

Report From Berlin

Alexander Freund



From June 2008 to May 2009, I am on sabbatical at the John-F.-Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin. During this time, I will report about various aspects of Canada in Berlin. In this report, I introduce you to two institutions in Berlin that have played an important role for many Canadian scholars visiting Germany's capital: The International Center for Academic Exchange (IBZ), and the John-F.-Kennedy Centre for North American Studies.

The International Center for Academic Exchange or IBZ (the acronym of its German name by which it is generally known) was founded in the early 1980s by the Free University of Berlin (FU), the Technical University of Berlin (TU), and three research institutes. Its aim is "to provide a pleasant home for our guests while they learn, work and explore in one of the most interesting and exciting cities in Europe." The complex provides furnished apartments in one of Berlin's nicest neighbourhoods. A leisurely bike ride on special bike paths (with their own traffic lights) gets you to the FU or the Ku'Damm (West Berlin's centre) in 15 minutes. In 25 minutes you are



at the Brandenburg Gate and Berlin's "Neue Mitte" (new centre) around Potsdamer Platz. The IBZ hosts regular lectures and concerts. Canadian scholars from all disciplines are regular guests at the IBZ. For more information, visit <http://www.ibz-berlin.de>. In 1963, political scientist Ernst Fraenkel founded the John-F.-Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin.

In interdisciplinary programs leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees in North American Studies, currently 700 students are learning about Canada and the United States from cultural, literary, linguistic, historical, political, sociological, and economic perspectives. Doctoral students are trained at the new Graduate School of North American Studies. The institute's library is the largest North American Studies library on the continent. This is one of the reasons it has been a magnet for visiting scholars from Canada and the United States. Another is the welcoming and dynamic staff and faculty as well as the diverse student body. On July 1, they met for an evening of fun and music to celebrate Canada Day. For more information, visit <http://jfki.fu-berlin.de/en>.

The Chair in German-Canadian Studies was established in 1989 with grants from the Secretary of State's Program for Canadian Ethnic Studies and a group of private philanthropists within the German-Canadian community of Winnipeg. It is located in, and affiliated with, the History Department at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Chair promotes the teaching of, and research into the history and culture of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants in Canada. It interacts with the German-Canadian community in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the rest of Canada through public lectures and the newsletter. The Chair promotes regional, national and international research through conferences, publications and grants.

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Unless otherwise stated, all articles were written by Alexander Freund

Submissions of articles, news, reports, and reviews as well as artwork and photos for publication in this newsletter are welcome.



German-Canadian Studies

<http://germancanadian.uwinnipeg.ca>

Grant and Essay Prize Winners

The recipients of the 2008 German-Canadian Studies Research Studies Grants, funded by the Spletzer Family Foundation (Winnipeg), study German migrants' changing language pronunciation, Russian Mennonites' High German, the German and Canadian media reporting on the Karl-Heinz Schreiber affair, and set out to compile a directory of congregations with German language services. The winner of the Undergraduate Essay Prize wrote about German-Canadians' "coming to terms" with the Nazi past. Below, the award winners tell you about themselves and their research.



Esther de Leeuw is writing her Ph.D. dissertation at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Scotland. She explores how migrants' pronunciation of their native language changes after the long-time use of a second language.

The acquisition of second languages is seen as essential from most political and academic institutions. Unfortunately, there has been little consideration towards the preservation of first languages in the case of migrants, neither within European nor North American borders. My research is unique because of its emphasis on pronunciation aspects of first language change in the case of migration. I am interested in finding out whether the pronunciation of an immigrant's native language (German) is affected by the

prolonged acquisition of his or her second language (English). More specifically, I am investigating phonetic aspects of bi-directional interference and first language attrition in the pronunciation of native German speakers who immigrated to Anglophone Canada.

My research is theoretically as well as personally motivated. I grew up in British Columbia, belonging to the second generation of a family who emigrated from the Netherlands. As a teenager, I moved from Canada to Germany, where I lived for six years, graduating from the University of Trier, with a *Magistra Artium* degree in phonetics, psychology and German. In my *Hauptstudium*, I spent a year at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. It is of both personal and theoretical interest to me to determine not only whether the pronunciation of a native language changes in a migrant setting, but also to investigate which kind of extralinguistic factors play a role in this process. For example, the type and amount of contact a person has with his or her native language may influence the extent to which the pronunciation of a native language changes.

My PhD studies are based at the Speech Science Research Centre within Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. I've thoroughly enjoyed my time in Edinburgh and thank those at this institution involved in my research, as well the German-Canadian Studies Foundation for supporting my research.





Nikolai Penner is writing his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Waterloo. He studies the use of High German among different groups of Russian Mennonites in Canada.

I was born and grew up in

Ukraine near the village of Chortitza, the first settlement established by Russian Mennonites in the wide steppes of Ukraine on the banks of the magnificent Dnepr. Since the late 1980s, when my family no longer had to hide its Mennonite roots and stories of the past, I developed a deep interest in all things Mennonite and a particular fascination for their languages. It is this interest of mine which led me to studying German at the State University of Zaporizhzhia, and after I immigrated to Canada in 2001, to doing my Master's and Doctoral degrees in German at the University of Waterloo, Ontario. Currently, I am working on my doctoral dissertation which is devoted to the High German language of Russian Mennonite immigrants in Canada.

