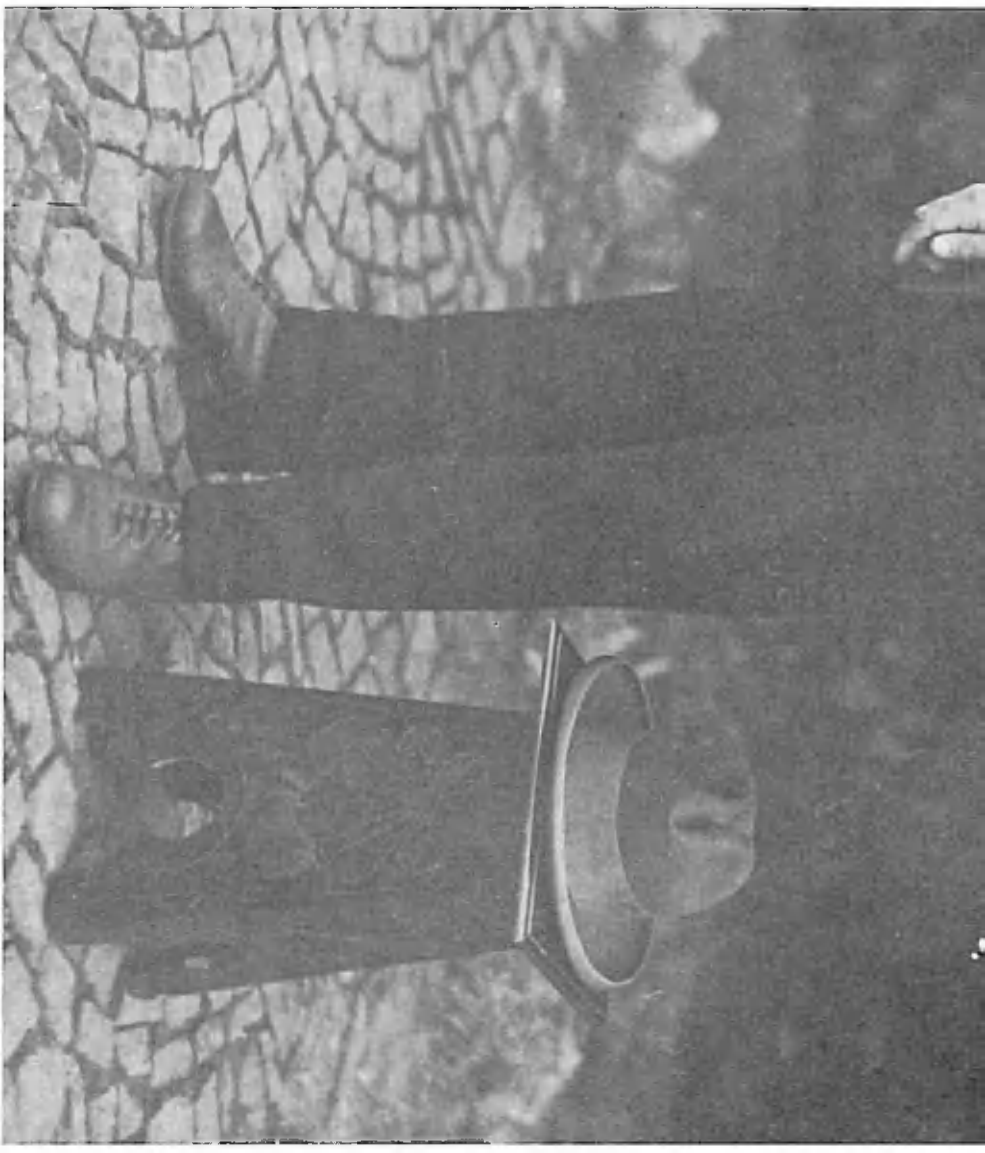
MENNONITE LIFE



In this Issue

Dr. Cornelius Krahn was born in Chortitza, South Russia, seventy-five years ago on July 21, 1902 (Julian calendar) or August 3, 1902 (Gregorian calendar, adopted in Russia after the Revolution). On Friday evening, October 7, friends of Cornelius Krahn are gathering to celebrate with him and his family his seventy-fifth birthday. In this issue we join in honoring Cornelius Krahn the scholar and teacher, the writer and editor, the builder of libraries, and—most important of all—the person.

Mennonite Life and the Mennonite Library and Archives are born "bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh." It, therefore, is appropriate in this issue to tell the story of Cornelius Krahn, who founded *Mennonite Life,* who was a major builder of the Mennonite Library and Archives, and who may be found many hours of any day or night in this historical library.

We have called upon Cornelius Krahn to tell the story of his boyhood years in Russia and his university years in Germany and the Netherlands: "Between the Volga and the Rhine, 1902-1936." C. J. Dyck—his student, friend and colleague—takes up the story of the young man with the doctorate who leaves for America. His article is an overview of the contribution of the man: "The Scholarly Pilgrimage of Cornelius Krahn."

In this issue Cornelius is interviewed about his second home, the historical library: "Infinite Riches in the Crowded Rooms of the Mennonite Library and Archives." The final feature is a bibliography prepared by Marianne Harms, "The Writings of Cornelius Krahn."

We are grateful for the life of Cornelius Krahn. We delight in his abundant energy and bouyant spirits, his curiosity and inquisitiveness, his persistency and doggedness as a scholar, his comprehensive knowledge, his range of linguistic gifts, his eager helpfulness to every inquirer, and his affection for his Mennonite people and their heritage.

MENNONITE LIFE

September 1977 Vol. 32 No. 3

Cover

Cornelius Krahn at Wernigerode a/H, Germany, September 29, 1926, soon after his arrival from Russia.

MENNONITE LIFE is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in March, June, September and December by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Second Class postage paid at Newton, Kansas 67114.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: One year, $4.00; Two years, $7.00.

Statement of ownership and management as required by the Act of Congress of October 23, 1962, Section 4369, Title 39. As of October 1, 1977, MENNONITE LIFE is owned and published quarterly by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. The owning corporation is a nonprofit educational organization, has no stock and security holders and carries the publisher's own advertising. Editors Robert Kreider and James Juhnke, North Newton, Kansas. Signed Paul Harder, Business Manager, North Newton, Kansas 67117.

The total number of copies of MENNONITE LIFE printed during the preceding twelve months have averaged for each issue a total of 1500 with a paid circulation as of October 1, 1977 of 1175. The balance of the number of copies from each issue are available for free distribution as samples and complimentary copies, deferred sales, and library holdings.

ISSN 0025-9365

Between the Volga and the Rhine 1902-1936

by Cornelius Krahn

My troubles started before I was born. I was not consulted as to where, when and through whom I was to see the bright light of this often gloomy world. It all began early in the twentieth century in the last house of the first village of the oldest Mennonite settlement on the Dnieper River in Russia. I was the oldest in a family of eleven. Only recently I had the opportunity to meet my nurse-maid in the Chaco of Paraguay. Was that a reunion! The tears in her eyes were so numerous that even mine did not remain dry. It reminded me also of my mother's account that one night in my early life a rock was thrown through the window which landed right next to me in bed without causing any harm.

Cornelius Krahn in 1925. A year before he left Russia for study in Germany.

From the Dnieper to the Volga

Poetic Rosenthal and the larger Chortitza, which gave the name to the whole Mennonite settlement, had grown together. Established nearly two hundred years ago, it was the first Mennonite settlement in Russia. These Mennonites came from West Prussia by wagon and boat to settle on the barren steppes which had been taken from the Turks by Catherine II. Among the first to arrive was a Krahn who could have been my ancestor. Later I visited a place on the Nogat River in West Prussia to find out whether that was my ancestral home. A Krahn who had lived there had just recently died. I have collected many sources to assist others in their research of their family histories, but I have never taken time to trace my own ancestry. The name is common among West Prussian and Dutch Mennonites, as well as among those in Canada, Mexico and South America. During a visit in Mountain Lake, Minnesota years ago, I visited a Krahn family. The blind old uncle claimed we were related. When asked what made him come to this conclusion, he said in good old Low

German that the Krahns had always been "doctors." (I had been introduced as "doctor.") When asked what kind of doctors they had been, he said, "Horse doctors, of course!" I had to agree that this was a family tradition, but acknowledged that I was an exception. I told him that the only horse I ever owned I had traded for a passport to leave the country.

My education in Rosenthal was limited to the first two years after which my parents, who had been *Anwohner* (those who lived on the edge of the village and worked for others), became pioneer settlers of the last of forty daughter settlements scattered over European Russia into Siberia and Central Asia. They established their home in the second village of the Arkadak settlement in the province of Saratov west of the Volga River. But even before, and again after my departure from Russia, I have repeatedly visited my birthplace in the Chortitza. During one of my more recent visits I was given opportunity to see the classroom where I got my first two years of schooling. I had no problem sitting in the same seat I had occupied when I was a youngster. I recall that the teacher asked me to give the word for *Beil* (German for ax) in Russian. My quick response was *Sokira*, which was the Ukrainian term which I had picked up from our hired man. After a hearty laugh by teacher and pupils I found out that I should have said *Topor*. Multi-lingual problems beset me early in life.

We turn now to the settlement in the Saratov area where Low German, High German and pure Russian were the only languages spoken. But the problem we faced here were those typical of pioneers everywhere, and they multiplied after the land had been paid for. The troubles among the Mennonites and other settlers in the Ukraine during and after the invasion of the German army in World War I hardly bothered us, because we were far away.

Education and Revolution

However, one day while my father and I were in town, we heard that the Russian czar had obdicated the throne. Soon we found out that this meant more than the removal of the pictures of the czar and the czarina from the walls of our village school. The land that the seven villages had just paid shrank suddenly in value and was parceled out in accordance to the size of the family. This was soon followed by a collectivization of the land and the removal of the *kulaks* to labor camps. I had departed before this happened.

I graduated from a seven-year Mennonite village school. Fortunately, for a number of years our village had Agatha Janzen from Berdyansk in the Ukraine as a teacher. She had an excellent training and was as fluent in Russian as in German. She was willing to give me private lessons beyond those that the school offered. Another inspiration came from Gerhard Wedel, who taught in a neighboring village. I read all the books available in our and the neighboring villages. Among them were those written by the first president of Bethel College, C. H. Wedel, which led me to inquire about the possibility of attending Bethel. This correspondence ended without results, possibly because there must already at that time have been an admissions fee. I did not have the rubels. I inherited an interest in books and learning from my mother. It is said that she could read a book while milking.

I was brought up in a Bible-reading, praying and singing family. Before I grew up my parents had changed from the Mennonite church to the Mennonite Brethren. In the years of my study abroad I worshiped in many different churches, including those of the Mennonites. During the last years in Europe, I became a member of the Alkmaar Mennonite Church in the Netherlands, of which Frits Kuiper was the minister. The fellowship of believers with whom I could worship and affiliate had widened considerably since my early youth. In fact, it started abruptly when a friend of my mother was surprised to find out that I was singing in a community choir. "How will the Lord find him during His second coming if he is in a group like that?" she asked. I do not know what my mother said, but for me it was enough to have heard the question.

The Revolution of 1917 and the civil war were not as severe in our area as in the Ukraine. We were also on the front line between the fighting parties but the war in our

Left—Cornelius Krahn in 1972 sitting in a seat in the elementary school at Rosenthal, Chortitza, Ukraine, which he had attended sixty years earlier.

Right—Mr. and Mrs. Peter Krahn, grandparents of Cornelius Krahn.

Mennonite Sunday School in Arkadak, Russia, 1925 with Cornelius Krahn (upper left) serving as teacher.

area was on a more limited scale. The revolutionary forces came through our settlement to fight Cossacks loyal to the Czarist government. The Reds came on to our farmsteads to exchange their worn out nags for good horses. We were also ordered to follow them with transports to the front. On such an occasion I had the feeling that the scared fellows back of me with the guns in their hands were more dangerous than the snipers in church steeples or elevated places. On one of those trips I decided during the night to escape and thus to shorten my adventurous journey to the front lines. Without difficulty I managed to make it until I was stopped by a guard, who, however, seemed to be more afraid than I was. I gladly shared with him my latest information from "the front lines." He was so grateful that he did not even ask me whether I had received permission to leave. As I continued homeward, a pack of wolves coming in my direction loomed on the horizon. What if they decided that my horse and I would make a good lunch before they continued to the sheep barn in the neighboring village? How glad we—my horse and I—were when we noticed that the beasts crossed our road right back of us without a look or sniff in our direction. Or were they on their way to the front line to be observers? The young men of our villages were still being exempted from military service up to 1925 and beyond.

My major reason for applying for a passport was to go abroad to get a university and theological education which were no longer available in Russia at that time. I had found such a school that would accept me tuition free. My father could not quite understand my effort to break with the family tradition of farming. He gave me a horse and my brother and I bought a modest house together. Mother was making gentle hints as to who could join me in partnership. However, I traded my red horse for a red passport that was to remain in my possession for twelve years and scare many border guards until it was finally returned to the place of its issue in Moscow. I was suddenly deprived of a most cherished document containing the detailed record of my world traveling. I left Russia one day after my brother's wedding and on my birthday, August 3, 1926. My relatives and friends saw me off at the depot of Arakadak. In Moscow I visited the Mennonite office, *Menobshestvo* (Peter Froese and C. F. Klassen), and other places of interest. At that time I planned to return after I had obtained the desired education. In 1929 my relatives wrote me that they would meet me soon in Germany. This did not happen. Only a few years later my father died at the age of 55, my mother living to the age of 88. It was our privilege in the early seventies to visit most of my brothers and sisters in Russia. The inhabitants of the seven villages of Arakadak as well as all Volga Germans were removed to Siberia at the time of the German siege of Stalingrad.

Cornelius Krahn (second from right) working with a farm crew near Neukirchen in Germany.

Beginning of Fulfillment of Dreams

When I arrived in Berlin at the railway station of Friedrichstrasse I was met by my uncle Jakob Penner, who had a business in Berlin. Two other brothers had gone to Canada at the beginning of this century. The Penner family in Berlin helped me in my "westernization" process. Heini and Ruth were about my age. Grandmother hailed from Dresden and would often put her arm around me and say in a well-meaning voice, *"Du armer Teufel!"*

In the Fall of 1926 I proceeded from Berlin to the old town of Wernigerode in the Harz mountains. I had been accepted by *Licht im Osten,* a school which was training Christian workers for eastern countries. Most of the teachers were bilingual, lecturing in German as well as Russian. Even though the school closed after my first year, the contacts with men like Jakob Kroeker, Bernhard Harder, Hans Harder, Walter Fellman, and W. Marzinkowski made me feel very much at home. I was introduced to Russian literature and theology and such writers as J. C. Blumhardt, Herman Kutter and L. Ragaz. I subsequently enrolled in courses in these fields at the universities of Berlin and Bonn. Here I was also introduced to the packing and shipping of literature to eastern countries by Jakob Dyck.

From Wernigerode I proceeded to Neukirchen near Moers and Duisburg not far from the smokestacks of Krupp in the Ruhr area. Neukirchen with its mission school (*Missionsschule*) and the devotional calendar (*Abreisskalender*) was known among Mennonites all over Germany as well as in Russia and America. The Bible school was training missionaries and ministers for work in Indonesia and Africa. Its constituency was primarily in the Lower Rhine area. From time to time Mennonites from Russia attended this school. During the four years of my stay there my schoolmates from Russia were Franz Martens and N. Orloff.

Bridges to University Study

During the four years at Neukirchen I learned to know and appreciate the pietistic atmosphere of this predominantly Reformed and Catholic area. I took courses in church history, German literature, Greek, Latin, Bible and theology. None of the teachers were university trained except one, a full-fledged Calvinist who did not mind shocking his students. His discussion of Christian growth once provoked a student to challenge him: "But professor, a Christian must grow spiritually, don't you admit?" His response was: "Yes, indeed, he must grow, like the tail of a cow, downward!" This "Barthian" was considered a hopeless case.

I taught Sunday School in a village and preached occasionally. Digging in the garden and bicycling to the neighboring Netherlands were welcome diversions from my studies. During one summer I worked for a farmer. At the beginning the farmer asked me how much pay I expected. Piously he said that the Lord would reveal unto us how much it was to be. I earned 50 DM (about $12.00) during that summer. I had good nourishing food. The sauerkraut was tops—homemade. One evening I saw the boss wash his feet and then carry cabbage heads to the cellar. I followed him. And there I saw him in a barrel with his bare feet kneading the shredded cabbage. I now knew why he had washed his feet, but henceforth that sauerkraut had lost its good flavor for me.

Near Neukirchen was the city of Krefeld with its large urban Mennonite Church from which long ago the first settlers to Germantown, Pennsylvania, had come. I learned to know a number of families. During those years I established significant contacts with the Mennonites in the Netherlands.

My four years (1927-1931) at Neukirchen were very important for my future life and work. I received a diploma stating that I had passed all examinations favorably and was considered qualified and sufficiently educated for the work of a minister. Since I chose not to return to Russia at this time, I contacted Professor W. Goeters of the University of Bonn as to the possibility of continuing my studies at a university. Here I was informed that I could not register at the university before I had passed a special examination at the German Institute for Foreigners at the University of Berlin. With encouragement from friends and determination on my part, I chose to continue my studies. I enrolled at Bonn University as an auditor in classes of Dr. W. Goeters, Dr. Fritz Lieb and some others during the winter semester of 1931-1932. Without the encouragement and the occasional dinner invitations of these two families, the road to graduate studies would have become very difficult.

I then proceeded to Berlin where I applied for admission at the German Institute of Foreigners (*Deutsches Institut fur Auslander*) to take courses for certification (*Reifezeugnis*) which would permit me to enroll at the university. At the same time I applied for permission to audit classes. Both requests were granted. My uncle gave me a room in his summer cottage at the edge of the city. To bicycle twice daily some four to five miles gave me the necessary exercise and even a few bonuses. It was an excellent way to learn to know the lifestyle of a city like Berlin. The Berliner has a German speech all its own and a style unique in other ways. Suspecting a bicycle collision he would holler far in advance to convince the prospective witnesses that he was not at fault. On the other hand he had a unique sense of humor. He is credited as saying to his girl friend, "Ich liebe *Dir*, ich liebe *Dich,* ich liebe *Dir* auf alle *Fälle.*" (I love you in all cases.) This says more about his linguistic peculiarity than his love life.

But my first concern was to obtain the document that would open the last gate to the fountain of knowledge and wisdom so that I could fully enroll in any of the subjects offered, possibly tuition free and with a free meal a day in the university dining room. After some concentrated study and attendance of lectures in German, Latin, Greek,

history an geography, eight professors signed the document on October 14, 1932 that I had passed the examination and was now admitted to any of the university courses and lectures I would choose. It had been a long journey from the steppes of Russia in 1926 to the steps of the university in 1932.

When I now look into my class registration book (*Studienbuch*) issued by the president of the University of Berlin which lists all lectures and signatures of professors whose lectures I attended, I am overwhelmed by the zeal with which I went to work. During the winter semester of 1932-33 I had eleven professors sign the book next to the listed lectures they were presenting. I enrolled for a total of twenty hours. Among the names appearing in my registration books are Martin Sibelius, Karl Barth, Karl Jaspers, Walter Köhler and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who lectured on contemporary theology.

Berlin: Battleground on The Campus

The Berlin of 1932 was now in an extremely critical state. What happened here was soon to shake the world. If it is to be described on the lighter side, one can do it briefly by reminding us of the following joke in circulation at that time. Hitler and Hindenburg were walking together. Hindenburg's handkerchief fell to the ground and Hitler wanted to pick it up. "Do not do that," said Hindenburg, "that is the only thing that still belongs to me!" Economically, culturally and morally Germany was in a desperate situation. Instead of being helped by the Allies as was the case after World War II, it had to meet payments for war damages far beyond its capacity to pay. The desperate situation drove the country to extremes. The majority Social-Democratic Party lost its influence, and the Moscow-orientated extremists on one hand and the National-Socialists on the other were exploiting the situation. The German middle-of-the-road citizens reluctantly sided with Hitler. Although buried in books, I saw the Reichstag burn and how the Dutchman, van der Lubbe, was picked up at the Brandenburg gate when I went past. I was a witness to the burning of synagogues and the beating up of Jews.

One day as I walked to the campus, I saw a mob of students run after one student accompanied by a girl trying to protect him. I heard an old woman leaning against the fence say, "Why do so many run after one person?" A passer-by following the crowd took time for an answer, "Go to your kitchen to your potatoes, you old Jewish pig!" To be swept off your feet by intimidation was the order of the day. Many were so disillusioned with the conditions that they did not notice or did not want to see what was happening. But there were exceptions. When I look into my *Studentenbuch*, I find the names of professors who were an outstanding cloud of witnesses. Very few, if any, of them showed any change or signs of compromise in the years I attended their lectures (1932-36) in Berlin, Bonn, Heidelberg and Amsterdam. Was it a select group that I was exposed to, or was that too early for some of them to show signs of compromise?

There were other occasions at which one could observe uncompromising convictions presented not only in a private conversation, but also in public. I planned to attend the lecture that the famous German writer, Gerhard Hauptmann, was to give at the celebration of his 70th birthday in the large auditorium of the University of Berlin. When I arrived there was as large a crowd at the steps of the auditorium as there was inside. He consented to say a few words to those who would not hear his lecture. They were brief and to the point. He said, "Looking from this elevated place I see many heads. You are living and studying in a very crucial time. Remain faithful to the best in the heritage of the poets and philosophers and do not compromise these ideals regardless of how tempting it may be." That was the great German writer whose novels and dramas I had learned to appreciate. And there was Martin Niemöller, the crusader and leader of the wing of the German church that would not compromise any truth, whose sermons I heard often while in Berlin. He was much later invited to present the Menno Simons Lectures at Bethel College. At that time he could tell us how it felt to be in prison and see the gallows through the window. His life was spared and he could continue his witness.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was mentioned before. His subject for his Ph.D. degree was entitled "The Concept of the Early Christian Church," which could have influenced me to write my dissertation on Menno's concept of the church. Little did I know at that time what role he was to play in the resistance movement against Hitler in the years to follow, although it was obvious that this could happen. My busy schedule prevented me from spending weekends with him as others did.

Thus Berlin became for me the stepping stone from a rural setting and Bible school to a capital city of a country in despair and in search of identity on many fronts, the outcome of which shook the world on an unprecedented scale. Rebuilt after World War II on its ruins with American help, it symbolizes the division of the Western world into two camps, the East and the West. It is unbelievable how man can destroy cities and resurrect them again in the image of the past and continue as if nothing has happened.

Heidelberg and Amsterdam: The Stage is Set

After one semester in Bonn and two in Berlin, I bicycled to Heidelberg into an entirely different setting! It had the oldest university in Germany. The castle hails back to the 13th century, and the university to the 14th around which the town grew. It has world-wide attractions to this day. For me the major attraction was Walter Köhler, a church historian, under whom I hoped to write my doctoral dissertation. Here I met Harold S. Bender and family, and Horst Quiring, who had the same intentions. Bender did so in dealing with Conrad Grebel and Horst Quiring in giving Luther another look. After a friendly visit with my doctoral

father (*Doktor-Vater*), we decided that Menno Simons deserved further investigation, although he had received more attention, particularly in the Netherlands, than any other of the Anabaptist leaders. Heidelberg had a small Mennonite fellowship and nearby were places, such as the Weierhof, Thomashof, Monsheim, etc., which could be reached by bicycle. It was, of course, much faster to get there with the Bender car.

Although I had been exposed to Greek and Latin, and had passed my examinations for university entrance (the *Abitur*) in Berlin, there was still the hurdle of the Hebrew and the expected check-up of my knowledge of the New Testament Greek by Martin Debelius, the famous New Testament scholar of that day. I liked old Professor Beer in spite of the fact that I would have to pass a test in my knowledge of the ancient Hebrew language. In his Old Testament lectures he always presented a wealth of information with a twinkle in his eye. In one of the lectures he pointed out how disastrous it can be when a nation gets overzealous in its effort to preserve racial purity as had at times been the case in the history of Israel. This was at the height of Hitler's drive for Aryan purity.

After my first semester at Heidelberg, I took leave and went to Amsterdam for a year of research and study in preparation for the writing of my dissertation devoted to Menno Simons. This was an extremely enriching year which exposed me not only to the use of the Dutch language with friends on the street and in the homes, but also in lectures I heard and ultimately delivered at various occasions. I was fully accepted in the student body and even became a member of ETE-BON, an organization of the theological students of the Mennonite Seminary in existence since 1814. I had been in the Netherlands numerous times since the days of my four years in Neukirchen near the Dutch border. I had met Frits Kuiper, who was a third generation minister and theologian, first at the Danzig Mennonite World Conference in 1930 and repeatedly since then spending some time in their home in Krommenie, then in Alkmaar and later also in Amsterdam. His parents, A. K. Kuiper, one of the senior ministers of Amsterdam, invited me to spend the year 1933-34 of my studies in Amsterdam in their home. This was an unusual and unforgettable opportunity for me and at once opened the doors for visits to many other homes. A lifelong friendship developed to the degree that I ultimately took out my first papers for citizenship in the Netherlands. It was extremely flattering to me when my professor and advisor in Dutch research, W. Kühler, repeatedly hinted that I could possibly become his successor because he saw no one else preparing to fill that position. However, there were other factors determining the course of events, including the political developments in Germany. I consider Russia the land of my fathers, West Prussia the land of my forefathers, and the Netherlands the land of my earliest ancestors. Again and again I have returned to it for research and writing—including a Fulbright Grant in 1953-54 and a sabbatical leave in 1963-64.

Left—Cornelius Krahn with three Dutch girls at the Dutch Mennonite Conference center at Elspeet, Holland, in 1930.

Returning to Germany, I could not help but stop for another semester in Bonn before winding up with the writing of my dissertation at Heidelberg. I found that certain professors, not to speak of students, had made considerable adjustments to the political trends of the day. Fritz Lieb, my favorite professor in Russian history and theology, had been dismissed. He returned to his home country, Switzerland. Karl Barth was still there, one of my reasons for studying at Bonn. Professor Goeters also was there, the man who had originally inspired and encouraged me to take up graduate work. Unforgettable were the encounters with Barth during his open house for his students when a wide range of topics were discussed. An event will be recorded here which speeded up his involuntary return to Switzerland after this semester.

During the summer semester of 1934 it was announced that henceforth only one greeting would be permissable throughout the country. Out went *Grüss Gott, Guten Tag, Auf Wiedersehn*, etc., and *"Heil Hitler"* became the only permissible greeting. After the usual devotional message before Barth started his lecture, he said the following, "All of you know what has been announced yesterday. In this auditorium we are studying the

Right—Cornelius Krahn in Heidelberg, Germany, c. 1936, shortly before his departure for America.

Cornelius Krahn visiting his brothers in Russia in 1972—Peter on the left and Heinrich on the right.

word of God. This is the church of Christ. There is only one Lord in this room and that is Jesus Christ. There is no *Heil* available in any other name!" I was glad to have stopped in Bonn on my way to Heidelberg.

Upon my return I wrote my dissertation consisting of two parts. The first was the beginning of Dutch Anabaptism and Menno's life and contribution. In the second part I presented Menno's view of the church within the framework of his theology. This was the first book dealing with Menno in greater detail in the German language taking into consideration all research and findings accumulated on the subject up to that time. It was published in 1936, the year of my graduation, under the title *Menno Simons* (1496-1561); *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten*, Heinrich Schneider, Karlsruhe. 192 pp. It appeared ten years after I had left Russia. There had been more research, problems and work connected with it than I had anticipated. There were times when I lost the sense of distinction between day and night. But mother nature somehow sooner or later re-establishes a balance between the two.

Then and Now

During my study in Heidelberg I had many contacts with Mennonite leaders such as Christian Neff at the Weierhof and B. H. Unruh at Karlsruhe, to name only a few. I attended meetings of the young people. One of the most important involvements was my participation in a round robin letter (*Rundbrief*) during the crucial years 1931-36. I was in charge of Circle 12 and enjoyed particularly the letters by Erich Göttner, the last pastor of the Danzig Mennonite Church. We discussed in longer contributions issues of the day and above all matters of faith and the Christian responsibilities in connection with the traditional principle of nonresistance, attitude toward government, race relationships, etc. I received a visit from the secret service about this matter. When I reported that we were Mennonites he was satisfied. Did he consider us harmless? Reading some 150 pages of serious discussions in the *Rundbrief*, one wonders now that no one was ever in trouble during those years and after the war. Or has the whole story never been told?

Immediately after my graduation at Heidelberg, I went to Holland where I was a member in the Alkmaar Mennonite Church and had taken out my first papers to become a citizen of the land of my forefathers. However, I received a grant for a trip to North America to make a study of the Mennonites there. I gladly accepted this assignment and left in the winter of 1937. It was, however, not until after World War II that I returned to Europe with a United States passport which had been exchanged for my red passport. Only two experiences out of many on many trips will be mentioned here. During a visit among the Mennonites of West Prussian background in Uruguay lecturing with slides about the faith of our fathers the electricity went off and I shifted in total darkness to my experience in Berlin in the days of Niemöller and Bonhoeffer, whose faith and courage had helped me in the days of great changes. At the moment when these names were mentioned, a voice in the audience shouted in no uncertain terms *Landesverräter* (traitors)! A few weeks later we were in Espelkamp, Germany, in a large tent meeting. Among the several thousand people were a large number of Mennonites from West Prussia and Russia. How surprised I was when the songleader announced that we would all sing the hymn that Bonhoeffer had composed on the day before he was executed. I have hardly ever heard a more moving hymn sung so wholeheartedly by a choir and audience as was the case here. The hymn was entitled *Von guten Mächten wunderbar geborgen* (protected by good powers). I found the climax in the following words:

If you, Lord, will give us the heavy chalice
Bitter and filled to the brim
We will take it gratefully without trembling
From your good and loving hand.

I was overwhelmed by the change that had taken place since the days when I was a student there, and when these words were written in that prison cell. Did this generation know what the words meant at that time? I could only say, "Praise the Lord who performs miracles even in our day!" But now I must ask, to what extent, for better or for worse, do we depend in our Christian faith and convictions on the trends and developments around us, without being aware of them?

The Scholarly Pilgrimage of Cornelius Krahn

by Cornelius J. Dyck

Cornelius J. Dyck is Professor of Historical Theology at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, and Director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana.

We have met this evening to celebrate the life and work of Cornelius Krahn, a fellow historian and scholar among us. We will not be able to do justice to all of the wealth of experience he represents—the length of which includes all but the first two years of this century and the geographical beadth of which includes at least three major epochs—early years in Russia, academic training in Europe, and the flowering of his gifts in the North American environment. It is not given to many to span such large dimensions of time and space in this ways as effectively as Krahn did.

The first epoch of his life includes an event of global significance —the Bolshevik Revolution. As a boy he experienced moving from the comfortable Old Colony village of Chortitza to a new daughter colony settlement at Arkadak, in the province of Samara on the Volga River.[1] Here he undoubtedly experienced some of the continuing tension between the Church Mennonites and the Mennonite Brethren minority group to which his family belonged. Mennonites were prosperous in Russia at that time. From the first group of 288 families who had come to Russia in 1788 they had grown to number over 100,000, they had established and maintained a growing agricultural and industrial community and a vast network of schools, hospitals and homes, orphanages and cultural activities. A theological seminary was being planned. An approved alternative service program was supported by them at considerable cost. They had clearly become the envy of many of their Russian neighbors.

The coming of World War I did not at first greatly affect the Arkadak settlement though harrassment and anti-German sentiment was common, but apprehension turned to anxiety with the October Revolution of 1917. Though the Mennonites at Arkadak were spared the severe ravages of the anarchists of the south, Krahn has vivid memories of the end of the Czarist regime, the Civil War, the ensuing famine years of 1920-1923, the mass executions, and the futile struggle of Generals Denikin and Wrangel's White armies against the Red. The New Economic Policy (NEP) which Lenin initiated in 1921 renewed the hope of some Mennonites, but many began leaving for Canada, including a group from Arkadak in 1925. A year later Krahn, at 23 years of age, decided to leave also, with memories and experiences he would never forget. Instead of going on to Canada, however, he stayed in Germany for a decade of studies. One cannot help but wonder what he would have done if he had gone directly to Canada—become a respectable farmer in Manitoba or a strawberry farmer in British Columbia or, more likely, taught at Gretna and Rosthern?

The second epoch of his life centered around the academic institutions of Germany and the Netherlands, eventually including the University of Bonn 1931-32, Berlin 1932-33, Amsterdam 1933-34, and finally Heidelberg University where he submitted a dissertation on the life and theology of Menno Simons and was granted the Doctor of Theology degree in 1936. Formative influences in his study of sixteenth century Anabaptism were the theologically divergent views of Wilhelmus Kühler of Amsterdam and Walter Köhler of Heidelberg, both well-versed in the field, as well as work with Christian Neff of the Weierhof, Walter Fellman, and Nanne van der Zijpp who was later to write 3166 articles for *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, totalling 9829 column inches.

Here, as in the first epoch of his life, the formative influences were not simply internal, intellectual, and religious, but also socio-political. There his milieu had been the rise of Communism, here it was the rise of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and the shadows of approaching World War II. One need only read the recent volume by Diether Götz Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich: Dokumentation und Deutung*,[2] or the Polish scholar Kazimierz Mezynski's writings and dialogue with the Mennonites in Germany today

Cornelius Krahn greeting friends in Amsterdam in 1972.

to sense some of the issues which must have confronted Krahn wherever he went in those days, whether on the university campus, in the Mennonite congregations, or individual social contacts. Again one wonders why the emigre from Communism was not sucked into the pan-German sentiment so prevalent among Mennonites in Germany as well as North and South America. He chose his loyalties with care and in 1937, two years before the war broke out, he found his way to Kansas.

It is this third epoch, his life and work in North America, in which we are primarily interested in this presentation, for it is here that we see the growth and significance of Cornelius Krahn's scholarly career. It began with two years of teaching at Bethel College, the earning of a Masters degree in German from the University of Wisconsin in 1939, teaching at Tabor College from 1939-1944, and from there a return to Bethel College as professor of church history and eventually director of the Mennonite Library and Archives. Let us survey these activities more carefully by grouping them into four areas of concentration: Cornelius Krahn the bibliophile and historiographer; secondly, the historian for the church, thirdly, the historian of Dutch Anabaptism; and, finally, Krahn the interpreter of the experience of the Mennonites in Russia.

The Bibliophile and Historiographer

When Krahn came to Bethel College in 1944 he immediately began the enormous and endless task of building the small collection of Anabaptist-Mennonite and related books left by C. H. Wedel and Abraham Warkentin into a comprehensive historical library, concentrating particularly on Dutch, Prussian, Russian, and Polish materials. By the time of his sixtieth birthday in 1962 this collection contained no less than 15,000 items, of which 10,000 were catalogued books. From that time until his retirement in 1974 an additional 8,750 items had been added to the collection, making it one of the three outstanding Mennonite historical collections in the world, together with the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College and the Mennonite collection in Amsterdam. When we remember the very real limitations of budget and space this achievement becomes even more significant. Wherever he went, and he was very mobile, from the windy prairies of Canada to the ruins of post-war Germany and the Netherlands, the eagle eyes of Krahn spotted what others had not seen, or had seen but not recognized as potentially valuable, and box after box of materials found its way to Bethel. The time came when some of us wondered whether he himself knew what all he had in those boxes, though he could find uncatalogued items amazingly quickly, but at least it was out of the rain and the fire and the disinterested hands of indifferent people—or the very interested hands of Harold S. Bender—and the cataloguing could wait. It is also clear that many of those boxes would not have come except for the high level of trust which people had in Krahn as a man to whom they could safely entrust precious church and family documents.

But Cornelius Krahn has been more than a lover of books. To the designation as *bibliophile* we should add that of *bibliopole*, that is, a seller of rare and precious books. In this area his activities had no equal apart from commercial channels. In this way he not only supplemented an inadequate acquisitions budget but enriched the collections of innumerable institutions and individuals, thereby actively promoting research.

Yet all of this activity was not simply an interesting avocation or, for that matter, part of his job description, but was aimed at furthering the study and awareness of a heritage he considered vital. A listing of the student papers, masters theses, and doctoral dissertations made possible through this collection would undoubtedly be impressive, and if the authors were asked they would, I know, invariably refer to the untiring, patient, and willing help and counsel given freely to them by Krahn and his colleague John F. Schmidt. For this we are deeply grateful.

It was this library setting which made possible the historiographical service mentioned earlier. From the constant flow of correspondence, books coming for review in *Mennonite Life*, visitors, and the presence of researchers at the back tables Krahn kept informed of research in progress at all levels, information which he gathered together with John F. Schmidt and Nelson P. Springer of MHL and made available annually in the April issue of

Mennonite Life. This was a difficult but most rewarding assignment providing a kind of clearing house of ideas and information. While much of this material was primarily factual, occasional references and articles, particularly the one on "The Historiography of the Mennonites in the Netherlands" in 1944, and the one on "Menno Simons Research: 1910-1960" in 1961, provided a skilled interpretive guide to the historiography in the field. These articles could not have been written without the library he had built up. Their publication served to stimulate further research in many known and unkown ways.[3]

Was there a specific rationale, a set of guidelines controlling these acquisitions? Probably, though I do not recall seeing any. Anything relating to Anabaptism and Mennonitism was obviously included, with particular attention to the areas mentioned earlier. There was a kind of division of labor with MHL at Goshen. Yet, as one who has used the collection extensively over the years, I want to identify what seems to me to have been a very important implicit guideline, namely to include not only Anabaptist and Mennonite church historical and theological materials but also non Anabaptist-Mennonite materials in social, economic, literary, art and all the other branches of human inquiry. Krahn was not one to study or to encourage the study of the Believers' Church tradition in isolation from the rest of human experience of a given time and place. A contextual reading of history, which inevitably led to a different kind of apologetic and theological inquiry, seemed to him to be the only legitimate methodology and this conviction, which is now more taken for granted in Anabaptist-Mennonite studies than it was thirty years ago, is reflected in the holdings of the library he began to build long ago. Among Mennonite historical libraries I consider this collection rather unique in this respect.

These comments are meant to underscore the great significance of the Bethel College MLA collection for a study of Anabaptist and Mennonite history, theology, and related issues from the sixteenth century to the present within the context of its time, and the way in which this has enlarged and enriched awareness of the Believers' Church heritage. Krahn was not only on the scene when the converging global, denominational and institutional forces provided the *kairos* moment, but seized it and made the best of it for which many have and will continue to be grateful to him. In facilitating the work of others, often at the expense of his own agenda, was a most significant contribution to his peers and to succeeding generations of scholars.

An Historian for the Church

There may be a difference between being a church historian and being an historian for the church though the two designations need not be mutually exclusive. The former frequently tends to write scholarly monographs about *"so wie es gewesen ist,"* and possibly how it might be if . . . for the edification and debate of his peers, and this is important. The historian for the church, on the other hand, while not neglecting the rigors of disciplined scholarship, is also a part of the church in the present and addresses contemporary issues in deep identification with them. In my introduction to *A Legacy of Faith*, which was published in 1962 as a *Festschrift* on the occasion of Krahn's sixtieth birthday, I mentioned that he had published no less than 123 articles in the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, and 84 in *The Mennonite*. I have not counted the number he has added to these in the fifteen years since then but there have been many. I would see these all as vivid illustrations of being an historian for the church, sharing the heritage and the vision with every member. It is not given to every historian to do this, but we acknowledge here that Krahn does possess this gift and affirm it as legitimate scholarly endeavor. To make the complex understandable and the unknown interesting and relevant is a gift which the church has always needed.

It seems to me to have been this gift, together with the conviction about history contextually, and the library reflecting this methodology which probably gave birth to, and certainly made possible the publication of *Mennonite Life* in 1946. It began and continued under Krahn's editorship, with the acknowledged help of John F. Schmidt and others, as a folksy and unpretentious magazine seeking to interpret Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and life within the cultural context of the day: "A quarterly magazine focusing on the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage and its contemporary expression." It was simple yet subtle in its sophistication, an early Mennonite attempt to confront and cope with the interrelationship of faith and culture, past and present. In his first editorial the editor states, in obvious reference to closed Mennonite communities and Noah's ark:

> Formerly all doves were kept secure in the ark surrounded by a world flooded with sin. Here an atmosphere was developed which instilled the characteristics and beliefs of the church into all of its members without much discussion or consciousness of it. Today the situation is different. The windows of the ark are open. Many a dove leaves without ever returning. It escapes into the world instead of from the world. But it may still be escaping the problems it confronts.[4]

The same concern appears in an earlier article published in 1935, in which he writes: "The problem of our position as Mennonites toward the Gospel and toward society remains, even though the emphasis may vary. Even when it seems as if one or the other tendency hos disappeared, the conflict between the two may break out again with renewed force."[5] In its deceptively casual approach, using Low German poetry and talking about borscht and the Mennonite way of life, *Mennonite Life* has represented a serious effort to correlate ethnicity with present identity and mission. While probably favoring a rural Mennonite orientation the sweep of its agenda has by no means been provincial. Along with motifs of heritage and pioneering are complete

A pencil sketch made of Cornelius Krahn by the church historian, Roland H. Bainton, on a visit to the Bethel campus.

issues devoted to the arts (January, 1965), to peace (July, 1965), to race relations (January, 1967), to missions (July 1950, 1955), to mental health (July 54 and October, 1966), and other contemporary issues. If a rural bias was maintained it was in order to be an historian for the church as the editor reminds us in another context when he writes: "A well-known minister . . . exclaimed: 'No occupation is more honorable than farming.' But he also lamented: 'Durch den Weizenhaufen gingen unsere Gedanken zu Gott." ("Our thoughts found their way to God through our piles of wheat").[6]

In his work with *Mennonite Life* Krahn held up a mirror for Mennonites to see themselves, their institutions, their foibles, and always with the view of nudging them to greater faithfulness to the Lord of the church.

It is also appropriate to mention Krahn's work with the four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia* under the heading of historian for the church. These volumes have found their way into countless homes as well as church and institutional libraries. As co-editor he assumed major editorial responsibility in addition to himself writing 686 articles totalling 4673 column inches. He also served as editor of the 1967 reprint edition. The articles are well-researched and comprehensive. Where he found the time to write these in addition to teaching, committee work, and his work with the library and archives, has not been recorded. The *Mennonite Encyclopedia* has become an indispensable tool for scholars and laymen alike. Helping to bring it into being was a major service to the church, as well as to continuing scholarship.

Historian of Dutch Anabaptism

Three decades ago, in 1944, Krahn wrote:

> American Mennonitism is now beginning to analyze its tenets, doctrines, and heritage. In doing so it has turned first to its Swiss background. This is justified because the Swiss Mennonites were the first to settle in this country and their descendants form the majority of the Mennonites in America. But in the future of American Mennonite research more attention will have to be given to Dutch Mennonitism. In the first place, the sources of Swiss Mennonite literature on which research is based are limited in comparison to Dutch Mennonite literature. Secondly, the Mennonites of Swiss background were influenced more by the Dutch literature than by their own. Thirdly, Dutch Mennonites faced problems and made developments some one hundred and more years ago which American Mennonitism faces today and will face tomorrow. These problems and their solutions are reflected in Dutch Mennonite literature and in the Dutch Mennonite church of today. A study and knowledge of these problems and their solutions may help American Mennonitism to solve its present and future problems.[7]

Fulfilling this vision became a primary task for Krahn from the beginning of his academic career. The Dutch Mennonites had, of course, carried on scholarly studies almost from the time of their inception, as Krahn's article on Dutch historiography amply demonstrates. J. P. van der Meulen's *Successio Apostolica* of 1600, the writings of Pieter Janz Twisck, Hans de Ries, and others of the second generation, as well as the martyrologies and later histories confirm this. It must have taken considerable courage for a relative outsider to come to the Netherlands and announce his intention to write a biography of Menno Simons. There had been previous monographs on Menno, notably A. M. Cramer's in 1837, two German ones by Cornelius Harder in 1846 and B. C. Roossen in 1848, and again the Dutch interpretation by Karel Vos in 1914, followed in 1916 by the first American biography by John Horsch. Yet Krahn sensed unfinished agenda in the light of his own time and new studies in the sources.

In beginning his work on Menno Simons Krahn immediately faced the unresolved debate between Vos and Kühler as well as the then continuing debate between Kühler and Horsch. It is to his credit that the young scholar was able to draw upon the insights of both Vos and Kühler without getting caught in the historiography of either. With Vos he correctly included Münster as part of the story of Dutch Anabaptism, but he chided him (too gently, Harold S. Bender thought) for his Hegelian methodology, and he agreed with Kühler's interpretation of the early Dutch movement being essentially peaceful and Biblicist but modified his emphasis on individualism and pietism as well as questioning Kühler's exclusion of Reformed and Lutheran influences on the genesis of the movement and the tendency to read back twentieth century liberalism into sixteenth century Anabaptism. In commenting on the Kühler-Horsch debate Krahn quipped: "Horsch writes from the more conservative American Mennonite point of view and Kühler from that of the modern

Wedding picture of Hilda Wiebe and Cornelius Krahn on June 14, 1940, in Beatrice, Nebraska.

Doopsgezinde. Thus it is not surprising that the interpretations of the two historians sometimes differ as widely as their geographic distance."[9]

If any indebtedness of Krahn's interpretation of Menno and early Dutch Anabaptism were to be suggested it would be to the comprehensive *Beginselen en leer der oude Doopsgezinden, vergeleken met de overige Protestanten* of Syste Hoekstra in 1863, in which the centrality of the church is also emphasized. But Krahn goes further than Hoekstra in his generalization that "An Anabaptist theology is *ecclesiocentric*."[10] And he adds: "As the Lutheran's central concern is to find God through 'faith alone,' and the Calvinist's chief duty is to do the will of a sovereign God, so does the Anabaptist also have a chief theological concern. It centers around the *ecclesia*—the church or the body of believers . . ."[11] This was an early statement of a theme most scholars have long since taken for granted.

It is significant to note in this connection that Krahn was convinced early of the intimate correlation between Menno's view of the Incarnation and his doctrine of the church: "In his doctrine of the incarnation Menno is in no way dealing with a peripheral concern or stubbornly defending a minor issue, but rather addressing a question which is most intimately associated with his soteriology and his concept of the church."[12] Though this view is still not accepted by some, the further work of William E. Keeney and Alvin J. Beachy has firmly established its reliability.[13]

In working with Menno Simons Krahn became convinced that his *Foundation Book* of 1539-1540, "has had more influence in the history of Mennonitism than any other single volume except possibly the *Martyrs Mirror*. This is true not only of the Mennonites in Holland and North Germany but also of the Mennonites in South Germany, in Switzerland, and in America and Russia."[14] Particularly perceptive in relation to the earlier stated interest in the interrelationship of faith and culture was his early use of the term "active negation" rather than "passive negation" to describe that relationship:

> The early Anabaptists did not simply let the world be the world and withdraw for it in pessimism and despair . . . Their active denial of the existing world was a judgment upon it in word and deed, and a lively hope for the new order which should come from God.[15]

The crowning achievement of Krahn's work in Dutch Anabaptism is, obviously, the publication of his *Dutch Anabaptism: Origin, Spread, Life and Thought (1450-1600)* in 1968.[16] It has been warmly received both in North America and in Europe as a comprehensive history of the movement. In keeping with the author's methodology referred to earlier, its strength lies in part in the way in which Dutch Anabaptism-Mennonitism is seen as part of

the total history of the Netherlands and of sixteenth century Europe.

The Mennonites of the Netherlands have been a vital part of the Anabaptist movement from the sixteenth century to the present. They had their own roots and were not a second generation transplant of Swiss Anabaptism. There were more martyrs among the Dutch Mennonites than among any other group; most of the martyrologies originated there, as did many of the major confessions of faith. The movement was eventually named after Menno. It was among the Dutch Mennonites that the issues of faith and culture first seriously confronted the church among Anabaptists. The Dutch were the first to give self-critical attention to issues of faith and heritage to which the vast corpus of primary and secondary literature bears witness.

Beyond this we find in the Dutch movement a vigorous testing of the original vision. Institutional development proceeded rapidly after toleration came in 1574. The implementation of the Believers' Church at the congregational level found its most rigorous expression here, leading to the harsh disciplinary practices and divisions which must also be seen as a testing of the original vision. Similarly the tension between spiritualism and institutionalism found its sharpest and most persistent expression among the congregations in the Netherlands. Thus a study of the Dutch movement is crucial both for an understanding of early vision and dynamics and for subsequent implications for today. North American scholars are fortunate in having the skills and interest of Cornelius Krahn concentrated so heavily in this field. A new upsurge of scholarly interest among Dutch Mennonites today gives promise that the study of the Dutch wing of Anabaptism-Mennonitism will increasingly come into its own.

Interpretation of the Mennonite Experience in Russia

A discussion of Cornelius Krahn's scholarly pilgrimage would be incomplete without a brief reference to what may well be closest to his heart—the experience of the Mennonites in Russia. Note the use of the term "Mennonites in Russia" rather than "Russian Mennonites," a term he does not like and finds "confusing."[17]

Krahn was twenty-four years of age when he left the USSR in 1926. These had been formative years in his life and their impact will never leave him. He loved his homeland and feared for it, especially the Mennonites, under Communism. At the peak of Stalin's program of liquidation in 1935, Krahn wrote: "The new social order absorbs everything. Under such conditions it is difficult to believe that Mennonites can survive. Yet God alone knows the answer to this question."[18] Yet in recent years he has returned to the USSR, has sat in his old school desk, and met many Mennonite believers including members of his own family.[19] The pilgrimage motif so common to Mennonites has also been his experience and has played an important part in shaping his agenda as a scholar.

There is no doubt in Krahn's mind that the Mennonites of Russia are historically part of the Dutch story as the following statement affirms:

> The congregations of West-Prussia are the daughters, and the congregations of Russia the grand-daughters of the churches in Holland. The degree of authority that Amsterdam had at the end of the eighteenth century is demonstrated by the fact that before the emigration to Russia the Russian ambassador came to Amsterdam in order to see the Mennonites here in their pure, original state.[20]

Later, at his request, the church council of Amsterdam sent a letter of exhortation to the new settlers in Russia. It may be remembered that the question of ethnic identity of the refugees from Russia was of crucial importance following World War II. This statement of 1935, and others made them when the issue was at hand, was of considerable help in securing aid and resettlement for many of the homeless.

Krahn's writings on the USSR can be identified in the prepared bibliography. Among the early ones were several pamphlets in Dutch describing the suffering of the Mennonites. They were intended to inform and to encourage relief aid through packages. The later articles, particularly those in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* are scholarly treatments written with a deep understanding of the cultural, political, and social situation—"from the inside"—as it were. To these should be added *From the Steppes to the Prairies*, published in 1949, numerous articles and reviews in MQR and, of course, the articles and focus of *Mennonite Life*—which was unmistakably oriented to the Mennonites of and from Russia—wherever they might be found. Fortunately he also provided a number of invaluable maps, both in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and in *Mennonite Life*.

Cornelius Krahn knows the USSR well, its history, language, and customs. He knows the experience of the Mennonites there, past and present. Let me cite two illustrations as examples. The first is a humorous yet sad commentary upon Mennonite social attitudes, as seen in the training of their dogs, when he reports from his early recollections: "The watch dogs of the Mennonites seldom erred in distinguishing a Russian from a Mennonite, and gave them different receptions, although both were strangers to them."[21] The second illustration is his discussion of the *Selbstschutz* (self-defense), one of the deep theological and moral issues which has been used and misused for illustrative purposes ever since it happened and which Krahn discusses with understanding and empathy:

> . . . when all possessions are taken and entire towns massacred by robbing bandits, yes, when father and brother are murdered before one's eyes, and mother and sister mistreated by corporeal devils, then one can speak of a trial of nonresistance by fire. When someone cries to God in such a moment, and it becomes clear to him that even here he may not dip his hand in blood,

The Krahn family with their three daughters—Karla, Cornelia, and Marianne—and their families. Christmas 1976.

and that God can help even here; and another in a similar situation feels compelled to the conclusion that it is his holiest duty to interfere, it is indeed difficult for an outsider to decide who dealt right, even right before God.[22]

In relation to this last experience he comments that nonresistance cannot be "handed down from generation to generation but must be a personal conviction." His description reflects the existential dimension of his thought.

