

Yaacov Oved

# DIS TANT BRO THERS

History of the relations  
between the Bruderhof  
and the Kibbutz



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THE BRUDERHOF AND THE KIBBUTZ

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**Publishers of the Plough (U.S.A.)**

Typesetting: **Ilana Bernstein**

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**ISRAEL 1993**

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## Acknowledgment

This book was originally written in Hebrew, with a kibbutz readership in mind. After its writing it became evident that members of the Bruderhof would also find the book of great interest. As a consequence, Yad Tabenkin's Department for International Relations sponsored its translation into English. Work on the translation was begun by the late Hanna Lash, and completed by Yehuda Riemer. The manuscript was edited by the publishers of the Plough from the Bruderhof, and Vivian Rothschild from kibbutz Gesher HaZiv proofread the English version and prepared it for publication.

To all of the above, my deepest gratitude.

The Author

## PREFACE

The survey presented in this publication is a chapter from a book now in preparation about the history of the Bruderhof. I felt it necessary to have this chapter published beforehand, to inform the reading public of the web of relationships created between members of the Kibbutzim and the Bruderhof during the history of the two movements.

For 15 years, I have maintained contacts with members of the Bruderhof, and during this period I have developed feelings of closeness and sympathy towards them, while always being aware of the profound differences between us as to world-view, faith, and life-style. It was therefore with some trepidation that I started to write this chapter, since I was troubled by the thought that the quality of historical scholarship might be affected and that I would succumb to the temptation of writing my remembrances of personal encounters with members of the Bruderhof. But I was pleased to find that the more I explored the history of the relationships, the more I discovered the wide range of contacts that other kibbutz members had made with them, so that at the end I found myself part of a large and varied public who, like me, had undergone the inspiring experience accompanying such an encounter and had also become deeply interested in these communities.

During my inquiries, I discovered that the contacts with the Bruderhof had changed during the years. Drawing close at times and drifting apart at others, the two movements reacted with one another according to developments within their own spheres. Out of concern that relations might again reach a low point, I decided to start writing at once, so that the impressions of the contacts that had existed until now would not be lost and forgotten. I leave it to the reader to judge and evaluate the nature and meaning of these contacts. It should be pointed out that they have always existed on a personal level and have never been institutionalized. My writings are not intended to change this trend. In my opinion, relations should

continue on the path of personal contacts, even though it seems that conditions are ripe for raising them to a level of greater mutuality and to look for ways of achieving a deeper understanding. Moreover, the crisis through which the kibbutz movement is presently passing makes the fostering of a web of relationships with a communal movement, that has succeeded in jealously preserving its life-style doubly important.

The following survey, while of a historical-descriptive nature, it is valuable insofar as it reveals the existence of an unceasing impulse on the part of members of both the kibbutz and the Bruderhof to seek out contacts with allies and perhaps with "distant brothers." Nevertheless, beyond the kibbutz aspect, which brought me to this inquiry, I was accompanied all the time by the feeling that this episode has a wider meaning than the one discussed here. For within these contacts a unique phenomenon discloses itself: a continued dialogue between a Jewish secular movement and an internationalist Christian group. In this dialogue, which takes place between faiths and spiritual worlds far removed from each other, the parallel communal life-style succeeds in bridging the gap and in fostering deep and close emotional relations that continue to exist between the two movements in spite of the vast differences in outlook.

## BEGINNINGS

The two largest communal movements in our generation, namely, the kibbutz movement in Israel and the Bruderhof in Germany, were established early in the 20th century.<sup>(1)</sup> Geographic distances, the circumstances of their establishment, and a different Weltanschauung separated the two movements: the kibbutz movement was conceived with a secular, Zionist-socialist affinity; it supported political involvement and invested its efforts in the defense and security of the Jewish community in Israel (formerly Palestine). The Bruderhof emerged as a religious Christian group that zealously adopted Anabaptist pacifism, rejected almost all national and political involvement, and developed as a multinational community. And yet, throughout the course of their development, they have maintained close relations that have increased and branched out over the years, thanks to numerous mutual visits and dialogue that continue to the present. The relationship is unique because it is based on mutual respect for each movement's separate identity. Moreover, neither has ever attempted to preach to the other side.

During the early years, relations were sporadic, mainly in the form of incidental meetings between members of the Bruderhof and the Jewish HeHalutz movements in Germany. Opportunities for such encounters came during general meetings of German youth movements, by which both communal groups were influenced. The Bruderhof's founders were deeply rooted in the German youth movement that had emerged during the postwar unrest. Dr. Eberhard Arnold, the Bruderhof's spiritual leader and founder, was secretary of the German Christian Students Union during the First World War and after, and an outstanding, widely sought after public speaker. The Jewish Pioneer Youth Movement drew from the German youth movement much of its life-style and organizational structures.<sup>(2)</sup>

In those years, the close affinity between both communal movements was caused by their sharing the same spiritual sources; in fact, their communal concepts were much inspired by Martin Buber

and Gustav Landauer. The postwar Jewish youth movement's relationship to Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber's theories is well acknowledged.<sup>(3)</sup> Less is known about their affect on the Bruderhof, but apparently Eberhard Arnold had absorbed much of their ideas before the Bruderhof was established and passed them on.

At the beginning of the First World War, Eberhard Arnold, who belonged to an army reserve unit, was called up, but after three weeks he was released for reasons of health. From then on he was constantly preoccupied with the military question though it took some time for him to arrive at a pacifist approach. In 1915 Arnold and his family moved to Berlin, where he became an editor of the German Christian Student Union's monthly *Die Furche*, and literary director of the newly founded *Furche* Publishing House. He also lectured frequently and wrote numerous theological and philosophical articles including articles on Kierkegaard, Tolstoi, and Buber. In each he introduced the philosopher and then added his criticism. Only Buber was not criticized, evidently Arnold identified with his ideas. In fact, Arnold called him the "prophet" of a new religious concept at whose center was "the realization of Divinity," something achieved through finding peace with one's religion and overcoming one's internal duality. Arnold adopted Buber's concept of realization and turned it into one of the cornerstones of the doctrine he instilled in his young followers.<sup>(4)</sup>

Eberhard Arnold's esteem for Buber was profound and steadfast, never waning even when the latter openly supported the German war effort, which Arnold seriously questioned. He maintained his respect for Martin Buber during the early years of the Bruderhof, too. Arnold had been introduced to Landauer's doctrine via his book *A Call for Socialism* (2nd edition, 1919), and its social vision impressed him to such an extent that he integrated it into his own religious credo. He was impressed with Landauer's call to German youth to establish agricultural communes in which real togetherness would lead to productive and nonalienating work. The idea of small voluntary units that would eventually serve as a basis for changing society appealed to Eberhard Arnold and helped lead to the

establishment of his communal settlement, Sannerz, in June 1920. Moreover, its founding charter, which was signed by the first seven members of the community, was influenced in part by Gustav Landauer's ideas.<sup>(5)</sup>

Gustav Landauer's personality and doctrine continued to influence Bruderhof founders in later years, and his impact became even more profound after he was murdered by political rivals on May 2, 1919, and became a martyr. Evidence of his influence is found in many testimonies by older Bruderhof members.<sup>(6)</sup> George Barth, who joined the Bruderhof in 1924, tells about his first visit to Sannerz, where he had a long conversation with Arnold, mainly concerning Landauer's concepts and their influence on the Bruderhof's social vision.<sup>(7)</sup>

Simultaneously, there was a strong affinity to Martin Buber, whose influence on Jewish and German youth was great. The Bruderhof archives contain documents attesting to members' participation at conferences where Buber lectured; there is also evidence of the latter's visit to Sannerz during its first year.<sup>(8)</sup>

Eberhard Arnold and other intellectually versed Bruderhof members corresponded with Buber and raised theological and philosophical issues.<sup>(9)</sup> Hans Meier (born 1902), a Swiss member of the Bruderhof since the 1930s, tells of his esteem for Martin Buber ever since 1924, when he first met him during a congress of the Christian Socialist Movement in Zurich. This also led to Hans Meier's attraction to the Jewish people and Israel, and later to a lasting bond with the kibbutz movement, which he maintained throughout his long life. Hans Meier and others from Switzerland joined the Bruderhof in the 1930s after having first been members of Leonard Ragaz's Christian Socialist Movement, which fostered deep sympathy for the Bible and the Jewish people.<sup>(10)</sup>

Profound spiritual sources nurtured the Bruderhof's affinity to the Jewish people and to the kibbutz movement in the 1920s. In this decade, however, both were fledgling movements and as such were mainly occupied with existential issues, each in its own world.

Hence, hardly any concrete ties, existed in those years.

During the 1920s, the kibbutz movement spread rapidly. Thousands of young people joined Zionist youth movements in Europe in order to realize their dreams in Eretz Israel. There was no time to search for communal allies outside the Jewish world, even though curiosity about other forms of communal life existed. If there was any contact at all, it was sporadic and nothing further came of it.

The Bruderhof during the 1920s remained a tiny community, even though it maintained an "open-door policy" and attracted thousands of visitors during its first years. Between 1922-1928 it struggled to survive materially while crystallizing its doctrine and way of life under Eberhard Arnold's leadership. In those years, the Bruderhof had a wide periphery of potential followers in scores of small communes that had sprung up in German youth circles, mainly in the Neuwerk movement, of which Sannerz was a part. None of the communes managed to survive other than the Bruderhof, thanks to its religious convictions, its modest way of life, and the charismatic leadership of Eberhard Arnold.

Strong attempts were made to find allies in parallel circles: Eberhard Arnold's social vision did not allow him to become the leader of a small, isolated group. He perceived the Bruderhof merely as the nucleus of a large movement that would change society at large, and he therefore tried to form ties with other communes, even secular ones.<sup>(11)</sup> However, most communes in Germany disappeared after a few years. As significant contacts with German communes dwindled, dialogue began between Arnold and the Hutterites of North America, whom he had encountered through his studies in church history. Arnold began to correspond with them, and this led to an extended visit to North American Hutterite colonies in 1930-1931, which was crowned by his ordination as a spiritual leader for the Bruderhof in Germany. The religious ceremony tied the Bruderhof to the Hutterites without abolishing their uniqueness.

## ENCOUNTERS WITH MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS HE'HALUTZ MOVEMENT

In the beginning of 1930, special relations were formed between the Bruderhof and members of the religious He'halutz movement, who were training on a farm in Gheringhof near the Rhoen Bruderhof. According to George Barth, these relations had already been formed in the late 1920s:

We had long been aware of the group which lived in a nearby commune, preparing itself for life in a kibbutz in Eretz Israel.... When they visited us we were impressed with their profound idealism.... They adhere to the Jewish religion, but this does not impair our relations. Honoring their wish to eat kosher food, we offered them something suitable.... They were very curious about our way of life and wanted to understand how we manage the commune and our work. They all used to be townsfolk and were not used to agriculture. We had some vivid talks discovered that we had mutual interests. We regard the fastgrowing kibbutz movement as a partner in achieving our ideal of brotherhood and social justice. Communal life is perceived by both our movements not merely as a value per se, but as the first step towards a new society.<sup>(12)</sup>

In the Spring Valley (PA) files, are minutes of a conversation that took place on August 17, 1932, at the Rhoen Bruderhof between a group of visitors from Gheringhof and members of the Bruderhof. The report mainly consists of the visitors' words regarding themselves, their Weltanschauung, and their incentive to live on a kibbutz in Eretz Israel. They presented themselves as a religious-socialist group that aspired to settle in Kibbutz Rod'ges (a training farm near Petah Tikva) and maintain a community in which the social vision was integrated with a religious Jewish way of life. Members of the Bruderhof wanted to know in what way the Bible had inspired them. Furthermore, they wanted to understand whether

their Zionist conviction was merely a political one, or perhaps inspired by the prophets. According to the minutes, the visitors replied that they were strongly motivated by their belief in socialist principles that correlated with the prophets' vision. The hosts asked whether they were a closed community or whether their doors were open to all religious Jews and were told that every religious Jew was welcome as long as there was work and accommodation. The conversation ended in a discussion of internal problems, and the hosts inquired about ways and means by which personal rivalries were solved. They remarked that "after twelve years' experience of communal life, they were well aware of the fact that personal rivalries are unavoidable, and in order to diminish their impact, everyone should struggle against his own selfishness...." The visitors replied optimistically that they hoped to overcome their egotistical mentality during the training period for their future life in a collective community.<sup>(13)</sup>

In a talk with the author, Rudi Hertz, a member of Kvutzat Yavneh and one of the religious kibbutz movement's founders, he remembered this meeting and added that it took place on a Sunday, which was zealously maintained as a holiday in the entire Rhoen region. The meeting was inspired by curiosity about their neighbors. Hertz recalls how impressed they had been with the cleanliness and order, but how disappointed they were by the level of the Bruderhof's agriculture. He remarked, "In that respect we were much more advanced; they managed their farm like the poor farmers in the area." He recalled how hospitable their hosts had been, and how they had spent several hours in lively conversation. Bruderhof members were interested in the kibbutz, while members of the training farm were fascinated by the "Christians who lead the same kind of life as we do" and discovered that "their (communal) way of life ensued from their religious convictions." Hertz also noticed that they were influenced by Gustav Landauer and remarked that "Landauer was deeply admired by myself and by many of my generation. His book *A Call for Socialism* - served as the basis for our socialism, a non-Marxist kind of socialism."<sup>(14)</sup>

When Hitler rose to power in 1933, a period of persecution and suffering began for the Bruderhof. They had publicly abstained from voting, refused to raise their arm in the Nazi salute, and rejected all cooperation with the government. Being pacifists, they also refused conscription into the army. From the start they were put under strict observation and were later raided by police, army, and even Gestapo units on the pretext of searching for suspicious material and arms. Nothing discriminating was found, but they were forbidden to sell their books and to receive overnight visitors.

Although persecution curtailed the Bruderhof's ties with the outside world, and although visitors put themselves at risk, relations with the Jewish members of the training farm nevertheless continued. George Barth recalls, "They were the only ones who dared to visit us." Neither did the Bruderhof hesitate to keep in touch with Jewish circles and notables. Hans Meier relates how in 1936 he and several others from the Bruderhof paid a visit to Martin Buber's home. When the latter warned them of the risk, Meier replied, "We are facing the same danger and have also been forbidden to receive guests." During that visit Buber presented them with his and Franz Rosenberg's German translation of the Bible.<sup>(15)</sup>

In early January 1934, the National Socialist government rescinded the permit allowing the Bruderhof to run its own private school. By January 8, there were no children left at the community all had been whisked off to a refuge in Switzerland to avoid a Nazi teacher, and by March, a temporary Bruderhof in Liechtenstein had been established to house them.

The so called Alm Bruderhof was to provide safety for more than the children; when Hitler introduced universal military conscription the same month, all liable brothers were smuggled there too. In 1936, the Third Reich ordered conscription of all German men of military age living abroad, so all those affected at the Bruderhof in Liechtenstein fled to England. The next year, in April, the Gestapo raided the Rhoen Bruderhof and ordered its evacuation within twenty-four hours. Under those circumstances, even the

members in Liechtenstein did not feel safe. Plans were made for an escape to England, where they bought a farm in the Cotswolds near Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, in 1936, as the clouds had begun to gather over Europe.

By March 1938, all Bruderhof members had arrived at their new home in England. They numbered about 250 adults and children, most of them German, but also including Dutch, Swedish, French, and English members who had joined during the preceding years. Their community soon attracted British pacifists and conscientious objectors looking for a place where they might live according to their consciences. The farm encompassed 300 acres, 200 of them pasture and the remaining 100 comprising orchards and vegetable gardens. In addition, they had bee hives, sheep, and cattle, including 70 dairy cows. In England the Bruderhof continued its publishing activities with the preparation of new books and booklets in English, several of them English editions of Eberhard Arnold's works. Their most important step in that respect was the establishment of a periodical called "the Plough", which today still serves as the movement's means of expression. In the very first issues, one discovers that the Bruderhof's interest in the kibbutz movement had not waned. In the April 1939 issue of the Plough, there appeared a book review on the Handbook of Jewish Communal Villages in Palestine, (Head Office of Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel and Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem, 1938).

Gertrude Huessy, an educator and one of the founding members of the Bruderhof, wrote:

What are the roots of such a life and what are the causes of its success? ... How is it possible that so many people - twelve thousand in number decided upon this way of life? ... The book tries to show the reason for this enormous success. There are some practical advantages in living in a kvutza: life is more rationalized than on a private farm; farming is mechanized and the cost of production lower.... Manual and intellectual life are combined in a splendid way. The kvutza is a mutual insurance against

unemployment and ill-health. But the deeper reasons seem to lie in this: the movement of Zionism was combined from the beginning with a deep longing of many Jews to get back to manual lab back to the land! A.D.Gordon, who was deeply influenced by Leo Tolstoy, impressed the young people of this movement with an almost mystical fervour drawn from Jewish Hasidic sources. Socialism plays a great part in these settlements.... The deeper reason for their development seems to be an idealistic socialism, a kind of religious strength not called by name, but sensed as an urging power.

And in the spirit of her religion, the reviewer claims, "These are the urging powers which enable people to love such a life. The higher the enthusiasm for this new way of living, the smaller was the number of those who left."<sup>(16)</sup>

### **HASHOMER HATZAIR TRAINING FARM IN THE COTSWOLDS**

Some time after the article was published, members of the Bruderhof had a chance to get better acquainted with the kibbutz movement when they agreed to accept a group of young Jews, members of HaShomer HaTzair, who had escaped from Nazi Germany just before the war broke out. This had been arranged through the London office of HeHalutz by Arthur Ben-Israel, a member of Kibbutz Beth Alpha and emissary of the Jewish Agency to London. In those days many refugees were arriving in England, among them members of HeHalutz who had no certificates. These individuals were placed in training farms until they could proceed to Palestine. In their search for suitable farms, Arthur Ben-Israel and two young counselors, Ze'ev Weiss and Edith Freundlich, (now both members of Kibbutz HaZore'a) came across the Cotswold Bruderhof. In an interview both told me how impressed they were from the start: the large farm was tidy and clean, and the surroundings

beautiful. Most important, it was a communal settlement that called to mind a kibbutz.

The trainees 30 young men and women gathered at the Bruderhof in July 1939. Accommodated in a building set apart from the rest of the community dwelling, they managed their lives autonomously and ate the food they received from the communal kitchen separately. Eight of them are still living on a kibbutz today; six in Hazore'a, where I met with four of them to listen to their recollections of the Bruderhof. All talked with warmth and esteem about those days. They remembered their initial embarrassment at the attire of the Bruderhof members: the women wore long dresses and kerchiefs; the men were bearded and wore wide trousers and suspenders. They soon got to know and trust one another, however. Yael Gilad recalls:

Despite their odd clothing, we soon got used to them and even learned to admire their modest way of life. Moreover, we soon realized that theirs was an idealization of the collective, the just and the egalitarian way of life.... Personally, I was charmed.... Without identifying with their ideals or their religion, I admired the way in which they realized them.

Members of the Bruderhof called them "the Zionists" and went out of their way to treat them fairly. Larry El'or (Hazore'a) recalls:

The Bruderhof was experienced in absorbing refugees, most of whom had arrived from various places, and some very odd types. The trainees on the other hand, formed a homogeneous group of people who joyfully fulfilled the tasks of communal life. Members of the Bruderhof tried to make it easier for us to adjust. They allowed us to live as a group and abstained from anything that might be perceived as a missionary activity. We were allowed to eat separately, but were invited to join them on festive occasions. They were eager to hear about kibbutz, which they regarded as the ideal of a successful communal life. In certain cases they would even admonish us and say

that our behavior was unfitting for a future kibbutz life.... Altogether we lived side by side. We were mainly involved with one another during work-hours, which we shared equally. They tried their best to train us in farm work, doing this with characteristic German thoroughness.

Ze'ev Weiss has kept a diploma that he received at the end of his training period (some time before leaving England). An interesting document, it reads:

SOCIETY OF BROTHERS KNOWN AS HUTTERITES  
DATE: 18.10.1940 Werner Weiss, who led the group of Zionist refugees... has shown the keenest possible interest in all branches of farm work.... He has also concerned himself with the theory as well as practice of farm work.... We have no hesitation in testifying to the character and integrity of the owner of this diploma.

Some misunderstandings ensued from different concepts about work and property. Larry El'or recalls:

One of our members was working in the orchard when suddenly his ladder collapsed. Members of the Bruderhof said that he should be punished for breaking the work-tool by performing extra work. But we objected, claiming that it had been an accident and that the entire group would compensate for any harm done. We insisted because their demand conflicted with our principles, and eventually we called a strike. Faced with our obstinate refusal, the Bruderhof held consultations and finally agreed to our proposal. They even added, "We have realized that 'the Zionists' have some good principles.

The encounter between the two groups impressed both sides and left mainly pleasant memories. Georg Barth, who held a senior position in the community's leadership, wrote:

The Zionist group lived with us for many months.... They worked in all the farming branches.... From time to time they were visited by representatives of the London office

who wanted to find out how they were doing.... Despite differences, we developed a mutual understanding.... They were Jews and we Christians but this did not interfere at all.... We were very interested in the kibbutz movement and wanted to find out how they could maintain communal life without religious beliefs.<sup>(17)</sup>

Arnold Mason, of Birmingham, the first Englishman to join the Bruderhof in Germany, had similar recollections. He held a senior position in the community and had negotiated with representatives of HeHalutz about accepting the Jewish training group. He recalled, "We agreed gladly, because we urgently needed hands. Furthermore, it was very much in the spirit of those times to absorb young refugees from Germany".<sup>(18)</sup>

Generally, one may say that members of the Cotswold Bruderhof remember "the Zionists" fondly. I chanced to talk to some of the oldtimers and listened to recollections that resemble those of the Hazorea people. It was amazing to discover that they too remembered the ladder affair exactly as told by the latter. Both sides recognized that the training group was of great help as their neighbors' hostility increased in the dark days that befell England.

Larry El'or remembers the following incident, which has been confirmed by Bruderhof sources: <sup>(19)</sup>

A non-Jewish refugee living and working on the Bruderhof temporarily who used to go to the nearby village pub once heard local farmers planning a pogrom on the Bruderhof because they suspected them of being German spies. He returned immediately to warn them and the Bruderhof members met to solve the dilemma of how they should react in case of an attack: their pacifist principles forbade them to defend themselves and even to call the police. After lengthy deliberations somebody came up with an idea to turn to Ze'ev Weiss, who was in charge of our training group. He was told, "Since we do not recognize the police we cannot tell them, but we cannot forbid you

to report what is about to happen...." Having understood the hint, we acted straight away. On the following day, as the farmers advanced toward the Bruderhof, they found the police blocking their way. The pogrom was prevented.

Another instance, related by Arnold Mason, occurred in 1940, after the evacuation of Dunkirk, when relations between the Bruderhof and their neighbors deteriorated even more. Horror tales circulated that underground Gestapo agents were running the farm and that the Bruderhof was part of a Nazi movement that tormented Jews on its farm. The accusations were published in local newspapers, and readers' letters against the Bruderhof began to appear. The Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard went so far as to publish a letter by a local resident who wrote that members of the Zionist training group were fleeing the farm because of harsh treatment by the Germans.<sup>(20)</sup>

On reading this, Ze'ev Weiss immediately wrote a letter to the same paper,

I wish, on behalf of the Jewish group, to refute these false assertions.... Hitler has driven us out of Germany, and we are happy that we have found at the Bruderhof a settlement prepared to give us good training.... Our work here is exactly the same as of the brothers.... We feel, therefore, no injustice of any kind. Contrary to the assertions made by Mr. Pressland we have no complaints of any kind to make against the Bruderhof's attitude to us. For the Zionist group, Werner Weiss.<sup>(21)</sup>

According to Arnold Mason, Weiss' letter was of the utmost importance insofar as it put a stop to the defamation campaign. Nevertheless, it did not prevent the Bruderhof's having to emigrate from England. In the summer of 1940, after the fall of Holland and France and the evacuation of Dunkirk, the situation deteriorated even further. Local papers published letters calling for the detention of Bruderhof members and the question was even debated in Parliament, though enough voices were raised in their defense that they could remain in England (22).

Under the circumstances it was clear that the situation was getting worse. Soon the Bruderhof was informed by the Interior Ministry that its members were to be detained as aliens. Facing the possibility that the community would be forcibly split up, the Bruderhof decided to abandon Britain and to search for a haven in the Americas. It was, of course, extremely dangerous to plan such a crossing when the Atlantic was teeming with German submarines, but this did not deter the group. In search of a new home, Hans Meier and another brother left for North America, their journey having been permitted on the grounds that they were escorting a Jewish boy to his family in Venezuela.<sup>(23)</sup>

Attempts to find refuge in Canada and the United States failed. But help eventually came from Orie O. Miller of the Mennonite Central Committee, who suggested that the Bruderhof move to Paraguay, where immigrants had been welcomed by special agreement since 1926. (24). While the Bruderhof waited for the Paraguayan government's consent, the British Interior Ministry assisted in every way, reserving berths on the transatlantic ships of the Blue Star Line and helping with the sale of the Cotswold farm. The HaShomer HaTzair group stayed with them until just before they set out (25).

The first group arrived in Paraguay in December 1940, to be followed by several other groups in early 1941. The Bruderhof remained in Paraguay until 1961.

There they acquired a 20,000 acre farm called Primavera in the subtropical, eastern part of the country and established three communities in the area. They also bought a house in the capital city to accommodate members who would sell their products and negotiate with the authorities; the house also served as a home for young people sent to study at vocational schools in the capital. During their long stay in Paraguay, the Bruderhof did not succeed in forming significant relations with the local population. During the World War II years they remained isolated and lost touch with much of the outside world, including the HeHalutz movements.<sup>(26)</sup>

## RELATIONS DURING THE 1950s

After the world war, contact with Europe and the United States was resumed and new horizons opened up for the Bruderhof. As members searched and found similar religious, pacifist, or communal groups in various places throughout the world, they also renewed their contact with kibbutz members. The 1950s were years of widespread international activity for the Bruderhof, which led to the formation of ties with circles holding similar views. New communities were established in England, Germany, the United States, and Uruguay. Young people were encouraged to get a higher education beyond the boundaries of their communities, and partly because of this, the community in Uruguay was established very near to Montevideo, the capital. Contact with Jewish circles and especially with members of the Zionist youth movements in Paraguay, Uruguay, and England developed, as did extensive relations with kibbutz emissaries in the United States. Ever since, a widespread net of relations has existed between Bruderhof and kibbutz members, of which there is evidence in many letters.

One of the first kibbutz members to get in touch with the Bruderhof in the 1950s was Zvi Ofer of Yifat. In 1950, he served as the Kibbutz HaMeuchad emissary to Canada and the United States. His first contact was with the Hutterites. Having heard of their existence in those areas, and being a kibbutz member, he was curious to learn as much as he could about them. In August 1950, he wrote letters to two Hutterite communities in Canada. Introducing himself as a member of a commune in Israel, he asked for permission to visit to study their way of life and inform his friends in Israel.<sup>(27)</sup>

The letter he received from a certain J. Hofer was not very encouraging:

I understand that you are interested in learning about the Hutterites and their way of life, and that you would like to visit them some time. As for visiting them, it is quite all right, but if you want to study them and later write

about them we do not approve. It has happened time and again that scholars have studied the Hutterites in a superficial way and then wrote their interpretations in books and papers and thus gave the world a wrong and often a shameful impression.

Ofer did not visit the Hutterite community but sent a reply to J. Hofer:

I want to assure you that my interest in your communities is definitely not based on a scholarly approach, but on the assumption that one who has lived for about 20 years in a community similar to yours in Israel is obliged to find out and to speak with others who have a somewhat similar outlook on life, with the hope that there is something which we can learn from them, or exchange views.<sup>(28)</sup>

The visit did not take place, because Ofer was transferred to the United States, where he continued to look for contact with communal settlements and with people who studied them. During those attempts, he reached Henrik Infield, a researcher of communes and cooperations who put him in touch with several American communes. One of them was Macedonia which later would eventually join the Bruderhof movement. Ofer paid them a visit and attended the 1952 conference of communes at Yellow Springs at their invitation. During those encounters, Ofer formed relations with several commune members and researchers and with former members of socialist communes.<sup>(29)</sup>

One of his contacts was Art Wiser, a member of Macedonia. Through Wiser, a correspondence between Ofer and the Bruderhof ensued, that went on for years. Art Wiser still recalls Ofer's visit as his first encounter with a kibbutz member and told me about it.<sup>(30)</sup>

Zvi Ofer returned to Israel early in 1953 but maintained contact with the Bruderhof, first with Wheathill (England) and, after the establishment of Woodcrest, the first community in the United States, with several members there. He received informative material about developments in the Bruderhof as well as magazines and books that

were published in the 1950s. Their ties waned at the end of that decade, as Zvi Ofer got involved in other activities.<sup>(31)</sup>

## SHALOM WURM'S CONTRIBUTION

Shalom Wurm was a kibbutz member whose pioneer work contributed significantly to the relations between kibbutz members and the communal world at an intellectual as well as personal level. Wurm was one of the old timers of the kibbutz movement and a broad-minded scholar. He had belonged to one of the first HaShomer HaTzair groups at Bitania and later joined Beth Alpha, from where he moved to Ramat Yohanan. In 1941 he served as emissary to the United States, where he stayed until after the world war. During that period, he was introduced to literature on American communes, and on returning home, he published a series of articles in Niv HaKvutza about historical communes. The first appeared in March 1954 (No.10) and the final one in December 1959 (No.32). One of the last articles dealt with the Bruderhof and appeared under the title, "The Bruderhof's Open Door." It was based on publications he had come across and on correspondence with members of the South American Bruderhof. Letters by one of its members, Dick Whitty, which are cited in the article, show a great interest in the kibbutz movement, as well as a remarkable openness about events on the Bruderhof. For instance, on March 26, 1964, he wrote to Wurm about the recent crisis in the Paraguay communities, as a result of which approximately 540 members and children left (from a total of about 1400) in 1960 and 1961:

Please excuse me for not giving a reasonable account of all that has happened to us before leaving Paraguay and later. Only the future will tell if we are strong enough to refute the doctrine on the disintegration of social movements.<sup>(32)</sup>

Evidence of Wurm's relations with the Bruderhof may be found in several letters in the Bruderhof archives at Woodcrest.<sup>(33)</sup> One of

the most interesting among them was written by Wurm on September 31, 1955, under the heading "An Invitation":

I spread the news of your new community [in the United States] among some of the most active people of our movement. They felt encouraged. One of them came upon a splendid idea. He asked how would your people react upon a project of calling a conference, a joint conference of all the Hutterite Fraternal communes and the communal settlements in Israel to discuss the problems of community living, exchange opinions and establish close ties. Many of our friends seized on it and would welcome such a rare opportunity. Our veterans of the Jordan Valley suggested that should such get together materialize, it should take place in the Jordan Valley, where the Degania Kvutza exists over 46 years. They would like to be the host of such a symposium. Do you consider such a suggestion practicable...? We have to cope with many problems that would no doubt interest you.

The letter, written in the name of Ichud HaKvutzot VeHakibbutzim, and signed by Shalom Wurm, received a reply from Woodcrest written by Hector Black:

Your friendly letter delighted us all. We read it to our members in the dining hall and sent copies to several of our communities in order to inform them of your proposal to organize a meeting or a convention. The main obstacle is the fact that just now we are extremely busy in getting ready for a convention of communities that will convene in a couple of months in Paraguay.<sup>(34)</sup>

In addition, Hector Black answered other questions that Shalom Wurm had raised in his letter:

As for your question about the current situation of the Hutterites, I am sad to inform you that recently they have become ever more sensitive and ardently object to any kind of change. Change is perceived as a dangerous deviation from their sacred tradition, and also applies to their customs and attire. We had hoped to find a

way for a real union with the Hutterite communes and still believe that something may be done. So far we have united only with one of their communes in North Dakota (Forest River).

Two years after the first invitation, Shalom Wurm repeated it in a letter addressed to Dick Whitty:

"We would be happy to host several of your members here... Both our communities would benefit much from such a visit."

In the same letter, he also refers to the relations between the Bruderhof and the Hutterites:

I was sorry to hear that you are not getting along with the Hutterites.... For years I have played with the idea that both movements unite.... However, we in Israel are no better.... It may take a long time until all kibbutz movements unite.... People tend to be conservative and have difficulty in forgetting the past.... The secretariats of all three kibbutz movements have recently begun to negotiate in order to formulate a combined economic policy and have discussed vital issues of kibbutz life, and these steps may bridge the gaps and promote understanding between the movements.

Going on to discuss the problems of young members, Wurm writes,

While some of your young people seem to be influenced by the cultural climate of your new country, ours aspire to achieve university education.... It is hard to fight these trends, but we are doing our best.<sup>(35)</sup>

## KIBBUTZ MEMBERS' VISITS TO BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

In the years during which Shalom Wurm corresponded with Bruderhof members, other kibbutz members formed relations with them as a result of visits to Woodcrest, the new community in New York State. Its proximity to New York City and to Jewish recreation

areas in the Catskills, but mainly to the HeHalutz summer camps, made Woodcrest into a frequently visited place for incidental tourists as well as for youth movement emissaries and camp counselors. Roswith Arnold (Eberhard Arnold's granddaughter) recalled the early days at the community's twentieth anniversary:

I remember one time a whole group from a kibbutz came and they told us about themselves at supper. Then they started singing and one of them got up and took another by the hand, and before we knew it the whole room was dancing. It was just during supper and they were dancing the Hora between the tables. It ended up as a very joyful dance evening, and they taught us some of the Israeli dances; that's how we then slowly learned them.<sup>(36)</sup>

Woodcrest was also visited by public figures from Israel who were interested in the communal settlement, which looked like a kibbutz. One of them was Yosef Baratz, one of the founders of Degania. Members of Woodcrest remembered his visit as a moving experience, and despite its being very short, everyone I met still recalls it. Dick Domer, one of the oldtimers, said:

Yosef Baratz visited us in the spring of 1956. It was a very special occasion. We had met with Jewish groups who came for the weekend from New York and with youth from the nearby summer camps. Evidently Baratz had heard about us from them and arrived with his wife and with three young people. It was a very cold day, and I remember Baratz walking around in his winter coat. When he met the community at lunch time, he told us about Degania and the Israeli kibbutzim. His story was fascinating because it was our first encounter with one of the kibbutz movement's founding fathers. The meeting led to warm feelings on both sides, and we were sorry that he could not stay overnight. His visit had a strong impact because he sent us his book on Degania and for a long time we would read chapters during our meals.<sup>(37)</sup>

Another evidence of the impact caused by Baratz' visit may be found in a letter he received from Hector Black, who wrote:

We were very pleased to receive your book, *The Village on the Jordan River* about the founding of Degania and the early pioneers' life. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. The book interested our members very much.... From what we have read it is evident that in the past as well as nowadays there is a keen aspiration for togetherness which leads to a large measure of unity and to profound relations between members.... Several days ago a group of young Zionists from New York paid us a visit.... We are glad to have closer relations with kibbutzim, and it is superfluous to emphasize that we expect such visits in the future.<sup>(38)</sup>

Some time after Yosef Baratz' visit, Israel Shepherd, a second-generation member from Kibbutz Ayelet Hashahar, visited Woodcrest. He wrote his impressions in an article published in *Niv HaKvutza*.<sup>(39)</sup> The article is most interesting because it represents the first comprehensive impressions, of an encounter between a kibbutz member and the Bruderhof in the United States. It also includes parts of a dialogue between them on their way of life and beliefs. Israel Shepherd had heard about the Bruderhof from other kibbutz emissaries and was prepared and open to impressions.

Except for different ideological concepts (about the place of nationalism in man's life on the one hand and the place of religion the other) which are not to be scoffed at, there is a great similarity between the way of life in those communities and life on the kibbutz.... Therefore we prepared ourselves for a visit in a commune not unlike the kvutza, assuming that the differences between us mainly ensued from their religious and ideological origins.

And indeed, after a detailed description of the place and the people, Shepherd conversed with Bruderhof members and discovered that his assumption was valid.

The way in which the kibbutz movement as a whole and its members as individuals identify with the Jewish nation, society, and the State is completely alien to them. They don't endorse the principle of the commune's active involvement with its environment, society, and the nation. According to them, the commune has rejected all that... Their doctrine is based on two elements: a negation of the State and seclusion from society at large. This has led to alienation and to the loss of their fatherland concept. In their long encounter with the kibbutz, Bruderhof members keep wondering how a commune can survive without any religious foundation. The brethren are certain that brotherhood ensures unity, which in itself is founded on religious values and experiences. Moreover, we learned that they are not motivated by the settlement factor nor by a wish to return to nature.... Even though they live away from the cities, settling a tract of land is of no importance to them. They have no immediate affinity to their home, because this might enhance economic considerations instead of ideological ones.

In his article, Shepherd gives a detailed account of long conversations with his hosts about their way of life, their mode of education, their means of consumption, their ways of organizing work, and their culture. Summing it up, he says:

Even though in most cases we have tried to avoid any recurring comparison between the Bruderhof and the kibbutz in Israel, our outlook must obviously be influenced by the fact that we are kibbutz members.... One may approach the Bruderhof from three different aspects: first, to perceive it as a humane, spiritual, or social phenomenon whose values and very existence are of some interest; second, to consider the brotherhood as a chapter in the social Utopia of man's salvation; third, to compare the Bruderhof and the Israeli kibbutz, their differences and similarities. Despite the human, geographical and general

remoteness kibbutz member who uses his eyes and his historical conception may learn quite a lot.

Shepher's article was not the only one to be published by the kibbutz media, but it was the most comprehensive. After 1954 several letters and impressions of visits to the Bruderhofs in the United States and England appeared in kibbutz publications.<sup>(40)</sup> From them one may learn much about mutual impressions and about the issues raised during such encounters.

In October 1956, the Kibbutz HaMeuchad weekly, BaKibbutz, published an article by Saul from Alonim, in which he tells about his visit to Woodcrest.<sup>(41)</sup> His impressions were similar to those of Shepher, and he recounts a conversation with a Bruderhof member who had visited Israel and stayed in several kibbutzim in 1950, before joining the Bruderhof. When asked about the differences between the two communal movements, he replied:

Their [the Bruderhof's] perception of equality is more extensive. Whenever a community acquires some property, for instance, if one of its members inherits money, they share it with all the other communities. People are sent from one settlement to another in order to give a helping hand for unlimited periods of time....They have no central organization and everything is arranged through correspondence between the various communities. Individual problems are solved without sets of rules, just by talking....The commune is based on their religious and emotional aspiration towards the renewal of man and profounder relations between one person and another.

Saul also got the impression that "there is a strong sense of adversity towards society at large and the existing regime." When he inquired about their attitude towards socialism he was told, "We don't trust people who preach socialism without actually living it in a commune." One of the more interesting aspects of the published correspondence is that the Bruderhof was willing to expose disturbing problems in order to learn from mutual experience. For instance,

Hector Black wrote to Shalom Wurm in January 1956, "For some time I have wondered how you deal with serious differences between members and whether you have adopted any regulations in case of antisocial behavior...." He goes on to relate certain instances of social tension he encountered on his visit to an Israeli kibbutz and asks about the means of dealing with them. Finally, he asks forgiveness for "asking such grave questions.... They ensue from my wish to understand how you grapple with certain problems that we have in common and that are inherent in a communal way of life."<sup>(42)</sup>

The correspondence shows that the Bruderhof was concerned about its younger generation: its behavior, education, and loyalty to the movement. These issues were raised in two letters written in October 1957. In the first, from Primavera, Dick Whitty wrote about a convention on educational issues during which members complained that the young people were more interested in riding horses than in studying, that they were bored by the rural life in Paraguay and were seeking out ways unacceptable to the community. He ended by saying, "I know that these problems are not unfamiliar to you."<sup>(43)</sup>

The second letter was written by Ruth David of Oak Lake, the new Bruderhof in Farmington, Pennsylvania.

We are very eager to hear about the life of your young women. I personally am interested in education and especially in teenagers. It appears that our youth suffers from the same problems and difficulties as teenagers everywhere. It is not easy for them to decide on a communal way of life, even though eventually most of them reach that decision. We enable them to live outside for a while and experience a different way of life in order to make them think and reexamine their life more profoundly.<sup>(44)</sup>

Interest in the kibbutz movement is also found in Bruderhof periodicals. Between 1954 and 1955, the Plough published two articles on the subject, one by R.E. a member of Kibbutz Givat Brenner<sup>(45)</sup> and the second by Harry Viteles, professor of economics at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and chair of cooperatives at the

Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics (46). The editor felt prompted to add, "For some years our communities have felt a particular interest in the community life which is practiced in the Israeli kibbutzim." In addition to these articles, the Plough also published short items on events in the kibbutz movements.

## RELATIONS WITH THE HEHALUTZ MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AMERICA

As relations between kibbutz members and the North American Bruderhofs were formed via visits, correspondence, and articles, a parallel process took place in South America. The contact was taken up by local youth movement members and emissaries to Paraguay and Uruguay. Relations were mainly formed with residents of the Bruderhof House in Asuncion, because of its proximity to the Jewish population center and because most of the residents were young people (47). Fida Meier, now a member at Woodcrest, tells about her friendship with a girl from the youth movement.

The young people who lived in the Bruderhof house at Asuncion formed very good relations with members of the Zionist youth movement in Paraguay. Once a month we would meet either at their club or at our house. We were taught Israeli songs and dances and had many conversations about their ways and aims. In time, closer friendships developed, and we were even invited to visit their homes. I had a friend called Myrtha Levine. I visited her house several times and got to know her family. For me it was the first chance to meet a family of Jewish immigrants from Poland who had survived the Holocaust and World War II. I realized how difficult it must have been that their daughter was about to return to that part of the world... which was a scene of recurrent wars.

Fida Meier kept in touch with her girlfriend and others even after they left for Israel to join a kibbutz.<sup>(48)</sup>

More extensive relations were formed between youth movement members and the El Arado Bruderhof in Uruguay. This community was established to develop external relations and was therefore situated near Montevideo. Strong ties ensued with members of the Ichud and HaShomer HaTzair training centers nearby. There were even plans (though they never materialized) to place a training group inside the Bruderhof, just like the one that had existed at the Cotswold. On weekends the community attracted many visitors who came to spend time in lively conversation about world affairs and communal issues with "the bearded ones".

In 1957 Mordechai Nissim (Ein Zurim), who was sent by the Religious Kibbutz Movement to Uruguay, made such a visit. He reported about his visit in his movement's periodical.<sup>(49)</sup> Like other visitors before him, he was impressed by the community's external similarity to the kibbutz, but remarked that "it looks rather like a training farm before the kibbutz establishes its permanent place. Everything is just like kibbutz, although on a smaller scale." He held long conversations with his hosts about their religious convictions and was impressed with the way they had integrated Christianity and Martin Buber's ideas as expressed in his book *I and Thou*. His report deals mainly with their way of life, and he writes admiringly that "their collectivity is absolute and encompasses every aspect of their life." He finds that "there are many similarities with kibbutz life, such as problems related to the work roster," and that "their collective consumption is administered by institutions just like ours." Nissim was most interested in educational matters, in the fact that children slept with their families, with the second generation's problems, and with the fact that they often joined the community after having spent some time away to ensure that their decision was one of conviction. Like others before him, however, he concludes that despite the many similarities, "there is a clear-cut line that differentiates between the Bruderhof and kibbutz....The latter has a national character, but the Bruderhof has an international one."

Finally, he raises an original notion, "Thoughts keep coming and never let go, mainly from the religious point of view. Here too people are basing their way of life on religious convictions and perhaps they are in fact patterned upon the model of an Essene sect?"

Several years later, in 1964, Moshe Unna, the spiritual leader of the Religious Kibbutz Movement, mentioned that visit as "the first encounter with this religious collective community" and emphasizes that "not surprisingly, we are interested in their movement.... I personally have been in touch with their Paraguayan community.... I believe that it is important to get to know them, their concepts, ideas, and deeds. We must learn about things that are similar, but the differences that divide us may teach us about our problems...." Most of his article is devoted to a book review of Emmy Arnold's *Torches Together*. In a comprehensive review of the book, which is written by Eberhard Arnold's wife and which recalls the community's early days and difficulties, Unna ends by saying admiringly, "These people showed great strength indeed; a kind of strength that causes amazement and admiration. What was the source of their indestructible strength? Of their ability to rise and begin all over again? To my mind the answer lies in their true belief, not in themselves, but in the power of God, who guides man's ways throughout life. The answer lies in their indomitable will to realize the commandments of their religion, to realize them together because only thus, together with other people, will their realization be a real one."<sup>(50)</sup>

Members of the Bruderhof who lived in Uruguay at the time kept vivid memories of relations with the Jewish youth movement. Most interesting were the reminiscences of Andreas Meier, who acknowledged that the Jewish youth movement played a vital role in his return to the Bruderhof. He was among the first youngsters who left "to find out about the outside world." At first he and some friends worked on a dairy farm in Uruguay, but he later decided that this would not enable him to learn about the outside society. He recounts the time he moved to Montevideo:

I lived alone for about a year. I found work and made a living... but after a while I began to feel that my life was meaningless. I missed the company of the brethren, which I was used to; I was indifferent to the process of "money making" and to having to take care of myself alone.... At that stage of my life I got in touch with the Hashomer Hatza'ir training farm, of which I had heard before, and I stayed there for two weeks.... I still remember that period as a thrilling experience.... The encounter with these young people, who were enthusiastically preparing for their communal life, was something fresh and completely different from anything I had experienced during my year in Montevideo. It was quite similar to what I had experienced as a youth on the Paraguay commune. In certain respects their communal life was more extreme than the one I was used to. They had a communal clothing store in which everything was divided according to three sizes, and everyone could just help him/herself.... There were no private clothes.... The encounter with the collective community made me homesick for my former way of life and prompted my return to the Bruderhof. In Montevideo I had experienced loneliness; on the training farm, togetherness.<sup>(51)</sup>

Andreas is not the only one to remember encounters with the Zionist youth movement. Klaus Meier, his brother, recalls his coming to El Arado, where he went to study medicine at the University of Montevideo. He met members of the Zionist youth movements and "was attracted to their communal life style," though he adds, "we were divided in our beliefs. They believed that the commune might be constructed through human effort; but we said 'No! God alone can do it.' That was the big difference between us."<sup>(52)</sup>

Charles Headland, now a member of Deer Spring, recalls the weekend visitors, many from youth movements, and others who were interested in communal life. He remembers a young Jew called Raoul Weiss, whose visit to the commune was to become one of the

highlights of his life. Weiss confirms that the visit indeed reinforced his decision to opt for kibbutz life in Eretz Israel.

As happened in the United States, South American Bruderhof members began to correspond with kibbutz members. Among the most diligent was the already mentioned Dick Whitty from Loma Hoby, who was born in Scotland and had joined the Cotswold Bruderhof. Being interested in Jewish culture, he maintained relations with Israel through correspondence with several kibbutz members, among them Shalom Wurm, in the 1950s. He was married to a Jewish refugee from Vienna. Whitty recalls that he received his first letter from Avraham Ben Yosef (then a member of Kibbutz Sassa), who was seeking information about worldwide communes, in 1954.<sup>(53)</sup> According to Whitty, Ben Yosef let him have the names of kibbutz members who might be interested in forming relations with the Bruderhof; that is how Whitty contacted Shalom Wurm, Moshe Unna, and Arie Fishmann (a sociologist who published a study of the Religious Kibbutz Movement). Despite their mutual correspondence, Whitty emphasized that it was merely the result of his personal initiative and did not encompass the Bruderhof as a whole. In a letter addressed to me, he explained, "The whole of the Brotherhood at Primavera was not as concerned with it as now, with the contacts our communities have in the eighties."<sup>(54)</sup>

From the kibbutz side, Zvi Shahar of Tel Yosef (but at that time of Givot Zaid) took up correspondence with the Bruderhof. Born in Paraguay, he was a member of the Dror youth movement and was familiar with the Bruderhof. After becoming a kibbutz member, Shahar wanted to learn more about their way of life, and in a letter dated May 2, 1956, he wrote to Primavera, proposing an exchange of information to reinforce their mutual relations. He enclosed Spanish language publications about the kibbutz and asked for informative and ideological material about their movement.

He received replies from Dick Whitty (Primavera) and Charles Headland (El Arado, Uruguay). Both welcomed his initiative and said that they were extremely interested in the kibbutz movement. Dick gave a detailed report of their life in Primavera and expressed his

hope that some day they might get to know one another through mutual visits. He added a farm inventory of Primavera and diagrams of all nine Bruderhof communities in the world. According to the Headland, there were 1,200 members in their movement, 680 of them in Primavera. In addition, he sent booklets on their religion and ideology and noted:

The enclosed literature may raise a multitude of questions.... No doubt it differs from the Israeli way of thought.... However, after getting to know Martin Buber's and Max Brod's writings, I have arrived at the conclusion that we are closer to the Jewish entity than to the large Christian churches. The connection between us and Judaism ensues from our aspiration towards a new social order, towards a classless society... and towards the establishment of a nation that is based on justice and brotherhood.<sup>(55)</sup>

We learn about an additional initiative from the Plough of June 1958, which published a letter from a group of young Israelis.

We belong to the Federation of Kvutzot but differ from them in our concepts. We read and heard about you and feel ourselves very near to you, to your beliefs, and to your way of life. We want here in Israel to do something very near to what you realize in the life in your communities. Of course, there are differences, but they are of a secondary nature. We should like to establish relations with your community and hope to learn very much from your experiences.

Our group was created three and a half years ago, when we left secondary school. We looked for the meaning of life. We found the way back to religion, not the orthodox one, but the living, the spiritual one. We left town, wishing to begin a new life in the country, where spirit, love, brotherhood, and God's commandments in their full significance will dominate life, daily life.... We live as a community on a farm which is not our own, working for

the company that owns it and getting a daily wage. We hope to establish a place of our own in a year or two. All of us are very young, between 19-20.<sup>(56)</sup>

The initiative was never followed up; the Bruderhof had entered a period of seclusion, and the young group had to make their own way. From the few details found in their letter, it seems probable they belonged to the "Schechter group," which would eventually establish a collective moshav in Yodfat.

## ENCOUNTER WITH THE KIBBUTZ IN THE EL ARADO PERIODICAL

In 1957 Dick Whitty proposed to devote half of the El Arado (Then the Bruderhof's Spanish equivalent of the Plough), to the theme of the kibbutz. The initiative was significant insofar that until then no communal movement had been granted so much space in any of the Bruderhof's publications. Whitty began to correspond with Roger Allain, at the time Servant of the Word or minister in El Arado about his proposal.

