

Diaspora hermeneutics: Mennonite refugee narratives between the World Wars

John Eicher

Abstract

‘Diaspora hermeneutics’ is part of a larger work that follows two groups of German-speaking Mennonites who inhabited Russia until the 1870s, fled separately to Canada and Germany, and were reunited in Paraguay in 1930. This chapter focuses specifically on one group of Mennonites who remained in Russia until 1929, passed through Germany in 1930, and established Fernheim Colony, Paraguay later that year. Refugees and immigrants are often labeled with a bewildering mix of identifications. The Mennonite refugees in this chapter selectively adopted national and religious identifications given to them by the German state and North American Mennonites to facilitate their escape from Russia. Once in Paraguay, refugees used Biblical texts to integrate these identifications into their collective narrative.

This chapter contributes to our understanding of national indifference. ‘National indifference’ is a scholarly term used to describe people who do not conform to nationalist narratives. Current scholarship on national indifference overlooks diaspora communities by focusing on specific geographical regions with ‘contested’ political and cultural spheres. Other studies focus on historically powerful groups, such as the nobility and Catholic Church, whose political authority was eventually appropriated or usurped by the nation-state. My work demonstrates that some groups maintain traditions of proactive resistance to nationalism or use national identifications to preserve their autonomy. They are usually religious, organized at the communal level, and willing to migrate.

My work also contributes to our understanding of diasporas. Despite the proliferation of diaspora studies across the humanities, research on its religious dimensions lags far behind. This is surprising considering the ethno-religious origins of the term. In particular, current scholarship overlooks the way theology affects group migration. My chapter remedies this oversight by analyzing how Mennonite refugees were affected by the ecumenical agenda of North American Mennonites who facilitated their escape from Russia. It also considers how refugees used Biblical texts to understand and interpret their migrations once they were settled in Paraguay.

Keywords: Mennonites, Hermeneutics, Religion, Nationalism, National indifference, *kulak*, *Auslandsdeutsche*, Diaspora, Refugee, Migration

In the summer of 1941, Abraham Harder, a leader in the Mennonite community of Fernheim Colony, Paraguay was en route to Asunción to conduct church services for Mennonites living in the nation's capital. Along the way, he received news that Germany had invaded the Soviet Union. This event spurred Harder to write that Paraguay:

cannot be a permanent home [for Fenheim Colony Mennonites]! It was and is only our place of refuge... We shall tell our children ever again of God's wonderful help in time of need, our most wonderful rescue out of Russia, the help from the German *Reich* and our brethren in North America... we will stand our ground in the thorny, inhospitable Chaco [Desert] until God will bring to fulfillment our burning wish, our almost unquenchable longing!¹

Their longing was to be repatriated from Paraguay's Chaco Desert to a Nazi-controlled Russia or Ukraine.² The previous year, upwards of 90 percent of the Colony's population had signed a pledge to integrate themselves as citizens into the 'German National State' and to do their duty for the 'German Fatherland.'³

German nationalist sentiments and support for the Nazi party reached a high point among Fernheim Mennonites during the early years of World War Two. Their sympathies extended back to the colony's formation in 1930, when about 1,500 Mennonite refugees from across the Soviet Union migrated through Germany to Paraguay's Chaco Desert. However by 1943, colonists' attitudes had begun to change from identifying themselves as Germans to identifying themselves as Mennonites and from longing to return to Europe to accepting Paraguay as their new home. In July, several North American Mennonite leaders, including A. E. Janzen, from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in the United States, visited the colony in order to monitor Nazi sympathies and encourage transnational Mennonite unity. Upon their return, the visitors reported that pro-Nazi sympathies had almost disappeared in the colony.⁴

This chapter investigates how Mennonite refugees who immigrated to Paraguay from the Soviet Union in 1930 were identified and described by German nationalists and North American Mennonites who aided their migration. The experience of Fernheim Colony demonstrates that refugees who lack a preexisting communal identification are open to a range of external identifications during their wanderings. These identifications generally say more about the aspirations of those who are labeling refugees than about how refugees collectively view themselves. German journalists and government officials considered the refugees to be *Auslandsdeutsche* (Germans living abroad) while MCC considered them to be members of an international Mennonite community. All understanding requires

interpretation and Fernheim Mennonites used the Bible to mediate their ethnic and religious identifications. Drawing on a range of Biblical passages, Fernheim Mennonites argued over whether they should make the Chaco their new homeland (as MCC wished them to do) or whether the Nazis would restore them to what they believed to be their true homeland in Russia.

The history of the Mennonites reaches back to the sixteenth century Anabaptist movement in the German and Dutch speaking lands of Central Europe. Mennonite faith emphasizes adult baptism, non-violence, communal organization, and the separation of church and state. Branded as heretics, European magistrates spent the next two hundred years hounding Mennonite communities across the continent. During the early-nineteenth century, thousands of Mennonites immigrated to Russia after Catherine the Great granted them a set of religious privileges in exchange for making the steppes economically productive.

After the Russian Revolution, Mennonites negotiated with the Soviet government to be faithful citizens and punctual taxpayers in exchange for religious and economic autonomy. They hoped they could maintain the successful and stable communities they had established before the Revolution. Yet in 1928, Stalin introduced his first Five-Year Plan, which ushered in an era of forced collectivization and the liquidation of the so-called *kulak* class of farmers.

Though the Bolsheviks originally used the work *kulak* as a class label, it was modified throughout the 1920s to brand any rural individual who did not fit the template of the “New Soviet man” or any community that did not resemble the dominant Russian culture.⁵ Beginning with the de-Cossackization of the Don in 1919, the isolation and destruction of ‘deviant’ populations throughout the 1920s became a preferred method for creating socialism in one country.⁶ The goal was not simply enforcing order on a difficult population, but ‘cleansing’ this population from the body politic. Rates of economic and political persecution were often higher in areas with non-Russian populations.⁷ In defiance of orthodox Marxism, many officials held all German-speaking people to be *kulaks* due to their privileged status before the Revolution.⁸ Added together, the various interpretations of the *kulak* label led to a vague and amorphous understanding of the word.⁹

Siberia was epicenter of Stalin’s war against *kulaks*. Poor harvests in Ukraine, Crimea, and the North Caucasus between 1927 and 1930 shifted the center of gravity for government grain procurements squarely on Siberia and specifically on the heads of its ‘wealthy’ farmers, including many Mennonites.¹⁰ There were 59 Mennonite colonies in Siberia, occupying 60,000 *dessiatins* of land (about 65,400 hectares) and claiming a total population of 21,000.¹¹ Siberian Mennonite communities embodied the *kulak* threat because of their insularity, their agricultural unions, foreign contacts, and relative wealth. Earlier in the decade, one Siberian authority noted, ‘The class differences of the Mennonite population are not outwardly apparent, they are so good [at hiding them] as to be

unnoticeable.’¹² A second official bluntly stated, ‘The Mennonite communities are run by wealthy preachers.’¹³

By mid-1929, Mennonite hopes of maintaining their closed agrarian communities were rapidly disintegrating. By the middle of the year, they witnessed the termination of their economic and religious organizations, the imprisonment of many of their leaders, and the dispossession of much of their land and property. Many were also disenfranchised of their rights. With little influence in regional or local party circles, Mennonites had to look elsewhere for salvation. In keeping with their history of migration, thousands of Mennonites fled to Moscow in the fall, forcing the Soviet regime to confront the *kulak* enemy that it had created through its calamitous rural policies.

Earlier in the year, Moscow granted exit visas to a limited number of Mennonite families and this decision opened the floodgates for a massive, disorganized flight of refugees to the capital in September and October.¹⁴ Most refugees came from Siberia but others came from Crimea, the Urals, the Volga region, and Ukraine.¹⁵ By the middle of November, there were about 13,000 refugees scattered throughout the Moscow suburbs and it appeared as though their numbers would keep growing.¹⁶

After the Mennonites arrived in Moscow, they quickly set about contacting every powerful group of people who could secure them exit visas and passports. In addition to the Central Committee and the Politburo, Mennonite refugees also directed their pleas to the German embassy. Refugees viewed the German government as a possible ally but did not view Germany as their homeland.¹⁷ They understood themselves to be culturally German but largely avoided identifying themselves with the German nation or state. Most of them hoped that Canada would eventually open its doors and allow them to settle alongside their co-religionists on the prairie.

