MENNONITE LIFE

DECEMBER 1990

In this Issue

Mennonite Life's celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Civilian Public Service program of World War II began with the June issue of 1990. This issue continues that theme, giving attention both to the World War I precedents for CPS and to the experiences of the three major "historic peace churches," the Mennonites, Brethren, and Friends.

This issue begins with a continuation of selections from the private journal of Paul Comly French, edited by Robert Kreider. French served as Executive Secretary of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors from 1940 to 1946. These excerpts provide brief glimpses into the qualities which some historic peace church leaders admired and deplored in each other as they faced the challenges of working with the Selective Service System in wartime.

This issue also features four articles originally presented in April 1990 at a session of the 148th meeting of the American Society of Church History, held at Colorado State University, Fort Collins. Arthur J. Worrall, professor of history at Colorado State University and a scholar of Quaker history, organized and chaired the session. The session title was "Peace Churches in 20th Century America."

The articles by James Juhnke of Bethel College and by Paul Toews of Fresno Pacific College grew out of research for the Mennonite Experience in America project. That project is producing a series of four volumes which survey Mennonite history in the United States. Volume three, by Juhnke, was published a year ago with the title *Vision, Doctrine, War, Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Herald Press). Volume four, by Toews, will include CPS and the World War II experience. The article in this issue gives an advance indication of Toews' interpretive viewpoint.

Robert C. Clouse, professor of history at Indiana University, shows the connection in the Church of the Brethren between the World War I experience and a post-war resolve by key church leaders to be better prepared for future military conflicts. Clouse has been active in the Conference on Faith and History and is the author of *The Meaning of the Millennium*, among other volumes.

Hugh S. Barbour's paper, originally a commentary on three other papers, finds a number of insightful comparisons and contrasts among the Brethren, Quakers, and Mennonites in their peace witness. Barbour is a distinguished professor of history at Earlham College and the author of *The Quakers in Puritan New England.*

James C. Juhnke

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Camp entrance to CPS #5, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Back Cover

Winter scene from CPS #55, Belton, Montana.

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A Journalist's Private Reflections on the Mennonites

edited by Robert S. Kreider

As the year 1942 drew to a close, the 39-year-old Executive Secretary of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) recorded in his diary his observation of a train with four ambulance cars bringing wounded to Walter Reed Hospital from the North Africa war. With only a few Allied victories in a triumphal year for the Axis, French saw a long war ahead. He confessed his weariness with the NSBRO's unequal encounters with Selective Service officials, the strains of working with the church agencies and the restiveness of COs in the CPS base camps. His first problem of the new year was to respond to the Navy's demand that the Powellsville, Maryland, CPS camp be closed because of a fear that a subversive group of COs near the Atlantic coast could communicate with German submarines. As he would agonize many times in the next three and a half years, French contemplated resigning.

This study focuses on Paul Comly French's reflections on the Mennonites whom he came to know for the first time in the 1940s. As one reads the 1000-page diary one finds many other lines of inquiry inviting inclusion.

Paul Comly French

There is the personal side: his weekend trips home to his family in Philadelphia, the illness and death of his father, the illness and death of his wife, his reading, his personal devotional life. One senses whom he considers his closest friends and confidants: Joe Weaver, Mennonite and his right-hand man on the NSBRO staff; Raymond Wilson, Quaker and first director of the Friends Committee for National Legislation; M. R. Zigler, Brethren Service Committee (BSC) and Chairman of the NSBRO; and Orie Miller, Mennonite manufacturer and Executive Secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). He frequently tested his ideas with fellow Quaker Ray Newton, and others. In dozens of entries he recorded exasperating meetings with Clarence Pickett, Executive Secretary of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and A. J. Muste of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). French was troubled with Pickett's go-it-alone style and Muste's persistent call for the demolition of NSBRO collaboration with Selective Service. French often reflects his understanding of Mennonite perspectives on these issues.

He commented candidly on his meetings with national newsmakers and power-brokers: Eric Johnston, President of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce; John McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War and rising star; Senator John Sparkman; Senator Robert Taft and his brother Charles Taft; Chief Justice Harland Stone; General William Donovan, director of the Manhattan Project; Robert Murphy of the State Department; Solicitor Francis Biddle; Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt; Pearl Buck and many more. Politically shy Mennonites seem to have admired French's easy camaraderie with the great and

near great. French, a journalist by profession, had a gift for the succinct phrase and an ear for the quotable.

Beginning as early as September 1942 French, with his ever restless and seminal mind, was testing and then advocating a series of ideas for building a more peaceful world: a Christian Pacifist Party (Sept. 21, 1941), a postwar international newspaper *New World* (eight entries beginning July 19, 1944), a postwar peace pledge union (December 22, 1944), a conference of peace groups to effect a postwar organization (December 26, 1945), writing a book on the CPS experience (April 10, 1945), sending ambassadors of goodwill to seven countries (June 13, 1945), the sense of call that he and Ray Newton should go to Moscow to see Stalin (June 25, 1945, and six additional entries), a domestic news service for foreign language newspapers (July 12, 1945), a Protestant inter-agency service committee for overseas programming (January 7, 1946), a Washington newsletter (March 6, 1946), many of the above with additional entries. In 1946 he was considering invitations to overseas refugee camps in Europe and North Africa for the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee, work with the American Friends Service Committee, continue as executive secretary of a restructured NSBRO, and to become Director of CARE—the position he accepted. He discussed his ideas for postwar inter-church cooperation with Orie Miller, who appears to have given encouragement.

The French diaries are filled with observations on a long series of conflict-ridden issues: the struggle to reverse the Congressional ban on overseas service for CPS men, abrupt decisions of Selective Service without consulting the NSBRO and invariably Selective Service backtracking, the disposition of frozen funds most of which were earned by Mennonite men in farm assignments, demobilization plans, government camps and Selective Service's proclivity to make arbitary camp transfers, agency withdrawals from the NSBRO at the war's end, and the response of the churches to postwar conscription. On the latter, French gives no evidence of wanting a repetition of the CPS experiment. His preferred response—shared by Mennonites, Brethren, and some Quakers—seems to have been a strong case against conscription, a broadening of the definition of conscientious objector, provision for the absolutist, and an alternative service program of individual assignments with ample provision for overseas service. French identifies Mennonite perspectives on all the above issues.

Part II 1943-1946[1]

In January 1943 the series of Axis victories were drawing to an end, Germany's Sixth Army surrendered at Stalingrad. U. S. and Australian forces took Buna, New Guinea, and soon Guadalcanal. Rommel was in retreat in Tunisia. In CPS men in large numbers were leaving base camps for newly-opened units in mental hospitals and other special projects. In mid-February President Roosevelt authorized a unit of 70 CPS men for service in West China with the British Friends Ambulance Unit. Since he had secured approval for this project through his friendship with Mrs. Roosevelt, Clarence Pickett saw this as a Friends project. French urged that appointments be shared with the Brethren and Mennonites.

The China Unit—a Friends Project?

February 27, 1943

. . . Clarence is still thinking in terms of 1917 and 1918 when the [*AFSC*] was the only agency in the field. I wish there were some way to make him see that Brethren and Mennonites have progressed and developed and are just as anxious as the Friends are to do postwar relief work. . . . I can't seem to make them understand that the Mennonites and Brethren don't want to ride along with the Friends. They are anxious to handle their own relief program without trailing the Friends.

March 8, 1943

A plan was announced to have 1,300 men assigned to dairy farms and other agricultural work and close out most of the Soil Conservation Service units. John Swomley, who represented the FOR, felt we should flatly refuse to accept the new work, while Orie Miller said that Mennonites would do it if the government insisted.

March 9, 1943

. . . The group discussed the China Unit and Clarence asked for the cooperation of the Mennonites and Brethren in the way that I wished we had been able to work in all of our relationships. . . .

March 26, 1943

[*In a discussion with Brethren, Friends, and Mennonite representatives on the topic of CPS training for foreign service*] I reported that General Hershey was willing to approve two percent of the total men in camp. John Nason [*Friend and President of Swarthmore*] took the position that it was hardly worth bothering with for so few. Elmore Jackson [*AFSC*] felt that Clarence Pickett would feel that he must carry the issue to General Hershey and insist that we be allowed to train 600 to 800 men [*approximately 10 per cent*]. I explained that he felt that he could not defend so many [*CPS*] men in college. . . . Orie Miller supported me in my suggestion we accept what we could obtain now, as we had in the past, and then work for an increased number of men when we had definite plans to place them in foreign service. . . .

March 31, 1943

Henry Fast [*MCC*], Harold Row [*BSC*], and Paul Furnas [*AFSC*] spent some time expressing their dissatisfaction with the government's inability and, I assume, the NSBRO's, to make everything run smoothly. . . . I find it difficult to try to convince them of what the situation is in Washington and that no one has any overall plan for anything, including the war.

April 13, 1943

Bob Zigler said he told Elmore Jackson that he and Orie Miller were disturbed when Clarence attempted to represent them in the relief setup. . . . He said that Clarence had asked for ten men from the Brethren camps and ten men from the Mennonite camps for the China Unit while he planned to use fifty from the Friends camps. . . .

April 19, 1943

Paul Furnas said that they would much prefer to operate alone. He said that they understood that in this situation it was necessary to work together and that he, personally, because of his belief in the deep religious motivation of both the Mennonites and Brethren was desirous of doing so.

April 20, 1943

Orie Miller called in the evening to talk to me about the CPS Training Corps and expressed the opinion that he would prefer not to go with Clarence and Nason to see Hershey about more

Topping beets at CPS #33, Ft. Collins, Colorado.

men. He said that they were satisfied with the number available now and were willing to accept my judgment as to the right time to press for additional persons.

April 26, 1943

Joe Weaver said that he is ready to resign because he is convinced that he can't get what the agencies [*AFSC, BSC, and MCC*] want us to get and that they will not be satisfied with anything second hand from us. . . . He doesn't mind being under pressure from either Selective Service or the agencies, but he isn't up to taking pressure from both sides much longer. I agree with him.

Mennonites Refuse to Thin Beets

May 13, 1943

Colonel Lewis F. Kosch [*Selective Service*] called me this afternoon and said forty-five Mennonites had refused to thin beets at Fort Collins and wanted to know what we proposed to do about it. I talked with Orie and he said the men had the understanding that the beets were made into alcohol for military purposes and thus they felt unable to do the work. He said to explain to Kosch that they were very sorry this had happened, but they would support the boys in their attitude. He said to tell Kosch that they were willing to move the camp at once if he wanted to, or it was satisfactory with them if he felt the boys should go to jail, but they would not ask them to do something they felt conscientiously unable to do. I called Kosch and told him and for once even Imirie [*Selective Service*] was stopped. I think that we made more progress with Selective Service by Orie's approach than by any other way. There is an attitude of humility in it which seems to impress army people with much more effectiveness than the agressiveness that some of the rest of us show. Apparently Kosch had called Henry Abbott of Soil Conservation Service because he called me and said that none of the beets were used for anything but human consumption and that he felt that the boys did not understand this. I talked with Orie again and he said, if that was correct, he thought the men would be willing to work in the fields.

Orie Miller

Frustration with Selective Service

May 19, 1943

Paul Furnas, Orie Miller, Bob Zigler, and I spent three hours on the problems of Selective Service. It was finally agreed that I should tell General Hershey that many of our problems in the past resulted, in our opinion, from having men who did not want to be under religious controlled administration; that we felt with the opening of a government camp we would be able to operate on the basis of our original agreement with Clarence Dykstra in 1940, and that unless we would return to that agreement, it was our judgment that the Historic Peace Churches had better withdraw from the program. . . . As Orie Miller said, we would do the best we could in our way and if it wasn't good enough, General Hershey, a public official, would have to determine the next move. I have the feeling that if Hershey knew there is unanimity of opinion, we probably can work out the difficulties, although it may be that we are coming close to the end of our experiment.

June 1, 1943

Met Orie Miller . . . and together we went to Wallingford to talk with Clarence Pickett and Paul Furnas about Clarence's letter to the President. . . . Orie asked [*Pickett*] if he felt that he would rather deal independently with the government and not through the Service Board, because he said it seemed to him that was the basic problem involved in whether we were facing the question cooperatively or independently. Clarence said he felt sorry Hershey was upset about his visit to the President, but that he would have to continue to do it. . . .

June 2, 1943

Meeting with [*Selective Service and mental hospital officials*]. . . . The Mennonite operations in the hospital area had a lot to do with the successful working out of the meeting because both Virginia and New Jersey expressed real satisfaction over the way they had been able to deal with the MCC. Dr. Zeller from Byberry [*Hospital*] in Philadelphia expressed the same feeling about the Friends.

An Afternoon with Mrs. Roosevelt

June 8, 1943

Went to the White House this afternoon to see Mrs. Roosevelt. . . . I urged that men from the Brethren and Mennonite camps be given the same chance in the Near East and South America as the Friends had received in China. She agreed to discuss it with Nelson Rockefeller. . . . I got the impression that she felt that Clarence Pickett actually represented all of the groups when he talked with her about CPS men. She said that she had heard excellent reports about the work the Mennonite men had performed in mental hospitals.

June 17, 1943

Had lunch with Orie Miller. We had a two hour discussion on the problems of working together and the difficulties that I had with our administrative relationship with the Friends. He said that he had been watching it and understood how difficult it had been, but felt that it would be better if I stopped worrying about it. I told him that I had sent my resignation to Bob Zigler and we discussed it. Orie said that he had learned from long experience that problems could not be solved by walking away from them. . . . He is an amazing person and it did me no end of good to talk with him. . . . He said that all have to work on the basis of our traditions and experiences and that the Friends did things one way and the Mennonites another. No one could tell, he added, which was best because each way was best for each group. He said that he had the highest regard for Clarence Pickett and felt he was one of the few men who really understood the Mennonite problem. I had suggested to him and Bob that Clarence represent all of the groups in terms of the White House and in working for foreign projects. . . .

Ban on Overseas CPS Service

June 24, 1943

The House Appropriations Committee tacked on a provision to the War Department bill making it impossible for them to use any of their funds for COs. [*This was the Starnes Amendment, later passed by Congress, which halted the China program and cancelled training programs for postwar relief service. In the weeks following, French was absorbed in efforts to secure a withdrawal of the amendment and then after passage to find alternatives, but to no avail.*]

Electric shock therapy, CPS #63, New Jersey State Hospital, Marlboro.

September 24, 1943

Bob and I discussed again the unification idea [*NSBRO, AFSC, BSC, and MCC integrated in one body to administer CPS*] and also talked about Orie Miller's statement yesterday that after the first of the year the Mennonites were prepared to take one third of the unaffiliated or non-peace church boys, but were not prepared to continue paying one third for those who went to Friends or Brethren camps. . . . [*The Friends*] have been receiving 50 to 60 thousand dollars a year from the Mennonites [*to operate their camps*].

Pressing for New Projects

October 16, 1943

Clarence urged that we make a real issue with General Hershey over assigning men to social service and juvenile delinquency problems. Both Orie Miller and Bob Zigler said they were not prepared to make an issue over these two points, although they were prepared to

Staff meeting at CPS #63, Marlboro, New Jersey.

support the Friends in their desire for this type of project. . . . Orie Miller suggested that he would keep quiet in the evening session at certain points to preserve unity and A. J. Muste said he would do the same for the FOR. There was a general feeling of agreement, although I am sure the Mennonites and Brethren do not basically agree with the Friends in their feeling that they would have to withdraw from the program if some of the Friends provisions were not accepted.

October 17, 1943

The Friends feel that they were taking a load from the shoulders of the government in handling conscientious objectors, and they are ready to continue doing it provided they have the same opportunity of engaging in the forms of service which they feel are essential. The Mennonites, on the other hand, I think, feel that the government is being generous in permitting COs to engage in alternative service and is actually going the second mile by allowing religious groups to participate in this service. General Hershey, and I think the majority of the others in government with whom we have worked, are inclined to have about the same feeling as I think the Mennonites and Brethren have. This basically makes the difficulty. . . . Orie Miller and Bob Zigler [*seeing the expansion of service opportunities in two years of CPS*] feel that we can likely continue to make progress as we earn the right to such opportunities. They would prefer not to make a yearly issue with General Hershey. The Friends, with a much more articulate constituency behind them, feel that they must make concrete and definite advances to hold the support of Friends.... Personally, I would be inclined to move forward by degrees of progress and not either ask or expect General Hershey to make clear cut commitments regarding the type of service we could perform. I think that people not close to the Washington situation fail to understand the pressures under which government people work. . . . I know the obstacles we face in working with Kosch and A. S. Imirie [*Selective Service*] with their thinking based on their Civilian Conservation Corps background; yet it seems to me that if our belief has any meaning, we must learn how to see their position and how to work with them.... I wonder at times whether we have really approached our problems and relationships with Selective Service with a basic humility and sensitiveness that we should have as followers of Christ. . . . If . . . we are able to carry through, we will have demonstrated that there is something in the power of goodwill and understanding. And we will have demonstrated that conscription cannot make a man a conscript any more than Roman slave laws could make the early Christians slaves. We have a chance—it may be the last for a long time in the kind of centralizing state that is ahead—to demonstrate that freedom is within a man and has no relationships to any external pressures. Dave Swift [*AFSC*] has admirably expressed this point of view in this week's *Friends Intelligencer.*

October 25, 1943

It is always a pleasure to work with Orie Miller. He has such a direct mind and goes to the root of the problem. Both he and Bob said that they were prepared to accept men from Friends camps, if they wished to come in preference to going to Mancos [*a government camp in Colorado*], and felt that the men should be told that it was one of the alternatives which they might consider. I am more and more impressed with Orie and his simple faith. He sees more closely than most of us what is really involved in this program and how we cannot let it fall apart. . . .

