Mennonite Central Committee and National Socialism, 1933–1955

Benjamin W. Goossen, *University of Chicago*

National Socialism played an important role in the humanitarian efforts of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in its early decades. Founded in 1920 in the United States to provide aid to Mennonites in famine-stricken Soviet Ukraine following the Bolshevik Revolution, MCC served an international religious community with deep and complex links to Germany and German nationalism. Germany constituted an increasingly significant node in MCC's multi-continental aid network during the years when the rabidly antisemitic and anti-communist Nazi Party was gaining strength. In 1929, a democratic Germany, the Weimar Republic, helped bankroll the transfer of thousands of Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union to Brazil and Paraguay. This had the unanticipated result that when Adolf Hitler achieved power in 1933, the substantial monetary debt that MCC had incurred under the previous democratic government was now owed to the Third Reich. Although US-based MCC leaders were not pro-Nazi, many of their contacts in Germany and Latin America were. These other Mennonites helped push MCC to deepen its activities in the Third Reich. After the start of the Second World War, MCC began a relief program in Nazi-occupied Europe. The agency learned of Nazi plans to resettle tens of thousands of Mennonites in German-controlled territory as part of an Aryan "master race," and MCC staff contemplated aiding this work. The United States' entry into the war in December 1941 led to MCC's

withdrawal from the Third Reich. At the time of MCC's departure, Nazi Germany's power was at its height, with around a fourth of all Mennonites worldwide—approximately 125,000 individuals—under Nazi rule.[1]

MCC workers returned to Germany in 1945 after the Third Reich fell. Over the following decade, the organization distributed humanitarian relief among non-Mennonite Europeans, one part of a much broader international effort to reconstruct war-devastated western Europe, while also helping some 22,000 Mennonite refugees, of whom 15,000 relocated to the Americas. Most of these refugees had received privileged treatment from Hitler's genocidal state as "Aryan" Germans; some participated directly in the Holocaust of European Jews. Refugee leaders sought to keep MCC in the dark about the full extent of Mennonite–Nazi connections, but administrators nonetheless learned the basic outline of what had happened. Staff downplayed these findings in their public statements and in their dealings with comparatively influential Allied occupation officials and other government workers as well as refugee agencies associated with the newly established United Nations. Initially, this strategy helped to protect members of the largest Mennonite refugee group, from Soviet Ukraine, from deportation back to the USSR. However, by the time MCC began moving thousands of people out of Europe in 1947, the strategy primarily allowed MCC to acquire refugee services and funds from UN-affiliated organizations—whose statutes precluded aid for migrants deemed to have received preferential treatment under Nazism as racial Germans—and to broadly protect the reputation of Mennonites. MCC claimed that refugees under its care had suffered under totalitarianism in a manner comparable to Jews, and, in ensuing years, promoted a narrative about their providential rescue from war-torn Europe. These accounts contributed to the rise of what historians Doris Bergen, Mark Jantzen, and John Thiesen have called the "myth of Mennonite innocence" under National Socialism.[2]

New research conducted in Mennonite Central Committee's archives has helped to make possible an overview of the organization's entanglements with Nazism. MCC's present-day commitment to understanding this complex history, as exemplified by its decision to promote discussion of this difficult topic, promises to strengthen its ongoing mission as a humanitarian organization engaged in peacebuilding around the world. By inviting scholars to examine files at the MCC office in Akron, Pennsylvania, and encouraging public presentation of their findings, the agency has shown an admirable dedication to transparency. This first step of interpretation begins a new path for MCC and us, its supporters, toward collective response.

MCC and the Third Reich

MCC first conducted humanitarian relief in Europe more than a decade before the establishment of the Third Reich. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution and Russian Civil War, the organization provided material assistance to approximately 60,000 Mennonites in Soviet Ukraine suffering from famine. Following this aid campaign, 20,000 Mennonites migrated from the Soviet Union to Canada between 1923 and 1927. Joseph Stalin's ascent, which precipitated a violent struggle against "class enemies" and the forced collectivization of the Soviet countryside, led to another departure of Mennonites. In 1929, the government of democratic Germany brokered admission of nearly 4,000 Mennonite refugees from the USSR, along with a smaller number of non-Mennonite German speakers, to transit camps in the Weimar Republic. MCC helped move most of these migrants, along with several subsequent transports from northern China, to Brazil and Paraguay. A subset settled in Canada with assistance from the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBC). Germany issued loans to finance transportation to Latin America along with sundry other costs. Although technically the migrants owed this travel debt to the German government, MCC and CMBC guaranteed the payments. These agencies agreed to pay interest starting in 1935 and to fully repay the debt by 1940.[3]

Thus, when Hitler came to power in 1933, the money MCC and CMBC had owed to the democratic Weimar Republic was now due to the fascist Third Reich. At the time of expected payment, this debt was worth more than $385,000 (around $8 million today, adjusted for inflation).[4] With the Great Depression underway, neither MCC, CMBC, nor the refugees were able to assemble this sum.

MCC leaders sought out Mennonites in Germany who could advocate for them in the debt matter with the Third Reich. Staff approached one intellectual, Walter Quiring, whom they identified as having "considerable influence" in Germany. Although Quiring was a "rabid Nazi," they felt this posed "no reason not to use him judiciously to help in this difficult situation."[5] More valuable was MCC's longstanding contact in Germany, Benjamin Unruh, a Mennonite professor and humanitarian. As an émigré from the Soviet Union, Unruh had represented the interests of Mennonite refugees from the USSR to German state officials since the 1920s. Unruh was also a Nazi sympathizer, who contributed financially to the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS) beginning in 1933 and who depicted Mennonites and Jews as racially irreconcilable.[6] Following a 1936 Mennonite World Conference in the Netherlands, MCC and CMBC empowered him to speak for them on the debt issue. Unruh mobilized contacts in

Berlin, especially bureaucrats in the German Foreign Office, where he depicted Mennonites worldwide as potential supporters of fascism. On behalf of MCC and CMBC, he beseeched Hitler's government to "grant us further generous support and thereby ignite in us as a racial community [*Volksgemeinschaft*] and as a small church a new passionate desire to express reverence and thanks to the German race and the German Reich through noble cultural work and a Christianity of action."[7] Germany's Foreign Office agreed to reduce the interest accruing on the Mennonite aid agencies' debt and to postpone repayment of the principal until 1942. Since Canada and the US entered the Second World War before this date, however, the money was never repaid.

MCC's negotiations with the Third Reich were complicated by pro-Nazi attitudes within several Mennonite colonies in Brazil and Paraguay. Many migrants, who had been settled with joint help from MCC and Germany, were grateful to both sets of benefactors and followed events in Germany closely. Leaders of Paraguay's Fernheim settlement praised Hitler's rise in 1933: "With great excitement, we German Mennonites of the Paraguayan Chaco too participate in the events of our dear Motherland and experience the national revolution of the German race."[8] The Third Reich continued longstanding German state efforts to cultivate relationships with German speakers abroad. This included material assistance, a small fraction of which went to Mennonites in Latin America. Aid from Nazi agencies included a steam engine for Brazil's Krauel Colony as well as school supplies, children's toys, and a radio for Paraguay. Such assistance reflected a belief that German-speaking colonies were distant "island" outposts of the nation. Pro-Nazi Mennonites in turn assured officials in the Third Reich of their loyalty and their antisemitic bona fides. One leader alleged that many Mennonites in Paraguay considered Jews "a deceitful and corrosive element that must unquestionably be avoided."[9] MCC staff disapproved of pro-Nazi attitudes among Latin American Mennonites but in practice mostly tolerated them. By 1944, assistant secretary Harold Bender regretted MCC's cautious approach. After pro-Nazi activists exacerbated intra-colony tensions, especially in Fernheim, and as the United States government expressed general concern about fascism among Latin America's German minorities, MCC developed a more overtly anti-fascist stance in the region. Bender recalled that until this point, the organization tried to support local Mennonites "without asserting undue pressure against the Nazi element."[10]

North American MCC leaders ascribed excitement for Nazism among many Mennonites in Latin America as due in part to the influence of Benjamin Unruh in Germany. According to one MCC

worker in Paraguay, an important factor propelling radicalization within the Fernheim settlement was "*Unruh's evident pro-Nazism* and his encouragement for the colonists to return to Germany or to German possessions." Unruh stayed in constant contact with Mennonites in Latin America by letter, and many settlers reportedly held "great confidence in this man."[11] He knew that leading Nazis eventually wanted Germans in the Americas to relocate to the Third Reich. In 1939, Unruh worked with a variety of National Socialist organizations, including the newly formed Ethnic German Office (Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle), a branch agency within the much larger SS headed by Heinrich Himmler, to help organize several small transports of Mennonites from Brazil and Paraguay. Unruh expected these initial pilot transports to prepare the way for later movements of thousands of Mennonites from the Americas, once Hitler secured more space. In the meantime, he reasoned to skeptical MCC colleagues, "A small settlement of young people in Germany can only help to improve our relationship with Germany, which has done so much good for us."[12] Some of these migrants from Latin America took over farms that the Nazis seized from Poles, an example of how welfare for the "Aryan race" relied on material deprivation of other groups.[13]

The outbreak of the Second World War drew MCC further into dealings with the Third Reich. German forces invaded Poland, intending to realize Hitler's old objective of *Lebensraum* (living space) in eastern Europe. Hitler believed that the German people needed vast expanses of territory to the east to grow and thrive. He intended to expropriate property from Jews and Slavs and to settle German speakers from around the world on stolen land. Unruh fervently advocated for Mennonites to be included in this violent scheme. MCC leaders did not support the idea of a global Mennonite migration to the Third Reich, but in the early years of the war, they wanted to keep Germany's goodwill. With US neutrality and the military course of the conflict appearing to favour Hitler's war aims, it seemed that Germany's importance for MCC's international aid efforts might grow. More immediately, leaders considered the war a travesty whose harms they could help ameliorate. In November 1939, a Goshen College professor, Martin Lehman, travelled to the Third Reich as MCC's Relief Commissioner to Europe. Lehman's task was to distribute aid to war sufferers and to ensure MCC's ability to operate in Nazi Germany and German-occupied territories while also maintaining a more politically neutral stance than Unruh.[14]

