

the shaping of a musician's tastes by early musical experiences and the effect that writing for a Mennonite community has on compositional choices. The careers of the singer-songwriters analysed in the pieces by Allison Fairbairn and Jonathan Dueck present another aspect of this problem. They may have to throw off the inflections of their musical upbringing in order to find the language that will take them into the musical mainstream. At the same time they can find sources of inspiration in their heritage and comfort in being recognized and claimed by their communities.

The last sentence of Katie Graber's essay sums up most of these issues very elegantly.

If all of the divergent aspects of identity performance, the ineffable element of the experience of musical sounds, and the embodied social actions that present and represent identity can converge with our definitions of identity, we have allowed for the broadest possibilities for musical meaning. (73)

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Reviews of History

Irmgard Epp, ed. *Constantinoplans - Escape from Bolshevism*. Victoria BC: Trafford Publishing, 2006. Pp. 370.

What did Constantinople have to do with Mennonites? How did it come about that 111 men of Mennonite origin escaped with the White Army to Constantinople? What do the historical accounts say about MCC's program in Constantinople and its role in bringing the Constantinoplans to America? This book is the result of a quest by retired teacher Irmgard Epp of Kelowna, B.C. to learn the story of her father, C. H. Epp. In doing so she collected oral histories or interviews, and built them around a 52 page diary by Peter H. Gerz. It turned out to be an uneven read, but increasingly fascinating since the short documents of remembering have the reader piecing together individual lives into a composite picture that elicits the above questions.

To tell the story it may be helpful to keep in mind that the later years of World War I, then Civil War and Revolution, placed much

of Russia into chaos till at least 1924. The main political story lines - break down of tsarism, rise of Soviet Power, civil war between Red Army and anti-Bolshevik White Army - are well established. But not only was it individual experiences of war that were as chaotic as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* painted the Napoleonic years, even the central state archives reflect the disorder. I recall reading files from the new Soviet justice department (1918-20), written on such a diversity of papers and shapes that I was reminded of Anna Baerg's diary written on soup can wrappers. I saw copies of official orders sent out which were typed on the reverse of older papers being re-used due to paper shortages. There were plaintive appeals from the ministry wondering whether anyone more than 40 kilometers away had received the order. So official policy and actual practice were far apart.

These Constantinoplers became such through being drawn into military service in the civil war years. Some made the individual choice to join an army unit because they thought that could stop the pillaging. There was the better known Mennonite Self-Defence League (1919-20) made up largely of former security guards from Mennonite estates, some of whom stayed with the White forces. There were also young Mennonite men brought into military service by commanding officers with no respect for any CO appeals they might make. Irmgard Epp's research turned up a common pattern, also true for Mennonite servicemen in USA during World War I - all said little about the experiences, even their children knew very few details. That tight-lipped style comes through in several shorter pieces. The speaker thanks God, then the MCC or Salvation Army, or local hosts in Germany and America, for helping them get back on their feet.

The book is organized into six sections that reflect an attempt to be topical. From another perspective, three longer memoirs (Gerhard Wiens on colony life; Peter Henry Gerz' diary from his years in the White army; and Peter D. Froese's "Recollections" with spiritual reflection) carry the weight of a story line. Wiens' written account from the 1980s on colony life before the revolution (theme of part 1) serves as the basis for nine more vignettes.

Part 2, on Life in the White Army, covers the second 100 pages, mostly with Gerz's long diary that includes how he became a cook and never shot a gun, and two other accounts. Part 3 then becomes the Constantinoplers' story itself, actually titled "the Hollanders' Desperate flight" since many of these tried the ploy of claiming to be Dutch to get visas. Most eventually got to the USA. There follows a short previously published account by the captain of the British transport ship Rio Negro, which captures the color of the desperate rescue of White army and stragglers getting out of Simferopol just ahead of the Bolshevik guns. A group of 62 were detained in Ellis Island, New

York, long enough to refer to it as an island of tears, until MCC officials managed to negotiate their release through appeals in Washington.

Particularly interesting was the final fifty-page section on “Batumi Emigrants,” consisting of nine accounts of persons who were not soldiers, but who were forced by army movements to flee cross-country (with narrow escapes included) to Batumi on the east side of the Black Sea. From here a group managed to find passage on a ship to Constantinople and then, with MCC assistance, to USA. Little vignettes include descriptions of their kind and generous hosts in Souderton and elsewhere in Pennsylvania. These two groups of Mennonites were quite alien to each other in language, form of dress, and piety, and yet some of their relationships were sustained by letters and visits for decades.

Mostly the book conveys the story of young men, naive to start with, lucky to survive many bad situations, and cut off from family except for infrequent messages about bad times. Eventually they looked either to Germany, The Netherlands, or America to find safety and to start life over again. Workers from the newly formed MCC appear as angels, practical in locating food and lodging, and getting the refugees short-term employment. Meanwhile, paperwork and loans were being negotiated for them to take the Orient Express through war torn Europe, or to take a ship through the Mediterranean and on to New York.

So the knowledgeable reader learns more, whereas an uninformed reader will enjoy the adventures, and should take some of the claims with suitable caution. The worst inaccuracies appear in John Dick’s story to a daughter-in-law, a highly embellished account titled “Add one Cossack and Stir.” Particularly hilarious is his claim that Empress Catherine made the Mennonites promise not to do missionary work in Russia, “She needed soldiers not missionaries” and follows this with the claim that “the church broke apart over this issue and the Mennonite Brethren Church came into being and they did missionary work in their areas.” (166) His descriptions of brutality included the claim that Cossacks captured young men who had deserted to the Communist party, who were beheaded. Another incident that Dick may not have witnessed was the rape of women in the presence of their family, and the bayonet stabbing of a baby by a soldier for apparent sadistic pleasure. Dick adds that “incidents like this happened all over the Ukraine.” Such a generalization fits with his ‘add a Cossack and stir’ style but says more about prejudice of the ‘other.’ Dick also used it as explanation why “some of the Mennonites, who are a non-resistant people, lost faith in their church doctrines.” It may be wiser to keep in mind this was an old man telling a distant story of his youth, who right after the above passage, went back to his days of fighting and nights of

travel to get to the boat in Yalta in November 1920, where the parting with his horse before embarking was a bigger trauma for him.

Like other side stories to the broad Russian Mennonite narrative, especially the narratives of escape, this book gives us the Constantinoplers' adventures. Epp deserves credit for persistence with locating materials and getting them translated. The photos and map add value. There are a few typographical errors, but the four ways of misspelling Noworossijsk (the German way) (126-8) appear to be Peter Gerz's idiosyncrasies.

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Abraham Friesen, *In Defense of Privilege: Russian Mennonites and the State Before and During World War I*. Winnipeg, MB and Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Productions, 2006. \$39.99 (Can.), \$35.99 (US). Pp. xvii + 520.

This book explores a "crisis of identity" among Russian Mennonites in the first decades of the twentieth century. At the core of the response to this crisis, Friesen argues, was Mennonites' aspiration to preserve the privileges that they had been granted upon their entry into Russia in 1789 – above all the exemption from military service. Thus Mennonite self-examination in the context of late-imperial politics and the world war was a matter principally (though not exclusively) of defending privilege.

Friesen proposes that until the 1860s historical consciousness among Russian Mennonites was remarkably limited, but that several circumstances soon compelled them to face fundamental questions about their origins and identity. First, a schism within their church, coming at about the time that the regime first considered terminating the military exemption, forced Mennonites to clarify their convictions and rendered the adherents of one of the resulting branches, the Mennonite Brethren, particularly vulnerable to military service in light of their close resemblance to Baptists. Second, the government's proposal in 1907 to classify Mennonites as a "sect" rather than a "confession" required them to explore the origins of their religious community so as to defend the original designation. And third, the introduction of land liquidation laws in 1915, which sought to alienate the property of ethnically German landowners in strategically important provinces, impelled Mennonites to emphasize Dutch origins while downplaying their connections with Germany, which had in fact grown substantially

in the decades before the war. While the importance of the confession/sect distinction disappeared with the autocracy's collapse, the other issues remained central to Mennonites during and after the revolutions of 1917. Some Mennonites abandoned nonresistance in the face of Bolshevik and anarchist depredations, and the appearance of the German army drove them to renounce their claims about Dutch origins in order to assert affinity with occupying forces. In great detail, Friesen critically analyzes the intricate deliberations that occurred among Mennonites as a result of these challenges, keeping always in mind the particular context that made one set of assertions more attractive than another. What emerges is a portrait of an ethno-religious community whose core convictions and sense of self were in great flux.

Friesen's account raises a whole series of issues fundamental not only to the history of Mennonites, but to Russian and religious history more generally: the problem of religious toleration and confessional minorities; the contradictions of a modernizing but conservative state; the complex link between religion, ethnicity, and particularistic rights; and the mass dislocations and confusion unleashed by the Great War and imperial collapse. Given that his own area of expertise is the Reformation, Friesen has covered these issues well, if not always with the nuance that one would expect from an accomplished historian of Russia. Friesen's analysis of Mennonite deliberations is very deep, and he has expended great effort to establish intellectual links between the various participants.

In my view, two problems nonetheless detract from the monograph's success. The first concerns the comparatively weak treatment of the Russian government – a product, presumably, of language and source limitations for Friesen. Occasionally the aspirations of the autocracy are simplified and presented in caricature, while in many cases Friesen can offer only speculations or rhetorical questions about important dimensions of the issues under consideration. Secondly, *In Defense of Privilege* at times overwhelms the reader with detail, and Friesen frequently loses sight of the proverbial forest for the trees. Too often the author fails to summarize his findings and to state their implications explicitly. My own view is that the book is too long and that a more concise, stream-lined version of the text with more explicit argumentation at key points would have been more effective, while not compromising anything in terms of actual content. Still, for historians of both Russia and the Mennonite experience, Friesen's book contains many insights and raises questions of central historical significance.

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Melanie Springer Mock. *Writing Peace: The Unheard Voices of Great War Mennonite Objectors*. Pandora Press: Telford, PA: Pandora, 2003. Pp. 345. Soft cover.

Melanie Springer Mock argues that the literature accepted as forming the Great War canon is too exclusive in the privilege it affords to the combatant's voice. There are other voices. Even if they lack 'combat gnosticism' these voices have confronted a jarring reality in wartime. In her book, *Writing Peace*, Mock proposes to broaden the Great War canon by first justifying a space for other voices, then introducing the diaries of four Mennonite objectors.

Mock's first chapter gives an account of the diverse American Mennonite community at the time of the 1917 conscription. Mennonites were divided into at least sixteen distinguishable groups, "each with its own ethnic, cultural, and / or theological identity." (28) Although an abstract commitment to pacifism was widely affirmed, in matters of praxis there was disunity. This meant that for the young Mennonites ordered to enlist, a clearly formulated position outlining their church's practical doctrine of pacifism was absent. The inability of Mennonite churches to speak in one voice forced their young men seeking objector status to reflect on their own beliefs and the demands of wartime *as individuals*. Diaries that recount this experience have the potential to provide glimpses of a pacifist working through the concrete implications of his conscience. The Mennonite objector, thus, represented an unparalleled experience in the Great War.

The second chapter turns to examine the Great War canon and assesses partial responsibility for the prerequisite of combat gnosticism to the writers themselves. Mock writes: "the exclusive nature of the Great War canon can be attributed, in some part, to the progenitors of the canon – the writers themselves – who asserted again and again that only those who were there could...write about war." (88) This is one limitation.

Mock expands on this limitation by wading into more esoteric regions of literary theory. As the published writers of the Great War tended to be well-educated, they looked to classical imagery to describe trench warfare. This resulted in a literature of stark dichotomies. Most overarching is the opposition between the beauty of nature and the grotesqueness of warfare. While dichotomies are powerful in the haunting images they provoke, texts permeated by dualism can be dangerous. By relying on a traditional ontology of binary oppositions the Great War canon presents "a polarized worldview that offer[s] no hope for mediation or reconciliation." (92) Although some prefer to dismiss such talk as eisegesis, Mock's conclusion should be uncontroversial: The accepted canon lacks sufficient perspective to justify its exclusivity.

Mock's third chapter attempts to counter the common tendency to treat the diary as a 'less serious' literary medium than those texts prepared with publication in mind. Of course there are notable exceptions (one thinks of Anne Frank), but, as the tendency goes, these are instances where the failure of an important writer to prepare a text for publication forces us to elevate her diary. However, with the rise of social history and its emphasis on an account of everyday life, this prejudice against the diary has been receding. Diaries can offer an "immediacy and directness" (115) that a text prepared with the intention of publication cannot. This 'immediacy' is mired in subjectivity, and this is precisely the benefit. A diary has the potential to offer unique insights into an individual's daily confrontation with reality. This 'directness' "holds the power to disrupt authorized versions of experience." (86-87). In the context of the Great War the authorized version of experience consists entirely of the texts crafted by soldiers with an eye towards publication. They are mediated by publishers and authorized by 'combat gnosticism'. For these reasons Mock concludes that broadening the Great War canon to the diaries of non-combatants is appropriate.

After justifying that there is potential space for the diaries of non-combatants within the Great War canon, *Writing Peace* concludes by presenting four candidates for inclusion. The selections seem to have been chosen to reflect the diversity of Great War Mennonite objector experiences. The diarists represent a mixture of church denominations, education levels and marital statuses. We also see a range of punitive measures: one diarist spends time in military prison, while another gains favour with the military during his detainment.

Mock does an excellent job contextualizing Mennonite objector diarists within Great War literature. Her argument for the validity of non-combatant experiences within the context of the Great War blends comfortably with arguments for the legitimacy of the diary as literary medium and the need to broaden the accepted canon. After reading *Writing Peace* readers will likely agree with Mock and support the inclusion of new voices into the Great War canon.

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Harvey Neufeldt, Ruth Derksen Siemens and Robert Martens, ed. *First Nations and First Settlers in the Fraser Valley (1890-1960)*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004. Pp. 287. Soft cover. \$30.00 Cdn, \$25.00 US.

Harvey Neufeldt, Ruth Derksen and Robert Martens have gathered a collection of essays, originally presented at the First Nations First Settlers Conference at the University College of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on June 5-7, 2003. The essays collected here are a mix of academic papers and personal reflections on the history of the Fraser Valley. They organized the book into five parts: "Pre-settlement and Early Settlement," "Early Religious and Intellectual Developments," "Community and Family in Yarrow," "Educational Institutions and the Arts," "Economic Development and Urbanization of Ethnic Mennonites."

The introductory chapter is a transcript of the opening address by Albert McHalsie, at the time, Acting Executive Director of the Aboriginal Rights and Title Department at *Stó:lō* Nation. McHalsie traces the significance of local language in its micro-dialects, names, and colonialism to demonstrate that to understand the history of a region, one must know the stories of the origins and ancestry of the region's First Nations. The remainder of Part I is filled with fine chapters on the reclamation of Sumas Lake, grounded in archival research and weaving together of political, financial, and labour issues, as well as chapters on the Japanese and Sikh communities, and finally the settlement of the Mission area on the North Shore. Together these chapters tell a story of immigration, settlement, acculturation and a growing sense of tolerance in the midst of increasing diversity. These stories are not without their serious instances of discrimination, racism, and exclusion, perhaps most pronounced with the expulsion of the Japanese during World War II. However, before that tragedy, as Anne Doré demonstrates, through a shared economic base and a network of cooperative associations, in the Fraser Valley at least, there appeared to be a "degree of tolerance and cohesiveness achieved between the Japanese Canadian and white populations." (65)

The second part, on religious and intellectual developments, highlights two individuals. One is Charles Hill-Tout, a wealthy businessman and Anglican who helped found St. Matthew's Anglican parish in Abbotsford, who was also an anthropologist who studied the Coast Salish and was critical of missionary attitudes and strategies towards the First Nations. In the second and final chapter of Part II, we are introduced to Mennonite settler John Harder, through a personal reflection by his son.

This is also where the book makes a fundamental shift and becomes a book on Mennonite settlement in the Fraser Valley, leaving the reader with the distinct impression that First Nations, Japanese, Sikhs, Anglicans, Swedes and others were background for a deep analysis of the Mennonites. Not in itself a problem, but given the title and first of five parts, one might be forgiven for thinking it was not a book mostly about Mennonites. In fact, just to note, nine of the sixteen chapters are about Mennonites, and no extended scholarly analysis, beyond the opening address, is given to First Nations history.

With the exception of Mark Dumont's chapter on residential schools, nine of the final ten chapters are on Mennonite themes. Marlene Epp opens Part III, which is devoted to Yarrow Mennonites. She traces the experiences of women building community in a place often given to utopian dreams. The thread of utopia runs through the following chapter by Ruth Derksen Siemens and Lora Sawatsky where, using the questionnaire, they explore the puzzle of why Yarrow experienced a rapid rise and demise of Mennonite population. Royden Loewen rounds out Part III of the book with a cultural analysis of Yarrow Mennonite memoirs. Loewen draws the utopian thread through here too, where, in a Jungian cosmos, the struggles of the settlers took on mythic significance. Here too the landscape and climate provide the raw materials for utopian writing. These essays read well together and frame the Yarrow Mennonite experience in a way that is both informative and insightful.

The fourth and fifth parts continue the Mennonite theme, except for Dumont's chapter on residential schools. In this chapter, the First Nations reappear, though the chapter is organized around Saint Mary's Indian Residential School. Also in part four, there are interesting chapters on poetry and metaphor in Leonard Neufeldt's *Raspberrying* (1991) volume, followed by three chapters on education, Dumont's residential schools piece, as well as two on Mennonite schools by Bruce Guenther and Harvey Neufeldt. Guenther is filling a significant void in western Canadian historiography with his work on Bible Schools, and this chapter fits in nicely with that story as Mennonites established several schools in the Fraser Valley for important cultural and religious purposes. Neufeldt gives attention to high schools in his perceptive analysis of the changing mission of Mennonite high schools in the Fraser Valley.

The book concludes with a fifth part devoted to economics and urbanization. Exploring in particular the hop industry, Ron Denman takes us through the seeming contradictions of Mennonites working in such an industry when alcohol was largely frowned upon by the same Mennonites, and how working in the hop industry enabled stability at a time of migration and settlement. John Redekop ends the volume with

an analysis of the impact urbanization had (is having) on Mennonites in the Fraser Valley. Bringing to the foreground issues of individualism, prosperity and secularization, we see both tradition and the “ethnic enclave” of Fraser Valley Mennonites weakening.

The editors deserve credit for pulling together these conference papers and for being mindful of the topical imbalance. Though the volume is strong on Mennonite studies, it would be nice to have had a more balanced volume. However, one can read deeply of Mennonite experiences here and consider how they accommodated modernity, and how that might apply to studies in other North American regions, and other small ethno-religious groups.

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Royden Loewen, *Diaspora in the Countryside, Two Mennonite Communities and Mid-Twentieth-Century Rural Disjuncture*. Toronto University of Toronto Press: Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006. Pp. xv + 331. Hard cover \$70.00; Paper \$32.95 (Can.).

Diaspora in the Countryside is a social history of two Kleine Gemeinde Mennonite communities in the half century between 1930 to 1980 – Meade County in western Kansas and the Rural Metropolitan district of Hanover in Manitoba. Loewen documents how these communities were both affected by a broader great rural “disjuncture” that transformed traditional rural ways of living. The two communities changed in divergent ways because of differences in geography, government policies, and Mennonite population density. The semi-arid climate of western Kansas, together with United States agricultural policies, fostered a wheat growing monoculture. In Manitoba the short growing season, limited economies of scale, and friendlier government policies for rural enterprise, made smaller agricultural units more attractive and viable. Meade Mennonites were limited by small numbers and by their distance from the city of Denver. Manitoba Mennonites benefited from the “critical mass” of Mennonite settlement in the Steinbach area, and from the proximity of the city of Winnipeg.

Loewen documents and analyzes the profound transformations in these communities through the mid-twentieth century decades in chapters on the environment, economic development and growth of a middle class, the shift to more joyful evangelical religious expression, changes in gender roles and relationships, and widely varying reinven-

tions of Mennonite community in British Honduras and in the North American cities of Winnipeg and Denver. The author draws upon a wide variety of published and unpublished sources, including letters, diaries, auction records, advertisements, wills, census records, newspapers, government reports, memoirs, novels, and oral interviews.

In Loewen's view, community transformation among the Kleine Gemeinde folk was not a unilinear process of acculturation or modernization. As they fragmented and scattered, these Mennonites made four basic choices, all of which involved social transformation: to stay on the farm and adapt to agricultural change; to move to town and embrace middle class values; to move to the city and face greater fragmentation; and to move to isolated farm colonies and attempt to hold onto traditional ways. The reformation of social life that flowed from these choices produced not a general loss of identity, but rather the creation and coalescence of viable and diverse new communities.

This book is a celebration of "cultural creativity," not a lament for a lost world. Loewen celebrates the ability of people under the stress of social and economic change to reorganize their lives and re-center their communal life around freshly formulated ideals. In this regard it contrasts sharply with the tone and thesis of Calvin Redekop's book on the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren, *Leaving Anabaptism*. Redekop laments the loss of the "original purposes for being" that follows when Mennonites enter the alternative world of American evangelicalism.

Although *Diaspora in the Countryside* has a celebrative tone, it is a celebration suffused with irony, rather than with a triumphalist spirit. No matter what choices Mennonites made in their creative adaptations to change, Loewen finds irony in their choices. Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites claimed to be maintaining their inherited identity, even while they were digesting huge chunks of evangelical theology and social practice. Even the traditionalists in British Honduras/Belize, in their quest to preserve tradition, ironically cut themselves off from literature and practices of their Anabaptist forbears.

Loewen admits that the Kleine Gemeinde Mennonites are a unique group, distinctive in their Anabaptist pacifist beliefs and in the delayed breakup of their social cohesion. But he also claims that their experience sheds light on the history and social development of other Mennonite groups, indeed of "all farmers." (p. 8) The book's comparative approach is indeed illuminating. Additional comparisons beg for attention. For example, other Mennonite groups in the twentieth century, more than the Kleine Gemeinde, developed Protestant-style denominational institutions (colleges, hospitals, publications, denominational bureaucracies, etc.) that shaped their evolution. For Loewen the role of denominational institutions is apparently subsumed under

an inadequately defined concept of “critical mass.” We can hope that this excellent study will prompt equally insightful social historical analyses of the larger and more progressive Mennonite groups.

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Harry Loewen, *Between Worlds: Reflections of a Soviet-born Canadian Mennonite*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora, 2006. Pp. 358.

Harry Loewen’s autobiography, woven together by personal memories and insertions from Mennonite history, is a very worthwhile publication. It represents the work of a generation of refugees who as children and youth received a chance to live out their lives in freedom and self-determination in a new country. Loewen’s story is perhaps unique in that he is one of the few, ‘young wanderers between two worlds’ who developed a successful academic career, fulfilling his goals despite unfavourable social and economic conditions. Endurance and a strong focus on goals, as well as diligence and talent, contributed to this success. But without the friendship and support of many persons, Loewen’s path would have been more difficult.

He was born in 1930 to Nikolai Loewen and Anna Wiebe in the village of Friedensfeld in Ukraine. If things had gone according to the wishes of his parents, he would have spent his childhood in Canada, but their plans for emigration abruptly ended en route to Moscow in 1929 and were replaced with a series of disastrous experiences instead.

The Loewen family and their relatives were among the many people of German origin who were forced to leave their homes when the German army retreated from Ukraine during World War II. They left their home by train, traveling to Litzmannstadt in Warthegau, Poland. Like other refugees, the Loewen family received German citizenship [Volksdeutsche] here but they endured extremely difficult times when the Soviet army overtook them. The women in particular experienced many fearful hours and days. But God was at their side and Loewen felt protected by an angel who hovered on the ceiling of their dwelling, saving them from all danger. Again with God’s help, the Loewen family fled to Detmold in West Germany.

During his life in Ukraine and on their trek westward Harry Loewen had heard nothing about Mennonites, since his mother and grandmother had always emphasized that they were Germans. His first encounter with a Mennonite congregation was in the town near

the Dutch border where his family found refuge. Here Loewen was converted, following a sermon by Hans Legiehn and was subsequently baptized. The first book from which Loewen learned about the Mennonite faith was Cornelius Krahn's published dissertation on Menno Simons which had been distributed among the refugees.

By 1948 the Loewen family had migrated to Canada and Harry began his studies at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College (MBBC) in Winnipeg, where H. H. Janzen and A. H. Unruh became his mentors. They stirred in him the desire to become a preacher and teacher.

The year 1953 was a very meaningful one for Harry Loewen. He married Gertrude Penner and also became a Canadian citizen, two important events in respect to his future in the new homeland. Following his graduation from MBBC he assumed his first position as pastor in the Mennonite Brethren mission congregation of Winnipegosis, located 250 miles north of Winnipeg. In this small mission Loewen learned about the restrictive views of some Mennonites, views that for Loewen were later expanded and liberalized through the study of German and English Literature and History at Waterloo College in Ontario. Loewen's experiences as a high school teacher strengthened his desire to teach at the university rather than the secondary level. Thus, it was not difficult for him to accept a full time teaching position at MBBC. Because he often preached in the congregations, Harry and Gerturde were at that time ordained in the Mennonite Brethren Church.

It was challenging for Loewen to teach German Literature and History as liberal arts subjects in the Bible College setting. But he took his academic responsibility seriously and resigned from the college when he realized his academic freedom was restricted by a narrow biblical understanding in some areas. Subsequently he accepted a position at Waterloo Lutheran University where he taught part time while pursuing graduate work. In 1970 he received his Ph.D. His dissertation entitled, "Goethe's Response to Protestantism," was published two years later. Loewen's visits to Germany in 1970 and 1972 gave him a realistic and up-to-date perspective of West Germany.

During this time as a university professor as well as a lay preacher, Loewen's role models were F.C. Peters and Frank H. Epp. In the academic sphere, Harry Loewen was uncompromising when decisions had to be made with regard to donors and friends of the Chair of Mennonite Studies where he sought not only to teach but also to research and publish. The latter interest led to the establishment of the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* in 1983.

Doing Mennonite History on the one hand and Mennonite Literature on the other, presented its challenges for a professor who, being a Mennonite himself, had to act as a critic of Mennonite writers. Loewen's editorial position required him to provide information and guidance,

based on good arguments, all the while cultivating an understanding for different viewpoints. His broad education and wide interests stood him in good stead in this regard.

As he grew older Loewen considered how to end his academic career and resigned from his academic responsibilities at the age of 65, after he had received a guarantee of the continued existence of the Chair in Mennonite Studies and the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. Thus, he and his wife Gertrude moved to Kelowna, British Columbia to enjoy a well earned but active retirement. Two shocking events, however, intruded into their lives. In 1998 Loewen had a small stroke and in 2003 their new house and his library of 3000 books burned to the ground in the wake of a forest fire. Gertrude and Harry did not give up. They rebuilt their home on the same property and with the help of countless friends in Canada and abroad, Loewen began to fill up his bookshelves once more.

This worthy book ends with a comprehensive bibliography of Loewen's publications, which includes a number of reflective essays on various Mennonite themes. The latter reveal his commitment to the Anabaptist legacy, the foundation of Mennonite faith and history. This legacy has still not been completely explored.

Harry Loewen deserves thanks for the courageous and diligent manner in which he has looked back on his own life with objectivity. It shows that already early on in his life he had an open and critical eye. His confidence, his ability to see things through in difficult times and his willingness to accept new challenges is to be admired. Hopefully this very worthy memoir, which is also a segment of Mennonite history, will be read by many. This book will inspire and encourage its readers and teach them to value and respect the many facets of our Anabaptist Mennonite heritage.

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James Urry, *Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood. Europe - Russia - Canada, 1525-1980*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2006. Pp. xv + 400. Index.

Mennonites, Politics and Peoplehood extends and broadens James Urry's already extensive scholarly publications. In his ground-breaking 1989 book, *None But Saints. The Transformation of Mennonite Life in Russia, 1789-1889* (Winnipeg:Hyperion, 1989) he documented,

among other things, the unique governance, educational and military privileges Mennonites negotiated with the Russian Imperial government. He now provides more information about the Russian Mennonite political experience, linking it back to earlier European Anabaptist and Mennonite political involvements, and forward to changing attitudes and experiences in Canada, and in the Soviet Union up to 1929.

Urry successfully refutes claims that Mennonites, throughout much of their history, sought to avoid political involvement and live unobtrusively as “the quiet in the land.” In the introduction he examines that interpretation, but then proceeds systematically to document the extensive involvement of Mennonites with the outside world. The conclusion has the startling title, “The Loud in the Land.”

Urry defines politics very broadly to include a great variety of political ideas, institutions, events and actions. He discusses these in regard to both political relations external to, and within, Mennonite communities. Peoplehood is also used in a broad sense. It is defined by Urry as “the particular Mennonite sense of identity based on their faith and sense of being and belonging.”

The work is divided into three sections – Europe, Russia and Canada. Changing, power, patronage, privileges, revolutions, constitutions, nationalism, ethnicity and democratic relationships between Mennonites and secular authorities are discussed in detail and with clarity. Urry relies on a wide variety of carefully documented sources. Footnotes and the bibliography take up 123 pages of this 400-page book.

The opening chapters encompass a wide sweep of early Anabaptist/Mennonite history. The Russian section is somewhat narrower in focus. The scope of the Canadian section, dealing only with the period after 1890, is further and significantly narrowed to Russian Mennonite political activities in Manitoba. The final chapter deals with Mennonites and politics in Winnipeg.

The Manitoba/Winnipeg focus is due in part to the fact that the work began as a series of lectures Urry delivered in Winnipeg in 1994 in association with the Chair of Mennonite Studies. Subsequently those lectures were also delivered at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario, apparently without the addition of material on the political activities of Mennonites in that province.

The research, scholarship and writing is consistent with the high standards of Urry’s earlier work. He brings together in a coherent, persuasive and readable manner the evolving relationships of Dutch/Prussian/Russian/Manitoba Mennonites with secular governments. He demonstrates clearly that these Mennonites, who sometimes regarded themselves as the silent in the land, were never really entirely quiet.

He also shows that what they said, and how loud they said it, varied according to time and circumstances.

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Hans Werner, *Living Between Worlds: A History of Winkler*. Winkler: Winkler Heritage Society, 2006. Pp. vi + 226.

The writing of a local history, particularly one commissioned to coincide with a town's centenary celebrations, can be fraught with difficulty. How does the "objective" academically-trained historian write a book that does justice to the occasion and yet does not descend into hagiography? Hans Werner's *Living Between Worlds: A History of Winkler* is a model in this respect, successfully avoiding the potential pitfalls of being either merely a chronicle of interesting anecdotes or a descriptive genealogy of important residents.

Werner argues that Winkler is unique among towns in the "Mennonite Bible belt" of southern Manitoba. The town was not founded as a typical Mennonite single-street village. Indeed, prior to the First World War, Winkler's population was not primarily Mennonite. And unlike so many other prairie towns, Winkler survived the decline of the railways and of agriculture. Werner details the town's competition with the other major south-central Manitoba urban centre, Morden, and explains how Winkler emerged as the economic centre of the region.

The title, *Between Worlds*, is aptly chosen. Werner argues that, from 1892 to the end of the twentieth century, the population of Winkler strove to negotiate relationships in a new, multi-ethnic context. Even as the town became predominantly Mennonite, the plurality of identities persisted. Bergthaler, Mennonite Brethren, Old Colony Mennonites, and Sommerfelder had very different, at times divisive, understandings of how to conduct their affairs, whether in religious, economic, or civic life.

The discussion of inter-ethnic cooperation and of various religious groups' efforts to integrate economic and religious life is one of the strengths of this book. Werner details the economic interdependence of Old Colony Mennonites and Jews in Winkler and its environs. Recognizing the necessity of keeping their stores open for business on Saturdays, Jewish merchants hired Mennonite workers who were under no obligation to keep Sabbath laws. Old Colony Mennonites, resisting the lure of urban centres, were dependent on Jewish peddlers

for access to some consumer goods. The relationship between these two groups became so close that, when the shortage of farm land led Old Colony Mennonites to emigrate to Mexico in the 1920s, the Jewish population also departed from Winkler (23, 61-62).

Werner attributes the post-war economic success of Winkler to the creation of non-agricultural industries within the town, particularly a sewing factory and a recreational vehicle manufacturer (Triple E). He excerpts Heather Robertson's condemnation of the "hucksterism" of Winkler's annual sidewalk sale, known as Old Time Value Days. He himself is less critical of employer-employee relationships in Winkler businesses. The tensions between school and business, for example, are left unexplored – specifically the connection between exploitation of a pool of uneducated (though skilled) labour and comparatively low high school graduation rates. This despite noting that "it was always a challenge" to see rural students graduate from Garden Valley Collegiate (181). More effective is his brief explanation of the link between the absence of labour unions and the religious beliefs of Mennonite business owners and workers alike in Winkler.

The production qualities of this book are excellent. Interesting sidebars – ranging from quotations, letters to the editor, and newspaper articles, to poems – are interspersed with the text. Numerous maps, photographs, and statistical tables are included, all with sources provided (too often a rarity in local histories). Two appendices of early Winkler families and of civic officials are included, as well as a bibliography, copious endnotes, and an index.

Werner, and the Winkler Heritage Society, are to be congratulated on producing such an informative, well researched, and well written history.

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Reviews of Religious Studies and Social Science

Ray Gingerich and Ted Grimsrud, eds., *Transforming the Powers: Peace, Justice and the Domination System*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2006. \$20.00 (US).

Walter Wink is well known for his work on "the Powers," which can be summed up in three statements: the Powers are good, the Powers