MENNONITE LIFE

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FRONT COVER:
Modern school in Puerto Rico shows eager learners.

BACK COVER:
Water was formerly carried on the head from streams or wells.

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A FAREWELL

THIS ISSUE is the last one under the editorship of Cornelius Krahn and marks a twenty-six year milestone. *Mennonite Life* was started in 1946 for the purpose of presenting information about the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage and its challenge in our day. As the Director of the Mennonite Library and Archives and Professor of Church and Mennonite History, the Editor became aware of how much valuable information is stored in books, diaries, letters, etc., untapped and unused as far as the present-day generation of Mennonites is concerned. *Mennonite Life* was conceived to channel this information into Mennonite homes, congregations and libraries, and beyond that into public centers of information throughout the world. This has largely been achieved during the twenty-six years. ¶ But it is true only in a limited way as far as the Mennonite constituency is concerned. We have been more successful in getting *Mennonite Life* into public and university libraries than into the homes of those for whom it was primarily intended. The editors of *Mennonite Life* have always kept in mind the total Mennonite constituency, regardless of conference affiliations and ethnic backgrounds. It is a truly inter-Mennonite periodical. ¶ Throughout its history *Mennonite Life* was heavily subsidized by the publisher, Bethel College. The critical financial situation in higher education led the Board and Administration of Bethel College to the decision to discontinue the publication of *Mennonite Life*. The Herald Publishing Company, Newton, Kansas, was willing to take over the publication of *Mennonite Life*. Robert Schrag, the editor of the *Mennonite Weekly Review* is well-qualified to resume the responsibility as editor of *Mennonite Life*. The present Editor of *Mennonite Life* will be Consultant Editor and for the time being continue the responsibilities in connection with the "Mennonite Bibliography" and "Mennonite Research in Progress" reports published annually in the April issue. ¶ The new publisher and Editor will aim to continue *Mennonite Life* more or less the way it has been published during the past twenty-six years. Those who have access to the first issues of *Mennonite Life* published in the 40's and 50's will notice that a considerable change in content and appearance took place over the years. More changes will take place regardless of who the publisher and editors are. ¶ The Editor wishes to express joy and gratitude that the work started long ago will continue and bear fruit in the years to come. The Mennonite Library and Archives, located at Bethel College, the faculty members, and many of the faithful contributors and Department Editors will continue to make their contributions. ¶ Last, but not least, it is a deeply felt word of "thank you" that the Editor would like to express to all writers and readers of the years past and present; and above all, to the administration of Bethel College, starting with Dr. Ed. G. Kaufman, who was instrumental in initiating the magazine; and to all those co-workers from far and near in North and South America and Europe who have contributed to the magazine and inspired improvements.

Henceforth, all correspondence pertaining to *Mennonite Life* should be addressed to Robert Schrag, Herald Publishing Company, 129 West Sixth, Newton, Kansas 67114. Back issue of *Mennonite Life* between 1947-1971, be this in single quantities or bound volumes, will be available through the Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas 67117.

Cornelius Krahn

JOIN THE EDITOR!

CORNELIUS KRAHN has revisited the U.S.S.R. twice, in 1970 and in 1971. He intends to lead more groups in a tour to Russia.

The first tour is to take place in January, 1972, consisting primarily of college students, parents of students and educators.

The second tour will be open to all ages and will take place in June, 1972.

Send your inquiries about these tours to Cornelius Krahn, North Newton, Kansas 67117.

Radical Christian Discipleship Today

By Lloyd Ramseyer

Because of the incendiary nature of the term "radical" in modern society, perhaps we had better define the term. As used here the term does not represent any fixed position on the political spectrum from right to left. Rather, we think of it as complete commitment to a cause, and that the commitment is to a cause which differs somewhat from the generally accepted social, cultural, ethical, or religious pattern. Thought of in this way, a person fully committed to the cause of capitalism would be a radical in a socialized state, and a person committed to the way of love would be a radical in a society committed to violence.

When we think of radicals in our day we are likely to think of young people who plant bombs or set fire to buildings because they are committed to social change. As one person has said, perhaps the trouble is not that they are too radical, but that they are not radical enough. They have failed to make a radical break with the methods of a corrupt "realistic" human society that sees violence and force as the only realistic way of achieving an end which they believe to be desirable. A Christian radical will break with evil means in trying to achieve ends which are morally and ethically right.

Was Jesus Radical?

The radical, while fully committed, is not necessarily a fanatic. A dictionary definition of a radical is, "carried to the farthest limit; extreme; sweeping; championing something not generally accepted, or to an extent not generally accepted." On the other hand, a fanatic is "one possessed by an irrational zeal." Jesus was not a fanatic. He was perfectly rational. But he did break with the society of his day. He championed a position not generally accepted. And he did it with total commitment and self-sacrifice.

When Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, he did so in full knowledge of what it would cost. He faced danger as a human being, with the ability to make choices which would save his life if he felt that was what he should do. He did not go as a predestined machine, with all of the choices already made for him. He did not want to suffer and die any more than you or I would want to do that. Yet he resolutely faced the cross because he was totally committed to love for man, and he saw no other way to accomplish the purpose for which he was sent into the world. He could have attended the Passover and attracted little attention to himself—and lived—had he chosen to do so. But instead he planned his own triumphal entry, knowing that it would attract his enemies as well as his friends. No sooner had he entered the gates of Jerusalem than he proceeded to cleanse the temple, which was located next to the gate of entry. He knew this would further antagonize his enemies. He taught daily in the temple. He told parables directed at the Pharisees, and the gospels tell us that they knew they were so directed and that upon hearing them they plotted to eliminate him. He told the story of the last judgment, in which the law, which the Pharisees thought was so important, was not even mentioned as a criterion for judgment. His enemies tried various ways to trick him and thus turn the crowd against him, such as asking the very touchy question as to whether or not they should pay tribute to Caesar. The Pharisees thought to test him by sending someone to ask him which was the greatest law, and instead of mentioning some of the laws which they thought so sacred, he told them that the law of love was the greatest, and went even further by adding the statement that everything in the law and the prophets hung on these two laws of love. He thought it his duty to point out the hypocrisy of the Jewish religious leaders to the people, using the most violent language that he used during his entire ministry, a speech certainly not calculated to appease his enemies. He foretold that their beloved temple, and their sacred city of Jerusalem, would be destroyed, and that there would be great suffering. According to our definition of the

term radical, he qualified in two ways, he championed something which was not generally accepted, and he did it to an extent that was extreme and sweeping.

If we assume, and I think we must assume, that Jesus in his humanity was free to make his own choices, then I think we must also assume that even in that last week he could have saved his life had he chosen to tone down his message, to stop his direct attacks on his enemies, to take part in the Passover rites quietly. But he didn't feel that he could accomplish that for which he was sent into the world without exposing the hypocrisy and sham of the religious leaders of that day. He felt that if he was sent into the world to save it because of his Father's love for the world, he must make a clean break between the concepts of religion that were being taught and practiced, and those which he knew were sanctioned by his Father in heaven.

Did Jesus Have "Secret" Disciples?

After Jesus' death, resurrection, and the experiences of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples felt that the only way they could be fit followers of that kind of a leader was for them to be radical disciples. So they fearlessly preached the message of a Jesus who was really the Christ, the long looked for Messiah, who had taught, been crucified, and had risen again. Just as Jesus had done, they threw this message into the faces of the religious leaders of that time.

It is interesting that we hear nothing of either Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, after the resurrection, who were secret disciples of Jesus, because they feared the Jews. There was little place for secret disciples in the years following the resurrection. Secret disciples would never have built the church. There had to be leaders who were radical enough to say, when the rulers told them to be still, "we must obey God rather than men." Legend has it that only one of the original eleven disciples lived to die a natural death. All of the others became martyrs, as did a host of others who chose the path of radical discipleship.

Our Anabaptist forefathers were radical Christians. They gave up everything, including life itself, to follow what they believed to be the way of Christ. If they had not done so, there would have been no occasion for writing *Martyr's Mirror,* for none of them would have been martyrs. Neither were they quiet about their faith. Conrad Grebel debated openly with Zwingli. They went about gaining followers. It was not until persecution had killed off most of their leaders and they faced possible extermination that they became the "quiet in the land."

Arthur Gish, in a recently published book, says of them, "It was because of radical obedience to Christ and their vision of the Kingdom of God that the Anabaptists were forced to reject the dominant values of the sixteenth century. . . . They saw the need for people to live now as if the Kingdom of God were already here. . . . The important word for them was not faith . . . but discipleship."[1] It is doubtful if the dominant values of the twentieth century are any more Christian than those of the sixteenth century, and to make a radical break from the dominant values today and assume the role of radical discipleship cannot be done without sacrifice. Are we prepared for it?

Radical Discipleship Today

What does radical Christian discipleship mean for us today? Too many of us are pragmatists—we raise the question, not of what is right, or what is Christian, but of whether or not a certain way of behavior will work. We place our own lives and reputations above Jesus' teachings, and we say, "That may be all right, but it isn't practical." Radical Christianity is following Christ first, without undue consideration of what it will do for us. It is radical because it demands complete discipleship regardless of consequences to us. That is the way Jesus took, and the way the apostles built the church. It is what Jesus meant when he told those who would follow him that they would gain life by losing it, and that if they wanted to be followers of him they must be ready to take up the cross. But most of us aren't really very much interested in crosses, are we?

We must remember that we are not all asked to assume the same kind of cross. Each one has his mission. Furthermore, we must consider what our decisions will do for others. Perhaps an individual should be willing to live in a slum ghetto where crime rates are high in order to bear witness to Christ. But if he has children, he must raise the question as to whether he has the right to ask them to live in this kind of environment with the risk that it involves to their own developing life patterns. It is one thing for an individual to decide that he should go to some distant land to serve Christ; it is another to ask a family to tear up its roots and make that move.

The young person who feels that radical discipleship means for him to give up all thought of material things must not be too critical of a past generation with different ideas of discipleship, who made it possible for him to enjoy the way of living, the schools, and the other institutions from which they benefit. There are those who feel that discipleship means giving up all interest in material things, who still unconsciously are sustained by the knowledge that if a crash should come they are protected by a safety belt fabricated by those who had a different idea of what it meant to live a dedicated life. Had it not been for some who did accumulate some property, we would have none of our present institutions which render Christian service, such as schools and hospitals. Of course these institutions also depended on those who

were willing to forego accumulation of property in order to serve in them. The Mennonite church has often asked its teachers, ministers, missionaries, and others to serve at a barely living wage, feeling that it was good for them to sacrifice for that in which they believed. I have always contended that if sacrifice is such a good thing, more people should be willing to share it.

The Cost of Radical Discipleship

Not only do we fear to follow the path of radical discipleship ourselves, but we often try to argue others out of it, telling them that they are facing too much danger, or that what they are proposing to do just won't work in this kind of a world. Sometimes it is well to point out to them the dangers ahead. Jesus often pointed out to people what it would cost if they wanted to be his followers. But we should not insist on keeping them from following the path that they feel they should take. One of Jesus' best friends tried that on him. When Jesus explained to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die, Peter said to him, "No, Lord, this will never happen to you." What did Jesus reply? "Away with you, Satan; you are a stumbling block to me. You think as men think, not as God thinks." Do we sometimes become stumbling blocks to those who want to serve Christ regardless of consequences?

If your son, or grandson, would feel that in order to give complete allegiance to Christ he must refuse to cooperate in any way with the selective service system, what would you say to him? It has happened in churches that the deacons or the trustees would take the minister aside and quietly say to him, "You'd better water down that message a bit. It may be Christ's way, but some of our people aren't ready to take it. Our offerings will suffer and we won't be able to meet our church budget. Furthermore, when it is time to vote again on your position here you may not get enough support to stay. And, remember, you can't do this community any good unless you keep your job." Or we may say to our own son or daughter who feels that discipleship calls him to a life of sacrifice, maybe in the mission field, or in a dangerous area in relief work, "Why sacrifice all the advantages here? There is plenty of opportunity to serve Christ here at home. If you stay here I'll help you get started up in business." Or, "I want to retire soon and you can take over this good farm." Or we say to our college students who have taken seriously the things they have been told all of their lives by our churches about the sacredness of human life, and the peace position of our churches, when they want to demonstrate for peace, "Quiet things down a bit. This won't work. Furthermore, you will spoil the public image of the college. Be content to be the quiet in the land." What we may actually be thinking is that we Mennonites, who have faced persecution for generations, have finally achieved middle class respectability, don't go extreme and spoil it for us. In recent weeks others have become more vocal than the peace churches in speaking out against continued violence. I am reminded of the remark of one commentator, for example, that the Calley jury faced the impossible task of finding a moral solution in an immoral situation. Or we say to a son or daughter who honestly feels called to lead the simple life, and not try to outdo others in amassing wealth and gaining personal comfort, "That is impractical. We should be thankful for our opportunities and high standard of living. If you can make enough money to buy a Cadillac, why turn it down?"

"Take Your Cross and Follow Me" Today

These same things that we are telling others we are saying to ourselves, too, when faced with decisions as to whether to accept the standards around us and have success, or accept Jesus' way of apparent failure in human terms to achieve a spiritual triumph. Do we believe that we really gain by giving up all that we have to Christ, or was that just an idealistic saying that won't work in the 70's? We point out that Jesus' way led to a cross, and we can't quite see the point of asking for a cross. But Jesus said to those who wanted to follow him, "Can you drink the cup that I am to drink?" and "take up your cross and follow me."

There are two common errors which we make in thinking of radical Christian discipleship. The first is that we sometimes feel that to be fully committed means primarily to be against something, and to have the nerve to speak out against popular evil. It does include that. But there are also many good things in our society, and sometimes it takes as much courage to defend the good as to attack the evil. Christianity is opposed to evil, but it also has a positive program of good. The Love of God is positive, and it is good. The message of salvation through Christ is positive, and it is the highest good we know. Our work for human welfare is largely positive, and it is good and requires total and radical commitment.

The other error we make is in thinking radical Christianity has to be a big deal of some kind. There are many ways in which we show radical commitment without doing something spectacular. Perhaps total commitment for you involves paying more than your fair share of the church budget, without your gift even being known, in order that the work of the church might get done. Perhaps it means giving twice as much as you had intended for our church colleges. Maybe it means volunteering to teach a Sunday school class, or at least not refusing when you are asked. It is hard to understand why it should be necessary to even consider closing down a children's Sunday school

class for lack of teachers if we are all followers of the Christ who was so deeply committed to his task on earth that he gave his life for it.

We praise our Anabaptist ancestors for their courage, but we are so likely to show our appreciation more in idle words than in following their example. They faced torture and death for practicing and teaching what they believed to be the will of God. Too many of us are not even willing to stay up late on Saturday night to prepare to teach a Sunday school class or to commit ourselves to regular attendance at Sunday school as evidence of the kind of faith and commitment for which our ancestors gave their lives. It is true that those who risk their lives in radical discipleship are commended and praised, but too often we ignore or openly criticize those who show their radical commitment by going out of their way to do the less spectacular, but often just as important, services.

The Cross and the Silent Majority

Sometimes we do not do the things which would be required by radical discipleship because we are afraid that we might be criticized or might not do them well. One of our missionaries to Japan preached a sermon last August to missionaries and their families from all Protestant faiths gathered at a popular vacation spot for missionaries. It was published in *The Japan Christian Quarterly* last fall. He was using the parable of the talents as recorded in Luke as the basis for his remarks, and pointing out that the servant who had not put his talent to use was punished just because he did nothing with it. The reason he gave for not using it was that he was afraid to invest it, because he knew that his master was a severe man and would judge him harshly if he made a bad investment. The parable seems to indicate that it is worse to do nothing than to make a mistake in using the talents that have been given to us. This missionary said, in part, "These days I hear much criticism of so-called young radicals who engage in demonstrations, sometimes violent, to achieve what they believe are good ends. Much of the criticism is certainly valid. But so often we seem to be saying, 'Until you have all the answers, until you have the perfect way to work for peace, do nothing. Wait. Join the silent majority like the rest of us.' Unfortunately young people seem to feel that waiting is really doing nothing. They don't seem interested in participating in inactivity.

"If, like the third servant, we put preservation above all else, if we are afraid to move ahead unless we see exactly how things will end, we may be honest, pious Christians, but Christians who are satisfied with the way things are, Christians who lack courage and vision, Christians who are more interested in pleasing men than God. When we see what God has given us, including our faith, as something primarily to be *preserved,* rather than as something to be *used* for carrying out God's purposes in the world, then the adventure goes out of the Christian life. . . ." "I may, in all sincerity, choose badly, and in the name of Christ, end up opposing Christ. I wouldn't be the first person to have done this. A great many evil things have been done by dedicated Christian people, who sincerely thought that they were taking positive action for Christ. . . . There is always the chance that I will decide badly, that I will do something that contradicts the faith I profess. Any time I take positive action there is a risk involved. . . . But is it better to do nothing?"

Uninvolved Christians?

"If we want to use what Christ has given us, we have to take on his ways, his attitudes. We have to be radical enough to try to live in Christ's way in this world, to use Christ's methods to achieve his goals. . . . Our statements of faith say that we accept the Bible as our guide to faith and life, [but] we tend to use it more as a doctrinal textbook than as a practical guide for living. It is just a little too radical to be taken seriously as a way to live in today's world. But really, if we want to live as Christ's disciples, where else can we turn? . . . How much safer Christ would have been if he hadn't loved men, if he were uninvolved in our affairs. But he is involved, and so are his disciples. An uninvolved Christian is a contradiction in terms."[2] And so we face a double fear, the fear that we may not be right, and the fear that if we act on our convictions we will be opposed. We are not always sure that the way of love and peace which Jesus lived and taught will work in this kind of a world, and so we remain inactive in the face of violence. Or we are afraid that we might not be capable of doing the thing that needs to be done, such as teaching those fidgety youngsters in a Sunday school class. So we wrap our talents in a napkin and keep them safe. Or perhaps we merely rationalize that we might do the wrong thing because it takes less energy and work to do nothing. And then again, we are afraid of the opposition we will receive. And sometimes we rationalize that we might be wrong as a way to evade the possibility of opposition if we were to take action for the right.

The first century apostles, and our Anabaptist ancestors, were so sure that they were right that they were ready to take action. Being sure, they were willing to face hardships, imprisonment, torture, and even death for what they believed. They practiced radical Christian discipleship. Jesus says to us, "You may take the risk, use what God has given you in the way that he intended it to be used, and live a life of adventurous faith; or you can be afraid of risk, uninvolved, concentrating first of all on preserving intact what God has given you, and you will lose it all. . . . For anyone

who wants to save his life will lose it, but anyone who loses his life for my sake, that man will save it. . . . If you want to be a Christian, if you want to be a follower of mine, the only way you can do it is quite literally to follow me, to go the same way that I went. You must take up your cross and follow me each day. You must become my disciple. The only way you can save your life is to use it; use it following me. If you are afraid of taking risks, if your whole energy is concentrated on taking care of yourself, you will end up with nothing at all."[3]

In the sense in which we have used the term here, Jesus was a radical. He carried his message to the farthest limit, even to giving his life for it. He championed a cause not generally accepted. He challenged us to be followers of his, to be radical disciples. Are we willing to do this, or do we lack the energy? Are we willing to do this, or do we put other things first? Are we willing to accept his invitation to radical discipleship, or are we afraid?

FOOTNOTES

1. Arthur Gish, *The New Left and Christian Radicalism*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1970.

2. Quotations from Sermon by Robert Ramseyer delivered at Lake Nojiri, August 9, 1970, titled "A Sermon by a Lake" as published in *The Japan Christian Quarterly* (Fall 1970).

3. *Ibid.*

Scriptures: Matt. 16:24-28; 20:20-23; Luke 6:20-26.

Jan van Leiden: Violence and Grace

By Jürgen Byl

THE MÜNSTER KINGDOM of 1535-36 has inspired many writers, poets, artists, and even opera composers. There is no aspect of Anabaptism which has been treated more in novels, dramas, and operas as this event. The artists of the past were attracted above all by this dramatic event which indeed provides an unusual framework for an effective presentation of a tragedy. The fantastic rise of a man and his sudden total fall are a literary outline with fascinating pump.

Today, we who have experienced personally the reality of tyranny which can emerge out of ideologies, consider this event in a more somber mood. Our Mennonites are the only ones who do not show interest in what transpired in Münster. The *Mennonitischen Lexikon* (forerunner of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia*), in which several thousand persons are treated in great detail, tells the story of Jan van Leiden in twenty-eight lines. Nevertheless, the literature pertaining to the "Anabaptist Kingdom" is growing. Some publications are devoted to scholarly research with special emphasis on the social aspects of the event. We are selecting three books devoted to the literary form in the presentation of the Münster Kingdom.

Jan van Leiden and Hitler

A political presentation of the Münster events has been written by Friedrich Percival Reck-Malleczewen. The author was a conservative Catholic, East Prussian estate owner, and literary critic. At the time of Hitler's rise, he found himself compelled to gain clarity and take a stand in what was transpiring. In the person of Jan van Leiden, the king of Münster, he personified Adolf Hitler and in the reformer and minister Bernhard Rothmann, the propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels. The book entitled *Bockelson. Die Geschichte eines Massenwahns* appeared in 1937. The message was understood. The author was taken to a concentration camp where he perished. His book was reprinted in 1946 and again in 1968, this time with a critical preface by Joachim Fest.

It is unusual that almost at the same time, a drama by the Swiss writer Fredrich Dürrenmatt appeared dealing with the Münsterites. First he wrote the drama *Es steht geschrieben* in which Dürrenmatt, the twenty-five year-old son of a Bernese pastor, showed a touch of genius. When the drama was first presented in 1947, the Zürich public demonstrated against it. In 1967 the author published a new version entitled *Die Wiedertaüfer. Komödie in zwei Teilen,* which was again presented in Zürich and the year thereafter at Münster, the place of the event.

Dürrenmatt once said of the first edition that it "was questionable and as far as historicity is concerned, a bold parody of Anabaptism." In the second version, he presents Anabaptism as pure "ideology" and Jan van Leiden as "the tailor apprentice, a bartender, and

rhetorician" turns into a comedian and sort of a *Hanswurst*. At the climax of his power, Jan van Leiden brags:

"Art sustained me modestly
And now I am prospering through religion and politics.
But I am in a trap:
I became an Anabaptist because of occupational misery."

At the end of the play he exclaims triumphantly:

"I played the role of the king
I recited like a comedian my lines,
Studded with Bible quotations and with dreams of a
better world.
The kind the common people dream of."

Dürrenmatt does not let his hero die. A stranger, deaf and mute, an unknown person, represents him in the trial while Jan van Leiden becomes a star in the theater of the Bishop of Münster. Indeed a grotesque ending.

