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## Foreword

The tributes in this year's issue honour our two retiring editors and colleagues Harry Loewen and Victor G. Doerksen, respectively. Loewen has served as editor of JMS since its inception in 1983 and Doerksen as book review editor. Both have left an abiding imprint upon the pages of this journal and their dedication and editorial skills will be missed.

It is no doubt ironic that 500 years after Menno Simons' birth (1496–1996) the lead article by Jacob A. Loewen and Wesley J. Prieb deals with "The Abuse of Power Among Mennonites in South Russia 1789–1919." The authors, whose book on the subject is to be published soon, hope that their "I accuse!" will contribute not only to a better understanding of Russian-Mennonite history, but also to a greater commitment to Anabaptist principles of faith.

John B. Toews and James Urry, both well known to students of Russian Mennonite history, have contributed articles on the first half of the twentieth-century period. Toews investigates a religious subject dealing with the *Alianz* movement, while Urry deals with Canadian-Mennonite fantasies in the 1930s with regard to a "Menno" state to be founded somewhere in the world.

With Urry's article as a background, the article by John H. Redekop, "The Roots of Nazi Support Among Mennonites, 1930 to 1939," may not come as a surprise. What may be surprising is that some leaders in a traditional peace group like the Mennonites fell so easily for the siren song of Nazi propaganda. Fortunately, as the article shows, there were also sane voices that warned readers of Mennonite papers against the "Blut und Boden" ideology.

Bruce L. Guenther and John Friesen deal with Mennonite communities which are geographically separated by many miles. Guenther investigates an Old Colony group near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, showing how it gradually

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changed and evolved into a modern evangelical congregation. Friesen's article focuses on Old Colony Mennonites in West Texas and their struggle for economic and cultural survival.

With Mennonite women coming into their own in recent years (and none too soon!), Mary Cisar investigates women's autobiographies in a most creative and insightful article, "Mennonite Women's Autobiography: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Approach." The feminist voice in Mennonite studies has begun to add substantially to a better understanding and acceptance of the role of women in Mennonite society.

In our Poems and Stories section we present four original works. Naomi Reimer-Duke contributes a series of poems, "The Clamor of My Dead"; Lloyd W. Ratzlaff presents a short story, "Willy and the South Church"; Dora Dueck has a short story with a South American setting, "Crucifix on the Road to Gnadenheim"; and Katie Funk Wiebe contributes the autobiographical tale "Peter Had Come Home."

Novelist Rudy Wiebe is our Canadian-Mennonite creative writer *par excellence*. Twice he has won the prestigious Governor General's Award for Fiction, most recently for his latest novel *A Discovery of Strangers*. Al Reimer, in a review article, writes of Wiebe's literary accomplishments and development as a writer, focusing on the author's latest work. The issue concludes with book reviews and bibliographical notes.

After this issue there are changes in store for *JMS*, largely due to the retirement of members of the Editorial Committee. However, during the transition period the co-editors and the review editor have agreed to help with the editorial process until a new editor and team are in place. Articles for the 1997 issue of *JMS* should be sent to: Harry Loewen, 4835 Parkridge Drive, Kelowna, B.C. V1W 3A1.

The Editors