

maining under Polish rule.

One of the issues that became heated and protracted after the partitions of Poland was the question of military service. For more than a century Mennonites in Prussia discussed this problem, and tried to make various arrangements with the government. Archival documents provide detailed evidence of this complex development. No doubt many participants would have echoed these sentiments of a Mennonite minister:

Mein Gott, bewahr in Gnaden
fuer allem Fall und Schaden
Mich und der gantzen Heerd
Lass uns durch Jesu Liebe
Und deines Geistes Triebe
Vor dir sein hold und werd
Ach seegne diene Lehre
Das sich dadurch vermehre
In uns Gottseligkeit
Damit wenn wir eins sterben
Wir als die Himmelserben
Gehn ein zur Seligkeit.

—Peter J. Klassen

Wahrheitsfreund Index Now Available

On July 28, 1915 the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Publishing House in Chicago, Illinois published the first issue of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, the official voice of the Krimmer Mennonite Brethren Church (KMB). For the next thirty-two years this paper would provide news and inspirational material for the German-speaking members of the KMB Church.

The choice of Chicago as publication site for *Der Wahrheitsfreund* seems an odd one, since the nearest KMB congregations to that city were in South Dakota. The decision was made to locate the publishing house there when city missionaries David M. Hofer and Joseph W. Tschetter offered to pay for a building at 2812 Lincoln Avenue and the necessary publishing equipment if they in turn could use part of the building for their mission efforts. The conference agreed to this offer and in 1914 the publishing house was established at that location. In 1933, the site of publication was moved to Hillsboro, Kansas, and moved again one year later to Inman, Kansas.

M.B. Fast, later a member of Zion KMB Church in Dinuba, California, was the first editor of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*. He held that position from 1915 to 1917. He was succeeded by D.M. Hofer (1918-1933), J.G. Barkman (1933-1935), J.H. Klassen (1935-1945) and W.W. Harms (1945-1947).

Originally a German language periodical, *Der Wahrheitsfreund* began to include some English language children's features as early as its second year of publication. The number of English features was increased until by 1940 half of each issue was in English. Despite these changes, the number of subscribers had dwindled considerably by the 1940s and in 1947 the conference decided to discontinue *Der Wahrheitsfreund*. The English language KMB paper *Christian Witness*, founded in 1941, was enlarged at that time to take the place of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*.

Without a doubt, *Der Wahrheitsfreund* is one of the most valuable sources of information on KMB history. Unfortunately, this information has not been readily available to researchers, due to the lack of an index. This problem has

Eating Stones

*for my aunts who died in the Ukrainian
famine-genocide which numbered at least
seven million in the 1930's*

Hunger with its open face,
its open mouth. Simple
as a life-line. I love
the old man's story—
the miracle in the Ukraine—
how that loaf of bread slid off
the military wagon into the snow
and saved his whole family.
Survival and escape from
the unspeakable desert.

One loaf.

When the tramp sat on my
childhood backsteps, hunger
seemed to rub its rags
against the edges of adventure.
The small dramas of
the Depression, my mother
exclaiming and clapping
her hands as we opened
the huge round of government
cheese. All of us unaware,
the mute murders so far away.

I want
history to veer in their behalf,
not that wilderness of stones
with its refusals. Susie
and Marie, orphaned, young,
and beautiful, emaciated
on the pitiful bedding,
their mouths bloody with the effort.
I want for them the transformation
into loaves. And then, those
other necessities we live by:
a hand on their foreheads,
someone calling them by name.

—Jean Janzen

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now been solved with the recent publication of *Der Wahrheitsfreund Index* by the Historical Commission of the Mennonite Brethren Church. No longer is it necessary for the researcher to spend hours searching through endless pages for a particular elusive article. Indexes of authors, subjects, scripture texts, obituaries, weddings and congregational reports make it possible to quickly determine the exact location of any item printed in *Der Wahrheitsfreund*.

The index, along with a complete set of *Der Wahrheitsfreund*, is available in the Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies.