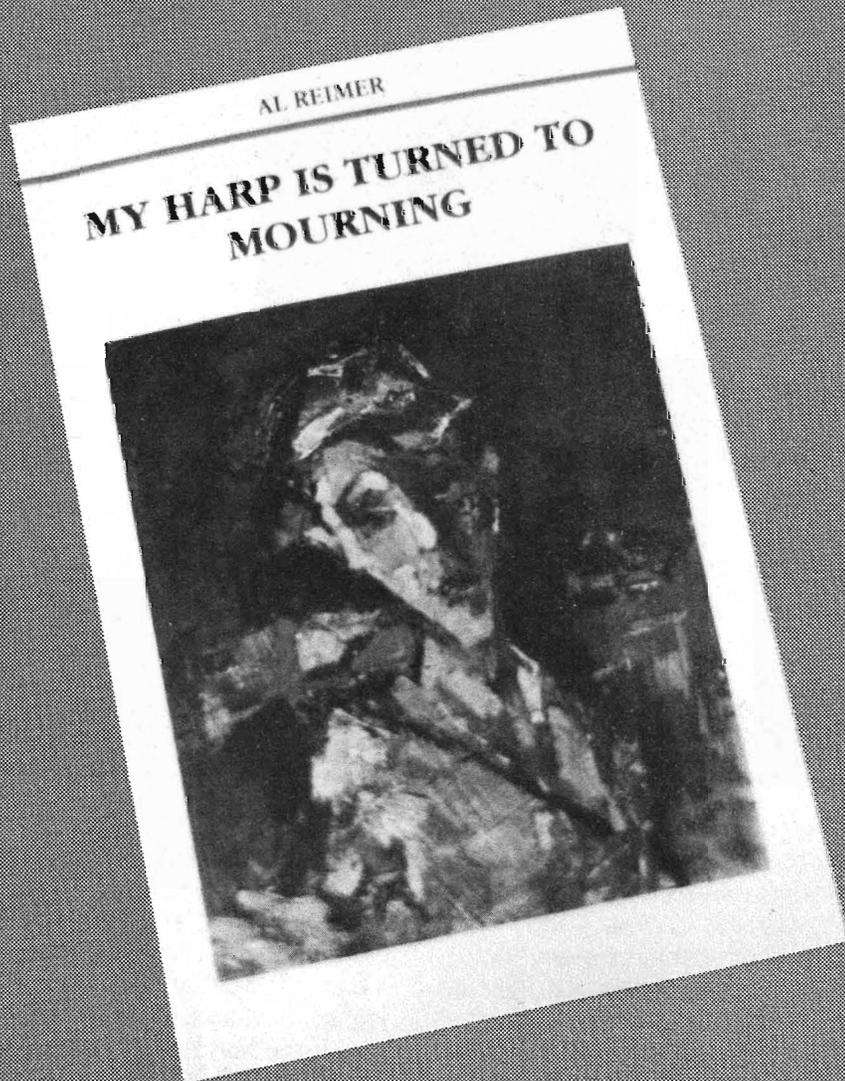


Mennonite Mirror

volume 15/number 8/april 1986



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ForeWord

In this edition there are two reviews of Al Reimer's novel, *My Harp Has Turned to Mourning*, a work that examines the Mennonite experience in Russia and through the Communist Revolution. The novel was sent to reviewers who could judge the book as literature and as history. The reviews of both writers are published in this edition; Elmer Suderman, of Minnesota, and John B. Toews, of Calgary, read the book and responded with surprisingly warm reviews. Suderman says "we know more about the chaotic, fleeting, formless, capricious, discontinuous life which Reimer's characters experience and to which we are heirs" and then goes on to say that all those who trace their Mennonite heritage to Russia are in Reimer's debt. Toews says the "cascade of turbulent events are . . . actual episodes gleaned from the collective memory of people," and then adds that the book caused him to reflect anew.

The *Mirror* apologizes for mentioning the Toews' review in the March edition. Those who read the ForeWord will remember a reference to the review, and then not finding it. The Toews' review was in place when we learned that the Suderman review was on its way; at that moment we decided to withdraw the Toews piece and publish both in this issue. In doing that, we forgot to delete the reference from the ForeWord.

The issue continues with an item by Ralph Friesen, who with his family spent three years in Zimbabwe. While his account of learning how to re-enter Canadian society has its humorous moments, his serious point is to show us how little interest we all seem to take in the experience of those who have the courage to serve in Third World countries.

Native land claims are an issue which can generate heated and intemperate debate. To resolve the land claims will take more than the wisdom of Solomon and the good will of both sides. Menno Wiebe suggests in his article that Mennonites may have a role in resolving the issue not only because of our peacemaking tradition, but also because of our own experience as people displaced from land.

A special feature of this edition is the Poets' Word. One page includes the work of three writers: Tim Wiebe, Anne Martens, and Clint Toews.

No issue of the *Mirror* would be complete without Vogt's Observed Along the Way, several book reviews, the Mix-up contest, items in both Low-German and German, The Manitoba News, and since the last word is ours, the issue closes as usual with Our Word.

Similar names inevitably cause confusion, and readers should be aware that Helmut-Harry Loewen is not the same person as Harry Loewen. The work of both appears in the *Mirror*, sometimes in the same issue.

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Mennonite Mirror

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Mennonite Mirror

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review

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Reimer's Novel a Monument to Mennonite Loss

Reviewed by Elmer Suderman

Al Reimer, My Harp is Turned to Mourning. Winnipeg: Hyperion Press Limited, 1985.

Daniel Fast, the great-great-grandfather of Wilhelm Fast, one of the main characters in Al Reimer's novel is thinking about his life. He is an old man, and his life has been long and eventful, beginning in the Mennonite settlements in Prussia, and coming to an end now in Blumenau in the Molochnaya where he has during the last forty-nine years established a substantial *wirtschaft*, and where he has been active in trying, unsuccessfully, to reform the Mennonite church. "Just once before I die," Daniel thinks, "I'd like to hold my long life clear in my head — my whole past so I can look at it and understand. But it won't hold still; it keeps running through my memory like water through fingers" (p. 26).

Daniel Fast speaks for all of us. That's why we turn to novels: to hold for once our lives in our head, to look at life and try to understand it. That is what Al Reimer has tried to do in this novel. He has succeeded. When we finish the novel we understand better who we are because he has portrayed a part of all of us, particularly those of us who trace our ancestry to the Russian Mennonite colonies. We know more about the chaotic, fleeting, formless, capricious, discontinuous life which Reimer's characters experience and to which we are heirs.

These characters stand before us as sharply etched as Wilhelm Fast's sketches of Blumenau. Just as he is dissatisfied with his sketches, so we are often dissatisfied with what we see. We are not interested in seeing Sudermanns, Fasts, Reimers, Loewens, and Friesens painted so starkly, in experiencing their anguish so completely. But such stark honesty is necessary if we are to hold our life clear in our head.

Reimer focuses on three characters: Wilhelm Fast, Erdmann Lepp and Nestor Makhno, very different, yet in strange ways very much alike. All respond to the Mennonite community. Wilhelm Fast, the sensitive artist, cannot find the variety of life necessary to his art in the often stultifying Mennonite colonies, and he searches for a new eye to see more clearly; Erdmann Lepp is not satisfied to limit his ministry to the Mennonites; Makhno, the Russian peasant, finds the Mennonites hypocritical and hates them for the beatings the elder Loewen had given him.

The strange similarities are most clearly expressed in one of the later scenes in which Lepp and Makhno confront each other. Makhno has forbidden Lepp to preach, but Lepp insists that he has a right to preach since he has been given the authority by the established government. Makhno says he is in charge. The two argue; both are audacious in their strategies, and Lepp argues that he is just as revolutionary as Makhno. Later, he tells Wilhelm that in this dramatic encounter with a man so unlike him, he discovered how much they were alike, both victims, both sufferers, and on that ground they could at some inexplicable level meet each other. Makhno is also impressed, impressed enough not to kill Lepp.

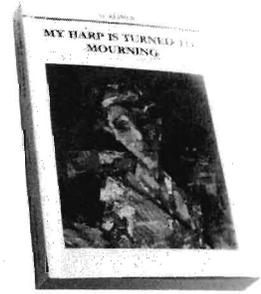
It is Lepp who has the last word in the novel. He has chosen to remain in Russia, knowing that he will probably be exiled, if not killed. We see him at the end of the novel still preaching in the barracks of Solovki, a "special purpose camp" to which political dissidents have been exiled. Here in the midst of inhuman torture and bestial cruelty he has become a living symbol of hope, and the novel concludes with the possibility that this stinking old scarecrow may still be preaching the love of Christ and the peace that passes all understanding.

Wilhelm, Erdmann and Makhno are not the only memorable characters in

the novel. Katja Loewen, Clara Bock, Nikolai Fast, the Bock, Fast and Loewen families, Cornies, P. M. Friesen all stand before us, and we get to know and, in part, to understand them, and to suffer with them, for most die or are murdered. There is enough brutality and murder in the novel to sicken. Indeed in reporting what happened to the Mennonites in Russia during the revolution, Reimer runs the danger of making death and brutality commonplace. It is easy enough for the historical novelist to fall into the trap of merely reporting the horror, dulling the reader so that death becomes no more than a passing shot in the dark, a small incident of no significance. But Reimer is aware of this danger, and even after we come to expect another rape, another murder, another death, we never become deadened ourselves. Each death shakes us, disturbs us, makes us aware that it is not just another horror which can easily be forgotten. Each death is indelibly etched in our memory. When Wilhelm hears about his first wife Katja's death, we feel with him as he listens to how it happened. When Makhno, whose marauders were responsible for Katja's death, discovers her body, his wail and crazed grief sharpens our awareness of the horror of death and rape.

Reimer's ability to tell the story of individual Mennonites is impressive. So is his ability to tell the story of more than one hundred years of Mennonite history in Russia. But there is, I think, an even greater accomplishment: his ability to give to the Mennonite community a life of its own. This is the story of a *gemeinschaft*, which in this time and this place established without much interference a community of separated people where life was good. Most of the Mennonites were comfortable, satisfied, even smug, and quite certain that they could look forward to even greater prosperity.

They did not worry much about their cherished principle of pacifism. They



were respected by the monarchy and by official Russia. They did not fear their Russian neighbors, nor pay much attention to their poverty. And then came the war with Germany, and their safe communities were threatened. Reimer makes us feel the impending doom, the sense that the world had gone mad now that it had breached the mulberry hedges of the Mennonite communities. Gerhard Fast feels it when his son, Nicolai, joins the army to fight Germans and later joins Makhno's revolutionaries to raid Mennonite villages. Bock feels it as his implement company begins to manufacture casings for landmines and hand grenades. All Mennonites feel it when the government conscripts their sons to serve in the ambulance corps and their horses to pull cannons, when the German villages are given Russian names, and finally when the monarchy falls. There is no doubt that chaos has triumphed when Mennonites are exiled, imprisoned and shot by firing squads.

