

Mennonite-Nazi Collaboration and Coming to Terms With the Past: European Mennonites and the MCC, 1945-1950

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Postwar Mennonite historiography has revealed very little about how Prussian and Ukrainian Mennonites confronted their wartime collaboration with the Nazis. Instead, most historical accounts about the postwar plight of Eastern European Mennonites focus on the great suffering and losses experienced during and after the war (which have mostly involved the Ukrainian group). It is my contention that a general charge of collaboration is valid in this case, not only because of the absence of European Mennonite resistance to Nazism but, more specifically, because archival evidence clearly reveals that a significant number of Mennonites actively supported the Nazi regime.

This study examines how Eastern European Mennonites fashioned their own unique historical understanding of their involvement in the Second World War, and why their choice to do so remains relevant for Mennonites today. Drawing on archival resources — including Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) correspondence and government documents — I address this topic by examining the experiences of East European Mennonites between 1945 and 1950.

I

Over the four centuries of their Prussian domicile, Mennonites continually struggled for acceptance, a struggle that revealed their proclivity to work toward a synthesis of their time-honored religious traditions with the prevailing national ethos.¹ By the 1930s, Prussian Mennonites had come to prioritize the latter and, contrary to the inherent incompatibility between Mennonitism and Nazi ideology, willingly participated in bringing the Nazis to power in supporting the German war effort. All Prussian Mennonite men of draft age joined the German Army (*Wehrmacht*) and the SS, some even before the introduction of universal conscription.² An untold number of Ukrainian Mennonite men also joined the *Wehrmacht* and *Waffen SS* after German forces seized Ukraine in 1941.³ With both communities compromising their traditional religious beliefs, the Danziger Mennonites were able to maintain

their community during the Third Reich and the Ukrainians were able to survive and mete out revenge against the Soviets, whom they had learned to despise. Although aware of the Nazi brutality and genocide that was occurring in nearby concentration and extermination camps, many of these Mennonites anticipated an eventual German war victory as the will of God.⁴ When the exact opposite happened and the Red Army encroached on the Vistula Delta, some Mennonites like Klaus Froese, who recognized that German aggression had aroused Russian vengeance, still pondered: “Will our victimization come to an end soon?”⁵

After their flight from the Vistula Delta in January 1945, the Mennonites found themselves either in Denmark or in the British zone of occupation in western Germany, often in terrible living conditions and nearing starvation.⁶ North American MCC workers — some of whom had done volunteer work in England during the war — had expanded their operations to mainland Europe in 1944 and made contact with these refugees, setting up camps at Copenhagen, in the British occupation zone in Gronau, Fallingsbostel, and Pelplin, Poland during 1946-1947. Here, the refugees’ status shifted to that of a defeated enemy, bringing with it notions of injustice and victimization, mixed with fear.

The Mennonite refugees’ greatest fears were of dying in the camps and, for the Ukrainians, of being repatriated to the Soviet Union, which one Mennonite woman believed would be proof of God’s “punishment for sin” against the Mennonites; another woman begged for death in its stead.⁷ The major problem for the Danzigers, however, was that the Inter-Governmental Council for Refugees (IGCR) and the International Refugee Organization (IRO) classified them as German citizens (*Reichsdeutsche*) which rendered them — since Germany was not a member of the United Nations — ineligible for care in IGCR/IRO and UN Displaced Persons camps and for IGCR/IRO emigration expenses.⁸ Now, after a centuries-long battle to gain the *Reichsdeutsche* status, it became the bane of their existence. The IGCR/IRO also refused to finance former *Werhmacht*, SS, and Nazi Party members, an aggregation which included a great number of Danziger, Ukrainian, and Dutch Mennonites.

The sum of these experiences came to bear on Mennonite refugees’ response to their new plight of homelessness and their subsequent reflection on the events of the war. Amid the great uncertainties of Central European statehood in the immediate postwar era, when nationality often determined whether one was persecuted or privileged and, in some cases, whether one would live or die, the Mennonites adopted a fluid national identity. When their

formerly favored characteristics of nationality, ethnicity, and language became the very things that brought the wrath of others to bear upon them, the Mennonites denied any association with the Nazi regime — and with their German heritage — and remodeled their existing identity to distance themselves from their recent past to avoid retribution from their enemies.

