

the plough



SUMMER 1939

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"THE PLOUGH, Towards the Coming Order" is a quarterly journal edited for the Society of Brothers by E. C. H. Arnold. With such a group behind it, THE PLOUGH is an instrument for uniting more closely those who are seeking here and now, both in the Bruderhof communities and outside it, to live by the standards of the Coming Order of justice, love and brotherhood. The Society of Brothers would be grateful if all who see the truth for which THE PLOUGH stands would do everything in their power to draw the attention of others to it. A leaflet telling of the aim of THE PLOUGH and the life of brotherhood behind it will be sent gladly to all whose names are sent to the Editor as likely to be interested.

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THE PLOUGH

Towards the Coming Order

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Summer 1939

The Call of the Hour

There has scarcely been a time of greater confusion and unrest than ours. It has scarcely ever been harder to recognize what is truth and what is lying. Peace is spoken of while war is meant, and threats of war are made to maintain peace. Now the question arises in us all: "Where do we find complete clarity and absolute certainty? What is the ultimate, the sole, authoritative standard? How are we to find the way that leads out of the need and disorder of this time?"

Some time ago we were able to hear the representatives of two great peoples and states present their standpoint. Any person who tried, quite objectively and without prejudice, to test the truth of each of these two opposing assertions, was bound to declare that both are right, relatively "right"; that is, as each statesman saw things from the standpoint of his state and its politics. Who wants to deny that through the one state's drive towards expansion, the peace of Europe and of the world is endangered? Who, on the other hand, can deny that the treatment of the conquered nations after the last world war was unjust? If we look back farther in history, we come repeatedly upon wrong against wrong, violence against violence. It seems as though one wrong drags the other after it, that in the continuing alternation of history the oppressed in freeing themselves become themselves the oppressors—whether in the class struggle within a nation or in the violence of war between nations.

Must it always be so? Or is there a forum, is there an authority that is above the nations, classes and parties—an absolute right? Is there an absolute truth, and true justice?

Everything depends on whether we have to give this question a positive or a negative answer. For just in this lies the tragedy of the present situation: all over the world, but especially in Europe, two hostile camps are preparing to decide by violence which is right, which wants peace and on which side truth is. The opposite extremes are growing more clearly defined, and those who know the political situation pre-

sume that in autumn, or perhaps earlier or later, a clash is to be expected that will drag us all into an awful catastrophe.

Nothing can make us recognize the need of the hour more clearly than this acute danger. Never has it been more necessary than it is to-day for us to reflect, to examine ourselves, to ask ourselves the question, "*What must we do?*"

Let us also bear in mind that already dreadful things are happening. Let us think of the terrible persecution of the Jews in Central Europe, of the bloody fights in Palestine; let us think of the increasing impoverishment of the masses in the rich capitalistic lands. Let us think of the increasing expenditure for armaments, which reaches astronomical figures and leads to an apparent economic prosperity, yet which serves not construction and human welfare, but destruction and annihilation of body and life, of property and of the values created by work. Further let us think of the need of innocent women and children in China and of the silent suffering of thousands upon thousands in the dictator-states. What must happen? What must we do?

We need men who are aglow with the fire of love, to proclaim the judgment of God to the leaders and nations. We need prophetic criers in the desert, who warn men to repent. We need men who live love, not only with words but also with deeds. We need men who have received such complete certainty and clarity from the Absolute, that they recognize and expose evil, whatever form or disguise it may take, as that which destroys life. We need men who absolutely renounce all evil, in that they live utterly for the good. We need men who are ready to suffer mockery, imprisonment, brutality or even death for the sake of love and justice, both in their own nation and among all men. We need men who quite truly, quite sincerely and quite simply serve peace.

Let us recognize how godless our times are, and how far we all are from God. Nothing tells us this more clearly and forcibly than the torn and divided state of humanity, in mutually hostile and destructive camps. Can we join in with *one* side? That is the danger of the hour.

We must not forget that humanity as a whole forms *one* body. When in one individual land or state evil takes control and expresses itself in more cruel and awful forms than in other nations and lands, no individual can withdraw himself from a share in the responsibility, guilt and suffering, because he happens to live in another land. We must recognize that the *whole* body of humanity is diseased, and is threatening in its madness to destroy itself.

We can only see the cause in this — that God is forgotten, and with him the central point in which all things have their origin and in which all meet. For no League of Nations, no leader or president, no assembly of statesmen or judges can be the forum or the authority that decides

between the innocent and guilty, between right and wrong, truth and lies, peace or war. The Absolute is *God* alone, and what we need to-day is to turn about and to turn back to God. That means true repentance and withdrawal from all that destroys the wholeness of the life of humanity, that all that is wrong in social life, in national and political life, in family or society life be wholly overcome. The turning away from evil is followed by the turning to God. Repentance is followed by faith in God. Faith in God brings about a complete and radical change in the ruling order.

Where there is faith, there the Kingdom of God, the new, the coming order, breaks in! John the Baptist calls to us to-day, "Repent! Change yourselves radically, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" This cry is addressed to each individual. We cannot wait till this or that prime minister, this or that important churchman or religious leader turns about. We must begin with ourselves. *We* cannot change the world. We can change it neither as individuals nor as organized political or religious masses! Let us be humble enough to recognize this! But we can change ourselves by repenting and leaving all the dead works of personal and collective self-interest. That is the first thing. Then we can believe in God, and love him and serve him. That is the second. The third inevitably follows: that we love our neighbours as ourselves. Thus then it happens, as it often has in the history of humanity, that a ray of eternity, a ray of the coming Kingdom of God breaks into the present. It actually happens that men live in peace, that they bear no arms even when compelled, but sooner suffer death than do wrong. It happens that men give in their goods and possessions, and put all their working strength at the disposal of a life of brotherly community, of social justice and the unity of nations and races. It happens that men, because they have withdrawn and turned away from the darkness, from war, injustice, hate and impurity, and because they believe in God, become free, loving men who serve God and their neighbours in purity and unity. Such an event is an intervention of God in this present time.

Thus the voice of Truth calls to us men and women of the year 1939, wherever we may be, whatever we may be doing, to whatever people, state, race, church, party or movement we may belong: "God alone is true! God alone is right! God alone is peace! God alone is love! Repent! Turn away from all evil, all lying, all injustice, all murder and bloodshed, all impurity! Repent! Turn to God! Then you will believe, then you will love, and then even to-day peace and justice will be reality on this earth!"

PAST AND PRESENT

The Church and the World

Claus Felbinger's Confession of Faith, addressed to the
Council of Landshut, 1560.

(continued)

How incomprehensible a thing is it to the worldly wise when one showeth them the narrow way! The word of the cross of Christ is, of course, foolishness to them that are lost. They declare that we mount far too high; that Christ hath paid and hath already done what is necessary for us; that one need do no more than believe this firmly, and simply confess himself a sinner—for God is merciful and gracious. They say not a word either of the new birth, without which no one can be blessed, or of true repentance. For true repentance is to sin no more; to begin a new and holy life with God, and to conform no more to the world.

Thus the worldly wise flaunt their high knowledge before us and say, "We find it in the Old and New Testament. As we see things, ye aim far too high. Were none to be blessed save those who act as ye do, the whole world would have to be condemned at once". Yea, but we believe the Word of God utterly: the Word that standeth and that cannot lie. It conformeth not to the world. Men have only to act in accordance with the Word. The worldly wise, especially the monks, clergy and writers, think that because they have read books and are well practised therein they can be found wanting in naught. O foolish men! The wisdom of God is neither to be gleaned from books nor learnt in high schools—far from it! For the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and a good understanding have all they who do accordingly.

Thus one seeth that they only have the secret of the Kingdom of Heaven who faithfully follow Christ: the others having eyes see not, and having ears hear not. David saith that the secret of God is only with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. They that continue in Christ's teaching will understand the truth, and the truth will make them free. Knowledge only puffeth up, but love improveth and buildeth up. For the Word of the cross of Christ rejecteth all the wise. Reason adviseth to come not under the yoke. For the way of the flesh is enmity to God.