Everybody knows that the community as they have known it has come to an end when the *selbstschutz* is organized, and the young colonists feel they must use force to protect themselves from the lawless raids of Makhno. The agonizing decision that Wilhelm must make when his long-time friend, Snapper Loewen, asks him to join the self-defense units is effectively dramatized. The issue of non-resistance is no longer academic. Wilhelm must face a situation in which love seems helpless. Love cannot overcome mud, filth, brutality, gore, murder and death. Wilhelm wonders what good non-resistance can do when confronted with hostile ruffians clearly beyond any appeal to reason, mercy or love. He feels that he has no other choice than to defend the community.

It is an agonizing decision, and the reader shares the agony, knowing that the Russian Mennonites can no longer hide, as they could for a long time, behind their mulberry hedges.

All this and much more Reimer dramatizes for us, making us aware that we, too, are in danger of losing our communities, that in a mad world nothing is secure. Much as we are moved by the murders, rapes and suffering of individuals, we are perhaps more moved by the death of the community. In the end what Erdmann and Wilhelm have lost is not only family, friends, a place to call home, but a community united by a common faith.

How complete this loss is, is most brilliantly presented in one of the last scenes of the novel. On the train which is to take Wilhelm, his mother and Clara Bock out of Russia to Canada, Wilhelm,

reflecting on his life, as his great-great-grandfather had before him, realizes how much he has lost, not least of which is his art which had made it possible for him to hold life clear in his head. But he has lost more, even if he does not realize it. He has lost community, a community that held him, that fascinated him, that gave him an identity, that connected him with the past.

He had wondered as a boy about his great-great-grandfather, Daniel Fast, whose daguerrotype he had often looked at on the old farm home in Blumenau, a photograph faded, covered with a fine tracery of cracks that made the image look as if covered with a spider web. Now even this cherished

daguerrotype had inadvertently been left in the books that the Soviets had confiscated. Wilhelm's last connection with the past and with his roots is forever lost.

Paradoxically, however, it is not lost for the reader. Even though it won't hold still for us any more than it would for Daniel or Wilhelm, by telling the story of the fall of the Mennonite communities, Al Reimer has given us a lasting monument to that community, with all its warts and foibles, with all its evil and goodness, its ugliness and beauty. And all of us who trace our roots back to that *gemeindeschaft* in Russia are in his debt.

Elmer Suderman is Professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota.

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- induction of the '86 graduates
- 8:00 p.m. - Spring Concert in the CMBC Gym featuring the CMBC Singers and Ensemble

Sunday, April 27

- 10:00 a.m. - Baccalaureate Service, CMBC Gym
- 2:30 p.m. - Graduation Service, Home Street Mennonite Church
- Speaker: Dr. Carl Ridd, Religion Professor at the University of Winnipeg
- 5:00 p.m. - Coffee & Snack at CMBC

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review

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Compelled to reflect anew after reading Reimer's novel

Al Reimer, My Harp is Turned to Mourning, (Winnipeg, Hyperion Press, 1985).

a review by John B. Toews

Allow me to admit my bias from the onset — for me this is a first class novel. It's not that I know much about the intricacies of novel writing. The book simply fits into everything I know about the Mennonites in Russia and agrees with all my carefully nurtured prejudices. Its many pages etched indelible images into my mind — images of momentous forces engulfing the lives of very ordinary people.

The author is tyrannized by his acute sense of history in a most appealing and appropriate fashion. He refuses to tell his story in a vacuum. As old Daniel Fast reminisces the nineteenth century Mennonite world in Russia re-emerges before the reader's eyes. This painless history lesson provides an understanding of the contrasting worlds in which the protagonists find themselves — the industrialist Bock, the evangelist Lepp, the anarchist Makhno, the estate owner Loewen. As the novel progresses, it is literally enveloped by history. The cascade of turbulent events are not imaginative inventions designed to create a more dramatic plot, but actual episodes gleaned from the collective memory of a people. Prominent personalities who figured in the world of that day — the historian P. M. Friesen; the factory owner Niehbuhr; the evangelist Adolf Reimer — are unabashedly interwoven with the fictitious characters. From time to time the reader is not at all sure that the main actors are all that fictitious.

Reimer's sense of history makes his

characters believable, authentic and convincing. They are carefully contained in the context of their peoplehood and emerge in the Mennonite ethos of the early twentieth century. Happily they never leave those confines to become spokespersons for the prejudices or peculiar views of the author. Their life-styles and the problems they progressively encounter are consistent with the happenings and issues collectively confronting the Mennonites during the first two decades of twentieth century Russia. They must cope with a society separated by extremes of wealth and poverty, and a religious mindset often incapable of deciding which of the Two Kingdoms is the more important. Their peacetime pacificism is confronted by the realities of war, revolution and anarchy. Some apply it consistently, others do not. Collectively the Mennonites are once again forced to include suffering in their theological agenda.

Reimer's historical awareness generates another kind of honesty. He does not seek to protect his characters by imposing an artificial sanctity upon them. Being Mennonite does not mean being pious. The society he portrays is diverse in typology and individualistic in character. It is not depersonalized by adherence to a narrow dogma. There are hardnosed farmers seeking to increase profit margins via mechanization and selective animal breeding as well as industrialists achieving the same goal via an aggressive capitalism. Here is a society capable of loving and hating, of forgiveness and revenge. It may come as

a surprise to some Mennonite readers that there were even those who were lusting and sexual. Still others rejected their heritage or simply decided to stand alongside it in silence and frustration.

The author's submersion into the period produces one rather unexpected result: his somewhat sympathetic treatment of the anarchist Makhno. Through the eyes of his victims we see him as a ruthless and merciless killer. On the other hand, though moulded by the brutality of peasant life, he is capable of fleeting compassion and love. Is Reimer asking Jesus' lovers of the Mennonite persuasion to confess their vengeful feelings towards their one-time tormentor? Are they, long after Makhno's death, to retract their muffled but persistent cry for vengeance, a cry not only directed against him but the communism which overthrew their peaceable kingdom.

After reading this novel I was compelled to reflect upon the events of that era anew. As singular episodes attracted my attention, I found myself asking whether I remember them from the documents I once studied, or whether they had been subtly suggested to me by Al Reimer. Somewhere in the future I can envisage the following scenario. Students in a Russian Mennonite history class are using this novel as a text and, as an assignment, are asked to separate fact from fiction. Unanimously they decide it is all true. Where will that leave us historians?

Dr. John B. Toews is a historian at the University of Calgary.



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Returning from Zimbabwe

It took guts to go, it took as many start again at home

by Ralph Friesen

People always tell you that when you return home after living in a Third World country you will experience culture shock, and the adjustment of trying to live in Canada once again will be even harder than the one you had to make when you went overseas.

There's some truth to this. But what you go through when you come back is not exactly culture shock. In fact, you find that although a few things have changed (where did all the Robin's Donuts shops come from?), most have stayed the same. Canada is a familiar world where the highways are free of pedestrians, there's a choice of dozens of radio stations or TV channels, and the greying hair or thickness around the waists of your friends is almost imperceptible. You may not like everything you see, but you know the rules.

Still, a few weeks after having dropped yourself into the warm bosoms of friends and family certain experiences begin to force themselves upon you.

Like trying to get work.

Okay, we were foolish, I admit. To quit a secure-seeming job with the federal government, sell the car, sell the house, sell half the furniture, pull the kids out of school, and hike off to . . . Zimbabwe. Where? Zim-what? Didn't that used to be Rhodesia? Wasn't there a war going on? Isn't the war still going on? This could be dangerous.

That's how it looked before we went. In retrospect, it wasn't particularly dangerous. But we didn't know that, then. Off we went, on our pseudo-missionary mission, almost convinced that our friends had a point when they told us what an admirable thing we were doing. Or was that just a polite way of telling us we were crazy? "It takes guts," they said.

It took some, I suppose. Step out into the unknown and believe that you won't

fall, or that if you do, you'll be able to get up again.

Other people, now that we're back, are not impressed. You tell them you were in Africa and this doesn't register; they just nod and the conversation goes in another direction, as if you haven't done anything more extraordinary than take the garbage out to the back lane. Maybe they're afraid you'll produce a starving African out from within the folds of your coat, and ask them to care for the creature.

We were foolish, I said back there. Do I mean it? It depends; sometimes it feels that way and other times it doesn't. On returning, we had all the basic problems of transportation and shelter and schooling and work to deal with. There were two ways of coming at all this: either be cautious and proceed with care, or plunge in and go for it. We went for it. We bought a car and a house and sent the kids off to school, all in less than two weeks. The car is used and the

house has no curtains, but we're a functioning family.

Work. Now, this is going to be tougher. Is this where the culture shock comes in? But what's being out of work got to do with culture?

You scan the ads. Almost every job, whether this is stated up-front or not, requires an "aggressive individual." Someone who can sell himself. You want a job, son? Then get out there and sell yourself, be outgoing, be confident, cheerful, prove that you can step on a few toes if you have to.

They're wearing suits in those tall buildings but don't let that fool you — it's a jungle out there! And we never even saw a jungle all the time we were in Africa.

Then there's the consumer society. Yes, okay, there may be some culture shock in this area. In Zimbabwe, there were supermarkets, department stores, clothing shops and all the rest, but your choice was limited, and few items ever went on sale. No flyers or catalogues were dropped in your mailbox. (Granted, we didn't have a mailbox, but the point remains the same.)

Here, wow! A moment doesn't go by without a whole raft of indispensable goods going on sale. This is for real, too. The jeans you bought, regular \$40 — a few days later they're at \$24.99! Hey! You blew that one. Next time, grab while the grabbing's good.

But there's a catch. If you don't buy, you feel as if you've squandered a wonderful opportunity. If you do buy, well then, you just have fewer dollars in your wallet, and there aren't enough coming in to replace the ones that go out. Also, if you don't buy, you're a traitor; it means you haven't got faith in the economy and you'll be punished — the interest rates will go up.

All right. It's my duty as a father and a patriot to go out and find dollars. I thought I'd try the easy avenues first and went down to see the unemployment insurance people. My wife and I had worked full-time in Zimbabwe and I had paid into the fund for years before leaving Canada. Shouldn't there be some benefits?

I went to the office in Eaton Place. I stated my case and the receptionist, curling her lip-sticked lip, said that I shouldn't have come there; I should have gone to the office on Edmonton Street, but perhaps they could make an exception; if I would take a seat? I sat down and watched a passel of plump, smiling civil servants stroll by, discussing what they were going to have for lunch.

Finally a meticulously-groomed woman emerged from the catacombs of offices behind the receptionist's desk and, sitting down across from me, asked me what I wanted. The first question that occurred to me was why I couldn't enter that sacrosanct office space instead of having to state my plea in the semi-public area where we sat — but I put that aside and inquired about eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits. The woman gave me a pitying smile, as to someone who is feeble-minded, and carefully explained why and how this could not be. Oh, well, I suppose it was worth the try.

We've been back in Canada since Christmas. Our lives have developed most of the usual routines, except that we spend an inordinate time thinking about money. This is not quite elevating. Back in Zimbabwe, our former colleagues are on the tennis court, or marking exercise books, or passing time at the bar, and sometimes our minds slip back to them and their comparatively anxiety-free lives. But then we snap back to the tasks at hand.

We knew when we started we were taking a risk and now we see that the adventure isn't over. At the moment, we can still say we're glad we went, and we're glad to be back.

Ralph and Hannah Friesen recently completed a three-year term as English teachers in Zimbabwe with World University Service of Canada. Ralph works as a researcher and writer and consultant in human resource development and film distribution; Hannah is an ESL teacher currently developing a social studies kit on Africa for the Department of Education.

COMING EVENTS

April 12: Mennonite Festival of Art and Music, Grant Memorial Baptist Church.

April 17, 18, 19: Westgate operetta: "Plain and Fancy," 7:30 pm, Tec Voc. School.

April 27: MBBC commencement 7:00 pm, Portage Ave. MB Church.

April 27: CMBC commencement Home Street Mennonite Church.

May 10: Auction Sale El-Dad Ranch, Giroux, Man.

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Mennonites can set an example by helping to mend broken promises: the Native land claims

by Menno Wiebe

With springtime being just around the corner, when all of nature beckons us back to the countryside and the grandeur of the open spaces, it is a good time to remind ourselves about the heritage of our lands. This spring season will, in all likelihood, raise for Manitoba the difficult issue of the unfulfilled treaty land entitlements.

It so happens that for both the Manitoba and Canadian governments there is unfinished business dating all the way back to the treaties first signed in 1871. That first treaty, for instance, provided for 32 acres per person, for most of the bands. A few additional bands were entitled to 120 acres per person. Treaties 1, 2, 5 and 10 resulted in the ceding of Indian lands to the Canadian government. Like all Indian treaties they were negotiated under circumstances that were advantageous to the government. They were calculated in terms of land sizes more appropriate to agriculture than to the traditional Indian economy of hunting. Despite the lop-sided outcome of the treaty negotiations, however, these treaties are still highly honoured by most Manitoba Indians.

Treaties are by definition high-level and binding agreements between sovereign nations. In Manitoba, as well as elsewhere in Canada, treaties were made between the government of Canada and the Indian nations. Since treaties are made between sovereign nations, Indian people do not regard themselves as another ethnic or immigrant group, destined for assimilation. Hence, Indian claims are deeply rooted in the historic formation of Canada and tied firmly to the highest forms of laws in this country.

It is rather easy to forget that Mennonites and other European settlers flourish in southern Manitoba by virtue

of treaties that were made only two years prior to the coming of the first Mennonites in 1874. Those treaties included agreements over land allotments, education, health and rights for hunting. Currently before Manitoba is the matter of land allotments. The specified number of acres promised for each Indian individual have not all been allocated. Twenty-eight of the Indian bands in Manitoba did not receive the full amount of land to which they were entitled. Of these, 23 bands have had their claims validated by the federal government. The entitlement cases of an additional five bands are currently being reviewed by the federal government.

It is not altogether clear why the transaction of land remains incomplete. But there are a few possible reasons:

- Indian people typically, did not restrict their lands by making arbitrary boundaries. The pressure from settlers, however, made them nervous about encroaching populations and caused them to call for a definition of their boundaries. But since the initiation of such surveys lay with the government, by terms of treaty, these surveys did not always occur.

- There was a shortage of land surveyors.

- Population statistics were often inaccurate.

- A wide-spread notion existed that Indian people did not make good use of the land, hence there was reluctance to mark off any more lands for the reserves.

Now, 115 years later, the Indian people of Manitoba are requesting fulfillment of their entitlement. In response, the provincial government committed itself to conduct a public hearing on the nature of the Indian claims. Two Mennonite briefs were submitted to the commission headed by Leon Mitchell. One of the points made in these briefs was that Mennonite immigrants of 1874 were likewise recipients of land allotments. As it happened, the allotment per

family was at least equal to that promised to the Indian peoples. Additionally, it was noted in the research that Mennonite land choice was agricultural in quality, to be contrasted to many of the Indian lands which were marginal in value. The Mennonite briefs also called for full allotment of land for treaty Indian people of Manitoba, based on the Manitoba Natural Resource Transfer Agreement of 1930 signed between the federal and provincial governments.

Commissioner Mitchell's final report accommodated the requests of Mennonite and other briefs, then advocated that the outstanding treaty land requests be honored, negotiated and appropriate lands allocated. Mitchell also commended the Native people for the gracious nature of their request. He wrote: "Very fortunately, most of these fears (regarding the potential impact of the fulfillment of Treaty obligations on established rights of ownership or on existing public uses of land) were allayed by the generous and statesmanlike position expressed by the Chiefs . . . These accommodations . . . deserve high commendation and appreciation by the people and governments of Manitoba and Canada.

The treaty people are not asking for expropriations of land now held privately by non-Indian farmers surrounding the reserves. Instead, they are asking first for unencumbered crown lands. Failing availability of these they ask for lands now leased, and only thirdly will they negotiate for privately held lands wherever there is willingness to sell. In other words, they do not wish to cause any displacement of people, or taking over of existing private lands.

And why is Mennonite Central Committee involved in the Indian land issue? For us it is a matter of biblical justice. The biblical reminder not to oppress the poor is very strong both in the Old and New Testaments. The Mennonite people, who themselves know all about

land displacement, about being aliens in countries they have come to know as their own, and about ethnic marginalization, should be the first to understand the plight of the original people here in this country who find themselves struggling for survival in their own homelands.

Of the total land areas in Manitoba, only 0.4 per cent belongs to Indian reserves. Should the treaty land entitlement be negotiated on the basis of the 1976 Indian population, then an additional 0.6 per cent should be added to the present reserves for a total of 1 per cent of Manitoba land area. It should be noted that the status Indian population represents 4.7 per cent of Manitoba's total population and that reserve lands are not only rural, but for the most part quite marginal to fertile agricultural areas.

To date, the Mennonite efforts towards resolution of Native land issues are as follows.

- MCC made available a voluntary service researcher to work with Indian bands to check the documentation surrounding treaty rights.
- MCC has worked with a number of reserves in order to assist them in the development of local lands in the area of gardening, wild rice development, etc.
- MCC participated in the presentation of submissions to the public hearings conducted by Leon Mitchell.
- MCC has had several meetings with the Premier of Manitoba and relevant cabinet ministers to commend the gov-

ernment for its actions and to advocate just settlements.

- We have sought to monitor the negotiations, as much as possible, with a view to testing the justice of an eventual settlement.

- Some meetings in the Mennonite constituency have taken place designed to prepare our own church people for an eventual settlement.

It can only be hoped that Mennonite people who came to the Red River Valley in 1874 will give some leadership in understanding the Native land issues. Mennonites, who have benefitted substantially by obtaining choice lands in Manitoba through the allocation of designated reserves, east and west of the Red River, now have an unusual opportunity to support the Indian people in seeking a just settlement.

In turn, it is the Indian bands who have come to the churches seeking our support, knowing that we are believers in biblical justice. Should the province of Manitoba be able to conclude the settlement of this very overdue problem, then this action could well serve as an excellent precedent for parallel settlements in other provinces. mm

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• Mid March also finds us doing something a little saner. We are invited to a friend's cottage to take part in the last cross-country skiing weekend of the year. The hills are beautiful and the combination of a long ski run and good food and company make this a highlight of a beautiful Spring season.

• Now with the Easter season approaching, we look forward to more concerts, a drama by the Mennonite Theatre of Winnipeg, and the wedding of a niece, which will bring many members of the family together. Spring is here. Can summer, and golf, be far behind? mm

review

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A young man's courage

A review by Paul Redekop

Mike King is a young man whose main claim to fame involves the fact that he travelled in a wheel chair from Fairbanks, Alaska to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1985. He grew up as one of five brothers in a Mennonite family on a dairy farm in Chester County, Pennsylvania. As a youth he was involved in sports, especially skiing and ice hockey. He also enjoyed travelling, and one of his trips was a motorcycle trip across the continent. On the road from Banff to Calgary he was struck by a car. His spinal cord was severed in the accident, so that he permanently lost the use of his legs. His recuperation included a lengthy hospital stay and an even lengthier rehabilitation.

Mike has written an autobiographical account of his adventures, including a brief summary of his life before the motorcycle accident, his feelings and experiences during the lengthy recuperation period, and finally, the decision to make the arduous expedition which is the main focus of the book. The author talks very openly about the anger and despair he felt at times during his rehabilitation, followed by the renewal of his faith, and determination to make the best of his situation. Mike King is refreshingly frank and straightforward about his decision to travel across the continent in a wheel chair. He talks about his enjoyment of travel and

his yen to have an adventure before settling down to more serious pursuits. He describes the organization of the trip, and how it developed into a means to publicize the plight of the handicapped and raise money for their support. The trip itself is also described at some length, with special emphasis on the people met along the way and the help received.

The book is written in an engaging manner and in a clear and simple style, and so is very accessible to a wide audience. In addition to the written descriptions, the book also contains a wealth of photos of Mike, family and friends before and after the accident and during his cross-continental journey. The book will be of special interest to anyone who is handicapped or is involved with the handicapped in any way.

The Mike King Story, by Mike King (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1985); Hard Cover; 176 pps.; \$15.95 US.

Paul Redekop teaches Sociology at the University of Winnipeg.