In August 1958 El Arado 7 appeared, including a section devoted to "Encuentro con el Kibbutz" (Encounter With the Kibbutz). Because this issue served as a milestone in the relations between the kibbutz and the Bruderhof, we shall give it some space in our review. The article that opened the section, which serves as a kind of editorial, comments on the unique relationship of the Bruderhof with the kibbutz:

Even though we are divided on many issues, we see a great importance in the fact that there exist groups of people who are devoted to a communal and integrative way of life in a world where everything is breaking up. We have one thing in common, namely our hope for a new mankind, for a new society in which the individual can put his potential at the service of his brothers and at the same time develop his own personality. Nevertheless,

we must emphasize that to our mind, kibbutz members' belief in the necessity of an army for defence is utterly opposed to the spirit of brotherly love. This is one of the issues on which we shall never reach a consensus with the kibbutz movement.... Yet this should not prevent us from feeling close to them, if only because like us, they aspire to an ideal of togetherness in communities where property and work are shared collectively. Most of the articles in this section originated from an extensive correspondence over many years with kibbutz members in Israel. Let it be noted that this volume deals with the common denominator of true communal life, rather than with differences of opinion.<sup>(58)</sup>

In addition to a number of informative articles on various aspects of kibbutz life, several others concern the dialogue between both movements. The most outstanding is entitled, "Humanismo o Fe? El Fundamento de la Vida en Comunidad" ("Humanism and Belief, The Basis of a Life in Community"), written in the form of a dialogue between a kibbutznik and a member of the Bruderhof, who both represent the beliefs of their movements. The kibbutz member opens with the assumption that enormous differences of opinion exist, but then continues to say the following:

We are seeking eventual points at which both movements can meet. To be honest, I believe that there is a vast spiritual difference between the Bruderhof and the kibbutzim in Israel.... To the world the kibbutz represents a secular utopian movement which has succeeded.... It is a movement that has no religious philosophy (apart from the religious kibbutzim). This immediately raises the question of whether humane ethics may replace ancient traditions of religion.

According to the kibbutznik it may. However, he believes that a commune should be based on spiritual motivations. In his kibbutz, federation, political and revolutionary Marxism served as the driving force and as the basis for a future society. In addition there was

enormous enthusiasm for building up the country. He asked the Bruderhof member what kind of spiritual power had inspired them. "Was it early Christianity? Another kind of Christianity? Was it perhaps a kind of communalism based on humane ethics and tinted with Christianity?"

The Bruderhof member's reply was based on Martin Buber's book *Paths of Utopia*, which includes a chapter on Gustav Landauer's doctrine and in which "one may find the key to our doctrine as expressed by the unreligious Jewish philosopher. Gustav Landauer was one of the people who influenced our community." He refers to a number of Landauerian ideas that served as the cornerstone for the Bruderhof, for instance, the community as a union of people who act as a living organism; people's need for internal renewal in order to renew their society; the community's unity as not being enforced externally, but as the result of a live, internal spirit that affects each individual; the spirit of brotherhood on which the Bruderhof's life is based and which enables Christians, Jews, and atheists to live together in one society. Then he asks the kibbutznik whether the kibbutz also aspires to an internal spirituality of brotherhood according to Landauer's doctrine. In the second round of questions, the kibbutznik touches on the Bruderhof's belief in the exclusiveness of Christianity. He asks:

If your profound belief in early Christianity disappeared from your life and you no longer believed in Jesus, would you be able to continue living on a commune? If your answer is negative, I don't perceive any direct relationship between the Brotherhood and the kibbutz movement, because we would have no common spiritual ground. But if your answer is positive and you agree to the assumption that a simple and deep tie of common human feelings may suffice to maintain communal life, then essentially we have a consensus.

The Bruderhof member's reply is circumspect. He begins by agreeing that communal life requires relationships based on a common humane ideal. Such an ideal does in fact exist in the

Bruderhof's life, an ideal that is so strong and comprehensive that nobody in the entire world may be excluded from it. Although they realize that most people may be unable to adjust, they believe that every person can change and improve; this also applies to one's enemies "and therefore one of our basic principles is not to participate in killings and wars....Politics also cause wars." In reply to the kibbutznik's question of whether they could exist without the foundation of early Christianity, he answers indirectly, by emphasizing three of their basic elements: 1. The commune is intended for anyone; 2. It objects on principle to every kind of bloodshed; 3. True brotherhood exists via direct and open relations between people. He adds, "You may be surprised to hear that we perceive nonviolence as the basic element of early Christianity. Gandhi claims that he was also inspired by the New Testament. Therefore we cannot repudiate early Christianity, which is the source of our doctrine and our belief in a life of love and brotherhood."<sup>59</sup>

Several articles show a tendency to discuss the Religious Kibbutz Movement. For instance, an article on democracy assumes that the Bruderhof's spirit differs from the spirit of secular, as well as religious, kibbutzim. The former believe that genuine Christianity required total community similar to that of the Apostles or Francis of Assisi and that none of the religious kibbutzim fulfill this requirement. The secular and religious kibbutz' communalism found justification in itself ("se justifica por si misma"). Dick Whitty, the author, estimates that religious Judaism does not call for communalism to the same extent as did early Christianity, which aspired to the kind of brotherhood that was realized in the Apostles' Jerusalem community.

The same author deals directly with the religious kibbutzim in his review of Arie Fishmann's book, *The Religious Kibbutz Movement*, and poses rhetorical questions to its members, for instance: "Could you maintain a communal life without your religion? Does the Jewish concept of 'A Sacred People' require the realization of kibbutz communalism?" Then he goes on to point out the lack of a direct relationship between orthodox Judaism and communal life. Whitty also wonders whether it might be possible to perceive the religious

kibbutzim in Israel as an expression of a new kind of Judaism, one that is much more radical than the concept of social justice in antiquity. According to him, Fishmann's hints that one should study the law of Moses in a manner that facilitate explaining it anew from an aspect of modern life in Israel. But nowhere is there any mention of the fact that kibbutz life is a higher form of social justice. The author suggests that kibbutz life and its abolishment of all private property is actually a realization of 'Shmitta' not just every seventh year, but throughout life; he advises religious kibbutz members to adopt it. Dick Whitty ends his review in the hope that the religious kibbutz may consider the value of their communal life from a much broader and more significant aspect, namely, as a vision for modern man. According to him, that is precisely what the Essenes did when they appealed to all the people via their way of life.<sup>(60)</sup>

The review of Arie Fishmann's book on the religious kibbutz was the only review included in that issue of the Plough. However, three additional reviews by Dick Whitty are found in the Bruderhof archives. In the first, on Miller Burrows' book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, Whitty refers to the Essenes as a model and an inspiration for the kibbutz movements. (Interestingly, he repeats Mordechai Nissim's idea that they served as an inspiration for the Bruderhof.) In the second, Whitty reviews Murry Weingarten's *Life in a Kibbutz*. Wich he saw as an attempt to justify the changes in the kibbutz following the industrialization process and the transition to family sleeping arrangements. From the book's descriptions and explanations, Whitty feels that "there is a strong bourgeoisie tendency in the kibbutz" as seen in the new trends, which the author seems to justify. Whitty does not disapprove of most innovations as long as they are not considered a panacea for all kibbutz ailments. He is very disappointed by the low participation at kibbutz assemblies and sees it as a bad omen for communalism. He concludes by saying that despite the book's evident faults, it serves as a source of inspiration for those who aspire to realize social justice in our time, because it depicts the dangers and difficulties that lay ahead.

The third book review deals with a novel by David Maletz, *Young Hearts*. According to Whitty, the book is "a novel of problems without solutions." After mentioning all the negative aspects of kibbutz life depicted in the book, he concludes that the most interesting chapter is Abraham Klein's speech about the community's lack of spirituality: "Can one build a new life on the basis of ignorance about where this life is leading...?" Whitty is disappointed that the book does not have any solutions to the questions and dilemmas it submits. Nevertheless, he believes that it points the way for constructing a bridge between a spiritual commune and a socialist one. Both should uproot any anticomunal trends and fight against them whenever they threaten to invade.<sup>(61)</sup>

This issue of *El Arado*, which was to stimulate an intellectual dialogue between the Bruderhof and the kibbutz movement, failed to achieve its purpose, and its pages have turned yellow in the Bruderhof archives. A year after its publication, the worldwide Bruderhof movement experienced one of the worst periods in its history: between 1959 and 1962, several crises caused about one third of Bruderhof members to leave the movement. As a result, all four of the South American communities as well as one of the two English communities were abandoned and their entire populations transferred to North America, to Bruderhof communities on the East Coast.

One might have thought that the Bruderhof's move to a populated area should have ensured widespread relations with the kibbutziks who had been visiting them ever since the 1950s, but this did not occur. There is no documentation about mutual encounters or even correspondence in those years either in kibbutz or Bruderhof archives. What happened? Klaus Meier of Deer Spring explains that the severe crisis of 1960-1961 affected all the Bruderhof communities; all were deeply involved with internal problems and unwilling to foster external relations. Moreover, financial difficulties prevented travel. In addition the Bruderhof's priority regarding external affairs was to establish contact with members who had left during the crisis in an effort to bring them

back.<sup>(62)</sup> Moshe Unna, for instance, reports that his correspondence with Dick Whitty stopped because of the crisis.<sup>(63)</sup> Under these circumstances, general relations between the Bruderhof and the kibbutz movement abated. Neither movement showed any interest in reviving them, and there was no external incentive. Meanwhile, the Bruderhof experienced an impressive revival: about 200 people who had left rejoined the movement, and a new community was established in England to absorb people who had left for Europe and were seeking ways to return.

### AMITAI NIV RESEARCHES THE BRUDERHOF

In the early 1970s, the relations between the kibbutz and the Bruderhof changed significantly mainly because of two people on both sides: Hans Meier, an old friend of the kibbutz movement, who had rejoined the Bruderhof and his family after twelve years of voluntary exile in Argentina,<sup>(64)</sup> and Amitai Niv (then of Misgav Am) a doctoral student at the Harvard School of Business Administration. Niv, who had met Hans Meier at the Deer Spring Bruderhof in Connecticut, had heard about the Bruderhof and had formed some vague ideas about them but was anxious to learn more. His enthusiasm touched Meier, who had a long-standing affinity to the Jewish people and the kibbutz movement. Andreas Meier, his son, remembers that many kibbutz members used to visit his parent's home. He recalls the good atmosphere during those meetings, as well as his father's warm attitude toward kibbutz members, whom he regarded as the Bruderhof allies.<sup>(65)</sup>

Summing up his encounter with the Bruderhof retrospectively, Amitai Niv believes that there were two stages to his access, the first during a Kibbutz Hameuchad Seminar in 1962, when he attended my lectures on communes, which he said enhanced his curiosity and fostered thoughts about their historical perspectives and chances of survival. The second occurred during his studies at Harvard, where

he went in the autumn of 1973. During the first year and throughout the following summer, Niv was busy researching for his doctoral thesis. In the summer of 1974, members of his family worked at the kibbutz movement's summer camps, where they got to know the nearby Bruderhof, Woodcrest. His family's stories reminded him of the lectures he had attended, and out of curiosity he began to visit the Connecticut Bruderhof. He arrived on a sunny autumn Saturday and, like many a kibbutz member before him, was overcome; but in this case there was also his purely academic interest. He recalls that on the road from the commune to Boston he came up with an idea to compare the Bruderhof with the kibbutz concerning relations with society at large: providing data for a theory about the communes' chance to survive. He wondered, however, how the subject would be received by a conservative institute such as the Harvard School of Business. Much to his surprise, it was accepted.<sup>(66)</sup>

Thus, Niv's intellectual curiosity about modern day communes and his instinct as a researcher to find a relevant subject within his professional area combined to shape his relations with the Bruderhof. Between 1974 and 1976 Niv spent two days a month (longer stays were possible during vacation) observing the Bruderhof. He was the first kibbutz member to meet the Bruderhof for such a long and intensive period; all others before him had merely been weekend visitors (except for the training group in England). Moreover, his systematic and participatory observations raised their encounter to a higher theoretical level. The result of this research was his thesis, *A Search for a Theory about the Survival of Communes*.<sup>(67)</sup>

As this lengthy encounter between a kibbutz member and the Bruderhof was an important and crucial stage in the development of their relations, I felt it important to interview Amitai Niv to day, years after his research project. My questions concerned his relations with the Bruderhof when it became evident to them that he was not just passing through, but conducting a study. When I inquired whether he had felt that they were retreating into their shells when they discovered his intentions, Niv replied:

No. But to tell the truth, only a few knew about my research project; most were not very interested in my actions. I tried not to draw attention to myself as a researcher. I lived and worked like everybody else and did not use any questionnaires. I conducted many free and candid conversations with different sectors in the population.

Niv explained that several factors contributed to his good relations with the Bruderhof from the beginning: their trust in kibbutz members, his good relations with Hans Meier and later with Heini Arnold (the Elder of the Bruderhof), and his great esteem for them and their way of life. Niv added that he continues to respect their communal system long after finishing his research project. He believes that the Bruderhof's positive attitude to his research has several origins.

First, the fact that kibbutznikim are Jewish makes the Bruderhof feel somewhat guilty because of the persecution the Jews suffered by the Christian Church, even though the Bruderhof often emphasize that they have no part in the actions of the established Church and, as Anabaptists, have also suffered persecution. In that respect they feel closer to the Jews, whose fate they have shared historically (during the Counter Reformation, for example, and in the 1930s, when they were forced into exile by the Nazi regime) than to the Christian establishment.

Second, the kibbutz was established in the Holy Land, which has great spiritual value for them. Niv sensed a kind of metaphysical empathy in his listeners when he told about his life in the Galilee and his travels throughout his home country of Israel. Third, the kibbutz is a communal movement that has existed successfully more than 80 years. Compared to many modern communes established in the 1960s, the kibbutz is closer to them and its way of life more stable. Hence, a kibbutz member who has made the effort to come from afar is regarded as a kindred spirit (68). As for their dialogue, Amitai Niv said, "I believe that the kibbutz made it possible for them to put some of their values to test. I assume that I did the same

during my research. I enabled them to examine themselves through the eyes of a kibbutz study, without actually being a missionary for the kibbutz way of life." When I inquired whether they had tried to be missionaries for their cause, I received a surprising answer.

Yes! The comparison between the kibbutz' and the Bruderhof's way of life is asymmetrical. I did not feel compelled to convince them that our ways are better and felt free to speak about kibbutz problems. However, the people I spoke to, especially Hans Meier and Heini Arnold, emphasized that the Bruderhof did not suffer from any of the problems I had mentioned, because of the value-oriented life to which they adhered meticulously. They knew a lot about kibbutz, and not merely from what I told them, but also from our publications, especially from the English edition of *Shdemot*. They had the impression that there was quite a gap between the averred principles of the kibbutz and their realization in practice.

Nevertheless, Amitai Niv does not believe that they intended to preach to him. They merely wanted to convince him that their communal experience was better, because they believed so strongly in what they were doing. He thinks they intended to point out some of the kibbutz' weaker points, which they felt should be amended. They have long ago recognized some "incurable weaknesses" of the kibbutz, such as the rejection of pacifism and a commitment to national security, and have given up all attempts at persuasion in those areas, rather accepting kibbutznikim as they are, in the same manner as friends of the Bruderhof in the kibbutz movement accept their Christianity. According to Niv, the dialogue was motivated by a sense of responsibility for both movements' communal future and an intention to reinforce endurance in times of unforeseen crises. He added, "I felt as though it was also done from love; they simply love kibbutz members."

As to my question whether such sympathy for the kibbutz was evident in his talks with ordinary Bruderhof members, Niv replied in the affirmative. "Many questions about the kibbutz were asked

by people I encountered at random. Most were of the informative kind, though some attempted to compare; just like the elders, they perceived the kibbutz inferior from the aspect of community and family life. I did not enter into any discussions with them, nor did I attempt to convince them of our ways. I regarded them as 'distant brethren.' Somewhat amazed, I cut him off and asked whether he had indeed used that term. Niv replied, "Yes. I used it because they call themselves 'brethren.'" I remarked that I had used that term several years later when I first encountered the Bruderhof, but without being aware of the fact that he had coined it. Since then 'distant brethren' has become the accepted term.<sup>(69)</sup>

Two years after Amitai Niv finished his research project, I visited the Deer Spring Bruderhof in Connecticut during a tour of historical communes and their archives. Before setting out I called Niv; he suggested I visit the Bruderhof and helped me contact them. The visit itself turned out to be an unforgettable experience, and a decisive step, in the relations between the kibbutz movement and the Bruderhof. Therefore, it may be fitting to describe some of my impressions as recorded my book on American communes.

I arrived at Deer Spring, a small community in a valley of the wooded Berkshire Mountains. It was a bright sunny autumn day... the magic of the pastoral setting with its colored maple trees was bewitching, and from the minute I arrived I sensed the idyllic mood that surrounded me. At first glance I had the feeling that I was on an Israeli kibbutz, transplanted to the United States. It was noon and my host took me straight to the dining hall, where I met all the members of the commune who had been expecting me. After I had taken a seat I was greeted with an Israeli song, which was a surprising and touching gesture. Soon barriers disappeared and I started to feel a special relationship develop between me, the Israeli kibbutz member, and the Christian pacifist members of the commune, about whom I had until then only read. In the evening there was a meeting with commune members

who wanted to hear about my kibbutz. Spontaneously I greeted them as "distant brothers" though not attaching any special meaning to the phrase. At the end of the meeting one of the old-timers, a white-haired, solemn-faced man, came over to me and said, "You were right in defining our relationship; we are indeed brothers, and though the geographical and spiritual distance is vast... let us keep in touch."<sup>(70)</sup>

And in fact, ever since that meeting, our relations have intensified and become closer. For the first time, a group of Bruderhof members set out to visit Israel and the kibbutz movement (71). I returned for several visits while on Sabbatical at Harvard University in 1982, and during those visits, I formed closer ties with Hans Meier as we enjoyed extensive conversations. I encouraged other kibbutz members to visit the Bruderhof communes during their sabbaticals in Boston, with the result that Alex Barzel, Menahem Rosner, and Aharon Yadlin have also visited there.