Hard to Understand the Mennonites

November 22, 1943

Bill Ackerman, who is now at Grottoes [*MCC camp in Virginia*], was in this afternoon and we talked about the attitudes of the various conservative Mennonites there. He found them hard to understand and felt that many of these men accepted their position simply because it was church teachings, and hardly knew why. We had an interesting discussion about the ability of a group like the Mennonites to retain their position and he felt that they could do it only as long as they were able to maintain closed communities. I think that is likely correct and that is the reason that some of the Mennonite groups are disturbed about their boys mixing with others in CPS. . . .

November 23, 1943

Dave Swift came in and we spent two hours talking about the AFSC-NSBRO relationships and considering how we could develop some confidence. I suggested that my resignation might help. He felt that it would because he said the AFSC thought that I was trying to build a large organization here and that I would have more personal power and prestige. He said that many of the people in Philadelphia felt that Barry Hollister should have my place. . . . Barry said that he was satisfied that my resignation would not affect the basic problem of confidence, because it was mainly the AFSC feeling that they would operate independently but did not believe that it was possible. . . . Dave said that Paul Furnas gave the staff the feeling that both Bob Zigler and Orie Miller supported them in their attitude about the NSBRO. I doubt it, because I think that both of them would say so to me directly. . . .

November 24, 1943

Had an extremely nice letter from Bob Zigler today. . . . He very kindly said that I was the only non-Brethren with the exception of Orie Miller, who he felt the Brethren would be willing to have here as their representative.

December 2, 1943

Bob and Orie were satisfied with the way NSBRO was being handled. . . . He said that he had the feeling that most of our problem dated back to the early days when Clarence Pickett suggested that the AFSC would run the whole program and the Mennonites and Brethren could "cooperate" with the Service Committee. Neither Bob nor Orie felt they could "cooperate" with the Friends running the program, but were willing to cooperate in a central organization. I am inclined to think there is some truth in what he says.

December 31, 1943

Talked with Colonel Kosch this morning about approving the Brethren clothing-heifer project as work of national importance. . . . If it were just the Brethren or the Mennonites, I think he would approve it, but seems loath to approve such a project for the Friends, and here is where the results of the two years of administrative difficulties come to light. The Brethren and Mennonites have developed satisfactory relationships, and thus, when a project of this type comes along, they have a fair chance of having it approved.

Cooking school, CPS #4, Grottoes, Virginia.

Back to the Farm

January 20, 1944

Had breakfast with Ernest Miller [*Mennonite and President of Goshen College*] this morning and discussed the demobilization problem and some of the factors within the Mennonite constituency that make the rural settlement idea so important to Winfield Fretz and Orie Miller. I expressed the opinion that many of the men would not be interested in going back to the farms and Ernest Miller agreed but said because of the internal problems in their groups they had to work along that line.

January 28, 1944

I wish there were some way for Friends to appreciate that they represent the smallest third in the total of the Historic Peace Church CPS and to realize the place the others play in the total program. . . . Mennonites have actually paid about half of the total costs of CPS since its inception.

February 18, 1944

The Council on Civilian Service met this morning. . . . With the exception of the Christadelphians, Mennonites, and Seventh Day Adventists, all present felt that an attempt should be made to halt the passage of any postwar conscription bill. . . . The Mennonites wanted pay for those who wanted it, but wanted to make sure that such provisions would not limit their group in making their testimony without pay. . . . It was generally felt that we should seek a register of COs, a broader interpretation of definition of conscience, provisions for dependents and for compensation insurance, a clearly non-military direction.

February 22, 1944

Don Smucker [*Mennonite pastor and former FOR staff member*] was in this afternoon. He has been visiting a number of the camps to present his "modern" version of the Mennonite non-resistance attitude. He said that he had been much disturbed by the attitude of A. J. Muste and Evan Thomas [*War Resisters League*] toward CPS and felt that they were undermining the whole pacifist program. . . . Don's ideas about political versus religious pacifists set me to thinking along a new track. The more I see of the way we act and react toward each other, the more I become convinced that he may be on the right road and there is no real hope of permanent peace until men actually change their personal attitude.

Going to Court for CPS Pay

March 6, 1944

Spent the day at Big Flats [*AFSC camp in New York State*]. Had a conversation with Zucker who attempted to secure court action on the pay question. . . . I remarked . . . that Mennonites felt that court action was the thing that a Christian did not do. They felt, I said, that you talked with those who you felt were unfair to you, but if

Donovan Smucker

you could not make them see your position, you did not carry it to the courts. Of course, the idea seems utterly unreal to him.

April 3, 1944

The Board met in Pittsburgh to consider my resignation. . . . Orie Miller said that he hoped that I would feel able to continue on the basis of the points they had outlined and that we were all of the same people who had started out together three and a half years ago. He said that if I had the feeling that they had lost confidence in me and the staff, it was the duty of both of us to regain that confidence in me and the staff. . . . [*All*] agreed. . . . Orie made one statement that made me feel badly. He said that at times he had almost felt like apologizing for being a Mennonite, when talking with some of the men in our office. It was directed, I think, principally at the Information Section. I assured him that we all had the greatest respect for him and thought, but did not say, that I believed that the staff had more respect for him than for any other member of the Board.

A Look at Canadian Alternative Service

May 10, 1944

Met Orie Miller at Montreal, Canada. . . . We discussed the attitude of the various Mennonite groups in the event that we have postwar conscription in the U.S. Orie said that some of their people—he had no idea how many—would follow the example of the German and Dutch Mennonites and accept military service. He said that some were doing it now. Another group, the largest, he thought, would work for some type of alternative service and would try to preserve their nonresistant testimony. The third part, he felt the smallest, would likely migrate to some country like Mexico or Paraguay where they could be assured of freedom from conscription. . . .

[*French reported extensively of his visits with Canadian Mennonite leaders and his probing of the functioning of the Canadian alternative service system.*]

About a third of the Hutterite communities refuse to follow assignments of Alternative Service officers while about two-thirds cooperate. . . . Orie felt that I should talk with some of the men who had served in the Canadian camps, men on individual assignments and leaders of the United Church of Canada, the FOR and political and economic CO groups. He felt that I would not get a complete picture unless I followed through with these other groups. He also said that he felt it would be excellent if I could go to England and get a first hand picture of their situation so that I could really speak with authority before Congress when they consider postwar conscription.

May 12, 1944

The Canadian system is certainly more flexible and considerate of the individual, but certainly lacking in an element of group testimony against war....

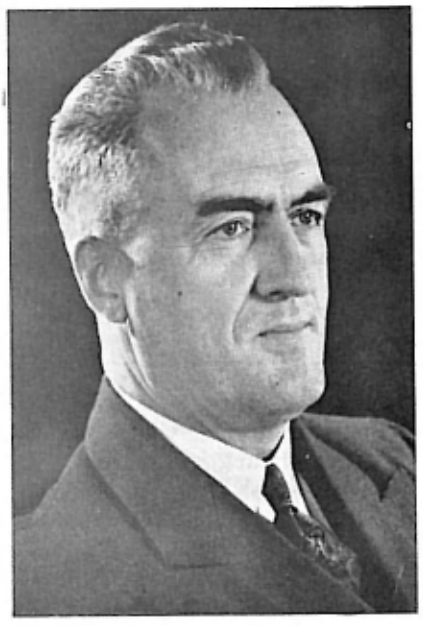
Visit to MCC Headquarters, Akron

May 30, 1944

Spent the day at Akron, Pa., at the MCC and went over the administrative breakdown. I had the feeling that the office was run more efficiently than the Friends office in Philadelphia but that all of the various functions seemed to be merged in the kind of a setup that Col. Kosch is most critical about. Talked with Orie at some length about it and he asked me to give them a detailed analysis of their operations.

June 13, 1944

In Manitoba I talked with J. F. Barkman of Steinbach. . . . He said that their group felt in general that the money they were paying the Canadian Red Cross for boys on their own farms was in reality a tax for the release of men from service. He felt very strongly that their groups might have considerable difficulty after the war when Canadian troops returned from overseas because there was no indication that they had much of a sacrifice for their beliefs. He said their leaders all strongly favored men being in camps so that they could continue religious instruction. . . . The Mennonite leaders with whom I talked said that many of the Mennonite farmers objected strenuously to paying their boys $25 a month and thought it was quite unfair. . . . C. F. Klassen [*Canadian Mennonite leader*] said that for more than five years, since the beginning of the war, he had been trying to work out a plan for some kind of central committee to deal with the government but that so far he had been unable to get even the Mennonites to work together.



C. F. Klassen

July 11, 1944

Meetings with Friends in Canada. . . . It had been noticed that Mennonites in general did not feel that they had any particular rights as COs, nor did they usually feel the sense of social obligation many pacifists feel.

The National Mental Health Foundation

July 28, 1944

Spent the morning [*in Philadelphia*] with Albert Gaeddert and Bob Kreider of the MCC and Len Edelstein and Phil Steer [*the CPS-based National Mental Health Foundation*] discussing the mental hygiene program. Albert and Bob both felt that it was worthwhile program and expressed their hope that Mennonite hospital and training school units would be included. Albert felt that the MCC would be willing to help finance the necessary expenses.

August 2, 1944

Spent the afternoon and evening with the Mennonite CPS unit at Howard, Rhode Island. It is a good bunch of men and they have about thirty-five wives and women volunteers working with them. . . . About 100 persons attended the evening session.

September 9, 1944

Representatives of AFSC, BSC, and MCC met in Washington at the Church of the Brethren to discuss and exchange views on postwar conscription. Friends seem to want to oppose it and appear

not willing to discuss an alternative service program, while both Brethren and Mennonites are opposed to it, but want to see a satisfactory program worked out if conscription is approved.

September 23, 1944

Raymond Wilson sent me a draft of the proposed letter to President Roosevelt opposing conscription after the war which will be signed by Orie Miller, Clarence Pickett, and Rufus Brown [*Brethren*].

Postwar Conscription

September 26, 1944

Orie Miller, Harold S. Bender, M. R. Zigler, and I talked with Kosch and Imirie about postwar conscription. Orie told them that Mennonites were opposed to it, but that if the Congress passed such legislation they wanted to see an alternative service program. He said that they expected to have about 1,000 men a year if farm and physical exemptions were eliminated and that they thought about 75 to 80 percent of their people would be from rural areas. . . . Kosch made a rather strong statement that Selective Service felt that church groups should have no part in the program and that it should be entirely a government-administered plan. Orie told him that if that resulted on the basis of their experience over the last 400 years, two-thirds of the Mennonites would leave the U.S. and migrate to Canada, Mexico, and Paraguay.

October 7, 1944

I talked with Albert Gaeddert at Akron and he told me that . . . they would take Powellsville or Big Flats [*AFSC camps*]. . . . I wish that I could get Paul Furnas to see that the Brethren and Mennonites are making a generous gesture to help Friends financial problems.

Aid to CPS Dependents

November 18, 1944

Orie Miller reported that he and Bob Zigler had talked with Paul Furnas and agreed to help our dependency problem [*need cases among dependents of CPS men*] by sharing on a three-way basis with all the non-Historic Peace Church men and that they had further agreed to handle it through the Friends office for men in Friends camps. It seems to me that this is an extremely generous gesture on their part. Toward the end of the meeting Orie Miller urged me to be very careful in how I discussed peacetime conscription with government officials so that there would be no thought that I was speaking officially for any of the groups. After the meeting I asked Bob Zigler whether I had said anything that embarassed the Mennonites and he told me that that statement by Orie was made at the request of the Friends.

One of the CPS wives in the female ward, Rhode Island State Hospital. CPS #85, Howard, Rhode Island.

November 24, 1944

Just finished an interesting book by Guy Hershberger on the biblical basis of the Mennonite nonresistance position. An excellent job.

December 5, 1944

Marie [*wife of Paul French*] passed on at 9:30 this morning, quietly and without pain.

December 26, 1944

I had a beautiful letter today from Henry Fast about Marie.

January 4, 1945

Joe Weaver told me this afternoon that the MCC had asked him to head up their postwar colonization work. He said that they expected a number of Mennonites to come from Europe and Asia and felt that there might be many thousands of Mennonites leaving this country if peacetime conscription was adopted.

January 16, 1945

Chris Graber was in to talk about some of their postwar plans and particularly what the Mennonite Church expected to do about men who had gone into the military service. . . . He said that they were especially interested in the men who had decided they had made a mistake but who still wanted to secure the benefits of the GI Bill of Rights.

January 30, 1945

Board met in Washington. . . . Henry Dyer [*CPS man*] attended the meeting and explained the plan on which he is working to secure presidential approval for individual [*assignments*] and more useful work. We all agreed with his motives and Orie Miller said that it was possible the Lord might use him to accomplish some things we had not been able to do.

February 27, 1945

Paul Furnas, M. R. Zigler, Orie Miller, and I met in Lancaster today.... Orie Miller expressed the opinion that we were moving down the road toward general regimentation and that we must decide whether we were planning to take on that problem as a major objective. He said that the Mennonites, he felt sure, would not try to engage in that fight but would concentrate on providing exemptions for conscience in the various laws that he felt might be ahead of us. He expressed the opinion that he felt that it was possible that some leading general might move into complete executive authority and set up a military dictatorship. . . .

Colonel Kosch's Secret

March 29, 1945

I find it disturbing to see how little understanding Colonel Kosch has of our philosophy and ideals. . . . Today particularly when he suggested there was some very secret and mysterious reason back of the West Coast transfers, that we would some day understand, seemed patronizing and to give the impression that we were not considered enough part of the program to warrant being consulted.

[*On an investigatory trip to the West Coast French learned of the threat that Japanese airborne incendiary bombs dropping on coastal areas could become more extensive and cause thousands of forest fires.*]

Met with Orie Miller, Lou Schneider [*AFSC*], Harold Row, and Joe Weaver for five hours of discussion at the La Salle Hotel [*Chicago*] on the West Coast fire situation. . . . After much talk, Orie said he was prepared to tell Selective Service that we had received information which made us think there were new factors in the West Coast transfers but that he was willing to accept the move in good faith after making these points clear. He thought we should tell General Hershey that we could not function under military direction, would not fight fires in war or munitions plants and wanted assurance that men unable to fight fires caused by Japanese bombs could be transferred to MCC camps or units. . . . There was general agreement that withdrawal from administrative responsibility should be considered only as a last resort.

April 27, 1945

Spent an hour with General Hershey discussing the West Coast fire situation. He said that the War Department had requested additional help because of the Japanese bombs and that the basic reason was military necessity! I told him of our concerns. . . . He agreed that it was a real problem. . . . He said he was not sure what commitments Colonel Kosch had made to the War Department but would discuss. . . . He felt one of the major problems was to find out whether it was being handled entirely as a military matter or whether the Forest Service was actually responsible.... I told him that Orie Miller had suggested that men might be transferred from the coast to other church units if they felt unable to continue. . . . He asked how many people knew about what I had discovered and again suggested we had been wise in not discussing it any further.

April 28, 1945

Talked with Orie Miller at Goshen and reported on my conversation with General Hershey. Orie felt that we should go ahead in the faith that we could work out the problems as they developed on the West Coast. [*French learned that the fire fighting would be under the Forest Service. There was consensus among the church agencies that they would cooperate, but that CPS men should be informed of the firebomb situation before volunteering to go West.*]

June 5, 1945

Had breakfast with Orie Miller and talked about world developments. . . . He says that he has found that an individual can do little to change the patterns of life and therefore it is better to live calmly and not let changes disturb you, but to have faith that the Lord knows what he is doing and that things will work out to His satisfaction in His own good time. It is hard for me to accept things without attempting to do something about them, but perhaps he gets more happiness out of life than I do.

Mennonites from Russia in Western Europe

July 11, 1945

Lunch with M. R. Royce [*Office of Strategic Services*] and Rupert Emerson. . . . I talked about the Mennonites brought out of Russia by the Germans and their desire to come to Canada. Emerson said that he had a confidential copy of the Yalta conversations and that Stalin had made a major point that all Soviet nationals must be returned to Russia regardless of their personal desires. He said that he understood that some of our military people were not following the provision in individual cases, but he thought it would be a real problem to ignore several thousand people in one specific group. . . . Talked with Harold Bender at Goshen and suggested that they should move with some speed if they wanted to be helpful to the Russian Mennonites now in Germany.

July 16, 1945

Called Harold Bender in Goshen this evening and suggested that it might be possible to get Roy Hendrickson at UNRRA to help us get someone into Germany to see about the Mennonites from Russia who are there.

July 20, 1945

[*The last entry on the West Coast firebomb issue*] Colonel Kosch said that our men were acting as foremen for soldiers, marines, sailors, and civilians because they had training in fire fighting and that forestry people said they were doing an excellent job. . . .

Talked with Roy Hendrickson about the Mennonites brought out of Russia by the Germans and asked for his aid

Fighting fire at CPS #35, North Fork, California.

in preventing their return to the Soviet Union. He said that UNRRA had nothing to do with displaced persons at the present time as a result of the insistence of Stalin at Yalta that only military personnel handle displaced persons. He said that he understood that Stalin felt that civilian agencies would not follow the letter of the agreement. Hendrickson suggested that I arrange to talk with General Holdring, head of the Civil Affairs Section of the War Department, and felt that it might be possible to secure favorable action in Washington. He said that our relations with the Russians were so delicate that he doubted if any army officers in the field would be willing to make any decision counter to the Yalta agreement. He said that he felt that both our army and the British would object to sending persons back to countries over their objection.

August 7, 1945

[*A broadly representative group of churchmen met in Washington to discuss alternative service in event of peacetime conscription.*]. . . . P. C. Hiebert felt the Mennonites could not accept a proposal which indicated approval of the I-AO position and Carlyle Haynes of the Seventh Day Adventists felt their group would not accept a draft which implied approval of the 4-E position.

October 7, 1945

Paul Furnas [*suggested*] that all men in CPS be released regardless of whether men in the armed forces were held on the grounds that we were in a different category from the soldiers and sailors. . . . Albert Gaeddert [*MCC*] had disagreed on the ground that such a suggestion implied not only equality of treatment but also preferential handling. . . .