Therefore saith Paul, "Consider your calling, dear brothers! Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;

but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; that no flesh should glory in his presence", but the praise be God's. Therefore Christ praiseth his Father in that he hath hidden this from the mighty of this world and revealed it unto babes.

We are accused also of condemning all who are not of our mind and who act not as we do. That we deny. We condemn no man, but we show to men their reprobate life and warn them of condemnation, and that we do in accordance with the Word of God that cannot lie. For we believe this Word, and that it will come to pass, and for the sake of loyalty to it we are often forced to lay down our lives. For one human being cannot condemn another. Judgment is in the hand of the Lord; but sinful, evil works are what condemn the man, where he hath not left them, in accordance with the Word of God, and brought forth honest fruits of repentance.

Further I have been asked, with regard to baptism, how often I have been baptized. I have said, "Once, as God hath commanded". They then asked if I had not also been baptized by the brothers. I answered, "The devout brothers who baptized me in accordance with the command of Christ first taught me repentance and faith in the name of Jesus Christ. Then, at my request, they baptized me on confession of my faith; which faith, God, according to his promise, also sealed and strengthened with his Holy Spirit, who hath till now kept me in the way of truth. And it is my hope in God that he take him not from me until my end."

But infant baptism I regard as simply naught. It is conceived by men for the sake of money, that the clergy may by its means enrich themselves; it is a plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted, therefore it must be rooted out. For they find not a single word in the Old or in the New Testament about child baptism, not a word that sheweth either that Christ commanded or that his disciples practised it: on the contrary, they held to the one and only baptism. Namely, those who, having reached years of discretion join the faith, on being awakened by the proclamation of the Word of God and on desiring to enter the covenant with God, let themselves be united by the covenant of grace of true Christian baptism, in that they take leave of the sinful pleasure of this world and reject the service of the devil. Therefore the devil striveth through his messengers to hinder at all costs the revelation of the true Christian baptism. Therefore hath the antichrist, the abomination of desolation, the pope, placed such emphasis on the accursed child baptism, which is meant only to harm true Christian baptism and the command of Christ, to hinder true subjection to God. For baptism is a bond of a good conscience with God and a certain declaration that the man hath been accepted as a light to the inheritance of all saints. Now, what knoweth a young child of a good con-

science with God? It is but trumpery! One who standeth by him, the godfather, is supposed to have faith for the child, while he himself knoweth not what faith is, is perhaps a drunkard, a blasphemer of God or a whore—a child of perdition.

To sum up, it is a foolish and blind affair. Through it all manner of evil and infamous men get the precious name, in that they call themselves Christians; which must be but a cloak for their knavery. For a Christian hath not his name from baptism, but from the conduct of his whole life.

He who liveth as a Christian is a Christian: he who liveth as a heathen is a heathen. All this hath been twisted by the antichrist, who still holdeth firmly thereto with the sword: he who will not believe him must die. Then the priests of Baal cry out, "Beware! it is a time of great danger! Wolves are wanting to break in among the sheep!" What great folly! What sheep have they! It hath now come to this, that the "sheep" tear the "wolves", that their "shepherds" want to shear them and suck their blood! Yet they hold the shepherds to be messengers, though they see in their lives that they are ruled not by the Spirit of God but by the spirit of wickedness. How then can they speak what is good, since they are evil? God entrusteth not his holy Word to such blasphemous men, for God is himself the Word that he committeth to true men. As Paul saith clearly to Timothy and Titus, they should be men who are blameless, the husband of one wife only, vigilant, sober, of a right mind, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach the doctrine of faith, not lovers of wine, not strikers, not greedy of filthy lucre, but kind, not brawlers, not covetous. One that leadeth his own house well, that he may have believing children. He must, however, also have a good testimony. They should likewise be courageous, not double-tongued, but sober, just, holy, devout, and bear in a clean conscience the mysteries of the faith.

Hold, now, your clergy up to this mirror to see if there be in them a vein of such virtue! Is not the opposite everywhere reflected? For this reason is no one improved by their teaching. It bringeth forth no fruit. Why? They speak not as the mouth of God, but only their own thoughts, the deceit of their own hearts, and do but destroy themselves and all who listen to them, holding them in what is evil. Their word hath no strength: it maketh none free from sin and devout, it reneweth none. They remain the same old sinful wineskins, that are unable to hold the wine of divine sweetness. The Holy Spirit will not dwell in men who are the vassels of sin. He entereth no heart that willeth evil. Therefore are they blind guides.

I was also asked what our attitude is to the holy sacrament. I said, "The sacraments of the clergy I regard as naught, for their blessing is a curse in the eyes of God, since they despise his Word. But I think

much of the supper of Christ and of his memory, and of him who holdeth it and can do so worthily—but this involveth much.”

Then they asked me if I believe not that Christ is essentially present in the body and blood in which he suffered for us on the cross. I answered, “Nay! Christ hath ascended to heaven. There he sitteth at the right hand of God, the heavenly Father. He letteth not himself be conjured thence into the hands of sinners, that they may afterward sell him for money. He is the enemy of all evil-doers. The mad shall not appear before his eyes. Thus, also, the mad, drunken clergy may not come before his face.”

“But”, say they, “he hath clearly said, ‘This is my body and my blood’.” Yea. We know also, praise be to God, the interpretation of this high mystery, which he wanted to disclose to his loved ones in this comforting supper—namely, by means of bread and wine, he hath shown the community of his body. Even as natural bread is composed by the coming together of many grains, ground under the mill-stones, and each giving the others all it possesseth, they have community one with another, and thus become one loaf; and as, likewise, the wine is composed of many grapes, each sharing its juice with the rest in the wine-press, so that they become one drink—even so are we also, in that we become completely of one nature with him, in life and death, and are all one in Christ: he the vine and we his branches, he the head and we his members.

But the branches must bear no other fruit than that which it is the nature of the vine to bear. For all unfruitful branches are cut off and cast into the fire. Even so, the limbs of Christ’s body. They seek not earthly good. They regard naught else but what the head, Christ, willeth through them and inspireth in them by his Spirit. He who hath not his Spirit, however, is none of his. But they who have given and surrendered themselves wholly to God, with body and soul and all their members, let themselves be ruled by his Holy Spirit, led in faith by him in true confidence in the Lord, quietly suffering him to work and keeping his Word in a pure, good heart—such are able to bring forth fruit in patience. They have the Word of God, which is spirit and life, within them—the flesh is of no profit—and they eat the body of Christ and drink his blood. He who acteth otherwise, deceiveth himself.

For no sinner, who hath not yet cleansed his heart through obedience to truth, in the spirit of sincere brotherly love, may sit down at this supper. For Christ kept it with his disciples whom he declared pure for the Word’s sake in which they had believed, and one seeth that Judas sat down at the table with an impure heart, lightly and thoughtlessly, despising the Lord’s word to talk of all things earnestly. He took it not to heart though Christ himself goaded him by saying there

was a traitor among them—a word that shocked the devout, though they were innocent. He, however, was hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and was no longer able to grasp the Word. But what happened when he took the sop? The devil entered into him, and drove him to fulfil his judgment. Therefore he had to attack his Master and cause his innocent death, as an example to all who are still unprepared, who with unrepentant, unclean hearts sit at the Lord's table, hypocritically, as though they, also, were true members of the body of Christ, wholly surrendered to him.

O! The Lord knoweth them all! He letteth not himself be deceived! And the man harmeth but himself, who dareth to oppose and tempt God; as Paul writeth to the Corinthians and warneth each earnestly, "Let a man examine himself well before he goeth in, to see if he be pure in heart, surrendered to God in divine obedience, a true member of his body. Where not—let him leave it alone. For whosoever eateth unworthily thereof is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord and eateth judgment to himself, in that he discerneth not the Lord's body", for he refuseth to see what kind of members belong to the body of Christ. For Christ will not have impure, adulterous members, who are still cleaving to themselves and to others in carnal love. Nay! He wanteth members, pure and holy as he, the Lord, is holy, who love God above all things and hold to him alone.

To be concluded.

Hutterian Brothers and Conscription

Their suffering in America during the World War.

The following remarkable narrative is based on the account of a young Hutterian brother, named David Hofer, who related these experiences after his release from military confinement, during which his two brothers, Joseph and Michael, had died in the prison under distressing circumstances. The truth of this heart-rending tale is vouched for by an independent account, as obtained from the fourth man of the group, who remained in close confinement until April, 1919. The attitude of the Hutterian Brotherhood with regard to participation in warfare is perhaps the most uncompromising of all the various branches of the Anabaptist Movement. Their treatment by the military authorities has therefore been unusually harsh.

When the four young men, three of whom were married, left their home in South Dakota for Camp Lewis, their troubles commenced on the way, on account of their beards. The other boys on the train amused themselves by jeering at the bearded objectors and even cutting their hair and beard with a clipper, to make them appear ridiculous when they would arrive at the training camp. They wept over

these indignities, suffered at the very start, anticipating what might be in store for them later. This treatment of the members of religious groups whose religion includes the wearing of the beard has been a common experience during the war.

When they arrived at Camp Lewis they were asked to sign a card, promising obedience to all military commands. Being absolute objectors to war service on religious grounds, they refused to sign. They likewise refused to take up any line of military service in the camp. They were commanded to step into line and march along with the rest to the drill ground. This they also refused, and refused to put on the military uniform in place of the peculiar home-made garb which they were wearing like all Hutterian Brothers. Hence they were put into the guard house in close confinement. The cursing and reviling that was heaped upon them by the guards was especially painful to them.

After two months in the guard house the four men were court-martialled and sentenced to thirty-seven years, which, however, was reduced by the camp commander to twenty years. The place of confinement was to be the military prison on the island of Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay. Chained together two and two they were sent there in charge of four armed lieutenants. By day the fetters on their ankles were unlocked, but never the handcuffs on their wrists. At night they had to lie flat on their backs, doubly chained together. Little sleep did they have the two nights of the trip, only moaning and weeping.

When they arrived at Alcatraz prison, they were forced to take off their outer clothing and ordered to put on the military uniform, which they again refused; whereupon they were taken to the dungeon and placed in solitary cells, down below, in darkness, filth and stench. The uniform was thrown down by their side and they were told: "There you will have to stay until you give up the ghost, if you do not yield;—like the case of the last four that we carried out of these cells yesterday". Thus they were left in their light underwear.

During the first four and a half days they received no food whatsoever, and only half a glass of water every twenty-four hours. During the night they had to sleep on the cold, wet concrete floor without any blankets. The next one and a half days they had to stand with their hands extended above their heads, crosswise, and were in this position manacled to the bars so high that they could barely reach the floor with their feet. The strain was such, that David, the discharged man who is now at home, says he still feels the effect in his sides. At times he tried to lessen the terrible pain in his arms by working the chamber pail nearer with one foot so as to be able, occasionally, to get up on the pail with his feet and thus ease the strain. The men

were not near enough together to be able to speak with each other; but once David heard Jacob cry out: "Oh, have mercy, Almighty God!" At the end of five days they were taken out of the "hole" and brought into the court-yard, where a number of other prisoners were standing. Some of them were touched with compassion at the pitiful sight of the sufferers, and one of them said with tears in his eyes: "Isn't it a shame to treat men like that?" For the men were covered with scurvy eruptions, were insect-bitten, and their arms swollen so badly that they could not get the sleeves of their jackets over them. They had also been beaten with clubs down in the dungeon, and Michael had once been beaten so brutally that he fell to the floor unconscious.

When they got out of the dungeon at noon on the fifth day, they did not yet get any food until the evening, when they got their supper. Then they were taken back to their cells for close confinement by day and by night, not being allowed to speak with each other. Only on Sunday did they get one hour for exercise in the open air of the stockade, under continuous close guard. In this manner their confinement continued at the Alcatraz prison for four months. About 24th November, 1918, they were transferred from Alcatraz Island to Fort Leavenworth, chained together again, two and two, in charge of six armed sergeants.

The journey went down through Texas and lasted four days and five nights. They arrived at Leavenworth at eleven o'clock at night and were driven through the middle of the street, under much noise and prodding with bayonets, as if they were swine. Chained together at the wrists, carrying their satchels in one hand and their Bibles and an extra pair of shoes under the arm, they were hurried on, in a cruel manner, up the hill towards the military prison.

When they reached the gate they were covered with sweat, so that even their hair was wet, and in this condition, in raw wintry air, they were again compelled to put off their own outer clothing, while the prison garb was being brought to them. It took two hours, till one o'clock at night, until they were taken into the prison, and by that time they were chilled to the bone. In the morning they were called at five o'clock, and again had to stand and wait outside in the cold. Joseph and Michael Hofer broke down and had to be taken to the hospital at once.

Jacob Wipf and David Hofer were sent to solitary confinement, because they refused to take up prison work under military control. They had to stretch their hands out through the bars, where they were manacled together, and thus they had to stand nine hours a day on a bread-and-water diet. This continued for fourteen days, after which they would get regular meals for fourteen days and so on alternately.

When Joseph and Michael Hofer became ill, Jacob Wipf sent a telegram home to the wives of the two sufferers, who took the next train

at night, accompanied by a male friend, to go and see their husbands. Both had small children. To make matters worse the depot agent insisted that the telegram had come from Fort Riley, not from Fort Leavenworth, and sold them tickets to the wrong place. So they lost a day by going to Fort Riley; and when they finally reached the military prison, at eleven o'clock in the evening, they found their husbands so near death that hardly a word could be spoken. When they came again early in the morning, Joseph was already dead and the body was in charge of the undertaker. He could not be seen any more, it was said; but his wife, Mary, pushed the guards aside, pressed on through various doors, until she reached the colonel, where she pleaded in tears to be allowed to see her husband once more. She was conducted to the place where the corpse had already been prepared and laid in the coffin. She eagerly looked in through her tears; but, alas! they had clad her husband's body in the military uniform, which, during life, he had so valiantly refused to don, because it was objectionable to men of his religion.

Michael died a few days later and was fitted out in his civilian clothes at the special request of his father, who had meanwhile arrived. When dying he stretched forth his hands and said: "Come, Lord Jesus! into thy hands I commend my spirit".

When the relatives had gone home with the dead, David, who had been permitted to be at the death-bed of his brother, Michael, was again sent back to his chains in the solitary cell. He says: "All the next day I stood there and wept; but I could not even wipe away my tears, as my hands were manacled to the prison bars". No one seemed to have any pity for him. The next morning, however, one of the guards was willing to go to the colonel to ask a favour on behalf of David. He begged to be transferred to a cell where he would be nearer his friend Jacob and could at least see him, even though he be not allowed to speak to him. The guard took the message to the colonel. In an hour he returned and told David to pack up his things, for he had been discharged. This, however, was too sudden for him, and he could not believe it. But the guard took him along to the colonel who affirmed the statement and gave him his discharge papers. A request to go and take leave of his friend Jacob was not granted. So he went out through the gate into the outside world. Here he again hesitated, doubts arising, whether all this were reality, or only a dream. Thus he remained standing until a guard came along and asked him what he was waiting for. "They tell me, I'm discharged and I can't be sure of it", he said. The guard replied: "You can be sure of that, for no one gets out of here who is not discharged". David then said, that he would have liked very much to say good-bye to his friend Jacob. The guard told him to write a few lines on paper, and he would bring the

note to Jacob the same day, which the guard did, as could be seen from Jacob's next letter to his wife, in which he wrote: "Katherine, just ask David: he will be able to tell you everything better than I can write it". From this it is plain he already knew about David's release.

The piteous funerals of the two brothers and the sympathy shown by the whole Hutterian community was something indescribable. These young brethren having been away from home and their families for six months, always in close confinement, suffering tortures of soul and body, the effect of their return as corpses is something that pen cannot describe. The sufferers have gone to their well-deserved rest.

On 6th December, 1918, the Secretary of War issued an order prohibiting further hand-cuffing of prisoners to iron bars, and other cruel corporal punishments. When, however, some of the Hutterian Brothers about five days later went to see Jacob in his solitary cell, he was still hand-cuffed to the bars for nine hours a day. He got his breakfast of bread and water at seven in the morning; at noon he was released from the bars for thirty minutes to eat his dinner of bread and water; and at half-past six he was again released and given the same fare for supper. Although he still had to sleep on the concrete floor, he had four blankets now; but there were vermin (especially bed-bugs) without number. Jacob sent the following message home with his friends: "I sometimes envy the three who have already been released from this misery. Then I think: 'Why is the Lord so hard on me? I have always endeavoured to be faithful and industrious. I have given the Brotherhood little cause for worry. Why should I now have to suffer so much longer single-handed?' But then again it is a source of joy for me, when I realize that the Lord considers me worthy to suffer for his sake. And I must concede that life here is like in a palace in comparison with our former experiences."

From this the reader can form a conception of the experiences of these men at Alcatraz prison. If standing hand-cuffed for nine hours a day, on a bread-and-water diet, and sleeping among vermin on a concrete floor, was like a palace by comparison, it is no wonder that Jacob finally felt that to be released by death would be preferable to a long continuation of life in that living grave of Alcatraz.

On 12th December, pursuant to Secretary Baker's order above referred to, hand-cuffing to the bars was discontinued at the military prison. The solitary prisoners were also given planks on the floor to sleep on, which made it warmer for them at night than sleeping on the bare concrete floor. Further relief was given about New Year, after the monster petition for the release of the C. O.s had been laid before the Secretary of War. About this time Jacob became ill and had to be removed to the hospital, whence his story (which fully corroborates

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David's account) was first given to the outside world. Jacob was not included in the one hundred and thirteen conscientious objectors who were released and discharged from the Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, on 27th January, in pursuance of an order of the Secretary of War, dated 2nd December. He was released at last on 13th April, 1919.

J. G. EWERT.

The Elmsett Community

Development and Organization

The community, which is situated in the village of Elmsett about eight miles from Ipswich, is in reality a direct outcome of the Community Conference which was held in East London on 5th November, 1938. A group of people gathered together after that conference and committed themselves to a full community, through which they believed that a real witness for peace and justice could be made. The group decided to seek out the means of establishing themselves on the land as a first step to self-subsistence in community. After several weeks of seeking, during which time they met as often as possible, the present farm was discovered in this very lovely and unspoiled part of rural England. The circumstances in the locality pointing to its being the right place in which to start, were the nearness of interested friends who wished to co-operate, and the possibilities of further development. It was decided that the farm should be taken, even before the necessary capital had been found, the group believing that once they had taken concrete steps towards their objective, the way would open up. This faith was not unjustified, and within a month the necessary capital had been found through friends who were keen to see this cell of the new order come into being.

On Friday, 6th January, 1939, the Elmsett Community came into being and a statement of the aims and basis of the community was issued, from which the following extract is taken:—

"We realize that it is useless to try to re-design the superstructure of the old system while the foundations are at fault, and have decided that we must help to lay the foundations of a new order based on the principles of brotherhood and co-operation of all mankind. We therefore renounce the selfishness of the old order, and this can only be done by sharing our life together in a true community, working not for personal reward, but for the benefit of the whole, and holding all our material goods in common. Thus personal ambition will be relinquished for the higher ideal, and the individual personality freed from the warping effects of commercialism, will

be able to express itself more fully in furthering that ideal. In this we shall find unity without regulation or constitution. Whilst believing in the fundamental spirit and ethic of Christianity, we are convinced that the truth behind this cannot be embodied in any doctrine or creed. We wish each individual to approach this question in the light of his own experience. The criterion of any faith is the life which emanates from it."

The members of the community feel that it is very difficult to express in words the deep fundamentals of this life, therefore they hope that the life they lead will be an honest expression of the principles of which they are convinced.

The first arrivals, who went to Elmsett early in January of this year, were housed in a small hut on wheels lent by a farmer neighbour. The weather did not favour the two pioneers, for it poured with rain the whole of the month spent in the hut, which meant that they had to do everything—eat, sleep, wash and plan in the limited space afforded by their abode. However, the rain did not hold up the work, for there were alterations to be made in the buildings to suit them for communal use. The barn had to be converted into the communal dining hall, which meant lining the inside walls and making a ceiling. This work was tackled, and by the time two more members arrived early in February, the dining hall was half finished. With four persons the hut became impossible, and so an emigration was effected to the barn. It was cold without a door, and without glass in the new window, but the zeal of the venture kept the four pioneers warm. The weather had improved and work on the land became possible. The task of completing the dining hall was continued at night by the light of lamps. Gradually as each evening went by a new piece of ceiling crept over the heads of the four. Eventually the house, which had been occupied by the relatives of the late owner, became vacant, and what joy it was to be able to have a fire, and to sleep in a proper bedroom, even though it was on the floor! Now it was possible for the rest of the group to come, and soon the house and dining hall were furnished and the place began to look like a community.

Then came the first wedding, which took place at the Community Centre in London, where the community was really born. The newly married couple returned to Elmsett to start married life in a real way in true community.

The work on the farm was soon well in hand, the hedges and ditches were cleaned, the seed beds dug, and the crops planned. It was decided to devote three acres to intensive cultivation for the first year, and gradually increase this as far as possible year by year. Through the helpful co-operation of a neighbour the group has been saved the purchase of very large implements this year, for they have been lent in

exchange for labour. One hundred and fifty blackcurrant bushes have been set and three times that number of cuttings taken from them. The group intends to devote about three acres to blackcurrants. The rest of the twenty-two acres has been sown with wheat, clover, peas and sugar beet. A number of Dutch lights have been set up and early salads can be raised, and plants reared for the vegetable gardens. The community has thirty head of poultry and obtains its milk from goats. The community hopes to develop along vegetarian lines and to be able later to dispense with stock altogether, manuring the land with green manures and compost. Already some results of the early work are to be seen, produce raised under glass appears on the communal table, and young plants are ready for the main plot. The members find joy in these little things as they are symbols of the life they are seeking in community.

At the first communal council held when the group had settled in, the organization of the life was planned, *i.e.*, its work and its cultural activities. Community is democratic and therefore the methods of organization must be such that they preserve that democracy, and make it impossible for differences of class to creep in, or for any dominating individual or group to arise. The community planned to meet once a week as a council of full members to discuss the problems and the business of the community. At this council only members have the right to take part in any decision, although non-members may be present at the council meetings. Everything is talked about by the whole community and carried through by the consent of all the members. The first council meeting elected a secretary and a treasurer to act for the community for one year, these positions to be changed at the end of that period. An assistant was elected to help these two for a period of three months. The object of this is that if the members all have a chance of sharing in and learning the administrative work, they will be able to take on the administrative positions when they are changed. Hence there is no chance of the same individuals being constantly re-elected to administrative work year after year and becoming an established authoritative influence within the community. A committee was also elected to plan the cultural activities of the community. This committee is responsible for the library, study groups, P.P.U. meetings, and for the Sunday evening services. It is hoped that gradually more educational activities may be provided, but with a small group this is not so easy as might be thought. The committee also keeps the community in touch with outside activities which might be of interest to the members, and is the means of useful contact with the community as a whole. The cultural and educational activities are not compulsory for the members, but are planned for their benefit.

The work of the community had to be well planned, for social and for economic soundness. In the first place women are considered as equal to men, and take their share in all work as far as it is physically possible for them—they are not confined to the kitchen, etc. In order that no class difference in respect of work should arise, it was decided that all the menial work should be shared by everyone, so that service in the kitchen and laundry, and the sanitary work should be planned by rota. For work which requires experts it was decided to appoint permanent workers who either have the ability required or are able and willing to learn the work of the department for which they are responsible. All unskilled labour is planned according to need and everyone takes his share. The working day is normally eight hours. When necessary longer hours are put in, but only when it is really necessary, for the community believes that individuals should have adequate leisure for such activities as may interest them, and also for the health of body, mind and spirit.