II

This remodeling of communal identity was to be founded on the familiar Mennonite motifs of victimization, martyrdom, and nonresistance; motifs that found support both in and beyond the Mennonite community, and that Mennonites would maintain long after the end of the war.⁹ MCC workers, who also believed and propagated the notion that Danzigers were victims of the war, were busy devising new strategies to elevate Mennonite status beyond nationality in order to circumvent the political restrictions on population transfers that the Allied powers and the UN had established.¹⁰ The emerging discourse fostered two related ideas that would affect the ability of Mennonites to reflect critically on their collaboration with the Nazis: it distanced Mennonites from their ethnic and national roots, and bolstered the Mennonite notion of being “in, but not of, the world.”

The first strategy that served to alter Eastern European Mennonite national affiliation was fashioned in the summer of 1945, when Ukrainian Mennonites, hoping to gain entrance into Holland and receive UN and IGCR assistance, claimed that they were of Dutch ancestry. One MCC administrator, together with a Mennonite Dutch pastor, convinced Dutch officials of the Mennonites’ Dutch ancestry which, they claimed, could be traced back to the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹¹ Under the terms of the 22 December 1945 agreement with Holland’s Frontier Guard, under which the MCC assumed responsibility for Mennonites of Dutch origin, a “Menno Pas” was created. The Pas attested to the Mennonites’ Dutch ancestry and functioned as a Mennonite passport that permitted Ukrainian Mennonites to enter Holland. In 1948, one MCC worker revealed the true motive for claiming Dutch ancestry, even after he recognized the problems inherent in doing so. He concluded: “We may feel unjustified in classifying them as of Dutch ethnic origin [because of their language and culture today]. On the other hand, what justification do we have in classifying them as of Prussian or German ethnic origin with its present implications?”¹²

The MCC assisted in many other attempts to distance Ukrainian Mennonites from both Soviet and German nationalities through the publication of numerous articles and documents concerning Ukrainian Mennonites' Dutch ancestry, and the proper historical and contemporary definition of "Mennonite."¹³ In 1946, an MCC administrator created a document on Mennonite identity for the newly-formed IRO, entitled "Mennonite Refugees in Germany," in which he informed IRO officers that "the Mennonite brotherhood for 450 years has consistently endeavored to put into practice nonresistance, nonswearing of oaths, and freedom of conscience."¹⁴

Another MCC administrator went so far as to provide Mennonites with the proper answers to questions that IRO administrators used in categorizing refugees and assessing their eligibility for IRO care. A circular to Mennonites explained that they were not to claim "German" or "ethnic German" nationality, but instead to identify themselves as Mennonites:

How should I answer the question about nationality? The question is very complicated but also a very simple question . . . this question should be answered with 'Mennonite.' And as a result, the person in question will be processed in a preferential way. In any case, one should not check off 'German' or 'ethnic German.' In this case one might also "forget" one's citizenship papers. We do not wish to answer the questions with a partial truth and lie, but we want to maintain the old [biblical] principle: yes is yes, no is no.¹⁵

Consequently, IRO administrators came to doubt the Mennonites' claim to Dutch ancestry and questioned the integrity of the MCC.¹⁶ The IRO's doubts were realized after their Preparatory Commission began investigating the wartime affiliations of Mennonites at the Fallingsbostel DP camp in 1949. Their random surveys revealed that many Mennonites had been Nazi Party members, and many had served in the *Waffen SS*, the *Wehrmacht*, and the *Sicherheitsdienst*, and that Ukrainian Mennonites had received German citizenship in 1943.¹⁷ The MCC went to great lengths to prove that the Ukrainians were forced to do these things against their will, and embarked on an elaborate diplomatic campaign on their behalf.¹⁸ In the end, the MCC convinced the IRO of their innocence, even though many Ukrainian Mennonites, motivated to avenge the deaths of loved ones under Soviet rule, had volunteered for the *Wehrmacht*.¹⁹

A second strategy involved Danziger and Ukrainian Mennonites furthering their traditional notion of being “in, but not of, the world.” As explained in a July 1946 letter to the IRO, one MCC administrator asserted:

The Mennonite refugees are undoubtedly a remnant of a distinctly characterized people, a *Volk*, which is neither Russian nor German.²⁰

Similarly, in an interview in 1988, the same MCC worker recalled:

They [the refugees] changed their identity when it suited them. They became chameleons . . . all those in the Russian zone . . . tried to pass themselves off as Germans so they would not be shipped back to Russia, but during the IRO interviews they flipped and suddenly they were not Germans . . . apparently they had no qualms . . . they played this game constantly . . . but in another sense, it wasn't a game, *they were neither German nor Russian nor even Dutch — they were Mennonite, a distinctly separate group.*²¹

A striking contrast to this Mennonite claim to “other-worldliness” is found in the Mennonite experience in Poland between 1945 and 1949. Although it was not uncommon for MCC workers to refer to Mennonite refugees as “our people” and to prioritize their well-being over others, this familial notion was extended to *land* in Poland that was previously owned and farmed by Mennonites.²² MCC administrators in Pelplin, Poland, revealed the underlying motive for MCC's presence in the area in their MCC report:

The MCC would like to set up a farm project on the uncultivated lands east of the Vistula River. It had formerly been farmed chiefly by Mennonites . . . I propose that if possible we obtain full administrative responsibility for a good sized tract of land in that area . . . with the idea of re-establishing a church and mission activities there.²³

Moreover, in contrast to his MCC brethren in western Germany, an MCC worker recognized the German ethnicity of all Mennonites in Poland, claiming that “we have three nationalities of Mennonites here in Poland: the Russian Mennonites, the German Mennonites from East Prussia and the Polish Mennonites from the communities near Warsaw. Nevertheless, all are distinctly of German race and wish to hold to their German culture.”²⁴ MCC workers succeeded in securing exit permits for these distinctly “German” Mennonites from Prussia, Ukraine, and Poland in 1948.²⁵

These strategies of identity modification were legitimized by means of a very powerful notion that the MCC and European Mennonites were involved in a divinely-sanctioned exodus from Communism and suffering to a new life abroad. These beliefs served to justify the tactics employed in manipulating Mennonite identity and various government agencies. As one MCC man explained to another in 1952: "I fully agree with you that we do not want to do anything illegal. But what is legal and what is illegal, when it comes to saving people from those godless Red bandits?"²⁶

The exodus motif finds abundant representation in a variety of Mennonite sources, including personal diaries of Mennonite refugees and MCC documents. Indeed, a Canadian Mennonite, who was a member of the Canadian Board of Colonization, and an MCC administrator both gleaned inspiration for their work from Moses' declaration before Pharaoh, "there shall not an hoof be left behind," a slogan that they included in their reports to other MCC administrators.²⁷ Similarly, in the pamphlet, "History of the Mennonites," written to British occupation administrators in 1945, the MCC offered this description: "The Mennonites look again over the ocean towards that far free country with its wide empty plains and think it their new Canaan the country which is waiting for their peaceful labor."²⁸

Mennonite appropriation of the exodus motif was insensitive at best, given the very recent fate of millions of European Jews. Here, the Mennonites depicted themselves as God's chosen, peace-loving people who were being led to their new promised land. This notion is nowhere more evident than in the 1947 MCC movie, aptly named "Exodus," which depicted MCC work among European refugees and was shown to IRO officials in Geneva with great effect. The MCC creator of the movie recalled how those who "saw the film . . . felt justified in coming down on the side of eligibility [for German Mennonite assistance]."²⁹ MCC's tireless lobbying, together with the easing of North American immigration policies after 1950, resulted in the "exodus" of all Mennonite applicants, regardless of their wartime status.

In the immediate postwar era, Danziger and Ukrainian Mennonites tried to distance themselves from their German heritage. Some claimed that even while they collaborated with the Nazis and served in the German armed forces, they had remained "*Wehrlos* (pacifist) in their hearts."³⁰ Danziger and Ukrainian Mennonites returned to familiar motifs of suffering and martyrdom, and of being "in, but not of, the world," leaving Mennonites, and

their posterity, without an adequate, critical reflective posture with respect to the final years of their Eastern European domicile.

III

Indeed, the historical focus on the “exodus,” while fostering a motif of suffering, has enabled Mennonites to forget about their Nazi collaboration. The IRO’s emigration restrictions resulted in some Mennonites choosing to lie outright about their identity. There are at least four known cases of Dutch Mennonite men who had been charged with war crimes for collaborating with the Nazis in various ways, who managed, with MCC assistance, to emigrate to Paraguay under false pretenses.³¹ For example, the notorious case of Jacob Luitjens, a former member of the Dutch SA and the Dutch counter-resistance, ended in 1988 with his both being found guilty of Nazi collaboration and becoming the first Canadian citizen to be charged, stripped of Canadian citizenship, and forcibly deported for such collaboration.³² These examples indicate the extent of Mennonite enmeshment with Nazism, and reveal the lack of Mennonite critical reflection on that relationship.

