjoyed Henri's solo *In einem kühlen Grunde*, Sig's cavernous basso rendering of *Jacob's Ladder* and Eleanor Isaak's sweetly sung *Our Bright Summer Days*. The full choir sang a hauntingly beautiful *Müde bin ich, geh' zur Ruh* and a lovely *Die Lore am Tore*.

The readings were as varied and skilfully done as the singing. Irmgard Friesen read a Fritz Reuter poem in flawless Mecklenburger Platt, followed by Butch Isaak with a poem in Molochnaya Plautdietsch (the Mennonite Low German sounds "flatter," less like High German). Horst Friesen read a humorous 1985 version of *Snow White* and Peter Enns delivered two German poems in his usual polished style. And Selma Enns scored a palpable hit with her *I wish I didn't talk so much*. Selma has a unique way of acting out a poem. Marie Enns gave a graceful reading of an English poem. Another touching moment of evening came when young Cathy Enns rose bravely from her wheelchair and presented a red rose to a cousin standing in for a great-aunt.

This was the third such Enns concert and if the audience has anything to say about it, it won't be the last one. What is the source of this family's genuine appeal as performers? Could it be that we see them as representing a style of family life that flourished among Mennonites in Russia and here in Canada at one time but that is now rapidly declin-

ing? That style was, of course, based on the clan concept, the family as a complete social organism working together, playing together, praying together. It was patriarchal in structure, stable in form, devout and purposeful in spirit. With its German cultural orientation this way of life tried to preserve a sense of generational continuity and fostered a narrow but healthy artistic refinement. Listening to the Enns family present these unpretentious bits of folk culture gives one the illusion of time standing still, as though we are still in the innocent, naively hopeful earlier decades of this century.

But time is rushing by after all. One wonders how long this fine family will be able to preserve their archaic but immensely appealing style of popular entertainment. How precious, fragile and personal this warm cultural gesture seems when set beside the noisy a-pestrut and blasting cacophony of the Rock Era. For a brief moment, at least, the Enns family created the illusion that we all once shared a saner, sweeter, more caring world than the one towards which we are how being helplessly propelled.

May the Enns Family lead us into their magic Circle of Friends again soon. *Komt boold wada, jo? mm*



Magdalene Klassen

David J. Epp, President of Kona Enterprises Ltd. and Kona Properties Ltd. is pleased to announce the appointment of Magdalene Klassen as a Real Estate Investment Consultant with the Kona Group.

Prior to joining Kona Magdalene was the owner of Magdalene's Sewing Shop, and is presently co-owner of Harris Sewing Centre.

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success in business, and something of his business philosophy through our mutual participation in MEDA. I was always tremendously impressed by his jovial and sincere character, and by his conviction that a business is not merely, or even primarily, a money-making machine but a social organism in which both workers and managers create a living environment which is vital to both. I had the feeling that if we closely examined some of our beliefs we would discover that we disagreed at many points, but his open-heartedness never allowed him to become too judgmental on that score. One could work together on the important beliefs that one *did* share. Of the businessmen that I have come to know fairly well over the past 20 years, I would tend to place Cornie in the very top ranks when it comes to vision and integrity. It is good to see that members of his family seem capable of carrying on this tradition.

- I must close this month's observations with a much smaller tragedy. On one of the last weekends in October we are able once again to spend a few days with our daughter and grandson from Edmonton. On a nice Sunday afternoon I am able to delight our grandson by giving him a large helium-filled balloon. He loves to watch it hit the ceiling of our car as we drive home with it. As we step out of the car I transfer it to his free hand. Somehow a connection is missed, the balloon sails up quickly into the blue sky, and our grandson can only stare up in agony as his prized possession disappears into the distance. We hear later that a new weather balloon was spotted an hour later over Gimli, on its way to the north pole. That is small consolation for the little guy who has had to discover, in the painful way that most of us do, that there is no lasting comfort in the things of this world. Eventually they all fade away.

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COMING EVENTS

November 15: 6:30 p.m. Mennonite Literary Society, Inc. annual meeting.

November 16: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School giant garage sale, auction and bazaar, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 26 Columbus Crescent.

November 21 and 22: Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre, "Amahl and the Night Visitors," at Young United Church.

November 22: 7:00 p.m. Mennonite Village Museum Fund-Raising Dinner.

November 22 and 23: Annual MCC meeting. Sargent church.

November 25: Westgate Society Semi-Annual Meeting.

December 6, 7, 8: CMBC/MBBC Oratorio Choirs performing Bach's Christmas Oratorio with the Winnipeg Symphony.



Carol Loeppky of Winkler, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment at Hindman, Ky. She will be working as an adult education instructor at Hindman Settlement School. Loeppky received a bachelor's degree in human ecology and education from the University of Manitoba. She was last employed as a home economics and music teacher in Whitemouth, Man. Loeppky is a member of the Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. Her parents are Helen and Bernie Loeppky of Winkler.

Jack and Lena Sawatzky are serving as voluntary service workers at Canadian Mennonite Bible College for the 1985-86 academic year. Jack will tutor international students in English, act as a resource person in the area of study skills, and co-ordinate social service projects for CMBC students. Lena will work with the service committee and help with office overload. They are members of Bethel Mennonite Church. Jack has taken an early retirement from Winnipeg School Division.

Rev. Diedrich Gerbrandt was installed as pastor at the Grunthal Elim Church on Sunday, September 22. The Gerbrandts have lived in Rosthern, Saskatchewan, for the last six years.