## THE BRUDERHOF MISSION TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

In 1983, the board of directors of the Yad Tabenkin Research Institute initiated an international conference of kibbutz and communal scholars and practitioners. Organized by Shimon Mahler, head of the International Relations Department, and myself, it was the first conference of its kind in Israel. We sent invitations to hundreds of researchers and communes whose addresses had accumulated over the years. From several aspects it was a leap in the dark, accompanied by many doubts. These soon vanished, however, when we realized that interest in the conference was above and beyond anything we had expected. It became evident that many of commune researchers abroad were unfamiliar with the kibbutz and that the interdisciplinary meeting greatly aroused their interest. There were fewer replies from commune members themselves, perhaps because of the high cost of air fares to Israel.

Invitations to the conference, which was to be held in May 1985, were also sent to the Bruderhof, and much to the organizers' surprise, they replied at once that they welcomed our invitation in principle though preferred not to commit themselves yet. As the conference date approached, however, the organizing committee received a letter from Hans Meier (December 5, 1984) in which he confirmed the participation of six visitors, five from the Bruderhof and one from a Hutterite commune in Minnesota. The travelers intended to arrive three weeks early to tour Israel, especially the kibbutzim where they had friends. They sent a list of 25 kibbutzim and 50 people who had visited them over the years and kept in touch. At first the organizing committee was overwhelmed with the responsibility of organizing the tour, but it soon became evident that all those on the list were only too glad to host the visitors. In additional letters the Bruderhof reduced the number of places and stated their priorities. In reply to our question about visiting the holy sites of Christianity they replied:

We are not interested in church-buildings and the religious "klim blim" around them at the different historical sites, but rather in gaining an impression of the region in which God made history through the people of Israel, its prophets, and Jesus, also now. We are much more interested in getting to know how God's creative spirit works among the kibbutzim than in the spots where the crusaders put the cross on other people rather than on themselves.

The Bruderhof mission arrived at Ben Gurion Airport on April 30, 1985. It was an historical event in the relations between the two movements and an emotional one for the people involved. In the Bruderhof's best tradition they had meticulously provided for the members of all communities to participate in the tour: in each community a map of Israel had been put up in the dining hall and the mission's course was posted daily; a daily bulletin reporting their latest encounters was published and many letters were sent as well. During their three week stay the guests visited many places, from Revivim in the Negev; Palmachim, Ga'ash, Shefa'im, and Sdot Yam on the coastal plain; Kfar HaHoresh near Nazareth; Sha'ar HaGolan in the Jordan Valley; and Misgav Am in Upper Galilee. They toured the country, visited Jerusalem and Nazareth, and met scores of kibbutz members for conversations. It was a most interesting encounter for all.<sup>(73)</sup>

At "The Old-timer's Exchange of Ideas" that took place on the final evening of the conference, Hans Meier gave public expression to their encounter with the kibbutz.

In every kibbutz we were received as if we were part of the family, and I hope very much that when you come to visit us, you too will feel the same. The fruits are proof of the tree from which they come, and since we feel that the fruits are in many ways the same, it then follows that the tree must be the same too.

Meier's address was mostly devoted to his life on the commune since joining it as a Religious Socialist in Switzerland; the Bruderhof's

experiences in Nazi Germany, in England, and in Paraguay; his voluntary exile in Argentina; and the eventual reunion with his family and his movement. He emphasized the Bruderhof's belief in God's spirit, which guides all its actions, including its failure. Appealing to the kibbutz he added:

In this sense we feel that you kibbutznikim can live too, because there is something which unites you.... It does not matter what we call it, but it is something beyond man which brings us all together here... shaping the truth which frees the world. We do not believe that we can change the world. We cannot force anyone to think as we do, but we feel that if we are open and seek together, God will give us what we are longing for.<sup>(74)</sup>

A short while after returning to the United States, the Bruderhof mission's first impressions were published as a booklet, *Two letters to the Kibbutz Movement in Israel*. They were written by Hans Meier and Georg Barth, both leaders of the community after Eberhard Arnold's death. Hans Meier wrote:

First we would like to express again our thanks for the hospitality, open doors, and open hearts that we experienced during visit to your kibbutzim and at the conference at Yad Tabenkin. We felt immediately at home in your communities, especially when we saw how you care for one another, quite apart from what each one is able to contribute ("From each according to his ability, to each according to his need"). In order to learn from each other something from our life in community, many of you ask us to share openly something of our experiences of the 450 year old "old" Hutterians and the 65 year old "new" Hutterians, which have relevance to the present situation.... We are aware that we can only start a dialogue for mutually seeking the best way to fulfill our task in the present hour of history.

Hans Meier opens the dialogue by depicting his credo on human history, a history controlled by God's will. He thus immediately focuses on what is probably the furthest removed aspect separating the two movements. Meier, however, does not believe that such a distance exists.

If you seek for the spiritual roots of the kibbutz movement, you will probably look first at the beginning and the teaching of the history of the Jewish people, which is reported in the Tenach.... From it we all should learn the purpose and tasks of our lives and the consequences if we do not fulfill them. In the Bible we are warned again and again that not we men but God, the Creator, has history in his hands.... In his love he does not force us to do his will but allows us human beings to "make our own history" to a certain extent, which is still limited by him.

Then he goes on to the Bruderhof's uncompromising attitude to pacifism, a subject about which one cannot be neutral. He claims that it is impossible to maintain a commune without internal unity of beliefs and aims, and he explains the difference between a consensus-oriented decision-making process and one based on a democratic majority. A large part of the letter is devoted to his analysis of events in Israelite history as told in the Bible. He writes about the deliverance from Egyptian slavery by the hand of God, who created the people of Israel as his chosen people and loyal to divine moral commandments; they rejected this status because they wanted to be like other nations; they preferred a kingdom, and that was their original sin. Hans Meier perceives a parallel between that chapter in Jewish history and between Christianity, which began as a brotherhood of people who lived a model life of communal property and went on to become a church that aspired to power and influence. As such it contributed to bloodshed no less than did the pagans it sought to reform. According to him, the Hutterites continue where the early Christians stopped, while taking care not to fall into the trap of the State, which rules by power. Meier concludes:

When this letter is read, many questions may arise, which we await with open minds and hearts. We feel that both our movements are called by God in this present situation and time to give realistic witness that it is possible to live in Shalom here and now. In this we must help one another for the benefit of all mankind.

Georg Barth, whose age prevented him from attending the conference, joined Hans Meier in his esteem of the kibbutz movement. He recalled his experiences in Germany during the 1920s, when he first met with members of the religious kibbutz.

In the life of the rapidly spreading kibbutzim, especially in the sacrifice and complete dedication of the beginning years, we saw and responded to the struggle for the ideal of the future brotherly society of justice, peace, and freedom. You and we look upon our community life as a forerunner of a future new order of society. In this we both feel the great responsibility we have....The state and government, which have to use force, never point the way to the future....However, we are not anarchists. We see the necessity of government, without which murder killing would soon put an end to mankind.

Dear friends at the kibbutzim! We feel near to you because you and we in the Hutterian Bruderhofs have lived in a community of goods, life, and work for so many years. We should not become soft, or give way in these things....In the struggle for the common life which we all go through, we think very much of you and we wish to stand by you. We have read about despairing people in your movement who no longer had the inner strength to continue the struggle. This shakes us very much. It is part of the reason that I felt the urge to share openly with you and stand by you.



The author with Klaus Meier at Hans Meier's apartment



Hans and Klaus Meier at Yad Tabenkin, Israel, during the 1st International Conference (May 1985)



Martin and Burgel by the Sea of Galilee, December 1987



Cotswold Hachshara Group with some Bruderhofers, 1939/40.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE'S CONTRIBUTION

The Bruderhof's visit to Israel reinforced relations between the two movements, mainly in the sense that it made them public. Former contacts had mostly been on the personal level at both ends, but after the conference, correspondence and visits significantly increased. The Overseas Department at Yad Tabenkin played a cardinal role in fostering these relations. Nancy Farchi of Kibbutz Revivim, who had been in charge of the Bruderhof mission during their stay in Israel, catered to their needs and formed close ties of friendship with them, remaining their main contact person in Israel years after the visit. On the Bruderhof side, Klaus Meier took it upon himself to maintain a regular exchange of information.

One incident that temporarily threatened the relationship between the two movements is especially instructive because of the dialogue it aroused and the deeper mutual understanding that followed. Shortly after the Bruderhof's visit, Plough 14 appeared, and friends of the Bruderhof in Israel searched in vain for any impressions of the conference. They were deeply disappointed and frustrated, because the publication tended to play down and even ignore the month-long visit. In a letter to them I wrote:

"On studying the Plough which appeared after your visit to Israel, one can't help but notice that there is a tendency to play down the importance of your visit to Israel and the kibbutzim....During your stay we tried to show you that we have created a worthwhile creation and formed the impression that the message got through to you....However, there is no sign of this in the last issue of the Plough.

Klaus Meier hurried to apologize, and in his letter of June 24, 1986 he wrote that after receiving my letter, he and his father talked with the editor. The latter had informed them that there would be a fitting report on the visit in the coming issue, which was to be entirely devoted to Israel and the kibbutz. Klaus Meier added:

We have been working hard on a whole issue of the Plough dedicated to our trip to you. We have tried to bring what you have asked from us during our last meeting at Yad Tabenkin. Amitai Niv expressed it by saying that we should "put the cards flat on the table." We have tried to do this because we also know that good friendship will only hold and weather all kinds of storms if there is open speaking.

In September 1986, Plough 16 appeared and was dedicated entirely to Israel. Its heading read: "When Brothers Dwell in Unity. Reflections on a Visit to the Holy Land." In the opening article, Hans Meier assessed the visit.

We were visiting the kibbutzim after many years of friendship and many invitations.... Surely this trip signifies more than friend visiting friend: Jew and Christian had turned towards each other for help- help to live Shalom. We felt immediately at home with the kibbutzniks.... We were thankful to discover so many similarities between both movements. It is not farfetched to conclude that they grow from similar spiritual roots.... Obviously there are differences. The time with our "distant brothers" (as they call us) left us awed and deeply respectful. At the same time, in answer to their request, we will spell out concerns we have felt for the kibbutz movement, "the experiment that did not fail," as Martin Buber called it.

Hans Meier was careful not to generalize and explained that "we can only exchange experiences and grope together for the way we each must proceed." He criticized kibbutz members' political approach and their attempt "to improve society at large by cooperating with the State." He recalled how a certain kibbutznik had said, "One difference between you and us is that you withdraw from American society. You isolate yourselves on beautiful islands. Your reaching out is really reaching out but never becoming a part. American society has no meaning for you." Meier admitted that this criticism was frequently voiced but insisted that, "the Bruderhof, like the kibbutz, is different from society outside. Both of us are islands,

whether we like it or not. In the society outside, people do not live in community helping one another."

"A cardinal issue for both movements is internal unity. Ultimately",- said Meier, "both the kibbutz and Bruderhof will survive as a group only if they unite in will and purpose for Truth. The Bruderhof was also concerned with the kibbutz's reliance on "democracy", the faith they put in majority rule, which means that some people dominate others. He summed this up by expressing his belief in both movements: every sincere Christian and every sincere kibbutznik is called by God to witness that it is possible to live Shalom here and now. To this we challenge and awaken one another for the benefit of all people."<sup>(75)</sup>

In addition to impressions of the visit, the Plough includes selections from the "Old-timers' Talk" at which Ya'acov Hazan, Yitzhak Ben Aharon, Moshe Unna, and Israel Bitmann participated. The latter said:

During the conference days I have been wondering what I have in common with the people of the Bruderhof? What have I to do with a religious group? Yet I must confess that many of their stories have touched my heart. In our early days we were just as strict with ourselves as they are.

The Plough was diversified and included pictures from Israel and the kibbutz as well as quotes from traditional Bruderhof and Jewish sources, both Hasidic and modern. It also included an article by Muki Tzur on the early days of the kibbutz movement, days of intimacy and spontaneity in which some similarity to the Bruderhof could be perceived: "Much of early kibbutz life, though not connected to any formal religion, was sparked by a religious, spiritual tension with strong ritualistic elements."

Altogether the editors tried to bring a mosaic of ideas and to present a balanced picture, even if they were not entirely successful. For instance, the Bruderhof's perspective was emphasized, while the quality of present day kibbutz life and its point of view were underrepresented. Moreover, covert criticism could be found on

kibbutz involvement in the Zionist movement and all its ramifications, for instance, army service and relations between Jews and Arabs. This was most noticeable on the final page of the Plough, where a letter of self-criticism from an anonymous kibbutznik was printed: "We have all the troubles of the outer society: power struggles, corruption....We don't have a clear call to call people to order, or a brightly lit way for people to follow." (76)

Despite its drawbacks, the Plough contained many subjects and questions that would foster a dialogue between the Bruderhof and the kibbutz movement and improve relations. In that respect, it served as a milestone. After all, though the Bruderhof maintained widespread relations with other communes throughout the world, none enjoyed the distinction of having an entire issue of *The Plough* dedicated to it. Moreover, mutual relations became official: a committee was set up under Hans and Klaus Meier, with Klaus in charge of official correspondence with the International Relations Department at Yad Tabenkin. Other members corresponded privately.

Among those who wrote regularly was Wayne Shirky, who had attended the conference. On July 28, 1986, he wrote about a unique encounter between the Bruderhof and 50 youngsters and their counselor, Yaacov Shamir (Kibbutz Malkia), from the Yehuda HaTzair. The group of youngsters, from all over the United States, was attending a training camp and had come for a day's work at the newest Bruderhof, Pleasant View (New York). After helping to clear the forest for the new settlement, the youngsters met with two older members, Hans Meier and Hardy Arnold, to hear about the Bruderhof's history and communal principles. It was an encounter between the commune's old-timers and young people who were getting ready to join a kibbutz in Israel. Yaacov Shamir, a kibbutz emissary, still remembers that day as a unique experience: "The elders spoke and the youngsters listened attentively. They were amazed, for they had not been aware that the Bruderhof, a community that resembled kibbutz to such an extent, was situated so close to their homes."

Yaacov Shamir was impressed by the fact that on the new settlement there were families with children who had come there from other established communes. He added, "I envied their ability to enlist their people. Whenever the Bruderhof decided on a new community, entire families, young and old, would immediately move there to begin their lives on a new settlement."

In one of his first letters after the conference, Klaus Meier wrote about a visit of two members of HaKibbutz HaArtzi, Mussa Bar-Semech and Dani Gal. He ended by expressing a wish: "We would like to have interested kibbutz visitors for longer periods in order to continue the dialogue that was started during our visit to Israel" (77). In April, 1986, Klaus Meier wrote that Mussa Bar-Semech had visited them once again and proposed that veteran kibbutz members would come for longer periods with their families. Klaus adds, "This is an interesting idea. I admit that I always thought in terms of young kibbutz members and not about adults with families."

Mussa Bar-Semech (Yad Mordechai), who was studying in the United States at the time, recalls that he encountered the Bruderhof while serving as counselor at a HaShomer HaTzair summer camp near Woodcrest. According to him, he met them after an extended stay in the United States, just as disturbing rumors about the deterioration of communalism in the kibbutz movement began to arrive. He was therefore profoundly impressed by the flourishing community, whose members maintained their communal life from internal convictions. Back in New York, he voiced his impressions in an appreciative letter and added that the Bruderhof very existence was an asset to the kibbutz movement. He explained that he was aware of the great differences in their doctrines, but thought that the similarities were even more pronounced.

His letter was distributed throughout the Bruderhof communities, and some time later he was invited to visit Deer Spring, Connecticut. There he met Hans and Klaus Meier, who had just returned from Israel and were still impressed by their encounter with the kibbutz movement. During their conversation, they decided that the time had come to move from theoretical talks to practical actions to

reinforce the ties between both movements. The Bruderhof was just beginning to establish their new community at Pleasant View and suggested that young people from kibbutzim and from youth movements in the United States might want to participate. At the same time, youngsters from the Bruderhof would assist at similar projects in Israel. Mussa Bar Semech, who feared that this would not be practical at that stage, proposed an exchange program for older and more established kibbutzniks. Not having any official status, he arranged a meeting between the Bruderhof and Dani Gal, who was serving as coordinator of the HaShomer HaTzair mission in North America. Although Gal was impressed with the idea, he did not promote the matter at the Kibbutz HaArtzi institutions. The Bruderhof, however, took the proposal seriously and acted right away. <sup>(78)</sup>

The plan, which was endorsed by Hans Meier was presented in 1987 to the elder of the Bruderhof, Johann Christoph Arnold, by Klaus Meier. The first couple, Martin and Burgel Johnson, set out for a four month's stay in Israel, from October 1987 until March 1988. They were followed by a second couple, Jim and Jeanette Warren.