Even as Martin Lehman took up modest work with Unruh and other pro-Nazi Mennonites in Germany, MCC considered

undertaking projects to aid victims of fascism. In October 1939, Harold Bender met with leaders from other historic peace churches in the United States, including the Church of the Brethren and the Society of Friends, to develop a common strategy for securing alternative service opportunities for conscientious objectors in the event of a US military draft. One of the Quaker delegates, Rufus Jones, further suggested a joint relief project to aid "German Jewish and non-Aryan refugee children now in England" as well as, possibly, the large-scale resettlement of Jewish refugees from Nazism to British Guiana, the Philippines, or South Africa.[15] Bender expressed enthusiasm for both ideas. State-level support for large-scale Jewish colonization was low, reflecting broad Western apathy to the plight of European Jews, and MCC's engagement with Jews took other forms. In 1940, an MCC representative travelled to England where he gifted a shipment of clothing (valued at $569 then, $11,500 today) to Quaker colleagues for distribution among Austrian, Czechoslovakian, German, or Jewish refugees. He subsequently reported that "well-to-do Jews in England give very liberally" to the Jewish refugees in that country, and he did not consider further help necessary.[16]

More significant was the establishment of an MCC project in France that built on efforts to help people suffering from the Spanish Civil War. While MCC leadership did not specifically plan to aid Jews or other victims of Nazism, staff operating in the rump state of Vichy France rendered such assistance with increasing courage as the collaborationist government began to deport French Jews. One worker visited a concentration camp near Rivesaltes, which held 5,000 people, including 2,000 Jews. "The things I saw there haunted me for days," she wrote, "and I didn't see the worst parts."[17] The MCC worker Lois Gunden became active in hiding Jewish children and was later recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations."[18] The activities of Gunden and her colleagues to save Jews from deportation serve as an outstanding example of principled Christian humanitarianism in the face of fascism and genocide. At the time, however, neither MCC executives nor the broader church considered the rescue of Jews to be a primary aspect of the organization's mission. One booklet about the principles of MCC relief, used both to train new staff and circulated among general readers, described the French unit's work with children and refugees, but it did not explicitly mention assistance to Jews.[19]

Meanwhile, Martin Lehman's base in Germany gave MCC access to mid-level Nazi civil servants in Berlin. Through close cooperation with Benjamin Unruh, Lehman secured permission to distribute aid in areas under German rule, especially to non-Mennonite Poles but

also to Mennonites living in Nazi-occupied Poland and France. While MCC's European activities initially faced severe restrictions, the organization sought to ingratiate itself with Nazi administrators. This involved promising to aid Third Reich objectives abroad. Germany's Foreign Office proposed an arrangement in which it would support MCC activities in eastern Europe if the organization also provided relief "for Germans in enemy countries."[20] Specifically, Nazi officials asked that MCC distribute aid to German civilians and prisoners of war transferred from Great Britain to internment camps in Canada.[21] MCC's chairman, P. C. Hiebert, agreed to oversee this work, and he began reaching out to Brethren, Lutheran, and Quaker relief organizations as well as the International Red Cross and German-American interest groups.[22] Very little MCC aid was ever rendered to Germans in the Canadian camps, but this project gave Lehman and Unruh leverage for their dealings in Berlin.

MCC staff felt that their status in the Third Reich improved over time. Lehman received logistical help from the German government to import goods for humanitarian assistance from other countries in Europe, which he considered unusually generous.[23] In his capacity as MCC's director of European relief, Lehman travelled to Denmark, France, Hungary, Switzerland, and home to North America. He also received clearance for multiple trips to the General Government in Nazi-occupied Poland, where atrocities that would later become recognized as forerunners to the Holocaust were unfolding. Lehman soon became sufficiently well connected that he fielded requests from several other agencies, including the American Commission for Polish Relief and the international Save the Children organization, to represent their interests in Poland. Because Lehman oversaw distribution of MCC aid to Polish prisoners of war, the Foreign Office and the military, the Wehrmacht, sponsored a guided tour for him of a prison camp.[24]

Through these experiences, Lehman became intimately acquainted with Nazi objectives for Lebensraum in eastern Europe. "Should Germany acquire enough space," Lehman learned from Unruh, "many ethnic Germans will come from the East and overseas. Many Mennonites will accept the invitation." Unruh anticipated that Hitler would provide a permanent homeland for all Mennonites who were in or previously from the Soviet Union, and he expected that "MCC could not have anything against this."[25] By 1940, several hundred Mennonites from Soviet-occupied Poland were already being transferred to Nazi-occupied lands as part of a much larger "return" migration. "The plans of the German Gov't now are to resettle all former Germans in Poland and Russia in territory in the western part of former Poland and contiguous with

Germany," Lehman told his MCC colleagues. "All this is significant for us for it may mean the bringing of all Russian Mennonites into the western part of this General Government."[26] Mennonite settlers in Latin America, meanwhile, continued advocating for their own relocation. Leaders of the Krauel Colony in Brazil voted "to repatriate to the German Motherland," where they would "offer our sons" for military service.[27] Many of the Mennonites living in Paraguay's Fernheim and Friesland colonies desired the same. "Because the German Reich has begun to bring back all Germans abroad and also intends to provide as soon as possible the opportunity to all Germans overseas to return," wrote a pro-Nazi group in Fernheim, "we too have applied as Mennonites of German heritage to return with our children to the country of our forefathers."[28]

US-based MCC administrators opposed the abandonment of Mennonite settlements in Brazil and Paraguay, which they had helped establish with such great effort. Preserving the colonies there would also keep their residents out of Hitler's armies. Staff grew increasingly wary of the Third Reich's interest in Latin American Mennonites, feeling that Benjamin Unruh hoodwinked MCC's commissioner, Martin Lehman, and by extension the entire organization into harming its own interests. "I feel Lehman needs some outside contact, to keep himself balanced," Harold Bender wrote to MCC's executive secretary, Orie Miller. If Lehman was to stay in Germany, "he probably needs some counsel as to what his relation to Unruh and to the rest of our MCC work should be."[29] Bender travelled to Berlin in August 1940 to meet with Nazi officials regarding both aid work in Europe and the colonies in Latin America. In a private conversation with Lehman, Bender requested that he "not sign with Unruh jointly on any matters about South America," a position which Lehman agreed to.[30] Yet underlying tensions persisted. Lehman reported that the "whole South-American-Colonist question comes to the surface frequently in my conversation with [German] officials much as I try to avoid it."[31] While he avowed to be warier of Unruh in the future, Lehman often supported Unruh's positions in his correspondence with colleagues in the US. He notably counselled against ending cash payments Unruh had received since the mid-1930s, cautioning that "any abrupt discontinuance of Bro. Unruh's maintenance would have a harmful effect on the confidence of the Foreign Office, which it now has in the M.C.C."[32]

The diverse threads of MCC's relationship to the Third Reich converged in 1941, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union. German troops surged eastward in a surprise attack at the end of June. MCC staff paid close attention to the invasion. "With the extension of the war to the East," one aid worker in Vichy France wrote, "we have

been talking a good deal about the possible needs of new relief activities in the Russian area, especially among our impoverished, persecuted Mennonites."[33] Soviet authorities evacuated over half of the German-speaking population in Ukraine prior to the arrival of Nazi forces. Yet by October 1941, Hitler's armies had overrun regions that included 35,000 Mennonites. Lehman envisioned a relief program to help these coreligionists, with MCC returning to the areas where it had first distributed relief in Soviet Ukraine in the 1920s. "That a very large part of our future work will be in the way of help for these Mennonites in different parts of Russia and of help in getting them resettled and established," he assessed, "is already quite clear."[34] Lehman was probably correct to assume that although his colleagues in the United States opposed the movement of Mennonites from Latin America to the Third Reich, they cautiously welcomed the transfer of tens of thousands of their coreligionists from the atheist Soviet Union to Nazi control.

In fact, Nazi ideology and policy linked the issues of migration from overseas and the war in eastern Europe. Hitler and his colleagues expected to kill tens of millions of non-Germans in conquered areas of the USSR, replacing people whom they considered "sub-humans" with members of the so-called Aryan master race. Nazi scholars calculated that of the millions of German settlers to be sent to eastern Europe in the wake of this series of projected genocides, hundreds of thousands would come from overseas. They held special interest for Germans from South America, a small minority of whom were Mennonites. Himmler's Ethnic German Office opined that once Germany won the war, it could "force the South American countries to sign resettlement contracts."[35] Secret wartime planning documents show that the Nazis expected to erect a major colonization base in southeast Ukraine, namely "the Dnieper Bend, Taurida, and the Crimea," where Mennonites and other German-speakers had long lived.[36] Himmler appointed a Nazi writer and activist named Karl Götz to head the future migration from the Americas. Götz had authored scholarship touching on Mennonite history. In October 1941, after travelling through Ukraine with Himmler, he wrote to Benjamin Unruh as a first step toward bringing Mennonite leaders as minor players into this grand genocidal resettlement scheme.[37]

MCC's activities in the Third Reich ended in December 1941 when Germany declared war on the United States, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor. German authorities interned Martin Lehman as a US citizen, and in May 1942 he was repatriated to his home country. However, during the five months of his internment in Germany, Lehman (lodged comfortably in a hotel in the Hessian resort

town of Bad Nauheim along with US diplomats) continued to correspond with Unruh and other German Mennonites. He knew that Unruh was producing documents for Nazi authorities to secure privileged racial status for Mennonites in Ukraine. "I have the necessary historical information about every Mennonite village," Unruh had told him, adding that he "sent 157 typed pages with about a dozen pages of references."[38] Unruh reportedly had even acquired government permits for Lehman to travel to Ukraine, and Lehman believed that only his internment prevented him from visiting the Mennonites there.[39] Over the following three years, Unruh continued to work closely with Nazi organizations, above all the SS, to aid his coreligionists in eastern Europe and to plan the hypothetical resettlement from Latin America. "After the war, whole groups of Mennonites overseas are prepared to settle unconditionally in the Reich," Karl Götz continued to assert as late as 1944. "As returnees from overseas, they are especially important and welcome. Their willingness to return largely depends on how we now handle the Mennonites here."[40]