James and Marilyn Heinrichs of Winnipeg, are beginning three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignments in Sudan. Marilyn will be working as a personnel administrator and James as a vehicle workshop manager. The Heinrichses previously served with MCC in Swaziland. James received a bachelor's degree in religious education from the University of Winnipeg. Marilyn received a bachelor's degree in music from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. James last worked as an automotive technician in Winnipeg. The Heinrichses are members of Aberdeen Evangelical Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. They have one child, Jane.



Carol Ann Klassen of Morden, is beginning a three-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment at Tanta, Egypt. She will be working as an elementary teacher with the Coptic Evangelical Church. Klassen previously served with the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions in Osaka, Japan. She received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Brandon University. She was last employed as an elementary teacher in Gnadenthal, Man. Klassen is a member of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Morden. Her parents are Jake and Anne Klassen of Morden.

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recording artist (he has three albums) made him the most appealing candidate for the job, according to Dodi Robb, head of CBC-TV children's programming.

Mennonite Central Committee needs 5,000 health kits to send to Kampuchea. MCC has a license to ship these kits that lasts only until December 30. The health kits are one response to the overwhelming health and nutritional needs in Kampuchea. They are distributed through hospitals in nine provinces. MCC encourages Sunday School classes, families and church groups to send kits to any MCC office. The kits should include: a toothbrush, family-size tube of toothpaste, bar of soap (5-6 oz.) nail clipper with file, and a dark-colored hand towel.

Peace advocates in Canada are suggesting that Boxing Day should be designated as **Peace Day**, coming as it does immediately after Christmas, the celebration of the birthday of the Prince of Peace.

Rev. David D. Klassen, a long-time leader in the Mennonite community, died on September 4. He was an active leader in the Bergthaler Church from 1935 until its dissolution in 1972. He was elected to the ministry at age 28 in 1930. He served as board member of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna, and also of the Canadian Mennonite Bible College. He is survived by his wife, Susan, 15 children and their families.



The **MCC Relief Sale** held in Morris in September raised \$80,000. Crafts, baked goods, produce, sausage and hot traditional foods were sold. Auction sales included furniture and farm equipment, some of it donated by local businesses, as well as quilts and other handcrafted items. Proceeds from the sale have been designated to go in equal

portions to MCC work in Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and El Salvador. The amount will be given to MCC in full, thanks to the efforts of **Sid Reimer** of Morris and **Winston Penner** of Landmark, who ran in the Manitoba Marathon to raise money for administrative costs.



The first volume of the collected writings of Arnold Dyck was presented at the September meeting of the board of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society at the Elim Bible Institute in Altona. Prof. Victor Doerksen said there are plans for three further volumes. Dyck was a versatile Manitoba writer, perhaps best known for his humorous Low German sketches involving Koop and Bua. In other business the Board approved plans of the cultural committee to conduct its music composers' competition another year. The program committee was encouraged to proceed with plans to record for radio broadcast the Arnold Dyck drama, *Wellkaom op'e Forstei* under the direction of Wilmer Penner. The Mennonite Book Club reported encouraging sales and growth in membership. Plans for a family history and genealogy workshop were endorsed. Membership in the Society currently stands at 161.

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About 150 people attended a tree-planting ceremony on the grounds of the Manitoba legislature that was organized by the German-Canadian community of the province. The linden (basswood) tree that was planted is intended to be an expression of thanksgiving for the religious, cultural, and linguistic freedom the community enjoys here. The ceremony featured a 40-voice children's choir under the direction of Rita Dyck, statements from various representatives of the German Community, and by Vic Schroeder, representing the Manitoba government. The tree-planting was the opening event for an all-day event that took place some weeks later, a community development conference on German-Canadians.



A ground-breaking ceremony took place in early October for the new Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) building that will be built in Fort Garry on a four-acre lot near Bishop Grandin Boulevard. The new building will cost about \$1.3 million, with five per cent of the cost coming from the provincial government through a job-creation grant, while the balance will be raised equally by MCC Manitoba and MCC Canada.

CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

The University of Winnipeg Athletic Centre has now been open for one year and the community use program is well under way. Since January, 23,000 people have entered the doors of this impressive building to participate in various community programs. Dr. Robin Farquhar, feels the university holds an intergal educational, social and recreational role in the urban core of Winnipeg, and the joint user concept of the Athletic Centre is one of many programs which has helped.

Since the facility is accessible to and usable by the physically handicapped, it has become a home to many special needs groups. Ethnic groups are also pursuing their cultural, recreational and athletic interests in this fine urban sports facility. Thanks to provincial government funding, access to this facility is free of charge for these groups.

The concept of joint usage of the Athletic Centre with the surrounding community is unique in North America. To introduce this concept to Winnipeg The University of Winnipeg is presenting a Cultural Extravaganza, Friday, November 29, 8 p.m. at the Athletic Centre, 400 Spence Steet. Groups such as the Magdaragat Phillipine Folk Dancers, Joycettes Twirlers and the Japanese Kendo Sword Fighters will be providing an evening of entertainment, including music, song and dance. Tickets are \$4 per person and are available at ATO, BTO, and The University of Winnipeg Athletic Centre until November 26.