The Johnsons' stay signified an additional step forward in the relations between both movement since the family was the first to spend a longer period at one community - Mussa Bar-Semech's kibbutz, Yad Mordechai. From there they traveled widely throughout the country, visiting various kibbutzim, and had an opportunity to gain different perspectives. Some of their first impressions were revealed in letters home:

**October 8th:** "Moshe [Mussa] wrote in his letter of invitation, 'A big dark cloud is covering the sun of love, unity and togetherness. You may understand how worried I am about the future. We need to cooperate all communal ways of life for our survival.' Burgel and I try to find and encourage any search for a deeper life in full community here."

**October 9th:** "There is something so genuine and forthright here. They believe each person has to find and cope with himself and give what he can to the whole."

**October 15th:** "To us it is still amazing that so many people give their lives without pay to help in these large communities. I am still trying to find reasons for this dedication. There must be more than political reasons for this dedication. There are certain facts that are different from our life in the Bruderhofs. They send their young men to the army after high school for two or three years. They do not agree with many of their government's policies....Despite that they have great interest to find out what holds us together"<sup>(79)</sup>

During their visit at the Yad Tabenkin Research Institute, Martin Johnson suggested that the Hutterite and Bruderhof elders be invited to visit Israel. The chairman of the board, Yaacov Sack, agreed immediately to host them, and an exchange of letters between Yad Tabenkin and Johann Christoph Arnold ensued. On January 14, 1988, Arnold wrote to Yaacov Sack thanking him for his invitation but regretting that the visit could not take place in the near future because of an earlier commitment in Germany. He emphasized, however, that he was very eager to visit Israel and hoped that he could do so during 1988.

In response to the invitation, which was sent by Yad Tabenkin and the Kibbutz Federation, seven Bruderhof members (including Johann Christoph Arnold, Hans and Klaus Meier) and two Hutterites arrived in Israel on October 17, 1988. They stayed until November 10 and managed to visit 17 kibbutzim, from Revivim in the south, to Shaar HaGolan in the north. They also visited research institutes at Yad Tabenkin and Giv'at Haviva. Toward the end of their visit, they convened at the Kibbutz Federation's offices, where they met with the movement's general secretaries. During their conversation they expressed a wish to intensify relations, and special committees were set up for that purpose.

Shortly after returning home, Johann Christoph Arnold wrote a letter in which he summed up their stay and expressed deep appreciation for the welcome and consideration they had received

by every representative of the kibbutz movement. Like others before him, he wrote:

We felt like we were in one of our communities.... But one obvious trend made us very sad. The kibbutzim seem to be very well off materially. This has bad fruits in the young people. The trend now seems to be, "What can I get out of the kibbutz?" when it should be, "What can I and my children give the kibbutz?" Only if this trend is changed-giving instead of taking will there be hope for the future of the kibbutz and the Hutterian communities.<sup>(80)</sup>

Arnold added that the Bruderhof was going to send two girls and two boys to study Hebrew at an ulpan in Kibbutz Tzuva and Revivim. That decision was a positive result of their visit, which everyone had estimated to be an important step in fostering relations between the communal movements.

The visit's significance was also reflected in Plough 22, in which the Israeli Kibbutz-Bruderhof Committee welcomed a plan to send six young people to study Hebrew at a kibbutz Ulpan. The committee perceived it as a great step forward and hoped to be able to receive kibbutz members on extended visits to the Bruderhof. The Plough also printed a letter by Elder Johann Christoph Arnold in which he thanked the kibbutzim for their warm hospitality.

Our hearts go out to the kibbutz movement in their struggle for economic survival and to win their people.... These struggles we have common. We on the Hutterian communities long that the contact with the kibbutzim continues. This contact has been a great enrichment to our communities and there is real hope for the future. This hope is best realized by a close working together of both movements for the brotherhood of all men.<sup>(81)</sup>

In January, 1989, Hans Meier also summed up the visit to Israel in a long letter addressed to the friends of the Bruderhof in Israel.

When our people visit your communities, and when kibbutzniks visit our Bruderhofs, we always feel many similarities... which led to calling us "distant brothers." The deepest reason for this is probably the fact that we know ourselves called to the same historical task: to prove realistically that it is possible, here and now, for ordinary people as we are to live Shalom. We understand that the word Shalom has the combined meaning of peace, justice, and organic unity. We feel that the best help we can render one another is to share our positive and negative experiences: the positive ones as mutual encouragement, the negative ones as mutual warning.

After this introduction, Hans Meier reiterated his view of the evolvment of early Christian communalism, its corruption by the Church, and its conservation by the Hutterites. He also elaborated on the Jewish people's fate as "God's chosen people," whose capability for living justly on earth was to serve as a model for other nations. He pointed to the harm that kingdoms and states had caused the Jewish people and mankind in general. Finally, he expressed his fundamental belief in an organic integration of peace and communal brotherhood. He ends the letter:

"The foregoing is meant only as a beginning of our open-hearted seeking together for Shalom for the whole mankind. We do not wish to tell you what to do, but find with you together the true reasons of why we live in full communalism."

Unfortunately the letter, which was full of good intentions to start an ideological dialogue, did not achieve its purpose. This may have been due to the strong and exclusive emphasis of the Bruderhof's religious doctrine. It was never answered to Hans Meier's satisfaction, and ever since, he continues to inquire for reasons. One may assume that his kibbutz correspondents hesitated to deal with unbridgeable religious issues, preferring instead to maintain open paths for their dialogue. Attempting to relate the doctrine of both movements, I wrote:

If I may use a metaphor, I would say that our worlds are as two banks of the river in which the communal life flows. Each bank is very different and distinct. The banks are close but parallel and therefore cannot meet. Only bridges can join them. I perceive the bridges in the similar patterns of our way of life. The linkage could be strengthened by our visits, encounters and mutual assistance. It is very important that each of us assert his identity and try to describe it as thoroughly as possible. In this way we can get to know each other more appropriately. Mutual understanding will buttress the bridge.<sup>(82)</sup>

An answer arrived shortly afterwards.

Your comparison of the kibbutzim and the Bruderhof as two shores of the same stream which run parallel but never come together intrigued us very much. We thought a lot about it and came to the following conclusion: you are right, when we follow the stream downwards, the two shores separate more and more. But when we return to the sources of the stream, the two shores come together and unite. It is a question of swimming upstream to arrive at the source, which takes more effort than swimming with the current.... Should not the kibbutzim and the Bruderhof and all the communities in the world give a clear witness of the Source of life for the whole of humanity by their life in common, like a living, organic body?<sup>(83)</sup>

The dialogue between Hans Meier and myself was ended. In the period that followed our correspondence, we ceased to strive upstream toward our common sources and instead drifted downstream on a dark current of misunderstandings and differences of opinion. The river banks grew further and further apart because of the Intifada in Israel.

The young Bruderhof people had come to study at the kibbutz ulpan or to do social work at the Arab village of Ibillin just as the Intifada started, and naturally their impressions were mixed and many

sided. Those who stayed on kibbutzim were treated very well by their hosts, especially at Revivim, where Nancy Farchi, an old friend of the Bruderhof, was their ulpan teacher. The young people were given a chance to tour the country and meet whomever they liked.

Shortly after the young people returned home, Plough 23 appeared, but there was no mention of the groups' stay at the kibbutz. Instead, it included an article by Carmen Meier about her experiences at an Arab wedding, during which IDF soldiers raided the village. Her tone toward the soldiers was rather hostile, and apparently she fully identified with the villagers' ordeal. Moreover, she did not refer at all to her eight months' stay on kibbutz. The Plough also printed two short articles on the West Bank and Gaza written in the same spirit. In fact, the entire issue identified with the Palestinian struggle and was extremely hostile toward the Israeli government.

When the Plough reached Israel, all Bruderhof friends in the kibbutz movement were amazed and greatly disappointed. Their disappointment was twofold: first, because the groups' stay on kibbutz had not even been mentioned, and second, because the complex problematics of the Intifada had been misrepresented. Nancy Farchi, who was extremely hurt by Carmen's reaction to her stay in Israel, wrote a candid letter to her Bruderhof friends.

Perhaps I am overly sensitive, but it seems to me that in the last issues of the Plough, all the articles about Israel have been about the poor Palestinians. Where are the stories about the young people who were here in the kibbutzim? We have waited to hear their impressions good or bad... and all we read about is the Intifada. All that is said about the Israeli is that he is a heartless soldier with a gun in his hand....Don't forget that my sons, too, are soldiers. Believe me, my son, who today is taking Palestinian identify cards and asking Palestinians to clean the walls of slogans, would certainly prefer to be at home in Revivim, sitting on a tractor and ploughing fields....Do you think he enjoys what he is doing? But he knows, we all know, that this is what we must do right now in this

situation in Israel. Perhaps you really will never truly understand our position here, our daily dilemmas, our daily pain and soul searching.<sup>(84)</sup>

As soon the letter reached the Bruderhof, letters and faxes began to arrive in Israel, all expressing regret over the distress that had been caused by the Plough. They were written by people who had been directly connected to the kibbutz movement: Martin and Burgel Johnson, Hans and Klaus Meier, Johann Christoph Arnold, the Elder, and his son Christoph. All expressed deep regret over the publication and indirectly criticized the editor for not maintaining a balanced point of view on the Intifada and the agonies it inflicted on both sides. The writers noted that Carmen had not written the article but had been quoted from an oral account to the community. According to them, she had talked emotionally about her experiences on kibbutzim, but the editor had published only a certain part.

The first to write, in November 23, 1989 were Martin and Burgel Johnson.

We appreciate very much the open relationship that you have with us and want to listen to your thoughts and will read your letter to all our membership.... We believe that despite this episode, we all have a strong and abiding love for you and the kibbutz movement. This makes us all the more sorry for the hurt this Plough issue has caused...

Several days later, on November 26, they wrote again: "We have had a meeting of Klaus, Hans, ourselves, and Derek Wardle, the current editor of the Plough, and have agreed never to present only one side of the picture alone again." At the same time, Johann Christoph Arnold took the trouble to answer Nancy's letter.

Your letter really touched our hearts. Can we print it in the next Plough? Could you ask one of your sons to write an article on "What a kibbutz Israeli soldier faces while serving in the occupied territories?" We want to publish that in one of our next issues of the Plough. This story has to be published.

On the same day (November 24), he also wrote Yad Tabenkin. Your insights into the problems of Israel are very important to us. As you can imagine, the whole struggle between the Palestinians and Jews is very much of our hearts. We long that a nonviolent, peaceful solution can be found, where no one is hurt. I am sure that this is also your longing.... So you dear ones, do not be disheartened with us. We will stand by you. We love you. We wish you strength for your daily tasks to seek true Shalom in a very divided country.

The Bruderhof kept their promise and Plough 24 published Nancy Farchi's letter.<sup>(85)</sup>

Without any coordination, similar letters were written by other kibbutz members. I too had written to Hans Meier, and in reply, he wrote:

Thank you for your letter of November 28th. It was written in just honest and straightforward a way as we felt should come from a true friend. And I think that I understand the source of the spirit of your letter and your need. You are right that the readers of the last Plough got a one-sided impression of the situation in Israel, and we are very sorry about it. For this reason we will try to correct it in the next number.... We do not only hope but we believe that our error in the last number does not stop our communal seeking of the truth.

In reply to a conciliatory letter that I had written I received a fax from Hans Meier on January 1, 1990.

Dear Ya'acov,

Hearty thanks for your letter of January 23rd, in which you confirm that our shores are close, the bridges strong, and the contacts strengthened. In this sense we would like to greet you all from our hearts and, using your metaphor, expect to meet you at the source. Shalom, from your "distant brother" Hans."

Thus the correspondence concerning the Intifada in the Plough ended on a conciliatory note. The Bruderhof leadership and friends of the kibbutz did all they could to assuage their Israeli friends, primarily by publishing their point of view in the Plough. Moreover, in an extraordinary gesture, the Bruderhof leadership invited two kibbutz couples, Nancy and Haim Farchi (Revivim) and Avishai and Rina Cohen (Shaar HaGolan), to visit and tour their communities in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Germany. Everywhere they were asked to present their point of views on the Israeli-Arab conflict and to tell about kibbutz life and how they come to live in kibbutz. The Plough covered the visit by publishing Avishai Cohen's life story.<sup>(86)</sup>

Nancy Farchi's impressions of their visit appeared in the International Communal Studies Association Bulletin, published by Yad Tabenkin.

We were welcomed as brothers with real joy and interest, and were surrounded with love and friendship.... The Bruderhof wanted us to share anything that was important or would be of interest. They longed for personal interaction, sharing and questioning.... We were happy to have the opportunity to talk about the kibbutz and Israel personally. We agreed that there are many common threads running through the fabrics of our lives. Taking great joy in discovering the common factors in our cultures and playing down the differences without forgetting them.<sup>(8)</sup>

Recent letters from kibbutz friends on the Bruderhof show a certain disappointment because the kibbutz has repeatedly ignored their invitations to host families for longer periods to study the Bruderhof's way of life. In fact, owing to its recent financial difficulties, the kibbutz movement has had to cease investing any effort in fostering relations with worldwide communes, including the Bruderhof.

In 1991 a breakthrough occurred, thanks to a private initiative of the Regev family from Kfar HaHoresh. They arrived at the

Bruderhof mainly by their own effort with only small kibbutz assistance and spent over six months sharing the life and work of the Deer Spring and Spring Valley communities. They returned home in June 1992 after having stayed longer at the Bruderhof than any kibbutz member. Being extremely interested in their fresh impressions, I met Shlomo (Shulti) Regev several days after their return.

I opened by asking what had motivated him to transfer his entire family (wife and three children) to a remote commune in the United States, and he replied:

My encounter with the Bruderhof began in 1985, when their mission visited the kibbutz movement in Israel and they arrived at Kfar Hahoreh as guests of Alex Barzel. They left a package of letters from Bruderhof children who wished to correspond with their kibbutz peers. My 15 year-old daughter Zohar was asked to distribute them and tried to persuade other children to write, but her efforts were in vain. Feeling responsible, she wrote to one of the Bruderhof girls (Hanna Meier, Hans Meier's granddaughter), and their correspondence continued for a couple of years. Two years later, Zohar was badly injured in a car accident. When Hanna Meier's parents heard of it they immediately wrote us a warm and emotional letter. We were very touched, and began to correspond and that is how our two families got in touch.

Years later we went on a short trip to the United States during which we visited Pleasant View, where Hanna's parents, Andrea and Fida, live. We had come to a pleasant and very clean settlement, but I don't believe that I would have been eager to return, until Fida uttered a certain sentence in reply to my remark that I was not religious and that their religion was alien to us. She had said, "We are not religious in the sense in which you perceive the term. We worship God through the mutual relationship between one person and another." Her words stuck in

my mind, and I began to feel that I wanted to return in order to understand what Fida had meant.

A few years passed, and meanwhile the kibbutz experienced a severe crisis. More and more people despaired of our communal way of life and claimed that it was unnatural. I was prompted to find reinforcement for my belief in the kibbutz by seeking a remote vantage point. That is when I decided to take my family for a longer stay on a Bruderhof community in order to better understand how they maintain their communal viability and how they realized the mutual relationship which Fida had mentioned.

Our reception was touching. When we arrived at the airport, two members from Deer Spring were expecting us, and although they were strangers, they immediately treated us as old friends. They drove us to the community, where an apartment had been prepared. We "adopted" by a family and met many people, who all of whom provided us with the feeling that we were welcome guests.

I was curious about the character of their relations after the excitement of their first encounter had abated. After all, their extended stay could have presented them with an opportunity to get to know the Bruderhof not merely in moments of elation, but during the monotony of their daily life. I wondered whether they maintained their sunny disposition all the time. Regev replied:

That question had bothered us too. As people who had been educated in the manner of Western society with its false facade, we wondered when "the demon would emerge from the bottle...." It didn't! We soon realized that their graciousness was real and maintained throughout all our relationships. Granted, it was most evident during our reception, and I believe that it is their way of overcoming embarrassment when meeting strangers. Later they do not smile continuously, but they always keep their welcoming attitude.

I believe that their gracious disposition ensues from the nature of their direct relations with one another. They are expected not to maintain a grudge. Whenever problems concerning another person arise, they are expected to talk with him that very day. We experienced this personally. It helps to maintain good relations, prevents a hostile atmosphere, and promotes benevolence as a natural expression of their mutual relationships. Something else may explain that cordiality, namely, their extraordinary attention to each and everyone. They notice every event, congratulate you on your birthday, celebrate the birth of a new born baby, and even sing under a sick person's window.

Every personal experience becomes a community experience in the deepest sense of the word. Unless you have actually seen it for yourself, you might perceive it as a show; however, the entire relationship has been internalized by Bruderhof members, who feel comfortable with it and are therefore naturally gracious. One of the things that attracted me to them was their evident pleasure in giving and sharing with others.

Without generalizing, I dare say that we felt as though we were living within a happy community, with people who enjoyed their togetherness. Let me give you an example: toward the end of our stay, we wished to visit other parts of the United States and inquired about their vacation arrangements. We were told that there were no specific arrangements for Bruderhof members, because they did not need any regular vacations. They were content to stay at home, where there were plenty of holidays and days of rest that they could spend hiking with their families, or resting. They did not imply that they would not enjoy travelling to other communities in distant states. However, there was no regular vacation to relieve stress.

Throughout our stay, they let us know that they were expecting other kibbutz members to spend longer periods with them rather than come on short visits. This feeling was reinforced when we became aware of everybody's interest in kibbutz life and its problems. We told them about our life and about the current crisis and felt that they were troubled by it. They follow the kibbutz from a distance, but with great concern. They perceive us as realizers of the Jewish destiny to be "a chosen people" who successfully maintain communities of sharing and brotherhood. Therefore they expect us to continue in our traditional communal way, even though they insisted that they were not telling us how to act. However, they would like us to seek the path to common sources of our communal life here and there. This motto is repeatedly stated by the kibbutz movement's old friend, the 90 year-old Hans Meier.

According to Regev, their life together also revealed certain disagreements.

During our conversations, there were ideological confrontations on various subjects such as their Christian doctrine; their pacifism and their denial of the right to defend oneself; lessons of the Holocaust; the place of women in society; their puritanical sex-education, which tends to repress vital issues; and their education of teenagers. Even though they send their youngsters to external schools outside the community, they are not given enough scope to experience any real conflict concerning their future. They guide their youngsters closely and steer them towards community life. We had talks and discussions on these issues, and they appreciated my candidness. I was impressed by their ability to listen and to respect another person's attitude even if they disagreed. Altogether our stay on the Bruderhof was one of the most impressive periods in my life. It was an emotional

experience to live with a group of people whom I had not known before, but whom I came to love and live harmoniously within mutual understanding and extraordinary openness. My family and I enjoyed every moment, we enjoyed the friendships that ensued, the lessons learnt from the experience of their life, and the mutual openness, but mainly their goodwill and effort to communicate with us strangers.

Recently, the Bruderhof has furthered the mutual relations with the kibbutz by initiating a project called Easter in the Holy Land. This essay competition invited all Bruderhofs to answer leading questions on the theme "Israel: Past and Present", mainly about religious and historical issues. The first question concerned the Judaeo-Christian tradition and its significance for the Bruderhof and the present day Christian church. The second focused on problems of modern Jewish nationalism and on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The five best essay writers won a three-week stay in the Holy land during Passover 1992. Two weeks of their visit were spent at kibbutzim, where they were hosted by old and new friends. They also visited Yad Tabenkin for an exchange of ideas about the common problems of both movements.

In the Plough 31 of May/June 1992, Milton and Sandy Zimmerman,

who participated in the trip, summed up their stay:

To experience the currents of life in Israel today was very stimulating and challenging. We need to keep in contact with our friends....We need to work and pray for peace not only for Israel, but for our Bruderhof movement, which likewise experiences the stresses of growing pains and recurring shakiness in holding firmly to its inner foundations.

At the end of their visit at Yad Tabenkin, the Bruderhof guests were asked to follow the tradition of signing the visitor's book. On examining it later, I noticed that since the Bruderhof's first visit in 1985, 50 members, young and old, had visited Yad Tabenkin. The

number of kibbutz members who have visited the Bruderhof is, it should be mentioned, much larger. Thus our wish to promote mutual relations has indeed materialized. The question of which way we ought best to reinforce our relationship remains; however, are mutual visits the only way? Should we look for other ways to learn from each other? I sought answers to this questions and insights on the future of Kibbutz-Bruderhof relations, among those who had formerly experienced extensive relations with the Bruderhof.

## THE NATURE OF KIBBUTZ BRUDERHOF RELATIONS

Amitai Niv had these insights on the issue:

You asked if we should follow developments in the Bruderhof as well as certain processes that are taking place there. I believe we should....The kibbutz could learn from the parallel experiment that is being conducted over there. Our dialogue is relevant, even if some may think that we have nothing to learn because they are religious.... I believe that the kibbutz has a great interest in the internal confrontations that are constantly being waged between their religious and ideological principles and their daily practice. We should examine to what extent they manage to adhere to their ideological truth in practice. It is a two-directional rather than a one-directional process. It is wrong to believe that ideologies don't influence practice, that there is no feedback. I could give you many examples from the period I spent with them. One aspect that should interest the kibbutz is their success in maintaining a religious ideological nucleus and at the same time adapting to changing circumstances.... In that respect they may serve as an interesting and significant model for the kibbutz movement's current problems. The question that must be asked today is whether a dialogue between ideology and

practice does exist, or whether there is only a one-way process in which practice is the determining factor while ideology is futile. In that respect, their ways are extremely relevant... although naturally there is no room for imitation; neither we nor they are able to imitate each other's patterns of behavior.

Our dialogue has an additional aspect in that they are a kind of 'point of reference' for our communalism. For the kibbutz they serve as 'a communal reference' because they are the only ones in the world who maintain an overall communalism among all their settlements (which used to be the vision of Gdud HaAvoda, the pioneer "Work Batalions" of the 1920s)." In reply to the question: "What did your stay with the Bruderhof and your studies contribute?" Amitai Niv said:

It was an unforgettable experience.... The Bruderhof is a unique island in the American environment. It enjoys a quality of human relations which are not to be found elsewhere. They have a tremendous amount of love for people; their kind of love, not erotic love. There is very little criticism and if it does exist, it is immediately dealt with. On the other hand, they are very strict about anything that concerns their religious doctrine. This is evident in times of crisis in the way they deal with themselves and with "heretics" who are expelled. On the personal level it was also quite an experience to live within a community where one feels loved.

As for the question whether the kibbutz should continue the dialogue, I dare say that the relationship has been unique insofar as it has taken place on an individual level even after expanding and branching out. I don't believe it should be taken up by the kibbutz establishment - in any case it would be unrealistic to perceive it as a challenge for the kibbutz movement nowadays. The relationship is based on personal affinity and should not be turned into

something institutional. I would adopt the exchange program for young people and families who could live for longer periods on either movement's communities. A longer stay with them is a wonderful experience. As for myself, I can only say that in retrospect after fifteen years it was an experience that I still cherish.

Mussa Bar Semech also felt strongly about his contact with the Bruderhof:

My visit to the Bruderhof left a deep impression and to a certain extent even affected my activities on the kibbutz.... Although I have always been a committed kibbutz member, I have only recently begun to publish value-oriented works on the kibbutz and believe that this was the result of my encounter with the Bruderhof. I saw that the communal way of life in which I believe is viable and that they maintain it successfully. I permit myself to generalize and say that they have affected me profoundly and I would be happy to see our relations become closer.

During my visits and contacts I noticed certain things which I don't accept, although many of their daily customs could be copied by us, for instance putting a stop to evil gossip or maintaining constant relations between people at work, during meals, at assemblies, and on holidays the kind of contact which has almost ceased since we introduced family sleeping arrangements. Moreover, they have succeeded in creating obligatory norms for interpersonal relationships which could serve as an example for every community.... In our adult society such behavioral norms no longer prevail and are fostered only in our schools. Adult kibbutz society seems to have halted all educational processes; I believe this to be a mistake, because education should continue throughout a person's entire life. Having understood this, the Bruderhof has created a framework for constant self-education.

I believe that this is very pertinent to our life mainly because of what is currently happening to the kibbutz movement. The Bruderhof could serve as a model for communal life and have a positive impact. Naturally, it is not possible to copy their norms of behavior, nor is there any need to. The very fact that a community which realizes the principles of a collective way of life does exist should encourage us. Even if our relations stay informal, the dialogue serves as a source of inspiration and encouragement for all who believe in communal life.... I can serve as a catalyst for collective trends on kibbutz.

On various occasions I have told them directly, "I put my trust in you! The kibbutz movement is at a crossroads. In many respects its communitarian values and frameworks have deteriorated.... You could help to stop this tendency!" I believe that they took my appeal seriously and acted to the best of their ability. I am aware of the fact that some of our people here would like to appeal to them, but hesitate to be in touch with a Christian sect.... This stigma is attached to all ardent believers in collectivism, who are labeled as people who want to turn the kibbutz into a closed sect.

I want to be perfectly clear: none of us on either side is talking about a covenant. It is unfeasible because of the enormous differences in our religions. But there can be close relations. So far none of the mutual relations have been undertaken by the movement's secretariats. The current trend is to ignore other communal movements and their experience. This is not accidental. Everything that is taught in our seminars is taken from the experience of our environment, because we aspire to assimilate in external society.<sup>(88)</sup>

Shlomo (Shulti) Regev was emphatic about the positive contribution of his experience:

I have no doubts that the Bruderhof communities and their experience could be a source of inspiration for the kibbutz movement. The first thing that we ought to learn from them is their ability to deal bravely with our existential issues as an alternative society. I have the impression that they have a strong internal power and are deeply committed to their way. For them it is a lifetime covenant, one with religious sanctions. It is definitely impossible for us to choose that way, but we could aspire to having a stronger commitment for kibbutz members. Such commitment would prevent us from persistently putting new question marks to the fundamentals of our communitarian life.

I really believe that they adhere to the principle which Fida Meier presented to me at our first meeting, that the principle of love is a cardinal aspect of their life: love for people, love for one another within the community, and the love of mutual giving. I know that kibbutz members will merely shrug their shoulders and say that the Bruderhof are religious people and that their ways are irrelevant to us. However, when you talk to them, they say: "We are not religious; we believe." And I ask myself, "Can't we believe in something that would form the basis for our life together? ...Don't we have things that made us opt for the kibbutz that inspire us to live on kibbutz?" I am quite sure that even today there are thousands of kibbutznikim who are seeking a way of life with a different content rather than material success. They aspire to a spiritual content, to a humane and friendly relationship. In those areas the Bruderhofs are very relevant and can teach us a lot. I think that we should maintain relations with them and believe that they want the same as we want.

In the kibbutz movement's current situation, we should seek some additional models for a collective way of life,

the Bruderhof's is a successful one. Without imitating it, we should try to understand and regard their model as a source of inspiration. One sees how things that we used to believe in still exist among them. One can see that they, too, have to struggle between their ideals and human nature. We don't have many opportunities to observe our problems from the point of view of another commune. I therefore suggest that we continue to foster the family exchange program.

To hear the Bruderhof's position on our mutual relations and their future, I interviewed their Elder, Johann Christoph Arnold. The following is a summary of our conversation.

How would you characterize the past relationship between the kibbutz and the Bruderhof movements, and do you see any benefit from it?

We feel that the long history of contacts between the Bruderhof and the kibbutzim has had a beneficial effect on our movement. The idealism behind the kibbutz movement, which may not be as strong now as it was in the beginning, has had an encouraging influence on us. Of course, we do not see eye to eye on several points, but wherever there is respect between movements that aspire to the same goals, there is a beneficial effect in proportion to the strength of idealism and respect....We feel strongly that what Jesus said about deeds being more important than words is very important: "By their fruits you shall know them." We feel closer to people who put brotherhood into action than people who speak Christian words but do not act on them in their lives....On the other side of the coin, we feel sad as we see the eroding of communal values in various kibbutzim, which leads to privatization and even to paying wages, etc.... We would wish to encourage all who work for stronger communal values of greater sharing and cooperation in the spirit of brotherhood.

How do you see the future relationship between the kibbutz and the Bruderhof movements?

We would hope that there could be an exchange of families between the two movements in an official way. We hope to be able to send more of our young people to visit kibbutzim and ulpanim in a similar way as we have done in the past.<sup>(89)</sup>

\*

I asked two prominent members of the kibbutz movement who had maintained direct relations with the Bruderhof about their opinions on the value of continuous connections. The first was Menachem Rosner from Kibbutz Reshafim, a member of the secretariat of HaKibbutz HaArtzi and professor of sociology who founded the Institute for Kibbutz Research at Haifa University. Menachem Rosner visited the Bruderhof settlements in the United States several times and also met with their delegations in Israel for a series of discussions to compare and clarify the ideologies of the two movements.

Menachem replied to my questions by outlining features of similarities and differences between the two movements, stressing in particular the differences in the religious sphere. According to his evaluation the meaningful similarity between the Kibbutz and the Bruderhof lies in the realm of community. As he put it:

Since I believe that the future of the kibbutz lies in the strengthening of the elements of society and community as well as those of ideology, I should think that it is very important to maintain contacts with a movement that develops these types of behavior patterns. Even if these evolve from a different source, they are proof of the viability of these patterns. An additional advantage of these contacts lies in the fact that we are dealing with a stable framework of a communal movement and not with an ephemeral group of eccentrics that rises and falls within a short period of time.

As for the future, I am in favor of diverse types of information exchange and of delegations that would promote mutual acquaintance. I have no apprehensions about any possible influence of their sectarian beliefs. In my opinion, the danger that kibbutz members would adopt this sectarian element is minor in comparison with the advantage gained by getting to know an integrated communal way of life, which has succeeded in maintaining a reasonable standard of living without falling prey to temptations of the American society surrounding it.... I think that it is important to get to know their experience in curbing the consumer approach. It seems to me that the kibbutz will not be able to exist without cultivating criteria of self-control in the sphere of consumption. This does not mean promoting self-deprivation and asceticism, but it also does not mean a constant race to keep up with the standard of living tempting us from the outside.

It is true that the Bruderhof settlements present an extreme type of consumer restraint that is not given to imitation and application by the kibbutz, but it is definitely a model from which we can learn. The same goes for their practice of intercommunal cooperation. It seems to me that there is in the communal experience of the Bruderhof a whole gamut of features that cannot be copied, but from which we may draw inspiration. Summing up: I view the pattern of relationships between us and the Bruderhof as a way of creating opportunities for mutual inspiration rather than a chance for copying behavior patterns.

My second interviewee was Aaron Yadlin of Hatzerim, one of the outstanding personalities in the kibbutz movement. He had been minister of education in the Israeli government as well as secretary of the United Kibbutz Movement (TAKAM) during the years 1985-1989. Aaron Yadlin established contacts with the Bruderhof before he assumed the office of secretary of TAKAM, visiting their

settlements and corresponding with several of their members. He maintained these contacts while in office and also met for prolonged discussions with the Bruderhof delegations to Israel. In his appreciation of these contacts, he told me the following:

I value very much the contacts with the Bruderhof and find them to have great educational merit in making kibbutz members aware of the existence of a communal movement like that of the Bruderhof. I think that it is important for kibbutz members to realize that communal life is a universal phenomenon and not just the result of the particular circumstances of Zionist realization in Eretz Israel. Increasing awareness that communalism is universal and may exist successfully under varying conditions will strengthen the realization that community is opposed to human nature. Furthermore, the more the communal phenomenon becomes part of the culture of various peoples and various philosophies, the more ground there will be for hope and optimism.

The special thing about the Bruderhof that gives continued contacts with them increased importance is their continuous existence. Their history goes back for over 70 years, the Hutterites, with whom they consider themselves affiliated, have a historical tradition that goes back 450 years. This is a movement that has a generational scale, a permanent fixture, not just an episode or a curiosity.

Another unique feature, which I consider important, is the fact that the Bruderhof, as opposed to the Hutterites, does not shut itself off from the modern world. I visited their enterprises and saw their catalogues which are directed at the American market, and it is my impression that in spite of their ideological isolation, they do not turn their backs on society and do not run away from the surrounding world.

At the same time, one should not underestimate the difficulties connected with this dialogue for both sides.

They have problems coming to terms with our approach to security. We serve in the army and consider this something of value. Refusal to serve is unthinkable to us, and they on the other hand are a movement of devoted pacifists. We are proud of being involved and contributing and not being on the margins of Israeli society but at the center and find their avoidance of political involvement hard to accept. When reading their newspapers, I felt that the Israel-Arab conflict and the frequent necessity for us to wage defensive wars was an embarrassment to them. But the contacts endure despite of all the difficulties, and it is to their credit that they knew how to overcome the things which divide us.

I asked Aaron Yadlin how he thought the dialogue should be continued in the future.

I think that much can be done in this field. The problem is that we are at present going through a period of weakness and spend all our time cutting budgets and getting out of various fields of responsibility. Therefore I am afraid that this is not the best time to come to the executive bodies of the movements with demands for allocation of finances. But in spite of this situation, we should not hesitate to address the secretariats of the movements and of the kibbutz federation. I am convinced that in the final reckoning such a budgetary allocation will be worthwhile. The problem of the kibbutz is not just economic. It is first and foremost a problem of morale and of faith. Therefore anything that can strengthen the faith in the prospects of the commune is a worthwhile investment.

There should be a group of haverim who read their literature and write for their publication. We should strive toward having a permanent section about the kibbutz in their magazine and at the same time see to it that our newspapers periodically publish news about the

Bruderhof.

Until now there have been tens of visits in both directions and it is worthwhile to continue these and widen their scope. For this purpose we could also utilize our emissaries in the United States. They should be encouraged to bring their charges from the youth movements to the settlements of the Bruderhof and to show them that in the U.S. there exists a kibbutz-like movement that evolved and succeeded to exist and maintain a communal way of life in a different and alien ideological environment. In my opinion, it would be worthwhile to examine the possibility of arranging frequent common gatherings in order to discuss problems in depth. I am referring to conferences of the kibbutz movement and Bruderhof only, without the participation of modern communes who have only existed for a short time. I think that there should be an interest in an historical-sociological conference of two movements like ours, each of which has a history and social experience, and there would be place for relevant comparisons. I consider these kinds of contacts an important contribution to the strengthening of the communal elements in our movement.