In the first months of 1942, as Martin Lehman waited to be repatriated to the United States, he continued to believe that MCC's work in the Third Reich had been paused, not ended. He wrote to colleagues at MCC headquarters in Akron: "The German Foreign Office asked me to convey to the Mennonite Central Committee their unofficial appreciation of the work of the committee in Poland and other parts of Europe and invites the committee to resume work in Poland or other occupied territory through Germany when the war is finished." Lehman emphasized that many thousands of people in Poland and elsewhere were facing death from undernourishment, and he pressed MCC to develop ambitious relief plans. He felt that aid to Mennonites, including those from Soviet Ukraine who had come under Nazi rule, should likely constitute a priority within this broader work. By contrast, he did not foreground the plight of European Jews, despite having personally witnessed aspects of their persecution. Lehman's relationships with Unruh and various Nazi officials inured him to certain forms of violence unfolding around him. "We are treated very, very well here," he wrote of his life in the Jeschkes Grand Hotel, where he enjoyed "splendid service and the best of treatment." He told a correspondent: "I hope to have a chance to tell the American people sometime that the German people are not the barbarians that American propagandist papers now paint them."[41] Lehman expected to resume his activities in Hitler's Germany. "As soon as practicable I want to return," he wrote. "The M.C.C. should begin plans now for a large relief program as soon as

war restrictions are relaxed."[42] Three years later, MCC would come back to Germany, but not to the Third Reich.

Postwar Refugee Operations

MCC's experience providing war relief and other aid in Europe, alongside peace-oriented programming closer to home, provided a basis for renewed humanitarianism in post-Nazi Germany. Between 1942 and early 1945, the organization had devoted most of its energies to organizing alternative service programs for conscientious objectors in the United States. Looking forward to the end of the war, however, MCC established a Mennonite Aid Section in 1944. Sociologist J. Winfield Fretz, who became secretary of the new Aid Section, authored a report on Mennonite colonization. His evaluation concluded that in an atmosphere of deep racial tensions and permanent military mobilization, "Mennonites must settle in fairly compact communities so that members can be of mutual assistance to one another." Fretz recommended "M.C.C. give guidance in the development of a Mennonite colonization program for the total Mennonite church."[43] While the initial purpose of the Aid Section was to help young men return to normal life following Civilian Public Service assignments, organizers envisioned that it might be repurposed to help "a considerable number of European Mennonites who have been uprooted by the present world disturbance." Planners expected that many of their European coreligionists might move overseas after the end of the war, noting: "This will mean a repetition of the type of assistance given to the Russian Mennonites established in Canada and in Paraguay following World War I."[44] Indeed, the Aid Section would go on to coordinate MCC's work with around 22,000 refugees from the former Free City of Danzig, conquered Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union. Of these, 15,000 ultimately relocated across the Atlantic, while the remaining 7,000 settled in what became the Federal Republic of Germany.

Over a month before the Third Reich surrendered unconditionally in May 1945, MCC leaders began planning the organization's return to Germany and other parts of continental Europe. They charged Martin Lehman with drafting a document called "The MCC's Program of Relief for Europe," intended to prepare aid workers who would travel overseas.[45] Lehman's manuscript asserted that helping war sufferers, including Mennonites, constituted a worthy objective for Christian pacifists. "The political beliefs and practices of needy people will be no concern of ours as relief workers," he wrote, "except in so far as they may be contrary to Christian ethics."

Lehman hoped that MCC could provide not only material but also spiritual help, for instance promoting pacifist theology among European coreligionists. He did not yet know what contact MCC might be able to establish with Mennonites from the USSR, but he recommended that the agency provisionally organize its humanitarian work by cooperating with Mennonites in central and western Europe, including Germany. As the MCC staff member best acquainted with Mennonites who had been in the Third Reich since 1933, he shared his view that, of this group, "some of the leadership and a definite minority are definitely in accord with the political philosophy of the Nazi party."[46] This understated the situation.[47] Lehman further claimed, misleadingly, that Christian institutions in general had conducted strong resistance in the Third Reich. The upshot was that when MCC committed to operate in postwar Germany, staff problematically presumed anti-fascism as coreligionists' default position. Lehman himself was in the first wave of MCC workers from the US and Canada sent to continental Europe in mid-1945.

MCC's postwar refugee operations developed within a broader relief effort to assist tens of thousands of non-Mennonite Europeans affected by the war, and was a relatively small part of what became an enormous international program to reconstruct western Europe. Operating in Austria, Britain, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland, MCC supplied as many as 4,000 tons of material goods per year. Its soup kitchens regularly fed up to 140,000 people. The organization distributed aid under the motto "In the Name of Christ," vowing to serve without regard to creed, colour, or nationality. People helped through MCC's general relief program included Jews and other victims of Nazism as well as their recent tormentors. In 1946 and 1947, at a time when many North Americans remained skeptical of providing aid to post-Nazi Germany, MCC was the largest donor to Germany's Protestant Relief Agency.[48] Within this wider program of unrestricted relief, however, MCC devoted special attention to fellow Mennonites, a decision made with reference to Galatians 6:10 ("As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," in the language of the King James Bible). Enough European Mennonites began receiving substantial material support that MCC even denied some requests for additional aid. "You will readily see that there is a vast difference [between the well-being of non-Mennonites in Europe and that of Mennonites]," one administrator wrote, "and as Christians I feel we must endeavor to find this happy medium between 'help to the needy' and 'especially to our household of faith.'"[49] Years later, a former Mennonite refugee evaluated the transformative effect of MCC aid: "Our

prospects in Germany [around 1945] seemed the least promising of any group, whether bombed-out native Germans or refugees. It was an impression that mirrored a reality that gradually, however, would change until we came to be seen as the group enjoying the best care with the brightest prospects."[50]

MCC humanitarians in Europe quickly determined that the Mennonites most in need of their attention were refugees from Soviet Ukraine who had retreated westward with Nazi forces starting in 1943. These individuals were now scattered among millions of other people displaced by the war, and like other larger groups from Soviet Ukraine, they faced the unwelcome prospect of deportation back to the USSR. Ukraine's Mennonites had experienced devastating hardships since the First World War and especially with the rise of Stalin in the 1920s. They endured collectivization, "dekulakization" of wealthy peasants, famine, and terror. The Soviet authorities targeted Mennonites on an ethnic basis as Germans, along with other supposed "enemy" groups like Poles and Koreans. From 1941 onwards, Nazi invaders treated most of Ukraine's remaining German speakers as members of the privileged Aryan elite. Hitler's functionaries falsely claimed that Stalinist violence perpetrated against Mennonites and other Soviet Germans could be ascribed to "Judeo-Bolshevism," and they justified the slaughter of Jewish men, women, and children as a means of breaking communist power. Mennonites, individually and collectively, became entangled with Nazi brutality in myriad ways, including roles as administrators, translators, policemen, and soldiers. Many of the 35,000 Mennonites in Nazi-occupied Ukraine received spoils of genocidal warfare, from clothes and kitchenware to houses taken from Jews or other murder victims. Nonetheless, the war years were hardly easy for these Mennonites. Now they faced the prospect of forced return to the USSR, where they would be treated as traitors. In fact, only 12,000, about one third, escaped this fate.[51] MCC staff worked tirelessly from late 1945 through 1946 to track down Mennonite refugees from the USSR, disproportionately women and children, and to bring them to regions administered by the Western Allies.

Efforts to help Mennonite refugees began developing in Germany even before the return of MCC to continental Europe. Two Mennonites who had been in the Third Reich during the war, both of whom had worked for the SS, appointed themselves as provisional MCC staff and began carrying out refugee work by mid-1945. The first was Benjamin Unruh. Operating in southern Germany, Unruh secured a certificate from Germany's leading Mennonite church group (the Union of German Mennonite Congregations) calling him a "*representative* of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa,

U.S.A."[52] Unruh had been the main spokesperson for Mennonites in Nazi-occupied Europe to the Third Reich, and he had worked with leading Nazis to integrate coreligionists from the conquered areas of the USSR into Hitler's racial state. As Nazi Germany collapsed, Unruh hoped to keep serving as point person for European Mennonite relief. He drew on prior employment with MCC to gain credibility with Allied occupation authorities. Unruh's role in postwar Mennonite refugee work has been understated in the published literature. In fact, he was instrumental in establishing a network of "trustees" (*Vertrauensmänner*) among the refugee population. As one trustee put it, Unruh was "from the start the acknowledged head and chief representative of this organization." Under his guidance, the web of refugee leaders took shape across Germany: "He ran its central office, maintained a master list of Mennonite refugees in Germany, and advised Mennonite refugees who sought his counsel. We saw B.H. Unruh as an altogether trustworthy friend, 'an immovable pole in our inconstant world.'"[53]

John Kroeker, based in Berlin, was the second former SS employee to self-identify as an MCC worker without official agency sanction. Kroeker was the scion of a well-known Mennonite family with deep ties in both Germany and the Soviet Union. He had migrated to Kansas with his family in the interwar years, where he produced antisemitic and pro-German propaganda. At the invitation of Nazi intellectuals in Germany, he travelled to the Third Reich in 1939 but was unable to return home when the war began. Kroeker had persistent financial troubles, and as he sought to raise money for himself and his family in Kansas, he became familiar with Unruh and Lehman, from whom he sought MCC employment.[54] Kroeker began working for the Ethnic German Office in 1943. Like Unruh, he travelled to Nazi-occupied Poland in 1944 to meet with refugees whom the SS had evacuated from Ukraine. "As a specialist on North America," he explained to one colleague, "I am primarily concerned with *contacting our return migrants and the local Mennonites in the Reich and, as feasible, evaluating their familial and personal relationships overseas*."[55] Kroeker believed Mennonites constituted an especially racially valuable subset of Germans. He hoped to use the information he gathered both to convince the Third Reich to extend special treatment to Mennonites and, after the war, to spread pro-Nazi attitudes among fellow believers in North America. Instead, he soon found himself in a position to mediate between destitute Mennonite refugees and Allied authorities. He established a "Menno-Centre" in Berlin and crafted a rubber stamp that read: "Prov. Representation of the Mennonite Central Committee; J.J. Kroeker,

Manager."[56] MCC eventually took over Kroeker's refugee work, which formed the base for its activities in Berlin.

Unruh and Kroeker were only the two most obvious manifestations of a much broader dilemma for MCC: namely, how should the North American organization engage with church leaders and intellectuals in Europe who had been Nazis or Nazi collaborators? MCC staff—who learned in harrowing detail through news reports, personal testimony, and other sources about the crimes of National Socialism—expected to rely on local leaders for information, labour, and support. Yet many of the best-connected Mennonites in Europe, especially in Germany, had developed their influence under the Third Reich. Put differently, because much of Europe's Mennonite elite had been Nazified, MCC's postwar decision to work with members of the intelligentsia ensured that they joined forces with former Nazis and Nazi collaborators. Unruh in particular pushed a stream of such individuals into MCC's path. During a 1946 meeting with Canadian MCC worker Peter Dyck, Unruh shared information about Nazi propagandist Walter Quiring and a refugee leader named Heinrich Hamm, who had participated in running a Mennonite-owned factory with slave labour from the Stutthof concentration camp.[57] Unruh helped lay groundwork for a future MCC refugee camp at Backnang when he and a former Nazi official, Rudolf Dick, met with Allied administrators in Stuttgart.[58] Similarly, in Bavaria Unruh worked closely with Heinrich Wiebe, who had served as the mayor of Nazi-occupied Zaporizhzhia, to advocate for Mennonites with Allied authorities.[59]

MCC staff agonized over how to handle Unruh and Kroeker. The Western Allies did not carry out denazification proceedings with great rigour but known Nazi pasts could have negative consequences for individuals, ranging from loss of employment to prosecution. MCC leaders worried that association with former fascists could harm the reputation of their agency and limit their operational leeway. Staff determined that "MCC will want to do the right thing" by Unruh, given his past services, but field workers were forbidden to treat him as an official employee.[60] Yet Unruh was simply too influential among the refugee community to be abandoned. In one case, P. C. Hiebert explained that "because of needed diplomacy as well as expediency," he decided to "use Benjamin Unruh as my intermediary to convey a copy of my letter to the Mennonites in the diaspora."[61] MCC routed funds to Unruh indirectly. He functionally became an MCC contractor, but his services stayed off the books.[62] The organization meanwhile assured concerned refugee leaders that Unruh remained in its good graces.[63] As for Kroeker, his Nazi-era contacts and papers made him too valuable to drop. "He showed

me his files," Peter Dyck reported upon meeting Kroeker in Berlin. "He visited many camps and has much information. A great deal of it he copied from the S.D., a branch of the SS. . . . I believe he really has something there but he won't give them up nor let anyone touch them; that's another reason why we can't simply put him behind bars."[64] MCC briefly entered into a formal relationship with Kroeker, according to which he continued to assemble refugees in Berlin in exchange for food rations.[65]

While MCC sought out non-Nazis among Europe's Mennonites, the organization found it impossible to achieve its goals by working with these individuals alone. The thousands of Mennonite refugees from the former Free City of Danzig appear to have collectively been the most Nazified. One MCC worker who travelled among refugee camps in Denmark found the number of former Nazis within this group to be "amazing."[66] Later, when staff selected four delegates from Germany to attend a Mennonite World Conference in the US, they had difficulty finding any clergy from Danzig who could meet visa qualifications. They discovered that the refugee group "apparently has no non-party members among its active ministers in the western zones of Germany at the present time."[67] The spiritual leader from the Danzig area with whom MCC worked most closely, Ernst Regehr, had been an especially enthusiastic Nazi, joining the party in 1931, before Hitler took power.[68] MCC did hire one anti-Nazi from Danzig, Herman Epp, for editorial work. Epp had been imprisoned in the Stutthof concentration camp, a facility where fellow Mennonites served as SS guards. Writing about Epp, Harold Bender noted: "He is the one Mennonite from West Prussia, or even in all Germany, so far as I know, who suffered for his anti-Nazi convictions, and spent some time in prison."[69] MCC also warmed to Gustav Reimer, deacon of the defunct Heubuden congregation in the former Free City of Danzig: "He is one of the few that was not afraid not to join the Nazi party."[70] But such choices were fraught with contradictions. Reimer had actually been a vital intermediary between Mennonites and the Nazi state, and he used his influence with MCC to help at least one war criminal secure false papers and transatlantic transport to Paraguay.[71]

For Germany's Mennonite intelligentsia, cooperation with MCC provided an opportunity to move beyond their pasts in the Third Reich. At a time when millions of Germans sought to distance themselves from Nazism, MCC provided a connection to the comparative affluence of church institutions in North America. Generous humanitarian assistance to non-Mennonite populations across Europe endeared the organization to Western Allied governments. Harold Bender's attitude toward the former Nazi genealogical expert Kurt

Kauenhowen is illustrative of the organization's willingness to rehabilitate fascist intellectuals. "Dr. Kauenhowen was a rather strong Nazi and has been disqualified from his teaching position because of this. This does not mean that we cannot befriend him and profit from the good aspect of his literary labors."[72] New periodicals in Europe and North America with close MCC ties circulated a wealth of information gathered from former Nazis and Nazi collaborators. Walter Quiring saw publishing as a means of working his way into MCC's good graces.[73] He also shared contact details for former SS and East Ministry staff responsible for Mennonite affairs in Nazi-occupied Europe.[74] Abraham Esau, the former Nazi Plenipotentiary for Nuclear Physics, undertook a substantial translation project in conjunction with MCC while imprisoned in the Netherlands. He translated C. Henry Smith's *The Story of the Mennonites* into German. The final version omitted an original section on the Third Reich, helping to sanitize Esau's own past and that of European Mennonites more broadly.[75] Former Nazis often helped each other, meaning that some non-Mennonite intellectuals benefited from MCC connections. The Nazi consul Walter Schmiedehaus helped to organize MCC's postwar work in Mexico. MCC, in turn, sent food packages to his relatives in Germany.[76]

The centerpiece of MCC's refugee aid program comprised resettling around 12,000 Mennonites from Soviet Ukraine to the Americas. By 1946, the governments of Britain, France, and the United States were turning against Stalin's program to seize former Soviet citizens from across Europe, including in zones of Western control. Mennonite refugees from the USSR already in the West were no longer likely to end up in Siberian labour camps. They nevertheless remained homeless and impoverished in a defeated land that was still years away from economic recovery. MCC resolved to help move across the Atlantic as many of these refugees as wished to depart Europe. To facilitate this work, MCC sought financial aid and relocation services from organizations affiliated with the United Nations, which oversaw a sprawling refugee program in postwar Europe involving migrant groups of many national backgrounds. UN rules stipulated that such agencies could not provide help to "persons of German ethnic origin" who had fled into Germany "to avoid falling into the hands of Allied armies," language intended as a blunt proxy to exclude people who had been in the upper tiers of the Nazi racial hierarchy during the war.[77] MCC workers calculated that if this standard were consistently applied to Mennonite refugees from the USSR, "95 per cent" would be deemed ineligible for United Nations aid.[78] During the war, most of these migrants had received "ethnic German" (*Volksdeutsche*) status and, later, German

citizenship, facts MCC knew. The policy of UN-affiliated groups to exclude Germans from assistance meant that Mennonite migrants—if identified as ethnically German, as most had been in the Third Reich—would not be able to access UN services and funds available to non-German counterparts such as Jews, Poles, or Ukrainians. It became MCC practice from mid-1946 to systematically deny the German ethnicity of Mennonite refugees from the USSR and, by extension, their relative privilege under Nazism.

To establish mass eligibility of Mennonite migrants from Ukraine for United Nations assistance, MCC made three principal claims to UN officials. First, the agency alleged that most refugees in its care were not Germans but members of a distinct Mennonite ethnicity. Second, it claimed that the migrants had been persecuted in the USSR like Jews under Hitler. And third, MCC insisted that these Mennonites "were brutally treated by the German occupation authorities" and that they "did not receive favored treatment."[79] MCC staff made these claims in a variety of contexts over several years, tailoring their assertions for specific situations. The apparent ethnic malleability of Mennonites from Ukraine (i.e., their ability to seem non-German) as well as their incontrovertible privations under Bolshevism rendered their cause broadly palatable to UN resettlement officials, who sought to help migrants within the confines of their mandate and sometimes beyond. MCC ensured that Mennonites from the USSR occupied the most publicly visible part of its refugee program, even as the organization simultaneously worked with migrants from Danzig and elsewhere, whose wartime Nazi ties were much more obvious. Staff also knew that Mennonite refugees from Ukraine included individuals who would not have qualified for United Nations assistance even if considered prima facie eligible as non-Germans. UN rules precluded assistance for migrants from any national group if they were known to have joined Nazi organizations like the SS. MCC took a heterogeneous approach to such people. Staff sometimes lumped them with the larger group from Ukraine, if doing so could help these individuals receive UN aid. But if MCC workers feared that this would tarnish their overall refugee program, they kept these applicants in a separate pool not presented for UN consideration. Maintaining multiple tracks for refugees while prominently depicting the core group from Ukraine as non-German victims of totalitarianism akin to Jews supported MCC's overall relocation effort. MCC-sponsored refugee transports included the full spectrum of people under the organization's care. The first shiploads of Mennonite migrants sailed for Paraguay in 1947. Smaller groups relocated to the United States or Uruguay. More than half would settle in Canada.

Ensuring the eligibility of Mennonite refugees from the USSR for United Nations assistance was financially beneficial for MCC's efforts to resettle these migrants as well as others, freeing up money to support refugees who did not meet criteria for UN aid. MCC successfully presented its wards from Ukraine as, collectively, "an un-Nazi and un-nationalistic group."[80] Refugee officials affiliated with the United Nations came to believe that "the majority of those [Mennonites] who found themselves in Germany at the end of the war had not come voluntarily to that country," concluding erroneously that they "were deported alongside other Russians to be used as slave labourers."[81] Such determinations rendered most refugees under MCC's care eligible for UN help. MCC staff considered this "the most significant development of 1947," because it determined "the measure of outside financial assistance that would be given our program."[82] Agencies tied to the UN retroactively provided an equivalent of $160,000 ($2 million today) for MCC's first shipload of refugees, and they continued financing overseas transport. The UN groups also paid for food rations and rail travel within Europe. At MCC's flagship refugee camp in Gronau, this assistance totaled nearly $9,000 per month ($115,000 today).[83] The UN cash flow substantially eased MCC budgeting. Mennonite churches in the US and Canada gave generously for refugee work, but even in the bumper year of 1947, donations for this program came to $600,000 ($7.6 million today), making the United Nations contributions important for MCC's Mennonite refugee resettlement program.[84] Within two years, UN refugee bodies had helped to move around 10,000 Mennonites overseas. Establishing refugees' eligibility for aid saved MCC and its Canadian partner, CMBC, at least $1,000,000 (an equivalent of about $12 million today) by early 1949.[85]

MCC's efforts to secure United Nations funding required cooperation with the refugees' own "trustee" network. The trustees diffused information among the migrants, ensuring a standardized approach to UN-related eligibility interviews. In August 1946, for example, Peter Dyck sent a memorandum to the trustees (who headed a larger network of around one hundred refugee leaders) to recommend that the migrants position themselves as comparable to Jews. MCC was "working to portray our *Volk* such that it has a special status. In this, we are entirely justified; our people have suffered enough, as one must recognize, and such people must first of all be helped. Two weeks ago, all Jews were given such a special status, totally irrespective of their nationality. This should also be done with Mennonite refugees."[86] Migrant leaders took up the story almost immediately, telling interviewers: "Mennonites feel that they are persecuted for their religion just as the Jews."[87] The claim that

these refugees should be treated "as the Jews" even appeared in the *New York Times*.[88] MCC assertions that Mennonites from Soviet Ukraine constituted a unique and persecuted ethnic group served the organization's multilayered effort to sidestep UN rules that excluded Germans from refugee aid. Staff knew that their strategy might suffer if United Nations officials treated wartime documents (including papers testifying to migrants' ethnic German racial status under Nazi rule or to their acquisition of citizenship in the Third Reich) as being more authoritative than MCC's own claims that these same people belonged to a non-German ethnicity comparable to Jews. Workers therefore used the trustee network to inform refugees from the Soviet Union that when they met with United Nations officials for eligibility screening, they should hide Nazi-era documents. MCC explained that an applicant "should not identify oneself as German or ethnic German. In this case, you can forget your citizenship status. . . . Relevant papers should also be left behind."[89]

The trustee network advocated tenaciously for refugees considered to be within the Mennonite community. These leaders intended to preserve the demographic integrity of groups moving overseas, and they especially sought to help Mennonite men who could head families abroad, including individuals with incriminating war records. More research is required to know precisely how each of the trustees had related to the Third Reich. It is clear, however, that some of the most influential trustees were implicated in the Holocaust and other Nazi ethnic cleansing programs, indicating that such pasts were widely tolerated within the migrant community. The trustee Gerhard Fast, for instance, was well known among the Mennonite refugees for his work as a racial expert with the Nazi East Ministry. His commando had operated in wartime Ukraine, distinguishing Germans from Ukrainians, Russians, and any remaining Jews.[90] Migrants commonly vouched for each other, as when two refugees falsely stated with regard to trustee Heinrich Wiebe (the former Zaporizhzhia mayor): "We certify that during his short term in office Mr. Wiebe protected the interests of the people as their dutiful representative and took part in no National Socialistic movements."[91] The director of MCC's main camp at Gronau hired Heinrich Hamm as his second-in-command based on the "strong recommendation of the various Mennonite leaders of the Mennonite refugees who came from Russia to Germany during the war years."[92] Hamm's prior support for receiving Jewish plunder was known to Mennonite leaders in Europe. When migrants did denounce each other, the charge of communism was probably more serious than that of Nazism. Moreover, such cases were expected to be arbitrated by committees comprised jointly of MCC staff and members of the

trustee network.[93] To a person, such tribunals likely shared the view of trustee Jacob Neufeld that "the Almighty, with the help of the German Wehrmacht, rescued the [Mennonites] in southern Ukraine."[94]

Revelations about the wartime activities of some Mennonites substantially hindered MCC's refugee program only during its final stages. By 1949, Mennonite eligibility for UN aid had come under investigation. United Nations officials learned of many applicants' wartime ethnic German designation and naturalization in the Third Reich. Although MCC sought to portray receipt of such status as involuntary, when UN workers consulted Nazi-era files archived in Berlin they corroborated doubts about MCC's depiction of the overall migrant population as broadly separate from or even repressed by the Third Reich. Peter Dyck questioned the representativeness of this UN inquiry. Picking 147 refugee names at random, he quietly submitted them to the Berlin archives. Archival staff were able to locate files from the Nazi era for half this group. Their report identified multiple people with Wehrmacht or Waffen-SS affiliation, a man who served with the Sicherheitsdienst in October 1941 (when death squads were shooting Jews in the region), a Nazi Party member, two wartime mayors, a policeman, and an employee of Organisation Todt.[95] Dyck kept this information secret. He did not share the results with most MCC colleagues. "Akron has not received any of it," he told a confidant, "and I see no need for submitting the findings to them at this time."[96] Nor did Dyck present his findings to United Nations officials as evidence of MCC's claims that Mennonites from Ukraine should be treated as non-Germans. UN workers meanwhile continued their own research in parallel. In July, they suspended Mennonite eligibility altogether. Through the Berlin archives and other means, they discovered Mennonite refugees from the Soviet Union with a spread of wartime positions similar to those detailed in the report solicited by Dyck, including a man who appeared to have joined an SS mobile killing unit.[97] Such new documentation did not prompt MCC to fundamentally alter its approach to migrants who may have participated in Nazi atrocities.[98] Rather, staff lobbied for Mennonite refugees from Ukraine to be reinstated as eligible for UN aid in principle, achieving this objective several months later.

By 1950, MCC's transatlantic refugee program was reoriented toward helping "hard core" Mennonite cases: migrants with known medical conditions, Nazi Party membership, or SS affiliation. MCC had already moved more than 11,000 refugees from Soviet Ukraine overseas by this time, leaving only 1,000 in Europe. Newly rigorous background checks showed that many of those remaining would not

qualify for United Nations assistance, even though UN refugee policy again held that Mennonites from the USSR should be treated as non-Germans. At least 140 had served with the Waffen-SS.[99] MCC nonetheless worked to help all aspiring migrants relocate to Canada. These efforts encompassed Mennonites from the Danzig area, whose clear wartime identification as Germans rendered them collectively ineligible for UN aid. While the Mennonite community in North America could finance their transportation, other barriers stood in the way. When sixty-two refugees from Danzig applied for Canadian visas as a test, thirty-five were denied due to past Nazi Party membership. Sponsors assessed that, since "most Danziger were connected with the party," large-scale migration would require changing rules that barred National Socialists.[100] Church leaders in Canada lobbied their government to allow entry for Danzig Mennonites beyond "the few who are not party members."[101] Waffen-SS cases among both the Danzig migrants and the final Mennonite refugees from Soviet Ukraine required especially great persistence. "There is nothing we enjoy more in our office work," one MCC staffer wrote, "as when we can call someone to inform him that we have been asked to mail his passport."[102] Pressured by interest groups including Mennonites, Canada gradually lifted restrictions on Nazi Party members and SS soldiers, enabling MCC to conclude its European refugee program by 1955.

Conclusion

Until recently, MCC has not publicly grappled with the ways that its humanitarian work with Mennonites from Europe before, during, and after the Second World War was entangled with Nazism and its legacies. Starting in the 1950s as MCC wrapped up its European resettlement operations, the organization sought to shape historical accounts of these efforts. MCC leadership exerted influence to censor the official history of the United Nations' overall European refugee program, of which Mennonites had been a small but notable part. MCC staff objected to claims in the initial draft that Mennonite migrants from Ukraine "were not eligible for the help they received," and that refugees "concealed evidence on the instruction of MCC representatives."[103] MCC files show these allegations to be essentially true. Yet the organization successfully enlisted allies at the US State Department to insist that the manuscript be revised to ensure MCC "receive better treatment."[104] Over the following decades, MCC continued to advance public narratives about the heroic salvation of persecuted refugees from the Soviet Union, further covering

over the complex, multifaceted entanglements of these and other Mennonites with National Socialism.

MCC's decisions to work with National Socialists during the Third Reich and then to downplay Mennonite-Nazi connections after the Second World War reflected fierce in-group loyalties but also a fraught relationship with Hitler's victims. MCC leaders sometimes voiced compassion for Jewish suffering or expressed dismay at examples of blatant antisemitism. MCC distributed moderate assistance to Jews, and, in France, saved Jewish lives. Yet staff could also take advantage of antisemitic prejudices among external refugee organizations to advocate better access for Mennonites. When the director of MCC's Mennonite Aid Section learned in 1947 that certain elected lawmakers opposed "admitting so many Jewish refugees to the U.S. as compared to the number of Protestants," he assessed that "time is now ripe" for MCC to press United States authorities to accept Mennonite applicants.[105] Others blamed Jews for complicating MCC's program to relocate coreligionists abroad, including complaints that Jews monopolized migration resources and raised too many questions about Mennonites' wartime activities. MCC's European Commissioner for Refugee Aid and Resettlement, C. F. Klassen, resented Jewish migrants whom he claimed appeared before United Nations screening agents in poor clothing and then, after passing inspection, wore "expensive furs and dresses with more than one diamond ring on their fingers and other jewelry." Klassen also identified Jews among the UN migration officers most responsible for raising roadblocks to Mennonites' own eligibility for financial help, disparaging a supposed pattern of "ignorance, prejudice, stupidity, and not seldom, even wickedness."[106] Klassen and his colleagues pursued their goals by advocating a topsy-turvy version of history in which European Mennonites allegedly suffered under totalitarianism as much or more than Jews.

Historical examination and public discussion of this past offer valuable opportunities for MCC and its stakeholders to deepen their commitments to effective worldwide humanitarianism. Evaluating the decisions of previous generations of MCC leaders can help current staff develop tools to navigate ethically challenging situations. Responding to evidence of antisemitism in MCC's history will benefit the organization's engagement with Jews, specifically, and it will broadly strengthen MCC's work in a variety of interfaith contexts. May the next steps that MCC takes on this journey of reconciliation epitomize its mission to serve in the name of Christ.

Notes

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1 Statistics collected for the first Mennonite World Conference report that, of perhaps half a million Mennonites worldwide in 1925, there were 12,500 in Germany, 6,500 in the Free City of Danzig, 2,300 in Poland, 3,000 in France, and 68,000 in the Netherlands. All these places had come under Nazi rule by late 1941, along with Soviet Ukraine, where 35,000 Mennonite remained. These figures include unbaptized individuals. Christian Hege, "Die Verbreitung der Mennoniten in der Welt," in *Gedenkschrift zum 400 jährigen Jubiläum der Mennoniten oder Taufgesinnten, 1525–1925* (Ludwigshafen am Rhein: Konferenz der Süddeutschen Mennoniten, 1925), 282–287.

2 Doris L. Bergen, Mark Jantzen, and John D. Thiesen, "Neighbours, Killers, Enablers, Witnesses: The Many Roles of Mennonites in the Holocaust," in *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, ed. Mark Jantzen and John D. Thiesen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 17.

3 "Verpflichtungserklärung," July 5, 1930, R 127514, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, Berlin, Germany (hereafter PA AA). For context, Esther Epp-Thiessen, "MCC and Mennonite Emigration from the Soviet Union, 1920–1932," *Intersections* 9, no. 4 (2021): 13–17. On MCC more broadly, Alain Epp Weaver, ed., *A Table of Sharing: Mennonite Central Committee and the Expanding Networks of Mennonite Identity* (Telford, PA: Cascadia, 2011); Alain Epp Weaver, *Service and the Ministry of Reconciliation: A Missiological History of Mennonite Central Committee* (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2021).

4 The debt totaled 945,676.80 Reichsmarks. In January 1935, 2.45 Reichsmarks were worth $1.00, bringing the debt's value in US dollars to $385,990.53. R. L. Bidwell, *Currency Conversion Tables: A Hundred Years of Change* (London: Rex Collings, 1970), 23. An inflation rate of 1970.9% for US currency from 1935 to 2022 yields an equivalent of $7,993,863.89 in 2022, according to US Inflation Calculator, https://www.usinflationcalculator.com/.

5 Harold Bender to Orie Miller, June 28, 1938, IX-06-03, box 2, folder 1/117, Mennonite Central Committee Archives, Akron, PA (hereafter MCCA). On Quiring, see Ted Regehr, "Walter Quiring (1893–1983)," in *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership Among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880–1960)*, ed. Harry Loewen (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003), 313–336. On Mennonites and the Third Reich, see Diether Götz Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich* (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1977);

James Irvin Lichti, *Houses on the Sand? Pacifist Denominations in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Benjamin W. Goossen, *Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 121–146; Marion Kobelt-Groch and Astrid von Schlachta, eds., *Mennoniten in der NS-Zeit: Stimmen, Lebenssituationen, Erfahrungen* (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 2017); Imanuel Baumann, *Loyalitätsfragen: Glaubensgemeinschaften der täuferischen Tradition in den staatlichen Neugründungsphasen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021), 119–314.

6 On Unruh, see Heinrich Unruh, *Fügungen und Führungen: Benjamin Heinrich Unruh, 1881–1959* (Detmold: Verein zur Erforschung und Pflege des Russlanddeutschen Mennonitentums, 2009); Goossen, *Chosen Nation*, 147–166; Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, "Benjamin Unruh, Nazism, and MCC," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 2 (2022): 157–207.

7 Benjamin Unruh, "Memorandum zum Reichsdarlehen," 1938, R 127518, PA AA.

8 David Löwen and Nikolai Wiebe, "Paraguay," *Der Auslanddeutsche* 16, no. 21 (1933): 542. On Mennonites and Nazism in Latin America, see John D. Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi? Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933–1945* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1999); John Eicher, *Exiled Among Nations: German and Mennonite Mythologies in a Transnational Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); John Eicher, "MCC and Nazi Impressions of Paraguay's Mennonite Colonies in the 1930s and 1940s," *Intersections* 9, no. 4 (2021): 27–32; Daniel Stahl, "Between German Fascism and U.S. Imperialism: MCC and Paraguayan Mennonites of Fernheim during the Second World War," *Intersections* 9, no. 4 (2021): 32–35.

9 Fritz Kliewer, quoted in Manfred Kossok, "Die Mennoniten-Siedlungen Paraguays in den Jahren 1935–1939," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 8 (1960): 371.

10 Harold Bender to Orie Miller, May 16, 1944, IX-06-03, box 22, folder 12/4, MCCA.

11 S. C. Yoder, "Account of Trip to the Mennonites in the Chaco," 1940, IX-05-01, box 1, folder 1/10, MCCA.

12 Benjamin Unruh to Orie Miller, July 4, 1939, R 127518, PA AA.

13 Gustav Reimer to Benjamin Unruh, May 25, 1942, Nachlaß Christian Neff, folder: Briefwechsel 1942, Mennonitische Forschungsstelle, Bolanden-Weierhof, Germany (hereafter MFS).

14 Orie Miller to Ernst Kundt, Nov. 15, 1939, R 127518, PA AA; Neufeldt-Fast, "Benjamin Unruh," 187–188.

15 Harold Bender to Orie Miller, Oct. 26, 1939, IX-06-03, box 2, folder 1/158, MCCA.

16 Amos Swartzentruber, "Report of my Trip to Europe Including Findings and Recommendations," 1940, IX-05-01, folder 1/9, MCCA.

17 Helen Penner, "Summary Report in Diary Form," 1942, IX-05-01, folder 1/13, MCCA. On the French unit, see Gerlof Homan, "Friends and Enemies: The World War II Origins of MCC Work in France," *Mennonite Historical Bulletin* 71, no. 2 (2010): 7–14.

18 Stéphane Zehr, "Lois Gunden and Mennonite Assistance to Children in France, 1941–1943," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 2 (2022): 307–329. On Mennonite rescuers, see also Alle G. Hoekema, "Dutch Mennonites and

Yad Vashem Recognition," in Jantzen and Thiesen, *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, 250–268.

19 Martin Lehman, *The History and Principles of Mennonite Relief Work: An Introduction* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1945), 27.

20 Gerhard Stahlberg, "Aufzeichnung," Jan. 24, 1940, R 127518, PA AA.

21 Martin Lehman to Orie Miller, July 19, 1940, IX-6-3, box 3, folder 2/49, MCCA.

22 Orie Miller to Martin Lehman, Sept. 19, 1940, IX-6-3, box 3, folder 2/49, MCCA. Canadian officials did not welcome this MCC program. Under Secretary of State for External Affairs to Consul General of Switzerland, Oct. 12, 1940, RG25-A-3-b, box 2821, folder: 1250-40, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, ON.

23 Martin Lehman to John Kroeker, Apr. 4, 1940, IX-19-01, box 4, folder 3/19, MCCA.

24 Benjamin Unruh and Martin Lehman, "Report on Relief Work for Mennonite Central Committee," Nov. 3, 1940, R 127518, PA AA.

25 Benjamin Unruh to Martin Lehman, Apr. 18, 1940, IX-19-01, box 4, folder 3/25, MCCA.

26 Martin Lehman to Orie Miller, Feb. 14, 1940, IX-6-3, box 3, folder 2/49, MCCA.

27 The decision is quoted in Benjamin Unruh to Ernst Kundt, Apr. 26, 1940, R 127518, PA AA.

28 "Erklärung der deutschen Gruppe in Fernheim," ca. Sept. 1943, Walter Quiring Collection, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, KS (hereafter MLA).

29 Harold Bender to Orie Miller, July 4, 1940, IX-06-03, box 2, folder 2/8, MCCA.

30 Martin Lehman to Orie Miller, Sept. 2, 1940, IX-6-3, box 3, folder 2/49, MCCA.

31 Martin Lehman to Orie Miller, Sept. 21, 1940, IX-6-3, box 3, folder 2/49, MCCA.

32 Martin Lehman, "Supplement to Report on Polish Work Submitted to Mennonite Central Committee," ca. Jan. 1942, IX-06-03, box 20, folder 10/57, MCCA. In 1935, MCC had agreed to send Unruh monthly payments of 600 Reichsmarks (worth $244.90 then, $5,071.48 today). Peter Letkemann, "Nachwort," in Unruh, *Fügungen und Führungen*, 384. The payments were irregular, however, and Unruh sought other sources (including German government funding) to cover costs for his humanitarian work, complaining that MCC undervalued his services.

33 Henry Wiens to Ernest Bennett, June 28, 1941, IX-19-01, box 1, folder 1/17, MCCA.

34 Martin Lehman, "Report on German-Poland Project of Mennonite Central Committee," ca. Nov. 1941, R 127518, PA AA.

35 Ernst Ritter, *Das Deutsche Ausland-Institut in Stuttgart 1917–1945* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1976), 144.

36 Czeslaw Madajczyk, ed., *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan* (Munich: Saur, 1994), 51–52.

37 Meir Buchsweiler, *Volksdeutsche in der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs* (Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1984), 321; Benjamin Unruh to Gerhard Hein, July 25, 1943, Vereinigung, box 3, folder: Briefw. 1943, MFS. For context, Benjamin W. Goossen, "Terms of Racial Endearment: Nazi

Categorization of Mennonites in Ideology and Practice, 1929–1945," *German Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (2021): 27–46.

[38] Benjamin Unruh to Martin Lehman, Nov. 17, 1941, IX-19-01, box 4, folder 3/25, MCCA.

[39] Martin Lehman, "Lisbon, Portugal," May 18, 1942, IX-06-03, box 5, folder 3/67, MCCA.

[40] Karl Götz, *Das Schwarzmeerdeutschtum: Die Mennoniten* (Posen: NS-Druck Wartheland, 1944), 3.

[41] Martin Lehman to John Kroeker, Mar. 8, 1942, IX-19-01, folder 3/29, MCCA.

[42] Lehman, "Lisbon, Portugal."

[43] J. Winfield Fretz, "A Confidential Report to the Mennonite Central Committee: Reflections on the Study of Mennonite Colonization," Dec. 27, 1943, IX-05-01, folder 1/15, MCCA.

[44] John Unruh, *In the Name of Christ: A History of the Mennonite Central Committee and Its Service, 1920–1951* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1952), 179. On MCC's postwar refugee operations, see also Frank Epp, *Mennonite Exodus* (Altona, MB: D. W. Friesen & Sons, 1962); Ted Regehr, "Of Dutch or German Ancestry? Mennonite Refugees, MCC, and the International Refugee Organization," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (1995), 7–25; Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Steven Schroeder, "Mennonite-Nazi Collaboration and Coming to Terms with the Past: European Mennonites and the MCC, 1945–1950," *Conrad Grebel Review* 21, no. 2 (2003): 6–16; Goossen, *Chosen Nation*, 174–199; Erika Weidemann, "Identity and Complicity: The Post-Second World War Emigration of Chortitza Mennonites," in Jantzen and Thiesen, *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, 269–289; Erika Weidemann, "Facing the Future, Reinterpreting the Past: MCC's Solutions for Successful Mennonite Immigration after the Second World War," *Intersections* 9, no. 4 (2021): 45–50; Aileen Friesen, "Screening Refugees: Mennonite Central Committee and the Postwar Environment," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 3 (2022): 381–416.

[45] Orie Miller to Irvin Horst and John Bender, Mar. 29, 1945, IX-12-01, box 22, folder 12, MCCA.

[46] Martin Lehman, "Mennonite Relief for Europe," 1945, IX-12-01, box 22, folder 12, MCCA. By "contrary to Christian ethics," Lehman meant personal impropriety, not political orientation. Indeed, when other MCC leaders determined that Lehman himself had engaged in an extramarital affair, they disciplined him with greater severity than sometimes applied to known Nazis or Nazi collaborators. P. C. Hiebert, "On June 30, 1946," IX-19-6, box 21, folder 12/79, MCCA.

[47] Demographic precision regarding Mennonite support for Nazism in Germany (and elsewhere) awaits further research. However, Lehman's claim deviated from reports that "the overwhelming majority of German Mennonites were always nationally oriented and welcomed Hitler's project with open arms." Benjamin Unruh to D. Hege, July 28, 1933, Nachlaß Benjamin Unruh, box 2, folder 8, MFS. Or: "The majority of Mennonites welcomed the National Socialist seizure of power on January 30, 1933, in the German Reich and in May of the same year in Danzig." Hermann Epp, "Die Westpreussischen Gemeinden von 1933 bis zum Untergang," *Der Mennonit* 1, no. 1 (1948): 4.

[48] Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger: The MCC Experience* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1988), 71–83; Pascal

Maeder, *Forging a New Heimat: Expellees in Post-War West Germany and Canada* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2011), 116.

49 Cornie Dyck to Atlee Beechy, Dec. 18, 1947, Robert S. Kreider Papers, box 6, folder 8, MLA. See also Astrid von Schlachta, "'Belief in a God of Love Seemed Like a Mockery': Mutual Aid and Relief Work 'In the Name of Christ' in Germany after 1945," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 2 (2022): 229–254.

50 Jacob J. Neufeld, *Path of Thorns: Soviet Mennonite Life under Communist and Nazi Rule* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 350–351.

51 On Mennonites in Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, see Eric C. Steinhart, "The Chameleon of Trawniki: Jack Reimer, Soviet *Volksdeutsche*, and the Holocaust," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 23, no. 2 (2009): 239–262; Gerhard Rempel, "Mennonites and the Holocaust: From Collaboration to Perpetuation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 84, no. 4 (2010): 507–549; Hans Werner, *The Constructed Mennonite: History, Memory, and the Second World War* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013); Doris L. Bergen, "Protestants, Catholics, Mennonites and Jews: Identities and Institutions in Holocaust Studies," in *Holocaust Scholarship: Personal Trajectories and Professional Interpretations*, ed. Christopher R. Browning, Susannah Heschel, Michael R. Marrus, and Milton Shain (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 142–156; Goossen, *Chosen Nation*, 147–173; Viktor Klets, "Caught between Two Poles: Ukrainian Mennonites and the Trauma of the Second World War," in *Minority Report: Mennonite Identities in Imperial Russia and Soviet Ukraine Reconsidered, 1789–1945*, ed. Leonard Friesen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 287–318; James Urry, "Mennonites in Ukraine During World War II: Thoughts and Questions," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 93, no. 1 (2019): 81–111; Jantzen and Thiesen, *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*.

52 Abraham Braun, "Zeugnis," Nov. 19, 1945, Nachlaß Benjamin Unruh, box 4, folder 21, MFS.

53 Neufeld, *Path of Thorns*, 352. Names of the trustees still working in mid-1948 (by which time MCC had already helped to move thousands of Mennonite refugees overseas) can be found in "Liste der Vertrauens- und Gruppen-Männer in der Britischen und Americanischen Zone," May 1, 1948, IX-19-16.3, box 1, folder 9/39, MCCA.

54 John Kroeker to A. Warkentin and P. H. Unruh, Feb. 25, 1940, IX-19-01, folder 3/19, MCCA.

55 John Kroeker to Kurt Kauenhowen, Feb. 10, 1944, John J. Kroeker Papers, box 2, folder: Kurt Kauenhowen, MLA.

56 Robert Kreider to Sam Goering, Howard Yoder, and J. N. Byler, Apr. 15, 1946, Robert S. Kreider Papers, box 6, folder 4, MLA.

57 Benjamin Unruh, "Besprechung mit PJ Dyck," ca. Feb. 1946, IX-14-00, box 5, folder 6, MCCA. On Hamm, see Ben Goossen, "How to Catch a Mennonite Nazi," *Anabaptist Historians*, Oct. 29, 2020, https://anabaptisthistorians.org/2020/10/29/how-to-catch-a-mennonite-nazi/.

58 Benjamin Unruh to Peter Dyck, Sept. 25, 1946, IX-14-00, box 5, folder 6, MCCA. Dick, a lay leader in the Lemberg Mennonite church, had been a Nazi official in the General Government. Emil Händiges to Arbeitsausschuß and Eideskommission der Vereinigung, Apr. 20, 1943, Vereinigung, box 3, folder: Briefw. 1943, MFS.

[59] Benjamin Unruh to Vertrauensmänner, ca. mid-1947, IX-19-16.3, box 1, folder 9/39, MCCA. On Wiebe, see Aileen Friesen, "Khortytsya/Zaporizhzhia under Occupation: A Portrait," in Jantzen and Thiesen, *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, 236–241.

[60] Orie Miller to Martin Lehman, June 11, 1945, IX-06-03, box 42, folder 23/12, MCCA. MCC knew of Unruh's SS ties, including his access to Heinrich Himmler. Benjamin Unruh, "Memorandum," Feb. 14, 1946, IX-14-00, box 5, folder 6, MCCA.

[61] P. C. Hiebert to Peter Dyck, Sept. 18, 1946, IX-14-00, box 5, folder 6, MCCA.

[62] From 1946 through 1948, MCC provided material goods valued at $50 per month ($588.62 today) to the Union of German Mennonite Congregations, which then paid an equivalent sum to Unruh from its own budget. Harold Bender to Orie Miller, Jan. 30, 1948, folder: B. H. Unruh Deutschland, Archiv der Kolonie Fernheim, Fernheim, Paraguay. From 1949 until Unruh's death in 1959, MCC provided a small pension for Unruh in exchange for his agreement to withdraw from MCC-related humanitarian work. Neufeldt-Fast, "Benjamin Unruh," 201–204.

[63] Siegfried Janzen, "Protokoll der Tagung der Vertrauensmänner beim Mennonite Central Committee in Deutschland," Oct. 21–22, 1947, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/78, MCCA.

[64] Peter Dyck to Akron, June 25, 1946, John J. Kroeker Papers, folder: Peter Dyck 1946, MLA.

[65] "Memo of Understanding Between MCC and J. J. Kroeker," June 25, 1946, John J. Kroeker Papers, box 1, folder: Peter Dyck 1946, MLA. See John D. Thiesen, "Writing the Autobiography of an Imperfect Stranger," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 36 (2018): 181–188; John D. Thiesen, "A Deeper Perspective on the 'Berlin Exodus,'" *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 2 (2022): 207–228.

[66] Peter Goertz to Emil and Rachel, Nov. 15, 1947, Peter S. Goertz Collection, box 2, folder: Correspondence October–December 1947, MLA. For context, Gerhard Rempel, "Mennonites and the Holocaust," 507–508, 512–525; Steven Schroeder, "Selective Memory: Danziger Mennonite Reflections on the Nazi Era, 1945–1950," in Jantzen and Thiesen, *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, 307–318; Steven Schroeder, "National Socialism and MCC's Post-War Resettlement Efforts with Danziger Mennonites," *Intersections* 9, no. 4 (2021): 54–60.

[67] Harold Bender to Orie Miller, P. C. Hiebert, and H. A. Fast, Mar. 13, 1948, IX-06-03, box 64, folder 35/73, MCCA.

[68] "Ernst Regehr," June 1, 1931, Captured German and Related Records, A3340, roll R064, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

[69] Harold Bender to C. F. Klassen and Robert Kreider, Oct. 25, 1947, IX-06-03, box 55, folder 29/147, MCCA. On Epp, see Christiana Epp Duschinsky, "Mennonite Responses to Nazi Human Rights Abuses: A Family in Prussia/Danzig," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 32 (2014): 81–96.

[70] C. F. Klassen to Orie Miller, Mar. 11, 1948, IX-06-03, box 66, folder 37/14, MCCA.

[71] Peter Dyck to C. F. Klassen, Aug. 20, 1948, IX-06-03, box 64, folder 35/137, MCCA. The false papers were for Johan Postma. On Postma, see Gabe Hoekema, "Pro-Nazi Pastors," in Alle G. Hoekema, *Hardship, Resistance, Collaboration: Essays on Dutch Mennonites during World War II and Its*

Aftermath (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2021), 130–137; Friesen, "Screening Refugees," 395–396. For discussion of another case in this vein, see David Barnouw, "Jacob Luitjens: A Dutch Mennonite War Criminal," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 96, no. 2 (2022): 255–274.

72 Harold Bender to Cornelius Krahn, Dec. 9, 1947, Robert S. Kreider Papers, box 6, folder 5: CRALOG Correspondence 1947, MLA.

73 Walter Quiring to Cornelius Krahn, July 3, 1950, Cornelius Krahn Papers, box 5, folder: Walter Quiring Correspondence 1946–50, MLA.

74 Walter Quiring to Cornelius Krahn, May 12, 1949, Cornelius Krahn Papers, box 5, folder: Walter Quiring Correspondence 1946–50, MLA.

75 Benjamin W. Goossen, "Abraham Esau: Hitlers mennonitischer Physiker," trans. Helmut Foth, *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 77 (2020): 129–140.

76 William Snyder to Harold Buller, Feb. 18, 1949, IX-06-03, box 69, folder 39/16, MCCA.

77 "Constitution of the International Refugee Organization," in *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776–1949*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1970), 300. Mennonites received far more UN funding than other groups that had held "ethnic German" status during the Second World War. Jannis Panagiotidis, "'Not the Concern of the Organization?': The IRO and the Overseas Resettlement of Ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe After World War II," *Historical Social Research* 45, no. 4 (2020): 173–202.

78 Peter Dyck to M. R. Thomas, Jan. 20, 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/74, MCCA. The "95 per cent" figure referred to the relative proportion of (otherwise eligible) Mennonite refugees from Ukraine whom MCC staff believed would be ineligible for United Nations aid if UN officials chose "to ignore the Dutch ethnic origins factor, and to rule them out on grounds of 'Volksdeutsch' if they have accepted German citizenship." Peter Dyck to C. F. Klassen, Jan. 16, 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/74, MCCA.

79 C. F. Klassen, "Statement Concerning Mennonite Refugees," July 19, 1948, AJ/43/572, folder: Political Dissidents – Mennonites, Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, France (hereafter AN).

80 Martha Biehle to Herbert Emerson, Aug. 9, 1946, AJ/43/31, AN.

81 Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, "Mennonite Refugees from Soviet Russia," ca. 1946, AJ/43/49, AN.

82 William Snyder, "Report of the Mennonite Aid Section Director," Jan. 8, 1948, IX-06-03, box 66, folder 36/124, MCCA.

83 Siegfried Janzen to William Snyder, Dec. 7, 1948, IX-19-16, box 27, folder 15/23, MCCA.

84 William Snyder, "Mennonite Refugees," 1948, IX-12-01, box 22, folder 35, MCCA.

85 J. J. Thiessen and J. Gerbrandt, "Minutes of General Meeting of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization Held in the First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon," Jan. 28, 1949, IX-19-9, box 3, folder 2/21, MCCA. This figure reflects the first 10,000 refugees moved across the Atlantic; UN organizations subsequently funded 1,500 more. CMBC paid for the transportation of Mennonite refugees who relocated from Europe to Canada without funding from UN refugee organizations. MCC financed UN-ineligible refugees who relocated to the US or Latin America.

86 Peter Dyck to Brüder, Aug. 1, 1946, I-X 19-03, box 1, folder 1/23, MCCA.

87 "David P. Boder Interviews Julius Klüver [*sic*]," Sept. 19, 1946, *Voices of the Holocaust*, https://voices.library.iit.edu/interview/kluverJ. See also "A Moses of Our Day," *Mennonite Life* 2, no. 1 (1947): 30.

88 "Mennonite Issue in Germany Ends," *New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1947, 8.

89 Siegfried Janzen, "Rundschreiben Nr. 2," ca. Apr. 1947, IX-06-03, box 58, folder 32/42, MCCA.

90 Fast served with Special Commando Dr. Stumpp, described in Eric Schmaltz and Samuel Sinner, "The Nazi Ethnographic Research of Georg Leibbrandt and Karl Stumpp in Ukraine, and Its North American Legacy," *Holocaust & Genocide Studies* 14, no. 1 (2000): 28–64.

91 Waldemar Wall and Anna Blankenburg, "Certification in Lieu of Oath," July 30, 1950, IX-19-16.4, box 23, folder 13/8, MCCA.

92 Siegfried Janzen to Whom It May Concern, Apr. 23, 1948, IX-19-16.4, box 9, folder 5/4, MCCA.

93 "Meeting of C. F. Klassen, Siegfried Janzen, Margaret Janzen, Elfriede Klassen-Dyck, and Peter J. Dyck at Frankfurt," Jan. 4, 1948, IX-06-03, box 66, folder 37/14, MCCA.

94 Neufeld, *Path of Thorns*, 371.

95 "NSDAP Records Check," Feb. 28, 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/74, MCCA. The SS Central Immigration Office (Einwandererzentralstelle) and other organizations had created records on most Mennonites whom the Nazis evacuated from Ukraine; that no files were found for half of Dyck's sample might have reflected the incompleteness of postwar archival holdings or the limits of archivists' retrieval methods. The results are perhaps better seen as a sample of 74 refugees (39 women and 35 men) than of 147.

96 Peter Dyck to C. F. Klassen, Mar. 11, 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/74, MCCA.

97 "Selected Mennonite Cases," ca. 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/78, MCCA. This report is undated but was discussed by MCC staff in July 1949. Friesen, "Screening Refugees," 404. Peter Dyck had previously reviewed findings from what may have been a separate UN inquiry with the Berlin archives regarding Mennonite refugees. Peter Dyck to C. F. Klassen, Jan. 19, 1949, IX-19-9, box 2, folder 1/74, MCCA.

98 For instance, the migrant whom UN officials identified as joining a Nazi mobile killing unit subsequently reported working in the office of MCC's Backnang refugee camp. Jakob Ediger to Elma Esau, Nov. 5, 1950, IX-19-16.4, box 5, folder 3/14, MCCA.

99 Executive Committee, "Minutes," Jan. 14, 1950, IX-05-01, box 2, folder 2/18, MCCA

100 J. J. Thiessen, "Bericht des Vorsitzenden der Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization für die erweiterte Boardsitzung," Mar. 1, 1951, IX-19-9, box 3, folder 2/21, MCCA.

101 MCC Gronau, "Annual Report 1950," Dec. 1, 1950, IX-19-166, box 1, folder 9/27, MCCA.

102 Anne Giesbrecht to J. J. Thiessen, June 10, 1952, Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, vol. 1326, file 968, Mennonite Heritage Archives, Winnipeg, MB.

103 William Snyder to C. F. Klassen, "IRO Manuscript Section on 'Mennonites,'" Jan. 24, 1953, IX-19-16.3, box 2, folder 10/18, MCCA.

104 William Snyder to C. F. Klassen, Feb. 9, 1953, IX-19-16.3, box 2, folder 10/18, MCCA. The re-written text described Mennonites as defined by "conscientious objection to the use of armed force," adding that they "have been

persecuted for centuries." The bulk of the original ten-page typescript, which had evaluated many archival sources to contextualize MCC's postwar work with refugees from Soviet Ukraine, was compressed into a single clause: "and finally the *Polish* and *Russian Mennonites*, about 11,500 of whom were eligible for IRO [i.e., United Nations] assistance." Louise W. Holborn, *The International Refugee Organization, A Specialized Agency of the United Nations: Its History and Work, 1946–1952* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 184.

[105] William Snyder to C. F. Klassen, May 28, 1947, IX-06-03, box 59, folder 32/56, MCCA. On Mennonite-Jewish relations, see Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia K. Weaver, *Salt and Sign: Mennonite Central Committee in Palestine, 1949–1999* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1999); Helmut Foth, "Juden, Täufer, Mennoniten: Ein Überblick über ihre 500 Jahre währende Beziehungsgeschichte," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 70 (2013): 23–54; Lisa Schirch, "Anabaptist-Mennonite Relations with Jews Across Five Centuries," *Mennonite Life* 74 (2020), https://ml.bethelks.edu/2020/07/09/anabaptist-mennonite-relations-with-jews-across-five-centuries/; Benjamin W. Goossen, "The Making of a Holocaust Denier: Ingrid Rimland, Mennonites, and Gender in White Supremacy, 1945–2000," *Antisemitism Studies* 5, no. 2 (2021): 233–265; John Kampen, "Assessing the 2017 Mennonite Resolution on Israel/Palestine," in *Peace and Faith: Christian Churches and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. Cary Nelson and Michael C. Gizzi (Philadelphia: Academic Studies Press, 2021), 296–316.

[106] C. F. Klassen to William Snyder, Jan. 28, 1953, IX-19-16.3, box 2, folder 10/18, MCCA.