Despite Mennonites’ relative indifference about the German nation and state, German government officials had a pre-existing analytical paradigm for understanding Mennonite communities in Russia. Officials viewed the refugees as *Auslandsdeutsche* and many were interested in helping the Mennonites relocate to a new country. Surprisingly, German embassy, foreign office, and presidential cabinet minutes do not contain any discussion about the historic or contemporary connections Mennonites had had to the German nation or state. Officials simply took it for granted that the refugees were ‘ethnic Germans’ and required their help.¹⁸

President Paul von Hindenburg quickly got behind the initiative to help the refugees. In a highly symbolic act of solidarity with *Auslandsdeutsche*, Hindenburg donated 200,000 *Reichmark* from the discretionary presidential budget to provide the refugees with temporary housing.¹⁹ As honorary president of the

German Red Cross, Hindenburg also 'directed a heartfelt plea to all Germans in and out of Germany each according to his abilities to contribute help to their German kinsmen.'²⁰ This call was accompanied by a plan to rally state and municipal organizations (*Kommunalverbände*) as well as business and workers associations to the cause.²¹ Hindenburg's plan was to unite German politics, government, industry, and labor around a specific objective while identifying the German state with an abstract, transnational *Detuschtum* (Germanness).

Yet the fractured and boisterous German press exhibited a stark difference of opinions about the refugees and *Auslandsdeutsche* in general.²² The *Frankfurter Zeitung* tied the present crisis into the longer history of *Auslandsdeutsche* in the Soviet Union, reminding its audience of the starvation experienced by German communities during the Russian famine of 1921-1922.²³ Further to the right, the *Hamburger Nachrichten* juxtaposed German weaknesses and Soviet strengths by labeling the crisis as a Soviet 'slap in the face' to Germany and a 'Genghis Khan-like act' against Germans living in Russia.²⁴

On the left, Germany's communist daily *Die Rote Fahne* published a front-page article excoriating the German government for interfering in Soviet domestic politics.²⁵ Along these lines, the Communist Party of Germany pointed out the hypocrisy of the government's support for 'kulak immigration' to Germany at a time when some of the country's poorer farmers were being forced to immigrate to other countries. They articulated their disgust in an interpellation against the German government's decision to aid to the refugees, which read:

The decision of the German government to carry out a relief operation for known Russian *kulaks* who, in their fanatical struggle against the socialization of agriculture and the construction of socialism in Soviet Russia, desire to emigrate from the Soviet Union is an unprecedented interference of capitalist Germany in the internal affairs of the Russian workers' state.²⁶

This statement strikes at the irony of what it meant for the Weimar Republic to help *Auslandsdeutsche* in Russia. The Communist Party argued for the integrity of state borders, at least until the international triumph of communism. On the other hand, German nationalists argued for a borderless understanding of *Deutschtum*. They believed the boundaries of the German state were but a temporary reality that did not encompass the entire German nation.

Between 29 October and 9 December 1929, the Soviet Union sent 5,671 refugees from Moscow to Germany. About 3,900 were Mennonites.²⁷ The other 8,000 or so were returned to their home villages or remained under arrest. Refugees who were lucky enough to escape found temporary housing in various abandoned army barracks in Germany. In one refugee camp, some Mennonites were visited by a contingent of nationalist students from Berlin. The students

lectured the refugees on the greatness of the German nation and held discussion groups in order to bring ‘the Germany of 1918 nearer to the farmers.’²⁸ German nationalists wanted to protect Mennonites from victimization at the hands of the Soviet regime but also give them an education in German victimhood. Whilst in Russia, Mennonites felt themselves to be religiously and economically persecuted as Mennonites, but their encounter with German nationalists helped them transpose their feelings into a German key.