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AN OVERDUE TRIBUTE TO MENNONITE MUSICIAN

I enjoy the fare of *Mennonite Mirror*, that is, most of its contents, and hope that you will carry on with an ever-growing number of subscribers. In the latest issue I was particularly interested in the tribute to that one-time and so prolonged irritant contributor to *Der Bote*, especially during the 1930s on a Mennonite hymnology, J. P. Claszen, by Wesley Berg. That is a tribute which was long overdue. I also can agree with Mr. Berg's assumptions as to possible reasons for Claszen having been so readily forgotten among Canadian-Russian Mennonitism, at least among its generality, not to mention at all among its ministry. However, in extenuation of the latter Claszen's indictments of "*das ausgedoerrte Mennonitentum*" — as he labeled it — and as he also pointed out in one of his early 1939 articles, he deliberately refused to say anything good about Russian-Canadian Mennonitism (Feb. 22, p. 4), J.P.'s intolerance of the opinions of a number of our foremost church and civic leaders was inexcusable. And could one expect that such among our foremost men as J. H. Janzen, B. B. Janz, and many others could easily forget that Claszen boasted about having denounced them and others among our church and cultural leaders to a certain Nazi organization in Berlin?

And yet, there is Walter Quiring, by every measure a worse Nazi promoter than J.P. ever was as a sympathizer, who also threatened some of our church and cultural leadership ". . . sie darf sich dann aber auch nicht wundern wenn wir, zum Beispiel in einem befreiten Russland, die Quittung auf dem Tisch legen werden." (March 22, 1939, pp. 2-3). He ended up in a Democratic Canada as the editor of a *Mennonitisches Familienblatt*.

Pax vobiscum! J.P., and may you receive your dues among Canadian music lovers, church and laymen alike.
Sincerely yours,
David G. Rempel

REVIEW DISAPPOINTS

Your February issue has just arrived on my desk. I found Victor Derksen's editorial on Mennonite theology very helpful and thought-provoking. Conversely I was disappointed in Harry Loewen's review of my book, *Love of Enemies*. If Mennonite theology is to grow then we must not just praise or condemn each other (as Derksen also notes) but we must come to terms with methodology and we must make critical judgements informed by our own scholarship.

Two wholly gratuitous comments in Loewen's review I found offensive. One that I write from a "genuine Mennonite tradition." What he owes me as an author and your readers is an answer to the critical question: Have I represented correctly the sources which as a scholar I must deal with on the topic of love of enemies and of peace? Does it really matter to your readers whether Loewen thinks that I write from a tradition that is genuinely Mennonite? And how has he come to that conclusion? By checking whether I attend Mennonite church? Comparing my conclusions with Schleithem? Menno Simons? For me, it matters not in the least whether Loewen even as incumbent of the Mennonite chair places me in that tradition. What matters is whether I have been faithful to Scripture.

The second gratuitous comment is that when I investigate Greek and Jewish sources I am "seeking to promote a spirit of ecumenism." As a scholar Loewen knows that we work with the sources that are available to us. Part of the newness of my book is precisely that I combine these sources in survey fashion and allow the reader to see that what is often touted as the great original idea of Christianity, love of enemies, is in fact seen already as far back as Egyptian wisdom literature.

Since, however, Loewen is not conversant in the field of Biblical studies he can attribute my range of quotations only to a "spirit of ecumenism." Your readers are too good to have me inflict on them other evidence of Loewen's failure to see the way in which I have tried to cut a fresh furrow on ground much traversed. I am, however, enclosing some of that for you and, I trust, Professor Loewen's edification. Perhaps you will allow me to review his next book for I am sure that I am as unqualified to judge his work in his field as he is to assess mine.

William Klassen
Inter-Faith Academy of Peace
Jerusalem, Israel

NO OPENINGS FOR WOMEN

Recently, I was involved in a very disturbing episode. A Master's graduate from our counselling program contacted me about job opportunities. This graduate student is a caring, intelligent, well-educated, experienced worker. Her curriculum vitae would contain information such as the following: 1) Many years teaching experience, including Elim Bible School; 2) A counsellor in a Personal Care Home; 3) A graduate of a Bible seminary; 4) A M.Ed. degree in counselling from the University of Manitoba; and 5) Much experience in church work and in marriage and family counselling.

I encouraged her to contact the general conference office since I was certain there would be ministerial positions available. Furthermore, she had been strongly considered for a minister's position last year at one of our largest Mennonite churches. When she phoned the conference office, explained her credentials and experience, and asked whether a position was available, the man at the office paused for several awkward moments, and said there was absolutely nothing available. Then he added, patronizingly, "are you interested in doing some volunteer work?" Upon hearing the response that she wished a paid position, the man at the Conference Office again said coldly and firmly, "We have no openings."

I found this hard to believe since the church I belong to has spent years trying to get a minister and we were frequently told by the conference that there were many more openings than ministers. I called the conference and asked whether there were any openings. Realizing a male was interested, I was immediately told by this same man that there were several positions open in Manitoba and that they were expecting several more openings shortly. I thanked him for the information.

I am left with an empty feeling, thinking, what do I do now? I have decided to write this letter and send it to the Conference Offices, and to the *Mennonite Mirror*, with the hope that people who make ministerial decisions will not eliminate educated, experienced candidates for considerations simply because they are women.

Bill Schulz
Winnipeg

Editor's note: This letter was received by the *Mirror* staff during the past year. Our apologies to the writer for the delay in publication.

Arnold Dyck German volume to revive interest in writer's work

a review by Andre Oberle

Dyck, Arnold. *Collected Works in 4 Volumes: Volume One: Verloren in der Steppe, Aus meinem Leben*. Edited by Victor G. Doerksen and Harry Loewen. Steinbach: Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 1985. Clothbound with dustjacket, with many illustrations by Arnold Dyck, 515 pages, \$25 (Special subscription price for all four volumes \$95).

