

The Making of a Holocaust Denier

Ingrid Rimland, Mennonites, and Gender in White Supremacy, 1945–2000

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*The novelist Ingrid Rimland became a prominent Holocaust denier in North America during the 1990s. Before embracing neo-Nazism, Rimland won acclaim within the Mennonite church—the Christian denomination in which she was raised—for her writings about women’s hardships in the Soviet Union. Her debut novel, *The Wanderers: The Saga of Three Women Who Survived* (1977), reflected widespread efforts to position feminized Mennonite suffering as comparable to Jewish persecution under Nazism, coupled with silence about the role individual Mennonites played in the Holocaust. The church’s male-dominated elite offered Rimland limited structural support as a female writer, however, and she struggled to sustain her literary career while raising a son with disabilities. Patriarchal constraints alongside Mennonite leaders’ failure to address historic antisemitism helped allow her drift into white supremacy.*

In 1999, an academic dispute erupted in the pages of a respected religious studies journal regarding whether members of a traditionally pacifist Christian group shared commonalities with one of the decade’s most notorious Holocaust deniers. The controversy concerned a review of *Lebensraum!*, a three-volume novel written by

the antisemite Ingrid Rimland. This trilogy repackaged hate that Rimland had been pushing for years via her website Zundelsite.org in the form of a multi-generational saga about German-speaking Mennonite families in Europe and the Americas. James Urry, a longstanding anthropologist of Mennonites, systematically exposed the antisemitic logic of Rimland's trilogy. In the final pages of his review, Urry expanded his lens, stating "[i]t is also sad to report that certain academically-trained Mennonite scholars in Canada recently have expressed ideas which in some form resemble those of Rimland in order to exploit the prejudices and appeal to the purses of older members of the Mennonite community."¹ A swift backlash followed these allegations. Angry letters from Canada rejected comparisons of Rimland to practicing Mennonites. The journal issued an apology and retracted the remarks.²

Intellectual and personal ties between Ingrid Rimland and mainstream Mennonite culture, although certainly complex, ran deeper than denominational leaders preferred to admit. Rimland had been born in 1936 into a German-speaking Mennonite community in Soviet Ukraine. When Nazi forces occupied Ukraine during World War II, Rimland's family received racial privileges along with tens of thousands of fellow Mennonites as *Volksdeutsche* or "ethnic Germans."³ They evacuated west with Hitler's retreating armies in 1943 to avoid the return of Bolshevik rule. Five years later, the North America-based Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) helped resettle thousands of these refugees from Europe to the Americas. Rimland relocated with her family to Paraguay, and she eventually moved to the United States and became a writer.⁴ Her debut novel, *The Wanderers* (1977), fictionalized her own wartime childhood experiences to modest acclaim. She soon began work on an expanded epic-scale version of the book, which took nearly two decades to complete. By the time it appeared as *Lebensraum!*, Rimland had gained infamy as the founder of Zundelsite.org, considered by scholars to be "ground zero for Holocaust denial on the internet in the 1990s."⁵

The increasing frequency of hate crimes today, coupled with the persistence of racialized inequality, lends urgency for fresh evaluations of white supremacy's transnational circulation.⁶ Rimland's

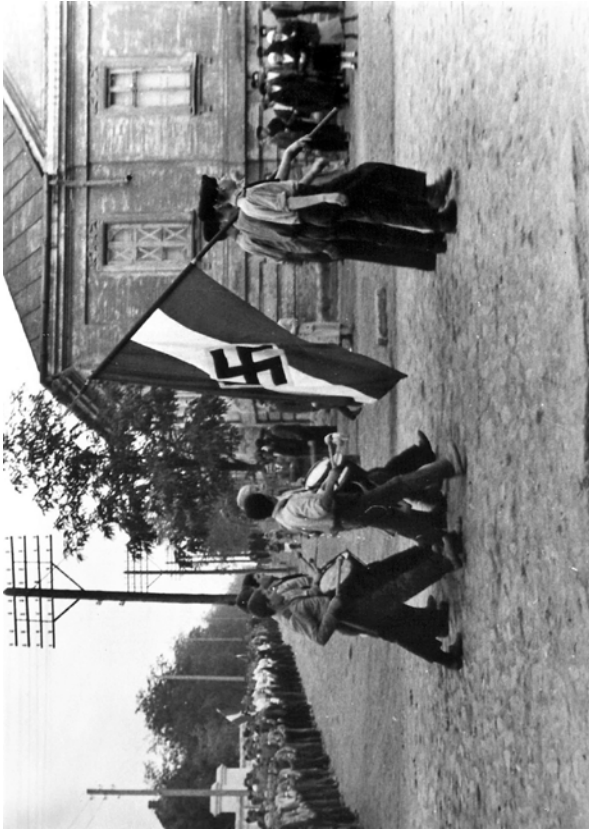


Figure 1. Volksdeutsche Youth with Band and Self-Made Banner on Parade

During the Nazi occupation of Ukraine, German-speaking Mennonites received benefits from the German invaders for allegedly being members of a local Aryan elite. Here, residents of the Halbstadt, Molotschna Mennonite colony where Ingrid Rimland lived march to celebrate a visit by Heinrich Himmler on October 31, 1942.

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entanglement with the worldwide Mennonite community can illuminate the uneven, often circuitous, transfer of violent far-right extremism from Hitler's Germany to present-day North America.⁷ In Rimland's case, radicalization occurred decades after her childhood in the Third Reich. Her midlife conversion to neo-Nazism appeared, at least superficially, to repudiate Mennonites' reputation for peacebuilding as well as their commonly alleged affinity for Jews. In fact, her turn to Holocaust denial followed a long history of appropriating Jewish suffering. After World War II, Mennonite leaders had shielded coreligionists from charges of Nazi collaboration by drawing comparisons to Jews. They repurposed old stories of victimhood in the USSR, suffused with myths about a fictitious cabal of "Jewish Bolsheviks."⁸ Their new accounts revalued Jews as an analogous group yet preserved antisemitic undertones. As counterintuitive as it may seem, Mennonites' propensity to self-identify with Jews opened a path for Rimland's racist trajectory.

Rimland's transition from mainstream acceptability to vocal Holocaust denial during the early 1990s also reflected her struggle to flourish in a patriarchal context.⁹ Publishing her first novel, *The Wanderers*, had been a triumph for her as a woman and a former refugee. Mennonite readers were predisposed to welcome the book's story of female suffering thanks to the earlier transatlantic activities of church elites in the wake of the Third Reich's collapse. This largely male cohort, echoing a strategy widely deployed by post-war Germans to distance themselves from Nazism, worked to posit family ideology as central to denominational identity. They framed reconstruction around the unification of broken families and the reassertion of patriarchal power in a community stripped of men.¹⁰ Rimland's own family life, however, fell apart just as *The Wanderers* hit bookstores. Caring for a son with disabilities as a single mother in the 1980s compounded the emotional and financial stresses of trying to write another successful novel. Then, as the Cold War ended, Rimland's prospects for recouping Mennonite readership through shared anti-communism evaporated. She grasped at antisemitic illusions, falsely blaming her troubles on a nonexistent Jewish plot to culturally dilute white populations.¹¹

ZUNDELSITE.ORG AND *LEBENSRAUM!*

Mennonites were hardly known for Holocaust denial in the 1990s. In fact, scholars of religion were more likely to treat the denomination as a Christian analogue to Judaism. “Both Jews and Mennonites are ethno-religious groups with a history of persecution and of migration through flight,” one assessment read, “and both share very strong commitments to the idea of ‘peoplehood’ and the importance of group continuity.”¹² Influential Mennonites embraced this comparison with the Jewish people. Some depicted the fate of their coreligionists under Stalin as akin to the genocide of European Jewry under Hitler—tens of thousands of Mennonites had experienced starvation, disease, arrest, deportation, and murder.¹³ This tragedy was perhaps most emphasized in Canada, which had been the main destination for two waves of Mennonite emigration out of the USSR, first in the 1920s and then after World War II. One church historian in Canada invited fellow Mennonites to learn from “the dramatic way in which the Jewish Holocaust has entered into the consciousness of a world-wide audience.”¹⁴ A Mennonite theologian, also in Canada, proposed that Mennonites forge commemorative strategies like “the Jewish response to the Holocaust.”¹⁵

