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THE BULLETIN
OF THE
BRUDERHOF
COMMUNITIES

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CITIZENSHIP

Editorial

GIOVANNI PAPINI has written: 'It is the mission of Jesus to bring our nature to loathe tomorrow what pleases us today, and to love today what yesterday filled us with horror. Each of his words presupposes this total renewal of the human spirit.'

Most of us have either overlooked or never understood the complete revolution implicit in Jesus' message to mankind. It is surely dawning upon more people that modern technical devices have increased mankind's mutual involvement; just the question of the possession of the little islands of Quemoy and Matsu threatens to embroil us in a world war. Economically every nation is dependent on the others—in war, what one nation does affects the whole world. Mankind thinks today in terms of co-existence, rather than of peace and harmony. Is it not time therefore that we began to question the basis of our society? Two thousand years ago Jesus told us that the foundations were false. He compared it to building a house upon sand. And his mission was to show another way, to point to a new relationship based on the kingdom of God. The values were to be different. It was not to be governed by the instinct of self-preservation, perhaps the strongest instinct in man, which dominates relationships in our present society—the anxiety over food and clothing for ourselves and our children; the desire to be looked up to, to do well, to give our children a better opportunity of doing this than we had;

to stand up for our 'rights' as individuals, as trade unions, as nations.

Jesus demands a total revolution of this order for those who would belong to the new society. The citizens are to lose their lives, not seek to preserve them; they should not worry about food and clothing; they should be servants to others; they should sell all they have and give to the poor. There are many other such revolutionary concepts—no part of a man's life is left undisturbed.

Those who are willing to accept such values and commit themselves to such an absolutely other way of life are to be the citizens of the new order. Jesus calls this building on a rock and pleads with all men to allow themselves to be revolutionized, not only in action but also in the thoughts from which the actions spring—to live as God meant them to live, so that a new society, where there is peace and harmony might come into being. This new order of God, he says, should be our first concern. But as there can be no peace without peacemakers, so there can be no kingdom without citizens and that which is represented by Ricardo Schaul about the close personal relationship of the koinonia brotherhood (see page 27) is something which should be considered most earnestly by all who long for true peace. Our generation needs action, not just words. Everything humanly possible has been done, but the way to which Jesus points has not been taken seriously.

Citizenship implies commitment and loyalty; in a truly Christian society, the citizens are loyal in their commitment to Christ—and no one who has conscientiously read the New Testament can deny knowledge of what that means.

PRIMAVERA WORKCAMP

Bruce Sumner reports about the first workcamp to be held in Paraguay, at our community in Primavera in July this year. The camp was sponsored jointly by the Brazilian Council of Churches and the Woodcrest Service Committee.

I MET the Brazilian group in Sao Paulo on the morning of July 2nd. The big four-engined plane arrived several hours late, having already had trouble with an engine, which then took some time to fix. Half way to Asuncion further trouble developed and another engine stopped completely. The plane turned back to Rio and many of the passengers were very nervous, even hysterical. When we finally left Rio thirty hours late, the whole journey to the Primavera communities took just twenty one hours.

The workcamp consisted of twenty six campers from five countries. The work was to build an isolation house for the new hospital at the Isla Margarita community and there were to be three study themes: studies of the different countries represented in the workcamp—Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, and Alabama (U.S.A.); Bible study; and thirdly, a study of Ricardo Schaul's book 'Christianity and the Social Revolution'. We, the Society of Brothers, had organized the workcamp and some of our own young people took part. Joaozinho Almeida, a student in his third year at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Sao Paulo, was the leader.

Some of the workcampers had come here with a very hazy idea of what they would find, although there was a keen interest to see our community as a result of what they had already heard about it.

At our meeting the first Sunday morning, something was said about the problem of inflation—not the inflation of currencies from which South America is suffering, but the inflation of the spoken word which no longer has the value that it used to have. This is because men today have found a lack of reality to give the words their full value, just as the currencies of these Latin American countries lack the real values behind them that would give them a stable value. We

pointed out that this was one of the things that our Society was seeking to do—to live a life of deeds that would give real value to the words of Christian testimony. It was something to which they responded very warmly indeed.

