

July 2015

Reading Suggestions on Mennonites and Nazism

Dear workshop participants,

Thank you for attending “From Aryanism to Multiculturalism: Mennonite Ethnicity and German Nationalism”! It was rewarding for me to present on this important topic, and I appreciated your insight and participation.

I am providing here a short list of published works on Mennonites and Nazism, both in the Third Reich and beyond. It is my hope that this will serve as a resource for anyone interested in learning more about Mennonites’ position during the Nazi period.

For a brief English-language overview of Mennonites in the Third Reich, I would recommend Hanspeter Jecker and Alle G. Hoekema, eds., *Testing Faith and Tradition* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2006), 123-130. A brief German-language overview can be found here:

http://www.mennlex.de/doku.php?id=top:drittes_reich

The most extensive published work on Mennonites in the Third Reich remains Diether Götz Lichdi, *Mennoniten im Dritten Reich* (Weierhof im Bolanden: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1977). James Regier has provided a helpful English-language interpretation of this and other works: <http://ml.bethelks.edu/issue/vol-59-no-1/article/mennonitische-vergangenheitsbewaltigung-prussian-m/>

On Mennonites and Nazism in a more global context, see John D. Thiesen, *Mennonite and Nazi? Attitudes Among Mennonite Colonists in Latin America, 1933-1945* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1999). Much of this story is also told in German by Peter P. Klassen, *Die deutsch-völkische Zeit in der Kolonie Fernheim, Chaco-Paraguay (1933-1945)* (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 1990). Brief English-language discussions of Mennonite-Nazi relations in Canada and Ukraine are given in the June 1991 issue of *Mennonite Life*:

<http://ml.bethelks.edu/store/ml/files/1991jun.pdf>

Insightful discussions of Mennonite participation in Nazi race science can be found in James Irvin Lichti, *Houses on the Sand? Pacifist Denominations in Nazi Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), as well as in Helmut Foth, “‘Wie die Mennoniten in die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft hineinwachsen:’ Die Mennonitischen Geschichtsblätter im Dritten Reich,” *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 68 (2011): 59-88. See also Helmut Foth’s encyclopedia article on the rise of Mennonite genealogical practices: <http://www.mennlex.de/doku.php?id=top:genealogie>

On Mennonites and Jews in Nazi-occupied lands, including Mennonite awareness of and participation in the Holocaust, see Diether Götz Lichdi, “Minderheiten, die sich lange fremd

blieben: Mennoniten und Juden in der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus,” in *Freikirchen und Juden im ‘Dritten Reich,’* ed. Daniel Heinz (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 65-76, as well as Gerhard Rempel, “Mennonites and the Holocaust: From Collaboration to Perpetration,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 84, no. 4 (2010): 507-549. A German-language version of Rempel’s article also appeared in the *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter*.

On the legacies of Nazism among the global Mennonite community, including MCC’s efforts to distance the denomination from “Germanness,” see Steven Schroeder, “Mennonite-Nazi Collaboration and Coming to Terms with the Past: European Mennonites and the MCC, 1945-1950,” *Conrad Grebel Review* 21, no. 2 (2003): 6-16; T. D. Regehr, “Of Dutch or German Ancestry? Mennonite Refugees, MCC, and the International Refugee Organization,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* (1995): 7-25; and, in German, Diether Götz Lichdi, “Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Schuldbekennnisse der Mennoniten nach 1945,” *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 64 (2007): 39-54.

Anyone interested in my own work can read my 2014 German-language article: Benjamin W. Goossen, “Mennoniten als Volksdeutsche: Die Rolle des Mennonitentums in der nationalsozialistischen Propaganda,” trans. Helmut Foth, *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 71 (2014): 54-70, available online at: http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/goossen/files/goossen_mennoniten_als_volksdeutsche_2014_2.pdf As I publish more of my own work in the next year, I will do my best to make it available to interested readers.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments at bengoossen@g.harvard.edu

Peace and grace,

Ben Waltner Goossen

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