The members are very anxious that the community should not become self-centred and isolated, and therefore they seek all possible means of making outside contacts. The communal activities are open to local people, and some have already joined with the members in the P.P.U. meetings and the Sunday evening services. One of the members hopes to run a club amongst the village boys, thus making a vital contact with the young people. The regular sale of *Peace News* in the streets of Ipswich provides another means of contact; through this many people have been met who have shown a very keen interest in the activities of the community. The community is also in membership with the Ipswich Co-operative Society, and is now getting into closer contact with the more idealistic side of the Society, and hopes that the future may bring the means of stimulating a more active interest in the ideals of brotherhood and co-operation, which were originally behind the co-operative movement. Through these and other channels the group is able to make a very vital and real witness to the truth, while at the same time living a constructive and practical life in community. It will thus be proved that the members are not escapists, but earnest seekers for the new order.

Already there have been many visitors and many want to come in the near future. Three parties plan to come and meet the members of the community for the purpose of discussion about communal life. Letters come from all over England and also from U.S.A., France, Palestine and Holland. There is much proof that practical life is the kind of witness that really gets to the heart of things.

The community is finding unity, without uniformity of dress, thought or action. The members realize that each has a responsibility to the rest and to the cause they serve. In the short history of only three

THE OAKSEY BRUDERHOF COMMUNITY



1. Avenue leading to the buildings.



2. Part of the farm buildings.




3. The Manor House at Oaksey.



4. The old farm house.

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months the reality of this life and the spiritual power and joy of community has been keenly felt by all, both in work and in play, in spite of crowded conditions and bad weather.

There are many who have applied for membership, but the capital and the accommodation will not allow for more than the present number of members. This is a great burden to the community which feels very keenly the need for development as soon as possible, or for the starting of another settlement by those who are keen to do what has been done by the group here at Elmsett. Should the capital be forthcoming the community could quite well obtain more land and start the work of construction which would make it possible for others to join them by next winter. It is the need of these days that all who can should help in laying the foundations of the new order.

All communications, accompanied by a stamp if possible, should be addressed to:—The Elmsett Community, Nova Scotia Farm, Ipswich.

The New Bruderhof Community at Oaksey



All our friends will be glad to hear that a second Bruderhof Community was founded in the spring of this year. The experience of four centuries of Hutterian history has proved that a healthy community should number some hundred and fifty to two hundred adults and children. The reason for this lies both in the spiritual and economic life of a Bruderhof. In a community settlement each member should, if possible, know all the others and share all joy and sorrow with his neighbours. When a community is too large this is no longer possible. If, however, the number at a community settlement is too low, if there are less than about a hundred and twenty souls, another danger arises: namely that the individual, with his strong points and weaknesses, comes too much into the foreground. The economic position of a community is similar. A Bruderhof peopled by some hundred and fifty to two hundred adults and children is in the most favourable position. There is a much more favourable relationship between productive work, which accounts for the community's income, and the necessary household work such as cooking, baking, washing, etc, in a larger than a smaller community. The same is true of the important work of educating the children from babyhood to the top classes in school.

In autumn 1938, the Cotswold Bruderhof had about two hundred and thirty members: children, young people and grown-ups. As, in these serious days, more and more people are becoming conscious of the call

to give up all things to find an entirely new life in brotherly community, the founding of a second branch-settlement as near as possible to the Cotswold Bruderhof became a matter of burning importance. For if two communities are geographically close together, in many ways the advantages of a larger community can be combined with those of a smaller circle. For example, one bakehouse and one school are sufficient for two or more small Bruderhoefe if they are close together. These, and similar reasons led to the founding of the Oaksey Bruderhof.

Oaksey Park Farm lies in very good pasture land on the borders of a wood some four and a half miles west of the Cotswold Bruderhof. It is about half a mile from the North Wiltshire village of Oaksey (postal address: Oaksey Bruderhof Community, Oaksey, Swindon, Wilts.), from which it is reached by a wonderful avenue of high trees, mostly oaks and elms (see illustration 1). The landscape is a little more hilly and varied than that in the immediate vicinity of the Cotswold Bruderhof. A beautiful stream flows through the fields. High trees surround the buildings.

The farm consists of about three hundred and twenty acres, of which only forty acres are arable and the rest pasture land. The farm can support about sixty cows in milk with the corresponding amount of young stock: in all some hundred head of cattle. The previous tenant had also bred pigs on a large scale, having some eighty to a hundred breeding sows and fattening pigs, and a poultry farm of four hundred laying birds.

The last two departments of farming can only be supported by the land to a very limited extent, and are dependent on the purchase of food-stuffs.

The farm buildings, though for the most part old, are sufficient in number and are still in good condition (see illustration 2). The dwelling-houses, which are so important for a community, are spacious and in good condition. In addition to a large manor house with about twenty rooms (see illustration 3), there is a fine farm house with ten rooms (see illustration 4). We think we shall be able to house some sixty to seventy people in these two buildings. For meals and meetings a large and airy loft in the farm house, which had been used for storage purposes, has been converted into a very tasteful room offering accommodation for some sixty to seventy people. As the illustrations show the entire Bruderhof is built in the Cotswold style, which accords so well with the landscape.

We happened to hear last autumn, by accident as it were, that this farm had already been for sale for months. Although it seemed financially unattainable, the whole brotherhood decided unanimously, in

faith in God's help and guidance, to try to buy the farm. Shortly afterwards the necessary means were placed at our disposal.

Thus in autumn 1938 we bought Oaksey Park Farm, meaning to take it over completely after the expiration of the leases of the two tenants in the course of this year. The farm tenant left at the end of March, whilst the tenant of the manor house, to which belongs some ten acres of ground, will move in the autumn.

Unfortunately, in connection with this purchase, we came up against strong opposition in the neighbourhood, especially from the wealthy landowners. After much consideration, however, it became clear to us that we could not voluntarily give up this land, which belongs to God. Thus it came about that at the end of March this year the Oaksey Bruderhof was founded. On the day on which it was taken over, the whole community including children and guests went to the new place, filled with the inner longing that this piece of earth from now on might be placed wholly in the service of God and ruled by the strength of his love, with the prayer that here, only the spirit of brotherly justice might reign. Thus the whole community gathered in the still empty house for a time of devotion, and with this meeting the Oaksey Bruderhof was founded.

At the moment we are occupying the farm house only. Because of this and the scarcity of room the number of people at the new Bruderhof is especially small. Thus this summer a small cottage with four rooms will be erected where ten more men may be accommodated. At the moment thirty-one people in all are living there—fifteen full members, four novices and twelve children. In the autumn when the manor house will be free a large number from the Cotswold Bruderhof will join them. Georg Barth is responsible for the general life of the Bruderhof. Arnold Mason has charge of the common purse and is therefore responsible for the business connections with the outside world. Arno Martin has the main responsibility for the farm and all the practical work.

Meantime the community is to be supported by four branches of farming. Firstly by dairy farming, by the sale of Grade A milk from a herd of about sixty cows. Then we have about a hundred and thirty pigs; a poultry farm of eight hundred laying hens and some four hundred young birds. The forty acres of arable land already referred to supply the greater part of the fodder necessary for the cattle.

The founding of the Oaksey Bruderhof Community fills us all with gratitude. It is indeed a wonderful thing in this earnest and torn time, that a new place should be won to serve the coming order of peace and justice. The inner and outward development of events around us confirms our certainty that community life, dared in the strength of

the Spirit of Jesus Christ, realized in the selfless, active work of devoted love which comes from faith, and the overthrow of the will to possess by living with all things in common, is more than ever to-day the flaming torch that must shine out into the darkness.

JOHANN HEINRICH ARNOLD.

Hutterian Brothers in Brazil?

Kagawa's reference to their settlement near Sao Paulo.

Friends who are interested in the history of the Brothers known as the Hutterians, of which a short summary was given in THE PLOUGH Vol. 1, No. 1, will be surprised as we ourselves were, to read the following sentences from Kagawa's book, "Brotherhood Economics".

"The Anabaptists preserved the spirit of brotherhood... The princes of the feudal system, however, were partly pagan, although they were nominally Christian. They despised such 'hundred per cent Christians'. Unfortunately they were abetted in the persecution of them by a great church with political power, and their brotherhood movement was suppressed. That great and saintly man, *Jacob Hutter*, was killed. His followers fled to Russia. There they lived until Lenin recently bore down upon them with persecution, since he did not like their Christian communism. They fled again, this time to Brazil. They settled near Japanese immigrants who reported back to Japan that in only four years' time these persecuted Christians had been amazingly successful in re-creating their Christian brotherhood in the new land." (pp. 104-5)

The history of the Brothers known as the Hutterians tells us of their wanderings from Moravia, where they had gathered from various countries in the course of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, through Hungary and Transylvania and over the Carpathian mountains to Bessarabia, and of the dispersal which took place from time to time, either through suppression or through their weakened condition. Finally they settled in Russia, and lived there in full community for some fifty years. After this there followed a period of less vital spiritual life, in which community of goods was not always practised, although efforts were continually made to return to it. Those who remained true to, or re-started, a life of full community in faithful adherence to all the vital principles of this martyr church called themselves "Hutterian Brothers"; whereas those who had departed from full community, but wished to keep their connection with the Anabaptist tradition, joined the Mennonites in Russia and were, and still are, known as "Hutterian Mennonites".

With the introduction of compulsory military service in Russia, the

members of the Hutterian communities remained true to their faith, and rather than partake in war, they gave up houses and lands and left the country. Having received the assurance of the Government in Ottawa and Washington that their conscientious objection to war would be respected, they left Russia in three groups for America. This took place during the years 1874, 1875 and 1877. On their arrival, community of goods was strictly adhered to from the beginning. Now comes the interesting thing. We know that there must have been many Hutterian Mennonites, who are also not absolute in their rejection of military training, left behind in Russia after the emigration of the three groups. Can it be that these were moved to return to the uncompromising brotherhood way of life which their forefathers practised? Again and again in their history we see how this longing returned to the hearts of even those descendants who had not practised community of goods for one or more generations. Just as post-war events and conditions in Germany led to such an awakening in the hearts of the young people, could it not also be that post-revolution Russia brought home to those Mennonites who were the descendants of the Hutterian Brothers the reality of the faith of their fathers?

In answer to a letter asking for further information, Toyohiko Kagawa writes :—"I cannot give you much detailed information of the Hutterians in South America, other than that mentioned in 'Brotherhood Economics'. Japanese who are living near them are my authority for my statement. They are settled somewhere near Sao Paulo, Brazil, and it shall be my pleasure to try to get further information for you." He goes on writing, "May God bless the Cotswold Bruderhof and its great devotion to the cause of peace! Oh that more people in the world would dedicate their lives to peace! With kindest regards to your brethren in the community, I am, yours sincerely, Toyohiko Kagawa."

It must be added that our interest in this link revealed to us in Kagawa's statement is more than a purely historical one. The whole history of the Brothers from their earliest Anabaptist beginnings has been a source of inspiration and guidance to us since the first few years of our life in community. Since that time, our own short history has become closely bound up with the history of the whole movement, through our being led by God to unite with the Brothers in North America. The question arises in our hearts, "What may the future reveal of God's further guidance?"

WINIFRED BRIDGWATER.

FORUM

"EXCEPT A CORN OF WHEAT FALL INTO THE GROUND, AND DIE . . ."

From Professor Lasserre to Eberhard C. H. Arnold.

Dear Friend,—Thank you for your letter of the 3rd of this month. I am glad that thanks to it the way is opened for a fraternal exchange, which no doubt will help me to complete and probably redress some of my views on your community, while at the same time it may perhaps be useful for the Bruderhof to receive the candid expression of certain reactions from a sympathetic outsider.

In 'Community in Britain' you stated that "the only foundation for true life is to be found in Jesus Christ—in the living Christ who is a potent force working within men". From this I gather that your group has its own interpretation of the speeches and life of Jesus—an interpretation which you seem to oppose to the interpretation of organized churches, religious sects and humanitarian movements.

I understand quite well that your group has found its spiritual foundation in a certain theology based on a common mystical experience of all the members. But was it necessary to antagonize, or appear to antagonize, among the very readers of the article on the one hand, those Christians who found the expression of their religious experience in other interpretations of Christianity, and on the other hand, those whose minds are so constituted, that to them the words "living Christ" have no meaning or no appeal, although they may be true followers of the teachings of Christ, and find force and succour in the contemplation of his life and attitude?

In another part of the article, you compare community with a loaf of bread, and point out that in order to make the loaf, the grains of corn have to sacrifice their individuality. Do you really mean that? I understand you, and concur with you indeed, when you speak of sacrificing our selfishness, but is really our individuality—that is, the special gifts and characteristics by which the individual personality of each of us is endowed and by which we all differ from each other—to be annihilated in the Bruderhof?

I am afraid your statement on this point may give the reader the feeling that, for example, the Bruderhof is engaged in some process of levelling and dis-individualizing spiritually its members, both adult and children, in a way parallel to that used by totalitarian states. Also, that the Bruderhof would disapprove of members feeling an urge to devote a part of their time—besides their duties and activities for the community—to the development of their inner life, to personal meditation, to special studies, even to independent activities of their own, when these have no connection with the actual programme of the community.

We must not forget that it is these men with a strong individuality, that is with a strong urge to form and express their own personality outside of their social framework, who are the initiators of human progress.

I would, for instance, word a comparison of man with a grain as follows: Man, when his will has been dedicated to God, should be able to find in true community a proper environment for the full development of his spiritual personality, just as the grain finds its proper environment for its development into a fully grown plant when it falls into the right kind of soil.

While I agree with you when you say that "the individuals must give themselves to the highest Cause which is God, or unity, or love", I cannot believe that this Cause is re-

vealed to us exclusively through the medium of the organic community to which the individual belongs, but I believe that there is also a direct revelation to man through his individual conscience, a direct divine urge for personal action in the interest of the highest Cause—for an action which may be different for each individual, and which may have to be accomplished independently of community life proper.

I wish you to understand that I am not in the least insinuating that such urge of a member for an independent personal life side by side with his community life, would not be fully respected in actual daily practice at the Bruderhof—as fully respected, for instance, as his family life is. But then, should we not infer that the actual practice in your community is broader than its theory—at least as I understand it from your article?

After all, a doctrinal theory based on a mystical experience can only be understood by those who have gone through that experience. When addressing the outside public, therefore, should the Bruderhof not let people form their judgment about this community, from its principles, its actual way of living, and its practical achievements rather than from a religious doctrine to be accepted from the outset? Is the expression of such a doctrine not likely to be more misleading than convincing to many—especially to those to whom this doctrine would sound as being in direct opposition with their faith in the divine nature of individual personality, as is the case with most Britons and Americans, also French Calvinists and Catholic Personalists?

To a large extent, all that I have said above would apply to 'The Plough' as well. Since it is designed to be "an instrument *for uniting more closely* those who are seeking here and now, both in the Bruderhof and *outside it*, to live by the standards of the Coming Order of justice, love and brotherhood", then, I am not quite sure whether the prevailing place given the religious articles will not have the opposite effect, as far as many well-meaning, community-minded outsiders are concerned . . .

I am not discussing the truth which is voiced through these articles. I am thoroughly convinced that it is a good thing that they are published. The question which arises in my mind, however, is: whether 'The Plough', as "an instrument for uniting those seeking to live by the standards of the Coming Order", is the proper vehicle for such articles, or at least for so many of them, or whether they should rather be published, for their own merits, in book form or in a separate religious journal.

I wonder whether some chronicle of activities and special events at the community would not be of great interest, and do much to familiarize the reader with the spiritual atmosphere prevalent in the Bruderhof. For instance, when I was there, the celebration of a silver wedding had taken place. An account of it in 'The Plough', together with a short summary of a few of the speeches delivered on this occasion, would have given your readers, I think, a colourful impression of the friendly atmosphere prevalent in the community. And there are certainly all sorts of other events in which your readers would be equally interested. It may also be interesting for them to hear of developments of the community regularly in each issue, in a more systematic manner than it has been done in former issues. This would then take the place of your former 'Bruderhof Letters', and a separate reprint of it could be made if necessary, for such uses, not now covered by 'The Plough', as had led the Bruderhof formerly to publish these letters.

These are just casual suggestions. That I wrote them will convince you I hope that I am greatly interested in your journal, in which I personally found much enlightening and stimulating material, and its success has my most sincere wishes.

I have just had the visit of Dr. S., who told me that he had spent a week-end at the Bruderhof last summer. He is another member of the Robert Owen Foundation. I endeavoured to explain to him your standpoint regarding private property, in which he could not concur; and our discussion had the effect of bringing home to me still more vividly than ever how fully I agree with the attitude taken by your community on the

four practical problems of war, property, sex, and work—as outlined in your article in ‘Community in Britain’. On this ground I am entirely with you.

Looking forward for your reply, which I am sure will help me get a fuller understanding of the Bruderhof and its spiritual foundation, I remain, with my best greetings and wishes to you and everybody in the Bruderhof,

Fraternally yours, Henri Lasserre.

Victoria College, Toronto 5, Canada.

From Eberhard C. H. Arnold to Professor Lasserre.

Dear Professor Lasserre,—I should like to apologize very much for the delay in replying to your very interesting letters. As you may have heard, I was indisposed for a long time owing to an operation, and since my return after a time of convalescence I have been very busy, as our Bruderhof is growing rapidly and there is a great amount of work to be done. I will try now to go into the questions which you raise.

Your point about our being rather more reserved with regard to stating our Christian basis seems to me an important one. You also write that ‘The Plough’ is too much concerned with religious subjects, or what you call theology, and you suggest that it would be more to the advantage of the very purpose of ‘The Plough’, as “an instrument for uniting more closely those who are seeking a new order of life”, if there were more articles about the colony life itself, and its more practical problems. Your third important point refers to the passages in our literature which seem to you to demand the complete abolition or destruction of individuality in a true communal life, and you compare this tendency in our writings with totalitarian ideology.

With regard to your first suggestion, I should like to say that it is indeed difficult to find a way of expression which pleases everybody. There are, for instance, quite a number of very “pious” people who find ‘The Plough’ much too worldly. There are others who find it too “Left-Wing”, or too pacifist, and so on. On the whole I agree that in our present time, where there is so much misunderstood Christianity, it is best to be as reserved as possible, and to let the life speak for itself. On the other hand, there seems to be a real need to call people to a new *spiritual* life, and there we may disagree. It is our experience that community life is impossible without a deep spiritual life of the individual members and of the group as a whole. Our community life is growing from *within*, and thus changing life *without*. I hope you understand: our religious articles are intended to be neither “theological” nor “doctrinal”, but are written and published with the sole intention of being a challenge, an encouragement and an inspiration to others. We feel especially that there is a certain school of thought which is very important to us, but which is too little known in England—I mean the school represented by men like Blumhardt, Ragaz, Barth (to a certain extent), Niebuhr, Eberhard Arnold, and, of the older writers, Kierkegaard, etc., which has been called the ‘prophetic school’ in juxtaposition to orthodoxy on the one hand and liberalism on the other.

In other words, we feel that religion must be experienced as a *living* force, which makes also old writings like those of the Early Church living. Further we feel a deep concern for the future of mankind. We feel that this kind of approach to religion, which is indeed neither entirely mystical nor fundamentalist nor liberal, is something of which our present-day world is in great need, and especially the Anglo-Saxon people. ‘The Plough’ has been trying for some time to work in that direction.

With regard to your second point, I agree entirely that the tendency has been for ‘The Plough’ to be somewhat too much concerned with difficult matter; and I have been making an effort to bring in easy articles which can be understood also by simple people. You will probably have noticed this in the last two issues, and it will be even more so in the summer number. It seems to me necessary to find the right balance between deep spiritual articles which are a challenge to men, and make them think

and reconsider their position, and articles of a descriptive or narrative nature which express the same truth in facts and figures, or in parables and poetic language. Your letter was a great stimulus to me in that direction, and I thank you very much.

Your main point concerns the relationship of the individual to the community. This is difficult to explain in a letter, because it is a subject of such vast implication that I feel, if I could meet you, we could talk about it for several weeks! It is indeed the main topic of our talks, addresses, discussions, etc., both within the Bruderhof and outside; for the question strikes at the very root of our life.

I agree that to a certain extent our statements in the article in 'Community in Britain' and also in our pamphlet 'The Cotswold Bruderhof' might be misunderstood. We do not by any means want to be totalitarian in the political or cultural sense of the word. But in its fullest sense of being something whole, or complete, or all-embracing, we are totalitarian. In other words, we believe *God* is totalitarian because he demands the *whole* man. You stumble in this respect over the parable of the loaf, in which the grains have been ground to flour; and also over the sentence that "one has to give up one's freedom". How can I explain what we mean? You will have noticed at the Bruderhof that every individual member *is* different from the others. Everybody has his own characteristics and his own gifts, talents and even peculiarities. That must certainly be so! And I think that in the Bruderhof these individual characteristics come to expression more fully than perhaps anywhere else. And we also feel much freer, in the deepest sense of the word, than we felt before we joined a community.

What then did I mean when I wrote those lines? It is a religious experience which I cannot describe in words. It is that which Christ called a new birth, when he spoke to Nicodemus and said "Unless you are born again you cannot see the Kingdom of God"; or what Paul writes, that we have died with Christ and found new life in him. By sacrificing one's individuality and one's freedom I mean that all the *evil* effects of selfishness and individual isolation must be overcome by removing the root of the whole trouble: the separation and disintegration of mankind into nations, classes, castes and individuals. This cannot be done by any compulsory means, but only by *love*. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." By this is meant not only to be ready to die for one's neighbours, but also to live for them by giving one's whole strength, energy, gifts, talents and means. Another word comes to me in this respect: "He who loses his life shall find it; and he who tries to keep his life (that is, his separate existence, spiritual and economic) shall lose it." I can only add, as I said before, that this experience which one might call an experience of creative sacrifice (in opposition to ascetic sacrifice) is something so great, and so wonderful and so freeing, spontaneous and natural, that it is just the opposite, the very opposite, of political and cultural totalitarianism.

It is just as much the opposite of the 'laissez-faire' of modern individualistic democracy, with its capitalism and exploitation of the poor, national and international. It is simply a new life of brotherhood where the individual, in full freedom and with all his peculiarities and gifts, does not work separately but as a 'limb of the body', as a part of the whole. And the whole community is not possible without a dedication in creative sacrifice of the sum of its individuals.

I believe that you will not understand my whole argument unless you feel something of this in your own heart. But I hope that my attempt to reply to your very interesting and stimulating letters will bring us more closely together. We feel that you have an understanding for our life which is rarely to be found among people.

Yours in friendship and love,

for the Cotswold Bruderhof,

June 2nd, 1939.

Eberhard C. H. Arnold.

CONCERNING THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

“And there shall be no more death”

On 8th May our sister Gertrud Dyroff was called into eternity. She died very suddenly after an illness contracted after the birth of her third little child. During the time preceding her death she gave clear testimonies of her deep faith in Christ and her unity with the Church. Gertrud was one of our oldest members, having for more than nine years worked and lived with us in community. She was one of the few who knew the community in Sannerz. On 10th June, 1934, she married our brother August Dyroff, now, with his three little boys, so sadly deprived of her. Yet the great blessings of a community life based on the spirit of love show themselves here, in that the children are cared for with a special love by the community.

