
Foreword

This issue of *Journal of Mennonite Studies* is divided into four parts: Historical and literary essays; creative literature; symposium papers; and reviews.

The first section begins with James Urry's essay "Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth and the Mennonite Experience in Imperial Russia" which deals with the dilemmas Mennonites faced with regard to their increasing material affluence. In this penetrating analysis Urry seeks to break what he calls the "conspiracy of silence" which "has been promulgated by many Mennonites about the true nature of their existence in late Imperial Russia." The Mennonite world in Russia was not one of "perpetual summer and sunshine," the author argues, but often one of glaring contradictions between Mennonite religious ideals and the realities of Mennonite society.

Werner Packull's "The Origin of Swiss Anabaptism in the Context of the Reformation of the Common Man" continues the so-called revision process in Anabaptist historiography. Packull contends that early Swiss Anabaptism was considerably more influenced by the concerns and aspirations of the rural and common people than has been realized by earlier Mennonite historians of the Anabaptist movement who stressed the religious-humanist beginnings of urban Anabaptism.

With Peter Pauls' article on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English views of Anabaptism we fill another gap in our knowledge of Anabaptism in England. The essay is part of a more comprehensive bibliographical study Pauls is presently engaged in.

The article "Menno Simons' Account of his Conversion and Call in the Light of the Bible" by Egil Grisliis, might be profitably read in conjunction with George Epp's essay on Menno Simons' early education in *Mennonite Images: Historical, Cultural and Literary Essays Dealing With Mennonite Issues*, ed. by Harry Loewen (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980).

In the creative literature section we are including four poems — two in High German and two in Low German — by the late Fritz Senn, a pen-and-ink drawing by Arnold Dyck not previously published, and a chapter from Al Reimer's Russian-Mennonite novel. It is our hope that in subsequent issues of the *Journal* we will continue to publish poetry and prose by Mennonite writers.

The four essays by Al Reimer, Harry Loewen, Victor Doerksen, and Abe Dueck were first presented as symposium papers in the fall of 1984 as part of the activities of the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. While these papers were not designed to be exhaustive studies of their respective subjects, they are presented here to satisfy numerous

requests that they become available in published form. The symposium included a fifth paper (by George Epp) which may become available for the 1986 issue of the *Journal*. The Editor's response to Harvey Dyck's essays on Johann Cornies (see the 1984 issue of the *Journal*) was first presented at Conrad Grebel College in the spring of 1984. It has been shortened and slightly revised for publication.

Our "call for papers" continues to be a standing invitation to submit articles and creative literature for possible publication in the *Journal*. Although the *Journal* is published once a year only — at least in its beginning stage — its nature and size allows for a greater number and variety of items than other academic journals.

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