Dürrenmatt's Jan van Leiden is no longer a hero of the drama in the common sense. In the postscript of the comedy the author says, "First I considered two solutions of a dramatic presentation as possibilities. One was to present Jan van Leiden as a positive, tragic hero or as a negative, tragic hero . . . One procedure idealizes, the other makes a demon out of the hero." The author chose neither of these two solutions, but wrote a comedy which, in his own words, is "conscious form of the theater" in comparison to a "naive" form of the tragedy.

A Radio Play

But the naive form of the tragedy continues. With the recent appearance of a new Anabaptist drama by Norbert Johannimloh in the Low German language—that is, the language of Münster during the 16th century—it could be assumed that this perhaps is simply a popular "native presentation." However, that is wrong. Johannimloh's radio play, "König un Dohlen un Wind" (The King, the Birds, and the Wind), demands much of the listener, including his formal sensitivity. The author has thus far presented three versions of his radio play (in the Low German dialects of Westphalia and Bremen as well as in Dutch). The playwright is an educator in Münster with a Catholic background in Verl, near Güttersloh. The uniform, classical dramatic action of "König un Dohlen un Wind" is in contrast to the confusing action and stage rich performance of Dürrenmatt.

The limitations of radio drama constrict the writer to brief scenes of action accompanied by longer presentations of the characters' inner thoughts. In accordance with Dürrenmatt's definition, Johannimsloh's Jan van Leiden is a "positive tragic hero." In this radio drama the listener experiences the last years of Jan van Leiden, which he spends in the cage on the tower of the Lamberti Church of Münster together with his bailiff and a "dumb" person. (According to the historical event, Jan van Leiden was put to death before being placed in the cage.) In reality the whole thing is a monologue of the dying Anabaptist king. It is a long, pathetic presentation—in part a complaint, in part a reminiscence about "better times," but finally ends with a slight doubt about the justification of his acts and the hope of mercy.

When Jan van Leiden has an opportunity to be freed through his wife, Divara, he declines by saying: "Lock the cage again. I will never leave it."

Divara: "My God, Jan, what has come over you?"

King: "The grace of our Father. Shut the cage."

Jan van Leiden feels extremely lonesome. This feeling of a total separation from his environment grows out of his contempt for humanity. In this matter, the plays by Dürrenmatt and Johannimsloh coincide. Similarly featured is the easily deceived mass of people. Implications of applying this to the role of the mob in the Third Reich are noticeable. A butcher, for example, says to Krechting, the leader of the Münster Anabaptists who is viewing the guards and inquires about their sentiment: "We believe in you, leader. In you, in the Anabaptists, and in the victory."

Krechting: "Your women and children die like animals."

Butcher: "Exactly because of this, we believe in you."

And in Johannimsloh's play, Jan van Leiden has a vision at the luxurious love feast on the square in front of the cathedral. This is the scene:

King: "I ask, are all of you satisfied?"

People: "Yes."

King: "Let us thank the Lord."

People: "Deo gratias!"

King: "Do you want to enlarge our kingdom?"

People: "Yes!"

King: "I say unto you: Go into the whole world! Today Münster belongs to us, tomorrow it will be the whole world!"

People: "Hurra! Hurra!"

This scene reminds us strongly of the speech delivered by Goebbels in the Sports Palace on February 18, 1943. (Said he, "I ask you: do you believe in the *Führer* and with us in a total victory?" Thousands of listeners shouted "Ja!"). The closing of the scene is a literal citation from the song of the Hitler youth by Hans Baumann: "And today Germany belongs to us and tomorrow the whole world!" It is not by accident that the word from Mark 16:15 is inserted, "Go into all the world." The Chiliastic expectation has turned into a secular dream of power.

Jan van Leiden gives as his reason for remaining in the cage of the Lamberti tower and for choosing a

voluntary death by saying to Divara that it is important for the people to look *up* to the cage to find strength in his sacrifice. They will conclude: "There he has been hanging for us; there he suffered for us; there he died for us. His cage is the symbol of our freedom."

Now it becomes apparent. The Anabaptist king with his two rough helpers is a blasphemous imitation of the crucifixion of Christ—a perverted "imitation of Christ." Just like Christ, Jan van Leiden is surrounded by two criminals. Just like at Golgotha, a woman consoles the dying. Here and there, a noisy mob is at the foot of the dying. Just like the Lord's Supper preceded the crucifixion, so the love feast, the death of Jan van Leiden. As the criminal attempts to influence Jesus to save him ("Think of me when you enter the Kingdom" Luke 23:42), thus the king of Münster offers the trumpeter "a very significant position if he would free him." Says he, "I will reward you as a king." Even the trumpeter uses scripture when he says, "If you are the Prophet of our Heavenly Father, then help yourself!" (Luke 23:37).

Jan van Leiden appears to be the greatest deceiver and also the greatest deceived. Divara, his wife, recognizes this when she returns to him the key for the prison: "Close it yourself. You have spent your life in prison. You cannot get out anymore."

Jan van Leiden cannot free himself. His speaking about mercy is requesting mercy. He is a symbol of the proud Christian who compares himself with his supposed ideal, Christ.

Another scene in addition to the crucifixion of Christ plays an important biblical role in this drama. This is the temptation of Christ by the devil (Matthew 4: 1-11). Especially the second temptation reminds us: "Thereupon the devil took him into the holy city and put him on the pinnacle of the temple. . . ." Is that not what is happening to Jan van Leiden in his "holy city" when he hangs on the "pinnacle of the temple"? Jan van Leiden does not resist the third temptation when he is shown "all kingdoms of the world and their splendor." He grabs. In the long run, he does not resist the temptation to be worshiped as a martyr. Jan van Leiden remains the personified Hybris, that is, a heathen with Christian ideology. Thus closes the radio play: "I am alone again as I always have been. . . . I, the king in the cage, alone with the ravens and the wind." (And weren't the ravens accompanying the heathen god Wotan?) However, Jan van Leiden realizes that "The time of the great king has come to a close. The time is at hand where the kingdom will be found in the hearts alone."

The time "when the kingdom can be found in the hearts alone" had started long before his life ended. The Anabaptists had changed in part under the influence of the Münster events. In the case of Menno Simons, this is very clear. As one of the first Anabaptist martyrs, Anneke Jans of Rotterdam wrote in her touching farewell letter to her son Isaiah: "For this reason, my child, pay no attention to the large crowd of people and do not walk on their path." But do not all of us have something of the spirit and inclination of Jan van Leiden?

Translated by Cornelius Krahn from the German article entitled "Bockelson, die Macht und die Gnade," from *Mennonitisches Jahrbuch, 1971* (pp. 45-49) edited by Johannes Harder.

Say No! Sag Nein!

By Wolfgang Borchert

Translated and copyrighted by Elmer Suderman

YOU!
Man at your machine and
Man in your workshop.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To make steel helmets and machine guns
Instead of waterpipes and saucepans
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Girl behind the counter and
Girl in the office.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To pack grenades and
To assemble telescopic sights
For a sniper's rifle,
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Factory owner.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To sell gunpowder
Instead of toilet powder and cocoa

Continued on page 126

Puerto Rico Mennonite Church

By Justus G. Holsinger

THE TWENTY-SEVEN year story of the Mennonites in Puerto Rico is a story of people, a story of hundreds of people with Christian commitment and dedication. It began even before the Mennonites ever thought of coming to Puerto Rico. It had its origin with Martin G. Brumbaugh, an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, who was appointed Commissioner of Education in Puerto Rico by the President of the United States soon after the Island became an American possession. Brumbaugh, like other American leaders, set out to Americanize the Puerto Ricans by setting up a system of education patterned after that of the United States.

I. THE EARLY MENNONITE PROGRAM IN PUERTO RICO

Early in World War II the Brethren Service Committee set up a medical relief unit at Camp Largo, Indiana, in preparation for service in China. In addition to professional medical personnel the unit was composed of conscientious objectors to war who had been drafted by Selective Service for "civilian work of national importance." Before the China relief unit had completed its training, Congress passed the Starnes Amendment which prohibited the stationing of conscientious objectors to war on foreign soil during the period of American hostilities.

The Brethren Service Committee, with its natural interest in Puerto Rico through its identification with the Brumbaugh contribution to Puerto Rico, looked to Puerto Rico as a place to utilize the services and skills of the medical unit unable to enter China. Upon short notice A. W. Cordier, who later held a high administrative position in the United Nations, made a quick trip to Puerto Rico to survey the medical situation for the Committee. Cordier returned saying that the Island was suffering from poverty and disease as a result of exploitation by American sugar and tobacco magnates. So desperate was the situation that some communities were without medical service. The Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, a federal agency of the Roosevelt New Deal program, agreed to serve as a federal administrative agency for Selective Service in the administration of a program in which conscientious objectors would be used.

The job to be done in Puerto Rico was so great that the Brethren Service Committee invited the Mennonite Central Committee and the Friends Service Committee to join in starting community health and recreation programs at three different locations on the Island. The Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA) had started programs in these communities during the mid-1930's but had discontinued the work because federal funds were cut off when World War II started.

The Brethren program was started at Castaner in August, 1942 with a 36-bed hospital and clinic in an old frame barracks building and a recreational program with planned activities in the community center. The Brethren program has continued over the years and today it has a modern rural hospital which serves the many rural people of the western mountain region of the Island. The Friends Service Committee stationed its clinic and community service program at Zalduondo in the northeastern part of the Island. When the war ended the Friends project was turned over to the Christian Church which later discontinued the program.

The Mennonite Central Committee was assigned the La Plata region, a rural community located in

Some of the slum areas still survive even though modern apartment houses appear on the horizon.

the mountainous interior on the old Spanish military highway joining Ponce with the capital city of San Juan.

I was one of a unit of three men sent to Puerto Rico in the summer of 1943 to begin a medical and community service program patterned after that of the Brethren Castaner Project, started eleven months earlier. A number of Civilian Public Service (CPS) men, along with non-CPS medical personnel, were rapidly assigned to Puerto Rico and within a year the unit of continental workers numbered more than forty people. The Mennonite rural program, along with the Brethren and Friends programs, caught the attention of the Puerto Rican leaders and within a year the Puerto Rican legislature appropriated a liberal subsidy to help cover the costs of medical service offered to the many poverty-stricken rural people.

Early Rural Medical Program

What started as a simple medical clinic in 1943 soon developed into a 25-bed rural hospital and in August, 1944, it was dedicated as the La Plata Mennonite General Hospital. The reputation of this small rural hospital, housed in an old frame barracks-type building, soon spread beyond the La Plata community. Each day found the roadway in front of the hospital full of people waiting their return to see the *americano* doctor.

During the war years the medical team worked under many handicaps because of the shortage of medical equipment, supplies, and drugs. In spite of these handicaps first-class medical service was given the people and during the early years the patients left gifts-in-kind as expressions of appreciation for the medical services. The medical statistics of the little rural hospital with its surrounding clinics were impressive during those early years when on a typical clinic day the number of patients seen by the two or three Mennonite doctors numbered well over a hundred.

Among the most common ailments of the rural people in the 1940's were malaria, intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, and malnutrition. Tuberculosis was the number one killer on the Island at the time and the La Plata tuberculosis clinic had a patient list of more than thirty people who came each week for treatments.

Parasite infestation was so bad that a sanitation unit was started in which a number of CPS men worked in the La Plata and surrounding communities in the installation of sanitary privies provided by the Insular Department of Health. Along with the privies program there were clinics to treat the people for parasites and educational programs to improve community sanitation. It was not uncommon to find communities in which more than 90 per cent of the people were infected with parasites.

Attracitve concrete houses have replaced wooden shacks of a generation ago. Home of a Mennonite family.

Many of the people who came to the La Plata Hospital and clinics had lost their teeth before they had reached adulthood. A dentist was assigned to Puerto Rico as a part of the medical team. He was later followed by several other dentists who held dental clinics in other communities of the central interior. The dentists expanded their services to the public schools, and thousands of children as well as adults received dental service from the Mennonite dentists.

Another great need in Puerto Rico in the 1940's was an adequate diet. Many of the children who came to the clinics and hospital were seriously malnourished. To meet this need milk stations were opened in the community to supply milk to children who otherwise received none. A nutrition research project was also started to demonstrate to the rural people the harmful effects of a rice and beans diet—the common food in rural areas—on the growth of white rats.

Dr. George Troyer, eye specialist, served for more than twenty years. The health program of the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends established rural hospitals.

Early Community Service Program

Community recreation and education service was built around the community centers, first in La Plata and within months spreading to three other Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration (PRRA) communities in the La Plata Valley. Included in the community center programs were supervised indoor and outdoor games of all kinds for the youth and adults of the respective communities. The centers became the focal point of community life in the evenings when entire families came to play and to visit. The center programs also included libraries, educational films, and a community paper which carried community news and educational articles. Language classes were also scheduled for students who wanted to improve their knowledge of English. It was through the community center activities that the American Mennonites worked their way into the hearts of the youth of the communities.

The community center programs expanded into the schools; within a year after the La Plata program started, a school health and physical fitness program was initiated in which more than three thousand public school children became involved in a program of physical education classes, a junior high school Brumbaugh League, and health clinics for children with physical ailments. Thousands of public school children received immunization and tuberculosis skin tests. Many were brought to the hospital for follow-up fluroscopies and in a few instances some were found with active tuberculosis. Never before nor since has such an intensive health and physical fitness program been developed in the rural schools of Puerto Rico. Unfortunately these programs had to be discontinued soon after the war years because of the shortage of trained personnel.

Community Sewing and Crafts Program

Contributing to the health and nutrition problem of the La Plata Valley people was the problem of low family incomes. Many of the people did not have work outside the home and the little five-acre plots of land could not provide an adequate income to feed, clothe, and educate a large family.

To help supplement the family income a community sewing project was started in which as many as thirty or forty women did delicate needlework in their homes. Some of the old forms of needlework which had become almost a lost art were revived, and beautiful linen pieces were done under the supervision of several Mennonite women who found a market for the completed work.

Other craft programs were initiated, among which was a hand-woven slipper project which gave employment to more than a hundred people. This project was administered by the La Plata unit in cooperation with the A. S. Beck Shoe Corporation. This shoe company was among the first mainland industries to locate in Puerto Rico under the famous "Operation Bootstrap" program which set off the industrial revolution in Puerto Rico.

Marjorie Shantz served for years as midwife nurse in Puerto Rico.

Early Agriculture Program

The La Plata Valley and surrounding mountains were once owned by big American tobacco companies who had exploited the rich soil in tobacco production. Tobacco was still the prevailing crop of the La Plata community when the Mennonite work was started in the mid-1940's. From the beginning the Mennonites had a conviction that the soil should be used for food crops rather than tobacco.

The Mennonite agriculture program, like the medical and recreational, started on a very simple level, first with a vegetable garden, a 4-H Club program, and then with a purebred heifer project. The Brethren Service Committee consigned a shipment of 25 purebred Holstein heifers to Puerto Rico to improve milk production on the Island. Seventeen of these were placed in the La Plata community: eleven were distributed among the small farmers of the community, and six were placed on the Mennonite demonstration farm to produce milk for the hospital. A purebred Holstein bull was imported to improve the dairy stock of the community. Experimentation was carried on in cooperation with the University Experiment Station in pasture improvement for dairy cows. Dairying never became a cash industry for this community but the dairy program did help to improve the home milk supply of some of the rural homes.

Like other aspects of the Mennonite program the poultry project had a humble beginning. Chickens at the time were selling for 50 cents per pound and the usual price of eggs was more than 60 cents a dozen.

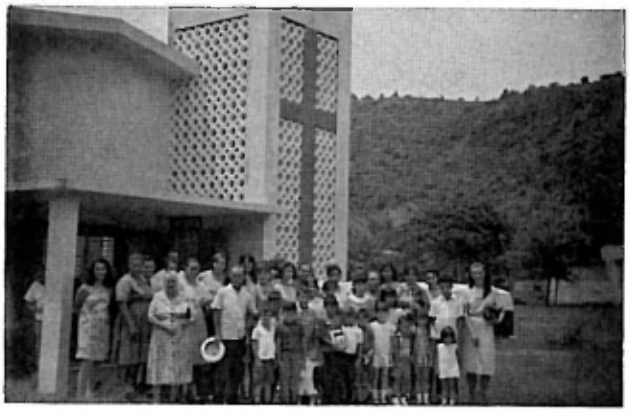
Only the wealthier homes could afford the luxury of eating poultry and eggs since a laborer's entire daily wage would purchase only two dozen eggs. Each little farm had a few small chickens running around the house, and the few eggs laid by the small hens were sold at the community store because the money received from an egg or two could be used to purchase a pound of rice which went much further in feeding a large family than several eggs.

The CPS men in charge of the Mennonite demonstration farm saw this situation as an opportunity to begin a poultry project in the community by placing chicks on the small farms in flocks of 25 to 50 birds. On the day they were hatched at the hatchery in Virginia, chicks were transported to San Juan, Puerto Rico, by plane and kept there on the demonstration farm until they were ten days old. At that time they were sold on a loan basis to the small farmers of the community. A small feed store was set up to supply the growers with feeds as well as medications against poultry diseases. When the broilers were ready for market the CPS men helped the farmers sell their products in the surrounding towns at a price far above the price of poultry on the mainland. Some of the farmers kept the young pullets for egg production which helped increase their family income. The farmers found that with an investment of a few dollars for simple cooperatives and with small loans they could increase the income from their small farms.

Beginning of a Mennonite Church

The Mennonite service program in Puerto Rico was under Selective Service for the primary purpose of giving conscientious objectors to war an opportunity to serve the physical and social needs of a rural community. Expressions of interest in starting an organized Mennonite Church in La Plata were heard from the young workers from the beginning.

The Hondorus church is an active Mennonite congregation.



However, Mennonite Central Committee leaders felt that a church should not be organized until the termination of the war in order not to jeopardize their relation with Selective Service.

The first organized church was started in the Pulguillas community, about a forty-five minute drive from La Plata, by a young missionary and his family under the direction of the (Old) Mennonite Board of Missions. The work was begun in December of 1945, and within a year members were received into the Betania Church and a thriving Sunday school and summer Bible school program was under way. The land, which was donated to the Mission Board by a wealthy landower, was used for the construction of a church building, a medical clinic, a small rural school and housing for workers. Three years after the evangelistic program was started at Pulguillas a permanent concrete church building was constructed and an active, growing church program was in operation. In addition to the Sunday worship activities the program included a variety of children's activities along with an active women's program.

The second organized Mennonite church in Puerto Rico was in the La Plata community, the center of the Mennonite service program. Religious activities were conducted in the community, however, even before a church program was organized. Several CPS fellows started a boys' Sunday school class, and Bibles were distributed in the community as early as 1944. The La Plata chapel was dedicated in the spring of 1946 as a center of worship for the continental workers, and people in the community were invited to worship in the English service. Early in 1947 the (Old) Mennonite Mission Board assigned a missionary to La Plata, and before the end of the year a congregation was organized with twenty-five charter members. The La Plata (Calvario) Mennonite Church soon became the center of religious life in the community with a variety of activities for children and adults. Among the highlights of the year was the summer Bible school which was attended by several hundred children and youth from the valley.

The two mother churches, the Calvario Church at La Plata and Betania Church at Pulguillas, were not satisfied to restrict their mission to these two rural communities. Within a few years the Betania congregation had carried the gospel message to a little valley community in Coama Arriba which could be reached only on foot or by horseback. Meanwhile the Calvario congregation went by jeep or on horseback to extend the message across the La Plata River into the remote community of Rabanal. Young Puerto Rican workers from the Calvario Church were assigned to the Rabanal Church, and within a short time an active evangelistic program was in operation.

The two mother churches combined their efforts to begin an evangelistic program in a community on

the outskirts of Barranquitas known as Palo Hincado. The first church building had formerly been used as a bakery, and the first missionary family lived in one side of the structure and conducted Sunday services and weekly children's activities in the other side. The main thrust of the early Palo Hincado program was with children and youth, and by 1950 an active church program was in progress.

II. The Mennonite Program a Generation Later

The full story of the Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico cannot be written in a short paper. It includes the work of hundreds of people, both continentals and Puerto Ricans, who gave of their time and efforts over a twenty-seven year period to the building of Christ's kingdom in Puerto Rico. The remaining space will be given to the work of the Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico as I found it upon my return in 1969 after a seventeen-year absence from the Island.

What was once a rural program in the La Plata Valley has now expanded into urban communities. What was started as a program to serve largely the lower income families has now expanded to serve primarily the middle class famiiles. A relatively unstructured service and mission program operating side by side has given way to a more structured and institutionalized program operating under a rather highly centralized church conference.

To understand some of these changes in the Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico one must understand that all of Puerto Rico has since experienced an industrial revolution within one generation's time from which has also developed a social revolution. The strong nationalistic feeling one finds in Puerto Rico today is also being felt within the Mennonite brotherhood. The rapid expansion of education to the most remote communities has made higher education available to the rural as well as urban youth who in years past were satisfied with an elementary education. The future Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico cannot be a transplant of the traditional Mennonite Church from the continent. It calls for alert Puerto Rican leadership which is conscious of the sociological changes taking place in Puerto Rico and sees these as a challenge to Christian commitment.

Educational Institutions

The old recreation, education and health programs are no longer found in the communities served by the early Mennonites. They exist only in the memories of middle-aged people who were then children and youth in the programs. In their place are two elementary schools, one in Pulguillas and one in suburban San Juan. The school at Pulguillas is named Academia Menonita Betania and the one in

The Summit Hills Academy.

San Juan is the Summit Hills Academy. Both of these schools are known for their high academic standards. They serve largely a middle class constituency that can afford the monthly tuition fee. Both institutions have a staff of teachers composed of continentals and Puerto Ricans, and both are presently administered by continental personnel. Although subjects in both institutions are taught in English and Spanish, Summit Hills is primarily an English oriented school with Spanish as a second language, while in the Pulguillas school Spanish is

Boys playing in front of modern low-rent apartments.

the medium of instruction with English taught as the second language.

Academia Menonita Betania had its origin back in the late 1940's when two Mennonite missionaries started a two-room rural school for the children of the Pulguillas community. The school began with the first grades and a grade was added each year until all nine elementary grades were included.

Today children in Academia Menonita Betania come by bus and private cars from the surrounding areas with many coming from the urban community of Aibonito. Parents are identified very closely with the school through an energetic Parents Teachers Association which assumes some responsibility for providing funds for educational facilities. One of the annual highlights is the dinner attended by hundreds of people in behalf of the school.

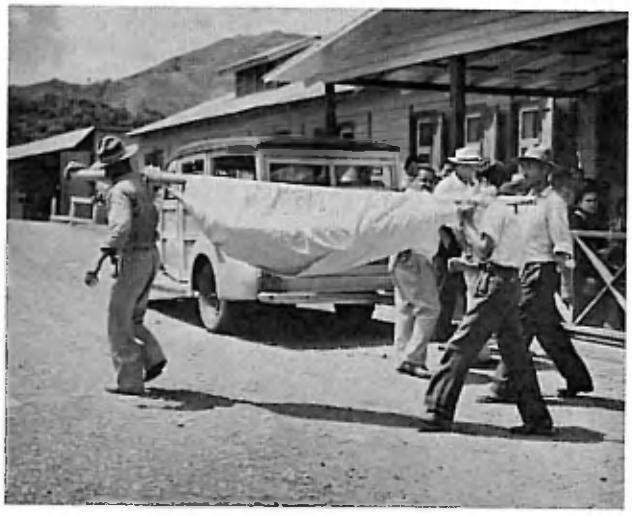
Academia Menonita Betania has one of the most beautiful locations in Puerto Rico. It occupies the central location on the hill which was given to the Mission Board years ago by the wealthy landowner. During the winter months the hill is frequently blanketed with fog until mid-morning when the mist rises and the remainder of the day is a crisp, clear atmosphere with the dark blue sky overhead.

The Summit Hills Academy draws students from the middle-class San Juan suburban community in which it is located. It is administered by the local congregation but most of the students come from non-Mennonite homes. Each year the number of applicants seeking entrance is greater than the school can accommodate, in spite of the tuition fee. The campus is located in the heart of the Summit Hills community where land is at a premium; the buildings on the campus blend in well with the middle-class concrete homes of the community. The Summit Hills school also has an active parents' organization which is closely identified with the needs of the institution. The school's reputation for high academic standards and its emphasis on English instruction appeal to the families who want their children to get a thorough education with English taught by continental teachers.

The La Plata congregation after twenty-five years.

These two elementary schools have a combined enrollment of more than 600 students. In both institutions there are more Catholic than Protestant children. Both institutions employ Protestant teachers but the primary function is not to proselyte for the Mennonite church. The basic tenets of Christian belief are upheld and taught in the schools without offense to any who may differ in religious thinking.

In days past, patients were frequently carried long distances lying in hammocks tied to bamboo poles (hospital in background).



A Modern Hospital

The old frame hospital at La Plata is today a chicken hatchery and has been replaced by a beautiful hospital building located on a hill overlooking the urban community of Aibonito five miles from the original location. Aibonito has the highest altitude of any city in Puerto Rico making it unnecessary to air-condition the hospital except in the surgical wing.

The high quality of medical service begun by continental Mennonite doctors and nurses in the old primitive hospital at La Plata has continued in the Aibonito hospital and clinic. The institution has a well-established reputation for its competent medical staff among professional medical people and also among the public in general. Its professional as well as non-professional staff is made up of both continental and Puerto Rican personnel. The administrative board is composed of both Mennonite and non-Mennonite persons, and lately it has become more a part of the local community. The most recent move has been the

appointment of a Puerto Rican administrator, a middle-aged man who first identified with the Mennonite Church as a youth in the Palo Hincado congregation.

The hospital and clinic serve primarily a middle-class constituency but indigent patients are taken care of under a subsidy from the Puerto Rican government. The medical costs are far below the average costs of other private hospitals in Puerto Rico, and many people choose to take advantage of the services of the private hospital in preference to the free service of government-operated hospitals and clinics.

The medical staff is composed of permanent long-term doctors and also younger short-term doctors who serve several years as an alternate to military service. This system of staffing has not been without its problems since it means that the community must adjust to the constant turn-over of medical personnel. Short-term voluntary service personnel are also used in other medical positions in the hospital which again means constant changes within the hospital staff.

The hospital is an outlet for expression of Christian love and concern of the Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico. It has not been used as an instrument for proselyting for church membership. There is a Mennonite hospital chaplain who ministers to the spiritual needs of the patients but pastors and priests of other religious faiths have equal privileges.

Chickens, Flies, and Cows

One of the greatest impacts made by the Mennonites in the Aibonito-La Plata region has been in agriculture. What was started as a small poultry program in La Plata has become a large poultry industry, and today more than half of the poultry produced in Puerto Rico is in this area of the Island. The greatest boost to poultry production came with the establishment of a poultry dressing plant by a Mennonite agriculturist at Asomante, several miles from Aibonito, in the 1950's. This plant has grown to the place where it is dressing more than three million birds a year, all delivered without freezing to the retailers on the same day they are butchered.

The poultry establishment contracts with local growers, and the small poultry farmers have been replaced with large poultry producers whose flocks number upward of twenty-five thousand birds. The old tobacco barns of the La Plata-Aibonito region have been replaced with huge poultry barns.

This development in poultry in the La Plata-Aibonito region has done much to place eggs and poultry on the table of the medium-income and even lower-income families of the Island. Poultry, once the most expensive protein food, has today become one of the most economical. The improvement of health conditions resulting from improved diets is one of the most noticeable changes in Puerto Rican life during the last several decades. However, many who live in the poultry producing communities will testify to the fact that the poultry producers have not been as successful in combating community pollution as they have in helping to improve the diet of Puerto Rican families. The waste from poultry farms is disposed of on open dumps to the discomfort of the inhabitants. These dumps become breeding places for flies which are everywhere present in the local communities.

While dairying has not become the leading agricultural industry of the La Plata-Aibonito region it has almost surpassed sugarcane production which was once the traditional economy of the Island. The Mennonite agriculturist who was instrumental in promoting the poultry industry was also active in promoting the dairy industry on the Island. He was active in promoting artificial insemination as well as modern methods of refrigeration among large dairies. Dairy products, like poultry products, are today consumed in the medium-level income homes and also in the public school lunch rooms without cost to the public. The great increase in consumption of dairy products has also helped improve health and nutrition in Puerto Rico.

The Puerto Rico Mennonite Church Today

The organized Mennonite church program which began with the churches at La Plata and Pulguillas has now spread to fourteen organized congregations, including churches outside the La Plata-Aibonito region. The church program operates under the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference with an executive secretary and a conference executive committee. Each congregation, however, has been allowed to develop somewhat autonomously, and there is no one established pattern or model which describes all the congregations. Some congregations are somewhat of a transplant of the Mennonite Church from the North while others are almost completely Puerto Rican oriented. A number of congregations have Sunday school classes in English for continental personnel and a bilingual pastor, while others are made up of members who cannot communicate in English and whose pastors stay almost entirely with the native tongue. Some congregations are located in urban middle class communities with leadership generating largely from the laymen of the church while others serve a rural people with leadership centered more in the pastor. Some of the congregations are struggling for identity and some even for existence while others are active, thriving, and growing churches.

Although several congregations have programs geared largely to the adult level, others are active in children's and youth work. In almost all the churches, however,

Miguel Solivan family, active in Puerto Rico. Both are graduates of Bethel College.

the proportion of children to adults in the church is considerably less today than a generation ago. Some of the congregations involve their youth in leadership positions of the church while others find it more difficult to involve the youth in church life. A number of the older congregations seems to have passed their honeymoon of enthusiasm, and other younger churches are now on that stage of development.

In spite of the many differences found among the Mennonite congregations there are many elements of church life which they enjoy in common. One Puerto Rican Protestant leader said that the outstanding quality of Mennonitism in Puerto Rico is the fact that Mennonites take their discipleship seriously. As one visits the different congregations, attends church functions, and visits the medical and educational institutions he is convinced that the observation of the Protestant leader is correct. The church places high demands upon itself and commitment to discipleship means a changed life.

This same Protestant leader also said that there is a stronger feeling of community among Mennonites than is commonly found among other Protestant groups in Puerto Rico. He attributed this to the commonality of purpose of the young Mennonites who came to Puerto Rico and the carry-over of this spirit into the contemporary church.

As one visits the different Mennonite congregations he finds a warm, genuine Christian friendliness among the brotherhood. The Latins by nature are a friendly, warm, emotional people, and this spirit is reflected in every aspect of church life. One finds this not only in organized church activities but also in the homes and in institutions operated within the framework of the church. This spirit is reflected in the feelings of concern one for another as members of the body of Christ.

The Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico has held to the peace position though it has been somewhat silent in verbal expression of its position to other religious groups on the Island. There has been the tendency to reflect the peace witness in expressions of service rather than in verbal dialogue with non-Mennonites. The Puerto Rican Mennonite Church has also taken seriously the Mennonite doctrine of nonconformity to the world, so much so that it has not become too involved in community life. Consequently, a number of Puerto Rican leaders have expressed concern about this tendency to isolate themselves from the mainstream of Puerto Rican life.

One of the outstanding features of the Puerto Rico Mennonite Church is the active youth movement. The youth from the respective congregations have joined together in a strong witness for Christ in different types of youth expressions. One year a group of young Mennonites from Puerto Rico collectively sponsored a trip to the Dominican Republic where they joined in Christian fellowship with the Mennonite youth of that country. This youth movement is most encouraging since it gives opportunity for religious expression for young people who will become the church leaders of tomorrow.

The Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico, as elsewhere, cannot be evaluated by statistical data. Perhaps the best evaluation is to ask the question: Where would these devoted Christian disciples who assemble each week at the Mennonite houses of worship be if the Mennonite church had never been established in Puerto Rico? One has only to take a look back at some communities where the Gospel message has never been carried to answer that question. There are also examples of many living in sin in the communities where the Gospel message has been active whose lives have not responded to that message.

Radio Evangelism

The story of the Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico would not be complete without mentioning the Luz y Verdad Spanish radio broadcasting program located in Aibonito, Puerto Rico. Though not under the Puerto Rico Mennonite Conference, the radio broadcasting program does serve the people of Puerto Rico as well as Spanish-speaking people all over the world. This program was started in the late 1940's with one station in Ponce, and over the twenty-three years of operation it has expanded to the place where millions of people each week hear the Gospel message in the Spanish language. Tapes of the Gospel message in song and in word are prepared in the Aibonito studio each week and mailed to the many stations around the world. God alone knows how many hearts and lives have been changed by these broadcasts.

The Mennonite Christian witness in Puerto Rico has been fruitful since from the beginning it has sought to minister to the whole man in the name of Christian love. The Mennonite Church in Puerto Rico is composed of people with all the frailties and limitations of human beings elsewhere in the world, but their lives have been transformed by the power of the spirit of Christ.

The Beginning of Alternative Service During the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05)

By Gerhard Lohrenz

THE POSSIBILITY OF an alternative service for the American and Canadian Mennonites appeared on the horizon with the beginning of World War I. This happened much earlier for the European Mennonites. It is a well-known fact that the Mennonites of Russia who did not leave the country in the 1870's fulfilled their alternative service in the so-called Forestry Service and during World War I in Hospital work. The latter had, however, a precedent during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). The following is a brief account of this little-known fact.

For some time Russia had tried to gain a controlling influence in the Far East and in this process it occupied Manchuria. Japan, threatened by the invasion, was unable to persuade Russia to adopt a less aggressive policy and subsequently declared war on the Russian giant.

To most observers it seemed that Japan had little chance of winning the war, but events soon proved otherwise. Russia soon found itself in a very awkward position and its losses in men and materials were enormous.

Young Mennonite men were not called to the colors as other citizens were, but the government asked for Mennonite volunteers as stretcher bearers and workers in Red Cross units.

Not all Mennonites were responsive to this. Some felt that such service would be "compromising the peace witness of the Mennonites." A good number of young men nevertheless responded positively to the call to alleviate the suffering of war.

Suprisingly little has been written about this phase of our history and our information on it is somewhat sketchy. We know though that several dozen, between fifty and sixty young men have rendered such a service; we know also that for some, to us unknown, reason the Mennonites of the Chortitza settlement responded better than those of the larger Molotschna Settlement.

Outstanding among those that went was the physician Nikolai Friesen, a married man with wife and two daughters, with a good practice in the Molotschna Settlement, a popular and a God-fearing man. (See photo of Dr. and Mrs. Friesen. Friesen in the uniform of a Russian military physician.) Dr. Friesen died in

Dr. and Mrs. Nikolai Friesen. Dr. Friesen had a promising practice in the Molotschna Mennonite settlement, but volunteered to serve and save wounded soldiers at the Russo-Japanese front. He himself died of over-exertion.

Mennonite volunteers who had already done their alternative service (Forestry Service) on the Russian front at the Japanese border (1905). Front: Rempel (seated) and Isbrand Friesen. Back row: Wallmann (from left), Penner, Hoemsen, Thiessen.

German Red Cross unit serving on the Russian side during the Russo-German War. Quite a number of Russian Mennonites served in this group.

Mennonite volunteers in hospital work during the Russo-Japanese War.

Jacob J. Penner served during the Russo-Japanese War and in World War I. He died in Canada in 1934.

the battle area of over-exertion. He lies buried in or near Charbin.

Most of the Mennonite volunteers were men who had completed their alternative Forestry Service to the country. The Mennonite constituency paid all expenses connected with this service and donated trainloads of clothing, food and other supplies. The cost of this help ran into the hundreds of thousands of rubles.

The volunteers usually received a send-off at home. A service was held and various representatives of our brotherhood addressed themselves to the volunteers. Prayers for God's blessing and protection were offered.

The volunteers gathered in the city of Ekaterinoslav (now Dnjepropetrovsk). Here they were assigned to various Red Cross Field Hospitals and then the groups were sent to the Far East. The journey was rather pleasant but very slow. The single railway line connecting European Russia with the battlefield in the Pacific Area was terribly overcrowded, and endless trainloads of Russian peasants were sent to those distant battlefields; because of this less important trains often had to wait for several days on some isolated side track before they could proceed.

Not only did the various Russian cities have their own hospitals near the battle area, but the German government too sent a fully furnished hospital. Half of the personnel, such as doctors, nurses and male nurses were Germans, but half were Russian citizens. Eight or nine Mennonites were assigned to this hospital. Peter Dyck, who in the 1920's came to Manitoba wrote a report about his experiences and preserved some photographs.

The group was sent to St. Petersburg (now Leningrad) where they were received by Dr. Hausman, the

A farewell of Mennonite voluntary service workers (front and back rows). In the middle row are the Mennonite administrators of the settlement and ministers among whom are Isaak Dyck (Elder), Jakob Wiebe (Oberschulze), *Heinrich Heese (Secretary of the Chortitza administration). In the front row sit Johann Federau, Abram Duerksen, Jakob Thiessen, Franz Enns, Johann Tjart, Heinrich Wiebe, Johann Wiebe, Gerhard Klassen. Last row: Heinrich Wiebe, Jakob Falk, Anton Sawatsky, Johann Funk, Jakob Derksen, Jakob Janzen, Heinrich Vogt, David Letkemann, Johann Penner.*

The Mennonites serving as volunteer hospital workers attached to the German Red Cross unit wore the German Red Cross uniform. (Right, Peter Dyck.)

Russian wounded soldiers in hospital at the front. In the rear are some Mennonite staff members.

head of the 150-bed large military German field hospital. On one day the whole personnel of this hospital had to appear in Gatchina for an audience with the tsarina-mother Maria Feoderovna. The audience lasted twenty minutes. The tsarina was very friendly; they kissed her hand and she gave a small golden medallion to each person. After the audience they were served a fine meal in the tsarina's palace.

The very next day, November 20, 1904, the same group had to appear in Tsarskoje Selo in audience before the reigning tsarina Alexandra. She, too, was friendly, shook hands with them and asked among other things when the Mennonites had come to Russia. Peter Dyck, the spokesman, did not know the exact date but gave an acceptable answer. A sumptuous meal was also served to the members of this unit.

The men now were dressed in German Red Cross uniforms and on November 21, left Petersburg by train. They travelled in second class sleepers. In Moscow the group received a very enthusiastic reception by German citizens living in that city. There was a large library on the train. Meals were good, and in good spirit the German Field Hospital train moved through the nearly endless width of European and Asiatic Russia. Dyck, apparently a nature lover, has left glowing descriptions of certain parts of the country such as the Ural Mountains and the Lake Baikal area. On January 16, after fifty-five days of traveling the group arrived in Kharbin, 8.016 *werst* from St. Petersburg. They were assigned a large two-story building and they assembled and set up two barracks they had brought with them. On February 23, the first fifty-two patients arrived and on March 10, another 152. Strenuous work without respite began.

Other men served in various capacities near or on the battlefields. Not one of them took part in fighting.

They had not come to shed blood but to heal wounds. This service of healing in quite a few instances was very taxing and three or four of these Mennonite volunteers laid down their lives. Only one of those volunteers is still living here in Canada. He is John Fedrau, Hague, Saskatchewan. He is 85 years old, but still in fairly good health.

Editor's Note. Peter Dyck, who wrote the account, was our neighbor in the village Borissopol (Number 2) of Arkadak, Saratov. Vividly I remember his unusual stories he related about these and other events.

The Flight to Batum

By John B. Toews

LIVING UNDER THE most primitive conditions and subject to constant disease and death, well over 200 Mennonites found themselves in the Black Sea port of Batum throughout most of the year 1922. What brought them there? The Russian Civil War which followed the October Revolution of 1917 generated a massive social upheaval characterized by anarchy, famine and disease. Hundreds of some seventy thousand Mennonites living in the Ukraine lost their lives. Those who survived were confronted by an array of calamities. The stage for the first great famine of the Soviet era had been set by the fall of 1921. Reserves in most of the villages were totally depleted by the requisitions of criss-crossing armies or the later confiscations of capricious officials implementing the ruinous economic policies of War Communism. Many held little hope for a Mennonite future in Russia. The most critical question in the fall of 1921 became that of survival. At this time there was still no prospect of American relief. Emigration possibilities, though under study, were nonexistent. Everywhere people were searching for bread. In view of the steadily worsening conditions, a number of Mennonite families fled to the Black Sea port of Batum late in 1921 and early in 1922. In their dramatic flight these families were sustained by the hope that somehow emigration to America could be more easily facilitated in Batum, since this was still an operational international port. Some of those who left were refugees from the Molotschna settlement, having fled to the Crimea when the area was overrun by the forty-second division of the Red Army in March, 1919. Others belonged to the Mennonite settlements in the Crimea. At least one group organized in the Molotschna area, traveled directly to Theodosia and from there to Batum.

In many ways the experiences of Crimean Mennonites were similar to those of the refugees from the north and to those of their brethren elsewhere in Russia. Following the October Revolution they endured the large scale grain requisitioning ordered by Soviet authorities; the loss of their farming inventory to Russian peasants anxious to implement the new government's nationalization decrees; the drought and consequential crop failure in 1921; the general lack of public safety resulting from civil upheaval as well as the banditry and pillaging of undisciplined troops. It should also be remembered that the Crimea remained one of the chief operational bases for the White Army until the final defeat of General Peter Wrangel's forces late in 1920.[2] The Mennonites in the Crimea were perhaps more fortunate than their brethren in the Ukraine in one respect: they were spared the depredations of the ruthless partisan army of Nestor Makhno, whose anarchist fury was especially directed against wealthy landlords and the German settlements.[3]

Late in 1921 the signs of imminent famine were everywhere apparent in the Ukraine and the Crimea. By January, 1922, most of the meager grain reserves had been consumed. Men spoke of the dark future, the night, the catastrophe.[4] All life activity became subordinated to the elemental struggle for survival. Death by starvation appeared certain and where possible, plans to flee the impending disaster were formulated. A Batum refugee leader, writing in October, 1922, accurately reflected the desperate sentiments of the Mennonites who earlier fled to Batum:

"The storm which broke over us began, as you know, with the Liquidation Laws of the fallen czarist government.[5] They raged over us with destructive fury during the civil war and through the fearsome all-prevailing spectre of death by starvation, drove every robber band to one's door, so that our life became far dearer to us than our ruined and devastated goods and chattels.

These stated sentiments are verified by the empty granaries and cellars, the many uncultivated fields, the many fresh grave mounds, the camps of the emigrants in the ports.

"Because help still did not come and the situation steadily grew worse, many a person who had his last morsel before him logically concluded: 'if I can expect death from hunger here at home . . . it is wiser to go in a direction where help can reach us earlier, and where the outstretched arms of the dear brethren from abroad are in a better position to rescue us from the clutches of that dreadful spectre, death by starvation.' [5][6]

In their struggle for survival the Crimean Mennonites, native and refugee, lacked the one dimension capable of offering hope for a better future: they were unable to effectively communicate with the outside world and hence possessed no reliable information upon which to plan their course of action. In a later account of their relief work in the Ukraine, American relief workers clearly reflected what was probably generally and most certainly the Crimean situation. "The soul-sick condition of the people was further marked by the readiness with which they received and were inclined to believe unwarranted false reports, especially such as would tally with their hopes and wishes."[7]

Meanwhile an event of great symbolic importance to the many Mennonites in the Crimea transpired. It involved the exodus of some sixty-two Mennonite refugees to America during 1921. During 1918 and early 1919 several Mennonite settlements in the Ukraine formed a loosely knit semi-military organization which became known as the *Selbstschutz*. As the German word suggests its chief function was protection and self-defense against the depredations of armed robber bands especially those led by the anarchist Nestor Makhno. However carefully the Mennonites tried to define its role or justify its existence in view of their historic nonresistance, the *Selbstschutz* inadvertantly moved beyond its intended role and collapsed while facing Red Army units in March, 1919. Many of its participants fled southward to Sevastopol and Berdyansk and subsequently escaped to Constantinople. Others joined or were drafted into the White Army. With the defeat of Wrangel in 1920 these too fled to Constantinople. In September, 1920, the newly organized all-Mennonite relief agency, the Mennonite Central Committee (Elkhart, Indiana, July 27, 1920), dispatched a relief unit to Russia. Landing at Constantinople, they visited some of the Mennonite settlements in the Ukraine during October and unsuccessfully attempted to land a small Greek freighter with relief supplies at Sevastopol in November. The headquarters of the unit became Constantinople. As the fleeing Mennonite young men reached that city they were cared for by MCC camps in and around Constantinople. For the relief unit these men emerged as the first Mennonite eyewitnesses able to report the catastrophic experiences of their brethren in Russia. In all an estimated 115 men reached Constantinople. American relief efforts focused unduly upon a segment of these which came to be known as "the sixty-two", perhaps largely on account of the great difficulty connected with their final emigration to the U. S.[8] For their journey to America they were able to secure considerable MCC support. Aspects of this episode were reported back to the Mennonites in Russia, especially those in the Crimea. In the minds of many of these, the successful emigration of their co-religionists with aid from the American Mennonites offered some hope for coping with their own desperate circumstances.