Some Mennonites think that the difficult and complex circumstances in which they were forced to conduct themselves and make decisions have not been fully appreciated by those who question their wartime actions. The popular rendition of Nazi Germany as a nation of homogeneous depravity, according to one Mennonite veteran of the *Luftwaffe*, is the result of “hocus pocus.”³³ To another veteran it is simply “a historical joke.”³⁴ Indeed, many Mennonites, and others, feel that historical objectivity has been sidelined in German historiography and thus maintain their defensive posture.

However, significant reflection and criticism are certainly appropriate and are the duty of theologians, scholars, and those otherwise involved in the events of this period.

Some have attempted to face the past with courage and integrity. One Danziger, Siegfried Bartel, has openly confronted his actions during the Second World War.³⁵ Bartel converted to pacifism following the war after “re-thinking Jesus’ teaching,”³⁶ but maintains that his guilt came from fighting in the war, not for having collaborated with the Nazis.³⁷ Generally, Bartel’s autobiography — in which he condemns all forms of violence — has not evoked a warm response from the Prussian Mennonites, since, according to him, “most of

them are not quite willing to think it through in regards of their own experiences in the war. . . . they take the view . . . [that they] couldn't help it."³⁸

Bartel's acknowledgement of responsibility serves as a challenge not only to Danzigers but to all Mennonites living in the post-World War 2 era. Understandably, many Danzigers, and other European Mennonites, share in Polish Mennonite Edna Schroeder Thiessen's experience. Edna claimed: "When I came to Canada [after the war], I built a wall between myself and Europe, and I wanted to keep the memories behind that wall. . . . [N]ow I sometimes go behind the wall to bring out the stories for telling."³⁹ Rather than, as one MCC administrator put it, "let[ing] sleeping dogs lie,"⁴⁰ appropriate reflection begins when Mennonites, like Thiessen, have the courage to bring out their wartime stories from behind their walls.

As we have seen, the history of the Prussian Mennonites — which includes my own family history — and the Ukrainian Mennonites reveals their enmeshment with the "German Germans," the German *Volk*. This complex enmeshment implicates all members of the *Volk* in the same experience. In the end, any healthy alteration of this implication can be accomplished only through contextualizing the Mennonite refugee experience in the broader European experience, not in order to excuse it but in order to achieve the distance necessary for appropriate reflection. This reflection allows for a more self-critical posture and encourages the acceptance of responsibility. In working through our past in this way, we will be able to work toward the restoration of denominational authenticity and credibility; two things which are requisite if the Mennonites intend to sustain respect in the German nation and throughout the world, and maintain sufficient vitality in their faith to pass on to their posterity.

Notes

¹ See Diether Goetz Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich: Dokumentation und Deutung* (Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1977), 5-34. Also see Mark A. Jantzen, *At Home in Germany? The Mennonites of the Vistula Delta and the Construction of a German Nation*. (University of Notre Dame: Ph.D. Dissertation, 2002).

² Leaders of the German Mennonite community published a statement in June 1937 to the effect that: "Under the new conditions, as of 11 June 1934, the German Mennonite Conferences have given up the principle of nonresistance." C. Neff, E. Haendiges and A. Braun, "Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden: Eine notwendige Berichtigung," *Mennonitische Blätter*

(June 1937): 72. While some were likely coerced against their will, many volunteered for the armed forces. Siegfried Bartel, a Mennonite captain in the *Wehrmacht*, claims that “by the time I enlisted in 1937, the question of serving in the army was no longer an issue for Mennonites in Prussia.” Siegfried Bartel, *Living With Conviction: German Army Captain Turns to Cultivating Peace* (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1994), 28.

³ Frank Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Russian Revolution* (Altona, MB: Canadian Mennonite Relief and Immigration Council, 1962), 46.

⁴ Horst Gerlach recalled how, at the outset of “Operation Barbarossa,” his school teacher had applied the apocalyptic account in the book of Revelation to the impending final victory of the Germans in the Second World War. Similarly, the *Gemeindeblatt der Mennoniten* began in the early 1940s to print articles with eschatological and apocalyptic overtones pointing to a German triumph. On these points, see Lichdi, *Dritten Reich*, 98 and interview with Horst Gerlach by author, June 2000.

⁵ Klaus Toews, “Die Flucht” in Maria Foth, ed., *Lieder aus der Not* (Winnipeg: Christian Press, 1950), 29-31.

⁶ MCA, MCC Records, “Refugee Migration, Denmark, 1945-1948,” “Denmark Unit Report, December 1-4, 1946.

⁷ Quoted in Peter and Elfrieda Dyck, *Up From the Rubble* (Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 1991), 94.

⁸ MCA, MCC Records “Refugee Migration — IRO, July 1949-September 1952.” letter from the International Refugee Organization to Chief Eligibility Officer titled “Eligibility of Mennonites.” T. D. Regehr provides the various refugee categories established by the occupying powers after 1945. “*Reichsdeutsche*” were German nationals living within the borders of the German Reich on 1 September 1939. “*Volksdeutsche*” were those of ethnic German heritage that lived beyond the borders of the Reich on 1 September, 1939. Because they lived in the Free City of Danzig, German Danzigers were considered as *Reichsdeutsche*. See Regehr, *Displaced Persons*, 266. See also T. D. Regehr, “Of Dutch or German Ancestry? Mennonite Refugees, MCC, and the International Refugee Organization,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 13 (1995): 250.

⁹ Articles in *Time* magazine claimed that German Mennonites were pacifists and were “true, believing Christians . . . sheep in the midst of wolves.” One article referred to the displaced Prussian Mennonites as being “of Dutch extraction” who were taken care of by MCC workers, who “look after Mennonite conscientious objectors in all parts of the world.” See “Plain People,” *Time* 49 (February 10, 1947): 60-61; and “The Poor Ones,” *Time* 49 (March 10, 1947): 38.

¹⁰ In an MCC pamphlet written in the late 1940s, author William Snyder, writing to Mennonites in North American churches, claimed: “Our Danzig and East Prussian brethren are not considered eligible for governmental assistance due to the fact that they are looked upon as ‘German nationals’ because their homelands were unified with pre-war Germany. However, *since they are also victims of the war* and members of our household of faith, the MCC is seeking to assist them.” *Mennonite Refugees: Whose Responsibility?* (Akron, PA: MCC Press, 1948): 3.

¹¹ Robert Kreider reveals how MCC workers used Horst Penner’s research on Mennonite ancestry, particularly the lists of Mennonite last names, to convince the Dutch government of the Russian Mennonites’ Dutch heritage. See Kreider, *Interviews of Peter and Elfrieda Dyck: Experiences in MCC Service in Europe, 1941-1949* (Akron, PA: MCC, 1988), 216. See also MCA, MCC Records, “Refugee Migration, January 1947-1948,” official government correspondence from M. R. Thomas, B.O.A.R zone eligibility officer, to regional eligibility

officers titled “Information Circular Number 9 — List of Mennonite Family Names.” The Mennonite names listed were of Dutch or east Frisian origin.; and MCA, MCC Records “Refugee Migration, IRO, 1947-March 1948,” “List of Mennonite Family Names,” 7 November 1947.

¹² Cornelius Krahn, “The Ethnic Origin of the Mennonites from Russia,” *Mennonite Life* 3, no. 3 (July 1948): 48.

¹³ Prussian Mennonite minister Ernst Crous’s document of 3 September 1945, “Die Geschichte der hollaendisch-deutschen Mennoniten in Russland und ihre Beziehungen zu Kanada und den USA,” supports claims to Dutch origin. See MCA, MCC Records “Basel Relief Unit Germany, Mennonites in Europe, Report.”

¹⁴ MCA, MCC Records “Basel Relief Unit, Germany,” letter from Peter Dyck to IRO officials titled, “Mennonite Refugees in Germany,” July 1946.

¹⁵ MCA, MCC Records “Refugee Migration January 1947-1948,” circular from Siegfried Janzen, 25 April 1947 titled, “Rundschrieben Nr.2 “Liebe Fluechtlingsgeschwister in Deutschland.”

¹⁶ Regehr, *Dutch*, 12.

¹⁷ Epp, *Exodus*, 409. See MCA, MCC Records “Refugee Migration, Fallingsbostel, 1949-1950.”

¹⁸ Letters written in 1950 by Franz Janzen, Hans Derksen, Margarethe Klassen, Agathe Wiebe, Anna Enns, Sara Regier, Johann Peters and others explain the forced German naturalization and recruitment in the German army and SS units. See MCA, MCC Records “Refugee Migration, Fallingsbostel, 1949-1950;” and “Refugee Migration — IRO, July 1949-September 1952,” letter from the IRO to the Chief Eligibility Officer titled, “Eligibility of Mennonites.” C. F. Klassen went to IRO headquarters in Geneva to plead on behalf of the ‘trouble cases’ and, with Snyder and Thiessen, appealed to the Canadian IRO, Immigration Branch and Labor Department officials in Ottawa, who ultimately influenced the reversal of the new IRO restrictions on immigration. See letter from Myer Cohen, Assistant Director of the Department of Health Care and Maintenance, IRO to the IRO Chief Eligibility Officer, 23 July 1949 and the reversal of the restrictions in a letter from Myer to the same officer on 3 October 1949. MCA, MCC Records, “Refugee Migration, IRO, July 1949-September 1952.”

¹⁹ One young Ukrainian Mennonite man claimed after the war: “I have avenged my father’s suffering and death tenfold. I have killed at least ten Red Army soldiers.” Quoted in Henry Loewen, *Road to Freedom: Mennonites Escape the Land of Suffering* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2000), 105.

²⁰ MCA, MCC Records, “Basel Relief Unit, Germany,” letter from Peter Dyck to IRO Officials, July 1946.

²¹ Kreider, *Interviews*, 322, italics added.

²² MCA, MCC Records, “Refugee Migration, Denmark, 1945-1948,” “Denmark Relief Unit Report, 1-4 December 1946;” and letter from W. Snyder to H. Bender, 9 December 1947.

²³ MCA, MCC Records, “Basel Relief Unit, Poland, 1948,” letter from J. Alton Horst to John Horst, 16 March 1948.

²⁴ MCA, MCC Records, “Basel Relief Unit, Poland, 1948,” “Present Conditions of the Mennonites in Poland, 1948.”

²⁵ Letter from Jaroszuka, chief delegate of the Ministry of Recovered Territories of the Polish Republic, 25 May 1948. See MCA, MCC Records, “Basel Relief Unit, Poland, 1948,” Menno Fast’s report, “A Report on Our Work Among the Mennonites in Poland, April-June 1948;” and letter from Menno Fast to Siegfried Janzen, 3 September 1948.

²⁶ MCA, MCC Records, “MCC Correspondence: Inter-Office, C. F. Klassen, 1952,” letter from Klassen to W. T. Snyder, 17 January 1952.

²⁷ Epp, *Exodus*, 409.

²⁸ MCA, MCC Records, “Refugee Migration, Gronau, January 1947-1948,” “History of the Mennonites,” 20 September 1945.

²⁹ Kreider, *Interviews*, 337.

³⁰ Interview with W. R. by author, June 2000. Diether Goetz Lichdi claims: “The younger ones would agree with it [*Wehrlosigkeit*] and the older ones would say — we always practiced it! They always practiced *Wehrlosigkeit* in their hearts.” Interview with Lichdi by author, 6 June 2000 (Heilbronn, Germany).

³¹ The Behage brothers posed as Gunther Klassen and Lothar Driedger, Joop Postma as Heinz Wiebe, and Jacob Luitjens—a member of the Dutch SA and Dutch counter-resistance—as Gerhard Harder. See John Thiesen, *Menmonite and Nazi?* (Kitchener: Pandora Press, 1999), 206-207.

³² Luitjens served only 28 months of the life sentence that had been decided in 1948 at his trial in absentia. Thiesen, *Menmonite and Nazi?*, 207.

³³ Interview with W. R. by author, 26 July 1999 (Winnipeg, MB).

³⁴ Interview with S. B. by author, 11 April 2000 (Agassiz, BC).

³⁵ The *Lübecker Post* printed “Festgottesdienste in allen Lübecker Kirchen — Hilfe für die Flüchtlinge” on 26 September 1945. In it, the author deplored the German claim to ‘pure inwardness’ (*reine Innerlichkeit*) and claimed that Germans were “guilty” regarding the war, were experiencing a “crisis of faith,” and were responsible to “aid in [the refugees’] physical emergency. “Tag der Inneren Mission: Festgottesdienste in allen Lübecker Kirchen — Hilfe für die Flüchtlinge,” *Lübecker Post*, 26 September 1945, 4.

³⁶ Interview with S. B. by author, 11 April, 2000 (Agassiz, BC).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Edna Schroeder-Thiessen, *A Life Displaced* (Kitchener ON: Pandora Press, 2000), 29.

⁴⁰ Kreider, *Interviews*, 360.