German nationalists were not the only group that recognized a larger significance in the refugees’ situation. Mennonites in North America also viewed the plight of refugees as a way to push the denomination toward greater solidarity. The North American Mennonite organization MCC agreed to back the German government debt for relocating refugees to a new country. This initiative was unprecedented in its scope and organization. Owing to their historic communal autonomy and different readings of the Bible, Mennonites were seldom unified in their beliefs or actions. This started to change in the early-twentieth century with Mennonites’ growing prosperity, increased mobility, rising education, and the availability of denominational newspapers, seminaries and colleges. MCC’s initiative to help the refugees was a landmark achievement for Mennonite leaders who strove for denominational solidarity.

Canada was the most desirable option for German and Mennonite authorities because the Canadian Pacific Railroad and the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization (CMBC) had already helped about 20,000 Mennonites migrate to this country in the preceding decade. Yet by the end of November, the worsening global economy, growing unemployment lines, gridlock between the federal government and the provinces, and an overarching fear of public opinion put an end to the immediate prospects of Canadian immigration.

The choice then came down to Brazil or Paraguay. Most German government officials favored Brazil. Immigration to this country promised a higher likelihood that the refugees would preserve their Germanness because the *Hanseatische Kolonisations gesellschaft* was in a good position to settle the refugees near other Germans living in Santa Catarina.²⁹ MCC was less pleased with Brazilian immigration because Brazil did not allow conscientious objection and refugees would be unable to control their own schools. MCC did not believe refugee Mennonites (or any Mennonites, for that matter) owed special loyalty to the German state or the promotion of Germanness abroad. Paraguayan settlement held out the best possibility that refugees could establish agrarian, faith-based communities, away from overreaching government policies.

Mennonite publications supported MCC’s initiative to help the refugees immigrate to Paraguay. *The Mennonite*, one of the largest Mennonite newspapers in North America, immediately embraced the refugees as their fellow brethren and

encouraged readers to donate money on their behalf. The paper also criticized Mennonites who did not see the refugees as their denominational brothers, stating, 'The next best blessing after rendering help should be the drawing together into closer fellowship of the numerous bodies that call themselves Mennonites but jealously maintain separate organizations.'³⁰ Along these lines, the influential professor and member of the MCC, Harold S. Bender, foresaw a new age for the Mennonite church in Paraguay. If the refugees could create a successful colony Bender envisaged 'a future state of Mennonites, where, if possible, all Russian Mennonites would be able to reestablish and develop their life and their culture within a context of unlimited freedom.'³¹

This statement expresses more than a modest wish for the refugees to preserve their religious beliefs or even the desire for them to live unmolested by hostile political ideologies. It argues for the creation of a Mennonite state. In contrast to German plans to use Mennonites to reinforce German enclaves in Brazil, Bender viewed migration to Paraguay as an opportunity to develop an autonomous Mennonite republic, capable of preserving and expanding its faith and culture.

Since MCC was backing the debt, the German government acquiesced to sending the largest share of refugees to Paraguay. The rest chose Brazil or managed to get their names on the waiting list for Canadian immigration. Between February 1930 and August 1931, 1,572 Mennonite refugees left for Paraguay's Chaco Desert, the majority arriving in the spring and summer months of 1930. The whole trip took about two and a half months.³² The refugees originated from 46 villages in Russia and Ukraine and were now brought together to form Fernheim Colony, located in the middle of the Chaco Desert.³³

Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, Fernheim Mennonites debated the larger meaning of their migration to Paraguay. One of the most important documents that Fernheim Mennonites used to understand their collective narrative was the Bible. Most Fernheim Mennonites interpreted their collective story as a tragic plot progression and looked to similar stories in the Bible to understand their fate. According to literary critic Northrop Frye, this type of story takes the shape of an inverted U, which rises to a point of peripety and plunges downward to catastrophe.³⁴ Most refugees had been successful landowners in Siberia but lost everything and had to leave. A future beyond this disaster was fraught and unknown.

Some Fernheim Mennonites viewed the Chaco as an alienating experience and entertained the violent hope that God would work through the Nazis to defeat communism and restore them to Eastern Europe. They believed the tragedy of their exile was merely half of the story. The story's true ending would be the victory of Nazi Germany and the defeat of Soviet Communism. Some members of the Fernheim Colony even went so far as to conflate their religious history with German race mythologies to create an unsavory mixture of identifications.

Other Fernheim Mennonites accepted the tragedy of their situation and drew on stories of exile to interpret their collective narrative. Forced from their lands in Siberia by Soviet authorities, they believed they were quite literally exiled to the desert.³⁵ They accepted that Fernheim Mennonites would not be restored in earthly terms. Rather, they thought they should make the best of their new situation in Paraguay and cultivate their relationship with MCC. They cited Jeremiah's counsel to the Israelites in Babylon, 'Seek the welfare of any city to which I have exiled you,' and the exhortation of Hebrews 13:14, 'Here we have no lasting city, but we are seekers after the city which is to come.'³⁶ These Mennonites conceded they were culturally German but refused to assert their German ethnicity over their religious convictions.

During their travels, Fernheim Colony Mennonites were confronted with various understandings of who they were and what they represented. Their exposure to German nationalists and North American Mennonites led to the awareness that they could be members of an international ethnic or religious community. Soviet officials, German nationalists, and North American Mennonites each took a specific feature of the refugees' identity as their starting point (either economic, ethnic, or religious) to tie refugees to their own visions of reality. Thus, Fernheim Mennonites had a range of identifications they could draw on to interpret their collective story and their collective future. On one hand, they rejected their identification as *kulaks* and the proposition that communism was the *telos* of history. On the other hand, the labels 'ethnic German' and 'Mennonite'—or a combination of the two—resonated with various members of the group. Fernheim Mennonites used the Bible to debate how their particular story fit into a larger German or Mennonite narrative. However, it remained unclear to them which Biblical passages best described their earthly situation or should be used to guide their earthly attachments.

Notes

¹ Quoted in John D. Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi?: Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1999), 146.

² *Ibid.*, 222.

³ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵ James Hughes, *Stalinism in a Russian Province: Collectivization and Dekulakization in Siberia* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1996), 8; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 122.

⁶ Peter Holquist, “‘Conduct Merciless, Mass Terror’: Decossackization on the Don, 1919,” *Cahiers du Monde russe* 38, (1997): 127-162.

⁷ Golfo Alexopoulos, *Stalin’s Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926-1936* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 46.

⁸ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 320.

⁹ Terry Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribing nationality and Soviet primordialism”, in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 161-182, 355.

¹⁰ Hughes, *Stalinism in a Russian Province*, 22.

¹¹ Tatiana B. Smirnova, “Mennonites and Germans in Russia Today: A Study of Ethno-Sociological Polls,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 30 (2012), 26. For land-ownership figures see Horst Gerlach, *Die Rußlandmennoniten: Ein Volk unterwegs* (Kircheimbolanden, Rheinland-Pfalz: 1992). For population numbers see J. J. Hildebrandt, *Sibirien* (Winnipeg MB: 1952).

¹² Gerhard Hildebrandt, *Die Mennoniten in der Ukraine und im Gebiet Orenburg: Dokumente aus Archiven in Kiev und Orenburg* (Göttingen: Der Göttinger Arbeitskreis, 2006), 101.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹⁴ Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Exodus: The Rescue and Resettlement of the Russian Mennonites Since the Communist Revolution* (Altona, MB: D. W. Friesen & Sons LTD., 1962), 231.

¹⁵ Christoph Mick, *Sowjetische Propaganda, Fünfjahrplan, und deutsche Rußlandpolitik 1928-1932* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 357.

¹⁶ About three quarters of the refugees were Mennonites but there were also smaller numbers of Baptists, Catholics, and Lutherans. Some estimates range to 18,000 individuals. See Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi?*, 32.

¹⁷ “Rußland Politik. Mennoniten—Deutschstämmige. Deutsche in Russland,” GFM 33/4538: L192473-L192474. The National Archives, Kew, England.

¹⁸ “Rußland Politik. Mennoniten—Deutschstämmige. Deutsche in Russland,” GFM 33/4538: L192411. The National Archives, Kew, England.

¹⁹ “Akten betreffend: Die Deutschstämmigen Kolonisten in Rußland (Alte Reichskanzlei),” R43 I/141, Band 1, L196164, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany; “Russland Politik. Mennoniten—Deutschstämmige. Deutsche in Russland,” GFM 33/4538: L192399. The National Archives, Kew, England.

²⁰ “Russland Politik. Mennoniten—Deutschstämmige. Deutsche in Russland,” GFM 33/4538: L192399. The National Archives, Kew, England.

²¹ “Akten betreffend: Die Deutschstämmigen Kolonisten in Rußland (Alte Reichskanzlei),” R43 I/141, Band 1, L196165, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany.

- ²² Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9.
- ²³ “Flucht aus Rußland,” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 15 November 1929, 1.
- ²⁴ “Die Vernichtung des deutschen Bauerntums in Rußland,” *Hamburger Nachrichten*, 12 November 1929.
- ²⁵ “Die Not der Deutschen in der USSR ein entlarvter Wahlschwindel!,” *Die Rote Fahne*, 14 November 1929, 1. See also, “Millionen für die kulaken—Nichts für die deutschen werktötigen Massen,” *Die Rote Fahne*, 1 December 1929, p. 3.
- ²⁶ *Verhandlungen des Reichstags: IV Wahlperiode 1928* (Berlin: Druck und Verlag der Reichsdruckerei, 1930), 3308.
- ²⁷ Peter Letkemann, “Mennonite Refugee Camps in Germany, 1921-1951: Part II—MOLLN,” *Mennonite Historian* 38 (2012): 1-2 & 10, 2; Thiesen, 33.
- ²⁸ Siegfried Kraft, *Die rußlandß-deutschen Flüchtlinge des Jahres 1929/1930 und ihre Aufnahme im Deutschen Reich: Eine Untersuchung über die Gründe der Massenflucht der deutschen Bauern und ein Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Behandlung volksdeutscher Fragen im Weimarer Zwischenreich*, Inaugural Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde einer Hohen Philosophischen Fakultät der Martin Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (Halle/Saale: Eduard Klinz Buchdruck-Werkstätte, 1939), 62.
- ²⁹ “Rußland Politik. Mennoniten—Deutschstämmige. Deutsche in Russland,” GFM 33/4538: L192394. The National Archives, Kew, England.
- ³⁰ “Editorial,” *The Mennonite*, 19 December 1929, 3. *The Mennonite* carried frequent articles on Mennonite unity and the need for a unifying Mennonite creed. See “The Need for a Creed,” *The Mennonite*, 27 March 1930, 6.
- ³¹ Translated by Edgar Stoesz in *Like a Mustard Seed: Mennonites in Paraguay* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2008), 10. Original quote from a speech by Bender in Christian Neff, ed., *Bericht über die Mennonitische Welt-Hilfs-Konferenz vom 31. August bis 3. September 1930 in Danzig* (Karlsruhe: Verlagsdruckerei Heinrich Schneider, 1930), 121-22.
- ³² Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi?*: 76.
- ³³ Levi Mumaw, “Relief Notes,” *Gospel Herald*, 24 April 1930. This number may be a little low. According to the same article, 41 families came from Siberia: five from Omsk, 34 from Slavgorod, one from Omur [Amur], and one from Pavlodar. Ten families came from Ukraine, three from Orenburg, two from Saratov, two from Samara, one from Crimia, one from Donbuss, and one from Ufa.
- ³⁴ Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. Ed. Alvin A. Lee, (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 197.

³⁵ Even the name of their colony suggests this sense of displacement as “Fernheim” means “faraway home.”

³⁶ Nikolai Siemens, “Unsere Aufgaben in Paraguay,” *Menno-Blatt*, May 1943; Nikolai Siemens, “Fernheim in Not!” *Paraguay Fernheim Colony 1940*, Record Group XI-6-3, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

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John Eicher is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Iowa. From 2012-2013 he is a visiting fellow at the Berlin Program for Advanced German and European Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin.