

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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VOLUME III NUMBER 1



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THE PLOUGH is the quarterly journal of the Bruderhof Communities in Europe and South and North America, a group of people of fifteen nationalities who live together in full community. Its aim is to unite more closely those who seek to live by the standards of justice, brotherhood and peace.

The addresses of the Bruderhof Communities are:

Sociedad de Hermanos. Primavera, Alto Paraguay.

Sociedad de Hermanos. Indep. Nacional 321, Asuncion, Paraguay.

Sociedad de Hermanos. Colonia 1065, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Society of Brothers. Bromdon, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, England.

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THE PLOUGH

The Quarterly of the Bruderhof Communities

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THE GREATNESS OF OUR CAUSE

LEWIS BENSON

When we try to understand history without divine help and only through the eyes of our human perception, what we are most likely to find is a story of human folly and wickedness and apparently meaningless cycles of evolution and devolution. But if we look at history with the prophetic eye we can see an ordered pattern of events which are grounded in the decisions of the Divine will and which reveal God's redemptive purpose for man. Through the testimony of the Bible we learn that God made us to glorify him and live by his word. And we also learn that, in spite of our disobedience, God loves us and has willed that we should be reconciled to him. The whole record of God's dealings with his people shows plainly that he is seeking to gather a people to himself, a holy people to be gathered in holiness. In the Old Testament we learn how God called a people to teach men the language of redemption so that when the time of salvation was come they might be ready to receive the fullness of God's love in Christ.

In the New Testament we learn how a people was gathered in holiness to the Lord by Christ's fellowship-forming power which Peter describes as 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation—God's own people'.

The first century Christians knew that they had been called to take their place in a great succession of events that God had willed. They knew that they had been called to become the new Israel of God and that they had become the heirs of God's promises to his people. They were few in number and poor and weak in outward things, but they knew where they belonged in the prophetic ordering of history. For them the fulfilment had begun; it was now continuing and would one day be completed.

But this holy community which Peter so powerfully described became, in time, something quite different from what God intended. Christianity became the official religion of western civilization and in

doing so became vastly changed. The church ceased to understand that it is called to enter into the sufferings of Christ's cross and so the power of God, which is only found through the Cross, was taken from it.

In the sixteenth century a reformation of the church was called for but, in the words of William Penn, the Reformation churches 'betook themselves very early to earthly policy and power to uphold and carry on their reformation'. The suffering community of the Suffering Servant was not yet brought forth.

We have traced in outline the story of God's dealings with his people down to the beginnings of the period of history to which we ourselves belong, the period we call 'modern'. The great prophetic event of modern times was, I believe, the calling of the first Anabaptists in the sixteenth century and the Quakers in the seventeenth century to be the pioneers of a new *Spiritual Reformation*¹. Through them God was again seeking to gather a holy community to himself. They had received a vision of a new apostolate, a new faith, a new preaching, a new witness, and above all a new community—the community that has fellowship with Christ in his sufferings.

This was surely a great and glorious work of God, but it was not long before the enemy of all good entered to destroy this work and to cast a shadow over the vision of universal Spiritual Reformation. From the very beginning persecution from without weakened the movement and took away its leaders. Then later Quietism and Pietism began to weaken the movement from within. Some of the Spiritual Reform communities that began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have had a continuing existence down to the present day but they have all, as far as I know, lost their connection with the cause of universal Spiritual Reformation. It has been said that 'Anabaptism affords a case of arrested development with scarcely a parallel in Christian history'. (M'Glothlin: 'Anabaptism' in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, 1908.) This is equally true of Quakerism. After 1700 the Spiritual Reformation ceases to be a force in history and loses the universal significance that it had for nearly two centuries. Protestant church histories do not even recognize the existence of the Spiritual Reformation and choose to treat its exponents merely as historically unimportant Protestant extremists. By the twentieth century this greatest spiritual event in modern times came to be the faintest of memories even among those who could claim lineal historical descent from the original prophets of Spiritual Reform.

Now, if we today still believe that the meaning of history must be understood in terms of the mighty acts of God in calling and gathering

¹ For definition of *Spiritual Reformation* see end of article.

a holy people to himself then we must, of necessity, press for an answer to the question: 'Where is Zion now?'

Is God now calling men and women to become 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy people'? Is God calling a people in this generation to come forward and proclaim the universal truth of the Spiritual Reformation in all its prophetic power?

For those who love the cause of Spiritual Reformation there are signs of hope. The movement which had its beginnings in the concern of Eberhard Arnold and his friends in the early part of this century is surely representative of the Spiritual Reformation. On the eve of his death in 1935 Eberhard Arnold wrote of 'the greatness of our cause'. The most important thing, he pleads, is faith in 'the universal kingdom of the Spirit. This is the context in which repentance, forgiveness, faith, certainty, personal dedication, and all the rest belong, and nowhere else . . . how great is this historical hour of world crisis . . . how much greater still is God's hour of judgment of the world and the Christ-hour of liberation that is coming! How burning our desire should be to know all these things . . . how fervently we should expect and long for the day itself, the coming day that will bring freedom and unity!'

This same vision of the great cause of the universal kingdom of the Spirit is stirring the hearts of some who are members of the Society of Friends. There are Quakers too who fervently long for the coming day and for the Christ-hour of liberation.

Surely God is again calling us to become valiant in the great cause of Spiritual Reformation, so that it may become again a live option in our age as it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. God is leading us again to a world-overcoming faith and into a world-overcoming community whose foundation is the power of the Cross of Christ.

This is the day of our visitation and all who have been given a vision of the new day that is dawning need to cherish a tender love toward one another. We are committed to one cause which springs from one root and which has one end, one goal, one purpose. We are a small people and a weak people and as we come to know each other better we can help and strengthen one another. We must pray that the Lord will show us how we can go forward as yokefellows in the common cause. The hand of God is upon us.

AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE. The term *Spiritual Reformation* is not in general use among church historians. Its use here is based on the assumption that the original Anabaptist and Quaker movements constitute a third kind of Christianity radically different from both Rome and the

Reformers. This third kind of Christianity which I call the Spiritual Reformation has four major points of emphasis.

First there is the principle of *Christian discipleship*. Christ is the teacher of his people and he leads them into all truth and righteousness. He is to be heard and obeyed in all things.

Secondly, there is the emphasis on the *corporate witness*. The church must also hear and obey Christ's commands. The true church, says Robert Barclay, must bear 'a joint testimony for truth and against error suffering for the same'.

Thirdly, there is the belief that Christ himself orders and governs the true Christian community. It receives its unique *gospel order* from Christ who gives himself to be its prophet, priest and king. Thus the church of the Spiritual Reformation is organic rather than institutional, restored rather than reformed.

The fourth point of emphasis is *the gospel of the New World*. Jesus said, 'I came . . . to save the world'. The Spiritual Reformation proclaims that 'the coming day that will bring freedom and unity' is already dawning and that the life of the world to come is already being communicated to the faithful. 'We according to his promise look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.'

From a letter of George Fox written to Friends in the ministry in 1654:

Friends everywhere abroad scattered, know the power of God in one another and in that rejoice; for then you rejoice in the Cross of Christ, him who is not of the world, which Cross is the power of God to all them that are saved. So you that know the power and feel the power, you feel the Cross of Christ, you feel the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. Now he that believes in the Light believes in the everlasting covenant, in the everlasting offering; comes to the life of the prophets and Moses, comes to see Christ the hope, the mystery, which hope perisheth not; . . . the end of all perishing things, the end of all changeable things, the end of the decaying covenant, the end of the prophets and Moses. Christ Jesus the son, his throne you will know, heirs with him you will be, who makes kings, and brings to know his throne and his power.

There is no justification out of the Light, out of Christ. Justification is in the Light; here is the doer of the will of God, here is the entering into the kingdom.—*The Journal of George Fox*, Revised edition.

HOW COMMUNITY BEGAN AMONG THE ANABAPTISTS

ARTUR METTLER

INTRODUCTION

In the foregoing article, the author refers to the comparative obscurity in church histories of the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Our own experience, both in books and among generally well-informed men, repeatedly confirms this. Many readers will therefore be unfamiliar with the historical events which form the subject of this article. The following brief note may serve as an introduction.

The Anabaptist movement had its beginning in Zurich, Switzerland, in the year 1525, when Georg Blaurock, Felix Manz and Konrad Grebel advocated adult baptism on confession of faith, in opposition to Ulrich Zwingli. Thus was laid the foundation stone of the establishment once again of true community according to the practice of the early Christians. The movement spread over large parts of central Europe and was cruelly persecuted both by the Roman Catholics and by the new state churches of Luther and Zwingli. Many of the Anabaptists sought a new home in Moravia, and gathered under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier in the neighbourhood of Nikolsburg. Fundamental discussions took place among them in an attempt to find a clear attitude about governmental authority, church discipline and war taxes, also later about the question of community of goods. As no agreement could be achieved in these fundamental questions, a group of radical Anabaptists, led by Jakob Wideman, broke away in the year 1529 from the main body at Nikolsburg, and introduced community of goods. They settled first in Austerlitz and as a result of a further division also in Auspitz. From this group after many struggles, emerged the distinct Church-community of the Brothers known as Hutterians, which still exists today.

In the year 1533 Jakob Huter became the foremost Leader of the Word. The Greater Church Chronicle reports about him: 'The Church-community inherited the name Hutterian from this Jakob Huter. They were known as the Hutterian Brothers, of which name they have not been ashamed up to the present day, for he remained joyfully steadfast in the truth even unto death. He surrendered body and life, as has been the case with all apostles of Christ in the world.'

The name 'Anabaptists' or 'Wiedertäufer' was given by their opponents, meaning 'those who baptize again'. This label was always refuted by the Hutterians on the grounds that infant baptism is no baptism and it is therefore not a repetition when a person is baptized on confession of faith.

If you investigate the beginning of Anabaptism, two things strike your attention. One is that the idea of communal property was spread through the whole movement. The second is that the Brothers who were later called Hutterians did go through a period of groping and searching until the 'plastic hour', as Martin Buber calls it—the appointed instant for the realization of the vision—was suddenly at hand. In fact, one of the distinctive traits of the beginning days of Anabaptism is that many things which were later definite principles were established only through intense struggle. The Chronicle of the Hutterians and other writings of eye-witnesses give us a vivid picture of these exciting times. There were three stages in which the inner vision crystallized and at the same time—something that sets this movement apart—was immediately put into everyday practice.

The first struggle was over the carrying and use of weapons. It was at Nikolsburg that the dispute was fought out between Hans Hut, the non-violent, and Balthasar Hubmaier from Waldshut, who was for allowing the use of weapons. Leonard and Hans von Liechtenstein, the lords of Nikolsburg, naturally enough, took Hubmaier's side and had Hut arrested. Hut, however, escaped down the wall on a rabbit-sling which his friends had smuggled in to him. The two groups were nicknamed according to their principles. The pacifist group, which permitted the carrying of sticks and staffs, but not swords, were called *Stäbler* (those bearing a staff), the others *Schwertler* (those wearing a sword).

But there were other important differences involved in the separation. We are told by Hans Schlaffer, who took part in the dispute, that the division between Hut and Hubmaier spread to another essential point, that of the admission of new brothers and sisters into the church-community. At the start anyone who had heard the message and applied for baptism was generally baptized without further ado. Hut now demanded that every candidate be asked to give a thorough account to show whether he had the foundation necessary for making this step. Hans Schlaffer adds the significant remark that inadequate preparation is just as barren as child-baptism, and hence as unfitting to radical discipleship of Christ.

The Chronicle then tells us how a certain Jakob Wideman came and joined the brothers at Nikolsburg. We are told that he found many things here that did not fit with the true picture of the church, especially the weakness in 'brotherly punishment', that is, church discipline. He also took the same line as Hans Hut, saying he could not agree to carry the sword or pay war taxes. These things made him and his group separate from the rest. That brought him into disfavour with the lords of Nikolsburg, who served notice that he and those with him had to

leave their domains. They were still tolerated for a few months during the worst of the winter cold, but the following spring, in 1528, the lords renewed their threat in earnest, and the little group was forced to move out. Only a few had taken the opportunity to sell their property. Then came the sad departure from their beloved Nikolsburg, not without tears on both sides, as the chronicler remarks. Two hundred people, not counting the children, left the town under Wideman's leadership on the way to a new and unknown home.

They encamped in a deserted village where they stayed for a day and a night. The refugees were now dependent on one another for better or for worse, and since there were apparently many who had lost everything, they all tried to master the situation in accordance with the spirit that lived in them, and under whose guidance they had ventured out. They joined together before God and decided, as in the time of the apostles, to appoint special ministers to be of service to them all in the loving practical care of one another. Men were chosen from the group who had everyone's confidence. 'At this time', the chronicler goes on, 'these men spread out their coats on the ground before the people, and everyone laid down on them all he had, with a free heart, unforced, for the keep of the needy.' But the chronicler shows that more was involved than just the temporary emergency, adding that this was done 'according to the teaching of the prophets and apostles, Isaiah 23 and Acts 2 to 5'. The passage from Isaiah reads: 'All their gain and earning will be holy to the Lord. They shall not lay up in piles, but what they gain will be the Lord's supply: for the feeding and keep of the old and hungry.'

This was the occurrence that united 'idea and plastic hour, vision and need'. (Buber) The reference to the prophets is significant. In our own times something similar has been happening before our very eyes, in the Palestine communal settlements, which show the continuing though perhaps hardly traceable effect of the social justice demanded by the prophets, proving its worth in the time of need.

We are surprised to learn that the large Nikolsburg group, except those that later joined the quickly growing Wideman group, disappeared without a trace. All that is known is the unfortunate fact that they later fell subject to the 'Münster' spirit and joined in that attempt to set up the kingdom of God on earth by violence.

Other lords were willing to take under their protection the little group of objectors to all military service or war tax and they settled down to live again at Austerlitz. The section of the Hutterian Chronicle closes with the noteworthy words, 'and so the people and church began to increase. At the same time, zeal and the grace of God caused the brothers to send members into other provinces, especially into the Tyrol.' Immediately after the establishment of community of goods,

mission work was energetically begun. It is a good thing to see this connection, which is highly significant.

On into the seventeenth century, after the Thirty Years War, people in the communities were still aware of the relationship of these two things. Andreas Ehrenpreis, who made particular efforts to care for the right spiritual and material order within the communities, was the one who specially devoted himself to mission work. He did not rest content to belong to a group which possessed the laudable or—for others—despicable (depending on the point of view) institution of communal property. He also insisted on reaching out to his brothers in the faith in Western Europe, not to push Hutterianism on them, but to adjure them to see the consequences of their own principles, which are at bottom inconsistent with private property or self-will. He wrote an open letter to 'those who call themselves brothers and sisters, such as Mennonites, Swiss Brethren, etc.', subtitled 'Brotherly Community, concerning the highest commandment of love'. This letter shows a searching love that escapes from the limitation of particular historical time; which is not content to possess something good, but is driven to go out to people, to summon them out of their isolation and gather them. Community of faith is nothing if it is not proved in ordinary everyday life. A modern writer on Anabaptism, Dr Lydia Müller, summed up her impression of the situation by saying that the giving up of private property, which finds its logical conclusion in community of property, was certainly taught by the other Anabaptist groups, but only put into practice by the Hutterians.¹

Common property was not made into a dogma, even among the Hutterians, although their message throughout their long history has always referred to it as necessary, and they themselves have found in it a standard and a force toward revival. To them community of goods was by no means a mere imitation of the early Christians. Ulrich Stadler, one of the few first Anabaptist leaders to escape a violent death, said, for instance, that this system was not set up once and for all, but had to fit with 'occasion, opportunity, place and time'. And he saw that not everything in his time was set up precisely as it was in the original Jerusalem church. Ultimately the important thing was to carry out 'equal love, equal care, distribution and true community with all the Father's property according to his will'. When other people wanted to set up a life of common work and property on their pattern, the Brothers always warned them against imitating the externals without the spirit that goes with them—the community without the love

¹ See also the discriminating article, 'Peter Rideman and Menno Simons on Economics' by Donald Sommer in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* for July 1954, page 205.

from which it springs. Ulrich Stadler in fact warns against getting involved in any such thing, since the natural man, not dead to evil, cannot bear living like this; it would be too hard and bitter for him. Only the free and surrendered man can, and, under the impulse of the spirit, must live like this. It is worth noticing that the Brothers always mention community of goods and surrender together. They considered this way of living in no sense a human achievement, but rather a work of God which men can foster or repress, but not produce from their own resources. Life born of the spirit cannot be imitated. If it is attempted the result is a caricature of church community like the 'theocratic' state at Münster. Only when the spirit is at work in individual hearts drawing them together can spiritual community be reflected in material things.

Centuries after the *Didaché* (the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles), Peter Rideman summarized the experience of the first Anabaptist generation in his 'Confession of Faith'. Yet his words almost echo the earlier teaching on this point: 'When Christians keep community in spiritual and earthly things, they show that they have come to share the spiritual communion with Christ and that the image of fallen man has been renewed in them into the original image of God. The Holy Spirit, which built such complete community among Christ's followers at the Church's beginning, wills that it be kept now, too.'

The material arrangement for which Hans Hut and Jakob Wideman, Balthasar Hubmaier and Jakob Huter and hundreds of brothers and sisters gave their lives, of which communal property is only one part, is intimately connected with the most spiritual region to be discovered and tested by human experience. Other similar spiritual movements reveal the same truths. Martin Buber, in his chronicle of the eastern Jewish Chassidist movement, has the old Rabbi of Kosnitz say, 'No one can serve God fully except in a people'. John Wesley said after years of experience as a revival preacher, 'I was convinced that preaching like an apostle, without joining together those that are awakened and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the Murderer'. Real complete community was given to the Anabaptists under Jakob Wideman and later under Jakob Huter. They were struck to the heart ('awakened') and brought under an order which they themselves freely accepted. Thus they were made a people capable of offering a living testimony of true community to those who were willing to see it.

Jakob Huter writes of the ultimate mystery of this community, 'Those whom the Lord will send, he attires first with his spirit and power and lays his word in their mouths. Those who wish to be the sheep of his pasture must first love him with all their hearts. True faith makes a man new and brings with it the Holy Spirit and proves itself

with all the fruits.' To this belongs complete community and the peace of the church.

That embraces two statements which themselves shed light on the riddle of human nature and the misery of the world: Francis of Assisi's, 'If we wanted to own anything, we would have to defend it with weapons'—pointing out the connection between war and social inequality; and George Fox's, 'I live in that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars'. These words show the connection between peace and the doing of God's will. In the peace and social justice of the church-community the root of selfish will and property is dug out. These things are combated every day and overcome. Without constant support of the Spirit, man will lapse into his old ways. Only in the fellowship of struggle in the church-community can the Spirit do his full work and international, personal and social aberrations be healed from within.

Men can well ask themselves what different course history might have taken if, instead of persecuting them, the world had listened to the Anabaptists.

From Anabaptist Writings of the Sixteenth Century:

The highest command of God is love . . . In the community no one ought to say mine, mine. It is also the brothers'. Who can rightly give his brother spiritual and eternal good if he refuses him earthly good? A community where one is rich and another poor belongs not to Christ.

EITELHANS LANGENMANTEL

All those who truly believe and have wholly given themselves up to Christ have all God's gifts and possessions in common. In the house of the Lord there is no mine, thine, or his.

ULRICH STADLER

As all the saints have community in holy things, so in temporal things the members of Christ's body should reserve nothing for themselves. God has given men nothing for their own. Whoever gathers for himself acts against the divine laws.

PETER RIDEMAN

KIBBUTZIM IN ERETZ-YISRAEL

HARRY VITELES

'O Chevruta—O Metuta'—give me society or give me death—is used in the Talmudic version of the 'Rip Van Winkle' story.

Of the 700 non-urban Jewish communities in Israel, 232 or about one third are kibbutzim having a population of about 75,000. This probably exceeds the number of communitarian settlements and population on any date in the 18th century, the "golden age" of communistic and socialistic settlements, mainly religious, in the U.S.A. The kibbutzim account for 40% of the total Jewish rural population and for 5% of the total Jewish population in Israel—1,483,475—at the end of 1953. There were also 185,493 other population, mostly Arab. About 7,000 of the population of 75,000 in the kibbutzim were temporary residents. About half the other 68,000 were members (including children over 18 years of age), and over one third or 23,000 were children under 18 years of age. There were also 3,000 other children whom the kibbutzim bring up as their own.

About 40,000 or 53% of the population work full time. Children over the age of twelve and most of the parents work part-time. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in most of the kibbutzim. During 1951/52 (October-September) the kibbutzim farmed 160,000 hectares (395,000 acres), or about two-fifths of all the land cultivated that year in Israel. The kibbutzim raised 68% of all wheat, 50%—barley, 33%—forage crops, 19%—vegetables, 32%—potatoes, 31%—grapes and 89%—bananas; and accounted for 43% of all of the milk, 27%—eggs, 36%—honey produced by Jewish farmers, and 72% of the fish marketed.

The kibbutzim, like nearly all the religious and secular communitarian settlements in the U.S.A. and elsewhere, were established by groups who wished to live in their own way and to decide their own fate. Pogroms and spiritual and economic persecutions in Czarist Russia compelled hundreds of thousands of Jews to seek new homes. Among these were those who decided to build a new society in their own homeland, the Holy Land. It is impossible to identify the first to propose the communitarian form of agricultural settlement in the Holy Land. Maximalists and Minimalists in political aims, doctrinaire Marxists and rugged individualists were among those who suggested that agricultural colonization in the Holy Land should be only or

Note:

Kibbutz and Kvutzah are the Hebrew for a group. The plurals for these words are Kibbutzim and Kvutzoth. Formerly Kvutzah was used for the smaller and Kibbutz for the larger communitarian settlement. Kibbutzim and kvutzoth are full integral co-operative agricultural communities.

primarily on a communitarian basis. It is also difficult to fix the date when the communitarian life was first suggested. There are references to 'kommunas', 'collective' and 'communistic' settlements in the literature about the resettlement of Palestine in the last quarter of the 19th century.

Why did the socialist labour groups prefer the communitarian form of life? It is unclear as to whether and to what extent the apostles of kibbutzim were acquainted with the history of the hundreds of religious and secular communitarian settlements which sprung up in the U.S.A. during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There probably was an interplay of the following factors: current socialist and utopian doctrines; the Russian Revolution of 1904; the 'psychological connection between the courage of the Jewish self-defence groups during the pogroms and the courage required for the creation of a new society in a new country'; groups of workers could better compete with Arab unorganized labour and fight against the unfavourable physical and other conditions than could individuals; Jewish workers were unable to find satisfaction as wage labourers; and last but not least, the Jewish labour immigrants thought in terms of social justice and equality.

The kibbutzim, like all other communitarian settlements, insist on co-operative ownership of all property, other than personal items. While the kibbutzim, like their prototypes in other countries, proselytize for new members, compulsion in any form is taboo. An individual wishing to become a member of a kibbutz must show a genuine determination and effort to carry out all the principles of communitarian living, a willingness to work, i.e. to serve the community to the best of his ability, and also a real appreciation for those human relationships which are so essential for community living. As in all communitarian groups, all the kibbutzim have central services of all kinds; all inhabitants enjoy equal rights and have equal obligations; compensation for work is in kind and services, and not in wages. There is security for the aged, disabled, widows, orphans, etc.

Unlike most of the religious and many of the secular communitarian groups elsewhere, the kibbutzim do not consider seclusion as desirable. They continue to try to be examples for others seeking a different way of life. Unlike their prototypes, the kibbutzim are federated into central organizations which foster contact not only between the kibbutzim themselves but also between the kibbutzim and the community. Prof. Martin Buber writes in *Paths of Utopia* that the survival and success of the kibbutzim is due in a large measure to the central organizations which they established.

The communitarian settlements in the U.S.A., France, and other countries were and are completely divorced from politics. The fifteen

religious kibbutzim in Israel are divided on a sectarian basis into twelve moderate and three extreme in orthodoxy. All of these require their members to observe certain religious practices and traditions. But in all the other 217 kibbutzim the question of religion continues to be a personal equation. This is the reverse of the situation in the vast majority of the communitarian settlements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which, on the one hand, religion was the reason and the basis for their foundation and, on the other hand, politics were and are still considered a personal issue.

The kibbutzim are divided into four groups, 1) 'Ichud (Union) of Kvutzoth and Kibbutzim' which includes nearly all the kibbutzim whose members support the right-wing labour socialist party MAPAI. 2) 'Kibbutz Artzi'—the federation of the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim, all of whose members owe allegiance to the left-wing labour socialist party MAPAM; 3) 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' formerly non-political, unites nearly all the kibbutzim whose members seceded from MAPAI in 1944. They, together with the Hashomer Hatzair, formed the MAPAM; 4) 'Kibbutz Dati', the federation of twelve kibbutzim who observe the orthodox practices and traditions and are aligned with the 'Hapoel Hamizrachi', the labour socialist party of the HAMIZRACHI (orthodox Zionists).

At the end of September 1952 the three main groups of kibbutzim reported about the same total population.

<i>Movement</i>	<i>No. of Kibbutzim</i>	<i>Population</i>	
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Ave. per K.</i>
1. Ichud (Union) of Kvutzoth and Kibbutzim	69	21,797	316
2. Kibbutz Artzi	67	21,995	328
3. Kibbutz Hameuchad	56	20,425	368
4. Kibbutz Dati	12	3,046	254
5. Others	13	2,728	209
Total:		69,991	322

The kibbutzim of the 'Kibbutz Dati' require their members to observe orthodox religious practices. But religion was not the reason for their choosing the kibbutz form of life as was the case in the religious communistic settlements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They think however that kibbutz life minimizes the dangers of deflection from orthodoxy.

The individual members of the 'Ichud' kibbutzim also support the right-wing labour socialist party MAPAI. At the present time, the 'Ichud' accepts the view of the government as expressed in the following

extract from an address by Mrs Goldie Mayerson, the Minister of Labour and Social Security and a member of MAPAI (as reported in the daily newspaper *Haaretz* of 27.1.1953):

'It is understandable that the members of the meshakim (labour agricultural settlements) wish to educate their children in accordance with the principles of non-exploitation of mankind. But they (the members) should be told that they cannot educate their children within closed walls, within an enclosure where all is well while the children of the immigrants' transitory camps (Maabarot) will be hungry because of unemployment. The meshakim must find a way to introduce wage-labour without this resulting in the exploitation of the workers.'

The data about the number of wage-workers in the kibbutzim is incomplete. It is generally believed that the 'Kibbutz Artzi' kibbutzim relatively speaking employ less hired labour than do the kibbutzim affiliated with the other central organizations. But it seems that the 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' takes a more serious view about even the temporary use of wage-labour than does the 'Ichud' and the 'Kibbutz Dati'. The 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' is trying to limit the use of wage-labour to workshops and factories and hopes to reduce and gradually abolish this practice. The 'Ichud', no less concerned about the potential dangers of wage-labour than are the other schools of the kibbutzim, has organized a special company, with assistance from the government and MAPAI's financial institutions. This company undertakes on a contract basis to cultivate such lands which the kibbutzim are unable to farm without the use of wage-labour.

Yet another major difference between the 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' and the other central organizations is in its membership policy. The 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' is reported to be less selective in accepting temporary workers and candidates for membership than are the other three central organizations. The probationary period for candidates is reported to be shorter than that in the 'Ichud' and 'Kibbutz Artzi' kibbutzim. It is generally agreed that the 'Kibbutz Artzi' kibbutzim are more selective than the other kibbutzim. There are no accessible data about the turnover of the population in the kibbutzim. However, it is not improbable that the 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' kibbutzim have a larger turnover of population than have the other kibbutzim.

The last question is that of the rôle of industry in the economic structure of the kibbutzim. This question is closely related to the membership policy. The 'Kibbutz Hameuchad' always has considered that industry should be combined with agriculture. During the last decade, workshops and factories also have assumed an increased importance in the economic set-up of the kibbutzim of the other three sectors. There are about 350 workshops and factories with 5,000 workers in all

the kibbutzim. Most of the hired labour found in the kibbutzim are used in the workshops and factories. There is a tendency for all four sectors to organize their industrial enterprises as autonomous legal entities of a non-co-operative character in which the kibbutzim are part-owners. This formally transfers the onus of employing wage-labour from the kibbutzim to these legal entities.

The kibbutzim started as mobile groups of Jewish workers—generally known as 'kommunas', having a variable membership and organized primarily for the purpose of finding and exploiting new fields of work. These 'kommunas' generally had central services of all kinds, pooled their earnings, shared the work available, took care of the unemployed and in most cases also substituted co-operative ownership for private ownership of all property.

The membership of the 'kommunas' and the early kvutzoth rarely exceeded 50. They did not have written constitutions of principles. These early groups preferred flexibility and adaptability to changing economic and social political conditions which facilitate and increase the possibility of absorbing additional people within the kibbutzim. The four movements developed their own philosophy and principles which were publicized through their journals, books, etc. And every kvutzah had its own unwritten code of behaviour and of management procedure.

During the last decade the four schools of kibbutzim have developed a tendency to formulate in writing constitutions binding on all their kibbutzim. The written constitutions are intended as a code of behaviour for the members and as a manual of procedure for the management of the kibbutzim. They define the composition and authority of the governing bodies, prescribe the conditions of work, holidays and housing; outline the minimum standards of recreational and cultural facilities; define the opportunities which should be provided for higher education and for those members with special talents for painting, writing, etc.

There seem to be two major reasons for this development from the individual and unwritten code of behaviour and procedure to a written and uniform constitution. Firstly, the increase in the size of the kibbutzim, which needs no explanation; secondly, the change in the character of the groups of people from which new members for the kibbutzim (and for other forms of colonization) have to be recruited. Prior to the establishment of the State and up to about 1943, it was still possible to select and prepare the youth in eastern and central Europe for membership in the kibbutzim. The six million Nazi Jewish victims included most of the Jewish youth.

Before 1948, when the State was established, many of the 'sabras', i.e. those born or raised in Palestine, joined kibbutzim. The youth of

Israel now have other opportunities for serving the State, such as the army, civil service, teaching profession, etc. Non-European immigrants constitute the majority of immigrants since 1949. Most of these came from seventeenth and eighteenth century environments and had little or no schooling. The patriarchal traditions of many of these non-European immigrants are very strong. The youth are not permitted to leave their homes. The parents seem to be unfriendly towards the kibbutz form of life. And such immigrants who do enter kibbutzim do not have the preparation and training for this life which requires a high standard of independence and a highly developed sense of tolerance and restraint.

The children of old members of the kibbutzim allegedly have a different mentality, outlook, and approach than their parents. Though they have been raised within relatively narrow confines and in a social nurture, they apparently have not escaped the effects of the general tendency to emphasize materialism, technology and efficiency more than human relationships. This may account for the fact that the kibbutz 'sabra' wants his rights and duties to be clearly defined. The following extract from the pamphlet *Principles and Suggestions for the Social Problems of the Kvutzoth*, published by the 'Ichud' in February 1954 explains why the 'Ichud' decided to formulate a uniform written code of behaviour for all its kibbutzim. Not a small number of the older members of the kibbutzim ask whether regimentation is not the anti-thesis of communitarianism.

'The need to formulate the principles in writing is to equip and to clarify for the members the characteristics of the daily routine in such questions as relationship between themselves. This is necessary in view of the differences in age and occupational structure within and without (that is work done outside) of the kvutzah and with the branching out of the types of work, and in light of the change of the background of new members which is no longer tied up with the Chalutz (pioneer) youth movements, which were the training centres for kibbutz life; the kibbutzim absorb and wish to increase the absorption of youths and adults who come to them without any preparation for this kind of life.'

The kibbutzim are passing through a difficult transition period. Some of the critics already have written off the kibbutzim as an important sector of the state; there are others who expect the kibbutzim to become a small, sterile and uninfluential movement and then like the Shakers, the Perfectionists, the Icarians, etc. to disappear. While the difficulty of recruiting replacements may be a major reason why the kibbutz movement may decline in size and importance, there are other and equally important difficulties. The danger that politics may become a fatal cancer cannot be ruled out. The kibbutzim may be converted

into an instrument of political parties and/or of the government, and lose their independence. Improved economic standards influence and increase the tendency to use as the measuring rod of success standards of living rather than social values. Emphasis on materialistic rather than on social values is used to justify the employment of hired labour which was a major contributing factor leading to the disappearance of the communitarian settlements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The increased size of the kibbutzim not only endangers democratic government, but also leads to the rise of managerial classes, converting the kibbutzim from a classless to a class society.

In evaluating the past and future of the kibbutzim in the Holy Land, it would be well to bear in mind the following statement by Joseph Bussel, one of the spiritual leaders of the first kibbutz—"Degania A"—(quoted from the *History of the Kibbutz and the Kvutzah* by N. Benatri):

'The kvutzah was born from the needs of life, and if the time comes for it to disappear its fate will not be decided at a meeting . . . Its memory will remain to remind us of a glorious chapter in the history of our work—a serious attempt to establish a life of economic equality and of equality between man and woman.'

ALL LAND BELONGS TO GOD

I. VINOBA BHAVE AND INDIA'S LANDLESS PEASANTS

This may sound as strange as any science fiction story, and therefore I would like to share it with you. Imagine yourself on an Indian train which resembles a streetcar with its wooden seats and open windows. We are headed for Pusa Road Station in the State of Bihar. At present this whole area has been badly affected by the floods. It almost seems as if the train proceeds across a lake. Only trees and the railway ramp are showing above water. The train travels more and more slowly. Out of curiosity we open the door to look out. The bridge had given way under the pressure of the flood waters. We are approaching a new emergency bridge. The engineer, up to his neck in water, watches anxiously as our engine advances. The bridge holds, and we are the first to cross. What a cheer from the work crew!

Somehow this seems a fitting entrance into the territory in which Vinoba Bhave is walking. A journey into *No Man's Land*; for he believes that the land belongs to God; no one should possess it. We may use it as we use the rain that nourishes the soil, or as we use the air we breathe. No one should be denied the use of the soil just as we cannot deny people the air they breathe. In poverty-stricken India with its high

percentage of unemployment this is a serious problem. Yet if every family had the use of five acres of land, all the basic needs, food, shelter, and clothing would be solved. A peasant can grow his food, find mud, stone, or bamboo to build his little hut, and grow cotton which he can spin and weave himself. If he cultivates his own land, he will care for it and nourish it so that it will give better and more produce. As an employed labourer he has no such concern for the soil.

Many articles, pamphlets, and books have been written about Vinoba Bhave, but come along with me now to meet him.

I joined a group of five girls from the social workers' training centre where I had been staying. At 7 a.m. we reached a little village where green arches of welcome had been constructed, and children and adults were already gathered. The children were practising songs and calls—'Mahatma Gandhiji, Jay!' 'Santa Vinobaji, Jay!' 'Who will be landless in our village?—No one will be, no one will be!' A jeep came through with a loudspeaker announcing Vinobaji's arrival in Hindi. The children lined up on one side, the adults on the other side of the road. After fifteen minutes we saw some twenty people approaching, Vinobaji leading. All were clothed in Indian style, in white homespun cloth. The people cheered and quickly followed as the group passed by. I was caught in a swirl and a rush and could hardly get a good look at him until the afternoon prayer meeting.

By 3 p.m. people were already assembled, squatting down on the ground, and by 4 p.m. some twenty-five thousand had gathered. One of the members of the group adjusted the microphone and sang a song about this revolutionary movement. Someone else sang. There were announcements: 'Please be seated', 'Do not smoke during the meeting', and the calls were taught to the audience. At 4.45 Vinobaji arrived and stood on the platform while someone started the call, 'Who will be landless in our village?' with the audience crying, 'No one will be, no one will be!' Then he sat for the half-hour of prayers sung by the group. As his speeches were in Hindi, I could not follow. He spoke about love—how we should love one another, help one another, and share one another's burdens. Everyone should earn his bread by his own labour, not by the labour of others. Just as God had let rain fall on the just and the unjust, and had given us air to breathe, so we should not deny anyone his basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing. For this reason the landless peasant needed land. He asked, 'Will you please give? Adopt me into your family and give me a share of land which I will give to the landless. As the average Indian family has five children, let me be the sixth and give me a sixth of your land.'

The children were restless during the speech, but silence was not disturbed. All tried to listen. The two loudspeakers were certainly not enough. Children formed half the audience, and what noise there was

came from them. They were not prevented from coming and going during the meeting.

After the speech, Vinobaji remained to autograph his translation of the Gita into the vernacular. The Gita has often been called the Hindu equivalent of the Sermon on the Mount. In the meantime, members of the group were circulating through the crowd with special papers to be filled in by those who wanted to give land.

Back at his quarters, I asked for permission to walk along with his group for ten days. It was granted. Next morning, I joined the morning prayers at 3.30 a.m. and we were off on the march by 4.15. It was still dark. One man went ahead with a lamp, and another walked beside Vinobaji with a lamp. The rest of us followed behind. The villages we passed were still asleep. Daylight had broken when we reached a large village in which there was an enthusiastic welcome. In the rush we were all but trampled. A friend in homespun saw me and tried to make a path for me. This was the East, and I could not help but wonder if there had not been similar occasions in Palestine. The heat, the dust, the rush of barefoot, scantily dressed villagers all added to the atmosphere.

Soon after our arrival at the day's destination, we were all served our breakfast, Indian style, on banana leaves. About twenty girls had come just for one day from the training centre, and we were given a little room together. A rug was placed on the damp earth. There was barely enough space for all of us to lie down, but we were tired enough to sleep. Until the afternoon meeting time we slept, bathed, and washed our clothes, ate lunch, talked, and slept again. It was very hot. Others were not so privileged; they had to prepare for the meeting, attend to the day's mail, etc. There was again a two-hour prayer and speech meeting attended by an enthusiastic crowd.

That night I slept crowded between the other girls, and at 3 a.m. was glad to hear the rising bell. We attended prayers and started off on a good dirt road. Soon a woman stopped us. The members of the party tried to push her to one side, but Vinobaji wished to listen to her. She had been dispossessed. The landlord claimed the ground on which her house was built. She was out on the road with two children, in the rainy season. Vinobaji sent a message with the villagers to bring the landlord to the afternoon meeting. Afterwards both tenant and landlord faced their itinerant judge. It took three hours to settle her case and that of another woman.

Early morning prayers and we set off. This time the road was not so pleasant. We were ferried across some water. It was still dark, so that I could not tell if it was a river or just flood water. We made our way along some field paths, but soon had to take off our shoes and wade through the water. We reached our destination at 7.30 a.m. Our new

quarters were completely surrounded by water. We had to wade through two feet of water for nearly half a mile to reach them. Usually the quarters were in the local schools and often the school boys or scouts guarded the place to protect us from the over-curious villagers that swarmed about us. Even if we were in a room, they managed to open the shutters and peep in. On this little island the water protected us a little. As usual, local hospitality donated and prepared the food for the group.

The next day we were forced to take to the railway tracks—everything else was under water. Of the three trains which passed us, only one passenger recognised Vinobaji and greeted him. It was a sign of the indifference of the world. I had to recall the enthusiastic welcome in Jerusalem and the quick forgetfulness.

The remainder of my ten days passed in a similar manner. If we had not walked very far and it was cool enough, we went in little parties directly to the landlords, requesting land. Other days, gifts were taken only during the meetings. The attendance varied in size from two to twenty-five thousand.

It is not the big landlords that Vinobaji approaches. He asks of all, for if enough small landowners give, the moral atmosphere will change. He wishes to create not a material communistic revolution, but a practical spiritual revolution. The final goal very much resembles a universal system of intentional communities, similar to the early Christian communities—small village communities living together in the spirit of love, like large families, with no ownership of land, and the needs of all being equally satisfied. The final goal would do away with all need of government, but such a goal is not immediately realizable, therefore Vinobaji believes a real democratic government to be necessary and good. The mere possession of the vote, however, hardly means democracy. The goal is that land should be used in common, yet at present the land donated is to be distributed to individual families.

The main request at present is for land, but for the total revolution many varied gifts are possible. Firstly comes BHOODAN—gift of land; then SAMPATI DAN—gift of property (one-sixth of one's income); BUDHI DAN—gift of professional skill and knowledge; SMARATI DAN—gift of work; and lastly there has developed JIVA DAN—or gift of life. Some part of the message, such as the homespun clothes, may not be directly applicable to us in the West. However, even if we cannot accept that he is Saint Vinoba, he still challenges us to become real Christians, for it is the same age-old message of love, non-violence, devotion, and service that he preaches as he walks from village to village not knowing where he will rest his head at night.

LEE KLEISS

II. AFRICAN LAND HUNGER IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this article, I want to bring to the notice of Christians and peace-loving peoples of the world, the conditions of the Africans in South Africa. I shall use the terms Africans and Europeans to enable the reader to understand that by Africans I mean the black people, and Europeans the whites.

There are eight-and-a-half million Africans and two-and-a-half million Europeans in South Africa. The country is rich in minerals of many sorts, and grows crops of all kinds. The control of the country is exclusively in the hands of the Europeans. There is a strong colour bar in every walk of life in South Africa.

The Africans occupy thirteen per cent of the land and the Europeans eighty-seven per cent. Africans without land live on European-owned land as squatters, and work three months a year for the landlord for the right to live on the land. Men, women, and children are required to work for the landlords. In some areas the Africans are required by the landlords to work the whole year round without pay. In some areas the Africans, instead of working only three months a year as provided for by law, are forced to work four months a year.

Because of lack of land, Africans are always faced with years of starvation, and have to go about to look for places to live in, and for work to earn wages in order to support themselves and their families.

Every African male child of sixteen years of age and over has to carry a pass with him wherever he goes. His pass must be issued by his chief, head-man, a European Native Commissioner, or his employer. Under the pass laws, an African cannot leave his employer without the employer's consent. This is proved by the employer signing his pass off.

Since 1945 a system known as Influx Control of Natives into European towns and cities has been introduced by law. Under this system only the Africans wanted by Europeans for work may be allowed into European cities to take up employment. The unwanted must be sent out of the towns and cities. Any African found in a town with his pass endorsed 'refused entry into the urban area' is liable to arrest, and after being convicted he is sent to one of the farm prisons built all over the country, and from the prison sold to a farmer.

Africans living in towns and cities or those allowed to take up employment are not permitted to seek work of their own choice. Labour Bureaux are set up in towns, and employers go there for the workers they need. If an African worker refuses to go to an employer with whom he is told to take employment his permit is cancelled, and he is ordered to leave the urban area within seventy-two hours. If he is found there by the police after the expiration of seventy-two hours, he is arrested and sent to prison. The law gives the Influx Controller wide

powers to refuse or cancel an African worker's permit if he thinks the African an undesirable in the urban area.

An African coming for the first time into an urban area is given conditional employment; that means, he is allowed to work for one employer only, and if the employer dismisses him, or he leaves that employer, his permit gets endorsed 'not allowed to work in the urban area of . . . '.

The Europeans in South Africa say that they are superior to the Africans because they are white and have education. They go further and say that because they are Christians everything they do to the Africans has God's blessing, and God gave them the power to do it. They say they are God's chosen people, and as such they are the master race. They claim that God made the Africans for them to rule over as an inferior race, and to work for the Europeans without rights, for ever. It is therefore the duty of real Christians and peace-loving peoples of the world to investigate this defiance of Christian law and human rights in South Africa. It is not a domestic issue, but a world-wide problem.

NABOTH MOKGATLE

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

The spirit of the Lord is nowhere to be seen;
Is lost in the night among the stars in their courses;
Is sightless and soundless, but is seen by the hearts desirous of the light.
It gleams as a diamond on the dew of the morning.
To the eye of desire of the truth, the spirit of the Lord is visible,
But nowhere to be found and kept,
Nowhere to be held, possessed, but discerned by the heart's desire,
Hidden from the hater, and the lover of his life, the prejudiced,
The knowers of all knowledge and the teachers of all truth.
The spirit of the Lord is voiceless,
Inarticulate as the rushing torrent from the hills.
The spirit of the Lord is not locatable;
To the fickle is fitful as the flame on the marshes;
Is frail and easily extinguished
By the wrath of man working not his righteousness;
Is mighty as the mountains, reared up,
Shaped, twisted, and distorted by centuries of slow gigantic movement;
Is hardly accessible as their poised and jagged crags.
The spirit of the Lord possesses those who desire it;
Is unpossessable; fades as the manna but ever renewable;
More precious than diamonds and rubies,

More abundant than the sands of the shore,
 Golden, by the crushing and washing of the sea,
 (Not by the mines of Mammon destroying land and people).
 The spirit of the Lord is unconfined by bars and prison walls,
 By sacred aisles, and choirs and places where they sing.
 It blows where it lists,
 To make music for the shepherds clothed in sackcloth
 When the lamb of God is born.
 Gloria in Excelsis Deo, et in Terra Pax.
 The spirit of the Lord is a sword,
 Dividing truth from untruth, without hope, fear, or favour,
 More exact than the balance, more truthful than the true,
 More just than justice,
 Forgiving where the Law condemns, more exacting than the Law.
 To the possessors of the Law the spirit of the Lord is lawless,
 Breaking with non-violence the fetters forged by fear,
 Subversive to those who are fearful of the evil.
 The spirit of the Lord is unreliable
 To those who would, if they could, believe in its purpose,
 Too tolerant to those who are intolerant of time;
 Is vague and impractical to the apostles of force,
 Timid to the regiments of the righteousness of Might,
 Weakness to condemners of the Way, the Truth and Life
 Next a defiantly dying assassin and lately penitent thief.
 Praise be to thee, O Lord, for these mighty mountains,
 Unpossessed and unpossessable by their possessors;
 For these diamonds on the cobwebs in the first light of morning;
 For the four winds of heaven and the stars which cannot come down.
 Praise be to thee, O Lord, for a generous heart in those who are fearful
 and the dispossessed;
 For those whom our injustice has left human yet.
 Glory be to God for the spirit of the Lord is free.
 It opens up new and still untrodden ways
 Through the streets of the city and the prison yards,
 The paths of the jungle and the desert sands.
 Glory be to God for the infinity of His forgiveness,
 Apportioning no rewards for the evil and the good;
 For the abundance of His eternal heart, pulsing in the Universe.
 Glory be to God for diversity and equality in His infinity:
 For the spirit of the Lord is in the good and the evil, indefeasible,
 Creating and recreating all from our defeats.

MICHAEL SCOTT

FORUM

From the Community at Aiyetoro, Nigeria

In response to our request we have received the following statement from the above community under the title of 'Short History in the Mode of Life of Aiyetoro People in Okitipupa Division'.

We the people in the settlement live a communal life, having all things in common. Every individual in our settlement gets different kinds of foodstuff from the food store, to his satisfaction. This food is eaten in the different houses, but communal meals are also provided in our hotel.

Clothes are distributed to all individuals in the settlement, and everybody has his own house and furniture. Each man lives contentedly with his household, and all our human wants are met.

There were people who spread rumours all over the country, scandalising and deriding us in our ways of life. Some alleged that we live unsocially. This is quite untrue. We the people at Aiyetoro are peace loving and live a social life. We are energetic and progressive. We have committees who are always thinking about all that we are going to do in the Church. Whenever these committees meet they bring the results of their meeting before the Controller of the Holy Apostle Church, Aiyetoro. Then the Controller of the community brings before all the members the ideas which have come from the committees for the progress of our community. He asks all the members of the community if they are satisfied with these proposals. If we are all satisfied the proposals will be carried out.

If someone wants to be an Apostle in the community he or she must confess his or her sins. He or she shall leave off the worshipping or serving of idols, and avoid the places and practices of idol-worship, and follow the way of Jesus alone. He or she shall serve the kingdom of God. All his or her properties shall be in common. When someone becomes a member we place our hands upon him, and he or she will receive the holy spirit of God.

We hate to be making a noise, or two persons to be wrangling with each other, for such things do not let the wisdom of God abide with anybody.

We are now in readiness to build some launches to ply between Aiyetoro, Lagos and Okitipupa and all possible places in our country. Once more we are contemplating to make our canal from Mahin Lagoon navigable to Aiyetoro, our settlement.

Some people may wonder how we embark upon a series of projects. If one believes in unity, it does not seem strange. We the people of Aiyetoro have one faith and one mind. Hence everything is easy for

us to do. We appeal to all individuals in the country to believe in unity. There our success lies.

What we usually preach against in our settlement is outlined as follows: fighting, quarrelling, hatred of others, noise, laziness, idol-worship, stealing, stubbornness, lying, adultery, murder, extortion, covetousness, brewing of trouble, uncleanness of mind and other things which may mar the religious progress. We trust in God and do the right.

A Guest writes about his Misgivings

It is four weeks today that we returned to M. and it is a shame that I have not found time before to write and thank you for all the love and kindness we received during our stay at Wheathill.

Now there lie between the Bruderhof and us not only a full month and a long journey, but also many new impressions, old habits, old acquaintances, new duties and tasks and the lures of the whole bright world.

All that in no way serves to blur the experience of the Bruderhof in our minds—on the contrary, the peculiar quality of the experience is but strengthened by the contrast; and not a day goes by without our speaking of you and telling our acquaintances about you.

I am really something of a 'lone wolf', and not very sociable or inclined to strike up new friendships. Usually I cannot remember names and faces, yet you are all still quite familiar to me, as though I could see you in the flesh. We think a great deal about you and would be glad to see you all again—but of course, once more there's a whole world lying between us and the separation brought about by space and time allows my misgivings to arise again.

They are essentially the same as before, and are chiefly concerned with religion and one's outlook on the world in general. I don't think that I could ever bring myself to believe in a personal God and to regard man, more than other creatures, as his image; or to ascribe attributes to God conceived in the sphere of human ideas; or that I could even begin to comprehend his will.

The dualism between the principle of good and the principle of evil, which is such a determining factor in Christian thinking, is something I just cannot take in. Also war, which I detest no less than you, seems to me (in spite of all personal aversion) unavoidable, important, and necessary as death itself for the continual re-creation of an infinitely manifold life.

If I have not been able to decide to join you up till now, naturally a love of ease and enjoyment and a reluctance to commit myself and to become thoroughly insignificant have all played their part; to these is

added the uncertainty as to whether it is permissible so to withdraw and shut oneself away from this world as it is, and probably always will be. In the week I spent with you I was sufficiently convinced that with you this withdrawal and seclusion is not a turning away from the world; that you do not shirk responsibility in any way; and that your concern for the need and unhappiness of others is above the average. Nevertheless a certain measure of limitation and lack of diversity is unmistakable, and I do not know whether I should strive after these.

On the other hand, it is of course quite clear to me that some measure of renunciation is needful and that one can only achieve what is essential by refusing to be diverted by non-essentials. It only remains to ask, what are the essentials.

In short, there are many doubts and misgivings in my mind, and I often wish I could clear them up in conversations with you. You will see from this letter, however, that although the 'seed' has not yet sprouted, at any rate a prickle from the bitter-sweet and somewhat thorny shrub of your community life has remained in my flesh and does not leave me in peace.

In any case, we are very glad to continue to hear of you through J., and we hope very much that one or other of you will visit us when travelling in Germany. We also hope to remain in contact by letter. We send you our best wishes and hope very much to see you again soon—wherever it may be.

Germany.

H.V.

Bram Burger replies:

Dear H.,

In trying to answer your letter briefly I leave on one side those important observations which indicate a certain apprehension on your part—that in joining our brotherhood one has to cut oneself off from a great deal, or rather that one must completely give up one's own ego. Most of us wondered about this when we were guests.

I prefer to deal with the difficulty arising from your different outlook on life. You do not believe in a personal God. Your further remark, that you cannot see that man is made in the image of God any more than are other creatures, follows from this. You are also unable to accept the dualism between the principle of good and the principle of evil, and you feel that even war is not to be absolutely repudiated.

If I see it aright, you understand by 'God' an impersonal principle of development, or evolution, working itself out in every aspect and manifestation of the universe. What we call evil is perhaps a lower stage of development, or a necessary principle in the reciprocal action of death and resurrection to new life, such as we see in nature, where day

and night, summer and winter, interchange with each other. In this way war forces mankind ever again to find new ways to a higher cultural level. It also fits in here, that you take exception to a 'certain measure of limitation' which you believe you observed in our life. How can there be limitation, if everything—good and bad—has its place and meaning in the divine evolutionary process?

Over against this outlook on life we must place our Christian faith. We believe in a personal God, who calls upon us to fight against evil. This evil is a power opposing God, the anti-God, who makes use of men to fulfil his own purposes. It is a loveless power which divides, opposing itself to God's power of love, which seeks to unite. Just because God calls us to unity in love, we feel urged to live our brotherly life in community. This way is the only one on which, surrendering ourselves to God as he has revealed himself to us in Christ, we can overcome war, class-struggles, economic strife—indeed all forms of human self-will. The responsibility which this entails can never originate in a world in which the Divine Power is an impersonal power.

In a world without divine personality everything takes place according to fixed laws. There is no freedom to choose between good and evil. If, however, you feel yourself responsible (which you certainly do) that will be because you are better than your own doctrine, because in fact you do distinguish yourself from other creatures—animals for example. An animal has no sense of responsibility. Only man has freedom to choose between good and evil, because, from another world, the world of freedom, the personal God of love calls him to choose. Man is a person, created in God's image, because he is charged by God who is Person to fight against what is hostile to God, against loveless division. To be able to wage this war we must strike as one man. What is more, we must try so to live that through our life something is revealed of a world as God would have it: a world of brothers and sisters, united by God's spirit of love.

Our Bruderhof House in Germany. As reported in the last issue of THE PLOUGH, the way has now opened for us to begin again a life of community in the country where our movement had its origin in the year 1920. A large house has been placed at our disposal, and a group of members took up residence during the week after Easter. A fuller report of this new beginning will be given in our next issue. In the meantime, visitors are welcome, but it would be good if they could announce their intention to visit beforehand, as accommodation in the first months will be very limited. The address is: Bruderhofhaus Hohenstein, Post: (13a) Kirchensittenbach, über Hersbruck.

NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

Looking back over the past year, it is very encouraging to recall that our brotherhood at all the Bruderhoefe grew by more than fifty and that many others have taken the first steps towards full commitment. Our new members came from eight different countries, and we see this as a sign that people the world over are disillusioned by an existence where there is so much hatred, distrust, and competition, and seek a life of love and brotherhood. On journeys through various countries, we have met one after another of such people, eager to know more of community, eager to be pioneers in a new world where men are not only equal, living as though they were brothers, but where men realize the challenging fact that they really *are* brothers and *must* live accordingly.

Among the new members who are now with us on our various Bruderhoefe in three continents, there are those who had been disillusioned with the Christianity they had known. But both they and others who have come from agnostic and atheistic circles or non-Christian religions have experienced the guidance of the living Christ in our daily life and work.

The rich variety of background revealed in the biographies of these people is impressive and significant. It is unfortunate that space will not allow us to publish their life stories, for they provide a complete answer to the objection so often raised—that the way of community is only for a particular type of person and could not possibly be lived out by ‘just anyone’, by which it is often implied, ‘It is certainly not for *me* in my special circumstances!’

The nationalities represented among the new members are American, English, German, Swiss, Paraguayan, Belgian, French, and Dutch. The variety of trades and callings is interesting, too—among others, farmer, engineer, journalist, secretary, commercial artist, dress-maker, social worker, children’s nurse. The ages ranged from 17 to 71.

A good proportion of the new members were born at the Bruderhof or had been brought by their parents as small children. Before making his or her own decision to join the brotherhood after a probationary period, each of them had to deal with problems just as weighty as those which face newcomers to the Bruderhof. However, these young people, together with the newcomers, were able to find unity with the brotherhood through personal dedication to Christ and to the Church-community

Primavera. Married couples from our other communities in Europe and North America were among the twenty-two new brotherhood members at Primavera during the past year. They were joined by

several people from South American countries, where our circles of contact are not yet very wide. One family, although formerly refugees from Europe, had been enjoying a thoroughly bourgeois life in Buenos Aires. Something of the inner struggle that led them to the Bruderhof was told in a letter published in the last number of *THE PLOUGH*, under the title 'Are we made for a brotherly life?' Another new member, a Paraguayan girl in her early twenties, first came to Primavera about six years ago with a family by whom she had been adopted.

A Swiss girl from the Wheathill Bruderhof was received into full membership together with her cousin, who had grown up in the community. Although she had experienced community life with us in the days of the Almbruderhof in Liechtenstein, she had not considered it very seriously until after the war.

Among the Americans were several Quakers from the Philadelphia area, whose concern for peace had led them to community. On the other hand, two English ex-servicemen, one of who had served for nearly twenty years, had not felt the call to witness for peace until coming to the Bruderhof.

Several of the youth entered the brotherhood last year, including one who came to us as a little orphan boy in Germany. After his schooling, he left the community and worked on his own in Paraguay and Argentine for seven years. All that he had experienced as a boy, however, remained clear in his mind and eventually he returned to Primavera.

After joining us several years ago, a Paraguayan worker was closely observed by his fellow-countrymen, who are our neighbours around Primavera, to see whether he really would be accepted among us as a brother. They are more impressed by deeds than words. Our relationships with these people have grown and, as a result, two families have come to Primavera with the serious intention of joining the community. A special difficulty for our Paraguayan neighbours is the language. Most of them speak only Guarani. We are very glad to have a Paraguayan member of the brotherhood to help them.

Woodcrest. Six months have passed since Pearl Hall wrote her article 'The New American Bruderhof' which appeared in the Autumn, 1954 issue of *THE PLOUGH*. At that time she wrote, 'A circle of sixty-five people, including twenty-six children, is at home in the new community'. As this report is being written, more than a hundred people are gathered there, while twenty more are expected in the early summer.

This last period, then, is to be seen as one of growth and rapid development. Where have all these people come from? They have gathered together from all points of the compass. First, quite a large group of four families—a total of twenty people, including twelve

children—travelled about 800 miles from North Carolina. They had belonged to the Celo Community with whom we had shared lively experiences last year while our members were living at Macedonia in Georgia. These folk felt strongly called from the loosely knit structure of Celo to the more closely integrated structure of a community life founded upon the clear teaching of Jesus and united by his power.

Two families came, quite independently, from the west coast 3,000 miles away; one from Gridley in California, where they had for some time taken part in a small community, and the other from Seattle in Washington, where a group of people were deeply challenged following personal contact with members from Primavera. While one of these Seattle families is now at Woodcrest, another will shortly be travelling to Primavera.

Of the others who have joined recently, two families of Quaker background came from New Jersey and Pennsylvania. A formerly agnostic family came to us from Canada. From the Dominion, too, we are expecting another family, from the Winterbrook Community in Ontario. A young woman from Chicago has recently joined, and her parents will also be coming in the near future.

In describing her experiences, one of our guests spoke of her searching for 'something which I called "fullness"' in a Quaker work-camp in Belgium and the Peckham Experiment in England, and also in her studies in child development, religious education, psychosomatic medicine, and the ecumenical church. In all these she experienced something of this 'fullness' but her search found its culmination only in a total dedication to a life of Christian community.

Wheathill. The diversity of background was equally pronounced among those who came to Wheathill. Seven entered the brotherhood at Easter and sixteen during Advent last year. Among those who had been born in community were two granddaughters of Eberhard Arnold. One of them spoke of how deeply she had been influenced by the plight of the Displaced Persons who had been given a home at Primavera. Having grown up at the Bruderhof in Germany, England and Paraguay, she had seen community as the natural and normal way of life, and the world at large as an experience to be assimilated.

Several of the new members had passed through Dr Frank Buchman's Oxford Group and remained grateful for the experience of the silent waiting upon God. One of these had been a pastor in the Dutch Reformed Church in Holland, two others had been Unitarians, and yet another had been a Salvation Army officer.

We were particularly glad to welcome the first French family to join us at Wheathill. The husband had been a Protestant pastor in France, but had given up his pastorate to work as an engineer and had

also lived with his family for a short period in a French community. He wrote of his experiences in the last number of THE PLOUGH.

It was encouraging, too, that two young Jews from the U.S.A. joined us during the year. It was only through their experience of the life in Christian community that the truth of God's revelation in Christ became clear. Others with similar experiences had been influenced by the Sufi and Bahá'í movements.

Those who came from other European countries had been deeply influenced by their sufferings during the war. One told of the occupation of Holland by the Germans, while another spoke of the occupation of East Germany by the Russians. Both had experienced the evil of hate and war that had poisoned men's hearts. A Dutch barge-master has joined us with three of his four daughters.

The fruits of our outdoor speaking activity in the Birmingham Bull Ring were evident in five of our new people. Some of our members have gone there almost every Sunday and are continually making fresh contacts. Through this work we have been joined by a newspaper reporter, a factory worker, a children's nurse and others.

It is always a special joy to us when parents of our members come to share our life. This happened for several of us last year. How a sympathetic interest can lead to full unity was expressed by the mother of two of our members, when she said, 'In 1939 I first heard of the community through one of my daughters, but I did not realize that it had anything to do with me. I visited the community many times and I always realized the rightness of this life. Now at last through the many months I have been living here, I have come to see much more than just "rightness"; I have realized that this is the life we have to live, a life of unity and brotherhood.'

Something of what all this diversity means to us was expressed at a communal meal after sixteen members had been united with the brotherhood at Primavera last December:

'We know that the diversity of origins, gifts and skills, which will be an enrichment of our brotherhood life, is usually the cause of great separation between men, between races, nationalities and classes, but this has been broken down among us. Many come to us either seeking peace and social justice, or simply because they have been more and more deeply disturbed by the conflict in their lives between their different desires and compromises. All have come to find that personal freedom, justice and peace are only to be achieved in one way, and that is in the negation of all self-will—the change in oneself through the power of Christ. This is what fills us with such great joy today.'

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In this number we are glad to bring contributions by Lewis Benson and Artur Mettler. For many years Lewis Benson has felt a deep concern for a revival of what he calls the 'Spiritual Reformation', which found its expression in the so-called Anabaptist and Quaker movements. This concern, which we also share, bears upon the significance of Christ at the present time for those who confess him; to what application in their practical lives should this lead men? We were glad of two visits which Lewis Benson and his wife made to our community, when we were able to consider these issues together. Our talks led us to a deep understanding, especially in the concern which he brings out in his article.

A great deal of interest was stimulated by the article written by Artur Mettler for the Summer 1954 issue of *THE PLOUGH*, under the title, 'The Spirit of Prophecy'. In the present article he shows how the Anabaptists were led to a practical realization of the vision that was given to them, about which Lewis Benson has written in his article.

For some years our own communities have felt a particular interest in the community life which is practised in the Israeli kibbutzim. Harry Viteles has the Chair on Co-operatives at the Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics and Social Science in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and therefore writes with authority on present trends in the kibbutzim movement.

One of the major problems today arises from the dispossession of the masses from their rightful heritage of the land. Many articles have been appearing about the work of Vinoba Bhave and his co-workers on behalf of the Indian people. Lee Kleiss has sent us an account of the few days that she spent travelling with Vinoba Bhave, and we thought it would interest our readers.

The second article under the same title, 'All Land Belongs to God', was written by Naboth Mokgatle, a South African who recently spent ten days at the Wheathill Bruderhof. During this time he brought his burning concern for his people very near to the hearts of all our members. We felt that the poem by Michael Scott, 'The Spirit of the Lord', expresses the same longing that God's spirit shall prevail in these human and racial tensions.

In the News of the Bruderhof Communities, we have attempted to give an impression of the variety of backgrounds of the many people who joined our communities last year. This report shows that it is possible for people who are quite different from each other to become of one heart and mind.

INTERNATIONAL WORK CAMP AT THE WHEATHILL BRUDERHOF

July 17th–August 27th, 1955

We are glad to inform our friends that from July 17th to August 27th, 1955, an International Work Camp will be held at the Wheathill Bruderhof. The Work Camp is being planned by the German *Nothelfergemeinschaft der Freunde*, an organization which began in Germany after the last war. This group has arranged work camps during the past years to relieve the need in Germany caused by the devastation of the war, and to give aid in countries where natural catastrophes have occurred, such as Holland and Austria.

Our constant problem here at Wheathill has been the acute shortage of dwelling accommodation for the many new people who wish to join us in our common life. Now we hope to meet this need by erecting a number of wooden buildings which we recently obtained at a low price. We ourselves have not the working strength to erect these buildings, nor the means to employ paid labour. Therefore we look forward to the help of the twenty young people who will form this work camp.

The following extract from their programme expresses the aim of the organization: 'We work for understanding and reconciliation between men and nations, and we are convinced that lasting peace is not possible without the will for peace on the part of every individual, and without a just social order. We are not bound by politics, philosophies, religious beliefs, or nationalities. Everyone of good will who is ready to help is heartily invited.'

We can look forward to an interesting and stimulating time with this young international team, and we hope that they in turn will find stimulation in the experience of community living based on a life commitment.

For this project we need money urgently. We have to obtain more building materials, and, in addition, we have agreed to make some contribution towards the maintenance costs of the work camp. One of the buildings must be erected before they come for their accommodation. We therefore appeal for help to our friends, and to all those who have a special interest in furthering international understanding and who feel that such a visit of these young people can serve the cause of peace.

The work campers hope to meet English people to learn about the particular problems and questions of this country. Perhaps some of our friends would like to invite these young people for a weekend to meet other youth groups. Would anyone interested in this suggestion please write soon, so that the programme of their stay can be arranged accordingly.

For further information, please write to :—

SOCIETY OF BROTHERS, WHEATHILL BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY,
BROMDON, BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND

