

# Foreword:

This issue begins with two essays on plays dealing with Anabaptists and Mennonites. Lauren Friesen examines a 1947 German play based on the sixteenth century debacle at Münster and demonstrates how the playwright, the famous Friedrich Dürrenmatt, turned the account into a critique of Germany's flirtation with Nazism. Lesley Glendinning analyzes more recent dramatic works by amateur women writers in Manitoba who use Low German and humour to subvert authority and cultural icons. Gerlof Homan's paper on some 450 'Russian' Mennonite refugees in the birthplace of their ancestors in 1945-1947 is an account of international intrigue, cross-cultural tensions and native Dutch Mennonite goodwill.

The JMS Forum this year reproduces selected papers from the 'War and Conscientious Objector' history conference hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg on 20 and 21 October 2006. The first paper by Thomas Socknat argues that especially during war-time the Canadian peace movement received its genesis from a religiously-informed conscientious objection.

Two case studies of the edges of pacifism during the Second World War in Canada follow. James Penton's work on the Jehovah's Witnesses demonstrates how the state forced this religious group to pay the heaviest price among war resisters, including an outright ban on membership and frequent imprisonment. Ken Bechtel shows how Swiss Ontario Mennonites attempted to blend two seemingly opposing ideas – an Anabaptist communitarian pacifism and a prophetic Premillennialism.

The lived experience of conscientious objectors across Canada during the Second World War marks the next three papers. Abe J. Dueck outlines a conversation in Alberta where Mennonite Brethren leader B.B. Janz sought permission to have Mennonite CO's render non-combatant service along the lines of Russia's pre-revolutionary *Sanitätsdienst*. Leonard Doell shows how the United Church of Canada, whose teachers on Manitoba's Aboriginal reserves left for war, relied on Mennonite Brethren school teachers seeking Alternative Service opportunities. Lauren Harder describes the disparate and remarkably open response of Stirling Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ontario to the choices for or against military service by its young men and women.

The *Journal* turns next to historic sources in the study of conscientious objection. Conrad Stoesz's overview of primary sources scattered across Canada analyzes how those records were produced by government, church groups and individual COs. John Derksen reviews four

works on pacifism in North America and finds that despite different settings, approaches and media, they commonly asserted a lasting influence on society.

Four personal reflections show how attitudes have changed over time. Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld offers a theological critique of those pacifist trends and propounds a theology of pacifism. David Schroeder reflects on what being a CO meant for him during the Second World War and critiques a violence that comes in pervasive, but subtle ways. Sam Steiner tells his story of Vietnam War resistance when alternative service seemed an acquiescence to militarism, a stance that forced him to flee to Canada. Lisa Martens, whose grandfather was a CO during the Second World War compares the traditional CO stance to the ways of the more confrontational Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq and Central America.

For a variety of reasons, many very interesting papers at the 'War and the Conscientious Objector' conference are not included in this issue. Special recognition goes to Marlene Epp, Tamara Fleming, Andrew Friesen, Lucille Marr, Lawrence Klippenstein, John H.A. Dyck, Elizabeth Klassen, Victor Kliewer, Koozma Tarasoff, Gordon L. Toombs, and Ken Reddig. A play on the experience of Mennonite COs at Montreal River, Ontario, by Lisa Marten and a dramatic recitation by Dora Mandel on the Hutterian experience in the United States are also recognized.

In the "Personal Writings" section Katie Funk Wiebe traces funeral practices in her extended family over the course of her life, in early-century Soviet Union, mid-century Saskatchewan, and late-century Wichita, Kansas.

The book review section is again a treasure trove of scholarly analysis. It includes twelve reviews of novels and poetry, eight reviews of history, and four reviews of social sciences or religious studies. This is John J. Friesen's last year as book review editor for history and *JMS* salutes him for his two years in this service.

We also offer our gratitude to Kathleen Venema, book review editor for literature, and Al Reimer and Peter Pauls for their invaluable service in copyediting.

Royden Loewen, editor