One of the first meetings in the group was taken by the three members of the Waldensian Church, who told us about Uruguay and about their own group in particular. Many know the history of the Waldensians, which began about the year 1140 in Lyons in France. Theirs is a history of three hundred years of constant persecution, which only got easier at the time of the Reformation. It is a history of true Christian heroism and of a very radical following of the way of Christ—but that was hundreds of years ago. Today there are 18,000 Waldensians in Uruguay and Argentina. The greater number of them live in northern Italy, but there are also groups in the U.S.A. Their members told us here: 'What are we left with? A very fine history, but today—practically nothing! We have the problems of traditionalism and of lack of fervour.' At this present time they are concerned that their members are mostly of Waldensian descent and they are making great efforts in mission work in the towns of the countries where they are living now. This is something new for them, and we understand from those who visited us that there is a desire to come to a deeper life.

In the first week we began the three groups of studies. The Bible study was concerned with the first chapter of Acts and extracts from the second and fourth chapters which refer to the life of the early church. This type of study had been chosen and led by Joaozinho ('Johnny'), the workcamp leader. There was some deep searching about what it meant to obey Christ's command to 'be my witnesses'. What does this mean for us here and now? Does this refer to our ways of living the Christian faith in a community that is static and organized, or in a moving, dynamic and missionary life? This question was put at the close of one of these Bible study meetings. Many of them felt that the groups from which they had come had become static, organized and institutional, and a number of them said: 'Our churches have nothing, just

nothing, to say to the situation of men in the world today.' In one of these meetings there was some very heated discussion just about this and one of them said to me afterwards: 'This question pains me', and one really felt that it was so.

An Answer to Communism

With the study of the other two passages of Acts (2, 41-47; 4, 32-37) came the whole question of the relationship of life and message. The question was put: 'Does the message of a church depend on the type of life that it is living?' The greater part of the time was spent on the concept of koinonia*. What is true koinonia? In the study of the book by Ricardo Schaul, we again came to the question of koinonia as the Christian answer to the situation of the world today. There was a very strong recognition in the group that institutional Christianity had failed and that Christians must find the true life and message of Christ as an answer to the temptation of communism which is threatening mankind today. The Paraguayan workcampers were not concerned at all with the challenge of communism. Those from Uruguay were more concerned, although they came from a rural area. Those from Brazil were acutely concerned because their student organizations are completely in the hands of the communists. This does not mean to say that the majority of students are communist, but that the student unions are mainly communist-dominated. They agree that their biggest problem now is not to give answers to those students who have turned away from Christianity to communism, but rather the very many who have turned away from Christianity disillusioned about it and have later turned away disillusioned from communism too. This is the hardest group to speak to, they say. In his book, Schaul says very clearly that the type of Christian church that will be capable of surviving the crisis of our age is the koinonia brotherhood with close personal relationship even to the sharing of material possessions, as in the early church. This, too, he says, is the only Christian life that can speak to those genuine seekers who have gone to communism

*koinonia: the gathered fellowship of the church.

and later turned away disappointed from it. Edir and Joaozinho are both students of Schaul, who teaches church history at their seminary. He has a strong following among students but also encounters very bitter opposition from some people in the churches. He is one of those who have inspired the movement of young seminary students who have gone to work in factories. We had very interesting reports from them on this subject, from which it is evident that it is no simple matter to contact the working man at a deeper level. The work in the factories is just too hectic for contact during working hours, and when work stops, everyone rushes off.

The second week brought difficulties and tensions that had to be struggled through and got straight. There was the question in the group: What are the characteristics of the koinonia and what are the characteristics of a sect? Some had begun to wonder whether there was not sectarianism in the Society of Brothers. It took two days to get this really straightened out, but one felt that the relationship between us was then deeper than before. Also during the first week certain tensions had been developing among members of the Brazilian group about the leader of the camp and so we brought the matter into the open and cleared it up at the same time. After this crisis the group grew much closer together. A greater warmth and understanding entered into their relationships. The second week closed with a trip to the river which gave an opportunity for many good personal talks. Although the community's relationship to the group had been put to such a trial during the second week, we felt much closer to them for having come through together and just at that time they had put the question in their group: 'Am I ready to do God's will as he shows it to me?' One sensed that this question was taken very seriously as a completely new question to them and saw that they had begun to realize what radical implications this could have for their own lives.

The third week was a quieter one, used for study and discussion to deepen and carry further some of the questions that had arisen. There was a sense of great joy and of thankfulness in the group which had grown together as a group as

well as coming closer to our community. At the farewell meal on Thursday, Cyrena expressed her feeling that during this time a seed had been sown by God. 'None of us knows,' she said, 'what will grow out of it, but I have a deep conviction that God has some intention for this seed here in these Latin American countries.' Joaozinho expressed thanks to our Society for this time among us and said: 'Up to now we have known the truth of Christ with our heads. What this time has given to us is that now we feel the truth with our hearts.' He and others said that their lives had been influenced in these three weeks so that they could never be the same again.

New Ideas in Brazil

One of the things that many felt from this workcamp group was that there was something moving in Brazil. All the workcampers had their contribution to make, but the Brazilian group made quite a special contribution. I have been asked the question: 'Was this a hand-picked group, so that one could not expect that another group from Brazil would have represented the same depth of life and seeking?' In answer to that, I should say that they were quite an exceptional group in that five or six of them have leading roles in their own youth groups, but I do also believe that they are representative of a large body of seekers in their schools and church groups. I was told that the outlook of young Christians in Brazil has begun to change profoundly in the last five years. Joaozinho put the date of this change as 1953-54 when books by a number of thinkers in Europe and the U.S.A. first began to have an impact on students in Brazil. He said that the thinking of the students in his own seminary had changed, one could almost say 180 degrees, in the last five years. And those young men are now going out to the various churches of Brazil, carrying new ideas with them, and above all a profound discontent at the way the churches are answering the problems and needs of men today. For me personally, the workcamp was a very joyous experience and in spite of the difficulties and the crisis during the workcamp

itself which had sometimes put the experience in danger, it was nevertheless a great success.

We now have possibilities of two workcamps here in January or February, the one with a Swiss group from Buenos Aires and the other of an international character from all countries of Latin America. Two days ago I received a letter from the World Council of Churches Youth Department in Geneva, saying that they would very much like to sponsor a workcamp in Paraguay in 1959, and they ask for a report on our recent camp. We also have the possibility of sending young people to the camps in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in January or February.

Forum

The weary intercourse
of life

A point that impressed me after visiting Bulstrode was the anxiety of people outside, an anxiety over unimportant things, like the right joint of meat from the butcher! And for the first two or three days, I felt an elation which enabled me to rise above these petty annoyances between people. But gradually I am losing it—becoming bogged down by what Wordsworth called the 'weary intercourse of life'.... I know that you have the right way. I knew it intellectually before I came to Bulstrode, but seeing it in practice, and feeling it emotionally, does much more. You have given me—and probably thousands of other people, I'm sure—a vision of what life could be. People read in the Bible about the lion lying down with the lamb and all those other animals of prey being docile with each other—but no one really believes it. And in a less dramatic way, nobody much believes that Christians can live as Christ advocated. But the vision you gave me was of the lion lying down with the lamb, so now I believe that these things are possible as well as right.

York

S.C.

LETTERS FROM SPAIN

Above all barriers By your example of brotherhood and love you demonstrate to all men on earth that God gave us life and that men can live in peace if they are not ruled by ambition, vanity, hate, and vengeance. It would be a great joy to my family and myself to come to you and share in your life in community, to take our part in your joys and sorrows. I know that at first it will be difficult since there are so many barriers which men have created in society: frontiers, religions, customs, languages. But above all these barriers there is a universal bond—brotherly love. By reading your magazine EL ARADO I have come to know of your way of life and that you do not selfishly separate yourselves from the rest of mankind.... You are a big family and we want to belong to that family. We live in a corrupt world and I feel in my heart the sorrow of weariness, this weariness that man feels when he sees the hopelessness of his efforts. We want to try your way of living; we need a reality upon which to place our faith; the hard life of a pioneer referred to in EL ARADO does not frighten us—on the contrary it gives us courage to follow with even greater eagerness.

Barcelona

J.P.

Solitude I think very much of your life in community. This idea has been my 'battlehorse' since I was 17. As I see it, this is the only solution.... I have felt isolated in a great desert—so many people around me and so great is the disunion that each house is a world to itself. I wept in my solitude, knowing how you live and how we all ought to live in full community.... All with whom I speak say that it is impossible. Man is bad, they say, and in your community there must be envy, pride, laziness and greed. Work is difficult for me in my old age. I am more of a slave than the slaves of old. Today our chains are money and solitude. To live seems to be to possess a car and eat more than the stomach can take.

Barcelona

J.G.

NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

A NEW BEGINNING When the Macedonia Cooperative
IN NORTH AMERICA Community in Georgia united with the
Society of Brothers, it was soon realized that this 600-acre farm was too isolated in the mountainous country and that a new place would have to be found if the task of outreach was to be furthered.