\*

Here the survey ends, but not the story. This survey, even though it encompasses a lengthy period of contacts between members of the kibbutz and the Bruderhof, is not intended to be the concluding chapter in a history. Its main purpose is to make the story known to the public with the aim of encouraging its continuation. And indeed, at present the contacts continue to be maintained. At this time kibbutzniks are visiting the Bruderhof, and it may be supposed that soon Bruderhofers will come again to the kibbutzim for visits or for an extended stay of work and of Hebrew studies. But the continuation

should not be left to chance or to occasional sporadic visits. If these contacts are considered important, they should be cultivated.

While preparing this survey, I was happy to notice that other kibbutz members who met with the Bruderhof felt as I did, and that most of them are in favor of continuing the dialogue. At the same time, despite the perseverance with which contacts have been maintained in the past, there is room for exploring new ways that will lead to a deepening of knowledge and permit comparative studies. In this connection, Aaron Yadlin's proposals deserve serious consideration on the part of the deliberating bodies of the kibbutz movement and the leadership of the Bruderhof. Conferences devoted to realistic comparative discussions and study would deepen the understanding of the uniqueness of both movements and foster understanding of how each movement can learn from the cumulative experience of the other. Beyond the theoretical contribution that may emerge from such encounters, it also seems to me that both the kibbutz and the Bruderhof are in need of these kinds of contact. Even though each movement draws upon different and far-removed sources of existence, each one receives inspiration and encouragement from the existence of the other. Although the contacts were and still are mostly personal, their very existence has general significance, and their continuance is vital to the two movements. This is especially true today, when faith in the superior value of communal life is badly in need of reinforcement.

## POSTSCRIPT

While this book was being prepared for publication, we were informed that two veteran Bruderhof members had passed away: George Barth and Hans Meier, both of whom had played an active role in the close relationship between members of the Bruderhof and kibbutz.

A short time before his death, George Barth sent the following message to the kibbutz movement, through his friend Shlomo Regev, a member of Kfar HaChoresh:

### WRITTEN FROM OUR EXPERIENCE

#### WITH MOVED HEARTS - ALSO WITH ANXIOUS HEARTS

The founders of the kibbutz movement acted out of an inner "must" - felt they had to start such a communal life - left they had to start such a communal life - felt it was imperative. It was a driving force, a wind of the good spirit.

It was also like this in the [German] youth movement [between 1910 and 1930]. In that youth movement, the early spirit lasted only a few years; then the churches took over and the good spirit disappeared.

To the kibbutznikim:

Return to your beginnings!

Then you were authentic as a movement.

Don't be afraid to lose many, even thousands.

I don't think anybody can tell you what to do.

You must seek the change necessary for a new start.

Don't seek with logic.

Seek with your hearts - seek what your hearts say.

Love God

Love your neighbor.

\*

Hans Meier passed away on December 24th, 1992 on Christmas Eve. Sitting with a group of friends a short time before his death, he was feeling weak and excused himself to take a rest, parting from his friends with the word "Shalom" in Hebrew, a word with deep meaning for him. Hans Meier went to his room and passed away. He was 90 years old at his death.

The study presented in this book is testimony to the depth of the relationship between Hans Meier and the kibbutz movement, and to his unique contribution to the development of those ties. It is in many ways a dedication to the memory of a friend, a man of spirit, deep beliefs and a commitment to communal life.

## NOTES

1. The Hutterian Brethren, with whom the Bruderhof is connected, is a large group of communal societies. Essentially a religious group whose roots are anchored in the past, they cannot be considered a modern movement. Likewise, the first Kvutzot in Palestine, which were established before the first World War, were not organized as a movement but as a loose federation.
2. See: Moni Alon - *The Eternal Hope* (Hebrew); Hana Weiner - *Shorashim* 6 (Hebrew).
3. See: M. Rosner, Sh. Shur, M. Chizik, A. Avnat - *Trends in Kibbutz Socialism* (Hebrew).
4. Interview with Thomas von Stieglitz, Kingston, New York, U.S.A. Dec. 1991; Thomas von Stieglitz - *Kirche als Bruderschaft* (German), p.129.
5. About the influence of Martin Buber and Gustav Landauer; interviews with Hans Meier and Georg Barth, Deer Spring, Jul. 1990.
6. See Trudi Huessy "Memories of Our Early Years" Vol I Ch. M. p. 20.
7. Interview with Georg Barth, Jul. 1990.
8. See Emmy Arnold - *Torches Together*, p.60, Plough Publishing House, Rifton, N.Y. 1971; and letter by Shultheiss to Eberhard Arnold found in the Bruderhof Archives.
9. In the Buber Archives in Jerusalem (file 70e) there are three letters to Martin Buber written by Eberhard Arnold between 1918 and 1927. One of them deals with the plan to publish Gustav Landauer's letters. In the Bruderhof Archive there is a postcard sent by Martin Buber to Eberhard Arnold on March 11, 1927 in which he agrees with the Bruderhof concept about the integration of life and religion. See *The Plough* 16, 1968.
10. See Leonard Ragaz: *Signs of the Kingdom*, pp. 105-107.
11. Interview with Martin Johnson, Woodcrest, Nov. 1991.
12. Interview with Georg Barth, Deer Spring, Jul. 1990.

13. See the minutes of the meeting; Bruderhof archives file S407B/EAE17.
  14. Interview with Rudi Hertz, Kvutzat Yavneh, Feb. 1992.
  15. Interview with Hans Meier, Jul. 1990.
  16. *The Plough*, Vol II 2, 1939, pp.63-64.
  17. Interview with Georg Barth, Deer Spring, Jul. 1990.
  18. Interview with Arnold Mason, Woodcrest, Nov. 1991.
  19. This episode was also told also by Hans Meier in an interview with the author in Jul. 1990.
  20. See *Wilts. and Gloucestershire Standard*, May 8, 1940.
  21. *Ibid.* May 11, 1940.
  22. See *Swindon Advertiser*, May 24, 1940.
  23. See *Hans Meier Memories* . . . , Vol I 12, p.27.
  24. See the chapter on the emigration to Paraguay, in the forthcoming book on the history of the Bruderhof.
  25. Interviews with members of Kibbutz HaZorea.
  26. See the chapter on the Bruderhof in Paraguay.
  27. See Zvi Ofer to Joshua Hofer, Aug. 3, 1950 in Yad Tabenkin Archives, Zvi Ofer files.
  28. The correspondence in Yad Tabenkin Archives, Zvi Ofer files.
  29. Zvi Ofer corresponded with Walter Millap, an ex-member of Llano del Rio Commune.
  30. Interview in Pleasant View, Nov. 1991; information on kibbutz members in the Intentional Communes Conference, *The Plough* Vol. 1 2 1953.
  31. The correspondence of Zvi Ofer with commune members in Yad Tabenkin Archives; Zvi Ofer files.
  32. Shalom Wurm: *Communal Societies and their Way of Life* (Hebrew) p.516.
  33. Bruderhof Archive Post list 35.
  34. See "Igeret" (Ihud Hakvuzot Vehakibutzim) (227), Apr. 26, 1956.
  35. Shalom Wurm to Dick Whitty, Sep. 8, 1957 in Bruderhof Archives.
  36. Roswith Arnold, "Sharing About the Beginning of Woodcrest", ch.13, p. 9.
- Chris Zimmerman, one of the young Bruderhof members presently

working as head archivist, brought to my attention the great weight given to Israeli songs in the Bruderhof songbooks, a fact illustrated by the 22 songs sung regularly at public meals and family gatherings.

In his view, this is evidence of the strong ties between the Bruderhof and Israel. Whereas most of their folk songs are connected to members' countries of origin - Germany, Switzerland, England, America, etc., the Israeli folk songs are included in their repertoire because of their content and what they represent.

The following is a list of songs (in English transliteration) as presented by Chris Zimmerman:

# **Israeli Songs Sung at the Bruderhof**

title	songbook
1. And every man 'neath his vine	SJ 73
2. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, bezilzele schama	SJ 77
3. Hava nashira, shir hallelujah	SJ 78
4. Hevenu shalom a'leychem	SJ 73
5. Hinej ma tov umah naim	SJ 76
6. Hazorim b'dimah	SJ 373
7. Shalom Chaverim	SJ 74
8. Up to the land (Artza alinu)	SJ 574
9. Zum gali gali gali	SJ 670
10. Erev ba	SJ 209
11. befi roeh shirat Sadeh	SF 153
12. Hava nagila	SF 156
13. How blue roll the waters (kahol yam hamaim)	SF 151
14. Yesusum, Yesusum	SF 155
15. Ki-l'olam Hasdo	Sf 158
16. Shalom, Joyfully singing	SF 27
17. Shir Ha'avoda	SF 151
18. So strong be the hand (Tehezakna)	SF 19
19. Bein harim kvar hashemesh Melahetet	HS 55
20. Sing o sing a song of thanks (Shiru, Shiru Shir toda)	HS 56

21. Uru achim venale har tzi-yon HS 57

22. Arum dem fajer (yiddish) SJ 222

SJ = Sing Joyfully

SF = Shalom Folder

HS = High school Songbook

37. Interview with Dick Domer, Woodcrest, Dec. 1992.

38. "Igeret" (246), Oct. 3, 1956.

39. "Niv Hakvutza" 24 (Journal of Ihud Hakvutzot Vehakibutzim) Oct.-Nov. 1957, pp. 611-623.

40. A letter from Wheathill Bruderhof to Shalom Wurm telling about the visit of M. Mendel (Kiriath Anavim) "Igeret" (204), Nov. 10, 1955.

41. Bakibbutz (Hakibbutz Hameuchad) 319, Oct. 17, 1956.

42. Igeret (247), Apr. 26, 1956.

43. Igeret (154), Oct. 1957.

44. Bakibbutz (366), Oct. 6, 1957.

45. "From a kibbutz community in Israel", The Plough Vol 2 2 Summer 1954.

46. "Kibbutzim in Eretz Israel", The Plough Vol 3 1 pp.11-17.

47. The Plough, Vol IV 4 1956, p.115.

48. Interview with Fida Meier, Woodcrest, Nov. 1991. In trying to locate former members of the Paraguayan youth movement, I discovered several in Kibbutz Or Ha'ner. They all remember the Bruderhof and told me about their visits to Primavera. Through them I got in touch with Myrtha Levine Nevo, who now lives in Jerusalem. When I called her, she was very pleased that people still remembered her relations with Fida when they were still young girls, and added that Fida was invited to her wedding before she came to Aliya.

49. Amudim, (138) (Hakibbutz Hadati - The Religious Kibbutz), Dec. 1957.

50. Moshe Unna "The Bruderhof - A Religious Communal Movement" in Amudim, (222), Oct. 1964.

51. Interview with Andreas Meier, Woodcrest, Nov. 1991

52. Interview with Klaus Meier, Deer Spring, Jan. 1992.
53. Avraham Ben Joseph was born in London and joined Kibbutz Sasa in the beginning of 1950s. He left Sasa several years later to look for communal experiences in Japan, where he stayed for some years as a commune member and, being fully integrated with his new life, he changed his name to Moshe Mazuba. In 1985 he participated in the International Conference at Yad Tabenkin, where he lectured about the communes in Japan, expressing a pessimistic outlook on them. He returned to England, where, in 1986, he was killed in a car accident near Bath.
54. Dick Whitty to Yaacov Oved. Spring Valley, Dec. 14, 1991.
55. From the private correspondence of Zvi Shahar, May/Sept 1956.
56. "Young Community in Israel" *The Plough* 1 1958.
57. The correspondence which preceded the preparation of the special issue of *El Arado* . . . on the kibbutz could be found in the central archives of the Bruderhof in Spring Valley. It includes also articles which were not published.
58. *El Arado*, 7 p.15.
59. *Ibid.* pp.23-26.
60. *Ibid.* pp.28-34.
61. Dick Whitty, who wrote this in 1958, could not imagine that two years later he himself would experience this challenge, when the Bruderhof had to withstand anticomunalism among its members.
62. Interview with Klaus Meier, Deer Spring, Jan. 1991.
63. See "Bruderhof - a Communal Movement", *Amudim*, (222) Oct. 1964.
64. Interview with Hans Meier, Sep. 24, 1978 and Jul. 1990.
65. Interview with Andreas Meier, Woodcrest, Nov. 1991.
66. Interview with Amitai Niv, Feb. 13, 1992.
67. The contents of the research and its contribution are beyond the limits of this survey. A summary of the thesis of Amitai Niv can be found in "Organizational Disintegration" in G.R. Kimberly (ed.), *The Organizational Life Cycle*, 1980.

68. I could feel Hans Meier's deep appreciation of the kibbutz movement and Israel in all the interviews that I had with him. In one of the interviews he quoted Prof. S. Baron, who said that the kibbutz is the "remnant of the true Israel." This appreciation buttressed his view of Israel as the "chosen people".
69. Interview with Amitai Niv, Ruppin Institute, Mar. 1992.
70. Yaacov Oved: *Two Hundred Years of American Communes*, Transaction Publishers, 1988, Paperback, Edition 1993, p. XI.
71. Interview with Hans Meier, Jan. 1992.
72. Correspondence concerning the preparation of the International Conference is to be found in the Yad Tabenkin Archives.
73. Interview with Hans and Klaus Meier, Deer Spring, Jan. 1992.
74. *Communal Life*, Yad Tabenkin - Transaction Books, 1987, pp.744-748.
75. *The Plough*, 16, Sep. 1986 pp.2-8.
76. *The Plough*, 16, Sep. 1986 p.33.
77. Klaus Meier to Yaacov Oved, Jan. 2, 1986.
78. Interview with Mussa Bar Semech, Jun. 1992.
79. *The Plough*, 19, May/June 1988.
80. Johann Christoph Arnold to Yaacov Oved, Oct. 26, 1988.
81. *The Plough*, 22 Aug/Sept 1989, pp.10-12.
82. Yaacov Oved to Hans Meier, May 7, 1989.
83. Hans Meier to Yaacov Oved, Aug. 26, 1989.
84. Nancy Farchi to Martin and Burgel Johnson, Nov. 14, 1989.
85. *The Plough*, 24 April/May 1990.
86. "A Kibbutznik from Shaar Hagolan," *The Plough* 26 Sep/Oct 1990.
87. *International Communal Studies Association Bulletin*, 9, Spring 1991.
88. Interview with Mussa Bar Semech, Jun. 1991.
89. Based on an interview between Ya'acov Oved and Johann Christoph Arnold and Martin Johnson, Woodcrest, Dec. 28, 1991.

## ADDRESSES OF THE BRUDERHOF SETTLEMENTS

The full name of all the settlements:

### **The Hutterian Society of Brothers**

#### **U.S.A.**

##### **New York State:**

1. Woodcrest

Route 213

Rifton, N.Y. 12471

Tel. (914) 685 8351

2. Pleasant View

Rosental Lane, Ulster Park N.Y. 1487

Tel. (914) 339 6680

3. Catskill

Platte Clove Rd. HCR1 Box 24

Elka Park, N.Y. 12427

Tel. (518) 589 5510

##### **Connecticut:**

4. Deer Spring

Westside Rd. Norfolk CT 06058

Tel. (203) 542 5545

##### **Pennsylvania:**

5. New Meadow Run

Route 40, Farmington PA 15437

Tel. (412) 329 8573

6. Spring Valley

Rd 2, Box 446, Rt 381 N.

Farmington PA 15437

Tel (412) 329 0942

##### **England:**

7. Dervell

East Sussex TN32-5 Dr.

Robertsbridge - England

Tel. 011-44 580 880 626

##### **Germany:**

8. Michaelshof

5231 Birnbach

Auf der Hohe, West Germany

Tel. (11049) 49 26 81 6250

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**Yaacov Oved** is a member of Kibbutz Palmachim and head of the program on communal history at Yad Tabenkin, the Research and Documentation Center of the United Kibbutz

Movement. He is also a professor of history at Tel Aviv University and executive chairman of the International Communal Studies Association. His publications include:

*Two Hundred Years of American Communes*  
(Transaction Books, 1988,  
2nd ed. 1992).

as well as books and articles on communes, anarchism, and utopian socialism.

**DISTANT BROTHERS DEALS WITH THE HISTORY OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KIBBUTZ AND THE BRUDERHOF, THE TWO LARGEST AND ENDURING COMMUNAL MOVEMENTS.**

DESPITE THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE AND DIFFERENCES IN BELIEF, MEMBERS OF BOTH MOVEMENTS HAVE CREATED AND MAINTAINED CONTACTS SINCE THE 1920'S. THESE CONTACTS, WHICH TOOK THE FORM OF INTELLECTUAL DIALOGUE, HAVE BEEN SUSTAINED AND NOURISHED BY THE SHARED CLOSENESS OF THE COMMUNAL WAY OF LIFE.

THE AUTHOR TRACES THE LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO MOVEMENTS THROUGH THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THEIR HISTORY, HIGHLIGHTING THEIR RELEVANCE BOTH FOR THE MOVEMENTS AS WELL AS FOR THE COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE IN GENERAL.



**Yad Tabenkin**