The timely appearance of the first volume of Arnold Dyck's collected works marks an important and exciting event in the activities of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. This exceptionally handsome first volume contains the largely autobiographical novel *Verloren in der Steppe* (at last in a format worthy of its literary stature!) and the hitherto unpublished autobiographical sketch *Aus meinem Leben*. The novel is illustrated with the charmingly unpretentious drawings of Arnold Dyck which help to make Dyck's world concrete to the reader. Other illustrative material is also included. This edition of the works of Arnold Dyck features an unusually large print on fine quality non-glare paper.

The editors of Volume One, Victor G. Doerksen and Harry Loewen, provide the reader with an introduction to the works of Arnold Dyck including a brief biography of the author, a concise summary of the research done on the novel and an evaluation of its place in German and Mennonite literature. The summary of the various critical interpretations of the work will prove invaluable to the first-time reader. The editors also provide the reader with footnotes to explain words no longer in current usage, Low German words and other items which not every reader might be expected to know. By supplying this useful information the editors have ensured that the works of Dyck remain as accessible to the reader as when they first appeared. They are to be lauded on the excellent work they have done.

Dyck's beloved novel *Verloren in der Steppe*, written in High German, has lost none of its fresh appeal after all these years. The work, first published in five parts from 1944 to 1948, could be described as a *Bildungsroman* or novel of education. It traces the development of Hänschen, later Hans, Toews from boy-

hood to maturity. The events are described through the eyes of Hänschen Toews, a technique which gives the descriptions a charming naiveté. However, the author's benevolent humour is apparent throughout. Although Dyck describes what he essentially views as a lost paradise, his criticism of stuffy attitudes and questionable situations in the old world is equally strong. Dyck manages, however, to remain inoffensive in this criticism. Aside from tracing the development of the individual Hänschen the novel allows the reader valuable and very immediate insights into daily life in the old Russian colonies. We are permitted to witness the daily routine on the farm, to accompany the men and women and, of course, the children on their daily chores, to enter into the world of the children and follow the routine in the schools from their perspective, to share in the activities at pig-killing bees and other community happenings. Dyck views all these activities benignly but not without shots of irony and frequent demonstrations of disapproval. Particularly noteworthy aspects of the novel are the author's memorable nature descriptions and his great skill in portraying the emotional upheavals in Hänschen.

Aus meinem Leben is a brief but most informative autobiographical sketch which is here published for the first time. This sketch at the beginning virtually retraces the events described in the novel *Verloren in der Steppe* but goes beyond it in telling of the author's various attempts at studying art, his alternative service in the forestry and in the Medical Corps, his emigration and the various publishing ventures in Southern Manitoba including the purchase of the *Steinbach Post*, the publishing of the *Mennonitische Volkswarte* and the creation of the *Echo Verlag*. Those readers interested in Dyck's life will find this sketch most informative. Dyck's tone here is much more matter-of-fact than in the novel. Indeed, one senses a painful resignation in this work, particularly when the author describes his last publishing ventures and his fears for the future of the German book in Canada.

Volume One marks an exciting beginning to this important edition of Arnold Dyck's collected works. The

care with which the editors have prepared these texts is to be commended. The reader of Volume One will await the appearance of the other three volumes in this series with some impatience. The remaining editors involved in these volumes will be George K. Epp, Al Reimer and Elisabeth Peters. Volumes Two and Three will contain the author's many Low German ventures including the perennially popular adventures of Koop enn Bua. Volume Four will include previously unpublished works, essays and letters as well as a collection of art by Arnold Dyck.

This praiseworthy edition of Arnold Dyck's work is not only a must for all who have come to love this author but also for those who are concerned about the threatening gradual loss of our heritage. With its handsome appearance these volumes would make a wonderful gift for everyone who wishes to rediscover the fascinating world of Arnold Dyck or wants to share it with someone who has not yet discovered it.

Andre Oberle is Associate Professor of German at the University of Winnipeg.

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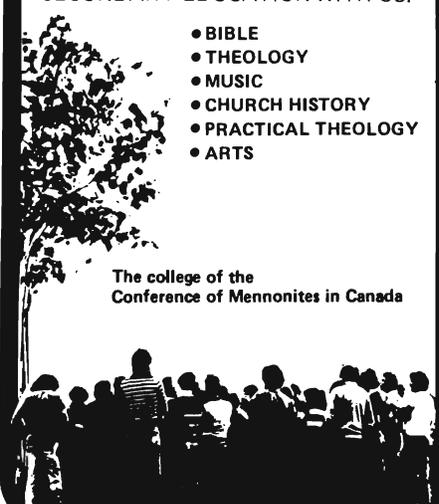
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**Koop enn Bua
fonn Arnold Dyck**

Abend

Belauschte Gespräche 8

Jasch fetalt, woo hee eenem Maun opp'e Heenauage jeklunjt haud, enn Koop jleewt nijch, daut dee Ead rund ess.

Buhr: (eintretend) Kjeena hia? De' Lied senn woll aula biem Eiwste. Et ess uck aul Tiet. Etj hab miene Joascht uck aul auf. Dee ess goanijchmol soo schlajcht, aus et aanscheen. Enn wann mien Howa woat kjenne riep woare, dann woa etj woll wada 'en Joa mett Kornfooda ütkome.