Various properties were inspected and the most suitable was found at Norfolk in Connecticut. Under the name 'Evergreen', a beginning has now been made there.

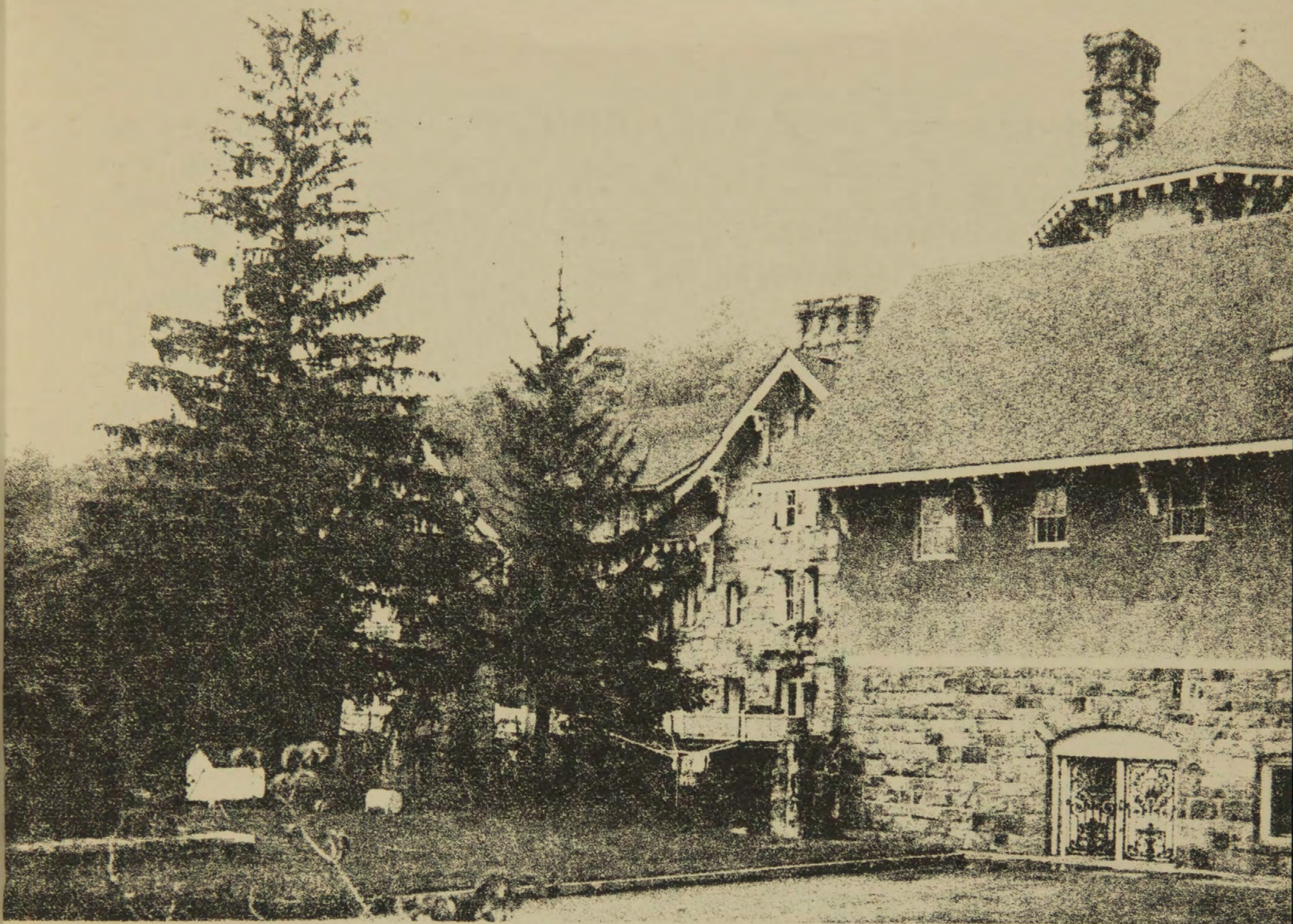
The new community lies about seventy miles to the northeast of Woodcrest, near the border of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York State. The estate was built in 1906 by a millionaire scientist, who had come to the United States as a sixteen-year-old Serbian peasant. The house was built in the style of the Serbian manor house where he had worked as a shepherd boy. Stone masons from Yugoslavia laid the walls—two to three feet thick. A subsequent owner of the property, not so conscientious about old-world authenticity, added a plastic-lined swimming pool to the estate.