Ingrid Rimland achieved notoriety as an antisemite through her intellectual, financial, and eventually romantic partnership with Toronto-based neo-Nazi Ernst Zündel. Born in Germany in 1939, Zündel moved to Canada as a teenager. He, unlike Rimland, had been at the forefront of organized white supremacy for decades. Zündel’s underground press published racist screeds with titles such as *The Hitler We Loved and Why* and *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth at Last*. Complaints by Holocaust survivors and the government of Ontario led to high-profile legal proceedings against Zündel in the 1980s. Convicted for spreading false news in 1985, Zündel appealed and was convicted again in 1988. The Supreme Court of Canada overturned his sentence in 1992, deeming the former law on reporting false news to be unconstitutional under the new Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and thus a violation

of Zündel's right to free expression.¹⁶ Two years later, Rimland met Zündel at a Holocaust denial conference in Irvine, California, where he was a featured speaker. The two became friendly, and Rimland soon launched Zundelsite.org from her California home. This site's domain registration in the United States allowed Zündel to circumvent Canadian anti-hate laws and continue publicizing his antisemitic views. He sent Rimland web content and paid her \$3,000 per month.¹⁷

Zundelsite.org used the tools of the nascent World Wide Web to spread the baseless claims of Holocaust denial to readers in North America and beyond. This website's material questioned that Hitler desired the "genocidal killings of Jews, Gypsies and others." Its articles denied that the Nazis built gas chambers, and doubted that the widely-accepted numbers of Holocaust victims were "anywhere near the number of people who actually died in concentration camps." According to Rimland and Zündel, mainstream historical consensus about the causes and course of World War II amounted to the "financial, political, emotional, and spiritual extortion" of the German people. Visitors to the site's online store could purchase audio and video tapes expounding these views. In 1996, Rimland also began sending thousands of daily "Z-Grams" to a listserv of international email subscribers. Monitors of hate groups decried these developments, which they labeled part of a broader digital revolution in online racism from the Aryan Nations and Identity Church to David Duke and the KKK. The Anti-Defamation League warned that "the Internet is more powerful than any extremist of the past decade could have imagined."¹⁸

Although barely noticed by commentators at the time, Zundelsite.org also doubled as a promotional venue for Rimland's career as a novelist. The website advertised her first book, *The Wanderers*, alongside neo-Nazi tracts. Among the products offered for sale in its digital shop was a film of Rimland's initial 1994 meeting with Zündel at the California conference. He had interviewed her about *The Wanderers* for his VHS-based television program. Footage showed the future partners speaking animatedly in an office. Rimland was visibly thrilled by Zündel's questions; she focused on



Figure 2. Ingrid Rimland and Ernst Zündel

Ingrid Rimland founded the Holocaust denial website Zundelsite.org after meeting the Toronto-based antisemite Ernst Zündel at a white supremacist conference in California in 1994. The couple married in 2001.

explaining the Mennonites, the religious minority at the heart of her novel. She was not concerned with outlining the faith's origins during Europe's sixteenth century Reformation, its historic stress on adult baptism and Christian pacifism, nor its growth among populations of color in the Global South.¹⁹ Rather, Rimland equated the denomination with the white German-speaking people she knew as a girl in the USSR. Mennonites were "totally, totally German," she told Zündel. Rimland claimed the Nazis "brought into our colonies the values that we had always held dear, namely the family cohesion, the pride in race, which was part of my upbringing."²⁰

Rimland's video interview with Zündel exemplified her new ambition to align Mennonite history—or at least a twisted version of it—with pseudo-intellectual neo-Nazism. She developed these ideas in long form through her 1998 epic *Lebensraum!* This trilogy depicted Mennonites as uniformly Aryan. It also used the generous wartime treatment of Mennonites by Hitler's forces as evidence of Nazi goodness. Across 1,500 pages, Rimland spun a convoluted narrative about two Mennonite communities, one in Ukraine and the second in Kansas. She portrayed each group as being menaced by Jews. In her telling, the Jewish threat manifested both locally as well as more abstractly through a global conspiracy called the "New World Order," which allegedly sought to destroy everything Germanic by causing bloody fratricidal wars. Rimland's fictional Mennonites were pacifists. Despite their peaceable ways, however, young people from each settlement were drawn into opposite sides of World War II. The plot climaxes as one Mennonite (from Ukraine) kills another (from Kansas) in battle. These figures represent the "maligned heroes" who fought the New World Order as well as its "forgotten victims," to whom Rimland dedicated her saga.²¹

Outside white supremacist circles, *Lebensraum!* received universal censure. Canadian authorities seized a shipment of the books at the US border.²² Mennonite thinkers, too, rejected Rimland's belief that their denomination competed with Jews in an existential struggle. Indeed, the only substantial controversy concerned James Urry's article in the periodical *Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

Urry—himself a non-Mennonite anthropologist based in New Zealand—argued that Rimland’s racism should be of “major concern to all Mennonites.”²³ Had Urry kept a tight focus on *Lebensraum!*, his essay would likely not have generated an outcry. He drew connections, however, between Rimland and some Canadian academics’ use of “words and concepts usually associated with Jewish suffering.” Urry believed this practice overstated Mennonite victimhood in the USSR and helped fuel myths of total Mennonite non-involvement with Nazism. Specifically, he critiqued a 1997 conference entitled “Mennonites and the Soviet Inferno.” The anthropologist contended that “the term ‘inferno’ is transparently synonymous with the word ‘holocaust,’” and he reprimanded the organizers for labeling Soviet violence against Mennonites as “pogrom-like” and “genocidal.”²⁴

The backlash to Urry’s review of *Lebensraum!* drew sharp lines between Rimland and the denominational mainstream. *Mennonite Quarterly Review* printed three letters castigating Urry, all by scholars in Canada. The writers did not dwell on Rimland and her ilk, whom they scorned as “nasty” people, possessed by an irrational “delirium.”²⁵ Nor did these critics engage the substance of Urry’s charges about the appropriation of Jewish suffering. They acknowledged differences between Mennonite life in the USSR versus Jews’ treatment under Hitler, obliquely invoking earlier debates in Europe about the uniqueness of the Holocaust.²⁶ Yet the authors also implied the comparison was fair and appropriate. One respondent, defending the phrase “Soviet Inferno,” freely admitted that conference planners had intended to reference Jewish genocide. “The title was deliberately chosen,” he explained, “because we all recognized that ‘holocaust’ had established itself as the specific identifier for the Jewish tragedy.”²⁷ That the other two letter writers were non-Mennonite academics—including a former director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Toronto—suggests how widely comparisons of Mennonitism to Judaism were deemed acceptable.

Assertions that Mennonites had suffered like Jews ironically diverted scholarly attention away from Rimland, including

investigation into the role denominational elites had played in her journey toward antisemitism. Contemporary Mennonite leaders could expect outsiders to assume deep and sincere sympathy with Jews. Yet, as measured by historical research or theological reflection, the denomination engaged less robustly with Judaism than did many other Christian groups. As one observer noted in 2001, Mennonite institutions “have never undertaken an examination of the theological implications of the Holocaust for Anabaptist-Mennonite theology.”²⁸ That this assessment still holds true, twenty years later, indicates the limits of denominational interest in dialogue with Jews. Withering public condemnation against James Urry’s review of *Lebensraum!* contributed to a chilling of academic inquiry into Mennonite-Jewish relations. Several thinkers did eventually publish a letter in support of Urry. They championed him “as a man and as a scholar,” but they also remained silent about antisemitism.²⁹ Over the next decade, *Mennonite Quarterly Review* printed no new research articles regarding Mennonites and Nazism.

This was the last time Rimland spurred public self-reflection among Mennonites during her lifetime. She occasionally showed up at churches or religious conferences to push racist literature and buttonhole unsuspecting listeners. In one letter posted to Zundelsite.org, Rimland lamented the denomination’s disinterest in Holocaust denial. “What I am doing in my work,” she asserted, “is not from ‘racist hatred.’ It springs from love for what once was and is now almost gone—a time where it was safe and good and right to have blue eyes, blond hair and pride in one’s own roots.”³⁰ By the early 2000s, Rimland’s influence even among white supremacists was waning. She had married her longtime collaborator, Ernst Zündel, after he moved to the United States to evade new legal investigations in Canada. Their marriage failed to secure him lasting residency, however, and US officials expelled Zündel back to Canada. In 2005, Canada deported the neo-Nazi to his native Germany, where he was sentenced to five years in prison for inciting racial hatred. Immigration rules kept Rimland from reuniting with her husband, who pre-deceased her by nine weeks in 2017.

Zundelsite.org languished and Rimland escaped legal accountability for spreading antisemitism.

THE WANDERERS

Mennonite revulsion for Ingrid Rimland and her activism in the 1990s gave scant indication she had ever been anything but an outcast of the faith. To the contrary, however, during the late 1970s Rimland won acclaim for her debut novel, *The Wanderers*, which told a story about Mennonite suffering remarkably similar to the narrative she would promote in her later neo-Nazi trilogy *Lebensraum!* Rimland researched her first book with the assistance of influential Mennonite academics. The denominational press warmly endorsed *The Wanderers* to everyday readers, and her promotional tour gave her opportunities to engage with Mennonite audiences across the United States and Canada. Rimland's fictionalized recounting of women's hardships in the Soviet Union and their experiences during World War II resonated with mainstream church histories about this past. Even after Rimland began denying the Holocaust, Mennonite scholars could still cite *The Wanderers* as illuminating the lives of women under communist and Nazi rule.³¹ Yet, Rimland's early work prefigured her subsequent overtly antisemitic prose to a noteworthy degree. From the start, she saw Hitler as a liberator, and she denounced an alleged "holocaust" against the Germans.³²

The Wanderers offered an account of Mennonite victimhood under Stalin and eventual salvation during Nazi Germany's occupation of Ukraine, as told from the perspective of three generations of women. These characters—loosely based on Rimland's grandmother, mother, and herself—foregrounded women's lives while also representing in aggregate the experiences of a feminized (innocent, suffering) denomination. In the novel's formulation, German-speaking Mennonites had settled along the Black Sea in the late eighteenth century, prospering there in peace and happiness for over a century until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The chaos of

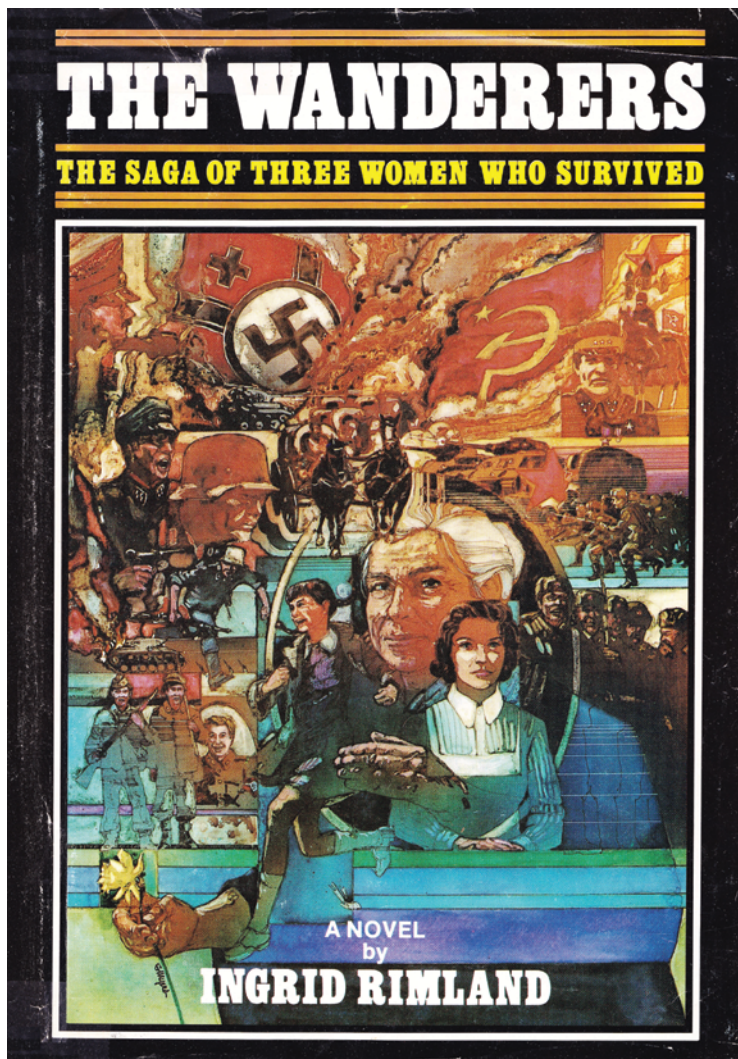


Figure 3. Cover of *The Wanderers: The Saga of Three Women Who Survived*

Ingrid Rimland's 1977 novel depicted three generations of Mennonite women who lived under Soviet rule, experienced Nazi occupation, and migrated to Paraguay.

© Image courtesy of Penguin Random House

the Civil War gave way to communist tyranny, heaping fresh abuses upon downtrodden Mennonites. The novel's subtitle, *The Saga of Three Women Who Survived*, underscored Rimland's conflation of female gender with unwarranted torment. The book's dust jacket advertised it as the epic of a "people" who, facing "extermination," fled the USSR to seek a permanent homeland.³³ As in Rimland's own life, the protagonists depart Ukraine with Hitler's armies. After the war, they find new benefactors among North American Mennonite aid workers who resettle them to Paraguay.

Mennonite critics praised *The Wanderers* upon publication. They approached the novel as a contribution to building peoplehood. "How does a people tell its 'story'?" opened one review.³⁴ Another summarized it as "the story of a people—a people who survived."³⁵ The book acquired accolades beyond the religious sphere too. It won a California Literature Medal Award. Bantam Books acquired rights to the novel (which originally appeared with a Christian press) and issued a mass market paperback in 1978. Rimland dropped hints about a possible film deal.³⁶ Whereas general audiences encountered *The Wanderers* as "dramatic fiction based on historical events," Mennonite readers—especially those with ties to the Soviet Union—experienced the book on a more personal level.³⁷ Some reviewers corrected mistakes using their own memories: Rimland described postwar refugee camps as too pleasant, and her text incorrectly placed monkeys in central Paraguay. Less trivially, one church leader contested the novel's portrayal of Mennonites as die-hard German nationalists, and he wished that the book better described the faith's spiritual underpinnings.³⁸ Positive and critical comments alike measured the book against expectations of verisimilitude.

The Wanderers appealed to many Mennonite intellectuals in North America because they had shaped its content. Rimland researched her novel with resources from the historical library of Bethel College, a denominational school in Kansas. She and her first husband had emigrated from Paraguay in 1960 to seek medical treatment for their disabled son, initially settling in Canada, where they retained contact with Mennonites but did not regularly

attend church. By the decade's end, the family had relocated again, this time to Kansas. Rimland became fluent in English, and she held dreams of becoming a writer. According to her 1984 memoir, she initially ventured to the Bethel library not to research a novel that celebrated Mennonites, but rather to collect fodder for an anti-religious book. Having felt unsupported by faith communities in Paraguay and Canada, Rimland expected more of the same in Kansas. Materials in the Bethel library unexpectedly changed her outlook. "I'll show them!," Rimland told herself at first. Then she started reading. "I fell silent," she later remembered, "and just read on and on." Visiting Bethel taught her to see Mennonites as "a badly decimated people with whom I could identify"—a people with their own "holocaust."³⁹

The director of the Bethel College library, an educator named Cornelius Krahn, steered Rimland toward materials that treated Mennonites as a persecuted ethnic group comparable to Jews. Krahn had helped to standardize such interpretations among the denomination's intellectual establishment through his capacity as the co-editor of a four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia* and as founding editor of a popular magazine called *Mennonite Life*. These publications contained ample information about Soviet violence against Mennonites, as well as casual comparisons to Judaism.⁴⁰ Krahn, like Rimland, had been born in what was now Ukraine, and some of his family members were still on the far side of the Iron Curtain. In 1970 and 1971, he personally advised Rimland during her visits to Bethel. After Rimland moved to California, Krahn sent her books by post, sometimes suggesting titles of interest. He also sent maps to help Rimland orient plot points geographically, and he consulted with her on cover art and promotional materials when *The Wanderers* went to press. Krahn also connected the young novelist with her literary "idol," a Mennonite named Walter Quiring. Rimland was ecstatic when Quiring read her manuscript in draft and agreed to arrange reviews.⁴¹

Guided by Krahn for nearly a decade, Rimland drank deeply from narrative channels that Mennonite scholars and churchmen had constructed since the Second World War. Krahn himself

had been one of numerous intellectuals who helped the North America-based humanitarian relief organization Mennonite Central Committee to downplay evidence of collaboration with Nazism among their members.⁴² MCC leaders tended to be anti-fascist churchgoers from Canada or the United States. They were primed, though, to assume the best of coreligionists in Europe, and they also viewed Soviet communism as a direct ongoing threat to Christian life and values. Most of the 15,000 refugees that MCC helped move from Europe to the Americas between 1947 and 1955 had received racial privileges from Hitler's regime. Nearly all their men served in German uniform and some participated in the Holocaust.⁴³ Yet MCC insisted to United Nations officials that refugees under its care were innocent members of a pacifist church who had endured terrible violence. "Much work can be done toward establishing," strategized the head of MCC's mutual aid program, "that the case of our Mennonites parallels somewhat that of the Jewish refugees."⁴⁴

Rimland's focus on female suffering in *The Wanderers* echoed MCC's postwar campaign to distance Mennonite migrants from Nazism. Refugees were indeed disproportionately women, and Red Army soldiers had raped many of them.⁴⁵ MCC depicted these realities as indicative of a longer history of communist depravity. One leader, likening Mennonite life under Stalin to "the experience of the children of Israel in the days of the Captivity," claimed that they had been "encouraged to loosen family life and engage in immoral sex experimentation."⁴⁶ Another writer posited denominational resistance to marrying outside the faith as a factor in Soviet persecution. "The only classic parallel of this," he speculated, "is that of the Jew."⁴⁷ Such a line of reasoning deflected awareness about the Mennonite soldiers who had fought for the Third Reich—many of whom remained prisoners of war in Soviet camps—and appealed to Western anti-communism at the outset of the Cold War.⁴⁸ Refugee leaders themselves took up the story, telling interviewers: "Mennonites feel that they are persecuted for their religion just as the Jews."⁴⁹ Evaluations of MCC and refugee rhetoric suggest that notions of a Mennonite genocide were widespread.⁵⁰

Overt comparisons of Mennonites with Jews enabled denominational spokespersons—and eventually Rimland—to posit communism as worse than Nazism while overlooking fascist crimes. Antisemitism had been a pervasive feature of Mennonite anti-Bolshevism prior to World War II. Prominent churchmen, like other anti-communists, wrongly depicted the Soviet Union as a Jewish state. One MCC worker in Ukraine during the 1920s parroted the antisemitic refrain that Soviet power lay in “the hands of Jews.”⁵¹ In the Third Reich, Nazi propaganda stoked myths of Judeo-Bolshevism. Mennonites who came under wartime fascist rule could curry favor with Nazi officials by denouncing Jews as “Bolshevik beasts” or “murderers and misbegotten bastards.”⁵² Those grateful for Nazi patronage spoke among themselves, even at the height of the Holocaust, about “Stalin and his Jewish comrades.”⁵³ The decline of such formulations after the war served primarily to dissociate the church from fascism. Hitler’s annihilation of the Jews, if mentioned at all, appeared as a lesser evil: “[t]o be shot or gassed was better than the terrible humiliations, the contempt and the suffering, that a merciless regime inflicted on millions of Soviet citizens.”⁵⁴

Mennonites’ approval of *The Wanderers* and its message of guiltless anguish cemented Rimland’s self-esteem as a novelist. She spoke about the book to church audiences from Wichita to Winnipeg. In these talks, Rimland played the partial outsider. She saw herself as a Mennonite by blood who cared for her “people,” but also as a religious nonbeliever, whose detachment from the faith allowed her to speak honestly about difficult topics. Denominational leaders were undoubtedly less than smitten with Rimland’s open apostasy, but a bevy of speaking invitations, reviews, and author profiles in the Mennonite press indicate overall receptivity. Rimland felt her debut was “a bombshell success.” This grand start—and her desire to recapture its glory—would haunt the rest of her career. *The Wanderers* gave Rimland a hunger for recognition. “I am inordinately proud of that book,” she wrote, “not just for what it says, but for my focused voice and strong conviction within the circumstances and the stresses in which I wrote my version of what needed

to be said regarding Mennonites: who they are, where they come from, what made them what they are today.”⁵⁵ For the remainder of her life, she would try, again, to reveal supposed realities others could not see.

FINDING HOLOCAUST DENIAL

Ingrid Rimland’s inability to recreate the triumph of *The Wanderers* propelled her turn toward organized antisemitism. She had tasted success by repurposing a narrative already honed by a generation of church leaders, who had moreover primed a sizeable audience. When Rimland deviated from this account of feminized suffering, she found herself adrift. Completing a doctorate of education in 1979, she worked as an educational psychologist in California schools and as a child psychologist in private practice. Rimland wrote articles in leading California newspapers but failed to find a major publisher for the two new books she wrote during the 1980s. By the decade’s end, she decided to return to her one proven hit. Rimland revised *The Wanderers* line by line and self-published the expanded text.⁵⁶ She may have hoped for renewed enthusiasm from Mennonites. If so, she was disappointed. In the years since *The Wanderers* first appeared, church historians had begun uncovering the broad pro-Nazi sentiment among a large minority of the denomination before and during World War II.⁵⁷ Such findings remained marginalized within the community, and collective Mennonite memory continued to favor accounts of victimhood in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, tales of communist violence became increasingly divorced from earlier depictions of the Nazis as liberators. Just as Rimland seized on this story again, her main audience had vanished.

A decade of irrelevance made Rimland desperate for a community that would praise her tales of suffering and redemption. Having internalized the sense of persecuted white womanhood Mennonite intellectuals had affirmed was her right, Rimland expressed pride for how far she had risen. From repression in the USSR and poverty in

Paraguay, she had become a novelist with great potential. Rimland was transparent about her ambition. She envisioned personal friendships with renowned public figures, including Shana Alexander, William F. Buckley Jr., Joan Didion, Phil Donahue, Edwin Newman, and Barbara Walters. She dreamed of winning a Pulitzer Prize.⁵⁸ In 1988, Rimland reviewed the real estate mogul Donald Trump's book, *The Art of the Deal*, for the *Los Angeles Times*. This review might be read as a projection of Rimland's own desires. She likened Trump to the character John Galt of Ayn Rand's anti-egalitarian novel, *Atlas Shrugged*. Trump, like Galt (and Rimland), showed "boundless inner strength and sharply focused talent—iconoclastic in ethics, hard-working, impatient with trivia, loving excellence for its own sake, hating controls on ambition and drive, having megadreams of what mind and money can buy."⁵⁹

Developments in Rimland's personal life had led her to associate literary achievement with her independence as a professional woman. Raising a child with disabilities in a society that placed responsibility for material support onto mothers strained Ingrid's marriage with her first husband, Woldemar. In her memoir, Ingrid described marital fissures growing in tandem with the research for her debut novel. Woldemar, who worked blue-collar jobs, saw his wife as a caregiver and had little understanding for her studies. "I'm leaving you, Woldi," she told her husband after immersing herself in Mennonite history. "Am I so wicked, wanting to expand?" she asked.⁶⁰ Upon moving to California, Ingrid began her doctoral studies in education and separated from Woldemar. The couple finally filed for divorce when *The Wanderers* appeared. "What's all this ruckus about?," inquired Woldemar, who according to his wife never read her manuscript. "Well it seems that I have made it," she replied, "I have become a star."⁶¹ Ingrid undertook her 1978 book tour as a proud divorcee. She received her doctorate a year later.⁶² Reflecting on her newfound autonomy, she credited *The Wanderers* with providing clarity: "[i]t gave me a focus for the rest of my life."⁶³

The antisemitic logic of Holocaust denial would eventually shape Rimland's erroneous belief that Jews sabotaged her writing

career. In video footage of a presentation given years later to fellow white supremacists, she traced her troubles to the start of her public life. She claimed *The Wanderers* had put her on a path to fame and fortune. Then someone at Bantam, which Rimland called “a Jewish publishing house,” noticed the novel’s positive treatment of Nazism. The publisher supposedly shredded all remaining copies. “Here was this great big groundswell,” Rimland alleged, “and the next thing, it was done. It was wiped out.”⁶⁴ No known evidence supports this story. But Rimland’s post-hoc portrayal of *The Wanderers* as compatible with formal white supremacy does underscore the book’s importance for her subsequent turn toward Holocaust denial. In 1994, an antisemitic journal effectively welcomed Rimland into the white supremacist community with a favorable review of her re-released debut. The magazine—a pseudo-scholarly mouthpiece for the California-based Institute for Historical Review, an organization explicitly committed to Holocaust denial—falsely alleged that the second edition had restored neo-Nazi prose “edited out by a publisher in 1977.”⁶⁵ This was itself a wishful revision.

Rimland had not yet become a Holocaust denier in 1988 when she self-published the new version of *The Wanderers*. Passages from the expanded text did excite career antisemites when they read the book several years later, but references to the Nazis as liberators followed the tone and intent of the original version. Rimland rewrote the novel to reflect a matured literary voice, not a changed attitude toward Jews.⁶⁶ The second edition, in fact, advertised another book she published in the same year called *Demon Doctor*, which was about her failed quest to catch the Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele. News articles in outlets like *The New York Times* speculated that the fugitive had contacts with Mennonites in Paraguay.⁶⁷ Rimland was struggling to rebound from her memoir’s commercial flop, and she became interested in the tenuous Mengele-Mennonite story. “For media attention, would Mengele do?,” she asked a friend.⁶⁸ Rimland hypothesized that a physician she had known in Paraguay might have been the disguised Auschwitz butcher. She also stated that this doctor indirectly contributed to a botched surgery on her infant son, disabling him. Rimland’s short stint as a Nazi hunter

proved fruitless though—*Demon Doctor* never became the best-seller she craved.

Available evidence suggests that by the following year (1989), Rimland entered an identity crisis. She had been working for a decade on the epic-scale follow-up to *The Wanderers*, provisionally entitled *The Scythe*, and she announced its imminent appearance. Her description of the book—“a seven-generational novel about the wheat empire of the Midwest”—conformed to initial plans she had communicated years earlier to her mentor in Kansas, Cornelius Krahn.⁶⁹ The aging librarian recommended Rimland for a Guggenheim Fellowship to research her opus, but this grant failed to materialize, prefiguring trouble to come.⁷⁰ Rimland forecasted that *The Scythe* would hit bookstores in 1990. It did not. Either Rimland could not find a publisher for the book, or she herself questioned its literary direction and temporarily shelved the manuscript that would become *Lebensraum!* Analysis of the hate-riddled trilogy she ultimately produced indicates that in hindsight as a neo-Nazi, Rimland considered 1989 to be a key date for her path into extremism. In a frame story set in that year, the novel’s protagonist—a lightly fictionalized Rimland—journeys from California to Kansas to bring Mennonites a gospel of antisemitism.⁷¹

Rimland’s yearning for adulation deepened as her prospects for a real literary comeback receded. She explained in *Demon Doctor* that she had embraced the sensationalism of Nazi hunting to boost interest in her mid-1980s memoir about educating her disabled son. This earlier, more conventional, book never took off as a popular ode to special-needs schooling as she planned.⁷² Rimland believed her autobiography should be adapted for the big screen, and in another ploy to generate buzz, she released a booklet by her son, Erwin, to demonstrate how much he had learned by age 28. “People should read about me because I am a very famous person who will be in a movie,” his aphoristic reflections began.⁷³ The subtext of Erwin’s pamphlet offered a grimmer depiction of quotidian life with his mother, who inflated expectations for her son and herself to cover over chronic anxiety, peripatetic housing, and financial insecurity. Ingrid’s increasingly outlandish strategies

did not convince. "Who wanted to read," she reported hearing from booksellers who would not stock her memoir, "about a handicapped child?"⁷⁴ In a 1990 interview, Rimland described herself as depleted. "This planet is shrinking with pain. I want an explanation for that," she said, before musing about the value of the Western heritage and the evils of communism.⁷⁵

The dissolution of the USSR marked Rimland's final break with mainstream pretensions. Unable to keep attributing personal woes to Bolshevism, she settled on the old lie that communism was itself a Jewish conspiracy. For Rimland, *perestroika* and the opening of the Berlin Wall seemed to be less victories for democracy than steps in a Jewish plot for totalitarian global government. In her newly extremist parlance: "it is still the Jews who are bedeviling the world."⁷⁶ She also incorrectly divined the handiwork of the New World Order in the disenchantment of her "people" with the one topic that had ever earned her acclaim: Mennonite travails before and during World War II. In truth, the scholarly examination of Mennonite-Nazi collaboration, alongside the broader popularization of Holocaust history, had prompted a quiet bifurcation in denominational memory.⁷⁷ Stories of Stalinist violence still held charisma yet now said little about liberating Nazi forces. One review of Mennonite peace historiography evaluated scholarship on Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union as unusually deep. Regarding Germany, by contrast, "there is practically no work at all."⁷⁸ Rimland accused Mennonites of abandoning their martyrdom identity: "our war reduced to 'Auschwitz,' our struggle vilified, our soldiers demonized."⁷⁹

Holocaust denial offered Rimland everything she felt she had lost. Favorable analysis of *The Wanderers* by the Institute for Historical Review in 1994 constituted the book's first positive treatment in years. This same group organized the conference, several months later, where Rimland sat for her initial interview with Ernst Zündel. Racists like Zündel accepted her writings for the brilliant texts she thought they were. Neo-Nazism also gave Rimland a readymade logic to understand her professional failings. Convinced she was not at fault, Rimland blamed Jews instead. Conspiratorial

thinking linked the many traumas of her life: Jews had supposedly driven the Soviet repression of Mennonites; Jews besmirched the Mennonites' alleged savior, Hitler; Jewish influence ostensibly caused North American Mennonites' "decay in spirit and in fact," prompting them to reject their own best interpreter—herself.⁸⁰ Spurned by reality, she chose fantasy. The fictionalized version of herself that Rimland conjured up in *Lebensraum!* enjoyed fame and riches as the author of a wildly popular Hollywood screenplay. The tragedy was that to maintain her make-believe world, she stoked Jew-hatred through internet activism on an international scale.

CONCLUSION

Making Ingrid Rimland into a Holocaust denier required a community effort. The likes of Ernst Zündel and the Institute for Historical Review defined one end of her trajectory. At the other end, collective Mennonite experiences of, and responses to, the Second World War equipped Rimland with an interpretive repertoire she would never discard. After the war, church leaders had successfully positioned the tens of thousands of Mennonites who came under Nazi rule in Eastern Europe as akin to Jews. Downplaying collaboration with Hitler's regime served the aims of Mennonite humanitarians but at a cost. The failure to wrestle with Mennonite collaboration with Nazism robustly and publicly starved denominational educators of resources to teach new generations about the dangers of anti-semitism. If Rimland's intellectual leap into Holocaust denial carried her far beyond the pale of Mennonite acceptability in the 1990s, the emergence of an antisemite from this milieu should not be considered a great surprise. Rimland developed as a thinker in an atmosphere steeped with Mennonite memorial culture yet empty of constructive engagement with Holocaust history. Despite having herself benefited from Nazi warfare, she learned to identify as a victim.

The patriarchal constraints in Rimland's life further conditioned her turn toward Holocaust denial. Achieving even a modicum of celebrity with *The Wanderers* had demanded tremendous

energy and discipline, all while balancing the excessive expectations of motherhood and navigating her collapsing marriage. Although the woman-centered subject matter of her debut novel delighted Mennonites and others, her tale of feminized suffering also served efforts by the denomination's predominantly male elite to retroactively establish the innocence of their European coreligionists in the Nazi era. The bargain was unequal. When Rimland deviated from the script or when institutional priorities shifted, these men did not reach out with help. True, Rimland never fully belonged to the denominational fold in her adult years. But women who remained in the church rarely if ever achieved the cultural power she desired. That Rimland would seek solace within the notoriously misogynistic community of organized white supremacy points to the limited options available for pursuing her ambitions. Her subsequent online demonization of Jews exemplifies all too poignantly how patriarchy and racism have functioned together to propel the rising antisemitism of our time.

NOTES

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1. James Urry, "Fate, Hate, and Denial: Ingrid Rimland's *Lebensraum!*," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73, no. 1 (1999): 126–127. For background on Mennonites, see Cornelius Dyck, *An Introduction to*

Mennonite History (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1993); John Lapp and Arnold Snyder, eds., *Global Mennonite History Series*, 5 vols. (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003–2012).

2. John Roth, “Apology to Prof. Harvey Dyck” and “Responses to James Urry,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 73, no. 3 (1999): 420–426.

3. On Nazi attitudes toward Mennonites, see Benjamin W. Goossen, “Terms of Racial Endearment: Nazi Categorization of Mennonites in Ideology and Practice, 1929–1945,” *German Studies Review* 44, no. 1 (2021): 27–46. Nazi treatment of Ukraine’s “ethnic Germans” more broadly is considered in Dmytro Myeshkov, “Die Deutschen in der Ukraine während der Besatzung 1941–1944,” in *Nationalsozialismus und Regionalbewusstsein im östlichen Europa*, eds. Burkhard Olschowsky and Ingo Loose (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 401–421.

4. Personal data on Rimland (née Brandt) are drawn from entry 1153 in Hermann Schirmacher, Hans Peter Wiebe, and Thomas Schirmacher, eds., “MCC Auswanderungslisten nach 1945: The Mennonite Central Committee Post-World War II Refugee List, 1945–1952,” 2020, Mennonite Genealogical Resources, http://www.mennonitegenealogy.com/int/MCC_Mennoniten_Ausgewandert_Nach_1945.xlsx

5. Aryeh Tuchman, “Generational Changes in the Holocaust Denial Movement in the United States,” in *Deciphering the New Antisemitism*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 361.

6. I follow Cynthia Miller-Idriss in defining white-supremacist extremism as “a global ideology based on extreme and violent ideological beliefs that rely on violence—as a solution and an imperative response—to a perceived existential threat to white civilization posed by demographic change and immigration.” Cynthia Miller-Idriss, *Hate in the Homeland: The New Global Far Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 15.

7. This article contributes to scholarship that analyzes Nazi antisemitism and racism in the Americas together. One strand of this literature considers American influences on Nazi Germany: see for example James Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017). A second strand interrogates the reach of European-style fascism in the interwar United States: see for example Richard Steigmann-Gall, “Star-Spangled Fascism: American Interwar Political Extremism in Comparative Perspective,” *Social History* 42, no. 1 (2017): 94–119. This article most closely follows a third strand, which examines exchanges in racial ideology between Europe and

North America after the fall of the Third Reich: see for example Heide Fehrenbach, *Race After Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

8. Paul A. Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 200–236. Hanebrink shows how postwar comparisons between communism and Nazism facilitated a conceptual transition from myths of Judeo-Bolshevism to claims of Judeo-Christian solidarity within Western anti-communism. On the earlier fusion of antisemitism and anti-Bolshevism in Nazi Germany, see Hanebrink, 83–162; Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Lorna Waddington, *Hitler's Crusade: Bolshevism and the Myth of the International Jewish Conspiracy* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

9. For a suggestive comparison, in which Mennonite leaders rallied around a problematic male figure during the same period, see Rachel Waltner Goossen, “‘Defanging the Beast’: Mennonite Responses to John Howard Yoder’s Sexual Abuse,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 89, no. 1 (2015): 7–80. On Mennonite heteropatriarchy in North America, see Stephanie Krehbiel, “Pacifist Battlegrounds: Violence, Community, and the Struggle for LGBTQ Justice in the Mennonite Church USA” (PhD dissertation, University of Kansas, 2015). The disproportionate sympathy (or “himpathy”) often extended to male perpetrators is analyzed in Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 178–219.

10. Marlene Epp, *Women Without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 70–186. On strategic feminization and reassertions of family ideology more generally in postwar Europe, see Elizabeth Heineman, “The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany’s ‘Crisis Years’ and West German National Identity,” *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 354–395; Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 101–140; Tara Zahra, *The Lost Children: Reconstructing Europe’s Families after World War II* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

11. Rimland’s antisemitic convictions conformed to anxieties common in white supremacist circles, from the KKK to present-day militia movements. On the place of women in white supremacist organizations often characterized by masculinist violence, see Kathleen M. Blee, *Inside Organized Racism: Women in the Hate Movement* (Berkeley: University

of California Press, 2002); Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, *Mothers of Massive Resistance: White Women and the Politics of White Supremacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Kathleen Belew, *Bring the War Home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 156–184. For current questions, see Kathleen Blee, “Where Do We Go from Here? Positioning Gender in Studies of the Far Right,” *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 21, no. 4 (2020): 416–431.

12. Daphne Winland, “Native Scholarship: The Enigma of Self-Definition Among Jewish and Mennonite Scholars,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 5, no. 4 (1992): 432.

13. From 1928 to 1933, 20–25 percent of the approximately 100,000 Mennonites in the Soviet Union underwent dekulakization, and eight to nine percent were arrested in the Great Terror of 1936–1938. These figures are higher than the estimated averages of five to 15 percent and one and a half to five percent for broader Soviet populations during the same periods, respectively. Colin Neufeldt, “Through the Fires of Hell: The Dekulakization and Collectivization of the Soviet Mennonite Community, 1928–1933,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998): 9–32; Peter Letkemann, “Mennonite Victims of the ‘Great Terror,’ 1936–1938,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998): 33–58. Soviet authorities also deported tens of thousands of Mennonites during the Nazi invasion of the USSR in 1941, and at the end of the war they forcibly repatriated 23,000 who fled Ukraine with Hitler’s retreating armies.

14. Leonard G. Friesen, “Mennonites & the Soviet Inferno: Reflections on the Symposium,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 16 (1998): 92. On Canadian Mennonite collective memory, see Robert Zacharias, *Rewriting the Break Event: Mennonites and Migration in Canadian Literature* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013); Sean Patterson, *Makhno and Memory: Anarchist and Mennonite Narratives of Ukraine’s Civil War, 1917–1921* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2020).

15. Waldemar Janzen, “Time of Terror: Biblical-Theological Perspectives on Mennonite Suffering during the Stalin Era and World War II,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 15. For a feminist and postcolonial critique of this theological direction, see Melanie Kampen, “The Spectre of Reconciliation: Investigating Mennonite Theology, Martyrdom, and Trauma” (PhD dissertation, Emmanuel College and the University of Toronto, 2019), 39–45.

16. See Alain Goldschläger, "The Trials of Ernst Zündel," in *Holocaust Denial: The Politics of Perfidy*, ed. Robert Solomon Wistrich (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 109–136.

17. Abe Opincar, "World Wide Reich," *San Diego Reader*, November 6, 1997, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1997/nov/06/world-wide-reich/#>. Organizers of the 1994 Holocaust denial conference reported euphemistically on their antisemitic event in "Spirited Twelfth IHR Conference Brings Together Leading Revisionist Scholars and Activists," *Journal of Historical Review* 14, no. 6 (1994): 2–8.

18. Howard Berkowitz, "Hate on the Internet: The Anti-Defamation League Perspective," in *Hate Crime on the Internet* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001), 24, 40.

19. Recent scholarship in Mennonite Studies has emphasized the centrality of communities of color in the history of the global church. See for example Tobin Miller Shearer, *Daily Demonstrators: The Civil Rights Movement in Mennonite Homes and Sanctuaries* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Felipe Hinojosa, *Latino Mennonites* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014); Regina Shands Stoltzfus, "The Unexpected and Complicated Presence of African American Women in Mennonite Churches" (PhD dissertation, Chicago Theological Seminary, 2017).

20. "Ernst Zündel Interviews Ingrid Rimland in San Diego," 1994, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNByJHQPFR0>

21. Ingrid Rimland, *Lebensraum!: A Passion for Land and Peace*, Volume One (Toronto: Samisdad Publishers, 1998); Ingrid Rimland, *Lebensraum!: The Theft of Land and Peace*, Volume Two (Toronto: Samisdad Publishers, 1998); Ingrid Rimland, *Lebensraum!: The Dream of Land and Peace*, Volume Three (Toronto: Samisdad Publishers, 1998). Despite being marked as published by Zündel's underground press in Toronto, these books were printed in the United States and distributed from Rimland's California home.

22. "Canada Tries to Bar Pro-Nazi View on Internet," *New York Times*, August 2, 1998, 18.

23. Urry, "Fate, Hate, and Denial," 107.

24. *Ibid.*, 127.

25. "Responses to James Urry," 421, 423.

26. The controversy over Urry's review of *Lebensraum!* might be considered a belated echo in Mennonite Studies of the broader

Historikerstreit in West Germany during the 1980s, as described in Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

27. "Responses to James Urry," 425.

28. John Kampen, "The Mennonite Challenge of Particularism and Universalism: A Liberation Perspective," *Conrad Grebel Review* 19, no. 2 (2001): 9. Recent investigations into the history of Mennonite-Jewish relations include: Helmut Foth, "Juden, Täufer, Mennoniten: Ein Überblick über ihre 500 Jahre währende Beziehungsgeschichte," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 70 (2013): 23–54; Lisa Schirch, "Anabaptist-Mennonite Relations with Jews Across Five Centuries," *Mennonite Life* 74 (2020): <https://ml.bethelks.edu/2020/07/09/anabaptist-mennonite-relations-with-jews-across-five-centuries/>

29. Victor G. Doerksen, Abraham Friesen, Johan D. Funk, Walter Klaassen, Harry Loewen, Peter Penner, and Al Reimer, "Letter to the Editor," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74 no. 1 (2000): 191.

30. Ingrid Rimland, "An Open Letter to All Mennonite Newsgroups," ca. 1999, *Zundelsite.org*, http://www.zundelsite.org/archive/old_zundelsite/english/ingrids_books/bio/menn_week.html

31. See for example Epp, *Women Without Men*, 46, 211, 213, 218, 228.

32. See among others "Writer to Speak on Horrors of Mennonite March to Berlin," *Hutchinson News*, November 14, 1978, 5; Debbie Lyon, "Mennonite Heritage, Survival Explored," *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 27, 1978, 3; Ingrid Rimland, "In meine Heimat kam ich wieder," *Cincinnati Kurier*, December 14, 1978, 3; Ingrid Rimland, "Roots of The Wanderers," *Heritage Review* 23 (April 1979): 37; Ingrid Rimland, "The Wanderers Revisited," in *Mennonite Images: Historical, Cultural, and Literary Essays Dealing with Mennonite Issues*, ed. Harry Loewen (Winnipeg: Hyperion Press, 1980), 269.

33. Ingrid Rimland, *The Wanderers: The Saga of Three Women Who Survived* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977).

34. Wilfred Martens, "The Wanderers," *Direction* 8, no. 1 (1979): 37.

35. Elizabeth Yoder, "Ingrid Rimland, *The Wanderers*," *Mennonite Life* 34, no. 1 (1979): 30.

36. Ingrid Rimland, "Giving Birth to a Novel," *Writers Digest* 59, no. 3 (1979): 29.

37. Charlotte Hutchinson, "A Tale of Basic Survival," *Sacramento Union*, ca. 1978, archived in Cornelius Krahn Papers, box 6, folder: Ingrid

Rimland 1972–1978, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, USA (hereafter MLA).

38. Peter Dyck, “*The Wanderers*,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 52, no. 4 (1979): 349–350.

39. Ingrid Rimland, *The Furies and The Flame: An Autobiography* (Novato, CA: Arena Press, 1984), 169–170.

40. For instance, Cornelius Krahn, “A Mennonite ‘Zionist’ Movement?” *Mennonite Life* 25, no. 4 (1970): 171–173. On Mennonite attitudes toward Israel in this period, see Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia K. Weaver, *Salt and Sign: Mennonite Central Committee in Palestine, 1949–1999* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1999), 27–134. Krahn’s editorial influence is described in Rachel Waltner, “From Anabaptism to Mennonitism: The Mennonite Encyclopedia as a Historical Document,” *Mennonite Life* 37, no. 4 (1982): 13–19.

41. Ingrid Rimland to Cornelius Krahn, May 1, 1977, Cornelius Krahn Papers, box 6, folder: Ingrid Rimland 1972–1978, MLA. Quiring had been an ardent Nazi but after World War II became reintegrated into the Mennonite mainstream as an editor and teacher. See Ted Regehr, “Walter Quiring (1893–1983),” in *Shepherds, Servants and Prophets: Leadership Among the Russian Mennonites (ca. 1880–1960)*, ed. Harry Loewen (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003), 313–336. Quiring used his postwar position of influence to undermine accounts of Mennonite-Nazi collaboration. Peter Rempel, “Genesis of *Mennonite Exodus*, the Book,” *Mennonite Historian* 44, no. 4 (2018): 10.

42. Benjamin W. Goossen, “From Aryanism to Anabaptism: Nazi Race Science and the Language of Mennonite Ethnicity,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 90, no. 2 (2016): 159; Benjamin W. Goossen, “Abraham Esau: Hitlers Mennonitischer Physiker,” trans. Helmut Foth, *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 77 (2020): 138–139.

43. Gerhard Rempel, “Mennonites and the Holocaust: From Collaboration to Perpetuation,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 84, no. 4 (2010): 507–549; Benjamin W. Goossen, *Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 147–173; Mark Jantzen and John Thiesen, eds., *European Mennonites and the Holocaust* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

44. William Snyder to C.F. Klassen, April 17, 1947, IX-06-03, box 59, folder: 32/56, Mennonite Central Committee Archives, Akron, Pennsylvania, USA (hereafter MCCA). On MCC’s postwar refugee

operations, see T. D. Regehr, "Of Dutch or German Ancestry? Mennonite Refugees, M.C.C., and the International Refugee Organization," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 13 (1995): 7–25; Goossen, *Chosen Nation*, 174–199. Mennonites were more successful at acquiring refugee assistance from UN-affiliated organizations than were members of other groups that held "ethnic German" status during the Nazi era. See Jannis Panagiotidis, "'Not the Concern of the Organization?': The IRO and the Overseas Resettlement of Ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe After World War II," *Historical Social Research* 45, no. 4 (2020): 173–202.

45. Marlene Epp, "The Memory of Violence: Soviet and East European Mennonite Refugees and Rape in the Second World War," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 1 (1997): 58–87.

46. Winfield Fretz, "Report of the Mennonite Aid Section Chairman," January 8, 1948, IX-06-03, box 66, folder: 36/124, MCCA.

47. Peter Dyck, "Memorandum on Mennonite Refugees in Germany," July 25, 1946, IX-06-03, box 50, folder: 27/81, MCCA.

48. The compatibility of anti-communism with postwar family ideology in an American context is described in Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

49. "David P. Boder Interviews Julius Klüber [sic]," September 19, 1946, *Voices of the Holocaust*, http://voices.iit.edu/interview?doc=kluverJ&display=kluverJ_en. See also "A Moses of Our Day," *Mennonite Life* 2, no. 1 (1947): 30.

50. 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): 11–12; Hans Werner, "A Usable Past: Soviet Mennonite Memories of the Holocaust," in *European Mennonites and the Holocaust*, eds. Jantzen and Thiesen, 303.

51. Christian E. Krehbiel, diary, June 10, 1922, MLA, https://mla.bethelks.edu/archives/ms_11/diary%20transcriptions%20by%20ruth%20unrau/diary%201922%20feb%2019%20-%201923%20mar%2023.pdf. See also entries for June 26, July 5, July 11, August 15, November 4, November 28, and December 24, 1922.

52. "Schilderung vom Volksdeutschen Heinrich Hamm," November 12, 1941, Captured German and Related Records on Microfilm, T-81, roll 606, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, USA.

53. Johann Rempel, *Einlage: Chronik des Dorfes Kitschkas, 1789–1943* (Regina, SK: Heinrich Bergen, 2009), 177.

54. Quoted in Meir Buchsweiler, *Volkdeutsche in Der Ukraine am Vorabend und Beginn des Zweiten Weltkriegs: Ein Fall Doppelter Loyalität?* (Gerlingen: Bleicher Verlag, 1984), 379. Mennonites' selective memory regarding the Nazi occupation of Ukraine had parallels among other groups formerly afforded "ethnic German" status. See Hans-Christian Petersen, "Selektive Erinnerung: Der Zweite Weltkrieg in der Ukraine im historischen Gedächtnis der Russlanddeutschen," *Problemy istoriyi Holokostu: Ukrayins'kyy vymir* 11 (2019): 207–237; Doris Bergen, "The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe and the Collapse of the Nazi Empire, 1944–1945," in *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives on the Third Reich and Its Legacy*, eds. Doris Bergen, Alan Steinweis, and Daniel Rogers (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 118.

55. Rimland, *The Furies and The Flame*, 198.

56. Ingrid Rimland, *The Wanderers* (Stockton, CA: Crystal Books, 1988).

57. This literature is described in Diether Götz Lichdi, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Schuldbekennnisse der Mennoniten nach 1945," *Mennonitische Geschichtsblätter* 64 (2007): 39–54; John Thiesen, "Menno in the KZ or Münster Resurrected: Mennonites and National Socialism," in *European Mennonites and the Challenge of Modernity: Contributors, Detractors, and Adapters*, eds. Mark Jantzen, Mary Sprunger, and John Thiesen (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 2016), 313–328; Marion Kobelt-Groch and Astrid von Schlachta, eds., *Mennoniten in der NS-Zeit: Stimmen, Lebenssituationen, Erfahrungen* (Bolanden-Weierhof: Mennonitischer Geschichtsverein, 2017), 11–38.

58. Rimland, *The Furies and The Flame*, 210–211.

59. Ingrid Rimland, "Wheeling with a Big Dealer: *The Art of the Deal* by Donald J. Trump," *Los Angeles Times*, January 24, 1988, J5.

60. Rimland, *The Furies and The Flame*, 183.

61. Ibid., 199. Documents available via Ancestry.com (Library Edition) show that Ingrid and Woldemar Rimland filed for divorce in May 1977 and formally ended their marriage in June 1978.

62. Ingrid Rimland, "Hierarchical Learning as a Function of Concise Informational Feedback with Regard to Ability, Age, and Sex of Identical Twins" (EdD dissertation, University of the Pacific, 1979).

63. Rimland, *The Furies and The Flame*, 199.

64. Ingrid Rimland, untitled, 1998, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zVukrKeBE0>
65. Theodore J. O’Keefe, “Novel Traces Wartime Exodus of German Mennonites,” *Journal of Historical Review* 14, no. 2 (1994): 41. On the Institute for Historical Review, see Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 137–156.
66. Rimland, *The Wanderers* (1988), 5–6. The public persona that Rimland crafted in the late 1970s as a mainstream writer and public commentator remained consistent through 1993. See for example, “National City Altrusa Club to Hear Author at Luncheon,” *Star-News*, September 15, 1993, C2.
67. Ralph Blumenthal, “3 Nations Joining to Hunt Mengele,” *New York Times*, May 11, 1985, 1. On the public interest in Mengele’s possible links to Mennonites, see Daniel Stahl, “How the Fernheimers Learned to Speak About the Nazi Era: The Long Historical Echo of a Conflict,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 92, no. 2 (2018): 285–298.
68. Ingrid Rimland, *Demon Doctor* (Stockton, CA: Crystal Books, 1988), 28. On this book, see James Juhnke, “Ingrid Rimland, the Mennonites, and the Demon Doctor,” *Mennonite Life* 60, no. 1 (2005): <https://mla.bethelks.edu/ml-archive/2005Mar/juhnke%20essay.php>
69. Rimland, *The Wanderers* (1988), 307.
70. Cornelius Krahn, letter of recommendation, ca. 1978, Cornelius Krahn Papers, box 6, folder: Ingrid Rimland 1972–1978, MLA.
71. Rimland, *Lebensraum!*, Volume One, 5–60; Rimland, *Lebensraum!*, Volume Three, 517–575.
72. To promote *The Furies and The Flame*, Rimland presented at such venues as the Riverside County Epilepsy Society in California and the annual conference of the Missouri Association for Children with Learning Disabilities. “Epilepsy,” *San Bernardino County Sun*, April 15, 1984, B6; “Conference to Open,” *Joplin Globe*, October 11, 1984, 3B.
73. Erwin Rimland, *If I Could Wish for Wishes to Come True* (Stockton, CA: Self-Published, 1987), 7.
74. Rimland, *Demon Doctor*, 28.
75. Audrey Stubbart, “Journey Leads to Sense of Self,” *Independence Examiner*, March 21, 1990, 4.
76. Rimland, *Lebensraum!*, Volume Three, 555.

77. The expansion of public interest in the Holocaust starting in the late 1970s is described in Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 207–266.

78. Harvey Dyck, “Peter Brock and the History of Pacifism,” *Conrad Grebel Review* 7, no. 2 (1989): 154. Indicative of this development was the inclusion of an article about Jews, specifically, in a supplemental fifth volume of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. (No such article appeared in the original four volumes.) This piece referenced Mennonite “silence” during the Holocaust but otherwise siloed the topic from the denomination’s World War II history. Jacob Enz, “Judaism and Jews,” in *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Volume Five (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990), 469–470.

79. Rimland, *Lebensraum!*, Volume One, 16.

80. Rimland, *Lebensraum!*, Volume Three, 545.

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