November 13, 1945

Had an interesting memorandum prepared by Robert Kreider of the MCC proposing the establishment of an MCC Student Center in Europe to train men for postwar Mennonite leadership. It certainly reads like a good idea.

Thawing the Frozen Fund

November 15, 1945

Executive directors [*met*] in Philadelphia to discuss frozen fund. . . . Albert Gaeddert [*said*] that the Mennonites, who earned most of it, felt that any aggressive attempt to secure it would do more spiritual harm to them than simply to forget it.

Smoke jumper at CPS #103, Missoula, Montana.

November 16, 1945

Had an interesting discussion with Orie Miller before the Board meeting in Philadelphia today about his trip to Europe and the Near East and China. He feels definitely that we are in for twenty to twenty-five years of very difficult times and, as he describes it, the whirlwind has yet to come and it is a grave question whether the minority groups will be able to survive the centralizing pattern which is evolving. He said that he feels quite definitely that capitalism is a thing of the past and that no Congressional legislation will be able to revive something which is already finished. . . . He discussed [*peacetime conscription*] with Friends in Europe and they all felt that conscription was coming all over the world and that an alternate program was essential under it. . . .

Both Bob Zigler [*who had just returned from Europe*] and Orie feel that many of the points being discussed in this country when they returned were of little importance against the need and starvation of a continent. . . . Elmore Jackson said that about one third of the AFSC had now reached the point where they felt it was necessary to talk in terms of an alternative service program in the event of conscription. . . .

I was much interested in Orie Miller's comment on the frozen fund at the Board meeting. . . . Orie thought that we should think about it once more and then forget it because he felt it would do us more harm spiritually than worrying about whether we were going to get the million dollars. This seems to be a typical Mennonite and Quaker reaction to a million dollars.

December 10, 1945

Joe Weaver told me that Orie Miller was much put out by an action of James Vail [*AFSC*] at the meeting of the Council for Voluntary Agencies last week in New York City when Vail secured Council approval for two AFSC representatives to go to Germany as an official commission for the Council to survey relief needs. Orie felt, Joe reported, that the Mennonites, Brethren, and Catholics should have been represented.

Moving Away from Isolationism

January 4, 1946

Orie said that he hoped that Paul Furnas would make sure that someone in the AFSC office understood the three-way commitment to see the CPS history, which I am to write, was accepted so that there would be no question about it after Paul left the AFSC.

Talked about the Atlantic City Conference [*of peace groups*] and Orie said that the Mennonites were beginning to realize that they had to move away from their isolationism, but did not know how to do it and at the same time preserve some of the values of their small rural communities. He said that many

Joe Weaver and Paul Comly French.

of them knew that they were in an atomic age and that they would have to work with other groups to a greater extent than they had in the past.

January 9, 1946

Robert Kreider and Claude Shotts went over the problems to be discussed with the Virginia Mental Hospital Control Board in Richmond tomorrow and we agreed on a general presentation of the problems that we had faced during the past three and a half years. I urged that care be taken not to place blame principally on the hospital superintendents, but to stress the need for greater legislative understanding of the problems and the need to increase wages, shorten hours, and elevate the professional standards of attendants.

February 1, 1946

Board of Directors meeting. . . . I was interested in Orie Miller's observations that Mennonites were unable to consider withdrawal [*from CPS administration*] while Mennonite boys were drafted. It seems to me his position is correct and that little is accomplished by walking out on a problem.

Joe Weaver Resigned

February 2, 1946

Joe Weaver resigned yesterday to go to Kansas to take charge of a new cooperative enterprise being organized by Mennonites. . . . I am going to miss his help and even temper. After giving five years, however, he has every right to think of what he should be doing and the job appears to be just made for him.

February 12-14, 1946

[*Atlantic City conference of leaders of peace groups to plan postwar joint efforts*] Came out with an agreement on the part of all . . . to recommend to their boards cooperation and financial support for the four items proposed and for the Consultative Peace Council. . . . I was much encouraged by the Mennonite attitude and their willingness to come as far as they did. The past five years of the NSBRO have seen a wide advance for them in terms of cooperative efforts with other groups. . . . On the way back to Washington Joe Weaver and I talked about Mennonite participation. He felt that they, as well as the Brethren, would be more happy about joining the united effort if I acted as the executive.

Relaxed about the Russians

March 4, 1946

Had an interesting talk with Orie Miller this morning about world problems. He feels that it is not very important whether the Russians assume control of Europe and Asia. He thinks that if their plans are good, they will last, but if they are evil they will fall apart. He has the feeling that we spend too much time worrying about things that the Lord can better take care of anyway and that we would all be better off working on the problems we can solve and doing our share in bringing a better world and helping the Lord's plans for his people. He certainly has complete [*confidence*] that things will work out as the Lord wants and that we should have more faith in the ultimate attainment of His plans and less for the immediate problems that seem so pressing.

May 29, 1946

The Board met in Washington today. . . . I am always intrigued by Orie Miller's quiet way of stating the Mennonite position and his half-apology for not being as aggressive as others are.

He said today that he could not fight the government and remain true to his Mennonite heritage. That attitude is almost inconceivable to many of the others.

June 27, 1946

Had a long conversation with Harold Bender today. . . . He said that Mennonites were developing their own school system and also were formulating plans for their own economic order so that they would be able to withdraw from life. I have the feeling that I should attempt to use the training and ability I have in working toward a better world, although I am very conscious that it all may be a futile business. . . .

July 29, 1946

Denison, Iowa, for a meeting of Mennonite camp directors and unit leaders. I talked this morning about the early history of CPS, the problems we faced and how we here tried to implement our ideals. I pointed out the difficulties in the early days of finding any agency willing to have COs working for them and permitting us to participate in the program. I said that I feel that Quakers approached the situation from the viewpoint that they were being helpful to the government and really doing the government a favor. . . . I am always impressed with the sincerity of the Mennonites and was much interested in seeing the camp again. I was here when it opened in 1941.

August 6, 1946

Flew out to Chicago today for a meeting of the Peace Section of the MCC. The meeting was held at the Mennonite Mission on South Union. It was my first visit there since the day when the NSBRO was organized in October 1940. . . .

Today Ends Six Years, One Month, and One Day

August 28, 1946

Had breakfast with Orie Miller this morning and talked about general world problems. We discussed the possibilities of war and he feels that people are too war-weary to agree to an immediate war, although he thinks that eventually the moves we are making will lead to another conflict. We talked about the seeming inability of man to learn to live with man in the new atomic age and how our physical sciences were moving forward faster than the social sciences....

Today ends six years, one month, and one day of service as Executive Secretary of the NSBRO.

* * * * * * *

Paul Comly French recorded the above entry about his discussion with Orie Miller on the shape of the world ahead as his last mention of Mennonites in his diary.

French moved soon thereafter into the directorship of CARE and drew many of his NSBRO staff into his leadership team at CARE: Joe Weaver, Gordon Alderfer, John Reimer, Richard Reuther and more.

The NSBRO-CPS experience enrolled Mennonites in a crash course in political science. They experienced institutionalism at its best and worst and in shades of gray in between. They were introduced into the highly politicized world of inter-church relations. In all of this Paul Comly French was a mentor to the Mennonites and the Brethren.

As Mennonites may have lost their political innocence, they became a useful political resource for those pressing the CO cause with government. One observes how French frequently cited Orie Miller's comments when advocating a point with Colonel Kosch or General Hershey. French used Miller's stance of innocent assurance to disarm Selective Service's military certitude.

One further observes how French, the pragmatist who had been schooled in the confrontational arts of labor negotiation, acknowledged that often politically innocent Orie Miller was his mentor. He saw in Miller's less confrontational responses to Selective Service assertiveness a way that in the long run would be more effective in achieving change.

The excerpting of one theme—the French-Mennonite connection—suggests that this diary of a Quaker journalist turned church administrator has much more treasure in the mine.

ENDNOTES

[1]See Part I, "A Journalist's Private Reflections on the Mennonites," *Mennonite Life* 45 (June 1990): 18-24.

Robert S. Kreider in 1946.

"Will a New Day Dawn from This?" Mennonite Pacifist People and the Good War

by Paul Toews

A. J. Neuenschwander, long-time Mennonite minister, conference leader and member of the General Conference Mennonite Peace Committee, articulated the expectant spirit of many Mennonite leaders in early 1941 when the Civilian Public Service (CPS) system was just getting started. Writing to Henry A. Fast, who became the first administrator of the Mennonite-run CPS camps, he expressed gratitude for the generosity of a political system that granted alternative service for conscientious objectors. The opportunity gave the Mennonites a chance to fulfill their civic obligations largely beyond the purview of the military system. It was a moment of high significance, both for a government under military siege to offer such a generous alternative and for Mennonites to demonstrate to themselves and to the nation that their pacifism was "constructive . . . instead of destructive." He mused to Fast, "will a new day dawn from this?" It was a question to be sure. But behind the question was an optimism that characterized Mennonite leaders at the outset of the war. The war could be a new day for Mennonites.[1]

The Second World War was a unique experience for Mennonites. Not since the American colonial period, if then, had Mennonites worked so closely with the American state. War, which traditionally made Mennonites and the state enemies, here strangely and, in the end, paradoxically drew them together. The partnership that emerged between the religious pacifist community and the political order was unique in American history. Mennonites brought to this partnership a theology that more clearly separated the church from the state than the other religious pacifists. Yet the Mennonite embrace of the state-devised system was more unreserved than that of other religious pacifists. Those whose theology seemed most severely strained by the political necessities of the wartime affiliation were the most silent about the weaknesses and compromises inherent in the collaboration.

Major General Lewis B. Hershey

The war was a novel venture into the rights of religious dissenters. Unlike some previous wars, conscientious objectors (COs) were given legitimacy and a defined place in the order of a war society. Lewis B. Hershey, Director of Selective Service for most of the war, and friendly toward the COs, labelled it "an experience in democracy . . . such as no nation has ever made before . . . to find out whether our democracy is big enough to preserve minority rights in a time of national emergency."[2]

Hershey encouraged the churches to accept the Civilian Public Service system as an instrument to achieve both public respect by engaging in service of national importance and as a program for shaping the religious and educational ideals of their people. Hershey was right on both counts. Through CPS Mennonites emerged out of the war with a new confidence about their place in the national society and with a revitalized sense of their religious mission. The war nourished the ideals of service and strengthened the agencies necessary to channel the ideal. The requirements of wartime benevolence matured into a theology of active reconciliation that redefined the public life of the Mennonite world.

But it was hardly Hershey's urging that prompted the Mennonite government partnership. It was the memory of World War I that largely shaped the accommodation of both the pacifist conscience and the state to each other. Central to virtually all Mennonite thinking,

beginning in the mid-1930s was the necessity of preventing a repeat of the World War I conscription system. The indignities and abuses of the first great war were remembered in Mennonite homes and churches during the inter-war period. Mennonite historians looking back on the war assumed that it had permanently altered the relationship between the nonresistant peoples and the militaristic state of the twentieth century. C. Henry Smith, a leading Mennonite historian, was persuaded that the future relationships would be more difficult than the past. Governments would be less willing to make concessions for distinctive minorities. He understood that democratic societies were frequently less able to accommodate special interests than the autocratic rulers of past segments of Mennonite history. Furthermore he feared that America during the First World War proximated totalitarian societies in making the state the supreme object of loyalty and worship.[3]

Guy Hershberger, in 1935, likened the situation facing American Mennonites to what European Mennonites confronted in the nineteenth century with the growing militarization of their societies and the withdrawal of any exemption for reasons of conscience. The United States government could easily be tempted with the same. Hershberger was fearful because "the history of the Mennonite church seems to teach that when the forces of militarism become too strong there is always a danger of compromise."[4] As late as 1939 Harold S. Bender, the premier Mennonite historian of the inter-war period, likened the prospects for the Mennonites in a coming war to the martyr tradition of the sixteenth century.[5]

The Mennonite search for an alternative began already in 1919 in response to congressional measures proposing a form of universal military training. In what was surely a record for Mennonite political activism, roughly 25% of the adult Mennonite population signed petitions requesting conscientious objector exemption in any future conscription system.[6] The intellectual articulation of what would become the Mennonite negotiating position came from Guy F. Hershberger in 1935. The occasion was the Mennonite Conference on War and Peace sponsored by one of the denominational peace committees. There were four positions that pacifist peoples could take in response to conscription. The first was to accept regular military service. Deep convictions and a long history prevented church adoption of this possibility. Noncombatant military service was the second possibility. Some Mennonite boys selected this alternative during the First World War. The problem was that noncombatancy was an integral part of the military system. While the task of noncombatants "was not of actual killing" it was "auxiliary to this task."[7] Past experience showed that the incorporation of the noncombatants was so complete that there was almost "no difference between this and the acceptance of military service."[8] The third position, the historic one, was refusal of any kind of service. While this one retained an honorific place in the Mennonite imagination and might again be required, Mennonites in the inter-war years were drawn to a different position.

The fourth position, one that envisaged alternative service, was the preferred one that Hershberger and virtually all Mennonite leadership would subsequently embrace. It was acceptable because of scriptural commands and the history of Mennonite people in relieving suffering and need. The moral example of doing this amidst the destructiveness of war would be particularly salutary for the nation. Furthermore the growing centralization and regimentation that Hershberger and others saw in the nation's devotion to militarism augured for service arrangements rather than exemption.

The most effectual means to insure such a system of alternative service amenable to the church was to devise the system and then secure its governmental approval.[9] The domestic political activity of Mennonites working with other peace peoples between 1935 and the September 1940 passage of the Burke-Wadsworth bill was almost wholly focused on guaranteeing acceptance of alternative service. The intervening time until February 6, 1941, when President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 8675 that established the administrative protocols for the alternative service system, witnessed almost feverish Mennonite political activity to insure that it would be a system with considerable church management.[10]

Those protocols hinged together for six years the government and the Historic Peace Churches in a unique partnership. A few conscientious objectors

Guy F. Hershberger

would serve directly under the supervision of governmental agencies. The overwhelming majority would be placed in camps under the general administration of National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO) but with the three peace church traditions operating separate camps. It was an ill-defined partnership from the beginning and remained so throughout. The imprecise nature of the understandings permitted interminable bickering. The churches agreed, on a temporary basis, to establish, finance and operate the camps under administrative guidelines established by Selective Service. As the temporary agreements became permanent the questions about the appropriateness of the relationship only intensified. Were the church agencies autonomous or were they agents of Selective Service? Were the religious communities that historically shunned the assumption of governmental responsibilities because of strong theological convictions now agreeing to perform governmental functions or not?

Mennonites in early 1941 were not troubled by these questions. They were euphoric. The relative autonomy of CPS was the best they could have hoped for. The lingering fears of a conscription system based on the WWI experience now gave way to a warm embrace of the new system. Young men called into national service would be permitted to perform their obligation under the guidance of the church. Sequestered in camps under the direction

of NSBRO, but separately operated by the three denominational groups, their service would be done within the confines of their church group, or at worst with fellow pacifists.

In a January 1941 article, "Mennonites and the Civilian Service Program," Henry Fast, the director of the camps for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), expressed this incongruous optimism. "If the people in our churches can catch a vision of the wonderful opportunity God, through this arrangement of the government, has placed at their disposal . . . they will thank God for the opportunity and undertake it with the determination to make the most of it. Paul believed that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."[11]

The lead editorial in one church periodical—*The Mennonite*—was just as effusive. "Now our beloved United States has, under the guidance of the heavenly Father seen the need of a law whereby we, with others in true loyalty and love of country are given the privilege of doing service of real benefit to our land, entirely under civilian control."[12]

Mennonites long wanting to prove their citizenship, needing to demonstrate the "constructiveness" of their resistance to militarism and define for themselves a different place in American society now had the chance. But they would have to seize the apocalyptic moment. Fast wrote "The question before American Mennonitism now is how they will answer the challenge of their present choice. Their answer will not only test the reality and depth of their loyalty to Christ and their faith in His way of love but, in the light of Mennonite history, will also determine very largely the whole future of Mennonitism in this country."[13]

Henry A. Fast

Mennonite Central Committee was confident that the churches and the individual young men would respond to this unusual opportunity "in a sacrificial spirit . . . and gladly make whatever sacrifice is necessary." The sacrifice to the church, calculated in financial terms, would be over $3 million. Orie Miller, the MCC Executive Secretary, did not hesitate a moment in committing the church to that amount. Writing to Clarence Pickett of the American Friends Service Committee he reflected Mennonite willingness by noting they "would gladly pay their share of the bill. They would do it even though every Mennonite farmer had to mortgage his farm."[14]

The Mennonite approach to conceptualizing the CPS system was clearly different from that of other conscientious objectors and from the government as well. It was an approach rooted not in the requirements of statecraft or even the furtherance of the legal rights of the citizenry in a democratic society. With the alternative system in place Mennonites approached the political system more through the injunctions of St. Paul to be subservient to the duly constituted authority. They accepted the restraints and the compromises inherent in this flawed partnership. Both the Friends and Church of the Brethren were less tolerant of various government restrictions.[15] Orie Miller, while always willing to negotiate, would not demand. In discussions with Paul Comly French, Executive Secretary of NSBRO, he made it clear that asking was a different sort of thing than demanding. Articulating the sentiments of most Mennonite leaders he wrote French at one point that "we do not feel called to remind Government of any moral obligation . . . or even to suggest that they should feel such obligation.[16]

The CPS experience rather was to be an act of witness. Work performed in the spirit of charity, goodwill and compassion would make a contribution to the nation's well being. Mennonites would accept a system that kept their boys out of war and then expect that they go "the second mile." Albert Gaeddert, successor of Henry Fast as director of the Mennonite camps during the war, defined that "second mile philosophy." "It does not insist on personal rights, but rather gives thought to the obligations and duties that one has. . . . When compelled to go one mile, the nonresistant Christian does not resist the compulsion but rather stands prepared to volunteer the services of the second mile."[17]

The embracive position toward the CPS system was largely rooted in the

Albert M. Gaeddert

memory of World War I and the chance it offered for a civic witness. But the possibilities it offered were also congruent with other changes in the location and self understanding of Mennonites in the middle third of the twentieth century. The Mennonite story from the sixteenth century to at least the mid-nineteenth century is best understood as an exile experience. Scattered from Western Europe both east and west, Mennonites lived on the margins of various host societies. Distanced from larger social systems by distinctive cultural and religious traditions, Mennonites became a people apart. The integrated nature of twentieth-century societies increasingly threatened that spatial and cultural segregation. But precisely as the isolation and cultural enclavement was passing, a new ideological system was emerging as the carrier of Mennonite identity. That ideational system rooted in the recovery of the sixteenth century Anabaptist tradition reached its high moment when H.S. Bender delivered the Presidential address—"The Anabaptist Vision"—to the 1943 meeting of the American Society of Church History.[18]

The recovery of the past was clearly a means of shaping the future. Yet the bipolar quality of the historical recovery immediately posed a conundrum. It simultaneously moved Mennonites inward toward the creation of a more intentional "Christian social order" and outward in missional and service activism. It brought Mennonites face to face with what happens to many separatistic and idealistic communities. It is the dichotomy between the logic of history and theology that pointed toward separation and the logic of contemporary experience that pointed toward greater social participation.[19]

The "Anabaptist Vision" address amply pointed to the ambiguity. Bender began by proclaiming that Anabaptism was "a programme for a new type of Christian society which the modern world, especially America and England, had been slowly realizing." As such the ecumenical and missionizing imperative was clear. He concluded by declaring that "the Christian may in no circumstance participate in any conduct in the existing social order which is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ. . . . He must consequently withdraw from the worldly system and create a Christian social order within the fellowship of the church brotherhood."[20]

Carl Beck serving tuberculosis patients, CPS #63, Marlboro, New Jersey.

The CPS experience nourished both sides of the ambiguity. The government, concerned to minimize opposition from patriotic groups, established most camps in places hidden from public view. Here in the less travelled roads, Mennonites would fashion their own small Christian communities, prepare themselves for the future and point the nation to a better way.

The enthusiasm about war-time service was linked closely to the possibility for Mennonite religious and character development within the confined camp settings. The management partnership between government officials and church leaders allocated all non-working time to the supervision of the church. Beyond the 40-hour working week, the church could structure the educational, recreational and leisure activities. It would be important to offer a full range of personally enriching activities that were also expressive of the nonresistant idealism. In a particular way, church leadership envisaged CPS as opportunity for re-education. Here a generation, forcibly incarcerated by government requirements and sequestered by the autonomy given the churches, would undertake an education in the recently refurbished idealism of the Mennonite tradition. CPS could become the Mennonite university experience.

At the center of the educational program was a "core curriculum" entitled *Mennonites and Their Heritage*, a set of six booklets designed to acquaint the young men with their tradition and the significance of their present service. Edward Yoder, sitting down to write his pamphlet, noted that "what they want is a kind of mutual back slapping

Leadership Training School held at CPS #18, Denison, Iowa. Left to right, clockwise, inner row: *Arthur Wiebe, Jesse Harder, Robert S. Kreider, Ralph Hernley, George H. Fadenrecht?, unidentified, Henry Guhr, unidentified, Stoltzfus?, unidentified, Don Gundy, Ralph Beechy, Rufus? Franz, Albert Gaeddert, Erwin Goering, unidentified, Roy Umble, Henry Reimer, uniden-*

tified, Ura S. Gingerich, unidentified, unidentified, Dwight Yoder, Alfred Zook, Atlee Beachy. Outer row, left side: *Grant Stoltzfus, unidentified, unidentified.* Outer row, right side: *David H. Suderman, Jacob D. Goering, Elmer M. Ediger, unidentified.*

effort."[21] It was that, to be sure. But the design was much more. They were lessons in Mennonite ecumenicity. The Mennonite schismatic past was bridged by the grandeur of a shared past. They were lessons in the history of past Mennonite benevolence with a call for renewed emphasis on active reconciling work of the kind embodied in CPS. The forward to each volume, written by general editor H. S. Bender, expressed the transforming aspiration of the booklets and the entire educational program. He hoped they would contribute "to a greater appreciation of the church and its splendid heritage of faith" but also that "from this enriched experience in C.P.S. may there come an enriched service, not only to the church and the nation, but . . . to Christ and His everlasting Kingdom."[22]

The camps, while conveying a common religious education, could be a laboratory for differing social strategies. Both the withdrawal and engagement positions became central to the non-working program of various units. Some CPS camps operated on farms purchased by MCC in order to enhance planning and education for subsistence farming. They were part of the larger program of rural and community revitalization championed by some leaders as an appropriate response to the loss of the earlier spatial segregation. Other units specialized in study for post-war relief and reconstruction programs. These units became the breeding place for the leaders of a post-war social activism.[23]

The enriched service that Bender hoped would arise from CPS was quick in coming. Through CPS, Mennonites became aware of the potential of their theology and its contribution to people beyond themselves. Hemmed in by sectarian constraints, largely self-imposed, the doctrine of nonresistance had heretofore been perceived as appropriate only for the small remnant. The tradition of Mennonite theologizing into the years just preceding the war overwhelmingly insisted on the distinction between pacifism that might be politically adaptable and nonresistance that was politically irrelevant. But Mennonites at least thought their war time service was potentially significant, if not always realized within the limitations of the CPS system. Programs of relief and voluntary service caught the imagination of the Mennonites in the post-war period. The war generated a missional and service activism that transformed Mennonite denominations. The war experience helped to resolve the bipolar quality of the recovery.[24]

The first reflective examination of the impact of the war on Mennonites was Guy F. Hershberger's 1951 study, *The Mennonite Church in the Second World War*. Hershberger suggested the war developed a "social consciousness and a new sense of social responsibility."[25] It did that and more. Earlier attempts to find a mediating place between a social gospel and conservatism had failed. The CPS and subsequent voluntary service programs linked orthodoxy to social compassion in a fashion that permitted the church to be socially more activist while remaining theologically conservative. This activism and the development of philosophy and practice of volunteerism became the core of the ideologically revitalized tradition.

The nation approached World War I with messianic expectations. The pyrrhic victory of 1918 sobered national aspirations for a second global military confrontation. Parts of the NSBRO constituency approached the beginnings of the Second World War with utopian expectations. Mennonites were not alone. Paul Comly French, the Friends director of NSBRO throughout the war, thought the CPS experience invaluable to the nation's democratic traditions. He thought it made two particular contributions: first it signified the preservation of individual rights amidst a consuming war; and secondly "Civilian Public Service has to make . . . a demonstration of the irresistible power of constructive good will as against force and violence." CPS would do that by forging model communities of peace and harmony out of the diverse peoples coming to each camp. They would "create a pattern of life that will demonstrate the way that nations can live together in peace and harmony."[26]

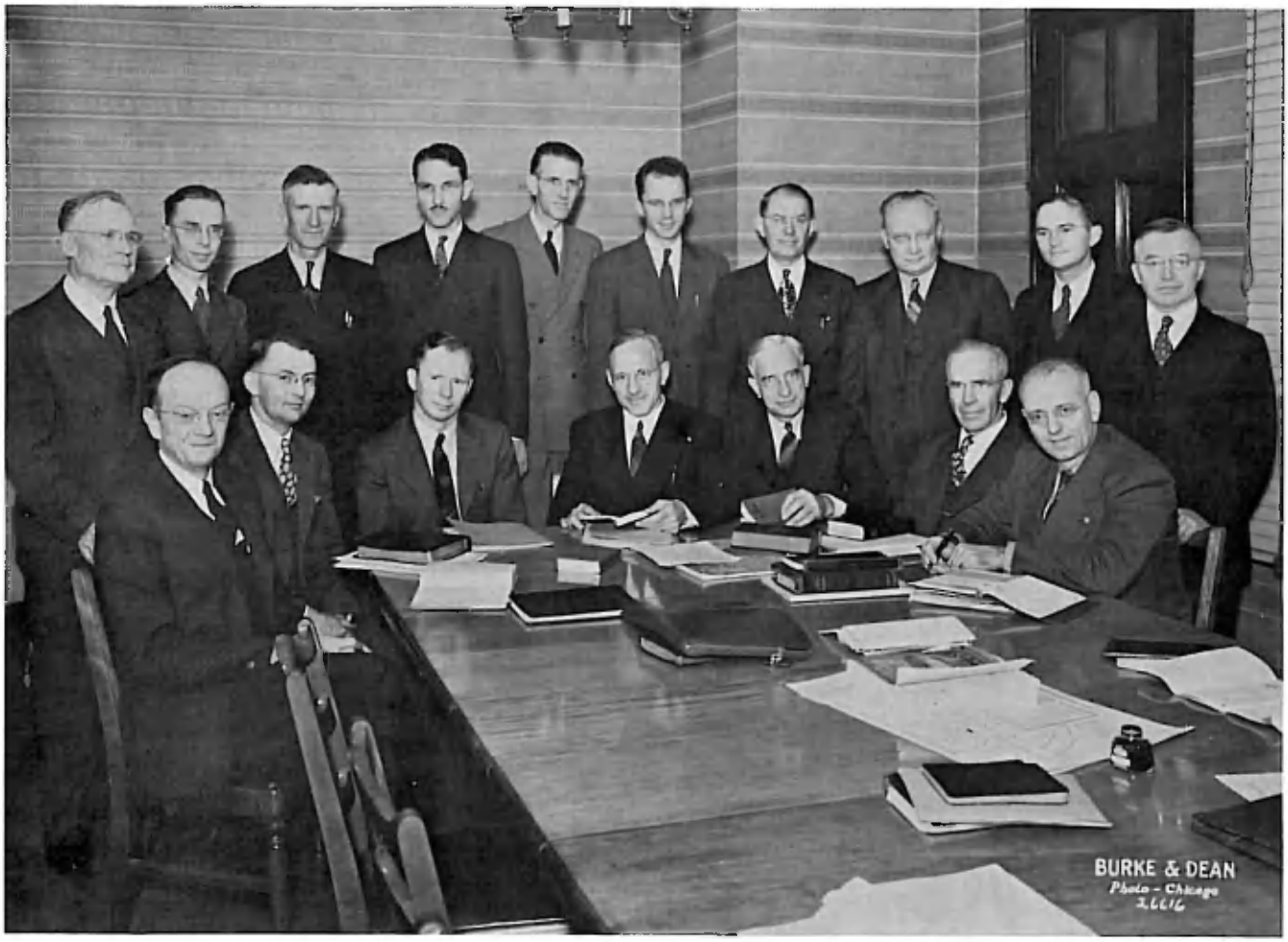
The experience of religious dissenters living together, disproportionately from peace churches with religious and cultural similarities made them in actuality a small slice of the larger population. It was hardly appropriate to think that their venture in communal living would become the model for global conflict resolution. But they were not daunted by their exception.

While the CPS legacy did not scale those national heights, it did prove to be a transforming experience for Mennonites. A new day did dawn. The church emerged out of the war a changed church. Old issues receded and new ones came to dominate and define its character. Studs Terkel's best seller on World War II is called *The Good War*. Incongruous as the two words hinged together are, it was a "good war" for Mennonite peace people.

Bible class at CPS #27, Mulberry, Florida.

ENDNOTES

[1]A. J. Neuenschwander to H. A. Fast, January 11, 1941, Fast Collection, box 1, folder 7, Men-



General Conference ministers meeting at Chicago YMCA to plan CPS visitations. Seated, left to right: *Amos E. Kreider, Erland Waltner, Albert Gaeddert, Andrew J. Neuenschwander, Jesse N. Smucker, John M. Franz, Freeman H. Swartz.* Standing, left to right: *Jacob H. Langenwalter, Walter Gering, A. W. Friesen, Olin A. Krehbiel, Walter H. Dyck, Elmer Ediger, John J. Plenert, Ed. G. Kaufman, William Stauffer, Harvey E. Nunemaker.*

nonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas.

[2]Quoted from Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 78th Congress, 1st sesson, February 17, 1943 in Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip E. Jacob, *Conscription of Conscience: The American State and the Conscientious Objector, 1940-47* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1952), p. 123.

[3]C. Henry Smith, *Christian Peace: Four Hundred Years of Mennonite Principles and Practice* (Newton, Kan.: Peace Committee of the General Conference of Mennonites, 1938), p. 27-28.

[4]Guy F. Hershberger, "The Christian's Relation to the State in Time of War: II. Is Alternative Service Desirable and Possible?" *Mennonite Quarterly Review* IX (1935): 29.

[5]Harold S. Bender, "Church and State in Mennonite History," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XIII (1939): 103.

[6]J. S. Hartzler, *Mennonites in the World War or Nonresistance Under Test* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1922), p. 226-227; Albert N. Keim and Grant M. Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience: The Historic Peace Churches and America at War, 1917-1955* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1988), p. 57.

[7]Hershberger, "The Christian's Relation to the State in Time of War," p. 29.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 30.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 33.

[10]The story of Mennonite participation in the Historic Peace Churches offensive to secure the Civilian Public Service system is told in various places. See Melvin Gingerich, *Service for Peace: A History of Mennonite Civilian Public Service* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1949), chapters IV and V; Guy F. Hershberger, *The Mennonite Church in the Second World War* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1961), chapter I; Keim and Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience*, chapters 3 and 4.

[11]Henry Fast, "Mennonites and the Civilian Service Program," *The Mennonite* LVI (January 7, 1941):3.

[12]"God Given Opportunities," *The Mennonite* LVI (January 21, 1941): 1.

[13]The Mennonite need to prove their citizenship, since World War I, is probed in James C. Juhnke, "The Agony of Civic Isolation: Mennonites in World War I," *Mennonite Life* XXV (1970): 27-30 and "Mennonite Benevolence and Civic Identity: The Post-War Compromise," *Mennonite Life* XXV (1970): 34-37. The quote is from Fast, "Mennonites and the Civilian Service Program," p. 2.

[14]Minutes of the Mennonite Central Peace Committee, October 25, 1941; "The Mennonite Civilian Service Program" (1941 brochure produced by MCC). Miller is quoted in Keim and Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience*, p. 113.

[15]See Clarence Pickett, *For More Than Bread* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1953), pp. 330-331; Sibley and Jacob, *Conscription of Conscience*, pp. 311-313.

[16]Orie Miller to Paul Comly French, August 25, 1941, CPS Correspondence, 1940-45, file 4, IX-6-3, Mennonite Central Committee Archives, Archives of the Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana.

[17]Albert Gaeddert quoted in Gingerich, *Service for Peace*, p. 404.

[18]See Harold S. Bender, "Anabaptist Vision," *Church History* XIII (1944): 3-23. For the place of this address in the Mennonite intellectual and cultural adaptation to modernity see Rodney J. Sawatsky, "History and Ideology: American Mennonite Identity Definition Through History" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1977); Paul Toews, "Mennonites in American Society: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* LXIII (1989): 227-246.

[19]See J. Lawrence Burkholder, *The Problem of Social Responsibility From the Perspective of the Mennonite Church* (Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1989).

[20]Bender, "Anabaptist Vision," pp. 3-4 and 23.

[21]Edward Yoder, *Edward: Pilgrimage of a Mind; The Journal of Edward Yoder, 1931-45.* Edited by Ida Yoder. (Wadsworth, Ohio: self published, 1985), entry for December 1, 1941, p. 446.

[22]See Harold S. Bender, "Foreword" in *Mennonite Origins in Europe.* Number I in the series *Mennonites and Their Heritage: A Series of Six Studies Designed for Use in Public Service Camps* (Akron, Pa.: Mennonite Central Committee, 1942).

[23]See Gingerich, *Service for Peace.* Chapter XIV looks at some of the "Farm and Community" units. Chapter XIX details the "Foreign Relief" training schools attached to some camps. The concern for the revitalization of rural communities is expressed in various places. Consult Guy F. Hershberger, "Maintaining the Mennonite Rural Community," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XIV (1940): 214-223; Melvin Gingerich, "Rural Life Problems and the Mennonites," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XVI (1942): 167-73. I have examined this rural movement as one of the responses to modernity in "Concern: Its Origins and Early History," (forthcoming in *Conrad Grebel Review*).

[24]See Melvin Gingerich, "North American Mennonite Overseas Outreach in Perspective, 1890-1965," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XXXIX (1965): 262-279; John D. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ: A History of Mennonite Central Committee and Its Service, 1920-1951* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1952).

[25]Hershberger, *The Mennonite Church in the Second World War*, p. 286.

[26]Paul Comly French, *Civilian Public Service* (Washington, D.C.: National Service Board for Religious Objectors, 1942), p. 11-12.

Relaxing at CPS #27, Mulberry, Florida. On top: George Maniaci and Roland Lehman.

Mennonites in World War I

by James C. Juhnke

In a recent article identifying potential fields for peace researchers, Kenneth Boulding called for investigation of "withdrawals from warlike activity, for instance, into monasticism, the peace churches, and trade and finance." Scholars of peace church experiences in wartime have often told their stories as a kind of sectarian withdrawal or quest for toleration in the face of persecution. The Mennonite experience in World War I, for example, filled with dramatic stories of a nonresistant people suffering at the hands of a militant crusading America, has invited a focus upon the confrontation between a beleaguered nonresistant subculture and a warmaking nation.[1] Boulding, however, suggested a more positive formulation: "How do niches open up in society to accommodate this type of activity and organization?"[2] We might also ask, how does a nonresistant subculture work to expand niches of withdrawal and of nonviolent activity?

The opening of niches of withdrawal from warmaking depends upon the character and the commitment of both the host society and the nonresistant subculture. Between 1917 and 1925 American Mennonites took advantage of two niches opened, in part, by administrative policy decisions of two national leaders. The first, opened reluctantly and incompletely by Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, provided a limited escape from military service during the war. The second, opened intentionally by Herbert Hoover, Chairman of the American Relief Administration, allowed Mennonites to participate in the great famine relief work in Russia after the war. The pressures of the first encounter helped generate energies to make the second a success. The result was that Mennonites, described as "the most grievously abused of any German culture group in the United States,"[3] nevertheless found themselves accommodated in America. A separatist people made themselves at home. The war and its aftermath left most Mennonites with both a stronger sense of being separate and a new appreciation for America as a home for nonconformists.

I. The Military Conscription Niche

The government did not have a clear plan for dealing with conscientious objectors to war in World War I. Secretary Baker confused the issue by denying that the selective service system constituted military conscription. The whole nation was volunteering for this holiest and least selfish of endeavors, Baker wrote, and selective service was only an incidental and rational plan of organizing the task. "It is in no sense a conscription of the willing; it is rather selection from a nation which has volunteered in mass."[4] True to the creed of the Progressive era, Baker believed that all reasonable persons would support the war if they were given the true information about America's intentions. If Mennonite draftees could be gotten out of their benighted rural environments and away from the limiting influences of their narrow-minded religious leaders, Baker was convinced, the uplifting influences of the military camps would lead them to join the national crusade.

The Selective Service Act of May 18, 1917 promised exemption from combat duties to members "of some well-recognized religious sect or organization whose existing creed or principles forbid" participation in war "in any form." This was a narrow niche which excluded the non-religious and non-sectarian pacifists. But Mennonite draftees, apparently favored by the legislation, also had to struggle for their exemptions. The War Department regulations required that they report to the military camps and wait for instructions regarding noncombatant duties to be defined and assigned at some future date.[5]

In fact Baker had set a trap. First he got the conscientious objectors into military camps. Then he issued secret orders to the camp commanders to do what they could to persuade these religious pacifists to take up weapons. The pacifists should be treated decently and segregated into separate detachments, Baker ordered. But they should be invited to view and participate in camp activities that they might catch the spirit of the war and join the crusade.[6]

The burden of holding open this precarious niche thus fell upon the shoulders of the young conscripted men in the camps. The churches at home could protest, as did, for example, the Mennonite Western District Conference in October 24-25, 1917, when it resolved that their boys could work in the military camps only under protest because "such service virtually constitutes military service, since the work is required by the military authorities and must be done within the military establishment."[7] But the boys were under military command, and the officers were accustomed to military discipline rather than soft sell. Tom Preheim, a Mennonite draftee at Camp Funston in Kansas, expressed his dilemma in typical Mennonite terms: "I hope God will find a way for me that I can serve the Govr. and at the same time not stamp my religious believe [*sic*]."[8]

Many of the peace church draftees were subjected to humiliation, physical beatings, courts martial and to various forms of intimidation and harassment.[9]

World War I conscientious objectors waiting their turn for a hearing before the Board of Inquiry.

The worst treatment often came at the hands of zealous and intolerant privates while officers turned a blind eye. Some conscientious objectors were court martialed, contrary to Baker's secret orders, and imprisoned at the Fort Leavenworth Disciplinary Barracks. Baker felt he had no option but to support the military. He eventually wrote to Colonel Sedgwick Rice, the commander at Leavenworth, "The conscientious objectors, like all the other inmates of the institution, have broken laws and been adjudged by properly constituted courts to suffer certain penalties of imprisonment. So long as they are detained in the prison they should live like other prisoners, be expected to work like others. . . ."[10]

On March 20, 1918, President Wilson issued executive order 2823, which had been drafted by Secretary Baker, with the long-delayed definition of noncombatant service available for conscientious objectors. Those who were unwilling to accept military service in the quartermaster corps, medical corps or engineer service, were examined for their sincerity and then sent out to agricultural assignments under the Farm Furlough Act. Even when furloughed the men retained military status and were under military regulations.[11] The furlough system was only partially successful, frustrated in some cases by local anti-pacifist protests. The war ended November 11. 1918, before the system had been regularized. About 1,300 conscientious objectors were accepted for noncombatant service, 1,200 were furloughed to service in industry and agriculture, and 450 were court martialed and imprisoned.[12]

Government statistics after the war reported 3,989 drafted conscientious objectors, out of nearly three million men inducted into military service. One survey of more than a thousand of conscientious objectors in army camps revealed that about half were Mennonites.[13] Secretary Baker did succeed in his goal of containing the problem of extensive conscientious objection interfering with the war effort, if indeed it ever had been a problem.[14] Nevertheless the niche did stay open. The steadfast refusal of military service by conscientious objectors in military camps, often in the face of humiliation and persecution, provided irrefutable data that the pacifist impulse must be accommodated, both in World War I and in future wars. During the Vietnam War, the niche grew into a chasm.

Historians have severely criticized the Wilson administration for its failure to protect civil liberties in wartime. Harry N. Scheiber wrote of President Wilson's "abdication of personal responsibility . . . ."[15] Daniel Beaver judged Secretary Baker: "The war finally blunted Baker's principles."[16] Wilson and Baker believed that liberty must be temporarily limited so that it might be made ultimately secure. Their stirring moral leadership unleashed an excessive creedal passion which led local vigilantes as well as Justice Department officials to unnecessary violation of First Amendment rights.

The Mennonite response to persecution was muted, as befitted a people who made a prime virtue of humility. Mennonite teaching called for obedience and respect to the powers ordained by God. Mennonite leaders exhibited respect and submission in their petitions to the government for exemption or other favors. As a people of the Bible, they generally made their case not in terms of individual rights guaranteed by the constitution, but rather in terms of promises which they understood the United States government to have made at the time of their immigration from Europe.[17] They knew they received more humane and understanding treatment from top government officials than from local and county authorities. Draftees in camp were usually more safe in the hands of generals than in the hands of common soldiers.

The war reminded Mennonites of their Anabaptist history of martyrdom and their migrations for conscience sake. Their wartime suffering was not simply an occasion for disillusionment, but an opportunity for refreshment at the spiritual springs of their peoplehood. They did experience some agony of soul as some of their young people abandoned the nonresistant faith and marched off to war, but the denomination as a whole was strengthened and refined in its historic identity. Surveying both World War I and World War II, Mennonite historian Cornelius J. Dyck could write, "War is good for Mennonites."

The war was good for Mennonites because American policy opened a niche for them, but also because they had to pay a meaningful price to occupy that niche. Mennonites also were fortunate that the United States' involvement in the war was relatively brief (nineteen months) and that the United States was on the winning side. Victors can afford to be tolerant. Postwar demobilization was rapid. Secretary Baker issued orders for release of conscientious objectors in prison early in 1919. A contrast of the Mennonite experience in Russia is instructive. In the comparable early stages of the war, Russian authorities granted more favorable options in the Red Cross and in Forestry Service than did the

American authorities. But the stresses of military defeat, political revolution, and economic collapse resulted in horrible Mennonite suffering in the Ukraine. What might have happened to the Mennonite German-speaking pacifist subculture in the United States had this country been invaded and defeated by Germany is, of course, a matter of conjecture.[18] It is not obvious that a crusading American democracy in defeat would have been more tolerant of German-speaking pacifists than was a crusading Russian empire in defeat.

II. The Benevolence Niche

Three years after the war which had painfully isolated them, American Mennonites found themselves embraced by the American government in a common endeavor for famine relief in the Soviet Union. Herbert Hoover, who had become famous in wartime food administration, was the Secretary of Commerce under the Warren G. Harding administration and the chairman of the American Relief Administration (ARA). Between 1921 and 1923 the ARA carried on a massive relief effort to relieve the suffering caused by war, civil war, and crop failures. Hoover organized the effort as a combination of private church and benevolent agencies together with public resources and administration to meet pressing human need. Consistent with his own philosophy of "corporate liberalism based on associational activity," Hoover granted substantial autonomy to private agencies, including Quakers, Lutherans, Jews, Mennonites and others, who wished to cooperate under ARA coordination.[19]

American Mennonites were desperately eager to participate in Russia famine relief, especially those who had migrated from the Ukraine to the American plains in the 1870s and following years. In addition to the ethnic and family ties with cousins in the Ukraine, the recent war experience was itself a spur to Mennonite benevolent activity. They had grown prosperous as the war stimulated the economy, and they were stung by charges that they were contributing nothing—refusing military service and buying war bonds only under great pressure—while the rest of the nation sacrificed lives and treasure in a great moral enterprise. Mennonites needed a moral equivalent for war.[20] They found it in the birth of a new "Mennonite Central Committee" (MCC), an inter-Mennonite agency created specifically to respond to the crisis in Russia.[21]

The Mennonites would have preferred to organize their relief work for Russia independently rather than in association with a government agency, as they had in fact done in previous decades at times of special need for colonies in Russia. They initially attempted, without success, to send aid on a southern route through Constantinople and the Black Sea. One intrepid and persistent Mennonite leader, Alvin Miller, actually succeeded in getting an official agreement with the Soviet authorities and with Ukrainian officials, but civil chaos and bureaucratic confusion prevented the Mennonites from getting their own supplies into the country independently. By force of necessity and of invitation, MCC did its work in the Soviet Union under the aegis of the ARA.[22]

While the American Mennonites had not received all they wanted in the famine relief effort, they had ample reason to be grateful for Hoover's achievement with the ARA. MCC spent $1,300,000 and fed 75,000 people in Russia in 1922-3, a small part of the total ARA program, but an event of surpassing significance for Mennonite witness and identity. MCC eventually grew into the largest of all Mennonite denominational institutions. It became an agency for international relief and service in the name of Christ which fostered inter-Mennonite unity and won the respect of other denominations and the world at large.

Hoover's political and administrative achievement in the ARA Russian famine relief was remarkable. He had to negotiate with a Soviet government which the United States had not formally recognized, and which had not yet fully established its own civil authority. He had to overcome American charges that the relief program would contribute to Communist control of Russia, charges which may have been at least partly warranted. In a situation of overwhelming bureaucratic confusion and complexity, Hoover's ARA administration chose to make room for private agencies whose directors were jealous of their own autonomy and had their own ideas about how to carry on the program. Some ARA officials were no more eager to have church agencies telling them how to do relief work in Russia than had military camp commanders during the war been eager to have pacifist churchmen telling them how to treat the conscientious objectors in their camps. Mennonite administrator Alvin Miller later wrote about some of the tensions: "Col. Haskell, in charge of the ARA in Russia, was inclined to be a BLUNT military official. To have about a half dozen representatives of Church organizations 'on the staff' cluttering up his limited quarters must have been rather galling to an army officer."[23]

The opportunity to participate in relief work was more critical for the identity of Mennonites than it was for other denominations. To be sure, Lutherans, Quakers, Jews and others have not always had a totally secure grip upon social acceptability in America. But the Mennonites had suffered from a double liability during the war. They spoke German, the language of the enemy; they refused military service, an action which could help the enemy. Recovery from their marginalization was especially urgent, and participation in socially recognized benevolence met their need.

In 1929 the Mennonite Central Committee published a 465-page documentation and narrative of its work, *Feeding the Hungry, Russia Famine 1919-1925, American Mennonite Relief Operations under the Auspices of Mennonite Central Committee.*[24] Peter C. Hiebert, MCC chairman and author-editor of the volume, included a photo-collage of voluntary relief administrators which had been circulated by the ARA. In the collage was Levi Mumaw, Secretary-Treasurer of MCC, along with representatives of the Federal Council of Churches, the Catholic Welfare Council, the National Lutheran Council, the Y.M.C.A., the American Red Cross, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Y.W.C.A., the American Volga Relief Society, and the American Baptists. In the center of this pantheon was Herbert Hoover, former ARA chairman who had become President of the United States. The heading read, "Many Faiths United in Greatest of Humanitarian Accomplishments." Here was visual evidence that Mennonites, through their benevolence, had gained a legitimate place in American society.

How does society open up niches to

accommodate nonviolent withdrawals from warmaking activity? In the case of Mennonites in American society from 1917 to 1922, a niche of exemption from military service was followed by a niche of invitation to foreign relief work. The Mennonite response to both openings proved to be the turning point for their experience and identity in the twentieth century. Exemption for religious pacifists was a precedent from previous wars, but one which had to be renewed through costly commitment in the face of persecution. Newton D. Baker, Progressive Secretary of War, demonstrated how a liberal democratic nation could restrict the liberties of nonconformists while fighting a war for freedom. Herbert Hoover, Quaker Secretary of Commerce, demonstrated how the principles of pluralism, voluntarism and benevolence could unleash the energies of private groups who were willing to cooperate with government in feeding the starving. This sequence of challenges contributed to Mennonite revitalization both by strengthening their historic pacifist identity and by generating for them new forms of legitimate denominational activity in America.

ENDNOTES

[1]The Mennonite experience in World War I has not been covered in a single volume. Gerlof Homann of Illinois State University is completing a manuscript on the topic. The most recent guide to printed and archival sources may be found in the notes to chapter eight of James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America 1890-1930* (Scottdale, Herald Press, 1989), 338-342.

[2]Kenneth Boulding, "A Proposal for a Research Program in the History of Peace," *Peace and Change*, vol. XIV, 4, Oct. 1989, 467.

[3]Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), xv.

[4]From the proclamation of selective service registration, May 1, 1917, written by Baker and slightly revised by Wilson. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, ed. by Arthur S. Link. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), vol. 42, 181.

[5]Albert N. Keim and Grant M. Stoltzfus, *The Politics of Conscience, The Historic Peace Churches and America at War, 1917-1955* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1988), 36-40.

[6]Order from the Adjutant General of the Army to the commanding generals of all National Army and National Guard division camps. Printed in James S. Easby-Smith, *Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 37.

[7]*Minutes of the 26th Western District Conference*, Oct. 24-25, 1917 (Newton: Herald Press, n.d.), 725.

[8]Tom Preheim to Henry Peter Krehbiel, Nov. 19, 1917. H. P. Krehbiel collection, 12-29, folder 176. Mennonite Library and Archives.

[9]The Schowalter Oral History Collection at Bethel College has collected the stories of several hundred Mennonite draftees. See *Voices Against War: A Guide to the Schowalter Oral History Collection on World War I Conscientious Objectors* (North Newton, Kansas: Bethel College, 1981), and Mary S. Sprunger, ed., *Sourcebook: Oral History Interviews with World War One Conscientious Objectors* (Akron, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Central Committee, 1986).

[10]Letter from Baker to Rice, May 21, 1919, National archives RG 98, USDB Fort Leavenworth, 383.2, Box 24.

[11]Keim, *The Politics*, 52-53.

[12]*Statement Concerning the Treatment of Conscientious Objectors in the Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 25.

[13]Charles Chatfield, *For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America 1914-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971), 75. The Mennonites, divided into many groups and not bureaucratically organized, did not keep reliable statistics on numbers of drafted men. My own judgment is that the percentage of Mennonites among World War I conscientious objectors was well below half.

[14]Chatfield in *For Peace and Justice*, p. 69, points out that genuine draft evaders, estimated to number 171,000, were a far more serious problem for the government than were the "forthright and law-abiding" conscientious objectors.

[15]Harry N. Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties, 1917-1921* (Cornell, 1960), 60.

[16]Daniel R. Beaver, *Newton D. Baker and the American War Effort 1917-1919* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), 237.

[17]See Susan Schultz Huxman, "In the World, But Not of It: Mennonite Rhetoric in World War I as an Enactment of Paradox," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1987.

[18]For a comparison and contrast of Mennonites in the United States and Russia during World War I, see the article by James C. Juhnke, "World War I," in *Mennonite Encyclopedia V*, a forthcoming publication by Herald Press.

[19]For an excellent discussion of Hoover's "corporate associational" vision see Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover, Forgotten Progressive* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975), 43, 86, 168, 198.

[20]James C. Juhnke, "Mennonite Benevolence and Revitalization in the Wake of World War I," *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, January 1986, 15-30.

[21]On the origins of MCC see P. C. Hiebert, *Feeding the Hungry, Russia Famine 1919-1925* (Scottdale: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929); John D. Unruh, *In the Name of Christ: A History of the Mennonite Central Committee and Its Service 1920-1950* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1952); Guy F. Hershberger, "Historical Background to the Formation of the Mennonite Central Committee," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (July 1970), 213-44; and Robert S. Kreider and Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Hungry, Thirsty, a Stranger, the MCC Experience* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1988).

[22]Alvin J. Miller, "The Beginning of American Mennonite Relief Work," *Mennonite Life* (April 1962), 1971; Kreider, *Hungry*, 34-39.

[23]Alvin J. Miller letter to Guy F. Hershberger, Dec. 10, 1966. Archives of the Mennonite Church, J. C. Meyer Collection, 1-44, 1962-67.

[24]Hiebert, *Feeding the Hungry* (Scottdale: Mennonite Central Committee, 1929), following p. 434.

Quartet, CPS #18, Denison, Iowa. Left to Right: *Henry F. Schultz, Mt. Lake, Minnesota; Clarence E. Friesen, Henderson, Nebraska; Russell H. Massanari, Fisher, Illinois; John F. Schultz, Mt. Lake, Minnesota.*

The Church of the Brethren and World War I: The Goshen Statement

by Robert G. Clouse

Roland Bainton described the Mennonites, the Quakers and the Brethren as "remarkable because they have largely preserved their testimony against war" from their founding until the present day. He called these religious bodies the historic peace churches "not because other churches are not concerned for peace but because these groups have refused to take part in war."[1] While this has been true as a general statement, there have been times when the Brethren have been confused as to how to express their nonresistance. This has been especially true with the acculturation of the church and the increasing power of nation states in the twentieth century. It is with a failure to adequately support a peace witness that the following article will deal.

The Church of the Brethren traces its origin to a group of individuals who were baptized by trine immersion in the Eder River near Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708. At times referred to as Brethren, new Baptists, Dunkers, German Baptist Brethren, or Church of the Brethren, these believers felt that they were restoring the New Testament practices by observing trine immersion, a three-fold communion service, anointing of the sick with oil, and other "apostolic" practices and attitudes. However, it would be more accurate to say that, "Brethren find their beginnings at the confluence of three religious streams—Reformed Protestant, Radical Pietism, and Evangelical Anabaptist."[2] From the Reformed tradition they acquired basic Protestant doctrines. From Pietism, they emphasized an ethical and emotional commitment to Christianity that recovered the essence of the faith from a hardened and disputatious orthodoxy. From the Anabaptists, they adopted a view of the church that led them to form a community of believers adhering to a strict church discipline, a nonresistant relationship to the state, and the teaching that believers should follow the example of Christ no matter what the cost in suffering or social ostracism. In time, the Brethren left Europe for the New World because of persecution and a lack of economic opportunity. By 1740, most of them had settled in Pennsylvania.

The Brethren flourished in colonial times because they were one of the German sectarian groups encouraged by the proprietors of Pennsylvania. Indeed, the Quakers had considerable influence on them as evidenced by their manner of dress, their church buildings, and their ecclesiastical policy. Church government proved to be difficult for the Brethren, however, as they attempted to balance the control of an annual meeting of all the members with a congregational form of church polity. This rather anomalous situation gave rise to many divisions within the group.

Another problem confronted the Brethren when they refused to support the American Revolution because of their nonresistant attitude and their conservative view of government. Consequently they were persecuted by the revolutionaries and were forced to adapt to the new situation by forming a unique subculture. One scholar observes: "The hostility under which these people have lived caused them to develop a greater exclusiveness. The doctrine of nonconformity to the world gripped the church. A special type of dress as a mark of separateness from the world was established. The Revolutionary War settled the matter that this was going to be an English-speaking country. The Brethren saw that an adjustment in language would be necessary through the years. They would be governed, too, by their English neighbors, some of whom were critical of them. The effect of this whole situation was to cause great numbers of the Brethren to move into states to the north and west. In emigration the Brethren became a frontier people without educational advantages."[3] Many writers have labeled the early nineteenth century Brethren experience as the "Dark Ages" or the "Wilderness Period."

However, as the century progressed, the Brethren began to merge into the society around them by securing an education and following other than agricultural pursuits. These new trends in the church led to ever more intense controversies among the members. The Brethren would try to settle their differences at Annual Meetings which combined the characteristics of a family reunion, a camp meeting, and a business session. All those who attended were given hospitality by the host congregation, and a tent or a large hall was erected to accommodate them. By the mid-nineteenth century, a group of elders, called the Standing Committee, prepared the business items to be presented to the conference by combining questions, or queries as they called them, put forward by the congregations. These sessions would reach agreement by unanimous consent. Great weight was given to the pronouncements of previous meetings, and thus the Brethren did their best to try to work with the forces of change. The extent of their involvement in American life can be seen by the long list of goods and practices that were condemned by the Annual Meetings as they tried to slow the pace of change. These included such items as ". . . bells, carpets, life insurance, lightning rods, likenesses, li-

quor, musical instruments, ordained ministers, secret societies, shows and fairs, tobacoo, and wallpaper."[4] By 1883 these tensions caused a division in the church resulting in a main body, called Conservatives; an old order party, referred to as the Old German Baptist Brethren; and a progressive group, known as the Brethren Church. It is with the Conservatives (later called the Church of the Brethren) and their reaction to World War I that this paper will deal.[5]

By the later nineteenth century, the old exclusiveness which had characterized the Brethren during the period between the American Revolution and the Civil War was changing. Although peace resolutions were passed by the Annual Meetings and pacifist articles appeared in denominational publications, the church was more interested in its mission program and the development of Sunday schools and colleges. The peace witness of the church was taken for granted. Although a peace committee was established in 1911 it was not given a prominent place in church affairs and no funds were provided for its support. At the same time the church was becoming more tolerant of the views of individual members whose ideas differed from denominational teachings. Brethren were attending public schools and colleges and were taking their place in the life of the community. It was becoming much more difficult for them to dissent from the nationalistic spirit of society on the peace question than it had been when the church was more isolated and existed as a counter-culture. Most members of the church voted in elections and many were even holding public offices at the time of the outbreak of World War I. As one Brethren historian explained, "it was the temperance movement in its development during the years prior to the war (that) was a great influence in starting the Brethren to vote."[6] Because of the loss of their distinctive subcultural ideology and the increasing homogeneity of American life, Brethren young people of draft age were not taught to relate their pacifist heritage to the complexities of twentieth century militarism. Consequently, despite the appeals of church leaders for peace, the advent of the Great War caught the church and her members unprepared.

The draft law of May 18, 1917, exempted members of peace churches from combatant service but left a host of questions unanswered. Among these were whether conscientious objectors should wear uniforms, engage in military drill, or accept noncombatant assignments that would help the war effort. Church leaders received numerous appeals from individuals in army camps as to a Christian response to these problems. The answers the men received usually represented two contradictory views. One group of ministers "advised the drafted young men to have absolutely nothing to do with the military machine, and refuse to do any kind of service. They argued—with some degree of consistent validity—that there could be no such thing as non-military service as long as the government, through its military arm, the War Department, regimented life and directed all physical force, including the lives of the people, to prosecute war to the end of killing and defeating the enemy. The other group advised the young men to be loyal citizens of the government and accept noncombatant service, as long as it did not violate the individual conscience."[7] Because of the confusion in the brotherhood, the district meeting of Northwestern Kansas petitioned H. C. Early and other officers of the Annual Meeting, asking that a special conference be convened to consider the problems of those who were conscripted and to clarify how they should respond to the demands placed upon them by the state.

Early polled the standing committee and a majority of them supported the special meeting which was held at Goshen, Indiana, January 9, 1918. At this conference the delegates drafted a declaration which clearly outlined the nonresistant position of the church and advised Brethren to have nothing to do with the coercive activities of the state. The statement, divided into three major sections, began with a memorial declaration to President Wilson which strongly supported the government of the United States. In addition to pledging the cooperation of the church with the state, it requested that Brethren be allowed to serve in a noncombatant role in agriculture and peaceful industries. This would enable church members to serve their country without doing violence to their consciences. Calling attention to the confusion that was taking place in army camps with regard to conscientious objectors the statement firmly and politely stated that "there is no absolutely noncombatant service under military control. Further, that if men are cooks, or in ambulance service, or in the medical corps, they are supposed to be armed, and if they or the work in their hands is attacked, they must use their arms in defense, and at any time, when ordered to do so. Many of these men would enter into monetary bonds to remain faithful to the Government, if permitted to enter constructive occupations and assist in the planting and gathering of crops, in harmony with their religious convictions."[8]

The second division of the Goshen Declaration was intended for distribution by the churches to their members who had been drafted. This section explained in careful detail the biblical and historical position of the Brethren. It cited numerous scripture passages including: Mt. 5:21-30; 26:52; Jn. 18:36; and II Cor. 10:3-4, as well as the examples of Christ, the attitude of the apostolic church, and the historic Brethren policy towards civil government to support nonviolence. The conference also urged members to labor more zealously in Christian mission and humanitarian efforts to alleviate the suffering and burdens brought upon humankind by the war.

However, the document states very clearly that Brethren were "not to enlist in any service which would, in any way, compromise our time-honored position in relation to war; also that they refrain from wearing the military uniform. The tenets of the church forbid military drilling, or learning the art or arts of war, or doing anything which contributes to the destruction of human *life or property*. We commend the loyalty of the brethren in the Camps for their firm stand in not participating in the arts of war. We do not wish to oppose the consciences of those brethren who, in some Camps, found work which they felt they could conscientiously do, but we urge them to do only such work as will not involve them in the arts of destruction."[9] The third part of the statement provided for the establishment of a Central Service Committee which would replace the peace committee in representing the Brethren to the government, in supervising camp visitors, and in making common cause with the other peace churches.

The Goshen meeting also made arrangements for the denominational press to print copies of the second section of

the declaration so that it could be distributed to church members who had been drafted.

Brethren who were confronted with challenges to their faith by the army used copies of the statement to defend their noncooperation in the camps and by April 1918, the document had come to the attention of the Department of Justice. On July 8, according to J. Maurice Henry, a member of the peace committee who served the Church of the Brethren congregation in Washington, Frederick P. Keppel summoned him to his office. Keppel was third assistant Secretary of War who was responsible for dealing with questions involving conscientious objectors. Many years later Henry recalled the incident with a mixture of horror and fear: "He received me very courteously, took me to his private desk and picked up a document bearing the seal of the War Department from the office of the Advocate Generals. I listened to the reading of the document with its charges which still ring sometimes like a nightmare in my ears. After reciting the law, the document charged the officers of the Goshen Conference, and the authors of the Goshen Statement as guilty of treasonable intent of obstructing the operation of the Select Draft Law. Dr. Keppel turned to me and said, 'What have you to say about this matter?' I studied a moment and quietly explained the facts about the Goshen Conference, and then asked, 'Will you have the case stayed forty-eight hours and give us time to prepare an answer?' The request was granted and the two other members of the Central Service Committee were called to Washington by telegram."[10]

When the other members of the committee, W. J. Swigart and I. W. Taylor, arrived they discussed the situation and agreed to encourage the brotherhood to withdraw the Goshen statement. As Ronald Cassidente points out in a thoughtful unpublished analysis of this incident, if the government had carried out its threats, the members of the standing committee could have been sentenced to two years in prison and/or fined $10,000.00 because they would have been charged with "attempting to incite inaction, disloyalty, mutiny, and refusal to do duty in the military forces of the United States."[11]

Once the committee had promised to discontinue the circulation of the statement, the government agreed to drop legal proceedings against the Brethren. Henry felt that the three representatives had made a genuine contribution to the welfare of the church. As he reflected on the matter several years later, ". . . the Church of the Brethren was saved from the impending tragedy. The Central Service Peace Committee—guided by wisdom from a gracious heavenly Father—had saved the church from a tragic situation: the church which the peaceful saint, Alexander Mack, had founded, for which Christopher Sower had been persecuted, and for which John A. Bowman and John Kline had suffered martyrdom in times of war."[12]

Later Brethren writers dissented from this view. The judgment of Roger Sappington sums up the matter from the perspective of historians committed to a peace witness, as he points out that there "seems to be room for honest doubt as to whether the greater tragedy may not have been the unconditional surrender of the Brethren leaders responsible for this decision to the coercive power of the Federal government."[13]

For the remainder of the war the majority of Brethren young men who were drafted went into the armed forces and made up their own minds as to the type of service they would perform. Although there were always a few who would not wear a uniform or cooperate in any way with their commanders, most of them ignored the historic position of the church.

It is easy to condemn the actions of Christians who lived in fear of persecution and who did not take a firm stand, but as Dale Brown reminds us, the committee that advised the Brethren to withdraw the Goshen statement represented a people who were trying to change their identity from members of a German subculture to that of mainstream America. He cites Floyd Mallott, a former Professor of church history at Bethany Seminary, who suggested that when Brethren began to drive automobiles and accept modern technology more than their religious attire changed. "Their peace beliefs went out as well. Many Brethren purchased Liberty Bonds and were caught up in the high fervor of patriotism."[14] The peace witness of historic Brethrenism became a problem to these individuals and maintaining it would not only have led to persecution by the government but also further division in the church. A firm pacifist stand might also have set back the pace of liberalization which many felt was necessary for the continued existence of the church in a rapidly changing society.

Another difficulty facing the Church of the Brethren during the war years was the crusade mentality that swept the country and the resulting intolerance and hysteria directed at those of German heritage. For example, an Iowa politician claimed that 90 percent of all the men and women who taught the German language were traitors. German library books were destroyed, German place names were anglicized, and hamburgers and sauerkraut became "liberty sandwiches" and "liberty cabbage." Leopold Stokowsky, conductor of the Philadelphia Symphony, refused to perform German songs, operas and contemporary orchestral music. However, he did ask for special permission from President Wilson to continue conducting Brahms, Beethoven, Bach and Mozart. Many churchmen contributed to this collective paranoia by approving of statements similar to the one attributed to Billy Sunday, "If you turn hell upside down you will find 'made in Germany' stamped on the bottom."[15] Those who were accused of pro-German sentiments were often exposed to mob violence. Several individuals were forced to kiss the flag and publicly recite the Pledge of Allegiance and at least one young man of German parentage was lynched. Many individuals who advocated pacifism, such as Eugene V. Debs, were imprisoned.[16] By the time the conflict had run its course, hundreds had been arrested under the espionage and sedition laws enacted in 1917. In such a xenophobic, conformist atmosphere, very few refused to support the war. While one may not agree with those who withdrew the Goshen statement, the reasons for their action can be understood.

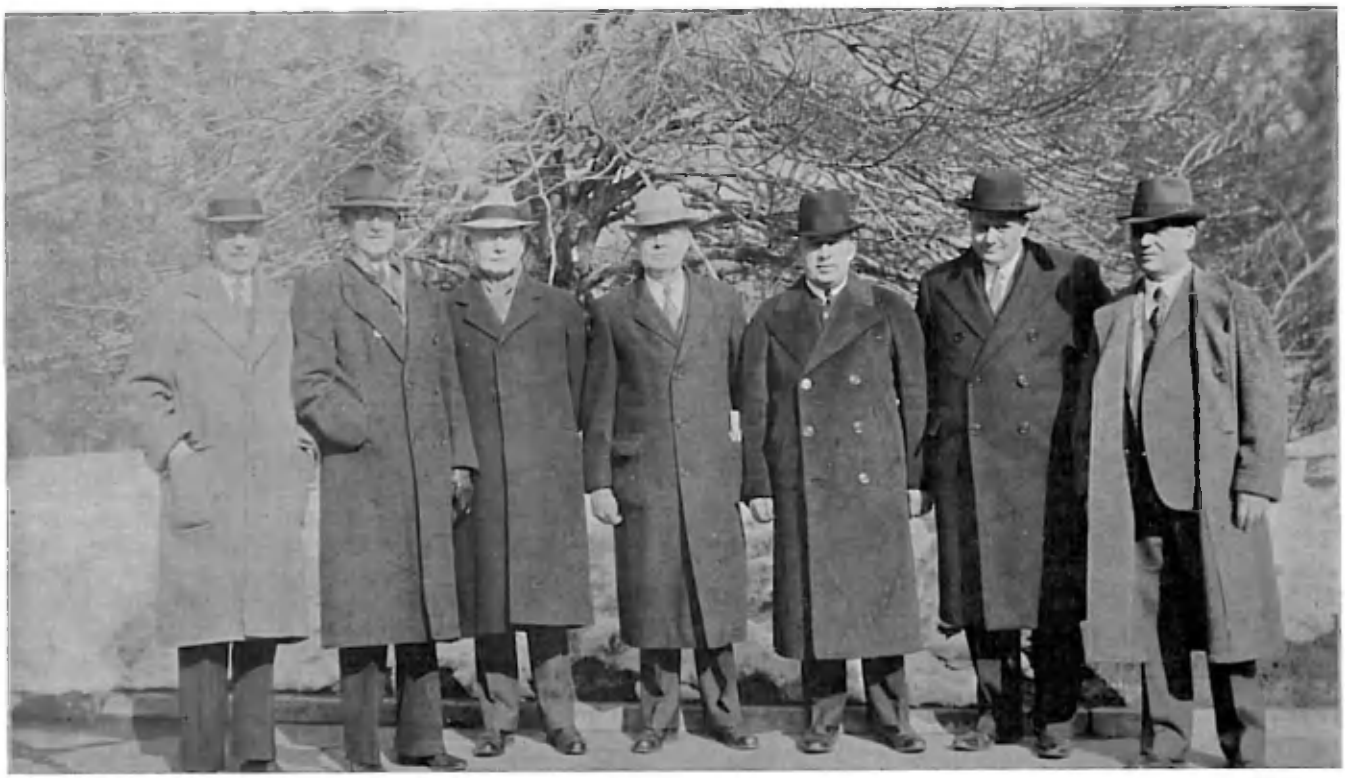
If the story ended here it would seem that the coercive power of the nation-state had won an almost total victory over the Brethren peace witness. However, this was not the case. As a phoenix rising from the ashes of a destroyed cause, a group of young men, most notably Rufus Bowman, Dan West and M. R. Zigler, were motivated by their wartime experience to devote themselves to the cause of international

understanding and to encourage a renewed peace witness on the part of the entire denomination. They did this in positive ways by advocating alternative service for conscientious objectors and by providing for extensive relief projects which became models for later ecumenical efforts. The first of this great triumvirate of peace leaders, Rufus D. Bowman (1899-1952), "was probably the most trusted, best respected, and best beloved of all Brethren church men during the period 1930-1950 and, next to Zigler, the most influential in forming the policies of the denomination. His activities spanned the careers of pastor, church executive, and educator."[17]

Bowman became president of Bethany Seminary and completed his Ph.D. at Northwestern University in 1944. His dissertation, part of which was published as *The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708-1941,* became the classic study of the Brethren and war. He devoted much of his energy as a leader in the church to the peace movement by attending international peace conferences, serving on the national council for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and cooperating with the Mennonites and the Quakers in peace activities. Bowman represented the Brethren in joint meetings with individuals from the other peace churches and President Franklin D. Roosevelt where a form of alternative service was agreed upon for members of their constituencies. The President was pleased with the result and complimented the group by stating: "I am glad you have done it. That's getting down to a practical basis. It shows us what work the conscientious objectors can do without fighting. Excellent! Excellent!"[18] The result of this agreement was the establishment of the Civilian Public Service Camps. Conscientious objectors during World War II were allowed to go to abandoned Civilian Conservation Camps and work at socially worthwhile projects such as forest management and soil conservation. Later, a number of detached projects were opened to these individuals so that they could serve in hospitals and on other charity projects. The Church of the Brethren spent considerable sums of money to support these men, especially in the work camps, because the government refused to finance them.[19]

The second of these peace activists, Daniel West (1893-1971), won greater recognition outside the brotherhood than did Bowman.[20] Educated at several institutions of higher learning including Bethany, Manchester College, and Cornell University, West chose to serve the church as a lay leader rather than as a minister. Following his discharge from the army in 1918, he became a public school teacher and administrator in Ohio. By 1930 he was appointed director of youth work for the Brethren. He used his position to encourage a variety of peace education projects including "20,000 Dunkers For Peace." West also recruited young people to serve in work camps and participate in peace caravans. In 1936 he was relieved of his other duties to visit college campuses where he spoke on behalf of various pacifist issues.

During the Spanish Civil War he went to Spain to organize relief efforts. Faced with the problem of doling out scarce supplies to the starving, he conceived the idea of sending livestock to those in need as a way of providing a continuing source of food. "The initial recipient of a cow or goat would pledge to pass on the first female offspring, so that a chain of aid would grow in geometric progression. The idea was



Alternative service delegation to President Roosevelt, January 10, 1940. Left to right: *Clarence Pickett, Walter Woodward, Rufus Jones, (Quakers); Peter C. Hiebert, Harold S. Bender, (Mennonites); Rufus Bowman, Paul Bowman, (Brethren).*

realized during World War II as the Heifer Project, Incorporated and began sending livestock to the needy around the world. American farmers, church groups, and service clubs were attracted by the earthy practicality of the scheme and it found broad support."[21] Later, the project expanded until it became interdenominational and ecumenical in scope. Despite his heavy commitment to humanitarian missions Dan West continued to be active in peace education by directing human relation seminars, initiating group dynamics programs and sponsoring retreats designed to foster Christian community.

The third Brethren peace hero, Michael Robert Zigler (1891-1985), was perhaps the most influential of all. He combined the extensive influence of Bowman among the members of his denomination with the ecumenical vision of West.[22]

Educated at Bridgewater College, Vanderbilt University, Bethany Seminary, and the University of Chicago, Zigler was one of those who took noncombatant service in World War I. He volunteered to work with the YMCA and was assigned to Parris Island, South Carolina, where he organized programs that gave spiritual comfort to the men and provided them with wholesome recreational activities. Later in life he recalled the traumatic experience of seeing recruits subjected to intensive drills, bayonet practice, and unrelenting indoctrination. They were driven almost beyond endurance in exhuasting, stressful ways to break their wills and remold them in the Marine Corps pattern. Zigler was impressed by the way the recruits were prepared to die for their country. He began to dream of a time when young people could be prepared with the same determination to give their lives for peace. His "experience there loomed large in his self-understanding and future direction for the rest of his life. He often spoke of the time there as the catalyst for his dedication to peace; he was conscious of the paradox that an assignment oriented toward maintaining the morale of thousands of young men being trained to kill should be the motivation for his giving his life to the cause of restraining the impulse toward war. Again and again, as he spoke to large and small audiences about peace, he would state that it was his YMCA job on Parris Island that was formative in his career as a crusader for peace."[23]

When the hostilities ended, Zigler returned to the work for his beloved church. Appointed to the position of Director of Home Missions at Elgin, Illinois, he was rather hastily ordained to the Christian ministry. Never one to worry about theological subtleties, he remained a lifelong liberal in theology. His major reason for accepting the position at the emerging headquarters of the denomination was to encourage Brethren peace activities. In his view, that was the major contribution that the Church would make to Christ's Kingdom. Because the ecclesiastical structure was in the early stages of development and finances were limited, Zigler soon found himself not only serving the Home Missions but also the General Ministerial Board and the Board of Christian Education. In addition, he "acted as chairman of the staff under the Council of Boards, the coordinating body that brought together representatives of the several church boards and the seminary. As such he acted virtually as a general secretary. He was clearly the major figure on the denominational staff level. His appearances at the Annual Conferences reflected this role. Articles summarizing the events of the conferences during the 1930s and 1940s featured his activities on every page."[24]

From 1919 to 1939 he visited almost all the Church of the Brethren congregations across the country. That was quite a feat when one considers that in 1931 there were over 1,027 congregations meeting in 1,464 places. Of these, 1,137 were in rural areas and small towns which were difficult to reach. Almost half of these congregations had less than 100 members and they were served by part time or unpaid ministers. However, in such a situation, a man of Zigler's warm, down-to-earth, personal style could win many friends and enlist widespread support. This would stand him in good stead in later years when he needed support for his peace activities on an international scale. Of all his duties, the one that interested him most was that of Secretary of Christian Education because this board was responsible for championing the peace concerns of the church. One of the novel methods he introduced while serving in this post was to enlist Brethren higher educational institutions in a unified attempt to build a strong church and a just society. A lasting contribution of this effort was the establishment of the peace studies program at Manchester College.

While working among the Brethren, Zigler also became involved in ecumenical activities. He cooperated with the local Ministerium, the Illinois Council of Churches, and the National (Federal) Council of Churches. From 1941 to 1947 he represented the Brethren on the executive council of the Federal Council of Churches. As in the case of his own denominational services, it was his desire to spread the Gospel of peace that motivated his ecumenical commitment. In the years following World War II, he became the Brethren representative to the World Council of Churches and in 1945 he was chosen to be a member of the council's prestigious central committee. At meetings of this body, he constantly reiterated his simple dramatic plea for peace. "When will Christians stop killing each other?" he would ask. "Other participants might personally be pacifists but as representatives of nonpacifist churches they could not commit their denominations officially to a peace position. Privately, they encouraged Zigler to keep up the pressure."[25]

During World War II he left his other church duties to become Executive Secretary of the Brethren Service Committee which sought to provide for alternative service opportunities and to relieve the suffering of those individuals in war zones. Zigler and Bowman were instrumental in bringing the Mennonites and Quakers together with the Brethren to develop a program for conscientious objectors. Although not entirely satisfactory, this system was a vast improvement over what had prevailed during World War I. Zigler also served as Chairman of the National Service Board for Religious Objectors which acted as a liaison between those young men who wished to maintain a peace witness and the government.

After 1945 his attention turned to another way of expressing his Christian concerns. For Zigler, pacifism was not a quietist faith but an active commitment to alleviate all forms of human suffering. The devastation in Europe gave ample opportunity to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. The agency through which he worked had as one of its goals rendering service to the needy regardless of nationality, race or creed. During the war this activity was somewhat limited, but with the advent

of peace the Brethren began to supply food, materials and assistance to the victims of the conflict. By 1948, the Brethren Volunteer Service was organized to allow young people to offer their time and talents to various projects both at home and abroad. In the same year, Zigler moved to Europe where he settled in Geneva. From this base of operation, he directed the humanitarian efforts of the church and represented the Brethren in the World Council of Churches. Under his leadership, tons of food and supplies as well as thousands of animals were distributed to people who had lost almost everything they possessed in the war. Many young people came to serve as short term workers under his administration in refugee camps, hospitals, nursing homes, and as youth leaders. It was difficult, even for those who did not support a peace witness, not to admire these forms of alternative service.

After his retirement Zigler never ceased working for a better world. In 1944 he had encouraged the Brethren Service Commission to purchase the former campus of Blue Ridge College in New Windsor, Maryland as a headquarters for the church's relief activities. Not only were goods shipped there for distribution to the needy in other lands, but refugees were temporarily given housing at the center and young people were trained for Brethren Volunteer Service. The facility was also made available to other agencies and denominations and it became a center for ecumenical relief efforts. In 1980 Zigler began to sponsor a series of programs at New Windsor aimed at specific vocational groups that would revitalize the peace emphasis of the church. Called "On Earth Peace," the organization continues to operate seminars, a bookstore and other programs designed to foster international understanding. In this way "he being dead yet speaks" to younger generations of Brethren as well as those of other denominations who would follow the Prince of Peace.

Consequently, from the perspective of over six decades one can take consolation from the fact that the nation state did not win a total victory over the Brethren in World War I. Individuals such as Bowman, West and Zigler profited from the mistakes of an earlier era and provided the leadership that encouraged the church to support conscientious objectors in a much more effective way during World War II. The peace witness of the church with its roots in the lives of individuals such as John Kline lives on. Today many Brethren echo the outlook of that great Civil War martyr who explained: "I have a somewhat higher conception of true patriotism than can be represented by the firing of guns. . . . My highest conception of patriotism is found in the man who loves the Lord his God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. Out of these affections spring the subordinate love for one's country; love truly virtuous for one's companion and children, relatives and friends; and in its most comprehensive sense takes in the whole human family. Were this love universal, the word patriotism, and its specific sense, meaning such a love for one's country as makes its possessors ready and willing to take up arms in its defense, might be appropriately expunged from every national vocabulary."[26]

ENDNOTES

[1]Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace, A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 152.

[2]Donald Durnbaugh, "Early History" in *Church of the Brethren, Yesterday and Today* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1986), p. 3.

[3]Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708-1941* (Brethren Publishing House, 1944), p. 98f.

[4]Durnbaugh, p. 13.

[5]For a brief introduction to the major Brethren groups see *Meet the Brethren*, ed. Donald Durnbaugh (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1984). These are a series of articles reprinted from *The Brethren Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: The Brethren Encyclopedia Inc., 1983-1984), three volumes, which is a veritable gold mine of information about Brethren beliefs, history and practices.

For information about the Progressive Brethren attitude toward the war see Herman A. Hoyt, "Nonresistance" in *War: Four Christian Views*, ed. R. G. Clouse (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1986), pp. 27-57; also D. C. Moomaw's two books *Christianity versus War* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Co., 1924) and *A Cloud of Witnesses, An Expression of the Deep Convictions of Faithful Men Who Are Opposed to War* (Ashland, OH: Brethren Publishing Co., 1925).

Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren* and Norman Thomas, *Is Conscience a Crime?* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1927) refer to the courageous stand of many of the Old Order Brethren as they refused to serve in the armed forces.

[6]Bowman, p. 164.

[7]J. Maurice Henry, *History of the Church of the Brethren in Maryland* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1936), p. 526.

[8]*Minutes of the Special General Conference of the Church of the Brethren, Held at Goshen, Indiana, January 9, 1918*, p. 13.

[9]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

[10]Henry p. 530.

[11]*The Gospel Messenger*, v. 67 (July 27, 1918), p. 2. Quoted from Cassidente, "The Goshen Statement Compromise," (1971), p. 10.

[12]Henry, p. 532.

[13]Roger E. Sappington, *Brethren Social Policy, 1908-1958* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1961), p. 44. Sappington's assessment of the situation continues, "In its hysterical desire to wipe out German sympathizers in the United States, the government had also found cause to prosecute an innocent religious minority with long-standing views regarding their participation in military service," p. 45.

[14]Dale W. Brown, *Brethren and Pacifism* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1970), p. 41. For some thoughtful applications of the lessons learned from the *Goshen Statement* see Dale W. Brown, *Simulations on Brethren History* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1976), pp. 77-105.

[15]Quoted in Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms: The Role of the American Churches and Clergy in World Wars I and II, with Some Observations on the War in Vietnam* (Scottdale, PA; Herald Press, 1969), p. 79.

[16]An excellent vignette of Debs as a war critic is Lawrence Wittner, "Eugene V. Debs: Socialist and War Resister," in *Peace Heroes in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. C. Debenedetti (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 56-84. The most readable biography of Debs is Ray Ginger, *Eugene V. Debs: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1962).

[17]Donald Durnbaugh, "Introduction" to the Garland reprint edition of Bowman's *The Church of the Brethren and War, 1708-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1971), p. 10.

[18]Bowman, p. 279.

[19]For more details about the situation of the church in World War II see David B. Eller, "Social Outreach" in *Church of the Brethren: Yesterday and Today*, ed. D. Durnbaugh (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1986), pp. 119-134.

[20]For more about the admirable career of Dan West see Glee Yoder, *Passing on the Gift: The Story of Dan West* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1978).

[21]Durnbaugh, "Introduction," p. 9.

[22]The dean of Brethren church historians, Donald F. Durnbaugh, has written a fine biography of Zigler, *Pragmatic Prophet, The Life of Michael Robert Zigler* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1989).

[23]*Ibid.*, pp. 40f.

[24]*Ibid.*, p. 81.

[25]*Ibid.*, pp. 191.

[26]Benjamin Funk, *Life and Labours of Elder John Kline* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1900), p. 246. For evidence of a continued peace interest among the Brethren see Dale Aukerman, *Darkening Valley, A Biblical Perspective on Nuclear War* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1981); Dale W. Brown, *Biblical Pacifism, A Peace Church Perspective* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1986) and D. F. Durnbaugh, ed. *On Earth Peace: Discussions on War/Peace Issues Between Friends, Mennonites, Brethren and European Churches 1935-1975* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1978).

Comparisons and Contrasts Among Historic Peace Churches

by Hugh S. Barbour

The leaders of the three "Historic Peace Churches" cooperated closely in defining, setting up, and running the Civlian Public Service Camp system. The Friends' camps were a little less concerned for their Church's influence with the camp life, but this was partly because the twenty Friends camps (out of the 67 total) had only 950 Quaker conscientious objectors within them, as against 4665 Mennonite and 1510 Brethren conscientious objectors. By necessity as well as temperament, Friends were more open to campers from other churches.[1]

All the camps' costs were entirely borne by the churches, except for the actual buildings. Thus the Quakers' two and a third million dollars felt more like philanthropy than did the Mennonites' three million or the Brethren's one and two-thirds.[2] But all three churches faced the same problems of maintaining morale and discipline for men coerced into dull and government-assigned digging chores isolated from society, when they had been promised "work of national importance under civilian direction." Here the Mennonites' centuries of patience under "powers that be," who were supposedly, but not visibly, ordained of God, paid off better than Quaker individualism.

The Quakers were less tame under government than were Mennonites and Brethren, which points to a deeper historical contrast. This difference made Quaker World War experiences lead them in almost the opposite direction from those of the Mennonites and Brethren. The Mennonites' version of a "two-kingdom ethic" is as close to Luther's as to the Quaker theocratic ideal of "speaking truth to power." The early Quakers, as their enemies reminded them, had not renounced their dream of a "rule of the Saints," as the Mennonites had after the Münster tragedy. In Pennsylvania, indeed, Friends practiced theocracy. They expected that Quaker stands like the rejection of oaths and armaments, would be accepted without coercion by all citizens once their consciences were enlightened. This came true so far as the Mennonite and Brethren settlers in Pennsylvania were concerned. Further research may reveal how those sectarians viewed the Pennsylvania government.

In the non-Quaker colonies, such as Rhode Island and early Carolina, Quaker citizens married, dressed and worshipped only among Friends. They expected fines and imprisonments for refusing war taxes and militia duty; but they were also willing to be elected as governors or legislators. In recent times, a Quaker like Senator Douglas saw himself as a social reformer, not as a representative of his church's moral order, nor as a renegade from his church. Some of this difference has indeed been cultural. Quakers in CPS camps were 43% urban professionals and only 11% farmers. Meanwhile the Mennonites were 12% professionals and 59% farmers.

The contrast has long been true for relief programs as well. The Mennonites sent some relief to strangers in the Spanish Civil War. But their feeding program in Russia in the 1920s had been mainly a mutual aid project for fellow Mennonites. The Quakers who provided $20,000,000 of relief in Samara during the same Russian famine[3] were continuing the pattern they had begun when they fed a million children a day in blockaded post-war Germany. Early Quaker philanthropy had also been mostly mutual aid. There were elements of mutual aid in the food Friends tried to send through George Washington's siege lines to British-held Boston, or to Ireland in its civil war of 1798, and even in Quaker aid to the South in our own Civil War. By that time, however, Quaker aid to slaves and freedmen and to the Irish during their potato famine had moved beyond mutual aid into wider philanthropy. Quaker schools and Sunday schools for the poor of London and Philadelphia had the same effect. In 1864 after the Crimean War the Quakers sent food to Finland. In 1864 and 1870 they sent aid to the Danes and to the city of Nancy when they were invaded by the Prussians.

The temptation of Quaker benevolence has not been to limit the efforts to mutual aid, but to become paternalistic in helping unfortunate strangers. In World War II Roger Wilson, the head of British service work, warned American Friends,

> The best Quaker relief work has, I think, sprung from a sense of common sin leading to a sense of common suffering and the subsequent need for . . . a common repentance, . . . a real intention to break the circle of sin and suffering by living in the grace of God, whose will for us in any particular situation is a real objective fact . . . known through prayer. . . . Inspired Quaker relief workers cease to be external agents; they become a real part of the chaos, the misery and the perplexity in which they move. . . . We need the experience [of] John Woolman when he saw himself as no longer a distinct and separate being, but part of suffering mankind.[4]

In relation to their governments, Quakers at their best also feel the common bonds and responsibilities of humanity and nationality. Thus the Mennonite and Brethren leaders went to ask the government Selective Service

leaders Clarence Dykstra and Lewis B. Hershey about alternative service for COs on December 10, 1940, after the draft law passed in September, a year before we were at war; but the Quaker leaders had met with Roosevelt about the draft the previous January, and had gathered representatives from 22 Yearly Meetings in July 1940, to organize lobbying against the draft itself in Congress. Three years later they turned the resulting War Problems Committee into the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the first permanent church lobby.[5]

It also came more easily for Quakers than for the other "Peace Churches" to propose positive alternative actions for COs in wartime. Friends had been as hated in England in the Crimean and the Boer wars as the German churches had been in World War I, but this was partly because urbanized British Quakers were raising their voices within the national arena. John Bright had been in Parliament until his stand against the Crimean War, when he said "the angel of death [was] abroad throughout the land" and it lost him his seat. In the Boer War, British Friends had been spurred on by Emily Hobhouse's visits to British concentration camps for Boers in South Africa and had sent relief to those enemies.

The British Quakers' response to the first World War included intense lobbying for peace and against the draft. Many were jailed for refusing it. But three service programs were also set up. First, there was immediate relief for German and Austrian citizens stranded and imprisoned in England when the war broke out. Then came a longer-term War Victims relief program that was the ancestor of both the British Friends Service Council and the American Friends Service Committee. Finally, there was a Friends Ambulance Unit which served at and behind the battle line in Flanders and later also in Italy, where the parallel Red Cross ambulance work inspired Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms*. My father served in both Quaker units. He was at Ypres in time to identify chlorine as the gas used on the victims he brought in during the first German gas attack.

In the second War, the Friends ambulances were on constant duty during the blitz bombings of the British cities. Quakers thus felt very much part of the wider wartime society. American Friends naturally tried to prepare for a similar duty, but their Haverford training unit, and a team already on shipboard off the Cape of Good Hope, were cut off by the Starnes Amendment that limited COs to conventional work within this country.

The Civilian Public Service experience, however, and the growing awareness that needs for which the American Friends Service Committee was sending relief were due to basic social injustices, turned that committee and Friends generally in the direction of social protest and of work of social change. Except for a few communes, this did not drive Quakers into a separation from wider society, but it meant a confrontation with its life and its leaders. Here Quakers met the Mennonites and Brethren coming the other way, out of their separatist isolation, while they still kept their radical critique of the faith and ethics of most so-called Christians. Thus all the "Peace Churches" found themselves national leaders of the protesting young people in the Viet Nam War era. During that war the New Call to Peacemaking and the vision of the nonviolent "Lamb's War" united peace people in practical action against social evil.

Mennonites and Brethren service committees may have kept better consensus with their communities of faith, and better roots in the Bible as over against secular radicalism, than have the Friends Service Committees. Quakers have been quicker to accept the challenges to find and overcome the causes of domestic, sexual, racial and economic violence and oppression.

ENDNOTES

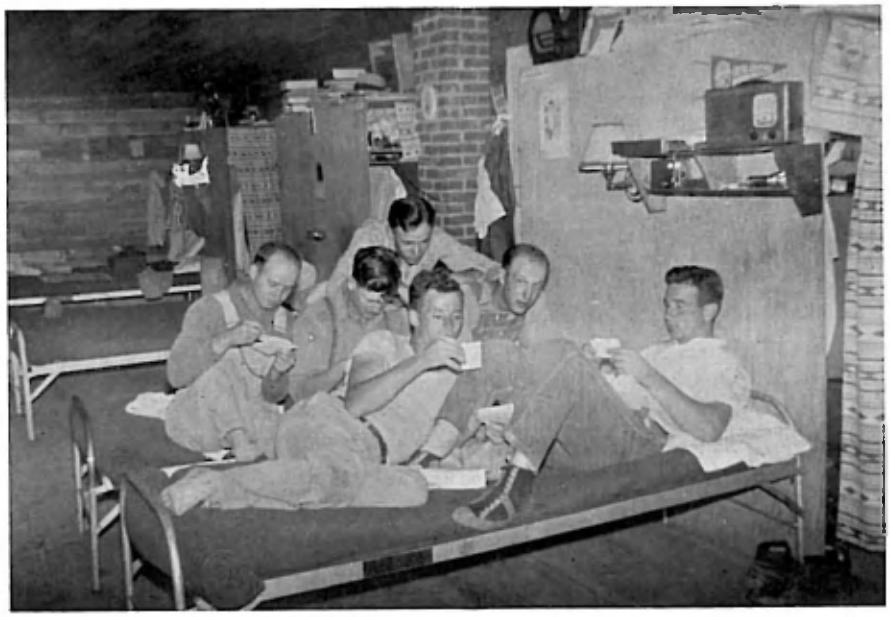
[1]Data from Mulford Sibley and Philip Jacob, *Conscription of Conscience . . . 1940-47* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952) and Clarence Pickett, *For More Than Bread* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953).

[2]*Idem.*

[3]Homer and Edna Morris papers, Earlham College Archives; Frank Surface and Raymond Bland, *American Food in the World War and Reconstruction Period* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1931).

[4]Roger Wilson, *Relief and Reconstruction*, Pendle Hill pamphlet no. 22 (Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1943), 11, 15.

[5]E. Raymond Wilson, *Uphill for Peace* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1975), ch. 2.



In the barracks at CPS #24, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Book Reviews

Merrill Mow. *Torches Rekindled: The Bruderhof's Struggle for Renewal.* Foreword by Tom Sine and John Perkins. Rifton, NY: Plough Publishing House, 1989.

In 1964, the Society of Brothers—more often referred to as "the Bruderhof"—published *Torches Together*, Emmy Arnold's memoirs of the Bruderhof's first decades. In *Torches Rekindled*, Merrill Mow presents the "next installment" of that community's history. A former member of the Church of the Brethren, Mow joined the Bruderhof in 1955; he died before publication, and the book is a transcription of dinner table reminiscences. Emmy Arnold had written in a similarly "folksy" style, and focused on the Bruderhof's "German period." She described its founding in 1920 by herself and her husband Eberhard; their ensuing pursuit of Christian community, influenced first by the ideals of religious socialism and the German Youth Movement, then turning toward Anabaptist models. This led to affiliation with the North American Hutterian Brethren in 1930. Her narrative climaxed with the disbanding of the community by the Third Reich in 1937, after which the Bruderhof resettled first in England, and then in Paraguay. Mow then covers the Bruderhof's "North American period," beginning with the gradual transfer of population and leadership from Paraguay to the eastern United States. His intent is to offer a religious understanding of the Bruderhof's schism, and later reunification with the Hutterian Brethren. The "narrative structure" of these two books is then quite different: Emmy Arnold's story builds steadily, presenting a community struggling "against the grain" of dominant societal trends, and maintaining a clarity of vision even in the face of Nazism; Mow blazes a more challenging narrative path, relating not the clarity, but the "blindness" of his community, and the fruits of an aggressively pursued repentance.

The book's title, *Torches Rekindled*, implies the extinguishing of a guiding light. The most important Bruderhof "error" related by Mow was how it came to exercise a dominating influence over the Forest River colony, one of the "ethnic" Hutterite communities; Forest River then transferred its affiliation to the Bruderhof in 1955. As a result, the Hutterian Brethren severed their affiliation with the Bruderhof, which was only restored in 1974 after Heini Arnold, son of Emmy and Eberhard, had repeatedly humbled himself before Hutterian leadership.

This bears recounting, but few details are revealing: Heini is cast as the paragon of Bruderhof virtue, while precise description gives way to an all-too-familiar vagueness. Other disturbing incidents are alluded to, but only in passing—such as the apparent "purge" that took place around 1959-1961, which other sources claim effected the departure or "expulsion" of over 600 members. Mow voices regret, but avoids citing individual responsibility because it was the "atmosphere" that was to blame—which, as a diagnosis, sidesteps accountability with disturbing convenience. (For a significantly different assessment of the problems leading to the Hutterites severing their affiliation with the Bruderhof, see John A. Hostetler and Gertrude Enders Huntington, *The Hutterites in North America* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 107-108. The best-known reference on the "purge" is Benjamin David Zablocki's *The Joyful Community* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1971), pp. 98-110.)

Mow specified individual accountability very infrequently, but one exception to this is curiously harsh: the sinful "ambition" of Hans Zumpe as leader was finally paired with the revelation of his adultery. Specification of sinfulness was then made in the case of a member who was cast out and did not repent, but no accusation approaching this one in potency was directed toward any member who remained or returned to the community; in their case, allusion to "bad atmosphere" misguiding the collective community was sufficient. This seems to constitute a double standard in terms of when "attention to detail" is of interest, and when it is not.

These "confessions" surface from a narrative framework of loosely linked anecdotes, which doubtless held the attention of Mow's dinner table companions, but are often less compelling to an outsider. Perhaps the book's greatest strength is in Mow's own incidental reflections on Christian community, which are often moving, insightful, and wonderfully straightforward. These undoubtedly reflect the broader Bruderhof perspective, as well as the virtues of Eberhard Arnold's vision. But Mow fails to relieve the discomfort of ex-Bruderhofers and some observers at the continued dominance of the Arnold clan and the ongoing pattern of "dynastic succession" in community leadership. His obliviousness to such issues seems to be guarded by a kind of "innocence." Emmy Arnold's memoirs were also characterized by an innocence: hers would unsettle the modern mindset, because it surfaces as an expression of wonder at incidents that make sense only through a faith commitment; Mow's innocence, on the other hand, comes into view not as a glimmer to unanswerable questions, but as a gloss to questions which the Bruderhof has failed to address.

But Mow confronts even the most critical reader with the fruits of Bruderhof commitment. These come to the fore, for example, in his references to Bennie Bargen. Bargen left Bethel College for the Bruderhof in the mid-1950s, but was then among the many to leave at the end of that decade. A little more than ten years later, Heini Arnold learned that Bargen was terminally ill, and came to North Newton, Kansas, to plead with Bargen to return. Mow does not specify whether this was a gesture of "repentance," or the drawing in of a "lost sheep." Mow's account of Bargen's return is preceded by reference to the Bruderhof's concern for "lost sheep." However, he also seems to imply that Heini's motives were in part those of regret. Mow thus leaves the

impression that Bargen may have been wronged, but he was also a "lost sheep." Bargen's son Eldon told me that members of the Bethel College community attempted to persuade Bargen to stay; however, he chose to return to the Bruderhof, and as a result spent many of his final days outdoors surrounded by children, dying "with a tan on his face." Eldon Bargen himself has some ambivalence about his father's decision—but could we have offered Bennie Bargen that much? Can we offer that much today?

James I. Lichti
Los Angeles, California

Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990. Pp. 271. ($14.95 paperback)

There is hardly a community today that doesn't feel overwhelmed by the problems of crime. Assaults, thefts, and illegal drug activity dominate the daily news. How should society respond to these problems? Even if such measures were curbing the rising crime rate, are harsher sentences for offenders, building more prisons, and the use of the death penalty really the answer?

For over a decade, Howard Zehr, particularly as a churchman and as a Mennonite, has been providing insightful and guiding leadership in matters of criminal justice. That leadership continues in a strong way with his new book, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice.*

Zehr's book is an examination of our current criminal justice system: its assumptions, priorities, and goals. His assessment finds the system seriously failing everyone involved—the victim and the offender and the communities that they and we are a part of.

In a readable style, Zehr draws from many years of involvement, including over 10 years as the Director of Mennonite Central Committee's Office on Criminal Justice, to describe the common experiences and feelings of victims and offenders. He shows how and why we need to be doing a better job of addressing the needs of victims and offenders to help them experience justice.

With a biblical and historical overview, Zehr explains how the present system inadequately deals with issues such as power, repentance, and forgiveness. We need, Zehr says, new approaches to create and sustain right relationships in our communities.

In *Changing Lenses* Zehr is arguing for the criminal justice system to change its paradigm. The system, he believes, needs to move from what he calls a "retributive" model of justice to a "restorative" mode of justice. Retributive justice, he says, sees crime as "a violation of the state, defined by lawbreaking and guilt. Justice determines blame and administers pain in a contest between the offender and the state directed by systematic rules." On the other hand, restorative justice views crime "as a violation of people and relationships. It creates obligations to make things right. Justice involves the victim, the offender, and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance."

The key to change, as Zehr promotes through the book's title, is to alter the way we look at and describe the problem. For example, if justice is primarily defined as punishing the wrongdoer, then we can expect a continual need to expand our prisons, have more frustrated and angry victims and plan for crime's increasing burden to take even a greater toll on all of society. To change the outcome we need to change our basic assumptions and goals.

The author clearly states this is a book of ideas of where our criminal justice system can and needs to go. In arguing for a move to a more restorative model of justice, Zehr acknowledges that many questions remain on the practical implementation of this approach. However, there are examples. One is the relatively few victim-offender reconciliation programs (VORP) operating in or along side of the judicial system throughout Canada, the U.S., and Europe. VORP is the process of bringing victims voluntarily to meet face-to-face with their offenders to discuss facts, feelings, and plans for resolution to right the wrongs as much as possible.

Zehr calls for more programs to be developed and tries to move the system and our communities towards a more restorative model of justice. And this is Zehr's hope—that if no other institution in society is exploring new perspectives, the church certainly needs to be. For even though extreme moral, ethical, and theological differences can be found in the church concerning issues of crime and justice, Zehr does take seriously the church's role to be the "salt of the earth" in these matters. With its ideas and group study questions for each chapter, this book encourages discussing what that role should be.

The causes and remedies to crime are complex, and our natural avoidance of these issues is understandable. Yet crime will pull us into the problem one way or another, either as a victim, offender, or as a community member voicing opinions on public policy. What policies do we advocate and on what basis?

After having read the book, one of our agency's volunteers commented that he would like to have a copy sent to each of our state legislators. Whether it gets that kind of distribution, *Changing Lenses* certainly is an excellent source to promote and cite in our discussions in working toward improvements that can have profound impact on people's lives.

Fred Loganbill
Director of VORP for Offender/Victim Ministries
Newton, Kansas

John B. Toews, *Perilous Journey: The Mennonite Brethren in Russia 1860-1910.* Winnipeg and Hillsboro: Kindred Press, 1988. Pp. 94 ($9.95—paperback).

Perilous Journey is a small book (94 pages) briefly surveying the Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia from its inception in 1860 to the eve of World War I. The author, John B. Toews, teaches history at the University of Calgary. He is a well known authority on the Mennonite experience in Russia, having written a number of articles and books on this subject, including *Lost Fatherland* and *Czars, Soviets and Mennonites.*

This book is not detailed or comprehensive. Such a slender volume cannot expect to cover what P. M. Friesen's larger work (900 pages) does. Instead it is more like a snapshot, capturing the major themes of the first fifty years of Mennonite Brethren history in Russia and offering some new insights to this movement.

Toews begins his story by describing the Mennonite Church in Russia during the mid nineteenth century. Here the author offers some new perspectives by using sources not available to earlier writers. In particular, he utilizes the diary entries of David Epp who records aspects of Mennonite life, twenty to

thirty years prior to the 1860 schism. In Epp's reflections, drunkenness and deviant sexual behavior are prevalent in the Russian Mennonite communities. Lifestyle and confession did not match and the spirituality of the community was not what it should be. Moreover, the close-knit Mennonite colonies had become something of an authoritarian Mennonite state, a kind of theocracy that failed to distinguish between the City of God and the earthly city.

Toews goes on to describe the beginnings of the Mennonite Brethren Church. Renewal came largely from preachers outside the Mennonite establishment. When revival preachers came to the villages and preached repentance, some accepted the invitation and broke away from the established Mennonite Church. This lead to the formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

But in chapter four, "Dangerous Journey," Toews demonstrates that the path to renewal was a perilous trek. This radical religion could not be contained in the traditional Mennonite framework. It broke out, sometimes in a way that shocked the traditionalists. In particular, the "froehliche Richtung" (joyous enthusiasts) movement exploded, emphasizing feelings and emotions so foreign to the joyless Mennonite religion. The new movement was faced with a balancing act between two extremes: the lifeless, creed-propounding traditionalism or the zealous, more erratic enthusiastic Christian experience.

Toews goes on to focus on other issues that grew out of the Mennonite revival. Were members of the new church to be satisfied with personal salvation or would discipleship be emphasized? Given the individualism found in the new church, how was it to be unified and organized? Toews indicates that the Mennonite Brethren were quite successful in transforming this reckless individualism into an organized religious body with a strong institutional basis.

In several of the later chapters, Toews looks at Mennonite Brethren relationships with the outside world. He examines the changing world of the late nineteenth century as it relates to the religious values of the Mennonite Brethren Church. In particular, Toews notes the new church's interaction with the Baptists and the impact of the Blankenburg Conference on the Brethren. By the early twentieth century, outside pressures had pushed the Old Church and the Mennonite Brethren closer together. While many differences still existed, the Brethren and the Mennonite Church found it to their advantage to cooperate in many institutional ventures.

Toews' short volume is helpful to historians, sociologists, church leaders and to Mennonite Brethren who want a short but insightful glimpse of their past. Early Mennonite Brethren history is a mixture of both positive and negative elements. The author has tried to tell both sides of this story. He describes the early Mennonite Brethren Church in the context of the political, social, and religious world in which they lived and the circumstances associated with its ongoing transformation. *Perilous Journey* is a well written narrative history describing the dynamics which shaped the early Mennonite Brethren experience in Russia.

Richard Kyle
Professor of History and Religion
Tabor College

Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Meetingplace: A History of the Mennonite Church of Normal, 1912-1987.* Normal, IL: Mennonite Church of Normal, 1987. Pp. 179.

Rachel Waltner Goossen, *Prairie Vision: A History of the Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church 1888-1988.* Harper, KS: Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, 1988. Pp. 146.

These two recent congregational histories join a slowly growing shelf of high quality works on Mennonite congregations. The two congregations are to be commended for selecting a highly qualified author and doing the behind-the-scenes work necessary to produce a good congregational history.

Meetingplace should be required reading for every Mennonite who is conscious of the current evolution of Mennonite unity. The Normal church is a 1970s merger of an old Central Conference, Amish background, GC church with a younger, fairly traditional, MC church. This is also a fascinating story of how an urban, strongly evangelistic, and very Americanized group gradually recovered its Anabaptist heritage and identity. The author's father was pastor of this church from 1972 to 1986.

Prairie Vision is the story of a rather more conventional, rural MC congregation. Familiar rural issues appear: population growth and decline, membership turnover especially among young people, involvement in town business, economic development. Familiar themes of MC history surface: the building of institutions such as Hesston College and South Central Conference, slowly growing acculturation, the rise and decline of the "doctrinal era" and outward signs of nonconformity such as head coverings. Even here there are a few inter-Mennonite signs: a scattering of GC, Low German family names and a founding bishop with the marvelously unlikely name of Benjamin Franklin Hamilton.

Esther Jost, ed. *75 Years of Fellowship: Pacific Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches.* Fresno, CA: Pacific District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1987. Pp. 122.

The history of one of the most important and influential regional Mennonite groupings is described in this brief book. The approach is topical, rather than chronological, with chapters by ten different authors. Expected themes are covered: origins, schools, home missions. Other, less routine subjects receive a chapter: theological changes, Hispanic outreach, women, music. This is a glimpse of a Mennonite group learning to deal with ethnic diversity and urban America.