Despite the fact that Russian Mennonites were once very hesitant to accept High German as the formal language, and that Plautdietsch, a West Prussian-based Low German dialect, is until today the primary language of most Russian Mennonites, High German has been an inseparable part of the group's culture ever since the end of the eighteenth century when it rapidly drove out the Dutch language, and became firmly associated with Russian Mennonite culture and faith. As is the case with most immigrants' languages in North America, both German varieties used by Russian Mennonites in Canada are being lost and in all probability will cease to exist in the course of the next several decades.

While a lot has been written about the Low German of Russian Mennonites, very little scholarly research has been conducted on the High German of the group. In my dissertation project, I am investigating how High German has been used by the two major waves of Russian Mennonite immigrants to Canada, which took place in the 1920s and 1940s-1950s.

Based on forty-nine audio-recorded interviews in High German with members of both groups, my project investigates grammatical specifics of the variety, looks at the domains High German occupied, investigates attitudes towards it, and traces how the situation has changed to this day. Twenty-five interviews with the immigrants of the 1920s were conducted in the 1970s by Henry Paetkau and Stan Dueck and are available at the Mennonite archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College. Nineteen interviews with post WWII immigrants I have conducted for this project will be made available there after the completion of the study.



Ulrike Marie Ehrenberg is writing her M.A. thesis in Canadian Studies at the University of Augsburg. She has just begun research for a comparative study of the Canadian and German press coverage of the

so-called "Mulroney-Schreiber saga."

My name is Ulrike Marie Ehrenberg and I am currently enrolled at the University of Augsburg. I am doing a major in Canadian Studies, and a minor in Political Science. As an undergraduate student, I focused on Canada's two official languages, English and French, as well as Canadian literature in both languages. Additionally, I broadened my general knowledge about Canadian politics, history, and geography.

As a graduate student, I started to shift my focus to Canadian politics, since it perfectly combines my two fields of study. In the summer term of 2007, I won a scholarship which enabled me to spend one term at our partner university in Ottawa. My fall term at Carleton University gave me an even better insight into Canadian politics, and since the Canadian government is located in Ottawa, I often found myself spending my spare time on Parliament Hill, where I attended Question Period on a regular basis.

While being in Ottawa, the newspapers were filled with new facts on the so-called "Schreiber-Mulroney saga," a term the *Globe and Mail* came up with to summarize the corruption "scandal" that involved former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and German middle man Karlheinz Schreiber. In my Political Science class, we often ended up discussing the case, and it was my professor who asked me if I could imagine doing a comparison of Canadian and German news coverage which focused on the topic. I agreed to do so and developed an even greater interest in the whole story. The fact that both Canada and Germany have been occupied with a

political affair that involved Karlheinz Schreiber appeared to be the perfect opportunity for doing research that would bring about clarification on both sides of the Atlantic.

When I returned to Germany, I decided to turn my recent research into a thesis that would include cooperation of the authorities, media coverage and a different perception that might be rooted in a different mentality or a different political landscape. I want to interview journalists, lawyers, and executives in both Canada and Germany, and write a paper that will help Canadians as well as Germans to better understand the other side of the case.



Pastor Horst Gutsche has begun a project of collecting information about congregations still using German in their services and other activities. Upon completion, the guide will be available to researchers and new immigrants.

I was born in

Germany of parents of Bessarabian (Moldova) German heritage. We emigrated to Alberta in 1956. After high school I studied in the United States, Germany, France and finished my studies for a B.A. (major: Germanic languages) and M.Div. (major: Old Testament) in Saskatoon. I then served in bilingual German-English Evangelical Lutheran congregations in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton, Brooklyn, N.Y., Calgary, Vernon, Onoway and San Francisco. Presently, I am not serving in a congregation on a regular basis.

In January 2008, I returned to Canada and heard of the grants provided by the Chair in German-Canadian Studies. The research I am doing will focus on the gathering of data in regard to all congregations in Canada which use the German language in worship and church activities. The goal is to publish an address book which will aid new immigrants. I previously did a study of the use of German in Canadian congregations which was published in Volume IX (1986) of the *German-Canadian Yearbook*.

Review

Martin F. Auger: *Prisoners of the Home Front: German POWs and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-46*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005.

This regional study of internment camps in Southern Quebec during the Second World War tells the story of some of Canada's 34,000 German prisoners-of-war and 4,000 civilian internees and their guards. The five camps in Farnham, Grande Ligne, Île-aux-Noix, Sherbrooke, and Sorel received civilians, refugees, and enemy merchant seamen from 1940 and POWs from 1942. After succinctly surveying the international history of concentration camps for civilians and combatants, Auger describes, based on government records, the overall program and operations

in Quebec. The description of the internees' experiences of camp life and Canadians' views of these prisoners is based on personal documents such as memoirs and oral histories. Internees spent a large amount of their time on labour projects, especially farming, but also in reeducation programs. There were nevertheless strains, tensions, and dissent among the internees, some of whom attempted to escape while a few committed suicide. Although lacking at times a critical distance to the sources, Auger's narrative is engaging and his argument sound. The author concludes that the internment "was a positive experience overall," (4) both for Canadians and Germans. It was a "home front victory" (147), to a large degree because the Canadian government (like the US government) respected the Geneva Convention throughout the war. This insight is particularly instructive at a time when democratic states seem to have forgotten this lesson.

Note: Fellowship Program 2009

Please visit <http://www.germancanadian.ca> to find out about scholarships, grants, and essay prizes offered through 2009 German-Canadian Studies Fellowship Program.