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An Awesome Task

a short story by Justina Neufeld

The warm glow of the evening sun was disappearing in the west. A humid June air hung heavy after the welcome rain over the small German village of Gnadental, nestled comfortably in the southern part of the Ukraine in the Soviet Union. Ten-year-old Justina, although exhausted, bounced into the summer kitchen to tell her mother of her adventure this summer day. It was the first time she had gone outside the familiar surroundings of her village without someone other than her family. The Janzen sisters were not only neighbors but distant relatives, so Justina, usually shy and insecure with adults other than her parents, felt comfortable to leave the village with them to participate in real adult work. She also felt proud to be included because they were four to six years older than she. Justina, although timid, had an insatiable desire to be with the older girls; they sometimes talked about things she did not hear at home. Her only sister was 10 years older, and she talked to her as if she were a mere child.

Walking the four kilometers to the Ukrainian village to pick cherries in the enormous collective farm orchard had taken real courage. Justina could not speak Ukrainian or Russian very well, and she had never walked that distance before. Against her mother's protests, she had taken an average-sized pail instead of the smaller one. Anna was puzzled that the youngest of her 10 children was so eager to perform the tasks of adults. Earlier, Justina had insisted on milking old Spotty; now for days she had pestered her to go cherry picking. Anna, a cautious mother, finally had agreed to let her go, partially because Anna was so preoccupied with the rumor and the constant talk of impending war. She had eight sons, five old enough to be drafted. Dietrich, the fourth oldest who was home for the summer from the university, predicted that war with Germany was imminent.

"Mother, we're home, I picked them all by myself and carried them most of the way home. Liesel helped only a short distance." Not getting the anticipated approval from her mother, Justina pulled the pail of cherries closer to the stove where Anna was preparing the evening meal.

"I did not even get tired walking. I stubbed my big toe though. It bled a lot, but now it's covered with mud." With still no response, Justina continued.

"Can I go with them again next week when they go to pick sour cherries?"

Justina was suddenly aware that her mother continued stirring the potatoes and had not acknowledged her presence. Sensing something was wrong, Justina snuggled up to her mother pretending to see what she was stirring. Looking up she could see that Mother had been crying.

"You can eat now if you are hungry." Anna's voice, heavy with sadness, alarmed Justina, and seeing her mother cry worried her. Emotions, especially sadness, anger, fear, or anxiety, were not expressed overtly by adults in the presence of others, much less talked about. Justina took cues from the adults in her family. She did not question her mother's expression of feelings. Instead, hiding her alarm, she asked casually, "Has the war started — or something?"

Loud sobs suddenly interrupted Justina's distressing thoughts. Only once had she seen her mother so upset; Justina sat on the bench immobile, her eyes cast to the floor because it wasn't polite to look at someone showing intense feelings. Yet, Justina knew every move her mother made and how distraught she looked. She had suddenly turned away from the stove, clasped her long striped apron, and covered her face as if to hold back the tears and the anguish that had suddenly gushed forth. But neither the apron nor her usual inner restraints could hold back the sobs, or the pain she felt.

Overwhelmed with a feeling of helplessness, Justina wanted to rush to her

mother, but she could not move, nor could she utter a word. The tension mounted inside her as she heard the words over and over, "Oh, God, be with us, help us, please help us," amid the now uncontrollable sobs.

Unaware of the cause of her mother's devastation, Justina wondered why God's help was needed. Again, she asked, trying not to show her alarm, "Has the war started already?"

"They have come to investigate what happened this afternoon. They came in a black car — four men from the Rajon [county seat]."

A black car from the Rajon struck terror in Justina's heart. She remembered well the black car that always came at night. In the morning news traveled fast from neighbor to neighbor about who had been arrested. In the past four years all of her playmates' fathers had disappeared in the night, never to be heard from again. The assumption was they were sent into exile, to Siberia.

It was in those years — 1936–37 — Justina had seen her mother one evening pack a small bundle of father's things to send along, just in case the car would stop at the house, investigate, question, and look through everything, searching for evidence of insubordination towards the new communist government. Owning a Bible or having in one's possession addresses of relatives in capitalistic countries or photographs of relatives was evidence of treason. Justina's experience from first grade on was a series of encounters with fear.

Mrs. Dyck, the neighbor woman, appeared in the doorway of the summer kitchen. "They're still there. They're watching to see how many more are affected," she reported rather matter-of-factly.

"How many have they butchered so far?" asked Anna, somewhat calmed by her friend's presence.

"I think it's three or four."

Justina, her tension somewhat eased by the adults' conversation, ventured to ask, "What are they butchering?"

The all-knowing Mrs. Dyck related what she had gleaned from various villagers who were witnesses of the catastrophe at the milking station. She looked and spoke to Justina directly: "Child, the herdsmen drove the herd onto the wet alfalfa field, then fell asleep. Instead of letting them graze 15 minutes as your father had approved, they grazed until some of them got sick. They bloated and will die if they are not butchered."

Justina, puzzled, asked why the investigators were here. "Justie," Mrs. Dyck told her sombrely, "your father is

responsible for everything that happens because he's in charge of the whole collective farm dairy. He has to see that the milk quota is met. To lose even one cow is very serious. The investigators are here to see what happened, and why."

Satisfied that she had brought Anna the latest news, Mrs. Dyck took her leave. "I better get home and fix supper for my children."

Her mother, weeping quietly, served Justina a generous portion of fried potatoes with cracklings. Justina wouldn't eat. Her frail body was tremulous and felt out of control. Over and over the voice within her said, "You must not cry. You will be strong for Mother. Papa said, 'You must be brave when you're frightened.'" Yes, fear, that was why she was shaking inside. Mother must not know how scared she was.

To stop that voice within her, Justina employed a ritual that had long helped her through times when she could not name her fear. She would sing — not out loud like she and Mother usually did. She could say the words of those songs to herself. "Take Thou my hand, O Father and lead Thou me, until my journey endeth. . . ."

The ancient family clock struck 10. Justina struggled desperately to stay awake and wait with her mother in the now-darkened kitchen. Although she had often begged to stay up late till the fireflies would come out and sparkle in the darkness, they now held no interest for her. But she would wait up till her brother and sister came home from the field so Mother would not wait alone for Father to come home.

Justina awoke with a start. She saw the early rays of the sun shining through the open kitchen door. She had slept through the night on the narrow wooden bench in the kitchen. There was an uneasy stillness about her. The events of the previous evening came slowly but with full force into her consciousness. She ran to the corner room, her parents' bedroom. The bed had not been slept in.

"Mama, Mama, where are you?" she called. But there was no answer. Running outside Justina found her mother sitting on the bottom step of the wooden porch. Appearing indifferent to Justina's presence, looking straight ahead, she said unemotionally, "The car left at three this morning, but father has not yet come home. Justie, go to the barn and see if he's coming home for breakfast."

Without protest or questioning, Justina obeyed. She was afraid, but deep inside she knew her shyness would not stand in the way. She had to do this, not

yet realizing fully the impact this task would have for her the rest of her life. Justina knew, however, she would not be the same person when she returned. In her mind she knew this task was bigger than she was, even bigger than her mother. To ease her fear she visualized as she walked to the collective farm milking barn how she would enter the back door. She saw the endless rows of huge red cows and several enormously large and fierce bulls that even adults feared. Entering the back door, she would see her father and then would not need to go to the office to ask that surly woman for permission to see him.

The five-minute walk ended too quickly. Hesitating momentarily, she started down the middle of the long barn. The cows tearing at the clattering chains and whipping their tails from side to side seemed twice as large as before when she had walked along holding on to her father's hand. Justina saw an endless row of udders below eye level. Except for several maids milking, Justina did not see anyone in the long middle aisle.

Tall, skinny Mrs. Peters stepped into the aisle with a pail of milk. "What are you doing here in the barn?" she asked harshly.

Barely audible, Justina managed, "I'm looking for my father."

"Huh! He's not here. They took him along for investigation. Lucky only six cows had to be killed. We could all be gone if it had been any more."

Justina, unable to grasp the meaning or implication, did not know how to respond. Her sensitive nature, however, picked up the sharp tone and unsympathetic attitude of this forbidding woman. Her eyes cast down and her heart wanting to jump out of her body, she turned slowly. Pretending that she was not upset, she walked out of the barn. She tried to ignore the wobbly feeling in her legs by recalling the fantasy in which she could fly just like the storks that nested every summer on the neighbor's barn roof. She could simply not return home to tell her mother, at least not right away. Her head still spinning, she sat down under the mulberry tree.

Closing her eyes, Justina tried to imagine what her father looked like, but no image would come. Then she remembered the last time she had talked to him. Oh, it was like magic when he appeared at the school on the last day of classes.

A rumor had spread a week before school was out that a shipment of candy had arrived at the village store. Justina and Elsa, her best friend, had gone into

the store on their way home and Elsa had asked the clerk if there was indeed candy to be had. The clerk confirmed the rumor and even told them what day the candy was to be sold. That day had come and gone; neither Justina's nor Elsa's mothers had money to buy the rare exquisite sweets. Every recess thereafter they went to the store to check if there was still some candy left. They could think of little else during the recesses. The winner of every game they played was rewarded with an imaginary little oblong wrapped candy with a jellied fruit-filled center. The last day of school Elsa and Justina again stood on tiptoes looking into the store window. Elsa had given up hope of getting any, but Justina's faith was still holding. If she could only talk to her father, he would give her some "kopekies" if he had any. She promised Elsa she would wait up for him tonight and ask him. The school bell announced the end of recess and they hurried towards the school yard and there he was.

"And what are you girls up to? Are you skipping class by chance?" he had asked with a half-smile.

"No, Papa, I was looking for you. There is candy in the store; do you have some money?"

And he reached into his pocket and brought forth all the "kopekies" he had. Four kopekies gave them each two pieces of that longed-for delicacy. That was the last time she had seen him, two or three weeks ago.

No, she would not go home right away; if she waited under this old mulberry tree a little longer, maybe he would appear again. Unexpectedly he would come around the corner just like he had that last day of school. He would smile at her and would ask, "What are you doing here, my littlest girl?"

However, her fantasy was interrupted when she heard the cows piling out of the barn to be herded to pasture. She had to go home and face her mother. Grimly, she decided she would tell her mother what Mrs. Peters had said. But the emotions she had would remain locked up deep inside herself. No one would know how desperately she wanted to scream to God and the whole world, "It isn't fair. I want my Papa. I want him to come home. Oh, God, how can we survive without him?"

Justina suspected what Mother probably already knew — that they would never see father again. An overwhelming load settled about her; she needed to be strong for her mother, responsible for her for the rest of her life.

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What care is given? What is expected?

by Ed Unrau

A study of intergenerational support between elderly parents and their middle-aged children has shown that while there is substantial agreement on the need to help older parents there is disagreement on how much care is actually provided.

In 1985 Dr. John Bond and Dr. Carol Harvey, both in the department of family studies of the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Human Ecology, completed papers describing their findings following a study of familial support of the elderly in a rural Manitoba Mennonite community.

They found that in terms of doctrine there was no difference among the four church groups studied. All referred to either the Fifth Commandment ("Honor thy father and thy mother . . .") or to other scriptural teachings outlining a Christian's responsibilities to those in need.

While there were differences in the degree of religious practice, or observance, among the groups, these differences were not related to the size of the burden the caregivers felt as they provided care. However, those interviewed for the study and who described themselves as having a high level of religiosity were most likely to describe the burden of care as low.

The researchers detected no differences between the elderly parents and their adult children in the perception of the support that should be given by the children.

But parents and children parted company in their assessment of how much support is actually provided: The parents reported receiving less support than their children said they provided.

Dr. Bond and Dr. Harvey explain this discrepancy in the level of support received by suggesting that the elderly parents may not be recalling accurately the level of support, or that the parents may have an underlying belief that the children should be providing more help than they do, or that the support provided by children is of limited value.

The researchers go on to say "an alternative view is that parents are accurate in their responses, and the offspring are over-reporting the amount of support provided."

They go on to say the inflated responses might be due to the fact that the respondents want to be seen as providing care to their elderly parents because family cohesiveness is an important concept in the community studied. Another view advanced by Dr. Bond and Dr. Harvey is that the adult children, being somewhat burdened by the care they already provide, perceive they provide more care than, in fact, they do provide to their parents.

Even though the people interviewed for the study lived near each other, shared religious values, and were concerned about the well-being of family members (as well as other community members), the researchers found that one could not assume that they shared similar perceptions of the care given and the care received.

In one of the papers Dr. Bond and Dr. Harvey wrote following their study they said: "With an increasing number of persons entering old age, there has been a consequent alteration of family dynamics, such that middle-aged individuals frequently care for and provide support to their older parents. At the same time, the middle-aged person is often in the midst of raising his or her own children, attending to personal aspirations, and carry the role of spouse."

Accordingly, contemporary middle-aged people often find themselves becoming grandparents while at the same time retaining a continuing responsibility toward their own elderly parents.

The researchers gathered information from pastors, middle-aged and older family members of an unnamed community described as a "rural Manitoba town. . . . A distinctive feature of this community is the religious and ethnic composition . . . which arose from the migration by Mennonites, the dominant religious group in the area."

The study focused on three Mennonite groups: General Conference (GC), Evangelical Mennonite Conference (EMC), and the Church of God in Christ (Holdeman). For comparison, an additional sample from the local Lutheran church was included because of its similar historical roots.

The researchers recently received a \$25,000 grant to continue their research on inter-generational support of the elderly.

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mirror mix-up

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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:
 If you want to be big,
 don't ○○○○○○○○○○.

This edition we announce the winner of the February puzzle and from among the 64 entries, Hilda Hildebrand of Halbstadt, was selected winner.

Answers to the February puzzle are: cupid, lover, heart, fancy, desire, divine.

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 May 21, 1986.

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review

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A book on Amish schools loses because it fails to find a focus

The Amish School, by Sara E. Fisher and Rachel K. Stahl (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1986).

Reviewed by Paul Redekop

This little book presents what is in effect a series of vignettes having to do with the Amish school system. The first part of the book gives a brief history of the Amish school system and describes it as it exists today. The basic values stressed in Amish schools are discussed: religious devotion, responsibility and respect, cooperation in place of competition, and maintenance of the group identity. One subsequent section, written by Sara Fisher, who taught in an Amish school for years, describes in detail the first day of school. Another section quotes excerpts from an Amish student's diary. Various short descriptions of the curriculum, school activities, parental involvement and special events are also included.

The book is very attractively packaged, with numerous excellent photographs. There are also things to be learned from it. However, it suffers from an apparent uncertainty regarding the nature of its audience. The earlier sections, with their general descriptions and justifications of the Amish school

system, give the impression that they are aimed at a general audience. At other times, the authors appear to be directing their remarks toward a specifically Amish audience. An example of this appears in the context of a discussion of the fact that Amish teachers as well as others in the community have a tendency to mispronounce common English words; and this because of their lack of contact with the outside world. This discussion is followed by an invitation to readers to send in lists of words which they have difficulty with. Still other sections of the book appear to be directed even more specifically at Amish teachers. These are sections which contain very specific suggestions for classroom procedure. At one point, for instance, it is suggested that a group of thirty students be seated in four rows, two with seven students each and two with eight each, and with the girls in the middle of each row and the boys on each side.

On the whole, this book gives us some interesting insights into Amish education. However, the reader who is looking for a more thorough understanding will be left somewhat frustrated.

Paul Redekop teaches sociology at the University of Winnipeg.



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Before Hanover, there were schools

SCHOOLS — OUR HERITAGE: From 46 School Districts to Hanover Unitary School Division, 1878–1968. By John K. Schellenberg, publ. by The Board of the Hanover School Division No. 15, Steinbach, MB. ISBN 0-919673-93-7. Hardcover, xi, 280 pp., illus.

Reviewed by Victor Kliever

This volume represents a rich compilation of information, statistics, and anecdotes of the 46 school districts in the southeastern part of Manitoba that is presently encompassed by the Hanover School Division. As the author states in his introduction, "It was not my intention to set up a learned document, but rather just record in simple language some happenings in each one of the 46 school districts." Indeed, the book is not systematic history. It does, however, give an interesting survey of the earlier developments of the education system, from its beginnings with the one-room, eight-grade school building and the single teacher who was expected not only to teach all subjects and keep the building clean and warm but also to be a moral paragon and leader in the community.

The major section of the book (pp. 1–246) deals with the individual districts in alphabetical order, devoting an average of 5–6 pages for each. A sampling of names includes Arran, Barkfield, Blumenort, Landmark, Niverville, Slawna, and Steinbach. The statistical information varies, according to available sources, but it generally includes the date of the formation of the district, the area encompassed by each, details of school buildings, names of trustees and teachers, and special vignettes or other relevant information as this was available. Just one illustration is the memory of earlier salary negotiations (p. 5): "Salary negotiations were exciting, when I think back. I remember one evening of negotiations where teachers and trustees sang gospel songs for the first 20 minutes and then negotiated sharply."

Other memories include the special Christmas concerts in Blumenhof, the early use of the Bible and *Fibel* (in German, of course) in Bothwell, some limited English instruction before 1900 in Clearsprings and other districts, the interschool softball games, and the Red Cross auction sales.

Sources, like board minutes, are absent or sketchy in the decades of the 19th and early 20th centuries; however, in time these become more complete, paralleling the gradual development of more formal educational structures. Such further developments include not only the additions of a second room or running water and indoor washrooms to the old one-room school, but also improved educational programs, secondary schools, and better qualified (and better salaried) teachers. Throughout the years many teachers, trustees, and parents continually devoted much effort to improving the educational possibilities for their children and youth. Even then, most of the developments did not come without intense struggles! Two of the most significant developments were the establishment of the Hanover (Secondary) School Division in 1959 and the Hanover Unitary School Division in 1968.

A concluding section gives a brief overview of the educational system in several stages from 1916 (the beginning of compulsory education for all children aged 7–14 years) to 1968; this section then leads into several appendices which indicate various statistics and a summary of the biggest project of the Hanover Board, the building of the Steinbach Regional Secondary School in 1971–72.

The author has done his work as an "insider," having been secretary-treasurer of the division from 1960–81. He writes knowledgeably and with enthusiasm, having himself experienced not only a good portion of the innumerable details that have become a part of the history of the division but also the tensions of deeply held, often differing

opinions about the meaning of quality education.

The technical quality of the book is generally very satisfactory: it is a well-bound hardcover edition with good quality paper and print; the many photographs are a most welcome addition to the text. Regretfully, there are some (few!) errors in the page numbers indicated in the table of contents ("Woolwich" and all subsequent headings are incorrect); "Hanover School Division #5: should read #15." A stylistic improvement would have been to use parallel typestyle for subheadings in "The Educational System" (247 ff.). More than only a stylistic oversight, one would have expected the name of the author on the title page; as it is, he is identified on page vii, with a photograph and tribute on page viii. An index of names might have been helpful, although it was not expected, based on the stated purpose of the book.

In summary: a less than systematic but stimulating and easy to read compilation of statistics and vignettes which will rekindle special memories in the people who have lived, taught, or studied in one of the districts, and one which will hopefully challenge other districts and divisions to similar works, as well as more formal histories! mm

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review

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A winning first novel about growing up

A review by Al Reimer

The Blue Jar, a novel by Anne Konrad
(Queenston House, Winnipeg, 1985)
225 pgs. Cloth \$19.95, paper \$9.95.

Novels about growing up are not everybody's cup of tea. If they are closely autobiographical they may at times be of more interest to the author than to the general reader. Fortunately, that is not true of *The Blue Jar*, a sprightly, superbly written autobiographical first novel about an unusually observant and perceptive Mennonite girl growing up in rural Alberta. Annchen is one of ten children in the "Bush" Klassen family, Russian-Mennonite immigrants of the 1920s trying to homestead in the alien, hostile bushland of northern Alberta. With only a few Norwegians as neighbors, they try desperately to make a go of it until they have scraped together enough to rent an established farm in a predominantly Mennonite area.

The key to success in this kind of novel is the narrator, the central observer, who must speak with the authentic voice of an inexperienced child, but at the same time reveal flashes of meaningful perception and insight in order to give depth and resonance to the narrative. That is not an easy point-of-view to maintain, but Anne Konrad carries it off with grace and confidence. Her Annchen is a fresh, unspoiled little girl who learns about death and personal loss early when her older sister Helen dies. Through mainly routine but freshly observed childhood experiences Annchen learns to understand the nature and quality of her limited little world. She learns to recognize and accept the rigid social and moral codes and stern Christian values brought from Russia by her parents and the other members of the community. In fact, most of the more interesting dramatic tensions of the novel come from the clash between the Old World values and attitudes and the demands of a dif-

ferent, more open kind of Canadian society. Annchen also learns to despise hypocrites and phonies, as in her painful experience with Mr. Schier, the hopelessly inept summer Bible school teacher.

Inevitably, in a novel of this type, the reader grows a little impatient as routine childhood experiences are lovingly detailed in lieu of plot. However, in fairness to Konrad one must add that she is adept at closing each chapter so as to get the maximum of significance out of ordinary events. She is particularly good at evoking in English the authentic speech accents and cadences of her Russian-Mennonite characters, whose first language at the time was, of course, German. Her sprinkling of German words and phrases give richness and realism to the texture of her language.

In the final chapters Annchen experiences the heady adult — though still

vicarious — thrill of her sister Tina's courtship and marriage. The sunny, innocent atmosphere of the novel now darkens to a more adult perspective as Annchen is introduced to the some of the mysteries of grown-up relationships, including those of the bedroom.

What I like best about this novel are its bright colors, its vivid tones and the economy and energy of its narrative line. Anne Konrad can write, make no mistake, and one would like to see her work with serious adult themes and characters. And yet, having said that, I would not like to leave the impression that this is a "mere" children's novel. It is quite simply a good novel that will appeal to readers of all ages.

mm



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poet's word

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Skill Testing Question

Early Saturday snow falls softly;
A lovely sight from my side of the window.
I scarcely notice, though,
bent as I am on deciphering this

SKILL TESTING QUESTION.

The pictures lined up, you see,
and the prize is mine
if I can work out the arithmetic.

OVER \$8 MILLION IN PRIZES!

I curse myself for being without a calculator
at this vital juncture in life.

Impatiently, I coax long forgotten formulas
back to memory —
. . . media distorted ambition.

YES, YOU TOO CAN BE A WINNER!

I rush to the counter to justify my math; Smile,
satisfied with my achievement,
Pocket a well-fed wallet
and prepare to enjoy a free lunch.

THOUSANDS OF PRIZES TO BE WON!

Outside, the wind picks up, Seemingly
Flings in a tattered old man, Who
fumbles with stiff fingers
for battered bills
spent long ago
on warmth.

I glance and sniff,
warily,
at this reeking,
unlikely
Christ.

Then, the manager:
"I'm sorry, sir, you'll just have to . . ."

And a voice, not my own:
"It's alright . . . he's with me."

The man looks confused as I thrust him the prize
and slide a pen between his fingers:

JUST FILL IN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS . . .

I leave him, bewildered with my shallow charity,
and stumble into the bitterness Beset,
mercilessly,
with skill testing questions.

— by Tim Wiebe

The Pathway

The moon was a lantern
Hung in the sky.
And the sea calm but for
Some small waves that touched the shore.

The night was dark
And deeply mysterious.
Yet there was the reflection of the moon,
And it trailed off toward the horizon.

But the path; oh the path!
It was made of diamonds.
Come — it beckoned to me,
Come, follow this road to eternity.

— by Anne Martens

BLACK AND WHITE

I watched another one tonight
Another good old black and white
Ain't it funny in my mind
They've left the others far behind
Look in on Bogart and Bacall
It's not because they're old at all
Call me anything you please
I'll take the moonlight through the trees

The innocence on earth's dark face
Has vanished now without a trace
The great old themes of excellence
With shy romance and common sense.

Serve mankind with a deep devotion
Climb a mountain, cross and ocean
Read the classics, find the hero
Soon, too soon it will be over.

As the movie fades from view
My silly tears start up again
The story's old, the script is true
I want it back again . . . Don't you?

Bring back the good old black and white
I'm tired of blood and guts alright
Take the monsters and the videos
And all the people without clothes
Bring back the good old black and white
I'll watch another one tonight.

— by Clint Toews

An auction sale to raise funds for **El Dad Ranch** will be held at the ranch located near Giroux, Saturday, May 10. El Dad Ranch is a residential and work treatment program for mentally handicapped people in conflict with the law. It is supported by individuals, churches and the Mennonite Central Committee. Proceeds will be used for the purchase of a three-ton truck for use in the sale of firewood by the ranch. Residents at El Dad cut, split, and deliver firewood for customers in the southeast and Winnipeg. Donations of articles for auction are being solicited and can be left at the ranch. Smaller items can be left at MCC Manitoba at 1483 Pembina Highway. Contact persons are Wendy Dueck, Kleefeld (377-4467), Ernie Penner, Winnipeg (775-1989), Addison Klassen, Steinbach (326-1050). El Dad Ranch is located three quarters of a mile north of Provincial Road 311, three miles east of Highway 12.

Walter and Karen Enns of Winnipeg have begun work as pastor couple at the Westview Community Church in Grassy Lake, Alberta.

MB Bible College has arranged temporary replacements for professor Henry Krahn, who died suddenly in December. **Prof. James Pankratz** and MB archivist **Ken Riddig** are each teaching one course. Other courses will be taught by Dr. Gerald Bower, who teaches history at the Nazarene Bible College, and Dr. Kenneth Hamilton, a retired theologian.

The **Dutch Mennonite Theological Seminary** — oldest Mennonite seminary anywhere in the world — observed its 250th anniversary in December with a special program in Amsterdam. Prof. Sjouke Voolstra, who teaches Christian theology and ethics and Mennonite theology at the seminary, served as the principal speaker for the occasion. Picking up the anniversary idea, Voolstra noted that Dutch Mennonites are celebrating three significant dates during this period — the 450th anniversary of Menno Simons' conversion to Anabaptism, the 250th anniversary of the founding of the seminary, and the 175th anniversary of the organization of the Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit (the Dutch Mennonite Conference). "I like to see the connection of the three — the Mennonite faith, the education of pastors, and the family of churches," he reflected.

Parents for German Education have recently encountered set-backs in the

Hanover School Division, Steinbach, and the Rhineland School Division, Altona, where boards have voted against the establishment of German-English bilingual programs. In Steinbach, board members expressed concern that a bilingual program would damage the basic German program offered in Grade 4 and up. A successful bilingual program at South Oaks School in Grunthal will be expanded to include Grade 3 next year.



Ingrid Friesen of Winkler, most recently of Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She will be working as a child enrichment worker at Collins House, an emergency home for homeless women with children. Friesen was last employed as an assistant manager in Winnipeg. She is a member of the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church and is also associated with Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Winnipeg. Her parents are Peter and Maria Friesen of Winkler.

Henry Gerbrandt of Winnipeg, has begun a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Ephrata, Pa. He is working as a shipper with Self-Help Crafts. Gerbrandt is a member of the Gospel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. His parents are George and Mary Gerbrandt of Winnipeg.



Marv Braun of Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Warburg, Alberta. He will be working as a mechanic and counselor with YOU (Youth Orientation Units). Braun was last employed as a mechanic in Winnipeg. His parents are Isaac and Margaret Braun of Plum Coulee, Man.

Music Teacher Position available at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. The position is basically in Choral Music at the Junior and Senior levels. For full-time position either English or Mathematics are required. Apply to E. Strempler, Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 86 Westgate, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 2E1 (Phone 775-7111).

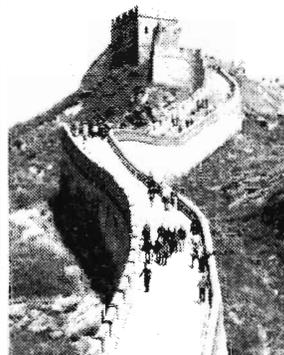
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Anton Kehler of Steinbach has been appointed chair of the annual Manitoba Mennonite Central Committee Auction Sale. The appointment was announced recently by Jake Letkeman, MCC Manitoba director. The date for this year's sale, which again will raise money for relief projects and aid in Third World countries, has been tentatively set for Sept. 13. Over \$80,000 was raised at the 1985 sale. Kehler, former manager of Robinson Stores, Steinach, replaces Jac. P. Siemens. Vice-chair is John G. Stoesz of Altona. This year's auction sale will again be held at the Big M Stampede grounds in Morris.

Wilma Schroeder of Brandon, most recently of Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment at Davis Inlet, Labrador. She will be working as public health nurse with Grenfell Regional Health Services. Schroeder received a bach-

elor's degree in nursing from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg and also attended Elim Bible School in Altona, Man. She was last employed as a staff nurse at Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. Schroeder is a member of the Trinity Baptist Church in Winnipeg and is also associated with Grace Mennonite Church in Brandon. Her parents are Albert and Anna Schroeder of Brandon.



Katheryne Penner of Gladstone, most recently of Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Winnipeg. She will be working as a receptionist and secretary with Pregnancy Distress Service. Penner previously served with Global Outreach Mission Prince of Peace Corps in Germany and Italy. She received a diploma in Bible from Steinbach (Man.) Bible College. Penner was last employed as a receptionist and secretary in Winnipeg. She is a member of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church in Austin, and is also associated with Grain of Wheat Church Community in Winnipeg. Her parents are Jake and Helen Penner of Gladstone.

Justina and Wayne Peters of Steinbach, are beginning two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignments with Self-Help Crafts in Ephrata, Pa. Justina will be working in the Self-Help international tea room and Wayne will be working as receiving foreman. Justina was last employed as a stenographer in Toronto. Wayne last worked as a restaurant manager in Steinbach. The Peterses are members of the Chortizer Mennonite Church in Mitchell, Man. Their children are Amy and Matthew.



Mary A. Cook of Selkirk, Ontario, most recently of Winnipeg, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Ephrata, Pa. She will be working with Self-Help Crafts. Cook was last employed as a security guard in Winnipeg. She is a member of the Maple's Church of the Nazarene in Winnipeg and is also associated with Rainham Mennonite Church in Selkirk. Her parents are Albert and Lela Cook of Selkirk.

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From left to right: Dr. Al Reimer, Dr. Harry Loewen, Dr. Bernie Wiebe, and Dr. G. K. Epp.

University of Winnipeg expands Mennonite studies

by George K. Epp

In the summer of 1977 the University of Winnipeg announced the establishment of a Chair in Mennonite Studies funded by the Friesen Family Foundation and the federal government of Canada. This was a first in Canada, and to emphasize the strong interest in this program, the University of Winnipeg invited George K. Epp to teach the first course for the 1977-78 academic year. In 1978 Dr. Harry Loewen was called to the Chair and since then Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg has become a popular field of studies.

Building on the success of the Chair of Mennonite Studies in June, 1984, the university and the Friesen Foundation agreed to expand Mennonite studies at the University by creating a Mennonite Studies Centre which eventually could develop into a Menno Simons College. As always with new ideas, it takes time to explain the purpose, the usefulness and feasibility of a new venture, but the new centre is beginning to take shape and the people involved in developing

Mennonite studies at the university of Winnipeg have become a very compatible team.

The Mennonite Studies Centre is located in McNamara Hall North, 380 Spence Street, just across from the main building of the university. On the third floor the centre has four offices and two seminar rooms at its disposal. Dr. Harry Loewen, holder of the Chair in Mennonite Studies, has also moved to McNamara Hall. Thus you will find the offices of Al Reimer, Harry Loewen, and George K. Epp next to each other. This creates the unique situation where three scholars working in Mennonite studies can consult each other instantly, and this is what happens on an ongoing basis. As a matter of fact, we enjoy this arrangement so much that we will find it difficult to accept a change.

In September, 1986, Dr. Bernie Wiebe will join the Mennonite studies team, adding a very important aspect to our effort, namely community service courses. During the fall semester, Bernie Wiebe will teach a course registered

with the Continuing Education division "psychology of leadership in the churches." This is a course open to leaders and potential leaders in the church. The enrolment will be limited to twenty, to assure a good setting for interaction. The second semester he will devote to a course for senior citizens, "adding life to years." Again the course will be limited to twenty participants. Both courses will spread over 10 two-hour evenings.

We are proud to offer enrichment courses for senior citizens and we will make sure that people in that category will not be neglected. So if you are in that category, prepare for your first course at the centre. You should have the time of your life with a good instructor and — no essays and no exams.

While most people know that Harry Loewen and George K. Epp are teaching Mennonite history courses as well as doing research, fewer people are aware of the fact that Al Reimer has made a major contribution to Mennonite studies, especially during the last year. Not only did Prof. Reimer complete a fine Mennonite novel. (I am not allowed to say more because we are colleagues), but he is also working hard on the two Low German volumes of a critical edition of Arnold Dyck's collected works. Dr. Reimer is the first senior research fellow at the Mennonite Studies Centre and no doubt will continue to make major contributions to Mennonite studies.

There is another activity at the centre of which Mennonite students should be aware. Abe Bergen, Manitoba conference youth worker, has made one of our seminar rooms the home of Menno Table Talks. Here Mennonite students meet to dialogue with students and professors or invited speakers. Pastors are also welcome to participate in these table talks next fall, although for this academic year they have just come to a close.

Some day, when you are in our vicinity, please drop in. You will be welcomed with a smile in the language of your choice. Our secretary, Christine Hommel, is fluent in English and German. Come and see the Mennonite Studies Centre right in the centre of Winnipeg. mm



The Mennonite Studies Centre occupies the third floor of McNamara Hall North, and lies across from the main university building.

Mennonites in East Germany met at a Pentecostal church in East Berlin in October for a first-ever nationwide *Ge-meindetag* or "Church Day" celebration. Fifty-five people came from all parts of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) for weekend sessions focusing on "Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg — And What Next?" Also present for the two-day meetings were West German guests from West Berlin, Hannover, and Stuttgart. Several participants — Oskar Wedel, Baerbel Schultz, Ilse Claassen, Gerhard Wiens and Ronald Koch — offered reports and impressions from the Strasbourg assembly.

"A critical self-examination of Mennonite experience, identity, and task, especially as its pertains to the North American context." that is the ambitious goal of a **conference on Mennonite self-understanding** to be held at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ontario, May 28-31. Sponsored jointly by the Mennonite Bicentennial Commission and Conrad Grebel College, the conference will feature a wide range of academic addresses with formal responses both by Mennonite and non-Mennonite scholars. Purpose of the conference is analysis of the economic, cultural, philosophical, and religious factors which have influenced the North American Mennonite world view. Keynote address will be presented by Hans-Juergen Goertz, University of Hamburg in Germany. Other presenters will include A. James Reimer, Conrad Grebel College, theology; James Juhnke, Bethel College, history; Delbert Wiens, Fresno Pacific College, philosophy; Don Kraybill, Elizabethtown College, sociology; Al Dueck, Mennonite Brethren Bible Seminary, psychology; Perry Yoder, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Biblical studies; and Hildi Tiessen, Wilfrid Laurier University, literature and fine arts. While directed toward an academic audience, organizers say interested pastors or laypersons are welcome to participate. There is a registration fee of \$25 and food and lodging can be arranged at Conrad Grebel College, although space may be limited. Information and registration forms may be obtained from Sam Steiner, acting director, Institute of Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6.

A **memorial scholarship fund** was established by Conrad Grebel College in honour of **Frank H. Epp**, former president and professor of history, who passed away in January. He had been at the college since 1971 and served as president from 1973-79. The proceeds from the fund will be used to promote the study of Mennonites and other minority groups — areas of interest to which Epp devoted large amounts of energy and time. Recipients will be graduate and undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Waterloo, where the archives of Conrad Grebel College will provide a focal point for research. Rod Sawatsky, acting president of Conrad Grebel College, said the college itself would make a significant contribution and that faculty and student have already contributed generously toward the fund. Sawatsky said efforts will also be made to solicit additional contributions from individuals and organizations across North America since Epp was well known outside the local area through his extensive speaking and writing efforts over the past 30 years. Contributions to the Frank H. Epp Memorial Scholarship Fund may be sent to Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 3G6. Tax deductible receipts will be issued.

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review

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WMT's Oscar Wilde Production Too Tame

A review by Al Reimer

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre presents *Lady Windermere's Fan* by Oscar Wilde, at the Playhouse Theatre, March 21-22, 1986.

Style is the man, they say; for Oscar Wilde style was the play. In *Lady Windermere's Fan* he took the kind of clatrap plot typical of 19th-century melodrama and transformed it through the brilliance of his style into a witty exposure of Victorian moral smugness and hypocritical double standards. Wilde's elegant epigrams — "I can resist everything except temptation;" "a cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing;" "life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it" — add up to much more than clever entertainment and cynical mockery. They really form a devastating critique of the hypocrisy and moral decadence of the middle class (upper class in our terms) Victorian society of his day.

To find the elevated style required for such a sophisticated comedy of manners isn't easy. It is, however, crucial because that style carries and illuminated the

whole play — plot as well as characters, particularly the characters. Even an experienced professional cast has its work cut out for itself in trying to achieve this light but trenchant style. Amateur players can do little more than reach out boldly for that elusive style and hope for the best. Unfortunately, in this production the best often remained just that — a hope. In fairness, some members of the large cast were able to approximate the required style and finish, but others were plainly in over their heads.

The Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre, I'm happy to say, has come a long way in the past dozen years. As I have frequently said in my reviews, the company has a fine, dedicated nucleus of actors and directors, with talented new ones being added every year. WMT stage expertise and confidence have grown steadily and stage craft overall, i.e., the acting as well as sets, costumes, lighting and props, have come close to professional standards in some recent productions.

In this production of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, however, I think WMT overreached itself. Visually it was impressive with fine, elaborate sets, handsome, authentic costumes, etc., but the

cast, generally speaking, was unable to do justice to this handsome-looking production. I had the feeling throughout that most of the players dressed in those stunning gowns and well-cut suits felt ill at ease in their roles and uncertain about how to deliver their lines.

There were exceptions, of course, as already indicated. Walter Kampen as Lord Darlington and Selma Enns as the Duchess came closest to the polished aristocratic style. Kathy Kruger as Lady Windermere and Gerhard Wiebe as Lord Windermere had the emotional intensity to be consistently interesting. Eric Lubosch as Dumby, Ernie Wiebe as Cecil and Jake Pankratz as Lord Lorton showed enough flashes of style to make their roles credible. The rest at least gave a plausible visual approximation of their roles even when they didn't sound quite right.

What we were left with in the absence of the required high style was a plot and characters that took themselves too seriously. The play became a kind of domestic problem play rather than the deft, ironic comedy it is supposed to be. Lady Windermere's despair over her husband's "affair" with Mrs. Eryllynne (in reality her long-lost mother) leads her to a compromising involvement with the young rake (Lord Darlington) who is lusting to get his clutches on her. In the end Lady Windermere is saved from social disgrace through her mother's self-sacrificing action, and all ends happily for everyone. It's a trite, improbable plot and to take it as seriously as this production did is to miss the more important points Wilde is trying to make through the witty, self-conscious irony of the dialogue. Indeed, the heavy-handed treatment often made the brilliantly conceived epigrams sound gratuitous, as though out of place and belonging to another play. An exception was the "party" scene in Darlington's rooms, where the smart talk among the young men seemed to work more effectively than in most of the other scenes.

I am left wondering why this play was selected in the first place. WMT has demonstrated over the years that it can do so many plays well, in both English and German, as well as operettas and short operas, that one wonders why it felt compelled to go so far afield this year. But even if *Lady Windermere's Fan* didn't quite come off this year in spite of its fine sets, costumes and intelligent directing, one can be sure that this company will not be content to rest on past laurels but will look around for something bold and enterprising for next year's major production. mm

(for my people's mothers)

winter solstice
unwritten chapters
of my people's book
remain indelible upon my mind
stories
ungridded by the pen
embrace unborrowed faith
evoke untrendy truths
stories with intonation
told with aromas in mother's alto voice
rest upon the shelves of memory
her lingering warmth
will surely take us through
my people's growing winter.

— by menno wiebe

Ons Darp

von Victor Peters

Aus etj noch en tjeena Benjel wea woss etj en eanem Darp opp. Daut wea en sea grootet Darp, en Russlaund, enn lach aum Nippa. Daut honk sogoa en bät emm Nippa nenn. Dee dietsche Darpa lagen aula schmock toop, oba ons Darp wea gaunss aune Sied, en stad meist aun en groatet Russedarp.

Wann daut eene Enj fomm Darp uck meist emm Nippa duckt, opp'm aundren Enj wea en Boajch, en opp'm Boajch stund 'ne Windmäl. Etj ha' nohäa aus etj ella wort noch fäle Windmäle jeseenen, en Hollaund, uck bie Toledo en Spaunien wowa Cervantes sajcht daut eene Windmähl sea hasslijch wea en eanem Onkel fomm Pead schmeet,

en sogoa de Windmäl en Steinbach. Oba de Windmäl tūs, met äre groote Flijchte dee sijt emm Wind soo lang-somm dreide, wea en bleef fe mie en Wunda. Doa wea nijch en eensjet tweestockjet Hüs emm Darp, en doarom sach de Windmäl uck so groot. Uck fonndoag noch tjemt mie de Windmäl hejcha fäa aus de Skyscrapers en New York, de Eiffeltorm en Paris oda daut Richardson Jebied en Winnipeg.

En Russlaund haud jieda Darp, na, well wie sajen meist jieda Darp, en Eatjenome. Ealoaga (einlage) weare Wells-gnoaga. Ealoag lach uck aum Nippa, en de Lied doa haude fief moal ene Wätj Fesch too Meddach. (Wann de Tjleenjemeenda en Moloschna daut nich weete sulle, "Wells" sent Fesch; en Jack Thiesse säd to mie daut "gnoagen" dautselwje Wuat ess aus daut englische "to gnaw," en wiels Thiesse daut sajcht well etj daut wellijch jleewen.) En de Lied en eenem aundren Darp heeten Krauntjemaltja — wuaromm weet etj nijch. De Menschen en ons Darp heeten Tscherkraussen.

Tscherkraussen wearen meist ferretje Menschen woont nuscht soo goot jintj aus feiten en sijch strieden. Toom Jletj wearen doa nijch sofäl doafonn aus Russen en Jüden. En kratjt noa disse wille Lied haude se ons em Darp jennant. Tscherkraussen droagen emma eenen langen Doljch bie sijch, en spetjten wowa se blooss kunnen. Wie wearen je wärlooss durwen nijch eenen Doljch habn, oba jieda bie ons haud en Fuptjemassa bie sijch, en wann uck en aufjebroaknet. Daut well etj wellijch jleewen, wiels bat fondoagschen Dach droag etj en Tjnipsmassa bie mie, en wiels etj daut eamol toom Schrüwetratja bruckt es et uck aufjebroaken. Oba bloos de Spets.

Wann etj säd, daut Darp lach aum Nippa, dann weat jie aul, daut wea enne Oolt-Kolonie. Daut wort jesajcht, daut de Lied ene Oolt-Kolonie nijch soo fein wearen aus enne Molosch. Wie wissten nich bätä. Felleijcht wea daut wiels wie en bät aufsiets wearen, so aus hia de Menschen bie Haskett ooda Grünthal. Sest weare de Mensche oba OK. Eamoal

wea en eene groote Staudt, etj jleew daut wea enne Kjrim, en Fia jewasst. De Staudt wea nich wiet auf fonn eene Forstei wowa de mennische Junges fonn aulawäjes weare märendeels omm Beem üttooaste. Donn haud de Bierjameista fonn de Staudt eenen Tsaddel noam Eppaschten fonne Forstei jeschetjt: "Daut Fia es schlemm. Schetjt ons foats 50 Moloschna, ooda 25 Oolt-Kolonia. Wann jie Nie-Chortitza habn, dann reatjen 10 too." Na daut well etj jleewen: Nie-Chortitz wea ons Darp.

Aune 1924 trokken eenje fonn ons Darp no Amerikau. Daut wea no Kanada, oba en Russlaund säde se emma mau "Amerikau". "Oh, es daut doa riew," säd Schmett-Moatess, "hia en Russlaund ha wie nijch jenuach Broot opp'm Desch, enn en Amerikau doa schmiete se kromme Näjael eeffach wajch!"

Aus de Lied nü no Amerikau trokken, naumen aundre Mensche äre Wirtschoften awa. Daut wearen oba nijch dietsche Lied soo aus wie. Daut wearen Lutherauna en sogoa en Katolik. Etj froag miene Grootmutta moal aus daut uck goode Mensche weare. See säd joa, dee Lutherauna wearen meist soo aus wie, en äa Eppaschta haud soogoa de Biebel jeschräwen. Miene Grootmutta haud eene donnasch-groote Biebel met fäl Bilda, en soo kjräch etj fäl Respätjt fere Lutherauna. Wäa weet, docht etj, felleijcht sett doa noch so en Lutherauna en schrift noch eene Biebel.

Grootmutta säd uck daut de Katoliken uck nijch aula schlajcht wearen. En daut jlewd etj uck. De Katoliken ons Darp heet Stach, en wiels hee de ensja Katolik mau wea, jintj hee bie ons no Kjoatj. Freeja haude se emm Darp de Kjoatj enne School jehaut. Daut wullen de Roode oba nijch mea loaten, en soo haude se de Kjoatj en eenem Spitja. De Lied brochten Bentje toop, en daut jintj uck. Oole Stach säd, wann he aul no Kjoatj jintj wul he uck eene Bentj stal-len. He haud oba tjeene, en so koft he onse jreene Goadebentj. Dee wort uck em Spitja mett aundre Bentje nennjstalt, en Stach saut jieda Sindach, eenjemoal schleepa uck en bät, kratjt so aus de aundre Menschen. Haud daut too de Tiet enne Entrückung jejäft, wea Oole Stach mett aule Mennoniete omm sijch emm Himmel jekomen. Eenjemol dentj etj, wua woll onse jreene Bentj jebläwen ess, en wowa Oomtje Stach woll jebläwen ess.

So aus etj säd, dee Lutherauna wearen OK, oba doch aundasch. Eamol saut wie Junges opp'm Mülbäboom en eeten Mülbäaren. Wie hauden aula schwoate

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- in Gretna?
- in July 1987
(after conferences?)

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Miela, soo aus wann wie hia toofäl Bleiwbäären jejäten habn. Donn säd Thiesses Heintje waut daut wie meist fomm Boom jeschmät wearen. Wie lachten ons meist doot.

Thiesses Heintje säd daut eenje fonn de Lutherauna sea sondaboare Nomes hauden. De Schauberts aune aundre Sied Darp hauden eene Mejal dee heat leda! "leda" wea bie ons tjeen schlaich-tet Wuat. Mien Onkel Peeta säd emma to de Mejales emm Staul: "Moakt daut leda rein ea jie maltjen." Jieda Koo emm Darp haud en leda, eenje jrata, eenje kjlanda, oba daut sest anständigje Mensche äa Kjint, en dissem Faul eene gauns schmocke Mejal, "leda" nannden, wea ons too groff.

Soo kaum de groote Bütawelt no ons Darp soo daut uck wie junge Junges erfoare mussten, daut et en dise Welt sea sondaboare Mensche jeft. mm

Low German Study

If you have been reading Low German, and if you speak it well, you may want to complete the questionnaire below. It's part of a study being conducted by a University of Winnipeg student.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) Do you speak Low German? If so, when? Where? How often?
- 2) What is your opinion of Low German? Is it a corrupted form of High German? Or is it an original language?
- 3) Do you think Low German has a future? If so, how? If not, why not?
- 4) Do you regard Low German as a hindrance or impediment to your future life or do you think it enriches your life?
- 5) How do you relate Low German to Mennonitism?
- 6) Do you enjoy reading Low German literature? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 7) Please discuss your attitude to Mennonite Low German as freely as possible.

Send your questionnaire to:
Robert Neufeld
1-169 Riverton Ave.
Winnipeg, MB
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N.B. You may identify yourself at the end of this questionnaire. Whether you do so or not, your identity and response to the above will be treated in strict confidence/or discretion.

Gerhard Lohrenz, 1899 - 86

Gerhard Lohrenz ist gestorben und damit verändert sich das Bild der Mennoniten in Winnipeg und in Canada. Man hatte in der letzten Zeit viel über Denkmäler und Monumente gesprochen und auch gehandelt — auch Gerhard Lohrenz war dabei — aber für uns, die wir ihn unter uns erleben konnten, war Gerhard Lohrenz selbst ein Monument.

Gross war er in der Erscheinung, er stand seinen Mann, aufrecht, seine Stimme fest und sicher, voller Überzeugung. Für viele heute ist eine solche Sicherheit, solche Überzeugung kaum mehr möglich, doch er trug sie uns vor.

Als Lehrer und Prinzipal in der M.B.C.I. hat er uns Geschichte und Mathematik beigebracht, und obwohl wir seine englische Aussprache suspekt fanden, man machte sich nicht darüber lustig. Wir merkten (die wir unerschämterweise andere Lehrer peinigten), dass mit diesem Koloss nicht zu spassen wäre. Er meinte es mit der Men-

nonitengeschichte so ernst, dass wir sogar selber daran Interesse gewannen — und das hat seitdem nur noch zugenommen.

Gerhard Lohrenz hat sich als Prediger, Lehrer und Schriftsteller verdient gemacht. Er hat, wie wenige andere, seinen Doktor (von der Universität Winnipeg ehrenhalber verliehen) verdient. Aber noch wichtiger ist der Respekt, den er bei seinen Kollegen und Brüdern, bei seinen ehemaligen Schülern und Studenten, geerntet hat. Wie wenige seiner Generation hat er die Verbindung zur nachfolgenden Generation aufrechterhalten. Man ist nicht immer mit seinen Deutungen der Geschichte einverstanden gewesen aber man hat ihm immer ernstgenommen. Das will heute viel sagen.

Gerhard Lohrenz war unser Freund und Ratgeber. Manchmal war er unser Gewissen. Er wird uns sehr fehlen.

— Victor Doerksen

zur diskussion

mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

Sind Wir Froh, Dass Wir Steuer Zahlen Können?

Der Durchschnittsmensch in unserer Gesellschaft freut sich, wenn er keine, oder möglichst wenige Steuer zahlen muss. Er spricht so, als wenn die Regierung ihm fälscherweise sein Geld abverlangt. Wenn es ihm dann gelingt, seine Mittel so unterzubringen, dass sie nicht nach Ottawa geschickt werden müssen, dann fühlt er sich wie der Gewinner eines gerechten Krieges. Mittlerweile hat aber diese, SEINE Regierung eben nicht die Mittel erhalten, die sie braucht, um die vielen Dienste zu leisten, ohne die unser Held sich das Leben nicht vorstellen kann.

An dieser Denkweise ist etwas nicht in Ordnung. Einerseits hat man in unserem Lande ein fast ideales Instrument entwickelt, um der Gesamtbevölkerung zu dienen, und andererseits ist man nicht willens, diese von uns bestimmte und gewählte Instanz die nötigen Mittel zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Es ist natürlich, dass man seinen Verdienst nicht gerne aus der Hand gibt (ausser beim Einkaufengehen!), aber auf diesem Gebiet wie anderswo trifft wohl

die Aussage zu: you get what you pay for! (man erhält je nachdem man bezahlt).

Sicher sollten wir auch darauf achten, wie diese Gelder von der Regierung ausgegeben werden. Werden die Sachen und Menschen, die es verdienen und brauchen, unterstützt, oder werden die Mittel verprasst? Hat die jeweilige Regierung eine Tendenz, eine bevorzugte Bevölkerungsschicht zu begünstigen? Sind eventuell auch mennonitische Minister und Abgeordnete an solchen Entscheidungen beteiligt? Da haben wir sicher unser Wort mitzureden.

Was ich aber nicht verstehen kann: dass man allgemein so schnell bereit ist, die Steuer als etwas Negatives zu sehen und womöglich sie zu vermeiden, sei es auch durch die apartesten Mittel und Wege. Dem Kaiser sollte ja bekanntlich gegeben werden, was ihm gebührt, wieviel mehr — und vielleicht mit Freudigkeit — einer Regierung, die wir ja selber sind! VGD

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“It’s like we have been in a room for a long time and the air is stale. It’s time to open the window and let in some fresh air. Of course, some flies will also come into the room and they might bother us a bit, yet the fresh air is worth having a few flies around.”

Li Zhonghua, interpreter and friend of MCC in Shenyang, China, on learning from other cultures

Learning from those with whom we work.



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