Töws: (tritt ein) Goodnowend.

Buhr: Goodnowend, Teews. Die sitt et fonndoag je tsiemlijch schmäärijch, daut ess eena fonn die nijch jewant.

Töws: Jo, etj haud fonndoag fäl Trubbel mett däm Binja, dee wull nijch rajcht soo aus etj wull, enn doabie hab etj miene Owerauls soo toojereet. Mie ommtootratje wea etj aul too ful.

Buhr: Waut heiwsd du fonndoag?

Töws: Howa.

Buhr: Dee wea je oba noch jreen.

Töws: Jo, etj schnied am auf too Fooda, mie ess angst, de' Grauss-hoppasch kunne an näme. Dee woare doch woll nu doahan gone, wua waut Jreenet ess, dee Weit woat an woll boold too hoat woare.

Koop: (eintretend) Goodnowend.

Töws und Buhr: Goodnowend.

Buhr: Heiwst uck aul, Koop?

Koop: Jo, dän Rogg hab etj auf.

Buhr: Jo, dän Weit, loont dee sijch nijch too heiwe?

Koop: Etj lot am noch 'en bät stone, daut Korn ess mie noch nijch faust jenuach.

Buhr: Na—nu. Ei de' Grausshoppasch, ess die nijch angst, daut dee am gauns näme, wann he noch lenja stone blift?

Koop: (Tut, als ob er die Frage nicht gehört hätte, wendet sich an Töws)

Teews, foascht du boold mol wada no Steinbach?

Töws: Etj räätien aul nijch ferr'm fefte August hantooowanke.

Koop: Waut meent daut eajentlijch — Air Tour?

Töws: Etj weat uck nijch rajcht, oba Bua woat daut je woll bäta kjane, dee wea doatoo aul toojoa jefoare.

Buhr: Well, Koop, daut ess waut, wua se' soone Mensche aus du nijch brucke kjenne.

Koop: (Unsicher) Na, wuaromm nijch?

Buhr: Well, doa moake Mensche Wunda, enn doajäaje kaunst du nijch.

Koop: (?)

Töws: Lot de' Noarentääj, räd jescheit.

Buhr: Etj räd jescheit. Senn daut nijch Wunda, wann dee Mensch enn soonem Foatijch mett Flijchte enn'e Loft foare deit rajchtsch enn lintjisch, jrod soo aus hee well, wann hee mett däm gaunse Dintj heistakopp schitt, wann hee lange Enja mett däm Kopp no unje flijcht. Woo dee Kjrät nijch herütfauale deit, hee woat sijch doch woll mett de' Teee goot fausthoake. Beigosch, fefead etj mie, aus enn soon Äaroplän jrod bowa mie wea enn mett eenmol opp'e Sied stelpt enn heraufkullad, aus wann eena 'ne Duw biem Fleaje schitt, enn dee hereauffelt. Etj saj ju, fefeaare deed etj mie, aus enn mienem Läwe nijch. Etj rausseled toosied enn wull utstätje doabie hab etj doch woll eenem Maun, dee bie mie stunt, opp'e Heenauage jeklunjt; hee beltjt opp enn doamett späad etj uck aul een poa Füste mank miene Rebbe. Mie stunt de' Loft stell, enn aus etj eascht wada gaupe kunn, lach etj aun'e Ead. Etj kijtjt schwind nom Himmel. Dee Äaroplän wea noch emma kratjt bowa mie enn kullad noch emma. Nu, nu must hee opp mie noppdrasche. Eene Fru

kjreasch, etj muak dee Uage too enn hilt de' Loft aun. Etj docht noch enn daut wea uck daut latste, waut etj enn däm oole Läwe docht, etj docht noch, waut daut fe eene groote Schmääplak fonn mie jäwe wurd. Etj weet nijch, woo lang etj soo jeläaje enn jeluat hab. Daut jintj aules fäl schwinda aus etj daut fetale kaun. Aus etj dee Uage wada opmuak, wea opp mie uck bie mie kjeen Äaroplän tooseene, dee fluach jemietlijch siene Stoak wieda, aus wann nuscht jewast wea. Soon Beest — doot gone haud etj kunnt fe Angst. Oba etj wea nijch auleen, dee waut wajchjetjreaje haud. Feea Schräd fonn mie saut 'en aundra Maun opp'e Ead, dee haud sijch eene Schoo ütjetrocke enn hilt sijch de' Teee. Aus etj dän Maun sach, späad etj platslijch soowaut Schnorret tweschen miene Rebbe, enn dann haud etj uck miene Besennung wada tridj. Etj stunt haustijch opp enn schlitjt mie wieda fonn däm Maun, dee siene Teee woame deed. Enn etj jleew, daut wea jrod Tiet jewast. Etj sach dän Maun nohäa noch opp'em Plauts mett eene Schoo enn'e Fupp herommhintje, enn hee kijtjt sijch emma soo heromm, aus wann hee wäm socht. Oba etj sie däm Maun nijch bossijch, etj festo am, dann etj hab selwst waltje Heenauage . . .

Enn nu froag etj ju, senn daut nijch pure Wunda? Enn daut ess noch nijch aules. Doas weas noch 'en Maun, dee sprung fonn eenem Äaroplän, aus dee fleijcht 5,000 Schoo huach wea, herauf, enn däm word nuscht.

Koop: Na soowaut woascht du ons nijch ennbille.

Buhr: Wacht mau. Dee Maun haud 'en grootet Stetj Leiwent ooda waut et wea, daut muak hee biem Faule soo op, daut et sach aus 'en Rääjescherm. Doaraun hong hee dann enn kaum langsomm herauf. Jefäadlijch sach daut

uck, oba etj stunt nu aul unja eenem grooten Boom.

Nohää kunn noch jieda, wää doa wull, uck mettleaje. See boode uck mie aun mettoofleaje, enn doa weare 'en poa, dee wulle daut uck fe mie betole, daut sull noch dree Dola koste. Etj bedankt mie scheen. Etj weet nijch, wua etj enn däm Fleajadintjs miene 200 Punt haud sullt fausthoole, wann dee mett eenmol haud heistakopp jeschote. Etj saj ju, Wunda, pure Wunda. Oba fe die, Koop, ess daut doch nijch. Du wurscht jleewe daut daut nijch mett rajchte Dinj toojeit.

Koop: Na, du deist, aus wann etj uck noch mau sea domm sie enn nuscht jeseene hab. Etj hab dän Steinbachschen Äaroplän uck aul jeseene, enn hab kjeenem Menschen deswäajen opp'e Teee jeklunjt.

Buhr: Jo, dee Steinbachsche Äaroplän flijcht oba uck nijch opp'em Kopp, enn kullat uck nijch aus eene Kulladu.

Koop: Na, waut du doa aules fetalst, woat uck woll nijch gauns stemme, du hast wada mea jeseene aus doa wea.

Buhr: Bruckst je nijch jleewe. Du

woascht woll uck nijch jleewe, daut 'en Maun dise Doag omm'e Ead jefloage ess.

Koop: Waut, omm'e Ead jefloage?

Buhr: Jo, omm'e gaunse Ead, hast du daut nijch jeläse enn'e Post? Mau acht Doag haft am daut jediat.

Koop: (schüttelt mit däm Kopf) Jeläse hab etj daut, oba jleewe doo etj daut nijch.

Buhr: Na—nu, daut ess doch oba enn aule Tseitunge.

Koop: Jo, daut mach senne. Daut schriewe se' oba mau soo. Äwahaupt festo etj nijch, woo daut sull gone, omm de' Ead too fleaje ooda too foare. Eena mott doch schliesslich wua aun een'e Städ kome wua sijch aules oppheat.

Buhr: Nä, se' saje, soone Städ jeft et goanijch. Ess nijch soo Teews?

Töws: Jo, se' saje, etj weet nijch.

Buhr: De' Ead saul äwent rund senne aus 'en Baul.

Koop: Jo, se' saje, oba daut kaun etj uck nijch jleewe.

Buhr: Wuaromm nijch?

Koop: Na, se' saje uck, daut aulwäaje opp'e Ead Mensche senn.

Buhr: Daut selle uck senne.

Koop: Na, dann kaun de' Ead uck nijch rund senne. De' Mensche wurde je dann boold aul bie ons hia bowe toopkrue. Dee wurde äwahaupt nijch bott'm krue kome, dee wurde je aul raufschedde.

Buhr: Jleewst du, wie senn emma bloos bowe?

Koop: Woo sest?

Buhr: Nä, se' saje wie senn uck mol unje, wiel de' Ead sijch doch dreit.

Koop: Na Bua, du jleewst doch nijch uck daut dee Ead sijch dreit. Daut lot se' sest wäm ennbille enn nijch mie. Dann jleewst du wolluck, daut de' Sonn stell steit?

Buhr: Sejcha jleew etj daut. Etj kaun daut nijch festone, oba wann aule jeleade Mensche daut saje, dann mott etj daut doch jleewe.

Koop: Jleew, wann du west. Etj sie oba noch emma soo jescheit, daut etj weet daut mien Kopp bowe enn miene Feet unje senn, enn daut de' Sonn tsemorjens opp enn tseowens unjajeit. Teews, jleewst du daut uck soo aus Bua?

Töws: Eena mott daut schliesslich jleewe, auf eena daut festeit ooda nijch. Onse Elre senn je ut Russlaund jekome, daut saul aun'e aundre Sied fonn'e Ead lidje, enn woat je woll uck, enn dee habe kjeenmol fetalst, daut se' nijch mett däm Kopp no bowe jegone senn.

Buhr: Jo, jo, Koop, daut woat die nuscht halpe, du woascht daut uck woll motte anfange too jleewe. Enn du woascht uck motte jleewe, daut jan

Maun enn acht Doag omm'e Ead jefloage ess.

Koop: Na, soont räd doch nijch 'enmol. Wann 'en Mensch fleijcht uck schliesslich kunn 'en poa Schräd fleaje mett däm Kopp no unje. Hee kaun doch oba nijch feea Doag soo mett däm Kopp herauf henje. Hee mott je schliesslich waut äte enn drintje, enn daut wurd je am aules ut'em Mul faule. Enn hee mott schliesslich uck . . . [Hier musste die Zensur eingreifen.] Nä, Bua, etj jleew, waut etj weet, enn lot mie nuscht ennbille.

Buhr: Well, dann ess die nijch too halpe. Du woascht dann boold hinja mie enn Teews wiet tridjbliewe. Wie foare too dee Air Tour no Steinbach.

Teews: Jo, wann aum fefte August scheenet Wada ess, foar etj.

Buhr: Nä, daut ess oba nijch aum fefte August, daut ess wada wieda rütjeschowe, bott'em Septamba, jleew etj.

Töws: Daut wurd mie uck aul bäta pause.

(Schon beim Hinausgehen)

Buhr: Foascht uck, Koop?

Koop: Waut kost daut noch?

Buhr: Fleijcht 25 Tsent.

Koop: Ess daut fonn'e Lein nijch uck tooseene?

(Die Antwort hörte ich schon nicht.)

mm



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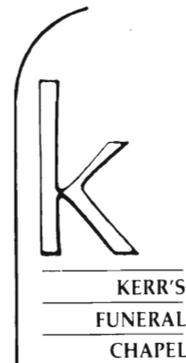
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“Und wenn sie fragen werden . . .”

Zum Film von David Dueck im kanadischen Fernsehen: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation am 29. August 1985

von Johannes Harder

In unserer Zeit wachsender politischer Unruhe, aber auch zunehmender Gleichgültigkeit und Vergesslichkeit gegenüber der Geschichte müsste sich ein Film mit diesem Thema geradezu

anbieten. Saubere Informationen können uns heute nur hilfreich sein. In unserem Fall aber, bei einem Kapitel voller Unheil, das unsere russländischen Mennoniten hart betroffen hat, ist gleich im voraus zu fragen, ob denn das Schicksal einer Volksgruppe bedenkenlos in eine Parallele der Geschichte Israels umstilisiert werden darf. Im Alten Testament werden die Alten

gemahnt, ihren Kindern Antwort zu geben, wenn sie nach dem Sinn des Erbes eines erwählten Volkes, ihrem Glaubensgut und ihrem Gottesdienst fragen. Sie sollen die Befreiung aus Ägypten bezeugen: Gottes Wunder haben Unheil in Heil verwandelt (2 M. 13, 14; 5 M. 6, 20): er hat die Tyrannen geschlagen und den Weg ins Land der Verheissung geebnet. Kann denn die biblische Heilsgeschichte für alle Misere und Unmenschlichkeiten, die den Film füllen, so linear und selbstverständlich für Flucht und Vertreibung im Osten (1944–45) eine unbestreitbare Analogie bieten? Sind die Mennoniten schlechthin Israel, die Sowjets Pharaone, das “gelobte Land” der “goldene Westen”? Ist hier der Filmmacher nicht einer Geschichtsklitterung oder gar einer verfälschenden Politisierung des Alttestamentlichen Textes oder auch einer Idealisierung der mennonitischen Katastrophe aufgefressen?

Gerade weil es in einem solchen Film nicht um eine Schmälerung furchtbarer Begebnisse, wohl aber um eine *Sinngebung* der terroristischen Akte und Aktionen gehen sollte, wäre um der Glaubwürdigkeit willen jede erdenkliche Objektivität angebracht und erforderlich. Wo wirklich Geschichte geschrieben oder demonstriert wird, muss zuvor auch geschichtlich gedacht und konzipiert werden. Denn Historie ist fortwährendes und in sich zusammenhängendes Geschehen. Ein halbes Wissen ersetzt noch kein gutes Gewissen.

Solchen geistigen Normen aber widerspricht die geradezu willkürliche Aneinanderreihung von Gewaltszenen voller Grausamkeiten, so dass beim uninformatierten Zuschauer kaum mehr als Ekel, Mitleid oder helle Empörung zurückbleiben. Der Film, eine Geschichtsklittererei und Effekthascherei, trägt leider nur eine historische Maske.

Im Hintergrund der geschilderten Ereignisse fehlt wenigstens ein Hinweis auf die Glanzzeit dieser einst so erfolgreichen und wohlständigen mennonitischen Bauern wie ein Wort über die ganze Unbekümmertheit und Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber der verelendeten Umwelt in der zaristischen Zeit. Den Vorrechten und dem Reichtum der einen stand die Armut, die Not, die Ausbeutung und die Unwissenheit der anderen gegenüber.

Wo war damals die überall mögliche soziale, kulturelle und wohl auch die moralische Ausstrahlung? Es fehlte auch — von wenigen rühmlichen Ausnahm-

Gedanken eines Tigers im Zoo

Nun seid ihr alle wieder da,
und los geht das Theater.
Na ja, ich kann das schon verstehen —
Ich bin ein schmucker Kater.
Ihr könnt anscheinend weiter nichts
als rumstehn nur und gaffen.
Wie sollte man euch böse sein?
Ihr stammt ja ab vom Affen.
So dumm wie diese Viecher sind,
so dumm seid ihr, Zweibeiner.
Hier um die Ecke, bitte schön,
da sitzt genau so einer.
Genau wie ihr benimmt er sich
ganz albern-überschwenglich
und hopst und kichert. Und dabei
der Kerl sitzt lebenslänglich.
Ihr tut mir leid. Mir fällt nicht ein,
euch etwa zu beneiden
um eure Sorgen, Ängste und
auch sogenannten Freuden.
Wie viele finden ihre Freud
daran, dass sie besingen
grad alles, was da kreucht und fleucht,
und in die Zeitung bringen!
Jetzt steht vor mir schon wieder so
ein weiblich Dichterwesen . . .
Wie viele gibt es aber auch,
die ihren Mist noch lesen!

— von Hildegard Wiebe

en abgesehen — die Fürsprache für die unaufhörlich verfolgten und erniedrigten Andersdenken und Andersglaubenden, die der zaristischen Diktatur ungezählt zum Opfer fielen. Die Missachtung der kulturell und materiell benachteiligten Umwelt war von mennonitischer Seite nahezu allgemein.

Auf dem Boden der Unterdrückung der breiten Landbevölkerung, auf dem Morast der Menschenverachtung wuchs neben der Armut ei der aufkommenden "Intelligenzija" auch der Klassenhass und der Atheismus, bis alles in Aufständen und dann, seit der Revolution im Jahre 1917, zu einem Rundumschlag führte. Empörung und Hass nahmen vielfach nihilistische Gestalt an, und das betraf nicht nur eine Auswahl Unwilliger und Hetzer — die Funken des Widerstandes wurden zu einem Flächenbrand.

In die fortdauernden Wirrnisse der Stalinära fiel ein Faktum, das kaum je bedacht wird: die faschistische Besatzung hat nicht nur allgemein verheerend auf das Volk gewirkt — für die "Volksdeutschen" wurde die zumeist zwangsweise Mobilisierung (auch der Mennoniten) in die Hitlerarmee zu einem doppelten Verhängnis. Wo immer sie eingesetzt worden sein mochten — sie wurden, gewollt oder nicht, zu Verteidigern des Faschismus, wo nicht gar in verschiedenen Arten Kämpfer gegen die Sowjets. Die Rote Armee hat bei ihrem Vordringen kein Federlesen zwischen Zivilisten und Uniformträgern gemacht. Der Zorn nicht nur der Kommissare, vielmehr weiter Volkskreise übte Rache ohne Mass (am Schluss kam ein Aderlass von circa 20 Millionen Sowjetbürger heraus). Vergessen wir nicht, dass mit der Roten Armee im Vordringen nach

Westen ein Bumerang zurückgeschleudert kam.

In diesem Gewitter standen nun nicht wenige unserer Leute. Niemand wird bei jenen, die die Rache zu tragen hatten, derartige Einsichten und Erkenntnisse voraussetzen dürfen. Schliesslich war auch bei uns die Masse geschichtlich wie sozialkundig nur zu wenig gebildet. Ich meine, dass dem Filmacher derlei Überlegungen erspart werden könnten; im Ablauf der tragischen Bilder gibt es lediglich aus Zusammenhängen herausgerissenen Szenen voller Bestialität; die Vorgesichte hätte wenigstens einen flüchtigen Hinweis verdient. Wie anders könnte vermieden werden, dass beim Zuschauer der Verdacht aufkommt, der Film wolle nichts mehr als einen Racheakt oder gar nur antisowjetische Propaganda betreiben?

Dafür aber sollten Mennoniten sich zu schade sein, in einem sehr auf Effekt bedachten Film und in der ihm vielleicht folgenden Publizistik als Vergelter demonstriert zu werden. Ich denke und glaube, solche Bedenken und Erwägungen müssten diesem Filmacher abgefordert werden, und sei es auch nur in einem abschliessenden Wort. Kinder einer "Friedenskirche" aber werden sich darüber hinaus darauf besinne, dass Gottesgerichte zu seiner Geschichte gehören.

"Und wenn die Kinder fragen werden," so werden die Väter ihren Söhnen und die Mütter ihren Töchtern bezeugen, dass der Lenker der Geschichte seine Leute niemals ins Rote Meer schickt, ohne sie hindurchzuführen ins Land der Verheissung — auch das Verderben ist Gottes Heimsuchung.

mm

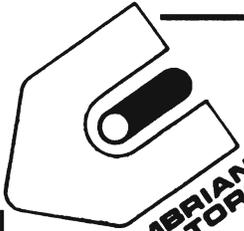
Johannes Harder's Review of "And When They Shall Ask"

A comment by Helmut-Harry Loewen

During their recent stay in Winnipeg, Prof. Johannes Harder and his wife Gudrun enlivened and inspired their many Canadian friends with words of encouragement and through the warmth and love of their presence. Discussions with the Harders revolved around many issues, both political and cultural, but inevitably the many problems relating to Mennonite life would form the core of their reasoned reflections. It was in this context of friendly *Auseinandersetzung* that Johannes Harder had occasion to view the television version of the film *And When They Shall Ask*, broadcast on the national network of the CBC in late August. This highly problematic film, questionable on both aesthetic and historical terms, prompted Harder to respond in the form of a critical review, which the *Mirror* presents in its original German version.

Harder's review gives expression both to the rage that is felt at the mystification of Russian Mennonite history as depicted in the film and to a sadness at the film's resentful and propagandistic manner of dealing with issues so central to that historical experience. Harder asks pointed questions of the film which its many viewers must surely consider when they evaluate its thrust. Can the Mennonites simply be likened to the Children of Israel, suffering at the hands of Soviet "Pharaohs," finding their own "Promised Land" in the "Golden West" after the experience of exile? Does this analogy perhaps involve a set of false politicizations of the Old Testament story, resulting in an idealized, one-sided, and mystified picture of the complex Mennonite experience in the Soviet Union? In stressing the victimization of the Mennonites at the hands of the Machnovites, does not the film overlook and conveniently forget the ways in which Mennonites were also a part of those who victimized others? The anti-Soviet thrust of the film is achieved at the expense of remaining silent about the complicity of many Mennonites in defending the fascist forces.

Harder's review is thus not to be understood as an attempt at creating scandal; it is, rather, the film that is scandalous, given its naive, visually inadequate presentation of a crucial experience to Mennonite history. This review thus contributes to lifting the veils of silence and forgetfulness which all too often engulf the way in which Russian Mennonite history is presented. Readers will surely be stimulated by Harder's position and, it is hoped, provoked into considering the merits of his pointed critique.



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