

MENNONITE HISTORIAN

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German Nationalism Among Canadian Mennonites During the Early 1930s

by Benjamin Redekop

A fundamental problem regarding the often strident Germanist sentiments expressed by Canadian Mennonites during the 1930s is ascertaining the degree to which such sentiments were related directly to the German nation, and the degree to which they were a response to particular problems faced by Mennonites as a distinctive ethno-religious "people." In an article written twenty years ago, Jonathan Wagner argued that Mennonites were participating in a larger Central- and Eastern-European "Volks-German Awakening," a broad movement with nationalistic and expansionist overtones. The article represented a wholesale indictment of Mennonite attitudes, with little understanding of the meaning which Germanism might hold for Mennonites as a religious people with their own particular concerns and aspirations.¹

In my work on the topic I have maintained that while a good deal of German nationalism was present among some Mennonites during the 1930s, it must be viewed within the larger context of a reaction to Russian communism, Germany's help for Mennonite refugees, and the struggle to perpetuate a distinctive Mennonite identity in a strongly assimilative Anglo-Canadian environment.² This latter struggle in particular was the broadest and most enduring feature of Canadian Mennonite Germanism in the first half of this century. Historical circumstances had brought about the dissolution of the Russian Mennonite commonwealth at the same moment that a powerful movement of *Volk*-unification was emanating from Germany. It was very easy to appropriate the ideas and rhetoric of this movement and apply them to Mennonites, many of them recent Russian immigrants, scattered across 3000 kilometres of western Canada. Pro-Germanism in this context meant not only separation from the "worldly" Canadian environment, but the possible reintegration of the scattered remnant on an ethno-linguistic, religious, and ideological basis. Thus while Germany did become a surrogate fatherland for some,

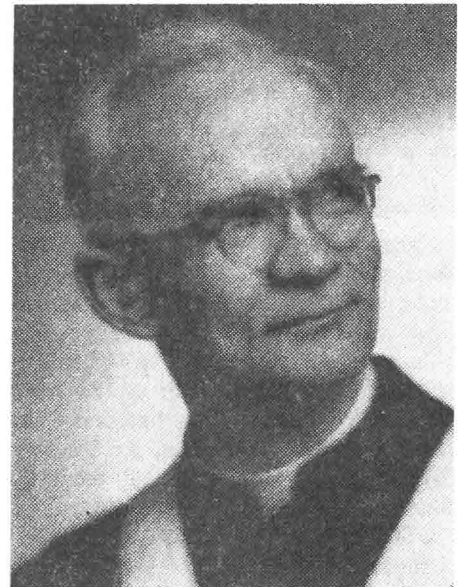
the pro-German and Nazi/"voelkisch" rhetoric espoused by a minority of Mennonites during the 1930s must also be interpreted within the framework of specifically Mennonite concerns and experiences.

With this general perspective in mind, I wish to explore in this article some of the more militantly nationalistic statements made by Mennonite individuals during the early 1930s. At this time, aid by Germany to Mennonite refugees and Nazi anti-communism were important sources of Germanist sentiment among Canadian Mennonites, yet the broader and deeper concern over Mennonite ethno-religious identity was also in evidence.

Probably the best source of information for understanding the dynamics of Canadian Mennonite Germanism is the Mennonite press. While Frank Epp's study of *Der Bote* is helpful on this question,³ I believe that the *Mennonitische Rundschau*, with a broader audience and larger readership, is more representative of the spectrum of opinion present among Canadian Mennonites. A close reading of the paper for the period 1930-32, before the assumption of power in Germany by the National Socialist party took place, gives a good indication of the range of issues involved.⁴

The topic which dominated the pages of the *Rundschau* in the early 1930s was the continuing tragedy in Soviet Russia. The final act of the drama saw over 13,000 Russian-Germans, mostly Mennonites, gathering at the gates of Moscow during the winter of 1929-1930, hoping to be granted exit visas. About half eventually made it out, thanks to Germany's temporary willingness to take them in, and its pledge of considerable financial support for their relocation.⁵ Pathetic letters from Mennonites sent to Siberia appeared in the *Rundschau*,⁶ along with reports of horrors in the colonies themselves⁷ and general articles abhorring the atheism and communism of the new Soviet regime.⁸ Some of *Rundschau* editor H.H. Neufeld's siblings wrote from Germany, glad to be out of Russia; one of

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Herman Neufeld, 1890-1959
Editor of *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 1923-1945

The History of Die *Mennonitische Rundschau*

by Bert Friesen

The *Mennonitische Rundschau* is a bi-monthly periodical published 24 times a year in Winnipeg by the Mennonite Brethren Church of Canada. It was not always so. The 115 year-old periodical has experienced many changes throughout its history.

This oldest German and oldest Mennonite periodical in North America began in June, 1878 in Lincoln, Nebraska, USA. It appeared under the title, *Der Nebraska Ansiedler*, as an insert of the *Herold der Wahrheit* which was published in Elkhart, Indiana. A one year subscription cost \$0.25.

This periodical would likely not have begun if the *Burlington and Missouri River Railroad* had not sought to attract settlers to their land holdings in the west. During the 1870s many Mennonite immigrants from Russia had settled in the North American prairies. The managers of the railroad

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German Nationalism

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his sisters, however, didn't make it.⁹

The sense of tragedy and loss was overwhelming¹⁰ and, understandably, Germany emerged as the great saviour and protector of the Mennonites. Emotional expressions of gratitude to the German nation began to appear:

In heaven will it be reckoned/the great things Germany has done. By it the poor, the persecuted/were pulled from the clutches of the evil one./God bless the German land,/protect it with your almighty hand.¹¹

A refugee wrote from Hamburg that Germany had provided for all possible needs, and that the German people had shown love to the refugees. "It is impossible to describe. There is no way we'll be able to pay them back."¹² A letter of thanks to President Hindenberg (who had personally donated 200,000 *Reichsmark* for Russian-German relief) was drafted at the 1930 Mennonite World Conference in Danzig.¹³ The fact that Germany was actively involved in furthering donations for Russian relief could only add to the general sense of gratitude towards Germany.¹⁴ Mennonites were admonished never to forget what the Germans had done for them.¹⁵

German efforts under Hindenberg to aid Russian Mennonites moved *Rundschau* editor Neufeld to trace his ancestry back to Prussia and apply for German citizenship.¹⁶ Although very few people went this far, it is clear that Germany's positive example helped to make it a strong reference point for Mennonite identity in the aftermath of the breakdown of the Russian commonwealth. Expressions of concern over the fragmentation of Mennonite society were present throughout the 1930s,¹⁷ and were coupled with laments over being a "people without a homeland."¹⁸ A poem illustrates well how Germanism was identified as a positive, unifying characteristic, and how the German nation was seen as a kindly father welcoming home his wayward children:

When in every land/the German Volk is scattered/so hold tight the bonds/of loyalty and unity./Great among the nations--the German

homeland./It reaches gladly from afar/to its own the hand./To nurture unity/in Joy or pain,/that is the German blessing.¹⁹

The "German" ethnic background of Mennonites was cited as being responsible for the qualities which carried Mennonites through their wanderings, helping them to make improvements on the land wherever they settled.²⁰ This kind of claim was frequently made;²¹ what is of interest here is that "German" qualities were seen to be a stabilizing factor in Mennonite identity.

The emerging German "voelkisch" movement also had an impact on Mennonites. An elder of the newly formed Schoenwiese congregation in Winnipeg submitted an article by a German writer in 1931 which argued that the German *Volk* could only be helped through a rebirth of specifically *Germanic* culture and religion--all other elements were to be expunged.²² The implication for Mennonites was clear. The *Rundschau* followed events in Germany quite closely, indicating that the "voelkisch rebirth" of the German nation was of prime interest. Even rather militaristic news concerning Germany was featured, like reports that the Stahlhelm Veterans Organization and the SA (a Nazi paramilitary organization) were being allowed to wear uniforms again, and that Hitler had proclaimed that Germans would have to be ready to sacrifice their lives if Germany were to regain its place in the sun.²³ There were many such pieces which ran as "news," without comment.²⁴

The fascination with Germany extended to all manner of news. There were articles on Hindenberg,²⁵ German shipping,²⁶ times of German shortwave transmissions,²⁷ and above all reports on German politics.²⁸ Hitler's progress was followed,²⁹ as were the results of the 1932 election race between Hindenberg and Hitler.³⁰ Part of the interest and identification with Germany was due to the perception that the success or failure of communism in the West would be decided in Germany. The Mennonites' immediate experience with communism in Russia gave them a very strong bias against it, and fear was evident that Germany too might fall to the atheistic communists, with the rest of the world soon to follow.³¹ An individual writing in 1932 held that Hitler was the only bulwark against communism.³²

A speech given by former Canadian Prime Minister Arthur Meighen, in which he called for revisions of reparations payments demanded of Germany and cited Germany

as being the linchpin in world resistance to Bolshevism, was covered in detail by the *Rundschau*.³³ Harsh actions taken by the Berlin government against communists were reported approvingly.³⁴ The unrest in Germany was seen as being "instigated and covered up by Moscow."³⁵

High feelings for Germany are further indicated in the number and range of strongly militant or political articles relating to Germanism and Germany printed during this period. It was in response to such articles that voices were raised in caution, as well, but at this point they were few and isolated (by the mid- and later-1930s they would become more numerous and forceful). An example of a militantly German article from a non-Mennonite source was the 1930 "German Day" announcement for Manitoba. These were festivals which had begun to be staged in the late 1920s on the prairies primarily as cultural events, eventually becoming controlled by National Socialists.³⁶ The 1930 notice was anti-slavic, -communist, and -pacifist. The "indestructible power and majesty of the German nature" was heralded as the only hope of mankind.³⁷ The apex of heterodoxy was reached in the *Rundschau* via the reprinting of articles from Nazi Julius Streicher's "obscene"³⁸ *Der Stuermer*. One of the articles had been sent in by two Mennonite men who stated that "It is high time that political issues be clarified to the people." The article maintained that Jesus was not a pacifist, and that the way to greatness lay in "aggressive struggle for the German Volk and fatherland."³⁹ Loyalty to Germany at this time seems to have overridden any concerns among *Rundschau* readers about these challenges to the historic Mennonite adherence to the principle of nonresistance.

It was only in regard to the doctrines espoused by the German General Ludendorff and his wife that some opposition was voiced to militant Germanism at this time. The debate on Ludendorff, a top General during the First World War and subsequent collaborator with Hitler, was initiated by a review article on a book of "prophecies" by the General. Typical of editorial policy at the time, the review did not take a position on Ludendorff's strange and extreme ideas.⁴⁰ A reader, however, pointed out that Ludendorff was "attempting to build a new Germany in which the Christian faith, the Freemasons and the Jews are simply done

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FAMILY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY

by Alf Redekopp

QUERIES

Wiens - Redekopp: I would greatly appreciate any information about the parents of Katherine Wiens who married Cornelius Hiebert and moved to Kansas in 1876. The Ebenfeld Church Records at Hillsboro, Kansas show her parents were Peter Wiens and Katharina Redekopp, perhaps living near the Chortiza area. Contact : Donald R. Webster, 6101 Virginia Ave. N., New Hope, MN 55243.

Friesen - Banman: Is anyone researching the genealogy of Peter Friesen b. Feb 26, 1812 who married Maria Banman (1815-1860)? Contact: Eva Beaulac, General Delivery, Albion, BC V0M 1B0.

Klassen: I am looking for information about the parents and grandparents of Peter Klassen b. ca.1850-1860 supposedly in Neuendorf, Chortitza and who moved to Steinfeld, Schlactin in 1897 as a widower with only one son, Johann Peter Klassen b.ca.1880 (my father). I was b. in Steinfeld on Mar.31,1906. Contact J.N.Klassen, Tilsiter Str.8, D-53340 Meckenheim, Germany.

Janzen: Heinz Jakob Janzen who was b. June 29, 1944 in Barntrup, Germany and who has lived in the Soviet Union since 1946 with his mother is looking for his father who he believes is living and well in North America. His father is a Jakob Johann Janzen b. July 26, 1922 in Jakowlewo to Johann Abram Janzen (1885-1938) and Elena Rempel (1895-1981). Jakob Johann Janzen's grandfather was b. Oct. 1, 1860 in Schoenwiese and d. July 25, 1927 in Jakowlewo. Contact:

Имя и фамилия
330048
у. Запорожские
ул. Плехинская 92,
а/я 38
Янцен Гейнц

BOOK NOTES - Family Histories

Ratzlaff, Agatha. *Ratzlaff: our family heritage* (Clearbrook, BC : Private publication, 1992) 163pp.

This book begins by providing information on the family name Ratzlaff, the historical background, and the earliest Ratzlaff ancestors dating back approximately 400 years. It then provides information on Peter Ratzlaff (? - ca.1901) and Anna Lohrenz (? - ca.1910), and Peter Ratzlaff (1863-1942) and Anna Schroeder (1867-1950), tracing the descendants of the latter couple. It

contains information on the siblings of Peter Ratzlaff (1863-1942), namely: Willhelm and Justina (nee Lange) Ratzlaff, Martin and Lena (nee Ratzlaff) Wannow, and Peter and Anna (nee Ratzlaff) Lange. It also includes information on the Lohrenz families.

Contact: Agatha Ratzlaff, 31861 Beech Ave., Clearbrook, B.C., V2T 1G8

Friesen, T.E. *The history and genealogy of Johann (1845-1923) and Agatha (1843-1927) Klippenstein* (Altona, MB : Klippenstein Family History, 1993) 140 pp.

This book begins with several chapters which provide the historical context for the Klippenstein family history. This includes a survey of Mennonite history as well as some comments on the earliest documentary evidence of the family name. The ancestors of Johann Klippenstein (1845-1923) are traced back to his grandfather Bernhard Klippenstein (1781-1841) and the reader is given valuable information about the various lines which descended from this patriarch. The main focus of the book, however, is on the descendants of Johann Klippenstein (1845-1923) who settled in Gnadenfeld, Manitoba shortly after coming to Manitoba during the 1870s.

This book is published with an attractive hardcover binding, containing maps, photographs, biographical sketches, tables and an index.

Contact: T.E. Friesen, P.O. Box 720, Altona, MB R0G 0B0.

Loewen, Helen Harder. *Spenst Genealogy* (Waterloo, ON : Private publication, 1993) 120 pp.

This genealogy is bound in a 3-ringed binder and consists of family group sheets with substantial remarks, colour photographs, and excerpts from a Spenst Diary (1929-1946). The earliest record consists of the family record of Kornelius Spenst (1826-1913) and his wife Anna Dueck (1824- ?) who lived in Fischau, Molotschna.

Contact: Helen Harder Loewen, 505-45 Westmount Rd. N., Waterloo, ON N2L 2R3.

Blatz, Dan G. *Jacob & Agenetha Blatz Family* (Winnipeg, MB : private publication, 1989) 81 pp.

This book contains the descendants of Jacob Blatz (1869-1947) and Agenetha Giesbrecht (1871-1953) who were married in 1891 near Gretna, Manitoba and lived in the Rose Farm School District near Morris. Contact: Maureen Hiebert, 771 Cambridge St., Winnipeg, MB R3M 3G3.

Dyck, Helga. *Our Guenther Family : Unsere Familie Günther (1764-1993)* (Winnipeg,

MB: Private publication, 1993) 308 pp.

This book traces the family history and genealogy of Johann A. Guenther (1838-1919) and Margaretha Redekopp (1839-1917) who lived in Rosental, Chortitza. Contact: Helga Dyck, 127A-25 Valhalla Dr., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0X7

Wiebe, Ted et.al. *Heinrich F. Wiebe Family Book 1851-1992* (Rosenort, MB : Private publication, 1992.)

This book traces the Wiebe ancestry back to a Peter Wiebe b. 1755 in Demfelde in Marienburg near Danzig, West Prussia, who migrated to Schoenau, Molotschna with a son Jacob Wiebe b. 1799. The primary focus of the book is on the descendants, the three children of Heinrich Wiebe 1853-1876) and his wife Anna Toews (1853-1935) who lived in the East Reserve in Manitoba. The widow of Heinrich Wiebe remarried Isaac DeVeer and died at Swalwell, Alberta in 1935.

Contact: Prairie View Press, Box 160, Rosenort, MB R0G 1W0.

Houser, Nannie Ellis with Elmer Andrew Houser, Jr. *Poetker families in North America* (Tamarac, FL : Private publication, 1993) 192 pp.

As the title indicates this book attempts to describe Poetker families in North America. What is most unique in this publication is the inclusion of the "German" and "Russian" branches. The "German branches" (Lutheran) include the descendants of Heinrich Mathias Poetker (1812-1889) who settled in Southern Ohio in 1864 and Frederick Wilhelm Poetker (1818-1901) who settled in Southern Indiana in 1879. The "Russian branches" (Mennonite) include the descendants of Johann Poetker b. ca. 1787 in Germany who lived in Fuerstenau, Molotschna and was married to Maria Nickel; and, the descendants of Johan Poettcker b. 1825 in Friedensdorf, Molotschna. The compilers have not established a direct link between the two branches.

Contact: Nannie E. Houser, 6601 N.W. 97th Avenue, Tararac, FL 33321-3349.

Penner, Martin. *Not only with you : the story of Kornelius Penner (1876-1923) and Katharina (Bergen) Penner (1877-1959)* (Winnipeg, MB : Private publication, 1993) 93 pp.

This book traces the Penner genealogy back to Heinrich Penner (1801-1843) and his wife Margaretha Loewen (1804-1869) who lived in Schoenhorst, Chortitza.

Contact: M.V. Penner, 25 Regatta Rd., Winnipeg, MB R2G 2Y7



Recent Acquisitions

93-96 John K. Schellenberg (Winnipeg, MB) - Family photographs and research notes.

93-98 Ebenfeld Mennonite Church (Herschel, SK) - Minute books (1959-1988).

93-103 Marienstammenschule (school for deaf) Molotschna - Photograph (ca. 1920) from Agnes Willms (Winnipeg, MB)

93-104 Franz Bartsch - Wedding photograph from CMBC Publications/ Elisabeth Peters (Winnipeg, MB)

93-105 William Friesen (Winnipeg, MB) - Sources and notes on Mennonite schooling in Manitoba (1890s-1930s) from Tina Friesen (Winnipeg, MB)

93-109 Altona families - Photographs (1920s) from Neta Eamer (Winnipeg, MB).

93-110 Altona-Gretna Teachers Local - Minute books (1936-1955).

93-111 Herold Mennonite Church (Morden, MB) - Youth programs (1919-1945) from Esther Bergen (Winnipeg, MB)

93-112 Isaac von Dueren (Danzig) - Letter (1772) copied by Jacob Stoesz (1850) from Peter Wiebe (New Bothwell, MB)

93-113 Morden Bergthaler Church Frauenmissionverein (Morden, MB) - Papers from Maria Pauls.

93-114 Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization - Records (1941-1971)

93-115 Mennonitische Umsiedlerbetreuung (Germany) - Umsiedler lists (1972-1992)

Manitoba Sommerfeld Mennonite Church History

The History Committee of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church announced plans for the publication of a history of the church at its centennial celebrations held on July 4, 1993 in Morris, Manitoba. The program book for the celebration provided pictures and basic information of the thirteen local Sommerfeld churches in Manitoba.

In 1893 the majority of the members of the Bergthaler Mennonite Church living in southwestern Manitoba separated from its bishop due to differences over higher education and other innovations. The

Bergthaler Church had been organized on the West Reserve around 1881. The majority group took a new name from the village of the new bishop, Abram Doerksen, ordained to lead the church while the adherents of the previous bishop, Johann Funk, retained the Bergthaler name.

The Sommerfelder Mennonite Church has about 4000 members in Manitoba and is one of several church groups in North and South America originating in the Bergthal Colony in Russia. Through the cooperation with the present leadership the Heritage Centre holds a microfiche copy of the Sommerfeld church register which is available for genealogical research.

In Remembrance of Our Supporters

John K. Schellenberg of Winnipeg, a generous supporter of the Heritage Centre died on June 28, 1993. In recent years his regular contributions through the Mennonite Foundation made the purchase of a microfilm reader and computer possible.

John K. Schellenberg was born on April 22, 1923 and he received his first schooling at Schoenau, then in Altona and Steinbach, followed by studies at the University of Manitoba. He worked as administrator for several communities such as the town of Steinbach, the municipalities of Hanover and St. Francois Xavier and the Hanover school division. He was involved in the writing of histories of the Hanover School Division, the Municipality of St. Francois Xavier and the Braun family.

Mrs. Helena Enns (nee Buhler), wife of P.W. Enns, passed away in late August. The P.W. Enns Foundation funded the construction of the Heritage Centre building.

We extend our sympathies to the families of John Schellenberg and Helena Enns.

Wood Carvings on Exhibit in Gallery

The Heritage Centre Gallery will feature an exhibit of wood carvings by Ron Boese and Jack Sawatzky from September 23 until mid-December. Ron Boese is director of maintenance at Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Jack Sawatzky was a volunteer advisor to CMBC students in the area of English after retiring from public school teaching. Both are from the Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

"We Still Stand on the same Faith"

At the end of World War I Heinrich H. Ewert, of Gretna, Manitoba wrote to S.F. Coffman in Vineland, Ontario for the purpose of getting in touch with the Mennonites in Ontario. Since the assistance given by the Mennonites in Ontario to the Mennonites immigrating from Russia to western Canada in the 1870's the contact had lapsed. The correspondence between these two leaders led to joint efforts for the immigration of Russian Mennonites to Canada in the 1920s.

Heritage Centre staff have prepared an exhibit titled "We Still Stand on the Same Faith" - a phrase from a letter of S.F. Coffman - depicting this exchange. The exhibit consists of a panel with several photographs as well as a binder with photocopies of the correspondence. It is available for display by schools or congregations.

A set of photographs of David Toews' youth in Kansas and his first years in Canada have also been assembled into a small exhibit.



John K. Schellenberg, 1923-1993

Lawrence Klippenstein Returns

October 1, 1993 we will welcome Lawrence Klippenstein returning to the Mennonite Heritage Centre after a year of service with Mennonite Central Committee in the former USSR. Peter Rempel will resume the position of assistant archivist on a half-time basis but then take a three month leave from November 1 in order to complete his M.A. thesis.



A string ensemble from Coaldale in the 1930s.



A Coaldale quartet "revived" from the early 1950s. L-R: Jake Reimer, Jack Dueck, Jake Thiessen, Rudy Baerg

Coaldale "Revisited"

The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies now has a complete set of all the audio and video tapes of the Coaldale "Revisited" event of May 21-23, 1993. Video tapes cannot be reproduced with a high quality but will be made available to those desiring a set nevertheless. A complete set of three video tapes is available for \$45.00 (including postage). Approximately 40 minutes of audio is missing on tape 1 (8:30-9:10 a.m., Sat.). A complete set of audio tapes (8) is available for \$45.00 (including postage). Orders with full payment should be received by October 31 and should be sent to the CMBS, 169 Riverton, Winnipeg, MB R2L 2E5.

New Books, Videos for Rent or Sale from the CMBS

1. **Neodachino — The Village Call "No Happiness."** The Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies has acquired rights in Canada for a film produced by Hof Film Productions in the Netherlands. The film is about a Mennonite village in Siberia which is experiencing the trauma arising from the question of whether or not to emigrate to Germany (See detailed description in *Mennonite Historian*, September, 1992). The original film is mostly in German with Dutch narration. An English version with English narration and subtitles has been produced and made available to the Centre in video (VHS) format. It is available for rent at a price of \$20.00.
2. **Mennonites & Baptists: A Continuing Conversation**, edited by Paul Toews. Essays by eleven distinguished scholars from both traditions examining historical and theological dimensions of the relationship between these two groups. \$19.95
3. **Da Capo: "Start Once From the Front"** A History of the Mennonite Community Orchestra, by Bertha Elizabeth Klassen. This is book featuring the various groups and individuals who have been part of the history of the orchestra in its various incarnations in Manitoba. A very attractive book with many pictures.

**C Centre for
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1-169 Riverton Ave. Winnipeg, Canada R2L 2E5



Boxes of files taken from a flooded room and temporarily placed on the stairs. Many of these items were then packaged and quickly frozen in order to prevent mould and to buy time to organize the drying operation.

Centre Flooded!

Heavy rains in Winnipeg and southern Manitoba resulted in serious flooding of many homes, buildings and farmlands. The Centre was also not spared. During the heavy rainfall on the evening of Sunday August 8, water and sewer backup in two rooms adjacent to the main archives caused extensive damage to the entire basement area where the Centre for MB Studies is housed. Although there was no damage to the main archival collection, water and sewer caused damage to the carpet and walls in all areas of the basement. One of the adjacent rooms to the archives which stored a large unprocessed collection of college records, a film collection, stock of books recently published by the Centre and photograph and sound recording equipment, experienced a water depth of 25 cm. Archivist Alf Redekopp and summer student archival assistant Lori Lamb worked to rescue the water damaged records, using various methods of cleaning and drying books and papers. The building maintenance personnel took responsibility for the replacement of the carpets and drywall. Steps have also been taken to ensure that such flooding does not recur.



GENEALOGY WORKSHOP

The Genealogy Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is sponsoring a one-day workshop on Saturday, November 13 from 9:30 until 4:00 entitled "Mennonite Links Between Prussia and Russia." The guest speaker for the day will be Henry Schapansky from New Westminster, B.C., who has written numerous articles for *Mennonite Family History*. He has carried out extensive research on the original settlers of Chortitza, Russia, tracing their families back to the Prussian Mennonite church registers. His articles on the villages of Einlage, Neuenburg, Neuendorf, Rosenthal and Schoenhorst have been published in *Mennonite Family History*.

The workshop will be divided into four sessions. Schapansky will open with a presentation on the Mennonites in Prussia, focusing on the Mennonite church registers and the 1776 census. He will talk about how these sources are organized and what can be found in them, and give those in attendance some helpful tips on what to be aware of when using these sources. Following a short coffee break the second session will focus on the early waves of migration from Prussia to Russia.

After lunch the third session will focus on the settlement of the Chortitza and Molotschna colonies, with particular reference to the census records in B.H. Unruh's book. Again, Schapansky will talk about how these records are organized and give some helpful tips on what to be aware of when using these sources. The final session will be an informal time of discussion where questions can be asked.

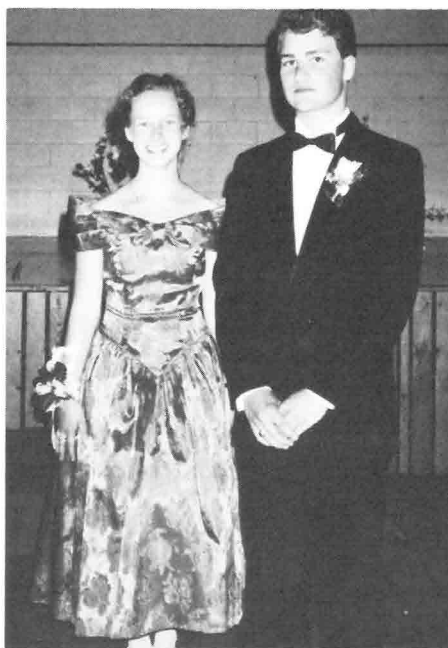
The workshop will be held in the chapel of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, providing those in attendance with access to the Prussian church registers on microfilm at the Mennonite Heritage Centre. A registration fee of \$15.00 will include lunch and a coffee break. The cost of registration for individual sessions is \$5.00.

To register please contact Alf Redekopp at 669-6575 or Richard Thiessen at 669-6583, or send your registration form to

Genealogy Workshop, Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, 169 Riverton Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2L 2E5. Please make cheques payable to the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society. Registrations would be appreciated by November 5.

Henry E. Plett Memorial Award

The Genealogy Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society awarded the Henry E. Plett Memorial Award to Randy Funk and Bonnie Plett of the Steinbach Christian High School at the June 27, 1993 school graduation service. The award is given annually to two Manitoba High School students for research and documentation of a Mennonite Family History. Randy received the first prize of \$100 for his essay entitled "The Rempel Family History." The second prize of \$50 was given to Bonnie Plett for her essay entitled "The Family History of Jacob T. Wiebe." The annual award by MMHS has been made possible through the generous contribution of Delbert and Doreen Plett of Steinbach, Manitoba.



Bonnie Plett and Randy Funk, recipients of the Plett Memorial Award.

ATTENTION! CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS!

At the 1990 sessions of the World Conference of Mennonites held in Winnipeg, plans were proposed for compiling a book of experiences of C.O.s during World War II, 1941-1945, taken from write-ups of any C.O. who might wish to contribute. A few have already done so.

MMHS Newsletter

At a recent meeting of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society Board of Directors, it was decided that the board would pursue the possibility of incorporating the society's newsletter into the *Mennonite Historian*. If this move is approved by the editorial committee of the *Mennonite Historian*, the society would cover the costs of two pages per issue, up to a total of eight pages per year. These pages would be devoted to reporting the activities of the society as well as to articles about the history of Mennonites in Manitoba.

This page is sponsored by MMHS, and is taking the place of the two page newsletter that would normally have accompanied the mailing of the *Mennonite Historian* to society members.

Local History Committee

The Local History Committee of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society is presenting "Stories About The Past" at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna on Saturday, November 6, 1993. Registration is at 9:30 and the program begins at 10:00 with two presentations: "Early Edenburg" by John Dyck, and "The Shape of Neuenburg" by Jake Rempel. After lunch the program resumes at 1:00 with two more presentations: "Sommerfeld Church History" by Peter Bergen, and "The Significance of Hochstadt" by Bill Kehler.

Registration with lunch included is \$10.00, and without lunch it is \$2.50. The following numbers may be phoned to register: Altona (324-6090); Winkler (325-9082 or 325-7907); Gretna (327-5544); or Morden (822-5292). Please register by October 28.

This would include workers in bush camps, mines, hospitals both General and Mental, agriculture or any line of work that you were engaged in.

If you have a diary or a set of notes etc., and you need help in writing it up, this could be possible.

If you feel that you would like to contribute your story, please contact one of the persons whose name and address appear below, before November 11, 1993. Ample time to complete the write-up would be allowed after that date.

John C. Klassen, Box 665 Morden, MB
ROG IJO Ph. 822-4244

or
Jake Krueger, Box 552, Altona, MB
ROG OBO Ph. 324-5396

Reflections on the Mennonite Brethren Bible School Movement in British Columbia

by H.C. Born

My participation in the Bible school movement in B.C. began back in 1950, twenty years after its beginning in Yarrow. I taught at the East Chilliwack Bibl School 1950-1953, was the teaching president of MBBI 1964-1969, and have been on part-time staff at Columbia Bible College in 1992.

Over the years the Bible schools in Canada have been a phenomenon to which many denominations attribute the vitality of their church life, and the supply of personnel for church ministries. The movement is as strong, if not stronger, than it has ever been. A comparison of the statistics of the American Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) confirms this. In 1980 they recorded 48, accredited and non-accredited, institutions in Canada, and in 1993 there are 69, 9 of which are in British Columbia. (Note: The AABC statistics may not be entirely complete.) The Bible school movement in Canada is vibrant and healthy.

Within the Mennonite Brethren constituency of Canada, the movement began in Herbert, Sask., in 1913, when the Herbert Bible school was founded by J.F. Harms. Later, in the 1920s, the wave of Mennonites from the U.S.S.R. brought with it a strong emphasis on Bible training, which led to the founding of the Winkler Bible School, Winkler, Manitoba, by A.H. Unruh. The beginning of the movement in British Columbia is actually a spill-over of the Winkler Bible School. In 1929, Mr. J.J. Derksen, who had had close associations with the Winkler school, together with three students from that school, came to visit the newly founded Mennonite settlement in Yarrow. Derksen saw the need for a Bible school, talked about it, and that, together with the impact of the students' attitude toward God and life in general, left a good impression upon the community. In the autumn of the following year, 1930, the Yarrow Bible school was started, giving the movement in BC a span of sixty-three years to date.

In the course of that time five MB Bible schools in BC have emerged: Yarrow (1930-1955); Abbotsford (1936-); Greendale (1938-43); Black Creek (1942-45); and East Chilliwack (1947-1959). All these schools' resources were incorporated into one school,

when the BC Mennonite Brethren conference became the official sponsor of the Mennonite Brethren Bible Institute in 1960. As is to be noted in the dates just quoted, all the schools had terminated their services by then except Abbotsford Bible School, East Chilliwack being the last one to close (1959), the year before the provincial sponsorship came into effect. The churches acknowledged the changing times and supported the continuation of Bible school training through one institution.

I am not aware that there was any competition between the schools, but I do know of cooperation. For example, at the East Chilliwack Bible school the required instruction for the ETTA teaching certificate were given, but the procuring of the certificates was channeled through the Yarrow school which had established the necessary connections with that association. There also were periodic exchange visits between the schools. Students sometimes spent a day on the campus of another school.

While observing, experiencing and reflecting upon these schools, one becomes aware of some very conscientious and profound factors that underlie and are woven into the fabric of the movement. Men and women were deeply concerned, not only for their young people, but for the whole church community. In one way it is almost humorous to read that when J.J. Derksen visited Yarrow in 1929, one of his chief concerns was that the people should not become too materialistic, and *that* only one year after the pioneers had started the settlement. But let us give him credit for wanting to prevent an attitude that is hard to counter-act once it has established itself. There was concern that the Christians should present a consistent witness in their community life (*Wandel*), and what better way than to initiate that emphasis in the younger group of people in a school, who would thereby be trained and encouraged to give a strong testimony of their commitment to the Bible and to God.

There was the added need to staff the various branches of the church's work. Therefore the school curriculum always included a teacher-training component. One can hardly imagine the continuation of an effective church presence without such an effort, whether that effort was in the field of Sunday school, young peoples, or even the preaching ministry. A community that cannot find its leaders from within its own membership is bound to disintegrate before long.

I am not aware that the schools articulated a philosophy of education, but

the subject content and practices clearly indicated a belief that all truth comes from and leads to God; that man needs to come into a favourable relationship with God in order to get at that truth. There was little challenge to the prevailing Christian worldview until the 1960s.

The curriculae in the different Bible schools were very similar. Primary emphasis was placed on Bible knowledge, pursuing a balance between the Old and the New Testaments, although usually more stress was put on the latter, for the obvious reasons that students should have a good grasp of the whole field of soteriology, and the accompanying area of ecclesiology, including the inception of the church, its nature and its ministry.

A good knowledge of the Bible would help promote several very important aspects of the church community. Very often the observation was underlined that people who understood, and were committed to, the Bible constituted a dam against the inroads of cults. Another aspect was the maintaining of strong Christian families, who are an indispensable element in every community. And maybe most important was the health and effectiveness of a personal Christian life. Christian ethics was taught as a separate course but was woven into many of the other subjects as well. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized. Recently, a seminary professor was on the Columbia Bible College campus teaching a course in spiritual formation. After several classes one of the participants said to me that the course reminded him so much of his second year in Bible school, which only underlines the fact that our Bible schools definitely were on the right track in this regard. The names of the Bible schools, including those in other provinces, also indicate that emphasis as one of the primary goals.

A third goal was to train workers for the church, especially, though not solely, workers for the Sunday school and youth work. I have already mentioned the ETTA program that most Bible schools eventually incorporated. But third and fourth-year students were also given a healthy initiation into homiletics in preparation for a possible ministry of the Word.

The emphasis on outreach ministries was generally not as strong as on internal church ministries. However, many students responded to the appeal for teachers for the summer VBS work, and for teachers at the "mission stations" operating under the West Coast Children's Mission and later under the Board of Church Extension. And many

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Reflections

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missionaries who went overseas had received their foundational training in Bible school.

In the course of time some emphases have changed and other elements have been added to the Bible school activities. Students' educational entrance qualifications are higher today than they were then. The emphasis on a school spirit became more necessary, with the competition coming from interdenominational schools on the prairies, as well as from Bethany in Hepburn, which received strong support from many church members in British Columbia. At the M.B. provincial conference in 1963 the faculty of MBBI made a push to enable them to foster a school spirit through students in residence, control over the Christian service activities, and sports.

The matter of accreditation with AABC was broached for the first time in 1963-64, but after we had done the self-study and had been notified of areas that would have to be shored up, the conference executive decided to end the efforts toward accreditation. Two areas that were to receive special attention were teacher qualifications and library holdings. Even as late as 1967 the need for a well equipped library was not seen.

Historically there has been a tendency for the Bible schools to turn into liberal arts colleges. Columbia Bible College has consciously resisted this trend, not willing to sacrifice its role in foundational formations for life and service. With such commitments one may expect the Bible school movement in British Columbia to continue with strength for a good while to come.

Die Mennonitische Rundschau (cont'd from p.1)

company offered to finance the periodical if it would be published in the west and would present prospective settlers with the settlement possibilities in the west. This offer was made to John F. Funk of the Mennonite Publishing Company which he accepted. Thus, *Der Nebraska Ansiedler* was born.

The Mennonite Publishing Company founded the periodical in order to serve the Russian Mennonite settlers in the prairie states and the province of Manitoba. However, when the immigrant influx of the 1870s ended the railroad ceased its financial support. The periodical, during this brief time, had attracted a large readership. The Mennonite Publishing Company, therefore, decided to continue the periodical but to publish it in Elkhart under the new title of

Die Mennonitische Rundschau.

The periodical was published twice a month beginning with first issue on the 5 June 1880 and continuing until the 15 August 1884. From the beginning of 1883 until 1979 it appeared weekly. Also, from the beginning of 1883 until August of 1884 it was published both weekly and monthly; weekly for the North American readers and monthly for the rest of the world. The monthly edition carried the most relevant and best material from the weekly for those readers abroad. In 1883 both of these editions were called *Die Rundschau* but after August 1884 when it became just a weekly it was called *Mennonitische Rundschau*.

The periodical, *Herold der Wahrheit*, also published by the Mennonite Publishing Company, had fewer and fewer German readers among the Swiss Mennonites who had been in North America for hundreds of years. Therefore it was decided to merge it with the *Mennonitische Rundschau*. From 6 November 1901 until 2 September 1908 they were published jointly in one periodical under the title *Mennonitische Rundschau und Herold der Wahrheit*.

From its beginning in 1880 until the 1 July 1908 the *Mennonitische Rundschau* was published by the Mennonite Publishing Company. Because of financial difficulties, caused in part by a fire in 1904 in Elkhart, and differences between John F. Funk and other Mennonite church leaders, the periodical was taken over by the Mennonite Publication Board in Elkhart from the 8 July 1908 until the 19 August 1908. Then it was sold to the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, PA., which published it from the 26 August 1908 until 12 December 1923.

On the 19 December 1923 *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* was published in Winnipeg after it had been sold to the Mennonite Publishing House, Winnipeg. For some years the Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, still held some shares in the new company. In 1940 it was reorganized into The Christian Press Ltd. Then in October, 1945 it was sold to members of the Guardianship Committee of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. In 1960 the conference itself bought The Christian Press and has published it since.

During the second World War *Die Mennonitische Rundschau* experienced some opposition because it was a German language periodical. Therefore from the 12 June 1940 to 2 October 1940 the first and last page were published in the English

language under the title of *The Mennonite Review*. The next year, beginning on the 11 June 1941, again under the *Mennonitische Rundschau* title, it had a new insert on page 11 and 12 entitled *Der Huterische Bote*. It was an insert "of the Christian-apostolic evangelical believing sect named the Hutterites." On the 27 August 1941 the title was changed to *Unser Bote*. The editor of these two pages each week was Gustav Stawitzki from the Riverside Colony, Arden, MB. It was inserted until the end of 1941.

In 1927 the *Mennonitische Rundschau* began its 50th year of publication. But that did not mean it began publishing in 1877. It had begun in 1878 as the first year of publication and so the 50th year was 1927. The publishers in 1927 made an error when they added to their title the subtitle of '1877-1927, Ebenezer 50'. It should have read '1878-1927, Ebenezer 50'. That error has been perpetuated until this day.

The format of the periodical has often changed. It has sometimes had a large newspaper format and sometimes a smaller magazine format. It began with four pages. For many years it had sixteen pages. Since 1979, when it became bi-monthly again, it has had 32 pages in a magazine format.

The printing format has also changed. Until 1972 it was printed in the gothic German script even though in Germany such script had not been used since the early 1960s. In 1972 it began a gradual shift to the latin script and later only the logo on the title page appeared in gothic script. Finally, in December 1992, the logo, with the title, also changed to the latin script.

The editors of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* during its long history have been: J.F. Harms, 1880-1886; M. Matuskiwiz, 1886-1895; D.F. Jantzen, 1895-1899; G.G. Wiens, 1899-1903; M.B. Fast, 1904-1910; C.@. Uiens, 1910-1920; W. Winsinger, 1920-1923; H.H. Neufeld, 1923-1945; H.F. Klassen, 1945-1967; E.L. Ratzlaff, 1967-1979; A. Schellenberg, 1979-1989, and L. Marsch since 1989.

The *Mennonitische Rundschau* has had a long and significant history. It is a periodical that still serves a faithful readership, some of whom have read it all their lives. Most of the readers, especially in North America, are adults, and the majority of them are of the older generation. It is a periodical rich in resources for a vast array of subjects. Parts of the first 50 years have been indexed. It is a periodical worthy of some study.

German Nationalism

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away with." Ludendorff wanted to invoke the old pagan, German gods like "Wotan, Baldur and Frya."⁴¹ This writer was harshly attacked by a German in Berlin for painting a false picture of Ludendorff, who was a "burning patriot."⁴² An anonymous letter followed which attacked Ludendorff, especially for his anti-Semitism.⁴³ The original critic then clarified his point further: "Christ or Wotan?"⁴⁴

There was full agreement, on the other hand, that the treaty of Versailles, in its treatment of Germany, was "the crime of the century."⁴⁵ Opinions on Hitler and the National Socialists at this time were either positive or undecided. One of the first positive assessments of Hitler was written in early 1931 by a Mennonite living in Germany. The writer predicted an impending victory for the Nazis, who displayed a "healthy national and Christian spirit," and asserted that the question of communism and world domination by the Jews would be decided on German soil.⁴⁶ Heinrich Schroeder, a teacher from the Russian colonies who had settled in Germany and who espoused National Socialist and *voelkisch* ideas throughout the 1930s, helped to "introduce" Hitler to Canadian Mennonites in 1932, claiming that Hitler was in favour of "positive Christianity" and the furtherance of "Deutschtum" throughout the world. When Hitler came to power, he would remember Germans everywhere, helping to right past wrongs against them so they could breathe easier.⁴⁷

The first statement of pro-Nazi views by a Canadian Mennonite occurred in 1932.⁴⁸ In late 1932 a reader complained that the news on political events was too one-sided: a perspective broader than that of one race or *Volk* was called for.⁴⁹ Earlier, the editor stated that he had been asked about his position on Hitler, and had responded that he didn't have one, since Mennonites were called to "higher" things than meddling in politics. He merely wanted "to observe how things stand in world politics, without taking a position on them."⁵⁰ Yet the tone and content of the paper at this time contradicted this assertion of neutrality. Just one example is an article on Hitler by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, one of the progenitors of the Nazi ideology, which appeared in the "News" section in 1932 without comment. Thus the opinions of a powerful advocate of Nazi ideas and the "Volksmensch Adolf Hitler" were featured as objective reportage.⁵¹

It is important to remember, however, that the eventual outcome of events was

unknown at this time, and that the majority of contributions to the *Rundschau* made no comment on these issues. The foregoing illustrates the turmoil and uncertainty of the early 1930s: the effects of the 1929 Wall Street crash were beginning to be felt; the door was being closed to the remaining friends and loved ones in Russia, as Stalinization set in; and communism seemed to be threatening not only Germany, but also had its representatives in places like Winnipeg.⁵² In addition, Anglo-Canadians had for various reasons again become hostile to "foreigners" living in their midst.⁵³

Russian Mennonite identity was in flux. An example of the struggle with outside influences is seen in the prominent Brethren Abraham J. Kroeker, former editor of the *Friedensstimme* in Russia, the semi-official organ of the Mennonite Brethren church there. Kroeker had settled in Minnesota, and was a frequent contributor to the *Rundschau*. Among his many submissions to the paper was a long article series written by a violently anti-semitic member of General Ludendorff's militaristic "Tannenberg Bund," who had recently visited the German colonies in Soviet Russia.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Kroeker maintained that his policy on book reviews had been to avoid books with a "German-patriotic and militaristic tendency;" Mennonites should only read good, Christian material.⁵⁵

An issue which was closer to home for most Canadian Mennonites was the value of German *voelkisch* ideas in unifying Mennonites and helping to perpetuate their socio-religious culture. What affected people the most was the idea that "German" qualities and the German language were important aspects of being Mennonite, and that preservation of the language was essential in maintaining the unity and integrity of the Mennonite *Volk* and its faith. A poem written by a "German father to his son" linked "German" virtues and the German language to good citizenship and the maintenance of the "old, true faith," and encouraged the son to "stay German" even if "a thousand fools mock you."⁵⁶ C.F. Klassen, a leading figure in the Mennonite world, wrote in 1931: "It is good if we always remember that religion and Deutschum were the sources out of which we have, until now, been able to accomplish much, and remain the sources for future accomplishments."⁵⁷

The issue of language was the most pervasive and enduring aspect of Canadian Mennonite Germanism during the 1930s and after. The discussion of "German and Religion" instruction in the schools was lively throughout the 1930s in the

Rundschau.⁵⁸ General articles such as J. John Friesen's "Spotlight on the German Language" also appeared. Friesen maintained in 1930 that "If a Volk trades its language for another, it loses its own life--its soul."⁵⁹ He also asserted that the loss of the German language would entail the loss of traditional Mennonite religious distinctives.⁶⁰ H.H. Ewert, a leading Mennonite educator of the Kanadier, who had earlier encouraged the use of English, was cited in 1930 as saying much the same thing.⁶¹ Other individuals called for a "surer foundation" in German and religion instruction in the schools: "We don't have anything against the public schools, we only want to make our children into pious Mennonites and thereby good citizens of the land."⁶² A "strong desire for good German literature" was beginning to be felt among Mennonites, another reported.⁶³ A minister of the German government informed Mennonites that loss of the German language would mean absorption into a non-German "Volkstum."⁶⁴

Thus, most of the elements relevant to the German identity of Mennonites were already present in the early 1930s, before the National Socialist revolution had fully taken place. The shattering experience under the Bolsheviks had prepared the way for German identification, broadly speaking, in two interrelated ways: on the one hand, Germany was seen as a rescuing and caring parent which promised to stand up to the communists and make German-speakers everywhere proud. At the same time, the German language and culture, as well as German ethnicity, were seen as sources for the unification, integration and perpetuation of Mennonite ethno-religious culture. As time wore on, the more overtly militaristic and nationalistic elements of this identification would be challenged in the Mennonite press, as "political" and "cultural" Germanism were differentiated and separated, with the former rejected and the latter being deemed acceptable and healthy.⁶⁵ In these early years of the decade, however, a great deal of unreflective German nationalism was articulated in the pages of the *Rundschau*. It is up to the historian, however, to situate such sentiments within their proper context, and not to assume, beyond the evidence, that the words of a strident minority were representative of the feelings of a majority of Mennonites. As the decade wore on, the discussion in the *Rundschau* became more complex, and it becomes clear that many individuals were not persuaded by the Germanist rhetoric, much of which was emanating from Germany.⁶⁶ While

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Mennonites may have in some measure participated in a larger "Volks-German awakening," the ultimate reference-point for most was the Mennonite *people*, as opposed to the German *nation*.

NOTES

1. Jonathan F. Wagner, "Transferred Crisis: German Volkish Thought Among Russian Mennonite Immigrants to Western Canada," *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* 1 (1973):202-220. My use of the term "Germanism" refers to a conscious affirmation of any of a wide range of actual or perceived components of the German culture, nation, "race," and way of life.
2. See Benjamin W. Redekop, "The German Identity of Mennonite Brethren Immigrants in Canada, 1930-1960" (M.A. Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1990), pp. 223;— "Germanism Among Mennonite Brethren Immigrants in Canada, 1930-1960: A Struggle for Ethno-Religious Integrity," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XXIV, 1 (1992):20-42; —, "The Canadian Mennonite Response to National Socialism" *Mennonite Life* (June 1991):18-24.
3. See Frank H. Epp, "An Analysis of Germanism and National Socialism in the Immigrant Newspaper of a Canadian Minority Group, the Mennonites, in the 1930s" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1965). For an analysis and critique of this work, as well analysis of *Der Bote*, see Redekop, "The German Identity of Mennonite Brethren Immigrants in Canada, 1930-1960," Chapter 3.
4. For a discussion of the *Mennonitische Rundschau* and its readership, and a detailed reading of the paper on the Germanism issue for the years 1930-36 and 1939, see Redekop, "The German Identity," chapter 2.
5. See Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona: D.W. Friesen & Sons Ltd., 1966), p. 233ff.
6. e.g. *Mennonitische Rundschau*, 16 April 1930, p. 9. Henceforth the title of the newspaper will not be cited when it is the obvious reference.
7. e.g. 14 May 1930, p. 8; 21 May 1930, pp. 8-9.
8. e.g. 26 March 1930, p. 11; 18 February 1931, p. 12.
9. 1 January 1930, p. 6.
10. Articles with titles like "In the Land of Tears" were common. 4 March 1931, p. 11. For more see John B. Toews, *Lost Fatherland: The Story of the Mennonite Emigration From Soviet Russia, 1921-27* (Kitchener: Herald Press, 1967). Also helpful is Harry Loewen, "Canadian Mennonite Literature: Longing for a Lost Homeland," in Walter E. Riedel, ed., *The Old World and the New: Literal! Perspectives of German-Speaking Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).
11. J.P. Klassen, "Dem deutschen Volk," 26 March 1930, pp. 2-3. Similar sorts of poems appeared in *Ibid.*, p. 6; Abram Jac-Loewen, "Unser Dank," 25 June 1930, pp. 8-9; P.P. Isaak, "Dem deutschen Volk!" 23 July 1930, p. 5.
12. 15 January 1930, p. 13. Other examples include 1 January 1930, p.6; 22 January 1930, p. 12; 18 November 1931, p. 4.
13. 1 October 1930, p. 6.
14. This included both the German Consulate in Winnipeg and the German government. 22 January 1930, p. 12; 12 February 1930, p. 6; 5 October 1932, p. 11.
15. B.H. Unruh, "Unsere Pakethilfe nach Russland," 5 October 1932, p.11.
16. H.H. Neufeld, "Euer Editor," 10 June 1931, p. 4.
17. Examples for the 1930-32 period include: 5 March 1930, pp. 1-3; Peter Dirks, "Unser Volk," 16 April 1930, pp. 1-2; P.P. Isaak, "Dem deutschen Volk!" 23 July 1930, p. 5; B.D., "Ein Mennonitisches Problem," 19 October 1932, pp. 1-2.
18. P.P. Kornelsen, "Volk ohne Heimat," 19 February 1930, p. 8; "Mennoniten," 16 April 1930, p. 4; 6 May 1931, pp. 6-7.
19. P.P. Isaak, "Dem deutschen Volk!" 23 July 1930, p. 5.
20. P.P. Kornelsen, "Volk ohne Heimat," 19 February 1930, p. 1.
21. Examples for the 1930-32 period include: "Chilenischer General ermahnt zum Festhalten am Deutschtum," 30 July 1930, p. 5; "Bleib Deutsch," 1 October 1930, p. 4; D.A.J., "Das vierte Gebot," 6 July 1932, p. 4.
22. E. Sengler, "Die voelkische Bewegung," 8 July 1931, pp. 2-3.
23. 29 June 1932, p. 8; 17 December 1930, p. 15.
24. e.g. 16 April 1930, p. 14; 30 April 1930, p. 14; 25 June 1930, p. 14;
- 28 January 1931, p. 14; 7 September 1932, p. 12; 21 September 1932, p.16; 19 November 1932, p. 11. There were many more.
25. 17 December 1930, p. 12.
26. 1 July 1931, p. 8.
27. 8 June 1932, pp. 4-5.
28. A few examples include: 29 July 1931, p. 11; 4 May 1932, p. 12; 8 June 1932, p. 14.
29. 24 February 1932, p. 12; 9 March 1932, p.12.
30. 16 March 1932, p. 14.
31. "Wie steht's in Deutschland?," 26 February 1930, p. 3; 16 July 1930, p. 5; 7 January 1931, p. 6; 22 July 1931, p. 12; J.P. Klassen, "Die groesste Schande des 20. Jahrhunderts," 20 January 1932, pp. 12.
32. Heinrich Schroeder, "Judenangst," 10 August 1932, pp. 4-5.
33. 25 November 1931, p. 12.
34. 22 January 1930, p. 7.
35. 12 February 1930, p. 7.
36. See Jonathan Wagner, *Brothers Beyond the Sea: National Socialism in Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press, 1981), p. 94ff.
37. "Deutscher Tag," 16 July 1930, p. 11. The soteriological power of the German essence was also cited in another article in the same issue, p. 5.
38. William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1959), p. 26.
39. Dr. Theo Haeuser, "Ein Apostel der Wahrheit," 4 February 1931, pp. 11-13. Another Stuermer article was reprinted two weeks later, covering Christmas festivities of the Hitler youth in Nuremberg. 18 February 1931, p. 5.
40. 26 November 1930, p. 12.
41. G.G. Wiens, "Ein neues Deutschtum?," 30 September 1931, p. 4.
42. 16 March 1932, p. 4.
43. "Zum 'neuen Deutschland'," 30 March 1932, p. 11.
44. G.G. Wiens, "Christus oder Wotan?," 6 April 1932, p. 4.
45. J.P. Klassen, "Die groesste Schande des 20. Jahrhunderts," 20 January 1932, pp. 1-2; 16 March 1932, p. 2; T.G., "Das neue Deutschland," 18 May 1932, p. 3.
46. "Deutschland und unsere Brueder in Russland," 14 January 1931, p. 8.
47. Heinrich Schroeder, "Die Juden," 3 August 1932, pp. 3-4.
48. C. M., 27 July 1932, p. 5.
49. 19 October 1932, p. 5.
50. "Hitler," 4 February 1931, p. 11.
51. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, "Volkmensch Adolf Hitler," 28 September 1932, p. 12.
52. For a discussion of Canadian communism during the 1920s and 1930s see Donald Avery, *Danaerous Forelancers: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), Chapter 4. During the 1920s, the North End in Winnipeg had provided a base for CPC activities, and the systematic suppression of the movement by government authorities during 1929-34 was indicative of its feared influence. In 1934 a Mennonite doubly reported that a communist had won a seat on the North End City Council, and urged Mennonites to get organized so this wouldn't happen again. J.K., "Am Morgen nach dem Wahlen," 12 December 1934, p. 8. In 1936 another warning was made about growing communist influence, and support was urged for mayoral candidate R.H. Webb, a staunch anti-communist. "Deutsche treten fuer R.H. Webb ein," 18 November 1936, p. 7.
53. The dire economic situation was at the root of the problem, as immigrants were linked to unemployment and labour agitation. General Anglo-Saxon nativism, exemplified most vividly by the growth of the Ku Klux Klan on the prairies in the later 1920s, was also present. Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 100-110, 126ff; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 247, 404-05; Avery, *Danaerous Forelancers*, pp. 111-15; Joanna Buhr, "Pursuit of a Vision: Persistence and Accommodation Among Coaldale Mennonites from the mid-Nineteen Twenties to World War II," (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1986), p. 82.
54. Beginning 1 June 1932, p. 10, by Herman Anders.
55. A. Kroeker, "Das Buch," 21 September 1932, p. 3.
56. "Bleib Deutsch," 1 October 1930, p. 4.
57. C.F. Klassen, "Der Weg der praktischen Hilfe," 18 February 1931, p. 2.
58. See Redekop, "The German Identity," chap. 4.
59. J. John Friesen, "Streiflichter auf die deutsche Sprache," 30 April 1930, p. 2. Other examples for this period include: "Die deutsche Sprache in Amerika," 26 November 1930, p. 4; "An das deutsche Elternhaus," 24 February 1932, pp. 3-4; A.J. Fast, "Einige Bemerkungen ueber Wert und Bedeutung der deutschen Sprache," 8 June 1932, p. 4.
60. J. John Friesen, 18 June 1930, p. 1.
61. "Ein Aufruf an Lehrer," 18 June 1930, p. 5.
62. "Religion und deutsche Sprache in unseren Schulen," 29 June 1932, pp. 4-5. Other examples include: "Bericht des Schulkomitees," 9 September 1931, p. 3; 23 September 1931, p. 3.
63. 17 September 1930, p. 4.
64. Dr. Boelitz, "Muttersprache," 29 April 1931, pp. 8-9.
65. See Redekop, "The German Identity," chaps. 3 & 4.
66. B.H. Unruh and Heinrich Schroeder were two individuals who resided in Germany and wrote many pro-German pieces appearing in the *Rundschau*. See Redekop, "The German Identity," p. 55ff.

Announcement from the B.C. Archives

Mr. Hugo Friesen will begin his assignment as Archivist in January, 1994.

WORLD WAR II CHRISTIAN VETERANS REUNION

June twenty-second to twenty-fifth, 1993 saw the reunion of 24 Christian veterans of World War II. The men and their spouses gathered at the Christian resort centre at Elim Lodge on Pigeon Lake, just northwest of Peterborough, Ontario. The three day event rekindled friendships, fostered Christian fellowship and provided an opportunity to meet "buddies" some of us had not seen since World War II. All were Christians who had met somewhere during military service; the majority were conscientious objectors who had enlisted in the "Restricted" Medical or Dental Corps as their choice of alternative service during the War. Though little known and even less publicized, the 227 Mennonite men who chose the "Restricted" service in the Medical or Dental Corps of the Canadian military without any arms training and with the guarantee that they could not be involuntarily transferred to any combatant units of the Military Forces. During their service at home, overseas and on the battle fields of Europe, many friendships with other Christian men were established.

During the six plenary sessions, under the general chairmanship of Cornie Riediger, the veterans were ministered to by their own "buddies". Special music was brought by Roy and Jean Bickle, and Amsey and Florence Buehler.

It is planned to hold another reunion. Christian veterans from any and all branches of the armed forces are encouraged to participate in the next reunion in Kelowna in the summer of 1995.

Contact: Henry Hiebert, 102-489 Hwy 33W, Kelowna, B.C. V1X 1Y2.

More on "Kanadier and Russländer"

Dear Editor,

I agree with Ben Doerksen that knowing our roots and being aware of the tensions of the past could help us to understand ourselves and some of our present conflicts. But it could also work the other way. Sometimes it is better to 'let sleeping dogs lie.' Our parents and grandparents worked hard to overcome their prejudices. Let us not revive them. Most of the examples used in *Kanadier and Russländer* (June/93) had far more complex scenarios than Russlaender-Kanadier tensions.

I feel the statements about the Winkler Bible School need clarification. It is true that the teachers and some students came from Tschongrow Bible School in Russia. Before he started Pniel, Dr. Unruh wrote Rev. Bestvater of Herbert Bible School who assured him that he would like to see a

Bible School in every province. Then he talked to Winkler businessmen who volunteered to finance the establishment of the school. Thus the first three trustees were *Kanadier*. Donations continued to come from the local community. The course of studies was adapted to Canadians and a *Kanadier* was hired in the fourth year of operation.

A large percent of the student body were *Kanadier* who, since the revival of the 1880s and the start of the MB Church, had been hoping for an opportunity to study God's Word in an M.B. School close enough to be affordable. Many farmers went to Bible School in the winter and became lay ministers.

Assimilation between the two cultures took place much more rapidly than normal as young people became friends and intermarried. The *Russländer* teachers were highly respected by their *Kanadier* as well as *Russländer* students. And the teachers recognized the *Kanadier* were not all simple-minded or afraid of education or tradition-bound.

It is unfortunate that personal prejudices often interfere with objective historical writing. I am perturbed that, I, a mere history fan and not a scholar, can find discrepancies in this small portion of doctoral dissertation by Ben Doerksen.

Shirley Bergen, Brandon

Book Reviews

(cont'd from p.12)

Readings from Mennonite Writings is a wonderful source for anyone interested in Anabaptist history and spirituality, and as was stated earlier, is a great source for those wishing to combine their interest in Mennonite and Anabaptist history with their devotional reading.

Reviewed by Richard Thiessen, librarian at Concord College, Winnipeg.

Book Notes by Richard Thiessen

Several books have recently been published which relate to the history of the Mennonite Brethren Church. The first is David Ewert's *A Journey of Faith: An Autobiography* (Winnipeg: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies and Kindred Press, 1993), \$13.95. David Ewert is well known as an educator, author, preacher, and conference worker, particularly amongst the Mennonite Brethren. This autobiography tells the story of the son of Russian Mennonite immigrants who grew up in Alberta, certain that he would be a farmer. However, a year at Coaldale Bible School

set Ewert on a journey to various institutions of higher education. These years prepared him for an academic career, including faculty positions at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, where he also served as president, and at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. Ewert's autobiography is not as reflective of the sometimes difficult situations he experienced as some might have hoped, but it does give us a picture of an individual who has had a major role to play in the Mennonite Brethren Church.

The second book is another autobiography, this one by Peter M. Hamm, entitled *Reflections on my Journey* (Abbotsford, B.C.: Peter M. Hamm, 1993), \$19.99. Peter Hamm was another well known Mennonite Brethren leader who, inspite of his failing health, was able to complete his autobiography before his passing in August of this year. Hamm served as a professor at Mennonite Brethren Bible College, a missionary with the MB Board of Missions in India and with the Mennonite Board of Missions in Liberia, and a missions administrator with the MB Board of Missions. We learn much about Hamm's life and work, although like the Ewert autobiography, we gain little insight or analysis of some of the difficult situations which he experienced in his work. Nonetheless, the book is well written and full of an amazing amount of personal information.

One author who cannot be accused of not offering his own reflections and analysis of the Mennonite Brethren Church is J.B. Toews, who has recently completed *A Pilgrimage of Faith: The Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and North America from 1860-1990* (Winnipeg: Kindred Press, 1993), \$14.95. Toews, a patriarchal figure in the MB Church for several decades, served as president of both Mennonite Brethren Bible College and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, as well as Executive Secretary of the MB Board of Missions. He offers the reader a look back at the Mennonite Brethren denomination's history, particularly its theological pilgrimage. Historical research is merged with Toews' personal observations and experiences within the denomination, and he openly reveals where MB Church has succeeded in living up to the ideals of the New Testament church, and where and why it has failed.

Many individuals who devote their lives to the church never seem to take advantage of the right they have earned to speak boldly and without reservation about their church's past—its successes as well as its failings. J.B. Toews has earned the respect of many in the MB Church, and his history of the denomination should be read by all.

BOOK REVIEWS

Walter Klaassen, *"The Days of Our Years." A History of the Eigenheim Mennonite Church Community: 1892-1992* (Rosthern: Eigenheim Mennonite Church, 1992), 312 pp. hdc.

[Ernest Enns and Ruth Vogt, ed.,] *Jubilate. 60 Years First Mennonite Church 1926-1986* (Winnipeg: First Mennonite Church, 1991), 182 pp. hdc.

Elizabeth Abrahams, Victor Janzen and Nettie Neufeld, comp. and ed., *"Great Is Thy Faithfulness." Steinbach Mennonite Church, 50th Anniversary 1942-1992* (Steinbach: Steinbach Mennonite Church, 1992), 150 pp. hdc.

What does a congregation want when it considers publishing a commemorative book? Does it want a detailed listing of the various leaders, committees, boards, teachers, choirs and other groups that have served the congregation, together with a generous sample of representative photographs? Does it want an organizational chronology of the congregation's development with enough factual content that memories are stimulated to recall past times? The Steinbach book does this well.

Or does it want the story of a people and its community, understood with the benefit of hindsight, where factual details of particular committees or groups or of particular events are less important in themselves than for their contribution to our understanding of the larger story? The Eigenheim history takes this approach.

Perhaps a congregation is looking for something of both, a much more difficult task to accomplish. The First Mennonite retrospective seems to be of this type.

How does a congregation go about producing this commemorative volume? Does it appoint a writer whose major role in selecting what to include and in interpreting what is included in the book leads unavoidably to a story coloured by the perspective of one person? Eigenheim took this risk.

Or does it appoint a representative committee whose primary task is to compile a comprehensive report on all activities, but not necessarily to create a unified story let alone to interpret it? The Steinbach book takes this approach with the committee including articles by over 30 identified writers.

The First Mennonite book takes an

intermediate position, with about a dozen writers (p. 165) whose specific contributions are not identified and a strong editorial team to give some cohesiveness to the whole manuscript. Its chapters deal with their respective topics at greater length and with more attempt at interpretation than the Steinbach volume, but less than Klaassen does in the Eigenheim book.

How does a congregation decide on the scope of its book? How much pre-history is necessary for the current body to understand itself? How broadly does the community context need to be taken into account for the church community to see and recognize itself?

The Steinbach book focuses on the congregation and limits itself to a half century of the activities and persons of SMC. Only in the sections on "Missions and Service" and "Conference Involvements" does it look at "outside" relationships and activities of the congregation and its members. But one learns virtually nothing about Steinbach and its broad array of Mennonite and other churches, nor about what it means to be church in a Mennonite village which has become a thriving town that has become almost synonymous with free enterprise business.

First Mennonite makes a much more serious effort to provide pre-history, not only of the far flung circle of congregations in Manitoba (37 groups at the peak) that made up the *Schönwieser Gemeinde* out of which the city congregation emerged, but also of the background in Russia of its various groups of members. And it ranges broadly over activities in which its members were involved "outside" of the congregation, activities as diverse as theatre, genealogy, hospital and senior citizens housing. But in spite of its designation as "First" Mennonite church of Winnipeg, it provides only incidental and casual insight into its experience as a pioneer urban congregation.

Klaassen surpasses all previous congregational histories that I have seen in the scope of his study. "Eigenheim is a place of which we know the centre but not the circumference," he begins. The peoples of Big Bear and Gabriel Dumont as well as those of Menno and David Toews are within the circumference, and Eigenheim's congregational story is interpreted in that larger context.

What sources does one use in writing a history of this kind? The obvious ones like congregational records, the recollections of living members and leaders, photographs and other mementos are obvious in all three books. What distinguishes the Eigenheim volume is its use of at least ten diaries, some spanning a half century of time, one running to 24 volumes, and sermon collections and

theological essays from a number of leaders of the congregation. Perhaps the personal, introspective reflections of diarists were not available to the committees of Steinbach and First Mennonite. But I suspect that sermon collections would have been. Their careful use can contribute very significantly to recreating something of the spiritual character of the congregation memorialized.

That leads us to perhaps the most important question: what does a congregation want to do with its commemorative book? I hope that every book committee would see its task as part of the nurturing and shaping ministry of the church and as helping the congregation sharpen its vision for mission. To begin with that goal would help to answer the various questions raised above.

Reviewed by Adof Ens, Associate Professor of History and Theology, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg.

J. Craig Haas, *Readings from Mennonite Writings: New and Old* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 1992). 436 pp., \$14.95 pb.

Have you ever wished that you could somehow combine your love for Mennonite and Anabaptist history and theology with your daily devotions? If you have, then this book is for you. The readings, spanning the years between the Reformation and the present, are taken from a variety of sources and represent a broad spectrum of the larger Anabaptist family. The Amish, Brethren in Christ, Hutterites and Old Order Mennonites are represented along with the major Mennonite groups, and the authors come from five different continents.

There are familiar names from Anabaptist history, such as Menno Simons, Pilgram Marpeck, Hans Denck, Jakob Ammann and Jakob Hutter. There are also familiar names from the twentieth century, such as Eberhard Arnold, Robert Friedmann, Walter Klaassen, Marvin Hein and John H. Redekop. Included are poems by Jean Janzen, David Waltner-Toews and Yorifumi Yaguchi, and hymns by Michael Sattler.

Other contributors include Mennonites from around the world, like Bui Quang, a student from Vietnam, Monroe L. Beachy, an Amish tax accountant from Ohio, and Magdalene Redekop, a Canadian author.

There is one reading for each day of the year, and references to sources appear after all selections. The book includes a bibliography, as well as indices of authors, subjects, scripture references, geography and time. A short chapter on Mennonite spirituality is also included.

(cont'd on p.11)