There was another rather dramatic episode involving a well-known Mennonite editor and publisher, Abraham Kroeker. He, together with his cousin Jacob Kroeker, had founded the German periodical *Friedensstimme* (Voice of Peace) in 1903, publishing first in Berlin. Once permission had been obtained to publish under czarist censorship the paper was printed in Halbstadt, Taurida, beginning in January, 1906, by the printing agency Raduga. After the paper was discontinued in 1914, Kroeker again began to print an occasional issue of the paper after the February Revolution of 1917. Because of the uncertain political situation he first employed the name *Volksfreund,* finally resorting to the old title *Friedensstimme* in the July 2, 1918, issue.[9] In spite of the Civil War the paper continued to appear from time to time until the final collapse of the White Army in the summer of 1920. Though Kroeker exercised considerable caution as editor, his views were obviously not sympathetic to the Bolshevik cause. He fled soon after the Cheka (secret police) arrived in Halbstadt (mid-1920), moving from village to village until he arrived in Yalta. Here he and several other Mennonites unsuccessfully tried to board a Turkish freighter bound for Constantinople. Finally Kroeker and another Mennonite family (J. Becker) secured the necessary exit documents and tickets for Batum. Once in Batum, Kroeker and his companions endured six weeks of bureaucratic frustration before obtaining the papers which allowed them to proceed to Constantinople in November, 1921. With the help of the American Mennonite Relief unit stationed in Constantinople he left for the United States in March, 1922.[10] While secretive, Kroeker's escape was known to some of his brethren in the Crimea and so added to the stockpile of "grapevine" information circulating in the Mennonite villages. Such news, invariably exaggerated, tended to reflect the colonists' desire to hear something positive and hopeful. The rumors seemed explicit: it was possible to obtain exit visas.

On the strength of this information two families

from the Crimean Mennonite village of Bek-Bulatschi plus three families from Spat banded together for emigration purposes. They were joined by two young men. A total of twenty-nine in all, they traveled by wagon from Bek-Bulatschi to the port city of Theodosia. Here, after some difficulty, they successfully boarded the steamer *Pestel* late in December, 1921. After a stormy and perilous crossing the group finally landed in Batum. The news of their successful flight soon became the feature story among the Mennonite villagers in the Crimea, most of whom were desperately looking for information which could offer them some help for the future.[12]

Encouraged by the experiences of their brethren, additional families decided to risk the flight to either Batum or Constantinople. Early in January, 1922, an auction sale held in the central Crimean Mennonite village of Adjembet saw a number of Mennonites, who were intent on leaving the Crimea, dispose of their goods and depart for Theodosia. Some ten days later a second group, following a similar course of action, boarded a specially hired railway car at the connecting station of Biyuk-Onlar and traveled to the same port.

When the second group arrived in Theodosia they managed to obtain a truck to transport their goods to the hotel which they had reserved. Keenly aware of the lack of public safety they marched alongside the vehicle, military style, until they reached their destination. To their surprise they found the members of the earlier group in the same hostel, still unable to secure their exit documents. Group leaders now cooperated in a concerted effort to obtain the tickets and exit permits for Batum. At first the request for over sixty tickets met with blunt refusal. The diplomatic skill of a Lutheran colonist traveling with the Mennonites; the exercise of patience; the ability of the refugees to supply ticket and emigration authorities with such high demand items as ten pounds of butter and considerable portions of smoked ham - all these factors finally combined to produce the required tickets and documents.[13] One group had waited for seventeen days, the other for ten. It was the first of many long delays.

On Sunday, February 12, 1922, over sixty refugees boarded the steamer *Pestel*, which had transported the earlier group to Batum. The five-day trip was uneventful though the travelers had to contend with a heavy lice infestation and endure the discomfort of being deck passengers. The *Pestel* made only one stop at Novorossisk. Having escaped impending disaster in the Crimea, most of the colonists optimistically anticipated their arrival in Batum. A Georgian woman who befriended the refugees on the ship warned them of a city subject to heavy rains and overfilled with refugees. The Mennonite passengers were not too perturbed for most expected an almost immediate exodus to America. When they arrived in the port a tranquil beauty greeted them. One of the Mennonites in the group, Abraham Froese, described the arrival:

"It was a beautiful February morning before daybreak, when the *Pestel* slipped into the quiet port of Batum. The thick fog lifted a heavy mantel from the small plain on which the city is located, and gradually disappeared before the warm rays of the emerging spring sun. Before us lay a sea of houses and in the background the wonderful mountains rose majestically with their bare snow-covered peaks. Isn't that beautiful! This is life! In the port surrounding us nothing of the deathly quiet we experienced in Theodosia: ships 'without number,' yes, even foreign steamers are awaiting us - there are even several. But who would have thought it at that time, that for so many honey would turn into very bitter bile."[14]

The first night the refugees were not allowed to leave ship. Next day when they disembarked it was raining heavily. Now the first anxieties made themselves felt. In one locality they saw Greek refugees living in open-sided sheds with only a roof over their heads. Elsewhere refugees of another nationality lived in what had been a pig pen.

"Should it not be possible to find a modest corner for us in this large city? Everything was occupied. Distress dictates haste. Scouts hurry into the various areas: accommodations must be found. Pressing the little ones to our breast we hurry after our leaders, for the rain increases.

"An endlessly long way - and still we are not at our destination. If only we could soon be in a dry place. Finally our leaders stop. We are standing before a building with an entirely open front. Without roof tiles, it strongly resembles an oriental structure. The rain penetrates the many holes in the roof of the building and falls on the floor, which serves as the first resting place for the tired wanderers. The various fungi covered the walls grey, since the rain penetrated deeply into the walls through tiny cracks. The raw vapours which filled the entire room, dulled the senses of the visitors, who were normally accustomed to pure air. The cement floor, completely broken and dirty with a scattered mud-hole here and there, was more suitable for jackals and wolves than for exhausted travelers. The rain became so intense that we literally lay in the mud. How sullen we therefore were in the morning, when we saw ourselves surrounded by water. Cough and joint-pains soon developed. But patience, we are traveling towards our desination. Hope sustains and the effects of such accommodations are soon overcome."[15]

Some found accommodations at scattered points in the city. The feed warehouse which Froese so aptly describes became home for some twenty-six adults and four children. The building, some fourteen by fourteen feet, had been used to house English soldiers, and offered only the most primitive cooking and sanitary

facilities. In desperate need of room, the refugees rented a section of the blacksmith shop next door. Again Froese's account speaks for itself:

"Three adjoining rooms, connected by an open corridor constitute the present residence of the Mennonite refugees in Batum. A rapid walk through these rooms provides immediate insight into the plight of its inhabitants. Through a narrow gate we come into the yard of the blacksmith shop. A rather singular picture unfolds before the visitor. Old scrap iron, broken wagons and tree trunks lie thrown together. Pigs, cows, and rabbits roam among the extra-ordinary filth of the yard. As a result of this unsuitable arrangement, the dirt penetrates into the corridor which, however, simultaneously serves the Mennonite refugees as a dining and meeting hall.

"As we walk out of the corridor we turn left into the first residence. It is a dimly-lit musty-smelling room. No ray of sunshine penetrates this dwelling and as a result it is infested with bed-bugs and other parasites. Only a few beds can be seen in these rooms, since a lack of funds make these unobtainable. Consequently most sleep on the bare cement floor. A coat frequently serves as the only bedding for the body, and a worn out jacket as a pillow. A somewhat different picture presents itself when we enter one of the other rooms. At first glance one realizes one is in a work room. Our material distress forced us to make do with a section of a blacksmith shop which we, naturally under the pressure of circumstance, had rented for a substantial sum.

"Here pigs, rabbits and rats live together and spread all kinds of odors. Simultaneously the room serves as a carpenter and blacksmith shop and as the residence of poor refugees. Here the heavy hammer of the smith is swung, here the billows are pumped; often the room fills with thick coal emanations to the point of suffocation and even the healthiest person finds it difficult to breath and rushes into the fresh air. Here the malaria patient shivers with chills and often heaves a last sigh, unnoticed by the workshop attendants amid the great noise. Our sleep is continually interrupted; either the grunting pig bumps over the kitchen utensils of the inhabitants, rabbits or rats run over the body of the sleeper, etc. Under such circumstances the work of the day means greater recuperation than a night's sleep in such filth.

"We now step into a narrow dark room. In the wooden walls there is no window, since basically this room was never intended to be lived in, but served the owner as a store room. Currently the owner finds it advantageous to charge the poor refugees a monthly sum of half a million rubles for its use. Because of his heartlessness this sum was extorted from the poor who were forced to agree to it. A young couple, man and wife, with two children in their midst - all shiver or glow with heat: evil Malaria has mercilessly overcome them. Helpless they cower in their corner, their sighs and plaintive crys become louder. Oh, if the Lord would only send one ray of light!"[16]

What was to be a brief stay lapsed into permanent residence. Living in crowded conditions, with primitive toilets and sanitation, such feared diseases as malaria and typhus soon afflicted many of the refugees. Shortly after mid-July, 1922, reports reaching the American Mennonite Relief Unit in Constantinople spoke of some twenty-eight deaths and a potentially large list of candidates for the grave. Attending doctors held the view that under the prevailing conditions few of the refugees would survive longer than two or three months. "One thing is clear to me, the people must get out of Batum or they are all unsalvageable and given over to destruction."[17] By the beginning of August, 1922, one refugee leader estimated that at least 75% were or had suffered from either typhus or malaria.[18] On August 5, the total number of refugees stood at 217. One month later thirty-seven deaths had been recorded, a fatality rate of approximately 17%.[19] By October 20, 1922, some fifty-two persons had died (20%) and about 90 to 95% of all the refugees were afflicted with some degree of malaria or typhus.[20] The colonists were simply unable to cope with the disease problem. Housing, food and medical services remained inadequate because of lack of funds. Some had suffered from malaria for three to four months, steadily weakening and finally passing away. "One sees many of them, old and young, with pale faces, fallen cheeks, gazing tiredly from deep-set eyes, moving about bent and with effort."[21] Family units were torn apart by deaths. In one family of six only the mother survived; in another the mother and five children died; in a family of eight only a fourteen year old daughter remained alive.[22] For the survivors the situation became increasingly desperate.

"Months have passed. Sunshine and rain alternate. Heavy clouds cover the sky of our disposition. Waiting. For who abroad senses and feels that a small group of Mennonite refugee-emigrants pleadingly stretch out their hands and cry for help. 'And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee . . .' a voice within me quietly sounded during the night, '- without me you can do nothing . . .' The voice steadly became louder, but man is so hard of hearing. A fearsome angel of death, malaria, now appears and mercilessly demands his sacrifices."[23]

The basic dimension of the Batum tragedy revolved about a group reasonably well supplied for a short term stay, but unable to cope with the rigors of an overcrowded city and an unaccustomed climate. At the very onset of their journey it was necessary to provide Soviet rail and emigration officials with extra payments. Once in Batum, they found the rapidly in-

flating Soviet ruble could only be exchanged for the Georgian ruble at an exchange rate of three to one.[24] Later this became one million Soviet rubles for 40,000 Georgian ones. Because of the incredible overcrowding even the most primitive accommodations rented at exorbitant prices. For the feed warehouse described by A. Froese the refugees paid half a million rubles per month. Already in the spring of 1922 food prices were prohibitive. On the Batum markets white bread sold for 15,000 Georgian rubles per pound, black bread for 12,000; coarse corn bread for 8,000.[25] Fortunately for the Mennonite refugees, help came soon after their arrival in Batum. The Russian relief agency of the newly formed Mennonite Central Committee, the American Mennonite Relief, had dispatched a unit to Constantinople as early as September, 1920. This AMR unit was now in a unique position to apply its talents to the service of the Batum Mennonites and through its efforts the refugees were able to obtain basic food rations from Near East Relief throughout 1922. For every person over seventeen the monthly ration included 22½ pounds of flour, 12 pounds of rice, 12 pounds of oatmeal, 6 pounds of beans, 2 pounds of sugar and 4 cartons of condensed milk.[26] Unfortunately many of the refugees were unfamiliar with the correct utilization of this milk form. The good fortune of the refugees was not destined to last. On December 12, 1922, the director of Near East Relief ordered that the Mennonites in Batum receive no further relief from his agency as of December 31, 1922. At this time there were still well over a hundred Mennonite refugees in Batum.[27]

While the majority of the refugees struggled to survive, their leaders negotiated for tickets and exit permits. The basic issue became clear by mid-March, 1922. Georgian officials, possibly anxious to reduce their large refugee population, soon granted the necessary documents, but Soviet authorities were reluctant to grant the actual exit visas. The Italian consul in Tiflis, upon whom the refugees were dependent for a visa to Constantinople (by the Treaty of Sevres the city was under international control), made the Italian visa dependent on a Soviet exit visa.[28] By mid summer the Italian consul also insisted upon a guarantee from either the American mission in Constantinople or from relatives in America which stipulated the refugee leaving Batum was able to enter the United States. At this point, ironically, Soviet exit visas were more readily obtainable.[29] In spite of such obstacles, the number of Mennonites in Batum gradually decreased during the second half of 1922. By August many of those with relatives in America had secured the necessary documentation. The number of Mennonites in Batum at any one time is difficult to determine because of the continuous influx and exodus. When the group from Theodosia arrived in February, 1922, they numbered about 70.[30] In all approximately 250 refugees arrived in Batum by October. Statistics reported on October 19 listed 249 refugees, of whom 52 had died, 15 returned to South Russia, and 40 left for Constantinople.[31] By December the 142 remaining refugees had been reduced to 110.[32]

The new year not only brought an end to the Near East rations for the refugees, but also made the exit visas more difficult to obtain. Until now most of the refugees, hoping to leave Batum and fearing deportation back to South Russia, had not registered as aliens in Batum. Eighty Mennonites did so on February 19, 1923, but not without a broad range of documentation which most were fortunately able to produce.[33] For the majority of those remaining the crucial question related to travel funds. The more fortunate ones received funds and guarantees from relatives in America. Others benefited by a small loan extended by the German speaking congregation in Tilflis. There were also assurances that funds were forthcoming from the Mennonite Central Committee.[34] Fiscal and pass difficulties notwithstanding, the majority of the Batum refugees had arrived in Constantinople by mid-April, 1923. Here well over a hundred refugees were housed in several country homes around the city.[35] The material condition of most of the refugees remained critical. No funds from abroad arrived in the spring months and many had spent their last rubles when departing from Batum. The process of acquiring the necessary documentation for exodus from Constantinople proved to be a slow but successful one.

The last group of sixty persons obtained their visas in late August, 1923, and left the city on September 1, stopping at Marseilles and Cherburg, then traveling on to New York.[36] A tragedy-filled episode in the history of the Russian Mennonites had run its course. Initially the majority of the refugees risked their property and life in order to escape their famine-threatened homeland. In Batum the majority endured much worse situations than their brethren who remained in the Crimea and South Russia. Especially critical was their helplessness in the face of serious disease, food and accommodation problems. All of these remained unsolvable. The colonist coming to Batum anticipated a short-term stay and a rapid processing of his exit application. He failed to reckon with the fantastic overcrowding in Batum and the resulting food shortages. In addition, the buying power of the Russian ruble declined almost daily after his arrival. What seemed to be adequate resources at the onset of the journey to America were exhausted before it actually began. As if this was not sufficient reason for losing hope, he saw his fellow refugees ill and dying all around him. Then too he sensed that he had been forgotten by his brethren. The American Mennonite Relief Unit which came to Constantinople was intent upon getting relief

goods to South Russia. For a considerable period after learning of the Batum disaster they lacked clear directives from America as to what to do about it. Perhaps the letters from Batum sounded no different from those coming from South Russia. In any case no relief representative visited Batum until October 19-22, 1922, when W. P. Neufeld of Reedley, California, and J. P. Jantzen of Sevastopol met with the refugees at the request of the American Relief and the Dutch Mennonite Algemeene Commissie Nooden voor Buitenlandsche.[37] It was only then that a clear picture of the tragedy which had transpired emerged. Fortunately, when the Near East Relief decided to withdraw its aid to the refugees in January, 1923, their evacuation was progressing reasonably well.[38] While there were still some delays in Constantinople, most of the Mennonites who fled to Batum managed to enter the United States. They had endured one and a half years of incredible hardship.

FOOTNOTES

FA — A. A. Friesen Archives, Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas.

1. Interview with G. H. Willms, Newton, Kansas, May 13, 1971.
2. Goerz, *Die mennonitischen Siedlungen der Krim* (No. 13 of *Historische Schriftenreihe des Echo-Verlags*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1957), pp. 62-66.
3. Victor Peters, *Nestor Machno* (Winnipeg, Manitoba).
4. A. A. Friesen, Collection, B. B. Janz to the *Studienkommission*, Kharkov, March 7, 1922, p.l. (cited hereafter as FA).
5. The writer refers to the special property liquidation laws decreed by czarist government in February and December, 1915. By their terms all German owners were compelled to sell their holdings within eight months. The laws were only partially implemented due to the burden of war and the general internal unrest of the period.
6. FA, P. M. Janzen to the "mennonitischen Hilfsaktionen im In-und Auslande," Batum, October 20, 1922.
7. P. C. Hiebert and O. O. Miller, *Feeding the Hungry. Russia Famine 1919-1925* (Scottdale, Pa., 1929), p. 225.
8. FA, A. A. Friesen to H. H. Schroeder. Bluffton, Ohio, December 30, 1921. The experience of one of the "62" can be found in W. Unruh, "Through the Valley of the Shadow," (manuscript in possession of Bethel College Historical Library, North Newton, Kansas). See also FA, D. Wieler, "Remembrances of Constantinople," Orrville, Ohio, March 5, 1922.
9. *Volksfreund* first appeared on May 13, 1917. Its last issue was Vol. II (June 24, 1918). Recently J. Schnurr of the Landmannschaft der Deutschen aus Russland, Stuttgart, was fortunate enough to rediscover a considerable number of the 1917-1919 issues of *Volksfreund* and *Friedensstimme*.
10. Kroeker's account of his flight was contained in his *Meine Flucht. Erfahrungen aus der Sowjetherrschaft* (Striegen, 1931), pp. 39 ff. Interview with C. C. Wall, Hillsboro, Kansas (March 8, 1971).
11. B. B. Janz Archive (Menn. Breth. Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba), Memoirs, etc., P. J. Rogalsky and J. P. Rogalsky, "Als die Heimat zur Fremde wurde, wurde die Fremde zur Heimat."
12. *Ibid.*
13. Interviews with J. K. Siemens, Hillsboro, Kansas. February 26, 1971, and March 16, 1971. Interview with C. C. Wall, Hillsboro, Kansas (March 8, 1971).
14. FA, A. Froese, "Ein Blick in das Leben der Mennoniten-Fluechtlinge in Batum, Georgien."
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. FA, Anon to "Deutsche Mennoniten-Hilfe," Constantinople, July 19, 1922.
18. FA, P. M. Janzen to the "Studienkommission." Batum. August 5, 1922. Janzen was elected as leader of the refugees on August 3, 1922.
19. FA, J. Siemens, Ab. Siemens, G. Warkentin to the "Studenkommission," Constantinople, Sept. 6, 1922.
20. FA, W. P. Neufeld and J. P. Jantzen, "Die Mennonitischen Fluechtlinge in Batum" n.d. FA, P. M. Janzen to "Die Mennonitischen Hilfsaktionen im In- und Auslande." Batum. October 20, 1922. One source cites a mortality rate of 25%, but this seems to be exaggerated. P. C. Hiebert Collection (Bethel College Historical Library, Newton, Kansas), H. Schroeder to P. C. Hiebert, Constantinople, December 6, 1922, File 254.
21. Hiebert Collection, H. Schroeder to P. C. Hiebert, Constantinople, December 6, 1922, File 254.
22. *Ibid.*
23. A. Froese, *op. cit.*
24. J. K. Siemens Interviews, February 26, 1971, March 16, 1971.
25. *Ibid.*
26. FA, P. M. Janzen to the Studienkommission, Batum, August 5, 1922.
27. FA, P. M. Janzen to B. H. Unruh, Batum, December, 1922.
28. FA, J. Penner and A. Wiens to H. Schroeder. Batum, March 16, 1922.
29. FA, P. M. Janzen to *Studienkommission*, Batum, August 5, 1922; FA, J. Siemens, Ab. Siemens, G. Warkentin to the "Studienkommission" Constantinople, Sept. 6, 1922.
30. FA, W. P. Neufeld and J. P. Jantzen, "Die Mennonitischen Fluechtlinge in Batum," n.d.
31. A report in the *Mennonitische Rundschau* set the number at 252. (Vol. 46, No. 4 (January 24, 1923), p. 10. In his report to a special refugee meeting held in Batum, leader P. M. Janzen reported 249. *Mennonitische Fluechtlingsfuersorge* Archive (Weierhof, Pfalz) "Beschluesse der Menn. Fluechtlinge auf der Versammlung in Batum am 19. und 20. Oktober 1922." On August 5, 1922, the group stood at 217, a considerable number having passed away. FA, J. Siemens, Ab. Siemens, G. Warkentin to the "Studienkommission." Constantinople, Sept. 6, 1922.
32. P. C. Hiebert Collection, "Liste der in Batum Wohnenden Mennoniten Fluechtlinge 1922," File 54. FA, P. M. Janzen to B. H. Unruh. Batum, December, 1922.
33. This included a pass or temporary residence permit; a document signifying former place of residence; certification from Near East Relief that they were bona-fide refugees; proof that they were America-bound and authorized to enter that country; photographs; transit visa assurances of the Italian and Turkish consuls. FA, H. Dirks and P. M. Friesen to "Vorstand des VBHH." Batum, Feb. 25, 1923.
34. *Ibid.* For those in Batum the questions of food, clothing, shelter, and medical care remained critical. V. Smucker, "Hilfswerk-Notizen, *Mennonitische Rundschau*, Vol. 46, No. 3. (January 17, 1923), p. 1.
35. FA, A. Warkentin to A. Froese, Batum, April 20, 1923. The idea of several "homes" for the Mennonite refugees emerged in early March. In short order the Mennonites managed to obtain quarters in four unused villas, the largest of which, renamed "Bethesda" accommodated some 61 persons. FA, A. Froese to J. Nickel. Constantinople, April 17, 1923.
36. FA, P. M. Janzen to B. H. Unruh, Constantinople, August 21, 1923. See also FA, H. Schroeder to the Canadian Board of Colonization, Constantinople, December 18, 1922.
37. FA, W. P. Neufeld and J. P. Jantzen, "Die Mennonitische Fluechtlinge in Batum." n.d.
38. The South-East Russian Mennonite Verband, meeting in the Kuban region on January 1, 2, 1923, voted to send 100 Pud (one Pud= 40 pounds) of bread flour to the Batum refugees. This was to be supplemented by two additional shipments of 100 Pud each. I was unable to discover whether this aid reached the refugees. FA, "Protokoll der Sitzung der Delegiertenversammlung des Mennonitischen Verbandes des Sued-Osten Russlands. vom 1. und 2. Jan., 1923." The AMR director in Constantinople, Mr. B. F. Stoltzfus was probably inadequately informed as to the actual plight of the refugees. "The NER in Constantinople told Mr. Stoltzfus that these people could be cared for much more cheaply in Batum than would be the case in Constantinople. So Brother Stoltzfus has arranged through NER that they be properly cared for and sheltered as long as they are at Batum." FA, O. O. Miller to A. A. Friesen, Akron, Pennsylvania, March 4, 1922. In Batum the refugee leaders were deeply disappointed that Stoltzfus did not visit Batum before returning to America in 1922. FA, Anon. to "Deutsche Mennoniten-Hilfe," Constantinople, July 19, 1922.

Old Colony Culture Change in Mexico

By James R. Jaquith

HUMAN COMMUNITIES WHICH identify themselves primarily as religious in orientation face some rather organizational and adaptive problems. This report will discuss one set of these problems as they apply to the Old Colony Mennonites in Mexico.

Religious communities tend to regard the ways in which they live as having divine sanction and purpose. Lifeways are understood by the membership, the *Gemeinde*, as having been revealed by God, communicated by early leaders and perpetuated by the membership's continuing disposition to follow their unique way.

Guidelines for living among such communities as the Old Colony in Mexico are thus regarded as in principle fixed and immutable, not subject to the vagaries of human imperfection which in greater or lesser degree are seen as the inevitable plague of secular society.

Quite aside from what the membership of a religious community will regard as its advantages, there is a kind of price to be paid, a particular order of problem which can have psychological and cultural expression sometimes of major proportions. This derives from the fact that human communities—religious or otherwise—almost never find themselves uncontacted or uninfluenced by other human groups. Real social isolation (such as that enjoyed for a few years in Utah by the Latter-Day Saints) would conspicuously diminish the problems referred to above, for it is in attempts by "the chosen" to articulate their ways with those of adjacent communities that friction is generated within the religious community and with its neighbors. The difficulty relates to the fact that lifeways and values of the neighbors are different and changing, and since members of the religious community depend to some extent on shifting resources and attitudes of host communities, continuous pressure is exerted on leadership components in the religious community to translate ostensibly divine directives into guidelines that the membership can work with in routine daily terms.

In its most abstract and extreme expression, the leadership of the Mexican Old Colony Mennonites sees the non-Old Colony world as contaminating in a ritual sense and thus to be avoided. Consequently, if the Old Colony could live in real isolation from Mexican society, its members could follow their own beliefs without concern for what Mexicans do or think and its leaders would not find themselves in the frustrating position of having to interpret and reinterpret how an essentially religious attitude toward the world is to be translated into day by day practice which must take Mexico and Mexicans into account. To lesser degrees the same statement can be made about Canada and the United States, since the Old Colony Mennonites maintain contact with these countries, particularly the former. And the same applies to non-Old Mennonites in Mexico, with whom certain kinds of interaction, e.g., marriage, are not allowed.

Most available literature on the lifeways of the Old Colony in Mexico present a picture of the kind that anthropologists call "ideal culture."[1] Such a description consists of a series of statements of what members (particularly leaders—*Preydyas, Ältestash, Darpshulte*) of the Old Colony feel should be done, should be said, should be thought in given circumstances. For example, the membership should not own or listen to radios, since doing so constitutes a kind of traffic with the outside "world." Nor should male members make a living other than by farming. Nor should female members learn to speak Spanish, since it is not necessary to their traditional lives and it is the language of the closest segment of the "world."

Descriptions such as those referred to above are useful in that they present the reader with a community's interpretation of its own beliefs. Moreover, an "ideal" description necessarily relates those beliefs to prescribed modes of behavior, since customary behavior is understood to derive from belief. Thus, the reader is offered a more or less neat and internally consistent picture of life in, say, the Manitoba Colony. Neat as such pictures tend to be, they have some disadvantages for the reader who is interested to learn what life is really like (by contrast with what people say it should be like) in the place being described. A corollary is isolation. That is, when a writer builds up a picture of a society based on ideal statements by the society's members, the picture will tend to ignore the influence of—at times even the presence of — other nearby societies. The fact is, however, that when two groups of people live in proximity they are bound to influence one an-

other. This is particularly true when dependency relations exist between them, and it is the case that the Old Colony is enmeshed in a complex series of such relations with its Mexican hosts. Mennonites are subject to most Mexican laws, for example, and both populations are linked economically in a number of ways. "Ideal" descriptions, in failing to come to terms with the facts of such relationships, necessarily fail to take realistic account of their consequences: that the lifeways of each group change, reflecting, directly and indirectly, influence from the other.

From Steel to Rubber Tires

One very clear example of how Mexican society has influenced the Old Colony relates to the use of rubber tires on tractors. The leadership early came to a decision that only steel-spiked wheels were to be used, partly, according to one preacher (*Preydya*), because the Bible does not mention the use of rubber wheels, and partly because their use would represent an augmented dependence on the "world." In fact, some years ago when rubber tires were first becoming popular, a number of men were excommunicated for using them. They grew increasingly popular, however, until today one rarely sees steel wheels on Old Colony tractors and to the point that this particular "sin" is no longer cause for excommunication. The basic economics of the transformation are simple: tractors are more efficient than horses and thus, in the long run, cheaper. This applies not only to work in the fields, but to shopping and other business trips to the nearby Mexican town as well. Mexicans, in the 1950's, constructed a paved road leading from the town through the Manitoba and Swift Current Colonies. One of the conditions of its use (by Mexicans and Mennonites alike) is that no vehicles with lugs or spikes be driven upon it. While horses can be, and sometimes still are, used for trips into town, this is prohibitively time-consuming for many farmers who live relatively far away. And since automobiles and trucks are not allowed to the membership, tractors are the realistic solution to getting into town and back. This is an example, then, of an activity which once was sternly proscribed and sanctioned having undergone a fundamental reinterpretation in the face of unrelenting pressure from the outside as well as from the inside.

The fact that one "should not" or "must not" own a radio—on pain, theoretically, of excommunication—has not insured their absence from the Old Colony. While the number of radios in use is unknown (and probably unknowable), it is considerable. The writer of this report has seen many. He has seen Mennonites who make a business of repairing radios for other Mennonites. He has heard estimates that between a third and a half of Old Colony families own or have owned radios. One persuasive demonstration that radios are widely used in the Old Colony is that every Sunday afternoon many Mennonite boys and young men visit the radio station in the town referred to above. They go there to request songs to be played for their girl friends who are listening in various villages.

Much has been made in "ideal" descriptions of Old Colony clothing: overalls for men and boys; long print dresses, distinctive hats and status-marking shawls for girls and women. In fact, variation on these norms can be observed regularly.

Prideful Wristwatches

There is an appreciable number of behaviors engaged in sporadically by some Old Colony Mennonites (regularly by others) which are forbidden on grounds that they are "prideful" or "of the world." Wearing wristwatches is one. Pocket watches on a plain string —often a shoestring—are acceptable, since time and its passing are of recognized importance. But a wristwatch is worn in plain sight and is assumed to serve at least partially as an adornment, evidence that the wearer is guilty of the sin of pride. Nonetheless, many such "adornments" are worn. This writer, in fact, has been in the home workshop of on *Altkolonier* who earns most of his living by repairing them for his neighbors.

Clothing is another such matter. It is men who do most of the experimenting, possibly because they deal with Mexicans more. Such experimentation is in the direction of Mexican fashions, particularly in hats, shirts, belt buckles and boots, all in what might fairly be called the "cowboy" style. It is in such cases that the *preydyas* find themselves in a difficult decision-making quandary. Since it is their charge to maintain "the way," and since "the way" must continually be translated into routinely followable guidelines, every new practice must, in principle, be decided upon. In one case a *Preydya* insisted that a young Old Colony man cease wearing a new yellow shirt because "yellow is a color that Mexicans wear a lot." People in one village still talk of how their *Preydya* persuaded the schoolteacher to teach an incorrect pronunciation of a *Hochdeutsch* (High German) letter because the correct sound "is one that Mexicans use."

The incidents of the shirt and the letter, as well as the rigor with which clothing and adornment prescriptions are enforced, give insight into a different, though related, problem. Old Colony leadership must continually struggle to maintain "ideal" lifeways in the face of increasingly frequent and tempting innovations from the outside. They must do this because the Old Colony Mennonites are not alone in the world. It is a few thousand people surrounded by some 45 million bearers of a cultural tradition very different from their own. Thus, anything which can contribute to the maintaining of clear boundaries between Mennonites and Mexi-

cans will be of satisfaction to the leadership. Not to dress like Mexicans nor to talk like them, while at the same time talking and dressing exactly like the rest of the Colony will help perpetuate the boundaries and thus the Colony itself.

Economic Consequences of Overpopulation

Simultaneously the most fundamental and the most fateful area of change in the Old Colony is industrialization. Moreover, it is mainly in the future. Traditionally, farming has been regarded as almost the only acceptable occupation for men. The *Altkolonie* does support a few exceptions, however, Schoolteachers are one. And each village supports a man who looks after the villagers' cattle during the communal grazing season. A larger number of men find employment in cheese factories, an occupation which Mennonites learned from Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) to the north not long after arriving in Mexico. While cheese making is industry, it is acceptable because it uses Mennonite capital, creates a market for Mennonite raw materials (milk) and supports a number of Mennonite workers, most of whom lack the land and/or capital they would need to be successful farmers.

The specter of increasing numbers of landless and capitalless young men already haunts the Old Colony. The reasons are several, one of which is population. Mennonite families in Mexico are extremely large by United States standards. There are too many sanctions operating to talk seriously at this time about rational family planning as a way of coping with over-population. It is probably worth pointing out, however, that a small number of Old Colony women have been introduced by Mexican medical personnel to oral contraceptives which are locally available, often without prescription.

Mass out-migration (such as the Old Colony's Russia-to-Canada or Canada-to-Mexico moves) is probably no answer. This is because of increased difficulties in finding what the Old Colony traditionally has demanded: a sizable area of contiguous, productive, cheap land *plus* a national government disposed to make a series of more or less radical social concessions relating to such issues as school attendance, participation in armed forces and other national institutions.

Another way of adjusting a fixed amount of farm land to increasing population is to modernize agricultural technology in order to maximize yields. This is not now feasible in the Old Colony both because it is very expensive and because of strong objection from the leadership.

Industrialization and Church Discipline

Still another way of adjusting to population growth is to industrialize. This approach, while strongly opposed by the leadership, appears in fact to be developing. Aside from the cheese plants mentioned above, there are box plants, a plant for rolling oats, a print shop, a factory for the manufacture of men's overalls, a plant that makes smudge pots for apple farmers, a hammermill plant, etc.

A fact of contemporary Old Colony life which has received almost no attention in the literature is what has been called household industry. That is, individual men, or families, conduct small-scale manufacturing operations on their own, either to supplement inadequate farm revenue or as the major source of family income. One man, for example, makes swings, merry-go-rounds and other playground equipment in his spare time. Another makes furniture of the kind often seen in American kitchens with tubular steel legs, plastic-covered chair seats and backs, and formica-topped tables. Still another invented a machine with which he stamps shirt buttons out of sheet aluminum. In general, proprietors of such household industries—and there are many in the Old Colony—seem disposed to industrialize on a larger scale if sufficient capital should become available. Thus, this considerable group constitutes the basis for greatly expanded industrialization.

In spite of the availability of motivation, technical competence, labor, markets, and in some cases capital, industrialization has not proceeded as rapidly as it might have because of the opposition of the leadership to what they regard as the establishment of excessive relations with, and dependence on, the outside "world." Thus, the threat of excommunication hangs heavy over those who would establish manufacturing facilities and over the larger number who would seek employment in such facilities. Indeed, a number of people who have involved themselves in industrialization have already suffered excommunication. It is important to understand, however, that this sanction has its own limits and cannot be imposed in excess. For one thing, excommunication of a large enough number of people would undermine the integrity of the very Old Colony the leadership is charged with maintaining. For another, some excommunicants have already changed their official church allegiance to a local non-Old Colony Mennonite group which imposes no comparable restrictions. It remains to be seen how the current leadership of the Manitoba and Swift colonies deal with these problems.

Preservative Education

The kinds of change discussed above have been relatively rapid and thus conspicuous. They are there to be seen by anyone who takes the trouble to look. It is the case, however, that some change is much slower and subtler, slow enough in fact that in the short run it appears not to be taking place at all. That

element in Old Colony culture which to date has most successfully resisted change has been the school system. There are very good reasons for this, all relating to the fact that in this Anabaptist community the schools are the primary mechanism by which young people are prepared for participation in the religious phases of adult society. Thus, that which children are taught by their *shawlliyeren* is the most zealously monitored and protected of all Old Colony pedagogy. Even very tentative attempts by teachers to innovate have successfully been resisted, and some potentially progressive teachers have been obliged to resign. There is constant pressure from the leadership to teach that and only that which is approved: minimal *Hochdeutsch* (including the distinctive Old Colony hymns) and minimal arithmetic. Insofar as change can be said to have taken place at all, it probably should be spoken of as latent and potential shifts in attitude and sentiment. Indeed, there are those who maintain that the only real changes that have taken place in the schools is a steady deterioration in the quality of the *Hochdeutsch* taught. There is evidence, however, of a developing sentiment among young, Mexican-born Old Colonists that the traditional curriculum is inadequate. This sentiment, should it become sufficiently generalized, could have several consequences. One might be an increasing tendency to send children to the more comprehensive school operated by the non-Old Mennonites referred to above. Another might be that succeeding *Ältestash* will come under increasing pressure to consider enrichment of the traditional curriculum. Whatever happens, the schools will continue to be the area of greatest sensitivity and resistance to modification. It should be recalled that, although other factors were involved, it was the government's attempts to Canadianize the schools of ethnic minorities that more than anything triggered the Old Colony's decision to move to Mexico in the first place.

Old Colonists more than most social groups regard themselves as being *in* but not *of* the world. It has been the purpose of this report to illustrate that even such self-consciously isolationistic people cannot persist indefinitely unaffected by the peculiar qualities of the land they inhabit and of the peoples with whom they share the land. It is also the truth that generations born on the land do not think of it in the same ways as did their fathers who came to it and pioneered it. It will not be many years before the Old Colony—its Mexican roots dating from 1922—will consist exclusively of people who were born and whose parents were born on the high, arid flanks of the Sierra Madre Occidental. This will be the reality to which they must adapt—not the ideals forged by their forefathers in Chortitza and Steinbach—and they will bring about the changes they need.

As an epilogue it might be worth observing that culture change is seldom a one-way process. While it is true that Mexican culture has inevitably had its influence on the Old Colony, Mexicans have absorbed their share of Mennonite influence as well. The most conspicuous manifestation of this is the common farm wagon—a platform built upon an old automobile chasis, painted John-Deere-green and now used by Mennonite and Mexican alike in their common preoccupation with the tilling of the earth.

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SAY NO!

Continued from page 105

There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Researcher in the laboratory.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To invent new kinds of death
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Poet in your study.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To sing songs of hate
Instead of Love songs
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Physician at the sick bed.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To declare men fit
For active military service
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Clergyman behind the pulpit.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered

Continued on page 142

Pioneering in Kansas
Early Hesston, I

By Mary Hess

IN THE LAST QUARTER of the nineteenth century the newspapers were full of tempting opportunities, and land promotional companies painted glamorous pictures of life in the West. Many Mennonites in Pennsylvania felt the stir of *Wanderlust* as the land beckoned them. They went as far west as they could by train, for the Santa Fe rails had been laid no further than Kansas in the 1880's. Those who came before this traveled by covered wagon. The movement West had grown so popular that most of these pioneers already had friends or relatives somewhere ahead in the newly developed country. The Hess brothers, for example, had an older brother in Council Bluffs, Iowa, who urged them—both of whom had just married sisters who each had a small inheritance—to come West. So the brothers came to Harvey County in Kansas about 1884.

The Pennsylvania Germans

This coming to Kansas by the Pennsylvania Germans was no mass exodus. Nor did they settle in a colony as the Mennonites who came from Russia in the 1870's had done. Rather they dribbled into Harvey County—two by two like the occupation of the ark—and bought their land individually. Although most of them spoke Pennsylvania-German, they also knew the English language and sent their children to English schools.

The names of the early settlers in and around Hesston indicate that they were primarily of Pennsylvania German or Swiss origin, although some had stopped off in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and other states before finally settling in Harvey County. There were names such as Welty, Ha(e)gy, Landis, Lantz, Bausman, Hertzler, Lehman, Smith, Steinmetz, Vogt, Widmeyer, Zimmerman, Berner, Brubaker, Baer, Holdeman, Hostetler, Shellenberger, Grove, Grabill, Klein, Weaver, Zook, Snyder, Miller, Sheets, Schroeder, Pfautz, Berger, Spangler, Erb, Hess, and Wenger. These Pennsylvania Germans formed a majority of those who settled in and around Hesston, and as time went on this majority increased.

One cannot bypass such names as Rapp, Dilts, Walker, Page, Streeter, Prouty, and many others who were not of German origin but nevertheless made a substantial contribution in building up the Hesston community as constructive, solid citizens. On the other hand, as the town increased in years, the most enterprising and resourceful citizens seemed to be of Pennsylvania German origin.

The Wilderness of Kansas

When these emigrants moved to Kansas, Harvey County's organizational structure was still in its infancy for it had become a county only a little over ten years before. The county's borderlines were settled although it was charged that some of the first surveyors had not used chains and compasses as carefully as they should have. According to one report, these men had driven across the prairie in a buggy with a bandana handkerchief tied to one wheel and measured the mileage by counting the revolutions of the wheel. This method may not have been so inaccurate had the counter stayed away from the jug.

Only eleven years previous to the establishment of Harvey County, Kansas had been given statehood by virtue of the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency. His election caused four states to withdraw from the Union, followed by the resignation of their senators and representatives. At this point the abolitionists, being opportunists, immediately moved to take up the Kansas bill. If Kansas did not actually start the Civil War it surely set the stage for it. The struggle for Kansas between the free and slave promoters was one

Main Street in the pioneer days of Hesston.

of the most bloody, corrupt, lawless, and ungodly struggles in all United States history, and all bedlam broke loose at the voting.

"I doubt that Kansas is physically worthy of sisterhood in the great family of states due to the moral unfitness of her citizens," cried one Southern senator.

"The inhabitants of Kansas are outlaws and pirates. The good men were abandoned by the government and driven out. Ruffianism is all that is left and are we to associate with them?" shouted another senator from Texas.

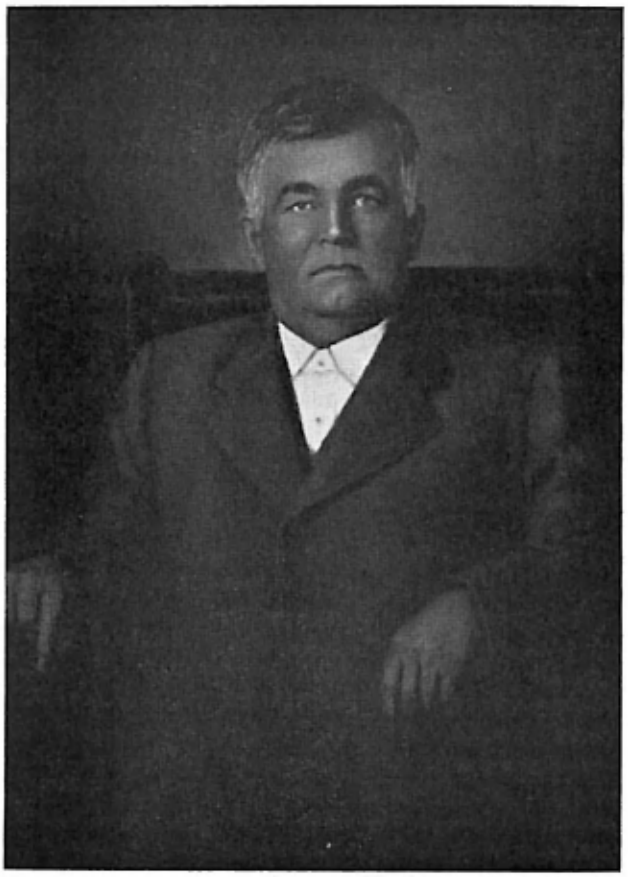
But a vote was taken above the shouts of derision and contempt, and Kansas became a state. This prompted the ominous prediction of Washington Irving, who had visited the state when it was a territory, to echo through the legislative halls:

Most of the country will, by its 'nature,' form a lawless interval between the abodes of civilized man. Here may spring up new mongrel races, the amalgamations of the debris and abrasions of former races civilized and savage—descendants of wandering hunters and trappers of fugitives from the Spanish and American frontiers; of adventurers and desperadoes of every class and country, yearly ejected from the bosom of society into the wilderness.

Taming the Desert

It was to this wilderness that the Pennsylvania Germans came, confident and expectant. Could these serious Kansas Mennonite settlers tame such a wilderness to be compatible with their way of living? Not only did they have to deal with "lawless" men, but more significantly they had to contend with the harsh physical elements of "The Great American Desert," as it was commonly called. Why is not known unless, as some joker quipped, it was because pioneers settled there and soon deserted it.

As part of the incentive to induce new settlers to stay, the railroads permitted the shipment of unlimited freight and cargo. Consequently, settlers brought complete furnishings and equipment with them at little or no cost. After all, migration was psychologically more solid when all their possessions accompanied the trip, thus making it more difficult to return home. Ethel Dilts recalls that her father, Flavius Dilts, chartered an entire railroad car in 1873 to transport his goods from Ohio. Any remaining space in the car—after the household goods, farm implements, and other possessions—was filled with crockery, which he then sold after his arrival in Kansas. Vera Fowler says that her family came from Pennsylvania in 1891, and Dr. Grabill came with them. He brought a wash-boiler full of food for his family's consumption en route, a neat bit of carry-on luggage. Mrs. Fowler recalls that when they got off the train in Hesston she looked and looked



Abraham Lincoln Hess after whom Hesston was named. He is the father of Mary Hess, the author of this article.

but there was nothing there—just nothing. A dreary arrival for a girl of nine.

Most of the newcomers arrived at Newton, a town that had just started its taming process. Only ten years before Newton had earned the reputation of being the "wickedest town in Kansas." It had been a stopping place for the cattlemen on their "bovine pilgrimages" from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, and opportunists soon learned there was gold to be mined from the lusts of the cattlemen. And now, even ten years after Newton's reformation—which was hastened by the arrival of the Russian Mennonites in the 1870's—the smell of liquor and the haze of gunsmoke still could be detected in the air.

A Checkerboard of Nationalities

The land that is now Hesston was surrounded on every side by settlers in the 1870's. The Russian Mennonites on the south and west. A French settlement on the north that had been there long enough to have

cultivated the land and put up buildings. This settlement reached from the McPherson County line to Canton, and had a hamlet called Elvira, which included a store, a post office, a church, and a school. The foundation for Hesston probably lay in this French settlement. Also, on the northeast of Hesston there was a settlement of Church of God in Christ, Mennonite (Holdemans). Then directly east of the Hesston site was the Highland group (Trinity Evangelical Church). Nearer by was a settlement of Methodists, and finally to the southwest was the United Brethren group. Each of these settlements was organized around a church.

Thus when the Pennsylvania German group arrived in the 1880's, the free and cheap land was already occupied. One newcomer, Abraham Lincoln (A. L.) Hess, paid $9.00 an acre for his first eighty acres. These new arrivals bought their land primarily from earlier pioneers who had experienced grasshoppers, droughts, prairie fires, blizzards, and dust storms, and wanted to leave at any cost. But the German people had already built up a firm resistance to all opposing forces. Out of their background of centuries of religious opposition and fugitivism they were now confronted with complete freedom; yet they were hampered by the violence of nature and the demands of the land, which forced them to hew their living patterns into a code centered on survival. This, in time, leveled off into an arbitrary and resolute way of life, as later developments prove.

A Town Emerges

The railroad boom came to Harvey County in the 1880's. By 1886 the Missouri Pacific began to lay tracks to McPherson, thus determining the location of the town of Hesston. It was to be started by a company called "The New Albany Township Company." According to a common practice, town builders pooled their money and land in order to form a company and to select a site, which was usually determined by a railroad company. In the case of the New Albany Company, it was located on the land of three men: A. L. Hess, Amos Hess, and a Mr. Smith of Albany, New York. There is some controversy as to the identity of the third man. Some records say it was Shaever, and some say W. W. Shaver, but I prefer to accept the word of T. M. Erb—a brother-in-law of the Hess brothers who was active in early Hesston affairs—who said the name was Smith. The town site was located on forty acres owned by each man, making a total of 120 acres with the railroad running right through the center.

Naming the town caused some difficulty. The corporation was called the Albany Company; the railroad station went by the name of Hess; and the post office located three miles north was called Elvira. "After considerable correspondence and red tape," wrote T. M. Erb in the first issue of the Hesston *Gazette* in 1917, "it was finally named Hesston for the Hess brothers, who figured largely in the development of the new town."

The town of Hesston was officially organized (but not incorporated) at 9:00 a.m. on July 16, 1886, in Emma Township, the north side of Harvey County. Its president was designated as D. P. Jones with Charles A. Randall as secretary. Neither of these men owned land in Emma Township, although it is possible that Charles was the son of John Randall who did own a considerable amount of acreage. As for D. P. Jones, a guess is that he was appointed either by the county or state as an experienced town organizer, for he did not hold the presidency for very long. In a year or two A. L. Hess became the president. Since Hesston did not incorporate until 1921, organization was only nominal, and the town could not own any property because it did not exist as a political entity. All property in town was held either by individuals, the county, or the township, which fact caused considerable dissension later on at the time of its incorporation.

Wagons and teams at the elevator in early Hesston.

Early Residents

The first streets in Hesston were named and laid out by J. M. Rapp and A. L. Hess. Amos, Nott, Smith, and Randall streets ran from north to south, while Lancaster, Shaver, Weaver, and Streeter avenues ran from west to east.

The first ten years of the town witnessed much buying and selling of all kinds of property. Flavius Dilts, a cattleman, doubled his herd in a short time by buying another calf every time a cow gave birth. A short time after the town was organized A. L. Hess mortgaged his remaining forty acres and bought eighty acres of surrounding land. The fact that he was able to pay

this off in five years proves that there was profit to be had from real estate as well as livestock.

Land was easily available from many of the early settlers because these farmers were slaves to the elements and often suffered defeat. In January of 1886 a hard rain turned to sleet. Then followed a blizzard of blizzards which covered the sleet with snow. The bitter cold lasted through January and part of February without the usual thaws to melt the ice and snow and to uncover the grass. Without food the cattle died by the hundreds and thousands throughout the state. Many of the surrounding cattlemen of Hesston were ruined. This, following a grasshopper scourge and several droughts, discouraged and defeated many of the earliest homesteaders. They were only too willing to sell out to these enterprising Pennsylanvia Germans.

Some of the early buyers of property in Hesston were John A. Randall, Charles A. Brooks, E. H. Brown, William Dunkelberger, C. W. Miller, J. L. Shellenberger, Charles Logan, J. S. Baer, Uriah Spangler, S. P. Swartzendruber, A. H. D. Smith, William Shaver, J. M. Rapp, William Hawkey, J. L. Showalter, Abe and Amos Hess, and William Rapp.

An old-timer, T. M. Erb, recalls that the first building in Hesston was moved in from Charles Barton's farm two and a half miles west of town. The building was only a stable and was placed on the corner lot on Main Street directly west of the railroad station. Barton bought and sold stock, and the place soon became an active shipping point and a livery stable. Roy Smith remembers that this building was one of two large buildings on the west side of number one block of Main Street. There was also a well in the center, and the water was used for all purposes, including drinking from a commonly shared rusty tin cup.

When the country boys wanted to stay in town for the night—for any reason or no reason at all—they would climb up to sleep in the hay above the animals in the livery stable, knowing full well that reveille would be sounded loud and long at five o'clock in the morning by a jackass that was owned and bedded by Ben Northcott across the street. This morning alert was so accurate that the whole town could set their clocks by it. The other large building on this block was Rapp's hotel, located on the south end of the block. In between were small wooden frame buildings sixteen or twenty feet apart.

Business Activities

The only sidewalks were ashes and cinders carried out from the heating stoves, and the streets were dirt. Main Street was edged on either side with shade trees. Hitching posts also lined the street, and the large depressions in the ground at the base of each one came from the horses' stamping hoofs. Most of the time water stagnated in these low spots, and swarms of flies buzzed around.

Paul Murray was Hesston's first merchant, having moved his goods from the store he had operated at Elvira in the French settlement three miles north of town. At the same time he had moved his residence to a location just east of the railroad in the north part of town. Some of the first new buildings put up were the depot and John T. Landes residence. Landes had the honor of establishing the first real family in the town. The first large dwelling was erected by Amos Hess for C. R. Wenger in the north part of town.

"The most successful enterprise coming to the town was the creamery," said T. M. Erb. "It was erected during the fall of 1888 and was located one mile east of town on the east side of the creek at the corner of the section. During 1890, milk was brought in from a radius of 25 to 30 miles and amounted to from 15,000 to 18,000 pounds a day. Practically all the butter was shipped from this place to all points in the United States, and the farmers received a steady cash income which was much appreciated in those times of low prices. During 1891 the company built another creamery at Newton and moved the main office there. In a few years after that the Hesston plant was only a skimming station."

William Rapp started the first grain storage business soon after the town began. He bought grain, storing it in individual bins built along the railroad tracks north of the station. The only means of getting the grain from wagon to bin to boxcar was by strong back, scoop shovel, and sweat. This establishment was a forerunner of the elevator that the Newton Grain Company built in 1891, operated by H. W. Hubbard and later by Amos Hess. Then followed shops of various kinds—all of the type that are usually found in a country town.

There was a boom of sorts soon after the beginning of the town. At one point there were three grocery stores which is more than there ever have been since. No one limited himself to one trade for it was necessary to seek out the needs of the residents and supply them regardless of training and background. Bill Curby, who had moved to Hesston from the French settlement, ran a barber shop, a restaurant, and a grocery store all in the same building. Chris Wenger was a veterinarian by trade, but he also carried mail, bought and sold horses to Pennsylvania, and ran a livery stable. The first blacksmith shop was built by C. T. Bacton with Bill Wyatt as blacksmith. Then a lumberyard, and hardware store with another blacksmith shop combined were started; the blacksmith shop was run by Ben Northcott, the lumberyard and hardware by Chris Wenger and Harry Graybill. William Rapp built the hardware store that is now serving the town, but it has since been moved from the west side of the

street to its present site. Among other business that followed were a grocery store run by William Klingenberg, a mercantile store by Gus Ebberly, and a butcher shop by John Egy.

The first doctor was J. P. Ball, who had his office in the town's only drugstore. It was here that Hesston's first big fire started, burning all the buildings on the southwest end of the block north of block one. These wooden frame structures were soon replaced by concrete buildings.

Then the need for a school became apparent. In 1889 a grade school was built on the southeast corner of the section northeast of town. Several years later the school was moved to the present elementary school location where soon after a two-room wooden frame building was erected.

Life in Early Hesston

Exciting and unusual events for the young were scarce happenings in those days of chores, weed hoeing, dull readers, and little or no pocket money. But one incident stands out indelibly in the memory of old-timers. One noon—shortly before it was time for the big school bell to ring, thus halting play and summoning all to fall in line to wait impatiently for the teacher's militant "march, one-two-three-four . . ."—a strange sound was heard, a sound unfamiliar to everyone, a labored "chug-chug-chug." Balls and bats flew every direction as the boys hurried to investigate. "Soon a two-cylinder, lever-controlled, four-wheeled apparition appeared, guided by Charley Champlin from Canton. A 'something' which had the atmosphere for a windshield, the sky for a top, and the hedge fence for emergency brakes," was the Kenneth Bitikofer and Vernon Fleming described the first car in their "History of Hesston" written when they were students at Hesston Academy. It chugged south, followed by the gaping schoolboys. When it reached the railroad crossing the grade was too much for it. The two cylinders sputtered repeatedly and died. Charley got out and started to push, reinforced by the eager schoolboys. In one mighty "heave" the incline and tracks were cleared, but alas! Charlie could not reach the controls in time to prevent it from heading for a wheat field and turning over. The boys helped in righting the vehicle, and they soon saw Charley continue on his way to Newton where he finally arrived three hours and forty-five minutes after take-off from Canton. Of course the tardy schoolboys had to face the stern-faced teacher, but fortunately his curiosity was also aroused and he could not resist asking for a report, which made the day for the entire school.

However, such incidents were rare, and life for the young was made up mostly of work—early in the mornings and late at night. Roy Smith recalls his life on the farm: "I walked two miles to school for six month terms, and stayed out of school for spring and fall work which totaled about five months of school each year. Sunday mornings we would take a lid from the back of the kitchen stove, turn it upside-down, dampen the soot on it, and blacken our shoes for the week. Then we would curry and harness a team of horses, hitch them to the carriage. And now we were ready to go to Sunday school. I followed this routine until I was twenty-one years old."

On Sunday afternoons the boys frequently went swimming in Emma Creek. The best swimming hole was at Pullen's bridge on the West Emma. Traffic was rare so when a horse and buggy was spotted there was plenty of time for someone to shout "duck." Instantly all took a dive, leaving the water without even a ripple when the passerby crossed the bridge. In those days swimming suits were unheard of items, Arnold Miller recalls.

The closest thing to vandalism were raids made on farmers' watermelon patches, or filling long johns—that had been carelessly left out on the clothesline—with buckshot from a double barreled shotgun at shivarees. As for juvenile protests, they went no further than questioning an umpire's decision for a coveted win at a baseball game with neighboring towns. Competition with Moundridge was especially hot and frequently drew angry boos and an occasional fist fight which resulted in a bloody nose or two.

But when the days got short and long winter evenings set in, the young people amused themselves by popping corn and pulling taffy, then challenging each other to a game of checkers, flinch, dominos, or crokonole. In January the man of the house and his wife, instead of poring over income tax returns, pored over the *Shumway Seed Catalog*, and dreamed of the appearance of the first robin when the seeds could be put to work. Mother darned socks or mended overalls, while father read *Capper's Weekly, Mail and Breeze, Country Gentleman,* or the *Pathfinder*. And when bedtime came the entire family gathered around as father read a chapter from the Bible, humbly acknowledging his submission to God. Prayer was an accepted rite before meals, as well as during the daily family devotions.

For the most part, however, life revolved around farming—selling and buying, planting and harvesting, animal breeding and marketing, building up the land. Their pleasure was in the land. Social contacts often came as a pleasant by-product of business transactions, for there were no middle men. Since frugality dictated, social entertainment was limited to the home—oyster suppers in the winter, and ice cream or watermelon feeds in the summer.

In 1892 a group of businessmen got together and attempted to devise a plan whereby all customers of

Hesston business places would pay cash for their purchases instead of writing checks. The purpose was to keep the currency and also the trade in Hesston, but this did not get the desired results. Consequently the need for a bank was continuously felt more and more each year. Not until 1907 was a bank actually started in a side room of the Wenger-Grabill lumberyard. The charter was issued to Waterman, who organized the group of stockholders to secure operating capital. The first year the bank had a capital of $10,000 and deposits amounting to $2,106.18. In one year the deposits increased by ninety percent. The capital remained the same for 40 years, but profits, loans and deposits increased steadily with the exception of the depression years from 1927 to 1937 when loans and deposits decreased. However, at this time the profits continued to increase. The first bank clerk was Guy Swallows. The bank stayed at this location until 1917 when a new building was erected at its present location.

Train service was good since it was the only commercial transportation available to Hesston citizens. There were four trains daily: a passenger and a freight train which each traveled north and south. This allowed for mail four times a day. The train had several names —"old jerky," "bobtail," "jerkwater," "Eldorado flyer." Originally the fare from Newton to Hesston was 24¢, and later was raised to 28¢.

Up until the time of the automobile Hesston's merchandising accommodations exceeded those of 1970. Where else could the farmers take their produce and buy their groceries but in Hesston? The ten-mile trip to Newton by horse and buggy involved a long day of exhausting riding. Consequently the Hesston merchants had a captive trade. The services offered by the merchants in Hesston were supplemented by the welcome visit of a huckster and raleigh wagon man who appeared once a month at each farm home. His visit meant candy for the children and some small gift for the housewife. He took produce in exchange for groceries and other small items. Then occasionally a Watkins medicine man appeared with homeopathic remedies and cures for all ills.

Only those services of a practical nature thrived in Hesston's early commercial history. These included doctors, veterinarians, blacksmiths, and barbers. Such luxuries as dressmaking, tailoring, dry cleaning, or laundering were taken care of in the home because it would have been considered an extravagance to pay for having such jobs done professionally.

Grandfather Viking

By Lauren Friesen

Grandfather Viking
masted his Frisian faith on Thor,
stroking whale-back
and raging sea with heavy oak oar.
Conquest and thunder threaded his brow,
banners and shields, starboard and prow,
commanding furrowed waves
near squall swept sands of Elsinore.

A gnarled tree,
now prostrated, grew near his door,
leaving a stump of a remainder
of past ages
and shaded lineages
pacing the floor.
(Some were given
life and breath
on cool chiseled stone.)

Graft
the amputated mast
on the sapling.
The vine and the branches
spike the marrow
with the blood and the wine.
Kiss the cheeks
of the rose,
plait the thorns
for a new hat band.

The embers wave in the October wind,
itinerant bellows fluff the fire,
and nails pierce the palm branch.
The river hugs the bank.
With water and fire
the dove days the anvil
on the soul.

Flames spill from the tongue,
the oarsman is flapping the reins,
sails paddle the pump,
the pulpit is planted with camouflage.
The blood of the spears
is washed from the martyr,
and roasted at the stake.
The bees
swarm and blaze across the land.

Beyond the dikes, beyond the forest,
the sun rises and hangs-out a smile.
A queen boards-up the taunts,
the moon releases a flaxen grin.
The spear was buried in grandfather's tomb.
A paper icon is lacquered on a trunk.

Ulysses granted a stay
from a conscripted execution.
The French lady of pleasure
lit the flame of liberty.
Ships float into the harbor.

We build with the plow.
The prairie is varnished
with turkey red.
The elbow may bend
before the sword
when the flame rescinds.
The eye is stapled on the cross.

The Social Structure of the Russian Mennonites

By John B. Toews

LATE IN THE eighteenth century Russia received its first Mennonite settlers. For most of these colonists, the migration to Russia was closely bound up with a quest for religious liberty, a factor which may have distinguished them from the far more numerous Lutheran and Catholic Germans who joined them in search of a new homeland. Such a stance was not new to their history. As historical offshoots of the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation, their pacifism already undergirded an eastward migration from the Lowlands of Prussia before 1560. Prussian economic and religious policies subsequently induced a further emigration into the Vistula valley, a hard-won freedom which was short-lived, since the Partitions of Poland returned the region to Prussian jurisdiction. During this critical period Empress Catherine II of Russia offered broad religious and educational freedom to prospective colonists. The promise of perpetual exemption from military service soon encouraged two major settlements in Russia. The first, Chortitza, was located in the province of Ekaterinoslav, west of the Dnieper River. It was settled between 1788 and 1796, and in recognition of its seniority among Mennonite settlements was often designated as the Old Colony. A second settlement straddling the Molotchnaya River in Taurida province was established in the first years of the nineteenth century, and simply referred to as the Molotschna. By the mid-nineteenth century both colonies attained considerable economic affluence, and because of a shortage of land, had established numerous new settlements in the Ukraine and elsewhere in Russia.

Background and Migration

The problem of migration in Mennonite history though it has been subjected to repeated study, remains an extremely complex one.[1] For most investigators the sequential themes usually involved: the emergence of religious persecution in an area of lengthy habitation; the promise of privilege and toleration in another land in exchange for the application of agricultural skills; after a prolonged sojourn the Mennonites once more faced renewed economic and religious pressures often resulting from material overachievement; a search for new settlement areas naturally resulted. Such generalizations are broadly applicable to the Mennonite migrations from the Lowlands to Prussia in the sixteenth century and to the Steppes of Russia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In Prussia of the later eighteenth century the Mennonites found them-

selves unable to purchase new lands for their ever expanding members, subject to tribute money for one reason or another, and faced the prospect of rapid assimilation and Prussianization. Not only was there considerable pressure to adopt exclusive use of the German (Dutch used previously), but the introduction of a qualitatively poor but compulsory elementary education system as well as urbanization and university training for a portion of the young made the Mennonites vulnerable to the loss of their traditional nonconformity.

Mennonite migration to Russia occurred within the framework of a *privilegium,* a set of privileges granted by the Russian government to entice settlers to the large, newly acquired territories in the south. Economically each family was guaranteed a perpetual land possession of some sixty-five *dessiatines* as well as the right to future industrial expansion. A guarantee of religious freedom included exemption from all civil and military service.[2] Inherent in such economic and religious freedom was a large degree of local autonomy. The legal framework of the Mennonite migration to Russia allowed for the unhindered transfer of ethnic concepts and structures, social and economic, to the new environment, but this only occurred in part. The migration mingled people from different areas in Prussia, whose ethnic patterns were not as varied as to be irreconcilable. This fact, however, remained the critical factor in preventing the duplication of Prussian models. An altered ethnic structure also resulted from the fact that the Mennonite migration to Russia was a protracted process, running its course over decades, each family or group contributing its particular emphases.[3] This did not imply a drastic break with Prussian religious and blood ties, but it did assure a more flexible adaptation to the Russian setting. The Mennonite system as it emerged in Russia cannot be described as deriving from a larger race (*Hauptvolk*) or circumscribed by a narrow interpretation of ethnicity.[4] Geographic distance and the radically different qualities of the host society made the Mennonite struggle for identity a unique and isolated one. The new emigrants were occasionally fortified by west Prussian values during the first decades, but fundamentally constructed their own system in response to the terms set by the Russian environment. In this sense the experience of the Russian Mennonites was not unlike that of ethnic groups in Canada or America. The rapid assimilation which invariably faced most groups on this continent, was nevertheless effectively stalled in the case of the Russian Mennonites by the legal terms of settlement. These not only assured their homogeneity, but allowed them to perpetuate themselves in self-contained communities throughout Russia. Most of the daughter colonies faithfully reproduced the religious, social and economic structure of the mother colony. The Mennonite pattern of migration within Russia, far from disrupting the sense of a common identity, actually strengthened it by providing a framework for self-perpetuation, which was fully controlled by the Mennonite community.

Agricultural and Industrial Aspects

The social organization of the Russian Mennonites possessed an amazing capacity for dealing with economic change. Though a rather all pervasive authority system existed, the overall structure responded readily to expansion and growth. Agriculture by and large provided the colonists with a common economic base and in the early decades of Mennonite settlement in Russia was critical to the survival of the group. The Prussian Mennonites who came to Russia, unlike other Anabaptist offsprings, like the Hutterian Brethren, did not strive for self-sufficiency nor were they loath to enter the competitive world of commerce and trade. Initially, however, the terms of settlement in Russia were agricultural and the regions they occupied were frontier lands. Economically the challenge of the virgin lands was a competitive and individualistic one. As the Mennonites set about to make their livelihood in the new environment, the fabric of the structure of agricultural life in Prussia naturally influenced their techniques of land utilization. It took time to learn that the patterns of land use in Prussia could not be fully applied to the Russian steppes. Not unlike the experiences of the settlers on the Canadian prairies, the Mennonites in Russia only gradually learned to be conservationists rather than exploiters. Several additional dimensions contributed to the flexibility of their economic structure. Already as early as the 1860's the absorption of the reserve lands in the original settlements through rapid population growth brought about the establishment of daughter colonies which usually "subjected the Mennonites involved to another frontier experience." Secondly, a protracted but steady emigration from Prussia (which continued up to 1865) assured the transfer of evolving agricultural techniques from Prussia to the widely separated Mennonite colonies in Russia. Finally, a well-developed system of communication between the various settlements quickly disseminated information pertaining to farm-management, improved implements and soil science.

The barren steppes of the Ukraine inherently determined the structure of Mennonite agriculture when the first settlers arrived. From the very outset marked distances and the pressures of a totally pioneer setting precluded grain farming on a massive scale. The raising of livestock emerged as the only reasonable alternative, with sheep breeding predominating. As early as 1819 the Chortitza settlement boasted a flock of some one thousand sheep. Wool production reached a peak between 1836 and 1841. The successful crossing of the

gray Ukrainian Kalmuk cattle with East Frisian cattle brought by the colonists resulted in the *Krasnaya Nemka* (German Red Cow), which even today survives as one of the more successful herds in the Ukraine.[5] High quality draft horses were also bred.

The presence of good draft animals was an important factor in setting the stage for agricultural revolution in the mid-nineteenth century which by 1860, saw an agricultural economy based on grain. The shift had its roots in a new system of crop rotation introduced in 1845 as well as a growing demand for Russian wheat in Western Europe. The Mennonites responded rapidly to the new market situation. Whereas in the early 1850's the average 175 acre Mennonite farm still only cultivated about 60 acres, the late 1880's saw this doubled. With its cattle, flax, tobacco and silk industry Mennonite agriculture remained a diversified enterprise during the first half of the nineteenth century. Surprisingly little discomfort accompanied the the shift from a general to the more specialized farming concentrating on grain. As European market demands commercialized wheat production, questions relating to per-capita or per-acre costs, cost-price ratios, and efficient modes of operation naturally arose. To effectively manage the expanded land area under cultivation, the mechanization of agriculture became an economic necessity.

Such pressure became directly responsible for the emergence of a Mennonite industry mainly producing agricultural machinery. Until the mid-nineteenth century, highly innovative farming was not characteristic of Mennonite agricultural operations in Russia. Lack of markets and fluctuating market demands, drought, periodic depletion of herds by disease and an absence of adequate capital all contributed to a conservative bent in farming operations. Though not inefficient or poverty-stricken, the Mennonite farmer could do little more than respond to the limitations set by his environment. Diversity of operation was the key to survival and such modern criteria of agricultural evaluation as productivity, knowledgeability and adaptability were simply not applicable. The advent of a high-demand grain market in Europe, extending over decades, provided the Russian Mennonite farmer with a production incentive in one direction. Now the presence of new techniques and equipment as well as management skills became highly relevant. Innovation became economically rewarding. With the expansion of the land under cultivation the single furrow plow gave way to the multiple share plow (the so-called *Bugger*), and during the height of the cultivation expansion a drill *Bugger* came into use which plowed and sowed at the same time.[6] After 1860 the Mennonites became innovators wherever industrialization related to increased productivity in agriculture. They adopted whatever mechanical or administrative means were essential to greater efficiency. Machines for tilling and seeding the land, cutting grass and cereal grains, and even for threshing and grinding saw their invention and constant improvement in Mennonite workshops.[7] Threshers and plows manufactured by Mennonite factories before W.W.I. qualitatively equalled many of their North American counterparts. By 1911 eight Mennonite factories manufacturing agricultural machinery produced 10 percent of the gross South Russia output in this category and about 6.2 percent of the output in all of Russia.[8] There was, however, no hesitancy in importing foreign equipment if greater efficiency was at stake and McCormick self-binders and German gasoline engines frequently found their way into Mennonite villages. By 1914, agricultural machinery of Mennonite manufacture could be found in all colonies from the steppes of the Ukraine to the steppes of Siberia. Imported automobiles were a recognized status symbol among the more wealthy inhabitants in some of the Mennonite villages in the Ukraine.

In the early twentieth century Mennonitism in Russia had, economically, achieved a dynamic equal to or even superior to the native Russian population or the German colonists amid which it found itself. The "Mennonite as the master farmer," whether always rooted in fact or not, became an accepted facet of the group's value system. Accompanying this mentality was even a sense of obligation and mission which envisaged that the Mennonite sense of economic progress was transferable to neighboring populations. The Russian Mennonite sense of ethnicity in no way curtailed material overachievement nor condemned affluence. Unlike communal or tradition enslaved in-groups, Mennonite economic freedom was rarely circumscribed by the religious or social values of the constituency. Already their multi-century pattern of forced mobility assured some flexibility in Mennonite agricultural economics and methods. Though some Russian Mennonite writers, novelists and historians drew parallels between Mennonite serenity and the tilling of the soil, the change or loss of a particular economic structure, agricultural or industrial, did not constitute a death blow to their concept of social organization or their views as to what the ultimate goals of life were. Repeatedly the Russian Mennonite farmer demonstrated his adaptability to a grazing or grain economy, and often moved from the centralized village to the individualistic economics of the totally private farm without great difficulty.

Changing economic practices became the sole measure of Mennonite cultural assimilation in pre-revolutionary Russia, their ethnicity would have been in serious jeopardy by about 1860. Until W.W.I., cultural assimilation involving economic patterns was not a critical factor in preserving the Russian Mennonite sense of peoplehood. Economic change rarely threatened the community organization or leadership pat-

terns. Agricultural and the accompanying industrial innovation never left the Russian Mennonites vulnerable to any loss of ethnic identity. If anything their role as farming innovators in the regions they occupied enhanced their feeling of belonging together.

The Social Structure

It might be argued that an affluent agricultural economy was directly responsible for the emergence of cultural awareness and social organization among the Mennonites, but the progression was not that mechanical. The Mennonite immigrants coming to Russia had joined together from different localities in Prussia for migration, and consequently the institutions and patters of the Prussian social system were not transferred en masse. Though ultimately constrained to forge a new identity in Russia, institutional controls to assure smooth interaction and to frustrate hostilities within their society were reasonably well developed and applicable when the Mennonites arrived in Russia. It could be argued that in their new environment the Mennonites clearly understood that a strong social system and a precise cultural identity remained the basic ingredients of survival amid an alien environment. As indicated earlier, the terms under which the Mennonite colonization in Russia occurred allowed a high degree of segregation from the host society, a situation inadvertantly reinforced by the sequence of historical events right up to 1917. The isolationism which would characterize Mennonite life in Russia was more the prosaic result of the provisions of Russian Colonial Law, than the aspiration of some utopian or millennialistic group. Russian Mennonite isolation from the national identity was not deeply rooted in the Anabaptist tradition of separation from the world nor energized by ideals of creating a perfect society. Aspects of utopianism may well have attended the later migrations of Canadian Mennonite segments to Mexico in the twentieth century, but they were hardly determinative in the social structure which the Russian Mennonites erected after they arrived in Russia. In Prussia as well as Russia the closed community became a functional qualification for Mennonite society. The Mennonite settlers in Russia had few illusions about the establishment of a perfect society nor did they particularly aspire towards renewal and innovation in existing institutions. The very pioneering situation which the immigrants faced upon their arrival in Russia dictated a rather practical, economically oriented society. The terms of settlement presupposed a highly centralized economic and political system, and institutional rigidity subsequently characterized much of the fabric and structure of colony life. Linguistically the Mennonites were cut off from their host society.

When the Mennonites settled in Chortitza and later in the Molotschna they established villages usually comprized of fifteen to thirty households. After 1801 the basic unit of justice, taxation and administration became the village assembly to which each sixty-five *dessiatine* farm could send one representative. This assembly elected the *Schulze* (village magistrate) as well as his assistants. Since the village had the title to all land within its borders, the entire agricultural and commercial operations of the colony became the responsibility of the *Schulze* (mayor) and the village assembly.[9] In addition his office was responsible for public safety and tried minor offenses affecting only the colony. In brief, his responsibility included the entire fabric of village life. For his actions he was accountable to the *Ober-Schulze* (district head). The smallest unit of local administration in the Russian political structure was the *volost*. From the very onset the villages in the Chortitza and Molotschna areas belonged to *volosts* or districts, each with a ruling body of district-wide authority. The voting assembly of this district body consisted of the village mayors who elected the the *Ober-Schulze*. The role of the *volost* administration many instances was the same as that of village officers, except insofar as it functioned on a district-wide basis. Though an even higher authority structure existed, the so-called *Fürsorge-Komitee für ausländische Kolonisten* (Bureau of Colonization or perhaps Supervisory Commission), its role and function are not related to this study.[10] The life experience of the average Mennonite colonist occurred on the village level and it was here that his particular identity and value system was forged. Ideally the Russian Mennonite village espoused an egalitarian sense of democracy in which all male inhabitants participated equally. In the village assembly every man could speak to an issue of common concern. In practice experience or age commanded special respect as did the holding of property, especially since a specific land quantum was a prerequisite for participation and voting.

In some ways the Russian Mennonite social structure developed some features sometimes seen as characteristic of "folk society,"[11] or of the "little community."[12] Allowing that qualities found in such models are useful for comparative analysis and allow nonconformity, what were some of the salient aspects of the Mennonite social system in Russia? As already indicated the terms of Mennonite settlement in Russia, the insecurities of the pioneer setting, and the radical differences between the colonists and the host society all contributed to Mennonite cohesiveness and homogeneity. The political organization of the settlements almost predetermined the style of leadership. Originally the entire land area for the Chortitza and Molotschna settlement was given to the settlement as a whole. More narrowly the village commune held the title of all land within its boundaries. Ultimately property rights were derived collectively from the group, which implied a form of central-

ized control in land utilization. Such a structure adapted readily the role of a strong personality since the individual colonist was extremely vulnerable to the economic pressures applied by the village commune. Religiously, Mennonite tradition favored the election of lay preachers and a church body functioning according to democratic precepts. Leadership was both personal and institutional, public opinion refusing to accept authoritarian personalities. As long as decision-making structures remained democratic in operation a strongly centralized leadership could not emerge. In Russia several factors conspired to alter the Mennonite egalitarian traditions. Government supervision of colonization already ensured a hierarchy, to which was added the patriarchal and paternal qualities that had come to be associated with czarism. Institutionalized religion, which largely defied leadership concepts in Prussia, was conspicuously absent when the first settlers arrived in Russia since they apparently brought no elder or preacher with them.[13] Furthermore, most of the Mennonite immigrants to Russia belonged to a lower economic strata than their brethren who remained in Prussia. The colonists left behind them ministers whose election to office usually symbolized their financial independence, but who nevertheless provided outstanding leadership. Even when later settlers, like those in the Molotschna area, brought ministers with them, life amid the unfamiliar circumstances of frontier life made leadership based on community consensus a precarious affair. The rather slow development of farming operations during the first decades of the Mennonite sojourn in the Ukraine was perhaps not unrelated to the lack of authoritarian leadership. Interestingly enough, substantial economic growth and development only came under the aggressive, czarist endorsed leadership of Johann Cornies, a Molotschna farmer and businessman. Special czarist interest in the economic welfare of the Mennonite colonies led to the establishment of the *Verein zur Erhöhung von Landwirtschaft und Gewerbe* (a type of Board of Trade and Agriculture), through which Cornies became a leading economic reformer. In spite of sharp opposition from conservative elements, his autocratic methods brought innovations in farming techniques, education and social welfare. However significant his contributions to the prosperity of the Russian Mennonites may have been, his era marked a substantial change in the kind of leadership acceptable to the Mennonite system.[14] From his death in 1848 until the turn of the century, when economic affluence freed a growing percentage of Mennonites from village structure, the Mennonite community witnessed an increased authoritarianism in both secular and religious leadership. Evidences point to a growing democracy with major decisions taken or contrived by the ruling council of either the village or district. Religious leadership, a trifle self-effacing during the first half of the century, became more determined, and was frequently closely related with secular power.

The tendency toward a more authoritarian leadership within the Russian Mennonite social structure was closely bound up with the political and religious stratification of the colonies. As descendants of the Anabaptist wing of the Reformation, the Mennonites were initially dissenters protesting the values and practices of institutionalized religion, Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed. Inevitably their promotion of radical religious beliefs forced the establishment of new social frames in which these values could be realized and maintained. Religious radicalism and nonconformity produced a functional social system, in which it was possible to observe and practice cherished values quite apart from "outside" society. Ultimately, however, because the new social frame was functional it, rather than the radical theology which spawned it, became determinative. Because it was functional the new social frame resisted change and restricted the application of a radical religious commitment to new circumstances. The first Mennonites leaving Prussia left partly in protest to an established social system which catered to wealth and to a militarism which threatened their Anabaptist perspective of peace. Once in Russia the new settlers experienced the difficulties of the frontier, the demise of traditional religious leadership, and the obsolescence of long venerated customs. They had settled in a religiously and culturally hostile environment and instinctively attempted to maintain their homogeneity on the terms dictated by the new environment. These terms were most benevolent and allowed the Mennonites a self-contained, self-regulating social system. They now faced the age old dilemma of applying a radical religious commitment to an all embracing social structure, unchallenged by outside political or religious forces.

FOOTNOTES

1. B. H. Unruh, *Die niederlaendisch-niederdeutschen Hintergruende der mennonitischen Ostwanderungen im 16., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* Karlsruhe, 1955), 192-201; H. Quiring, "Die Auswanderung der Mennoniten aus Preussen", 1788-1870 "Auslandsdeutsche Volksforschung, II (1938); H. Penner, "West Prussian Mennniotes through Four Centuries," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXIII (1949), 242-243; D. G. Rempel, "The Mennonite Migration to New Russia (1787-1870), *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* IX, No. 2 (April, 1935), 71-84; No. 3 (July, 1935), 109-128;

2. F. Isaac, *Die Molotschnaer Mennoniten* (Halbstadt, Taurien, 1908), pp. 5-7. A dessiatine equals 2.7 acres.

3. A good example involves the migration of the Guadenfeld community in 1835, whose arrival in the Molotschna brought a strong pietistic influence to the existing religious structure.

4. E. K. Francis rightly takes issue with attempts to construct a German or Dutch derivation of the Mennonites by arguing the Mennonites in Russia "developed into a separate people." "The Mennonite Commonwealth in Russia 1789-1914. A Sociological Interpretation," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review,* XXV (1951), p. 174; C. Krahn.

5. See C. Krahn, "Agriculture Among the Mennonites of Russia," *Mennonite Life,* X, No. 1 (January, 1955), pp. 14-20, 35.

6. The machine was still used in the 1930's by Mennonite farmers who emigrated to Canada in the 1920's, but took on the name of *Drillpflug.*

7. For an interesting case study of the growth of Mennonite Industry see J. J. Niebuhr, "Jakob G. Niebuhr Fabriken," *Mennonite Life,* X, No. 1 (January, 1955), pp. 15-30.

8. A. Ehrt in his *Das Mennonitentum in Russland* (Berlin, 1932), p. 92 produces the following chart.

9. D. G. Rempel, The Mennonite Colonies in New Russia. A Study of their Settlement and Economic Development from 1789 to 1914," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1933), pp. 113-117. According to Rempel the range of powers enjoyed by the assembly included "levying of taxes, disposing of surplus lands, determining crop rotation, selecting preachers and teachers, appointing herders, fire overseers, seeing to fire prevention and insurance regulations, . . . caring for the aged, sick and orphans, formulating health regulations, constructing roads, bridges, buying of stallions and bulls for village herds, and dismissing colonists on moral charges," *Ibid.*, p. 17.

10. The *Fuersorge-Committee* was an agency of the czarist government in St. Petersburg, subordinated to the Department of the Interior, for the settlement of German colonists. Its head office was located in Odessa.

11. Robert Redfield's very useful article "The Folk Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, (January, 1947), pp. 293-308, suggests certain categorical dimensions helpful in studying Russian Mennonite village life. These include the concept of the isolated homogeneous society where convention and custom is critical to the life style; the fact that religion, though not always discernible, is all-persuasive; communication is oral and intimate, the opinion of society achieving a sacred quality which corrects or failing that, expels excessive deviation; the sense of belonging; a strong confidence as to the goals of life.

12. Robert Redfield, *The Little Community* (Chicago, 1950).

13. P. M. Friesen, *Die Alt-Evangelische Mennonitische Bruderschaft in Russland 1789-1910* (Halbstadt, Ukraine, 1911), p. 73.

14. On Johann Cornies see W. Quiring, "Johann Cornies. A Great Pioneer," *Mennonite Life*, III, No. 3 (July, 1948), pp. 30-34, 38; D. H. Epp, *Johann Cornies, Zuege aus seinem Leben und Wirken* (Berdyansk, 1909).

The Mennonite Selbstschutz in the Ukraine An Eyewitness Account

By J. P. Epp

Introduction and translation by J. B. Toews

THE *Selbstschutz* (LITERALLY self-protection) still remains one of the most controversial episodes in the lengthy history of the Mennonites in Russia. As the term implies, the incident related to the formation of military units for self-defense in several of the Mennonite and other German colonies of the Ukraine. The most important of these emerged in the Molotschna settlement and in relation to the other independently functioning groups, engaged in the most consequential actions. As both an unofficial (it was secretly organized at first) and official agency it endured for less than a year. The majority of its adherents lived in either the Halbstadt or Gnadenfeld *volosts,* though other German colonists and deserters from the withdrawing German occupation troops (late fall, 1918) also joined. Seven of the twenty companies of infantry, for example, came from the German Prischib *volost.* In all about seventy villages containing a total population of over 50,000 were involved. The entire infantry numbered about 2700, the cavalry 300, divided into five detachments. The top levels of military leadership were in the hands of German Army officers. There was, however, considerable Mennonite participation on the detachment and company level. On the whole the *Selbstschutz* was poorly armed, especially from the standpoint of an operational military unit. The account which follows describes a rather large arms shipment from the White Army arsenal in Sevastopol, but essentially the materials involved were small arms and a few machine guns. Most of the activities of the *Selbstschutz* were directed against the partisan army of the anarchist Nestor Ivanovitsh Makhno who at the height of his power held large areas of the Ukraine under his control. His operations were especially directed against the Germans as a foreign element in Russia, but also against the wealthy classes generally, Russian landowners included. His depredations in the Mennonite villages included murder, robbery and rape. In retrospect the bandit misuse of Mennonite womanhood made the colonist extremely vulnerable to *Selbstschutz* participation since it struck at his most intimate possession.

From the standpoint of the Russian Civil War the role of the *Selbstschutz* was of little importance. For the Mennonite constituency which generated it, the exploit marked an unprecedented mass participation in military violence. As a result the *Selbstschutz* instigated a widespread debate aimed at explaining its origins and necessity. Accounts subsequently supplied by participants, though containing all the information expected of eyewitnesses, were sharply circumscribed by the highly personal dimensions of the author's experience. Discussion in the narratives was all too fre-

quently theological rather than historical, the writers being concerned about the applicability of nonresistance to the prevailing circumstances. Rather than describing the simple course of events they raised questions relating to the biblical authority for nonresistance and its function in crisis situations and civil disorder. In other instances recollections were too personal or ethnocentric. Historiographically the lack of more general or official sources produced highly subjective interpretations which were often polemical in character and saw limited documentation of the events themselves.

The following account is probably one of the more objective to survive. The author was an active participant in the Molotschna *Selbstschutz* and carefully cites the sequence of events characterizing its brief but turbulent history. The writer has a bit of difficulty in setting the scene for his narrative. Once launched, however, he presents at least two critical facets connected with the *Selbstschutz*. The one relates to its involvement with the White Army, which had serious implications for the Mennonites once Soviet control was reestablished in the Ukraine. The second describes the effort to define the character and nature of the *Selbstschutz* via an official document, approved by White Army officers. Once the Red Army regained control of the Ukraine, the document, as a proof of Mennonite intentions, probably prevented a reign of terror in the Molotschna Mennonite settlement.

A rather free translation style has been followed. Here and there lines which appeared repetitive have been left out. This is indicated by a sequence of three dots. Footnotes provide a further explanation of the text where necessary.

The Emergence of the Selbstschutz

1. The contributing factors: a) The long war. b) The land liquidation. c) The Mennonites are German and consequently national enemies. d) The bitter experience under the anarchists during the end of 1917 and the beginning of 1918.

2. The German occupation of the Ukraine in the spring of 1918.[1] a) The sudden change to German nationalism, b) the German propaganda, c) the tactless familiarity with the occupation army through the *Ludendorffeste* and the moral surrender of our youth to the military by our fathers.

3. The hopes with which one had greeted the Russian Revolution were dashed.[2] Through the revolution and banditry one had experienced a loss of human life.

What brought on the *Selbstschutz*? If today, after all of this lies in the past, one reminisces and judges historically, and sees the trials, the losses of life and property, one can only say it happened, it lay in the providence of our history. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5).

The German military sensed impending defeat after the USA declared war upon Germany. In order to cover its retreat from Poland and the Ukraine and to secure as much food and supplies as possible the Germans needed secure oases where they had room for encampment and protection. This because of the unfriendliness of the Russian population and the harassment of men and materials by roaming bands with whom the troops had to seriously contend at times. Was it surprising that they sought protection among the German colonists in Russia? They also found a receptive field for such suggestive propaganda as: "In order not to perish one must protect oneself."

What age group at first participated in the *Selbstschutz*? Those between eighteen and twenty, who had not been drafted and several older individuals who were more or less motivated by the love of adventure. On the village green there were drills in German fashion: the various weapons which could be found were shouldered. German officers, non-commissioned officers, sergeants and other adventurers drilled our lads to their heart's content, whereby the German anthem was sung with great enthusiasm. . . . These left the German army because they had somewhere found a sweetheart by some large-scale farmers or landowners or because they feared a court-martial upon their return to Germany. So the *Selbstschutz* was suddenly an accomplished fact, approved by some, but viewed by others (and these were certainly the majority) with concern, fear, yes with deep opposition.[3] It was moreover a time of war, revolution and worst of all a time of disintegration and political chaos. Whoever has a weapon in hand during such a time is dangerous and exploits his every advantage, even if he is a Mennonite. Many who sensed the danger and spoke their warnings gradually became silent under the threat of force; and so the classicist is right when he says *inter armos, silent leges* (in war laws are silent). Now the military games became serious. Our brothers in the Silberfeld *volost* near Gulai-Polye were being tortured, murdered, the women raped, their houses and farmyards robbed and reduced to ashes.[4] Whoever could, fled to the protected Molotschna villages before the bands of Makhno. Through the reports of these unfortunate people the idea of protecting oneself gained ground and more and more of the Mennonites took to weapons or to the idea of self-protection.

The great bandit leader Makhno came steadily southwards from the north towards the Molotschna colonies, and one day in October 1918, he appeared in the large Russian village of Tschernigovka, scarcely ten miles from our north-easterly villages. When the students at the College of Commerce in Halbstadt learned of this (others were also involved) they took to arms, commandeered a train of the Tokmak railway and headed for Verkhny (Upper) Tokmak. Tschernigovka was captured, the bandit leader barely escaping,

leaving dead and wounded behind.[5] There were also several dead on the side of the *Selbstschutz* (two). Blood had flowed and the die had been cast. Now it was either-or and the *Selbstschutz* was organized on a large scale.

The news of Tschernigovka spread from village to village. Village assemblies were called together and pressured towards a decision. The fear of revenge lay like a universal oppression upon young and old. The hotheads and activists began organizing on a large scale. The prophetic voices of our spiritual leaders became weaker and weaker and several (ministers) even blew the trumpet for battle. . . . It was all to be voluntary but unfortunately pressure was applied in some instances.

A *Selbstschutz* committee was elected to organize the villages; establish telephones and transport; build fortifications and trenches (at Hamberg and Klippenfeld); organize infantry, cavalry, mounted infantry and unified service branches; set up machine guns and one light field battery; supply materials to care for the families of impoverished *Selbstschutz* participants; establish a medical corp and a staff for discipline and court-martial. In this period there was much ado about nothing. Peace still prevailed. No one attacked us, we organized. . . . During this time of intemperance and hot-bloodedness something occurred which became a misfortune for us and could have meant the destruction of the Molotschna colonies. It was the following:

The Don Cossacks and White officers had traveled on war and other ships from Novorossiysk on the eastern shore of the Black Sea to Sevastopol and Yalta. They occupied the Crimea and established their headquarters in Simferopol. . . . Towards the end of 1918 a segment of this army (under General Tillo) advanced as far as Dshankoy and Melitopol. Russian officers penetrated into our colonies without our noticing it. The regimental colonel Malakov (a Bulgarian Russian from our neighboring villages) paraded as chief commandant over Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld. . . . A reorganization was initiated by which the villages were divided into various groups (each group under the supervision of a Russian officer). . . . These Russian officers attempted to integrate the *Selbstschutz* with the Volunteer Army (White Army) and almost succeeded.

One night at their instigation the southern villages of Elisabettal, Steinbach, Alexandertal, Marianovka and Shavkoy (Russian villages both south of Alexandertal), were overrun and searched. One of our *Selbstschutz* wounded a fleeing bandit in the leg. Five bandits were captured and shot by Russian officers in the Gnadenfeld cemetery. (Detachments from Gnadenfeld, Mariental, Pordenau and Schardau participated in this debuncle). Similarly Landkrone, Gnadental, Hierschau and other village detachments attacked Tschernigovka, and requisitioned a good deal of liquor and other goods. There were also eight prisoners which, however, were released by me (J. Epp) from the Gnadenfeld prison.[6]. . .

Why did we not resist the infiltration of the White officers? The German Army had left us. The "watch on the Rhein" (*Wacht am Rhein*) was no longer viable. The limited munitions which they had given us were not sufficient. Now the Russians came (White Army) and the politics of war are take and give. As already mentioned, General Tillo was positioned near or in Melitopol. The railway from Melitopol - Feodorovka - Halbstadt and Waldheim was in our hands. Consequently the Halbstadt *Selbstschutz* went to the Crimea and brought back a large quantity of arms. At a *volost* assembly in Gnadenfeld . . . we were authorized to obtain arms and munitions from the Crimea. So we traveled . . . to Simferopol where we were courteously received by the war leaders in the chief command (White Army). On our right arm we carried the black-white insignia of the *Selbstschutz*. From the Sevastopol arsenal we received whatever we desired of the German war materials which the Germans had left behind during the disarmament. We took five train carloads of arms,[7] munitions, four machine guns, field telephones, hand grenades, steel helmets, spades, picks, etc. In all we had 1,125 hand weapons. While we were in the Crimea the White forces had advanced to Feodorovka. On this occasion our *Selbstschutz* penetrated as far as *Gross* Tokmak and rescued the Blumenfeld (Wiesenfeld) colonists (near Orekhov).[8]

In the interim the Russian officers had not been idle. They had completed their organization insofar as they installed their higher and lower commanders, incorporating them into the active *Selbstschutz* committee and assigning them their functions. Thus captain Plavsky (name assumed by one of the Malakov brothers) was the Chief Commander of the Gnadenfeld *volost* and the *Selbstschutz;* A. F. Klassen, (Sparrau) adjutant for strategy; Kornelius Wiens (teacher in Margenau) adjutant for provisions; G. Nickel adjutant for front activities; H. Ewert was in charge of those who remained nonresistant, who were put to work fortifying Hamberg, Klippenfeld and Nelgovka. Since I was not present at the time and no one else wanted the job, I became adjutant for the judicial section (including discipline). With my authority I immediately released the prisoners taken at Tschernigovka. . . . The masses (Mennonites as a whole) knew nothing of all these procedures.

Who were the organizers of the *Selbstschutz* and who elected them and how did they emerge? In his book *In Search of Utopia* the historian E. K. Francis wants to seek out the basis of Mennonitism, but fails to comprehend the soul of Mennonitism in its dealings and conduct. Throughout the centuries Mennonitism de-

veloped an organizational talent which at times is downright secretive, more derived from instinct than the task at hand—like one finds in ants, bees and termites. For example one comes to a Mennonite conference with hundreds of delegates. One consults, proposes, talks, resolves, in spite of the fact that everything has been regulated and decided long before by a few brethren.

Who actually elected the *Selbstschutz* committee? What did it call itself? No one elected it. The Mennonite instinct, group consciousness and feeling of belonging together brought it into existence. This is not the voice of the majority or the voice of the people—"it came to pass." What did they call themselves? One would think a militaristic or even patriotic name. Wrong! A name was selected which encapsuled the strongest expression of Mennonite self-esteem, *Wirtschaftskomitee* (Economic Management Committee). Who would see anything non-Mennonite or suspicious behind such a name? No one. This *Wirtschaftskomitee* was liaisoned with *Mennocentrum*[9] and the church administration, even allied with General Conference and Mennonite Brethren churches. I do not wish to blame or accuse—there is only one judge and only one ruler in the history of peoples. . . .

I come back to my narrative. During the period of organization and confusion there were nevertheless men, I should say strong leaders, who directed as best they could. That was the *Wirtschaftskomitee*. Rather suddenly the *Oberschulze* (district chairman) called some district men together for consultation. A *Selbstschutz* committee was elected. Such a committee had earlier been elected by the active *Selbstschutz* and had (energetically) worked and organized. Now another election. The (old) *Selbstschutz* committee[10] is not even mentioned and Jacob Epp (author of the narrative) Elisabettal, and Cornelius Wiens, Margenau, are chosen. Both men join the *Wirtschaftskomitee* in the Gnadenfeld *volost* and are recognized by it.

One day I received an invitation, together with other men, to attend a meeting in Halbstadt the next day. The same day I went from Gnadenfeld to Waldheim, where I stayed overnight at Peter Toews'. Early in the morning I continued on to Halbstadt where both *Wirtschaftskomitees* (Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld *volosts*) assembled. The Halbstadt representatives were: Neufeld (Schönsee), Plett (Tiergerweide), Friesen (Blumstein), and Schroeder (Halbstadt). The Gnadenfeld representatives were: A. Rempel (Gnadenfeld), P.Toews (Waldheim), C. Warkentin (Waldheim), N. Esau (Friedensruh), Richert (Gnadenfeld), and my humble self. The topic of discussion related to the disengagement and separation of the *Selbstschutz* from the Russian officers and military administration. I, who was among the youngest, was elected to act as spokesman (for the committees). Colonel Malakov was invited to the deliberations. We told him what we had discussed and decided. A sharp exchange ensued, but in the end the good man believed us. I and H. Schroeder were asked to record the minutes, in which we precisely and clearly spelled out our position; that is that we were not a regular military unit and did not wish to engage in any political actions; that we only wished to protect ourselves from the bandits until a government in Russia took matters into its own hands. We two, Schroeder and I, then went to the *volost* secretary Fast and dictated approximately the following resolution:

We Mennonites of the Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld *volosts* united armed and organized as a *Selbstschutz* during times of stress when we were molested, subjected to burnings, robbed, raped and murdered by the various roaming bands. This *Selbstschutz* is no military organization capable of aggression or war, but designed to protect our lives and possessions against robber bands. We Mennonites are no revolutionary party and we do not wish to exercise military power. If a permanent government emerged in Russia, especially in the Ukraine, we solemnly declare that, irregardless of its political persuasion, we will lay down all our arms and submit to this government.

This declaration was signed by all members (of the two committees) and clearly communicated to the Russian officers. When the so-called 42nd Division of the Red Army under Commissar Molarenko advanced towards *Gross* Tokmak in March, 1919,[11] our brethren, led by B. H. Unruh, journeyed from Halbstadt to *Gross* Tokmak and presented the declaration to Malarenko and negotiated with him. The Mennonites were promised immunity and the *Selbstschutz* ordered disbanded and disarmed within three days. Rider carried the message from village to village. Those still at the front came home and laid down their weapons. In the Gnadenfeld *volost* the disarmament proceeded orderly. Each village loaded its weapons on wagons and brought them to the *volost* center. Only few *Selbstschutz* participants (and none in groups) fled from the Gnadenfeld *volost*.

At the time of its collapse a large segment of the Halbstadt *Selbstschutz* found itself near Blumental, Andreasburg and other villages in the Prischib *volost*. It consisted of the cavalry and the so-called "mounted infantry". Its commanders (Prussian) Homeyer and Sonntag[12] dissolved the front, granted the *Selbstschutz* participants their freedom, urging: "each man save himself as best he can." A large segment of this group (since they had horses) went into the Crimea where they organized a German *Jägerbatallion* and occupied the barracks of the Crimean regiment in Simferopol. When the Red Army invaded the Crimea this battalion joined it. When Denikin later invaded the Crimea and dispersed the Red Army, the German battalion joined the Whites. This battalion was never *Selbstschutz* and

had nothing to do with it. Another segment of the Halbstadt *Selbstschutz* fled in the direction of Berdyansk, disarmed itself in Mariental and several fled into the Crimea; others returned home.

In the Gnadenfeld *volost* the collapse (of the *Selbstschutz*) had the following sequence: The area cornered by Tschernigovka, Pologi, Sinyelnikovo and Novo-Karlovka came under great pressure from the Red Army. Consequently the fleeing White Army soldiers and *Selbstschutz* participants gravitated towards the northeastern villages, especially Gnadenfeld and from there to Berdyansk. One morning Gnadenfeld was filled with fleeing White soldiers. Panic and confusion were rife. No one knew who and where the enemy was. The *volost* building (center) was full of people. Since the *Selbstschutz* had its telephone center here, which connected Hamberg, Klippenfeld, Waldheim and Rückenau, and since several members of the committee were present, people came here for information. Presently amid the throngs in the large hall of the *volost* (building) my father, Peter Epp (elder of the Pordenau Church) appeared. With flashing eyes he looked around then shouted: "Brethren, we have sinned, have neglected the help of God, and have relied on the arm of the flesh as our source of strength. There is only one way for us: repentance and confession of sin and back to our God." After this Father shouted into the assembly and said: "We want to pray." He knelt down where he stood and all Mennonites and Russians, joined him where they were. After a prayer of confession and repentance Father stood up, looked at me for a long time and said, "Boy, the war is over, let's go!". . .

FOOTNOTES

1. The original account is found in the archives of the late B. B. Janz, presently soused at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (File I,d).

1a. The Germans occupied the Ukraine by the terms of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (March 3, 1918) signed between Germany and the new Bolshevik government in Russia.

2. The author is referring to the February Revolution of 1917 which brought the so-called Provisional Government to power.

3. The Mennonites in Russia were almost completely self-governing as far as local government was concerned. In utilizing this privilege they had established a delicately interlaced system of religious and civil institutions. The successive crises caused by revolution and civil war struck at the cohesiveness of the structure by diminishing the role of religion and accentuating the necessity of political action.

4. Epp is referring to the early activities of Nestor Makhno. Gulai-Polye marked both Makhno's birthplace and operations center.

5. The Tschernigovka episode is vividly described in Heinrich H. Schroeder, *Russlanddeutsche Friesen* (Doellstaedt, by author, 1936), pp. 52-54. Schroeder, influenced by the National Socialism of the 1930's, pictured the *Selbstschutz* as an effort to defend German honor, which it certainly was not.

6. The writer of the account, J. P. Epp, had been placed in charge of discipline and court-martial, and he was functioning in this capacity when he released the prisoners.

7. A "train carload" cannot be conceived of in North American terms, since the Russian railway car of the time had a considerably smaller carrying capacity.

8. The author is referring to the village Blumenfeld in the Schoenfeld *volost*. Situated to the north of the Molotschna-settlement, the German villages in the Schoenfeld *volost* were hard-pressed by the Makhno bandits. During the night of January 19-20, 1919, the *Selbstschutz*, fearing the possible liquidation of the village moved into the area, and under its protection allowed the villagers to escape to the Molotschna. G. Toews *Schoenfeld. Werde-und Opfergang einer deutschen Siedlung in der Ukraine* (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1939), p. 99.

9. On August 14-18, 1917, a broadly representative All-Mennonite Congress met in Ohrloff (Molotschna) to consider the implications of the February Revolution for the Mennonites in Russia. An executive council known as Mennocentrum was elected to act on behalf of the Congress between sessions. Because of political circumstances it never met again. A few years later the kind of interests it represented were absorbed by two agencies for economic reconstruction: the *Verband der Buerger Hollaendischer Herkunft* in the Ukraine and the *Allrussischer Mennonitischer Landwirtschaftlicher Verein* in the rest of Russia.

10. Epp is possibly referring to the *Selbstschutz* organization formed as early as May, 1918, which essentially sought to co-ordinate the *Selbstschutz* with the activities of the German occupation forces.

11. Epp's referring to Malarenko is not readily identifiable. When Gnadenfeld was overrun by the Red Army several courageous villagers pled for General Dobenko to spare the lives of the villagers in the Molotschna, which he finally agreed to do. B. H. Unruh's journey to *Gross* Tokmak may well have involved a civil authority, hence the mention of Commissar Malarenko. Epp's assumption that Malarenko led the 42nd Division is mistaken. It was Dobenko. In the original manuscript he speaks of the 33rd Division, which was corrected in the translation.

12. Epp's reference to commanders Sonntag and Homeyer is not quite accurate. Heinz von Homeyer was a German officer, who, convinced that his destiny lay in South Russia, went to the Crimea in February 1919. Here his help was solicited by a delegation of men from *Mennocentrum* in Halbstadt. Once back in Halbstadt, *Mennocentrum* negotiated with the White command to have Homeyer appointed as chief commander of the *Selbstschutz*, which occurred some two days before its collapse in March, 1919. Homeyer subsequently formed a brigade of some 4,000 German colonists in the Crimea designed to preserve public safety. It dissolved and disarmed once the Red Army established control over the area. Sergeant major Sonntag of the 182nd Saxon Infantry Regiment (Occupation Troops) was with the *Selbstschutz* from the very beginning and had led the I and II companies of the Halbstadt *Stosstrupp* (Shock Troops). Homeyer's recollections are well portrayed in his historical novel, *Die brennende Halbinsel*.

SAY NO! *Continued from page 126*

To bless murder
And sanctify war
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Pilot at the airport.

TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To drop fire bombs
Over cities
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Judge in your robe.
TOMORROW
When you are ordered
To preside over a court-martial,
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO!

YOU!
Man on the farm and
Man in the city.

TOMORROW
When you are brought
Your induction papers
There is only one thing to do:
SAY NO! SAY NO!

YOU
Mother of Normandy and
Mother of the Ukraine
YOU
Mother in Frisco
And London
YOU
Mother in Nepal
And Hamburg
And Cairo
And Oslo
Mothers of the world
TOMORROW
When you are ordered to bear children,
Nurses for military hospitals and
New soldiers for new slaughter,
Mothers of the world,
Then there is only one thing to do:
SAY NO, MOTHERS! SAY NO!

BECAUSE
If you do not say no,
If you do not say no,
MOTHERS
THEN
In the noisy, steamy harbor towns
The great ships will groan and fall silent
And like titanic water-soaked cadavers,
Pitch slowly against the harbor wall;
THEN
The algae-covered, seaweed-covered,
Barnacle-covered hulls,
Once so shiny,
Will become foul as dead fish,
Smelling, rotten, sickly,
DEAD;

THEN
The streetcars
Shall be glassy-eyed cages,
Dented and paint-flaked,
Lying beside steel skeletons of wire and tracks
Behind crumbling storage sheds
In lost crater-torn streets;
THEN
The mud-grey, thick soupy leaden
Silences
Will approach like a steamroller
And take over the schools,
Universities, theaters,
Sports arenas, playgrounds;
THEN
In the medical schools
The discoveries of great physicians
Shall mold like mushrooms;
THEN
In the kitchens, larders, cellars,
In the refrigerated rooms and graneries
The last stacks of flour,
The last jars of strawberries,
Pumpkins and cherry juice
Will spoil;
THEN
The bread on the smashed plates
Shall turn green
And seep onto the floor
And melted butter shall stink
Like green soap;
THEN
The wheat in the fields
Like a slain army
Shall fall over
Leaning against rusted plows
And the smoking brick chimneys,
The furnaces
And the industrial chimneys,

Continued inside back cover

Books in Review

Horst Gerlach. *Nightmare in Red*. Carol Stream, Ill.: Creation House, Inc., 1970, 239 pp., $4.95.

Horst Gerlach, a sixteen-year-old German youth reared on a farm near Elbing in the Danzig area of East Prussia, was deported with many other civilians to forced labor in the Soviet Union in the wake of the Soviet conquest of these areas in late 1944 and 1945. To have survived this ordeal of almost two years might well require all of the physical and spiritual resources available to any youth. Gerlach writes of these experiences after completion of his education and from the perspective of maturity.

Having here again read of all the harsh brutality of Russian conquest and concentration camp life, one ponders the infinite capacity of men for enduring suffering themselves and for inflicting it on others, all in the name of ideology. Vietnam will not stay out of one's thoughts. The prisoner's suffering and the rigors of camp life are portrayed factually, comparatively without emotion, but perhaps with less perception than some other literature dealing with concentration camp experiences.

Gerlach brought to his ordeal a thoroughly nationalistic German culture, lightly covered over with a veneer of National Socialist doctrine. His religious culture was

derived from a home presided over by a Lutheran father and a Mennonite mother. In this book the articulation of his spiritual pilgrimage while in camp is not traced clearly. Perhaps the development could not have been given coherence, and therefore its somewhat fragmented treatment in the book is a very realistic portrayal of Gerlach's actual state of mind while in camp. The spiritual resources he brought to this experience were almost certainly conventional. Their depth and tenacity doubtless contributed to his survival. But the full-blown affirmation of his faith, to be manifested in a deep religious experience of Christ as a personal force in his life, was to await a happier day in the United States.

That the profound theological issues surrounding man's relationship to God and his fellowmen rooted in man-made suffering and violence are largely beyond the scope of this story is not to be wondered at. Yet the questions remain. This narrative is but one tiny leaflet of a vast collective experience touching millions of the violent, ethnocentric tribes of the twentieth century, many members of which professed some sort of allegiance to the Prince of Peace.

North Newton, Kansas — *J. Lloyd Spaulding*

Paul Erb, ed., *From the Mennonite Pulpit*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1965, 200 pp., $3.75.

Paul Erb selected the twenty-six sermons included in this volume on the basis of their wide variety of subjects, homiletical style, quality of content, current interest and concern, and how well they accurately portrayed Mennonite life and thought. A sampling of chapter headings and sermon authors includes the following: Daniel Hertzler and Ralph E. Buckwalter under "Theology"; Allen H. Erb and Millard Lind under "Salvation"; Gerald Studer and David Augsburger under "Discipleship;" Ross T. Bender and J. D. Graber under "Christian Experience"; John E. Lapp under "Mission"; Carl Beck and Myron Augsburger under "Christian Living"; and John R. Mumaw under "Eschatology."

In the foreword Erb observes that the sermons in general reflect an emphasis on the themes of mission outreach and an active and involved discipleship, as opposed to a more traditional Mennonite stress on preservation and separation from the world.

By its very definition a sermon is primarily an oral presentation. It is "truth through personality," and to achieve its maximum effectiveness and be judged according to its purpose, a sermon should be considered as an oral expression in a setting where its reception is a crucial factor. However, a sermon before and after delivery also constitutes a literary form and as such can be appreciated for its content and form.

While Mennonites have not produced a wealth of books of sermons, the editor of this volume is mistaken when he says in his foreword that it is ". . . a first attempt at the publication of a collection of sermons by Mennonite preachers." Johannes Molenaar, minister of the Mennonite Church at Monsheim near Worms, Germany, edited a volume of sermons in 1844, entitled *Evangelische Stimmen, Predigtsammlung auf alle Sonn—und Festtage*. Included were sermons by J. Mannhardt, Isaak Molenaar, J. Ellenberger, Herman Reeder, Johann Gottfried Lübkes, and J. de Liefde. In 1906, an anthology of sermons appeared with the title *Predigten vorgetragen in den Mennoniten-Gemeinden Westpreussens*. This was published in response to a resolution by the Mennonite Conference in 1900, requesting the elders to compile a book of sermons for the Christian year. This compilation was to serve church members for home use on occasions when they would not be able to attend church services. The authors of the sermons are not given.

In America, S. F. Springer of Berne, Indiana, compiled a book of sermons called *Festklänge* with the subtitle, "Predigten von Mennonitenpredigern aus den Vereinigten Staaten, Russland, Deutschland, Pfalz, Baiern und der Schweiz." The sermons were grouped in three parts: The Church Festivals, Church Observances, and Miscellaneous. American ministers included in this collection were C. H. Wedel, L. Suderman, C. J. van der Smissen, D. Goerz, R. Petter, A. B. Shelly, A. A. Sommer, J. B. Baer, Christian Schowalter, M. S. Moyer, and Daniel Hege.

There have been a number of books of sermons by individual ministers, most notable among them being the volume by Jakob Denner (first German edition, 1730). More recent sermon books were published by Jacob H. Janzen (*Da ist euer Gott*, 1945), E. G. Kaufman (*Living Creatively*, 1966), and Russell L. Mast (*Lost and Found*, 1963).

The sermon books mentioned all reflect the convictions of individual ministers, and in a larger way they also reflect the spirit and the Christian life of their time. Collections of sermons usually suffer from a type of provincialism, geographic or denominational. Ministers should be keenly aware of the Christian orientation of the experience of living. They should be equally aware of the world—the context in which Christians must practice their faith. Both these perspectives should be reflected in their sermons in a style that is at once urgent, lucid, and direct—all qualities of good oral communication.

North Newton, Kansas — *John F. Schmidt*

Conrad Cherry, Ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971, 381 pp., $8.95 cloth, $4.95 paper.

Conrad Cherry, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University, has edited a collection of 30 articles, sermons, letters, and patriotic addresses which explain in religious terms the meaning of American national experience. The selections bring together clerics (Jonathan Edwards, Lyman Beecher, Washington Gladden, Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Luther King, Jr.) and politicians (Thomas Jefferson, Albert Beveridge, Abraham Lincoln, John Foster Dulles, and J. William Fulbright) as they fulfill their common function in American civil religion.

Cherry's introduction reviews the recent theological and sociological literature on American national religious faith. Although there are no selections examining America's covenant with God in the light of the Vietnam War tragedy, the book provides an excellent resource on America's historical nationalistic religious imagination.

North Newton, Kansas — *James C. Juhnke*

Continued from page 143

Once part of vibrating factories
Shall be covered with eternal glass,
Broken into little pieces,
Broken into little pieces,
Broken into little pieces;

THEN
The last human being
With his shredded intestines,
His polluted lungs
Will be speechless and solitary
Under the poisonous sun,
And he will walk around
Without direction
Alone
In the desolate cities;

THEN
Starved, demented, blasphemous,
The last man will complain
With the terrible question:

WHY? WHY?
Which will fade away
In the unanswering prairie;

THEN
This last animal cry
Of the last animal man
Will blow
Through the blasted ruins,
Seep into the rubble
Of the churches,
Clash against the concrete bunkers,
Fall into blood puddles,
Unheard, unanswered.

ALL THIS
Will surely come about

TOMORROW,
Maybe tomorrow,
Perhaps even today,

UNLESS
UNLESS
UNLESS
YOU
SAY NO!

MENNONITE LIFE
North Newton, Kansas

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