The buildings are grouped around a central courtyard which is planted with grass and evergreens. There are many outbuildings which can be converted for accommodation. It is estimated that with partitioning a total of about 112 rooms will be available.

It is hoped that we shall have a much closer contact with people in New England from Norfolk, as Woodcrest has been too far from Boston to make weekend visits possible. We are planning to continue with the production of Community Playthings, which is also carried on at Woodcrest and Oak Lake.

The decision to buy this property was reached at all three communities just a week or so before the group at Macedonia had to leave and we were all very thankful when the negotiations took only two days.

Shortly after the purchase, members passed through Woodcrest on their way to Evergreen. Mothers and children



Evergreen, Norfolk, Connecticut

stayed at Woodcrest while the fathers and single people began the task of transforming the estate into a place of community life and work. It was with a feeling of deep thankfulness and love that everyone joined together for a festive meal before the group left Woodcrest.

The new community's neighbours at Norfolk welcomed them warmly and many of them have since visited Evergreen on the occasion of the 'open house' when it was possible to tell them something of the purpose to which the estate is now being dedicated.

EUROPE We moved in to the new bruderhof at Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, near London, on July 18th, and we are glad to say that about a hundred people are now living there. To our great joy we have received many gifts of furniture for the empty rooms and have bought cheaply at auctions so that the place is beginning to look more homely. Heating for the winter is still an unsolved question, but in spite of all we lack, the joy that we have a place at last so easily accessible from London and can live there in community outweighs everything else. Friends and neighbours are being invited to visit Bulstrode for an 'open house' on Saturday, October 4th.

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From reports about the work in North America, we have realized that, through God's grace, we are experiencing something in the nature of a movement or stirring such as has not been given here in Europe so far. But we ask that in North and South America as well as in Europe decisions for a total commitment to Christ will be made in these earnest times.

During the strenuous time of finding and beginning two new communities, one in North America and one in England, and the joyous experiences of welcoming members who want to go the way of peace and brotherhood with us and the rejoicing with those who have united in marriage, we have had to be quiet and still in the face of the death of two of our children. One, sixteen-year-old Gregor Löber was taken from us after a very long time of suffering. He died at Bethel in Germany where he was very lovingly cared for during the last years of his life. The other, Rachel Marsden, nine years old, was snatched away in the midst of a healthy life; she died from severe burns.

We felt moved by these experiences which we all shared to dedicate our lives more fully to God and the service of others.

FRIENDS OF THE BRUDERHOF

If you wish to keep in touch with us, you may become a 'Friend of the Bruderhof' by sending an annual donation towards the work of our communities. If a minimum of 5/- is donated, you will receive THE PLOUGH and any leaflets published during the year. For a donation of 10/- or more the series of Plough Pamphlets will be sent in addition to the bulletin.

Single copies of THE PLOUGH are available at 1/- per copy, but free specimen copies will be sent to interested friends on receipt of their names and addresses. Copies of the bulletin in German, Spanish, Dutch, and Esperanto are also available at the same price.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE:

THE WAY TOGETHER

An account of bruderhof life and work. 6d

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The meaning of Christian discipleship today. 6d

TEN YEARS OF COMMUNITY LIVING

The story of the Wheathill Bruderhof. 3/-d

GROWING UP IN COMMUNITY

A report about the German war orphan children who have grown up at the Wheathill Bruderhof. 6d

HOSPITAL IN THE BACKWOODS

A pictorial review of the work of the Primavera hospital in Paraguay. 6d

WHAT IS THE BRUDERHOF?

Questions and answers about bruderhof life. 3d

COMMUNITY, THE OUTCOME OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

A New Testament basis for community life. 3d

CHRISTIANS AND WAR

A consideration of the Christian attitude to military and state service. 1/-d

All publications are available from any of the communities, the addresses of which appear on the back page.

Please add extra to your remittance for postage.

THE PLOUGH

is the English bulletin of the bruderhof communities. Similar journals are published in German, Spanish, Dutch, and Esperanto. The bruderhof communities are a group of people of eighteen nationalities who live together in full community in Europe and North and South America. The journals aim to unite more closely those who seek to live by the standards of justice, brotherhood and peace.

The Addresses of the Bruderhof Communities

ENGLAND

Society of Brothers

Bromdon, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

Bulstrode, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

GERMANY

Sinntal-Bruderhof

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Oak Lake, Farmington, Pennsylvania

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Sociedad de Hermanos

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