Cornelius Krahn could do the church and scholarly community no better service in his retirement than to reflect further on these issues and place on record more of his memories, as well as using his knowledge and linguistic skills to further understanding of this past and present Mennonite experience in the USSR. With the library in good hands, and still available to him, and with the vigor of his continuing good health we look forward to a continuing flow of materials—whether biblographical-historiographical, or of a more popular nature for the lay reader, or in the swelling stream of Dutch Mennonite studies but, hopefully, also in the field of the experience of the Mennonites in the USSR, including the experiences of Cornelius Krahn himself.

Notes

1. See "Arkadak" in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 1:157-58; also Jacob Wiebe, "The History of Arkadak," unpublished seminar paper, Bethel College, 1967.
2. Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein: D 7015 Korntal-Muenchingen, Hindenburgstr. 56. 1977.
3. *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, XVIII (October, 1944), 195–221.
4. "Active or Passive Christianity?", *Mennonite Life*, 1 (January, 1946), 4.
5. "Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites in Russia," MQR, IX (October, 1935), 168.
6. "Mennonite Community Life in Russia" MQR, XVI (July, 1942), 175.
7. "Historiography . . ." MQR, XVIII (October, 1944), 220-221.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 210.
10. "Prolegomena to an Anabaptist Theology" MQR, XXIV (January, 1950), 11.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
12. *Menno Simons (1496-1561)* Karlsruhe: Heinrich Schneider, 1936., p. 156. Translation from the German.
13. William E. Keeney, *The Development of Dutch Anabaptist Thought and Practice from 1539-1564*. The Hague: B. de Graaf, 1968., pp. 89ff, 207-221. Alvin J. Beachey, *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation*. The Hague: B. d Graaf, 1977, pp. 79-85.
14. "Menno Simons' Fundament-Boek Of 1539-1540," MQR, XIII (October, 1939), 230.
15. "Some Social Attitudes . . ." MQR, IX (October, 1935), 166.
16. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968.
17. "Mennonite Community Life . . ." MQR, XVI (July, 1942), 177.
18. "Some Social Attitudes . . ." MQR, IX (October, 1935), 177.
19. See "Russia Revisited," ML XXV (October, 1970), 147-155.
20. "Some Social Attitudes . . ." MQR, IX (October, 1935), 167.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 176. See also *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, IV:1124-25.

Infinite Riches in the Crowded Rooms of the Mennonite Library and Archives

Cornelius Krahn as interviewed by Robert Kreider

C. H. Wedel, H. P. Krehbiel, H. R. Voth Abraham Warkentin, John F. Schmidt, Cornelius Krahn—these are among the persons who have contributed so much to develop the rich resources of the Mennonite Library and Archives. In a particular way the historical library has been the lengthened shadow of Cornelius Krahn—his vision, his knowledge of the literature, his energy, his acquisitive instincts.

The Mennonite Library and Archives now occupies the basement floor of the Bethel College Library. It is packed from wall to wall, floor to ceiling with the materials which Cornelius Krahn and others have collected: 20,000 books and 700 periodicals, 30,000 photographs and 10,000 color slides, 400 paintings and works of art, 2,000 manuscripts, 300 tapes in the oral history collection, 380 editions and translations of the Bible, 450 titles of microfilms, several thousand copper and zinc newspaper cuts, hundreds of feet of boxes filled with documents, and much more.

Although Cornelius Krahn is retired one can find him almost every day in his beloved historical library —searching the catalogs of the book sellers for items not found in the MLA, assisting visiting scholars, going through the mountains of yet undigested historical materials. I think sometimes of the Mennonite Library and Archives as an archeological dig with strata upon strata of documentary debris to be sifted through by archeologists to find the precious artifacts. Cornelius is one of the most tireless of the archeologists who work this dig, interrupting his labors often to rush to others to show his new found pearl of great price.

We have asked Cornelius Krahn to discuss with us the Mennonite Library and Archives and tell the story of how some of the most significant books and collections have been acquired.

We shall ask a few questions as Dr. Krahn responds with stories of the library:

Editor: Here in the vault are several rare Anabaptist and Mennonite books. How and when were these acquired?

Krahn: Most of the books in the vault, judging by the accession numbers and other information found or remembered, date back to the decade between my Fulbright year in the Netherlands, 1953-54, and the year of my sabbatical study in Germany and the Netherlands, 1963-64. My interest in the acquisition of rare books strongly competed with my interest in research. There were so many auctions, secondhand bookstores, antiquariats, and libraries to go to. I had gone to all these places as a student in the 1930's when I was looking for inexpensive treasures. Some books were given to me as gifts. W. J. Kühler provided me with valuable rare duplicates when I was a student at Amsterdam. A substantial part of the large libraries of Dominee F. C. Fleischer and Prof. N. van der Zijpp have found their way into the vault.

When I see that we paid at bookstores and auctions only $3, rarely more than $20, for each of these books I realize that today we would need to pay fifty times that amount. Many of the books obtained 25 years ago just are not offered for sale now in the catalogs.

Special mention must be made of Walter Adrian. Twenty to thirty of the very rare 16th and 17th century books were acquired by Walter Adrian in the years immediately after World War II when he was engaged in relief work with the MCC in Germany and Austria. Most of these Walter donated.

Editor: How did you gather together these hundreds of paintings by Mennonites?

Krahn: During my leave in the Netherlands in the early 50's I de-

Rare books in the vault of the Mennonite Library and Archives.

Ludwig Keller as a young student in 1890. Right, a book plate from the Keller library.

voted much time to the study of the Golden Age—the 17th Century—in the Netherlands during which period many Mennonites became significant writers and artists. Among these were the Hague School of Artists of the 19th century. I purchased some very rare works of art at reasonable prices. Govert Flinck, Jacob van Ruisdael. In this period we acquired the paintings of Daniel Wohlgemuth and Marie Birkholtz Bestvater.

Financial help for the purchase of these works of art and rare books came from such donors as A. J. Claassen of Beatrice, Elva Krehbiel Leisy of Dallas, and the Suderman family of Newton and others.

Editor: You have been responsible for acquiring the collections of the papers of some major scholars. Would you tell us about some of these?

Krahn: Here are 17 document boxes of the Ludwig Keller Collection. C. H. Wedel, the first president of Bethel College and the first Mennonite historian of the prairie states and provinces, was a great admirer of Ludwig Keller. Through his numerous books Keller removed some of the prejudices against Anabaptist-Mennonites still common at that time. As the official archivist of Münster (he lived from 1860 to 1910) he published some books on the Anabaptists which changed the traditional image of the Anabaptists. In one of his letters he reported that as a result of his work a mob threw rocks through his window shouting: *Wiedertäufer Apostel!* Keller continued his research and carried on a correspondence on a large scale. How we acquired this huge collection of letters, periodicals and books I have reported in some detail in an article in the March 10, 1966 *Mennonite Weekly Review*. At the end of World War II we and others sent CARE packages to the daughters of Ludwig Keller who were living in Germany. A number of visits with the Kellers followed. This led ultimately to the transfer of the bulk of the library and archives from East Germany to Berlin to Frankfurt and then to Kansas. The story of this miraculous air-lift involved the Mennonite pastor in East Berlin—Walter Janzen, relief workers of the Beachy Amish, the Frankfurt MCC office.

John B. Toews and Katherine Hooge have compiled "A General Register of Materials of the Ludwig Keller Collection" of 540 pages which lists all letters that Keller received, all in chronological order and with a brief description in English of each letter. He was in correspondence with Harnack, Mommsen, Meinecke, Eucken, Diltey, Troeltsch and hundreds of others. A remaining great task is to trace these letters to those people with whom he corresponded to see what he wrote in his letters to them. He kept few notes on the letters he sent.

Editor: Are there other collections of interest?

Krahn: There is, of course, the large J. H. Janzen collection of 33 boxes (about 15 shelf feet). Another smaller collection but of great significance is the A. A. Friesen collection of nine boxes. A. A. Friesen was born in 1885 in Schönau, Molotschna, where he received an unusually good education. He graduated from the University of Odessa in 1910 and continued his studies in Germany until 1912. He taught in Halbstadt from 1912 to 1919. He was a member of the Study Commission of four sent to America in 1920 by the Mennonites in Russia to investigate immigration pros-

pects. He taught briefly at Bluffton College. From 1922 to 1926 he was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, living at Rosthern, Saskatchewan. During his last years he had a small business at Rabbit Lake, Saskatchewan.

It was there where I visited A. A. Friesen in January 1946. During my visit I noted the unusually large correspondence he had accumulated during his lifetime, particularly when he was with the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization. He indicated that this rich Mennonite archival material was to be turned over to the University of Saskatoon from which he had received his BS degree in 1927. After his death in 1948 I continued my correspondence with Mrs. Friesen and their daughters. I also visited Mrs. Friesen in Winnipeg. Ultimately the family decided to deposit the collection with the Mennonite Library and Archives.

In the collection is extensive correspondence with David Toews, B. H. Unruh, B. B. Jantz, C. F. Klassen, P. C. Hiebert and many others concerning the Mennonite migrations. B. B. Jantz, Frank Epp, and J. B. Toews have made us of this rich collection. We have also provided photocopies to B. H. Unruh of his correspondence which was lost during World War II. The collection, however, contains much additional information concerning Friesen's early years in Russia and the experiences of World War I and the Russian Revolution.

Editor: What are the rarest books to be found in the Mennonite Library and Archives?

Krahn: One is a leather-bound edition of the Greek and Latin New Testament edited by Erasmus and published in 1522. We acquired this soon after World War II through the Zentral-Antiquariat at Leipzig for twenty dollars. It would not now be available at twenty times that price. The book dealers of East Germany still offer the best book bargains anywhere.

The rarest book acquired by the MLA is the Bible of 1528 containing the Old Testament prophets translated by Ludwig Hätzer and Hans Denck of which the first printing appeared in 1527. The University of Chicago has a copy of this Bible. The MLA paid 1750 German marks for its copy—about $450.

Another rare book is our Froschauer Bible, a 1536 edition published in Zurich by Christoph Froschauer. It is a Swiss version of Luther's Bible. When this Bible was revised the Mennonites continued to use the old editions, which then came to be known as "Mennonite Bibles."

Editor: Do you find any interesting materials between the pages of these rare books?

Krahn: A few years ago Jacob Friesen brought an old German Bible to the MLA for safe keeping. In it was the German printed invitation extended to the Danzig Mennonites in 1787 inviting them to come to the Ukraine to settle the steepes along the Dnepr River. All the privileges and promises were listed and guaranteed: total freedom, free land, the right to have their own schools, exemption from military service, etc. We promised Jake Friesen that the invitation of Catherine II would remain with this Bible, the Word of God, taken from Germany to Russia to North America. In fact the Bible had been taken from Russia to Canada and from there to Menno, Paraguay. From there it had been returned to his relatives in Mountain Lake, Minnesota. This calls attention to the fact that Mennonites have had a unique dual concept of obedience to God and government and an appreciation of God's promises and the government's promises.

Editor: Here is a *Martyr's Mirror* in a tattered wood and cloth binding. What is the story behind this book?

Krahn: Some 25 years ago when I was to speak in the Meno Mennonite Church in Oklahoma I took a walk through the cemetery to get acquainted with the names of the pioneers who had settled there. As I met the caretaker at work he pointed to one tombstone and said that he could speak "Dutch." I asked him what kind of Dutch he had spoken to which he replied, "Holland Dutch." Sensing I was skeptical, he continued by saying that he had seen him read from a Dutch Bible. He told me where I could find the family owning that Dutch Bible. This led from the son to his son. When I arrived the family was glad to get the box with the Bible from the attic. Not only did I find in the box a Dutch Bieskens Bible but with it was the traditional partner, namely Th. J. van Braght's *Martyr's Mirror*.

These two books had made the pilgrimage from the Netherlands to West Prussia to Russia to Kansas to Oklahoma. The wear and tear was evidence that they had provided spiritual nourishment for generations. After my surprise and joy had been expressed the family agreed that it might be best if these books would find a final resting place in the MLA but, first, they must check with "Dad." So we went to him. The response came back with conviction and determination like that of the prophets and martyrs of old, "Son, these books have been sacred and are the source of sustenance and spiritual food for many generations in our family and here comes a stranger and you are ready to let them go!" I consoled myself with the thought that they were safe for the time being, but I never forgot my find nor that admonition of father to son. The young daughters came to Bethel College. I was present at the final oral examination of the last daughter and at the close of the exam accompanied her to the door and asked her how the books were doing. "They are in good hands but will get here in due time," she said.

Later I was again asked to come to Meno to speak. I wrote my friends that I would come to visit them. When I arrived two of the Kane family were seated and without getting up they glanced at the box on the table containing the two books. Hardly any words were exchanged. It was agreed that I could take the books along to the MLA and that they were to be labeled as a contribution from the Frank E. Kane family "on a loan basis." Worn and torn as they are they are the most vivid symbols of that

Worship and church items from West Prussian Mennonite Congregations in the Mennonite Library and Archives. In the background communion ware and candle holders from the communion table. The nine small microfilm boxes contain the church records of the various congregations. The open book on the left next to the microfilm boxes is the oldest Danzig church record written partly in the Dutch language.

"cloud of witnesses that have gone before us."

Editor: Here in the hallway is a large oak chest which bears the inscription: "Dowry chest of Anna Jansen . . . being part of the 47 pieces of baggage with which the C. Jansen family landed at Quebec, Aug. 28, 1873 on their migration from Berdyansk, South Russia." What might have been found in this chest?

Krahn: In addition to all the things which a girl of 17 might have in her hope chest, I like to think that in the chest were three volumes of Menno Simons' *Foundation Book*. Anna Jansen's grandfather was Peter von Riesen of Schiedlitz near Danzig. Peter von Riesen had translated, published and promoted the distribution of the *Foundation Book* in West Prussia. Fearing the authorities, 29 elders and ministers meeting at Marienburg on August 10, 1836, asked him to stop the distribution of the three-volume set, recall all distributed copies and hand over to the leadership all remaining copies.

To this he responded that the printing had been completed and that he would bring all remaining copies to the Elder Peter Regier of Tiegenhagen. His letter was dated

August 24, 1836. The elders ordered him to bring all copies of Menno Simons' book to them who then arranged to hide the volumes in the attic of a church in the swamps of the Werder. Some copies of the *Foundation Book* were brought to North America by family members like the Jansens and especially by members of the Kleine Gemeinde group. Copies of the Menno Simons' *Foundation Book* printed by Peter von Riesen are to be found in the MLA and may also have been brought to Beatrice, Nebraska, in that chest of Anna Jansen.

It seems incredible that the sons of Menno should have banned and then exiled their founders' most significant writings. Dr. Mannhardt writes this about the conditions of spiritual timidity among the Mennonites in West Prussia almost 150 years ago: "The tradition to live as *die Stillen im Lande* turned into an effort to avoid any impression that the Mennonites were different in any way. The reading of Menno Simons' books could give that impression and could result in some discomfort to the sons of Menno."

Editor: Is there any book in the historical library for which you have a particular affection?

Krahn: It is this tiny volume—three by four and a half inches and two inches thick and beautifully bound in parchment. This is the story.

It had been agreed that I would write my doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg under Prof. Walter Köhler on Menno Simons. To do this research I accepted an invitation to spend one year in Amsterdam in the homes of two Mennonite ministers, A. K. Kuiper and Jan Dozy. One day when I was deeply involved in my study Dominee Dozy knocked on my door and showed me a little parchment-bound book. I saw that it was exactly what I needed for my research. Not only did he give it to me for my research but as a gift to be taken along on my Menno pilgrimage.

When I looked at it more closely I found that it was an extremely rare copy of the 1562 edition published the year after Menno's death at Wüstenfelde. Could Menno have been aware of this printing or even helped with this edition? I found out that this book had been in the family since the days of Menno and had been transmitted from generation to generation.

How did it get into the hands of Dominee Dozy? In his congregation was a family which had this book but no children to inherit it. They gave it to their pastor. He in turn gave it to me since I was doing my doctoral study on Menno Simons. I soon learned that there are only three other copies of this edition; one in the Mennonite Library in Amsterdam, another at the University of Bonn, and a third in the Schwenckfelder Library at Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. I did not bring this book with me when I came to the United States in 1937. It, however, survived the war in my absence and is now in the MLA—the oldest Menno Simons book in our holdings.

Editor: Are there materials in the Mennonite Library and Archives which were literally snatched and saved from fire or the waste disposal can?

Krahn: Most certainly—the Danzig Mennonite Church records. These were found at the end of World War II scattered on the floor of the damaged church in Danzig by young Mennonites who were delivering horses and cattle to Poland in 1946. Apparently refugees or soldiers had found shelter in that bombed-out church and tried to keep warm by burning books and church records. The young men, former Bethel students, entered the church. saw the books and records and remembered the admonition to look for any remnants of value. They picked up the old church records—some charred on the edges—plus books, and candle holders and communion cups from the communion table.

The Mennonite Church in Danzig had had an excellent library. In the last days of the war in 1944 as the Red Army was approaching people fled, leaving behind even their most cherished possessions. No one to this day knows what happened to Erich Göttner, the last pastor. From the church records we know that he had conducted the last baptismal service in the spring of 1943 when he entered all the names in the record book in his beautiful handwriting. He could have perished in the burning city or as a prisoner of war.

Most valuable among the materials from Danzig are the church records in which the first entries go back to 1598. Dirk Philips, coworker of Menno Simons, had been the first leading minister of Danzig. All the entries of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, ministerial elections are in the Dutch language down to 1780, when there was an abrupt shift to High German. The entries regarding deaths continued in Dutch even longer. The striking thing is that this shift from Dutch to German occurred at the same time that the first migrations began to Russia. Was it possible that not only the objection to military service but also the fear of total acculturation to the German environment which prompted this migration movement?

Editor: You speak of candlesticks and communion cups from Danzig. Are there other artifacts of significance to be found in the MLA?

Krahn: We have another communion cup story from West Prussia. In the second half of the 19th century when Prussia adopted a general conscription law, some Mennonites of West Prussia and Danzig refused to accept any form of service in lieu of military service. These feelings ran strong in the Heubuden Mennonite Church near Marienburg. The elder and some ministers of the Heubuden congregation announced just before the communion service that only those members could partake of communion who would submit in writing a statement that under no circumstances would they engage in military service.

It soon became apparent that only a small minority of the large congregation was willing to sign such a statement. This caused the "faithful flock" to separate themselves and to worship in private homes and to prepare for migration to America. The ministers of this rem-

The Heubuden Mennonite Church in West Prussia on the eve of World War II.

nant kept the communion set in their homes. When the group departed for America they took with them the beautiful pewter communion set as well as the wooden bowls used in baptismal services. The communion cups are dated 1768. The set was given to the MLA a few years ago.

Editor: What in this whole library and archive do you cherish most?

Krahn: All these rare books and manuscripts beyond price are less valuable than something else. The most important thing about this library is that it is being used by students, faculty, community people, and scholars from distant places. Do you know what I cherish most? It is this collection of more than one thousand term papers which our students have written on Mennonite and Anabaptist-related research projects. The MLA lives on in all those who studied these materials and produced all these amazingly good research papers.

The Writings of Cornelius Krahn

A Bibliography

by Marianne Harms

This bibliography is a partial compilation of Cornelius Krahn's writings. It is believed to be a complete listing of his books, but not all of his articles.

Krahn began his writing in the United States soon after his arrival, in 1937. North American Mennonites were acquainted with his scholarly works, but his articles, written for various Mennonite publications after his arrival in the States, gave him widespread recognition. He is also well known as an author and editor of books and pamphlets.

The three major sources for this bibliography are: Cornelius J. Dyck, the Mennonite Library and Archives collection, and Krahn. Cornelius J. Dyck edited, *A Legacy of Faith: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Cornelius Krahn*, 1962, in which he wrote a chapter, "Cornelius Krahn and the Dutch Mennonites." This chapter is a biography of Krahn's scholastic achievements and writings. Dyck does not attempt to include all of the writings, but rather annotates major research and states the number of articles for which Krahn was responsible as editor and author.

This bibliography contains Krahn's writings from 1924-1977, including the items compiled by Dyck. Items in this bibliography are a part of the Mennonite Library and Archives collection at Bethel College. Krahn was consulted on numerous occasions for additions and corrections, a help which is greatly appreciated.

Krahn's articles have covered a variety of topics, such as: Dutch Anabaptism and Mennonites, Dutch and Russian Mennonite art, Russian Mennonites, Mennonite migrations, Mennonite literature and Plattdeutsch, etc. Many of his recent articles have dealt with the centennial of the Russian Mennonite migration to North America, and travel diaries detailing Krahn's impressions from recent trips to Russia, South America and the *Umsiedler* in West Germany.

I. ARTICLES IN SIXTEEN SERIALS

The following is a compilation of serials in which Krahn's articles have most frequently appeared:

American-German Review

"From the Steppes to the Prairies, Part I," 11:1 (October 1944), pp 10-13.

"From the Steppes to the Prairies, Part II," 11:2 (December 1944), pp 30-34, 37, 39.

"Gnadenau in Kansas," (February 1944), pp 18-21.

Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte

"Anabaptists in American Periodical Literature," 43 (1952), pp 103-106.

Der Bote

Krahn has been a regular contributor to *Der Bote* as well as serving as Assistant Editor. He was instrumental in the merge between the General Conference paper *Der Christliche Bundesbote* and the Canadian *Der Bote*, in 1947, which is now the present *Der Bote*. *Der Bote* has been indexed from 1927-47, and work to complete the index is in progress. This index credits Krahn with sixteen articles and seven book reviews.

Christlicher Gemeinde-Kalender

"Zum 'Austritt des Menno Simons aus dem Papsttum' vor 400 Jahren," (1936), pp 36-46.

"Eine Ermahnung Mennos zum Frieden und zur Liebe," (1937), pp 36-43.

Church History

"Anabaptism: Abortive Counter-revolt," a note to the editors, 27:1 (March 1958), pp 92-93.

"Historiography of the Mennonites in the Netherlands: a Guide to Sources," 13:3 (September 1944), pp 182-209.

"Menno Simons Research (1910-1960) Survey," 30:4 (December 1961), pp 473-480.

Krahn has also contributed eleven book reviews which can be located through the indexes for *Church History*.

Geschriftjes Ten Behoeve Van De Doopsgezinden In De Verstrooing

"De Doopsgezinden in Rusland, door een Russischen broeder," no. 50.

"De Doopsgezinden in Rusland tot in den tegenwoordigen tijd," no. 59.

"De Gemeenten der Amische Doopsgezinden," no. 60.

Gospel Herald

"Menno Simons and the Mennonites," 52:17 (April 28, 1959), pp 393, 405-406.

"Mennonites the World Over," 38:33 (November 16, 1945), pp 628.

"Mennonites the World Over," 38:41 (January 11, 1946), pp 772.

"Rebuilding European Mennonite Churches," 38:28 (October 12, 1945), pp 533.

"Student: Where Are You Going?" 58:37 (September 21, 1965), pp 829.

"To Go or to Stay," 67:9 (February 26, 1974), pp 173-175.

"With Mennonite Returnees in Germany," 68:50 (December 30, 1975), pp 930-932.

The Mennonite

Krahn has written eighty-four articles and book reviews for *The Mennonite*. In the March 20, 1945 issue of *The Mennonite* Krahn began his regular reports about the conditions among the Mennonites of Europe and the disaster of World War II. Starting October 2, 1945, these reports appeared weekly for a number of years under the heading "Mennonites the world over." Often these reports were appeals for help coming from Russian and German Mennonites displaced during World War II.

Mennonite Life

Krahn founded and developed this illustrated quarterly published at Bethel College which was under his editorship from January 1946 to July 1971, volume 1-volume 26, number 3. He continued as consulting editor when *Mennonite Life* was published under the auspices of Herald Publishing Co., Newton, Kansas, until it was transferred back to Bethel College under its current editorship, February 1975. He has also contributed a total of 111 articles plus book reviews and the annual bibliography and research in progress.

Mennonite Quarterly Review

"Anabaptism in East Friesland," 30:4 (October 1956), pp 247-255.

"Anabaptism in Westphalia," 35:4 (October 1961), pp 282-285.

"Conversion of Menno Simons: a Quadricentennial Tribute," 10:1 (January 1936), pp 46-53.

"Echo-Verlag Publications," 24:3 (July 1950), pp 287-288.

"Emden Disputation of 1578," 30:4 (October 1956), pp 256-258.

"The Historiography of the Mennonites in the Netherlands," 18:4 (October 1944), pp. 195-224.

"Menno Simons' Fundament-Boek of 1539-1540," 13:4 (October 1939), pp 221-232.

"Mennonite Community Life in Russia," 16:3 (July 1942), pp 174-177.

"Mennonite Plattdeutsch," 33:3 (July 1959), pp 256-259.

"The Office of Elder in Anabaptist-Mennonite History," 30:2 (April 1956), pp 120-129.

"Prolegomena to an Anabaptist Theology," 24:1 (January 1950), pp 5-17.

"Some Letters of Bernhard Warkentin Pertaining to the Migration of 1873-1875," 24:3 (July 1950), pp 248-263.

"Some Social Attitudes of the Mennonites of Russia," 9:4 (October 1935), pp 165-177.

"Views of the 1870's Migration by Contemporaries," 48:4 (October 1974), pp 447-459.

Krahn has also contributed a number of book reviews to the MQR.

Mennonite Reporter

"At Crossroads and on Detours: Why Did Some Go South, Some North?" 4:24 (November 25, 1974), pp 24-25.

"Beware of 'Brother Andrew' Tale's Cautions Retired Historian and Traveller," 3:8 (April 16, 1973), pp 13.

"South American Diary," 6:1-4, 6-11 (January 12, 1976-May 1, 1976).

Mennonite Weekly Review

Krahn's contributions to *Mennonite Weekly Review* may have even surpassed his contributions to *Mennonite Life* for he has written a minimum of one hundred and ninety articles, including book reviews. These articles have been on a variety of topics, but he is particularly known for his regular columns. Monthly articles appeared under the title "Faith of Our Fathers," from April 22, 1943 up to December 14, 1950. He describes these articles as the story of the Mennonites in a popular narration. The series continued starting January 1951 and concluding August 7, 1952, but was devoted to the Old Colony Mennonites. Other series by Krahn were: "Observations While Abroad," (March 11, 1965; March 25, 1965; April 29, 1965); "Issues and Concerns," (January 7, 1965; February 4, 1965; February 25, 1965; May 27, 1965; July 15, 1965: August 5, 1965; September 30, 1965); "Observations at Home and Abroad," (June 9, 1966; July 21, 1966); "Baptism—Yesterday and Today," (March 9, 1967; March 16, 1967; March 23, 1967). Krahn has also reviewed books which appeared under the column "On My Desk."

Mennonitisches Jahrbuch

After World War II, in 1948, Krahn revived and contributed to the General Conference *Bundesbote-Kalender* as the *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* and served as the editor until 1957. The *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch* was primarily for the use among Mennonites who had recently come from Russia and settled in South America and Canada.

Mennonitische Jugendwarte

"Die Gemeinde bei den Taufgesinnten in 16. Jahrhundert," (Februar 1936), pp 14-20.

"Mennonitische Jugend in Amerika (UGU.)," (August 1937), pp 85-86.

Unser Blatt

The first article that Krahn published had appeared in Russia in *Unser Blatt* just before he left that country in 1926.

Zondagsbode

The first articles Krahn wrote upon his arrival in the United States in 1937 appeared in *Zondagsbode* under the general title "Brieven uit Amerika," (Maart 14, 1937-September 18, 1938). These thirty articles were about his impressions as he visited Mennonite communities, congregations, homes and institutions, as reports to the Dutch Mennonites.

Other serials Krahn's articles have appeared in are: *Doopsgezind Weekblad, Gemeindeblatt, Der Mennonit, Mennonitische Blätter, Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter,* and *Mennonitische Rundschau.* Krahn has said there are few Mennonite periodicals in Europe and North America in which one of his articles has not appeared.

II. ARTICLES AND CHAPTERS

Krahn, co-editor and writer for the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, contributed 686 articles. He also wrote an article on Menno Simons for the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, II (1955), and on the Mennonites for *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, IV (1960).

The following articles and chapters have appeared in other publications:

"Altruism in Mennonite life," by C. Krahn, J. Winfield Fretz and Robert Kreider. (Sorokin, Pitirim A, ed., *Forms and Techniques of Altruistic and Spiritual Growth, a Symposium*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1954) pp 309-328.

"Anabaptism and the Culture of the Netherlands," (Hershberger, Guy F., ed. *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1957), pp 219-236.

"Art Among the Early Dutch Mennonites," (*Proceedings of the Eleventh Conference on Mennonite Education and Cultural Problems*, 1957) pp 55-65.

"The Dutch Mennonites and Urbanism," (*Proceedings of the Tenth Conference on Mennonite Education and Cultural Problems*, 1955), pp 65-74.

"Menno Simons als een der centrale figuren van eed broederschap, die zich over de wereld verspreid heeft," (*Stemmen uit de Doopsgezinde Broederschap*, 10:2, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1961), pp 54-59.

"Menno Simons and the Mennonite World Brotherhood," (Walter Klaassen, William Keeney, Russell Mast, Vernon Neufeld, Cornelius Krahn, *No Other Foundation: Commemorative Essays on Menno Simons*. North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1962), pp 55-64.

"Menno Simons' Concept of the Church," (Dyck, Cornelius J., ed., *A Legacy of Faith: the Heritage of Menno Simons*. A sixtieth anniversary tribute to Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1962), pp 17-30.

"Menno Simons Research (1910-1960)," (Walter Klaassen, William Keeney, Russell Mast, Vernon Neufeld, Cornelius Krahn, *No Other Foundation: Commemorative Essays on Menno Simons*. North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1962), pp 65-76.

"Mennonite Migrations," (*Proceedings of the Fourth Mennonite World Conference*, Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1948), pp 229-230.

"Mennonites Hold World Conference," (*Christian Century*, September 1, 1948), pp 886-888.

"Mennonites—Numerically Speaking," (*Mennonite World Conference, Souvenir*. 1948), pp 22-24.

"Russia: Messianism—Marxism," (*Journal of Bible and Religion*. 31-3 July 1963), pp 210-215.

"Some Cultural Contributions of the Dutch Mennonites," (*Proceedings of the Sixteenth Conference on Mennonite Education and Cultural Problems*. 1967), pp 87-100.

"The Witness—Yesterday and Today," (Cornelius Krahn, & John F. Schmidt, eds., *A Century of Witness: the General Conference Mennonite Church*. 1959), pp 1-12.

"Ye are the Body of Christ," (*In the Service of the King*. Newton, KS: Bethel Deaconess Home & Hospital, 5:3 March 1946), pp 15.

III. BOOKS AND LEAFLETS

The following books and leaflets which Krahn wrote and edited are arranged by title:

Bilder aus der Kirchengeschichte fur Mennonitische Gemeindschulen, von C. H. Wedel. Neubearbeitete siebente auflage von Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Herald Book and Printing Co., Inc., 1951, 112 pp.

Brieven uit Rusland. Altona a.d. Elbe: Hans Harder, 1924, 5 pp.

A Century of Witness: the General Conference Mennonite Church. Edited by Cornelius Krahn and John F. Schmidt. Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1959. 93 pp.

Dutch Anabaptism: Origin, Spread, Life, and Thought (1450-1600). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968, ix, 311 pp.

From the Steppes to the Prairies (1874-1949). Edited by Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1949. 115 pp.

Der Gemeindebegriff des Menno Simons in Rahmen seines Lebens und seiner Theologie. Zur Erlangung des theologischen Dokorgrades on der Ruprecht-Karls-Universitat zu Heidelberg. Karlsruhe: Schneider, 1936. 47 pp.

Die Geschichte der Mennoniten Europas. Von C. Henry Smith. Deutsch von Abraham Esau. Bearbeitet und erweitert von Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1964. 347 pp.

Menno Simons (1496-1561). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Theologie der Taufgesinnten. Karlsruhe: Schneider, 1936. 192 pp.

Menno Simons' Lebenswerk kurz dargestellt. Amsterdam: Gleijsteen, 1937. 23 pp.

Menno Simons' Lebenswerk, 2nd ed., North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1951. 32 pp.

De Mennonitengemeenten onder het Bolsjewisme. Kempan: Stads Boek-en Courantdrukkerij, 1934. 16 pp.

The Mennonites, a Brief Guide to Information. By Cornelius Krahn and Melvin Gingerich. Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1967. 20 pp.

The Mennonites: a Brief Guide to Information. (2nd edition) Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1976, 32 pp.

Paria's in Soviet Rusland, n.p., n.d. 7 pp.

No Other Foundation: Commemorative Essays on Menno Simons. By Walter Klaassen, William Keeney, Russell Mast, Vernon Neufeld, Cornelius Krahn. North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1962, 76 pp.

Solzhenitzyn's Cancer Ward: Inside, Outside, and Beyond. n.p., n.d. 9 pp.

Story of the Mennonites. By C. Henry Smith. Third edition revised and enlarged by Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1950. 856 pp.

Story of the Mennonites. By C. Henry Smith. Fourth edition revised and enlarged by Cornelius Krahn. Newton, KS: Mennonite Publication Office, 1957. 856 pp.

The Witness of the Martyr's Mirror for Our Day. Revised edition. Selections taken from the Martyr's Mirror and illus. by Jan Luyken. North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press, n.d. 47 pp.

Beulah S. Hostetler, "Franconia Mennonite Conference and American Protestant Movements 1840-1940," PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1977, 323 pp.; Theron F. Schlabach, *A New Rhythm for Mennonites: The Mennonite Church and the Missionary Movement 1860-1890.* Elkhart: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1975. 40 pp.

Beulah Hostetler's dissertation is an investigation into the central values of the Mennonites of Franconia Conference in Bucks and Montgomery Counties, Pennsylvania, and the ways in which these values became the basis for resistance to dominant American Protestant movements from 1840 to 1940. For the definition of these central values, which she calls the "charter," she turns to the Swiss Anabaptist Schleitheim Confession of 1527, which addresssed the matters of baptism, the ban, the breaking of bread, separation, shepherds in the church of God, the sword and the oath. Although the Franconia Mennonites had never adopted the seven Schleitheim articles, nor is there documentary evidence that they were even aware of them, Hostetler argues that the Franconia Mennonites adhered to Schleitheim as the authoritative standard for practice. She disclaims any intention of addressing the issue, however, of whether nineteenth century Franconia Mennonites "retained the original spirit and vitality of Anabaptism."

Hostetler's main contribution, however, is not in the alleged Schleitheim-Franconia continuity, but rather in the thesis that the "charter" was the basis for resistance to outside Protestant influences as represented by the Oberholtzer Division (1847), revivalism, institutionalization, fundamentalism and premillennialism. In every case the Franconia Mennonites correctly perceived that the outside Protestant movements, which were so alluring to many other Mennonites, represented a genuine threat to that which was most significant in the life of the group. Oberholtzer's demand for orderly keeping of minutes, for example, is seen as a product of American Protestant post-revolutionary organization-building which directly threatened the church "charter" practice of settling matters in personal, biblical face-to-face encounter. By resisting Oberholtzer's demand for rational procedures, the Franconia Mennonites were preserving the essential nature of their brotherhood. Much the same can be said for Franconia resistance to revivalism, fundamentalism and other Protestant movements.

In its friendly and sympathetic attitude toward the Franconia Mennonites, Hostetler's thesis stands together with the interpretations of J. C. Wenger (*History of the Mennonites of Franconia Conference,* 1937) and Robert Friedman (*Mennonite Piety Through the Centuries,* 1949), and in opposition to the interpretation of Leland Harder "The Quest for Equilibrium in an Established Sect"). Harder saw the Oberholtzer division as an effort to reform the church on authentic Anabaptist lines. Hostetler moves beyond Wenger and Friedman in her careful reading of the sources to show the function of Franconia Mennonite resistance to change in opposition to specific charter-eroding influences in American society.

It is particularly notable that Hostetler's thesis diverges from H. S. Bender's positive view of the Mennonite "Great Awakening" from 1890 to 1914. The awakening which Bender had lauded for its great work in stimulating missions, education and church organization also had detrimental effects for traditional congregational life. "Awakened" Mennonites were busy organizers who built institutions on American Protestant models without counting the costs of bureaucratization for brotherhood living.

An ambivalent view of the Mennonite "Great Awakening" is implicit also in Schlabach's *A New Rhythm for Mennonites,* a booklet which constitutes the first section of a forthcoming larger study of the development of the missions thrust in the Mennonite Church (MC). Unlike Hostetler's formal definition of charter which had no category for missions (The Schleitheim Articles, although written by zealous Anabaptist evangelists, did not mention mission or evangelism.), Schlabach confronts the problem of the lost missions interest in Mennonite history. He draws a very sharp contrast between the theology and style of Anabaptism and the theology and style of the modern missions movement. Much in the modern Protestant missions theology, born of Pietism, was alien to Anabaptist-Mennonitism: emphasis upon individual salvation, sending missionaries by voluntary as-

sociations rather than as a natural outgrowth of functioning congregations, focus on the hope of evangelizing the entire world rather than upon the possibility of regenerated discipleship in an unregenerate world. When Mennonites in the nineteenth century belatedly underwent their "quickening," they were beguiled by American religious activism. The traditional self-effacing Mennonite language was gradually replaced by bold and aggressive language. The doctrines of nonresistance and separation from the world were pushed off to the edge of Mennonite concern. Mennonites began behaving more and more like Protestsants.

For Schlabach, as for Hostetler, the word "Protestant" usually carries negative content. The Protestant way was a threat, a deviation, a path which veered away from deepest Mennonite moorings. Schlabach does not bemoan the rise of missions interest among Mennonites, but he is deeply troubled that when Mennonites did get on the missions bandwagon they did so with a Protestant theology and a Protestant style. There would have been alternatives more consistent with Anabaptist-Mennonite principles, Schlabach believes.

This dissertation and booklet are significant for the emerging interpretation of American Mennonite history because Hostetler and Schlabach shift the focus of attention away from the "Mennonite Great Awakening" which had so bedazzled an earlier generation. The starting point—the point of moral identification—now becomes the isolated, rural, pre-quickened, pre-rationalized Mennonites who resisted conformity to main currents in American life in the early 19th century and, for the Franconia Mennonites, well into the 20th century. What follows after is lost promise.

The flowering institutions which were the mark of Mennonite maturity for those who built them—whether in Dhamtari, Nyanga or Hillsboro—are now seen to have fostered a style of life and thought incongruent with the best in the early Mennonite vision. But what are the proper boundaries of our contemporary historical self-criticism? Are we tending toward a framework of interpretation which basically sees Mennonite history after the mid-19th century as a downhill slide? What is there to affirm in our twentieth century institutional heritage? Hostetler and Schlabach help us pose such questions with fresh meaning and urgency.

James C. Juhnke

THE MISSIONARY AS STORY TELLER

Levi Keidel, *War To Be One*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971, 239 pp.,$7.95.

Levi Keidel, *Black Samson*, Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1975, 143 pp., $3.50.

Levi Keidel, *Stop Treating Me Like God*. Carol Stream, Illinois: Creation House, 1971, 223 pp., $4.95.

Levi Keidel, *Footsteps to Freedom*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1969, 253 pp., $3.95.

Quite a number of Mennonites are writing books and getting them published, but few of these writers are missionaries. Even fewer are the Mennonite missionaries who write novels.

True, we have had good books on the history of mission work in various areas—I am most familiar with those written about India—and there are a few books of short biographies. These authors do adequately what they attempt to do, they give us little in the way of background for understanding the countries in which mission work takes place.

Levi Keidel has done a service for us and for the Mennonite church in Africa by writing about the people, the culture, and the politics that form the world in which our missionaries teach and preach and minister. Furthermore, he writes with a very readable style.

His newest book, *War to be One*, is the story of the ministry of Archie Graber with the African Inter-Mennonite Mission, known as AIMM. Keidel focuses on the civil wars that raged for three years, 1960 to 1963, after the Congo became independent from Belgium to become the Republic of Zaire. Parallel with the tribal and provincial wars was the split in the church as tribes were divided and set against each other by political events. This split was not formally healed until its reconciliation in June, 1974.

Along with the account of the ministry of Graber is juxtaposed the story of Matthew Kazadi, the black pastor of the Baluba tribe. He became a refugee from Charlesville, the mission station where the two had first met at the beginning of their ministries in 1930.

Keidel uses a mass of detail about movements back and forth as small wars are ignited and put out, he tells stories of suffering and death by famine, shootings, and torture as refugees are frightened out of their home villages to try to find safety in other areas that are destined to become involved in the war.

The miracle of this drama is the way the spirit of the Congolese people emerges, their determination to live and to make a life as they resurrect themselves again and again from near annihilation. Keidel writes:

> Their ability to survive misfortune can be credited not so much to relief aid provided them as to their sheer, stubborn determination to triumph. Self-motivation, which Archie had seen emerge in the mid-1930's, had now blossomed into driving ambition. . . . Christians transferred this same kind of resourcefulness and ambition to their work of building the church. They were starting a new thing. The Baluba forefathers used to say, "Even if pioneers begin only by swatting grasshoppers, one day their progeny will laud them for their marvelous feats." (p. 223 f.)

This is an adage that Kansas Mennonites will be able to appreciate.

Archie Graber went to the Congo in 1930 as a part of the mission team to help establish churches and do what missionaries do: preach

and teach and minister. After thirty years of arduous but par-for-the-course successes and failures of missionary endeavor, he found himself and AIMM involved in the war. He had become so close to the people that they looked to him for leadership in helping them with the distribution of relief supplies and then the rebuilding of their villages and churches.

The real triumph for Graber was the reconciliation of the AIMM churches. He had left Zaire in 1969 with the churches still divided. He gave the commission to Kazadi to effect the reconciliation. Keidel writes: "Archie was gratified. Only the estrangement of the two groups of Baluba brethren remained to mar the picture. It was one thing, he saw, to build houses and classrooms and churches. To mend broken relationships was something else." (p. 228)

The healing took several years, and then Kazadi, leading the native pastors, and the AIMM missionaries formalized the union in 1974, healing the brokenness and completing the joy of the Grabers in their retirement.

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Black Samson is the true story of a Congolese (now Zairian) told in autobiographical style. We follow him from his rather idyllic youth through his education in a mission school, and his fall from acceptable society because of his uncontrolled anger and greed. Finally we have his reformation as he learned of the love of God from smuggled pages of the Bible and as he observed the way of Jesus practiced by a fellow prisoner.

I was particularly interested in the first chapters about village life and customs, how traditions develop and how important they are in giving stability to a tribe as it fought for survival. There is the story of how a new tribe was formed, the ritual terrible in its demand for human sacrifice, but reminiscent of the way Christ died to save humanity.

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I think that Keidel does his best writing in *Footsteps To Freedom*. While *War To Be One* is a factual account of the war and the inspiring story of Graber and Kazadi, *Footsteps To Freedom* is a novel about the same events and perhaps the same people. The author has more scope in a work of fiction for shaping the story and presenting his truths. He is not hampered by details, calendar, and geography. He can let his story speak for itself without having to pass judgment on his characters.

In this novel, Keidel develops his story in a more leisurely way and has time to hone his style into an effective prose. Any writer, teacher of English, or lover of words will enjoy the metaphors that come out of the African experience. Perhaps they are platitudes to the native, but they are fresh images to our reading eye and ear and they expand our understanding. The author had to have ears tuned to the language and a heart sensitive to what his friends were saying to write as he does.

When Mulumba and his wife, the main characters of the story, are nervous about going to a meeting where they will meet important people from the diamond mines, he says, "Is your heart shaking, Ngalula? Are you ready to sit among big people today?"

"I will be with you, but I will not talk," she says. "The wren rejoices in her own nest; when she is in another's, she sits with a stiff neck."

The number of the people at a wedding was so great that a falling leaf could not have found a path to the ground.

Mulumba says of his feelings when he goes to work in a strange village whose customs he does not know, "I was not brave now. I was standing on a rock with much slipperiness in the middle of a river full of crocodiles." In speaking of the many problems which encircled him on every side, he says, "An ant sitting on a sieve sees holes everywhere." When he argues with his uncles who had loaned him the bride price of his wife and who now are making demands about its repayment, he complains, "I asked you to help pound my corn, but does that make the pestle yours?"

Mulumba tells of the prosperity that came to the country and how the white man brought tempting things to buy, such as colorful material that made their eyes happy, food in cans, and sewing machines. He says, "Those who like honey will find the path to the beehive."

In speaking of the revolution that brought much suffering to his people, he says:

> Now all of us in our hearts agreed that the revolution was bad. What had tasted good in the mouth was now sickening the stomach. But what could we do? It was too late to escape being mixed up in it. One with a lame leg could not accuse another with a crooked nose for our trouble. We were all guilty. We were trapped as ants inside a bottle. What paths could we follow in trying to deliver ourselves? (p. 228)

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Stop Treating Me Like God is of a different theme. Keidel uses his Africa experience, but he talks about the missionary task as it affects the missionary personally. The stereotype of the missionary, as many people see him, is difficult to live up to, even though he may be completely dedicated to the cause of carrying the message of the love of Christ into ever situation. The missionaries are expected to be perfectly dedicated, perfectly controlled and perfectly successful; and when they act imperfectly, when they find that their dedication is not enough to keep them from making mistakes, they are disappointed in themselves. They can then only wonder: how can a true Christian fail?

This is a very personal story, perhaps too much so, but it will help readers understand the problems that Christian workers face in any strange situation.

So to Levi Keidel, missionary to Zaire, we are indebted for telling us what it is like to be a white Christian in Zaire; to be a black Christian in Zaire. There must be more novels, more biographies in the heads of other missionaries about the Christian experience in other countries, including the United States and Canada. We would like to read them.

Ruth Unrau
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E. Reginald Good, *Anna's Art*, Kitchener, Ontario: Pochauna Publications, 1976.

Anna Weber, who was in her own time considered "unbrilliant" has now earned recognition as Canada's most outstanding and prolific fraktur artist. The motifs she used were based on Mennonite traditions handed down through generations of Pennsylvania Germans.

Anna's Art relates the experiences of the Weber family as they traveled by covered wagon from Weaverland, Pennsylvania to the German Company Tract in Waterloo County, Ontario, Canada. Following the death of her mother, Anna lived in various homes. It was during this period that she had the opportunity to follow her own interests and the family was happy if she kept herself occupied—"even if it was with artwork." She never sold any of her drawings but gave them to those who would visit her. Anna's friends were primarily children who were delighted to receive one of her creative designs.

E. Reginald Good refers to a number of incidents in his search for the works of this nineteenth century fraktur artist. He has included thirty-six of her extant pieces, three of which are of her needlework. Many of the fraktur are reproduced in their original delightful colors. The book design by Glenn Fretz is very pleasing and certainly adds to its appeal.

Anna signed most of her pieces, "Anna Weber hat das gemacht" along with the date. "It is providential that these pen and wash drawings have survived to be appreciated by the present generation, even as they were long ago by at least some of Anna's people."

The result is a book that helps the reader to understand Anna as she recorded her feelings in her simple creations of nature.

(*Editor*: An article by Nancy-Lou Patterson on the art of Anna Weber appeared in the December 1975 issue of *Mennonite Life*.)

Ethel Abrahams
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Jan de Vries. *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age, 1500-1700*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974.

Jan de Vries combines economics and history to study the Dutch rural economy over two centuries of change and growth. He seeks to understand the factors which brought the Dutch to one of the highest levels of wealth at the end of the period.

For those interested in Dutch Mennonite history very little of specific information is found. Any religious factors which might have influenced developments are almost completely absent. The few references to the church are primarily related to data which the church records provide. The data gathered from the church records are primarily related to changes in the population. Jan de Vries generally assumes the state church situation and seems to ignore entirely the Mennonites even though they would probably have been a significant element in some areas studies.

The study does tend to confirm some factors which historians of the Dutch Mennonites have observed. The author notes the strength of individualism and the peasants, particularly in Friesland where Menno Simons and Dirk Philips lived and began their work (see pp. 55-57). He also indicates the economic reasons for a growing trade between the Baltic area, particularly Poland, and the Netherlands. This growing trade helps explain why Anabaptists would know about and find means to migrate to the Vistula Delta area in the sixteenth century (see pp. 71-72, 166-173).

More specific study would need to be done to see to what degree the Mennonites contributed to the economic change. It is well known that Mennonites were influential in the development of the Zaan River area and Workum ceramics. While they contributed to the total change made by the specializations in these areas, no mention is made of Mennonites, or any other religious groups, to the developments.

The book does provide helpful analysis of the changes which no doubt influenced and were affected by the Mennonites. Therefore any historian interested in understanding the Mennonites in the Netherlands in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries would do well to be familiar with de Vries' study.

Another group who might be helped by reading the book are those interested in development. Jan de Vries has made some observations about how and why the Netherlands could and did change. Those interested in helping developing countries with primarily a rural economy might find some clues for knowing what might be done to raise the level of prosperity in a sound and just way.

William Keeney
Bethel College

Active or Passive Christianity

by Cornelius Krahn

. . . . the essence of Mennonitism was unique. It emphasized strongly that Christianity is an active and aggressive force in a world of sin. The early Anabaptists dug through the rubble of tradition until they believed to have reached that true foundation of which Paul writes. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." It was their desire as co-workers of God to build on this foundation free from debris "gold, silver, and precious stones." They testified in word, deed, and blood in public debates, in the markets, in cathedrals, in courtrooms, in universities, wherever they went. Every member was a missionary; every man an actor in the divine drama. This is exemplified by the testimony of a Catholic persecutor who remarked to an Anabaptist martyr in a prison cell, "Before you join your church you cannot distinguish between 'a' and 'b', afterwards you know the Bible better than we theologians." This knowledge of the Bible, coupled with the aggressive spirit of testimony which found expression in consecrated living, accounts for the rapid spread of Anabaptism, in spite of severe persecution.

Is Mennonitism today still the aggressive force we have been describing? If not, why did it become passive? Because of its unique concept of Christianity, Anabaptism found itself in contradiction to existing churches, social, and civic institutions. . . . . According to the Anabaptists, the government had no right to interfere with the inner life of a church. The "*established* churches," naturally, did not object; they had been established by the government. For this reason early Anabaptism, severely persecuted and deprived of its trained intellectual leaders, became a movement of peasants and the lower middle class. Therefore today, with the exception of the Netherlands, the Mennonites are still predominantly rural. Like the saints of the Middle Ages, who went into the deserts to save their own souls, Mennonites settled in uninhabited countries to find religious liberty and to preserve the true spirit of Christianity. Sometimes their withdrawal may have resulted in being an end in itself and have become a matter of self-preservation. But, as the monks would join the world in distress and tribulation to acknowledge their solidarity with a world in sin and serve it in a Christian spirit, so would Mennonite communities as a rule perform their Christian duties and obligations. Also, they were quietly testifying to the surrounding world by demonstrating what a Christian community can achieve in solving religious, social, cultural, and economic problems.

It is true, the Mennonite "ark of Noah" has never been perfect. Too often it anchored in a quiet, peaceful port instead of doing its mission on the high sea. How did we become complacent? Severe persecution forced the Mennonites to withdraw from the world to till the soil in quietness. Their strength is at once their weakness. This is the route by which we became passive on-lookers.

How can a passive Christian become active? Time is playing into our hands. The "Chinese wall" that surrounded us is gone. Modern means of communication have thrown all the problems of the world into our compact and confined Mennonite churches and communities. We have no choice but to confront them. . . .

Formerly all doves were kept secure in the ark surrounded by a world flooded with sin. Here an atmosphere was developed which instilled the characteristics and beliefs of the church into all of its members without much discussion or consciousness of it. Today the situation is different. The windows of the ark are open. Many a dove leaves without ever returning. It escapes into the world instead of from the world. But it may still be escaping the problems it confronts.

Together we have to realize what the mission of our Christian church is and how we can fulfill it best. We have to be fully acquainted with the trends of today and tomorrow, but we must also know what the essence and characteristics of our church were yesterday. Analyzing the past and the present will enable us to point out which way will lead to what goal. When a farmer wishes to make a straight furrow he must have a goal in line with the point from which he started. Looking back, we find that the early Mennonites started out on the solid foundation, "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and forever."

This is the foundation upon which we wish to present in *Mennonite Life* the problems of our churches and communities of the past and present,—both here and abroad. Only thus, with the help of God. can we make a contribution to a greater and more abundant realization of Mennonite life "as it should be."

Mennonite Life, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1946.