Gertrud's heart was filled with *love* to all mankind, to all in social and spiritual need, and especially to the very poor. Above all she loved children, and only a short time before her death she was devoting all her strength and energy to the community's children, as one of our kindergarten teachers.

Through her death we experienced something of the overwhelming power of love, which is stronger than death, and we felt among our circle the nearness of eternity. It is our deepest wish that all our work may always be penetrated by the strength of the love which is eternal.

Further growth in the Bruderhof communities

We have also experienced the victorious power of life over death in the steady growth within our communities since our last report (Vol. II, pp. 16-22). Six new candidates for membership have been taken in, who will enter into full membership after about a year's noviciate. Following our Whitsuntide experiences, nine more people wish in the near future to join us in the common life.

God, the Creator, has also given new life to our families. Since March of this year six children have been given to us, and we have also been able to take in three children who are victims of the unjust order of our present-day society. In addition to this several more refugee children are expected as soon as they can leave Austria.

Because of this considerable growth it was found necessary to extend the economic basis of the Brotherhood. That is why the Oaksey Bruderhof Community was founded (see full report, pp. 49-52). Further we were able to acquire additional land in Ashton Keynes by the purchase of two adjoining grassland farms, Ashton Down Farm of two hundred acres and Old Manor Farm of one hundred acres, the latter having been rented by us since June 1937.

Our guests

We are deeply thankful for the great opportunity for the furtherance of the community witness which offers itself through the great number of guests and visitors who come to the Bruderhof. Since Easter we have welcomed among us some thousand people, who have either

OF come to live and work with us for a few days or even weeks or who came for an afternoon or evening visit, sharing so far as possible in our inner experiences. At Whitsun we were able to share deep experiences of the Spirit with over two hundred people from outside. Our guests come from a great variety of movements. They include socialists, Salvationists, P.P.U. members, University students, Toc H groups and F.O.R. groups, workmen's clubs, and many who do not belong to any particular group or organization. On nearly all occasions we have been able to establish an inner contact by giving our guests and visitors a short outline of our communal life and the ideas and principles underlying it, generally followed by an open discussion.

Our friends will agree that such a considerable influx of people involves a great deal of work. We therefore decided to restrict the time for visitors (apart from those who come to stay and work with us for a time) to Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and the whole of Sunday. We would be grateful if our friends would make a note of this and try so far as possible to keep to these times, in order to enable us to proceed with our work as efficiently as possible, for it must not be forgotten that we have to work hard for our living. All guests who come on any of these days will be shown round the workshops, buildings and grounds, and an effort will be made to explain to them the meaning and the manner of our life. The products of our workshops and of our farm will also be on sale at these times; and every purchase helps towards the furtherance of our communal witness and towards the cost of maintaining orphans, refugees and all the needy people for whom our door is always open.

We would further like to ask all our friends who come from far and wish to stay with us for one or more nights to let us know by letter or card the date of their arrival, so that arrangements for their accommodation can be made beforehand. A Guest Letter is being prepared which gives full particulars of the part guests play in the life of the communities at Ashton Keynes and Oaksey. It also contains a full description of the geographical situation of the two Bruderhof communities, and of how to get there by rail or road. Please write for this letter to the Secretary, The Cotswold Bruderhof Community, Ashton Keynes, Wilts.

Youth Hostel at Ashton Keynes

In this connection we would like to draw the attention of all those who wish to visit the Bruderhof communities to the new Youth Hostel which has been opened at Ashton Keynes, about a mile distant from the Cotswold Bruderhof buildings but actually on the borders of the community's land. We were able to sell Old Manor Farmhouse to the Youth Hostels Association, retaining for ourselves the hundred acres of the farm itself. The Y.H.A. has converted the old farmhouse into a beautiful hostel, and all our guests who are members of the Association can stay there. For those who are not members it would be worth while writing to the Head Office, Trevelyan House, Church Rd., Welwyn Garden City, Herts., for a membership card (2/6 per year Junior membership, 16-25 years; 5/- per year Senior membership). The Hostel can accommodate twenty-five men and fifteen women. Anyone who wishes to reserve a bed should write to the Y.H.A. Warden, Old Manor Farm, Ashton Keynes, Wilts. Full particulars are to be found in the Y.H.A. Handbook for 1939, p. 78.

United in marriage

On Sunday, 11th June, we celebrated at the Cotswold Bruderhof the marriage of our members Brian Trapnell and Nancy Watkins. This is the second wedding this year, the first being that of Guy Johnson and Eleanor Dutton, who were married on 14th January last.

The new designation of the Bruderhoeffe

When the new Bruderhof community at Oaksey was founded, it became necessary to find a name descriptive of both communities or of any more groups to be founded later. We would like to be known simply as 'The Brothers', and we have therefore changed the name of the Society which our members form for practical purposes from the "Cotswold Bruderhof Society" to the "Society of Brothers", and as our Brotherhood enjoys full membership of the Hutterian Church, most of whose community settlements are in Canada and South Dakota, U.S.A., we are also known as the "Hutterians."

The names and addresses of our two communities are now as follows: The Brothers, Cotswold Bruderhof Community, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, Wilts., and The Brothers, Oaksey Bruderhof Community, Oaksey, Swindon, Wilts.

Friends of the Bruderhof

As was announced previously, some of the friends who wish to help the "Society of Brothers" to become established on a good economic basis, but who could not very easily give money, have formed a limited company which is called the "Friends of the Bruderhof, Limited". The prospectus is now available. All those interested in helping in this way should write to the secretary of the company, at the Registered Office, 41 Corn Street, Bristol, or to the Brothers at the Cotswold Bruderhof Community. A great deal of capital is required to build a new children's house, a laundry with bathrooms adjoining, to convert an old barn into a dining hall, and for the construction of additional farm buildings. Considerable capital is also required for the development of the new community at Oaksey.

Redeemable preference shares of £1 (redeemable in twenty years) are being offered to bear dividend at four per cent. We believe there are very many people to-day who are concerned about the right use of capital for the furtherance of the cause of peace, and who may wish to support our efforts to extend an active witness of peace and brotherhood by investing some of their money in this company, instead of in a business concern run for profit or involved in armaments.

The Brothers and the British Government

Some weeks ago our member Eberhard C. H. Arnold was able to express the gratitude of the Brothers to Sir Samuel Hoare, in a few words at a luncheon in London. In a later letter addressed to the Home Secretary he conveyed more fully the thankfulness which the members of the Bruderhof communities feel for the understanding and sympathy which the British Government has shown to them in permitting them to stay in England. His letter also contained a short summary of our history in connection with the Hutterian Brothers, and of our principles with regard to non-participation in war or preparation for war, and of the refusal of the Brothers to take governmental office or to swear

an oath. On behalf of the Brothers, Eberhard C. H. Arnold asked for the understanding and tolerance of the British Government in case these views should lead to conflict with the authorities, and with the local population. He also thanked the Home Secretary for the understanding he had shown to the Bruderhof communities in connection with Lord Apsley's question in the House of Commons in December, 1938, when he asked whether the Home Secretary would do anything to prevent the then Cotswold Bruderhof Society from buying Oaksey Park Farm. In a written reply to Lord Apsley, Sir Samuel Hoare had stated:

"The Bruderhof were allowed to establish themselves in this country on condition that they did not seek to enter employment outside the community. They are a community of agriculturalists and craftsmen who are self-supporting.

I am informed that the community is purchasing additional land mainly in order to accommodate a number of British subjects who have joined since its arrival in this country.

I know no grounds on which I should be justified in hindering a transaction between those who wish to sell and those who wish to buy the estate in question."

In reply to Eberhard C. H. Arnold's letter, the Home Secretary wrote: "I write to thank you for your letter of 27th April. I have been much interested in the information that it contains and I am glad to hear the history of your movement. Yours sincerely, Samuel Hoare."

In connection with this whole matter the Brothers wish to state clearly that in obedience to Christ's words they cannot take an oath. For this reason a member who acted as interpreter at a Petty Sessional Court at Cricklade on December 27th refused to take the oath. He was prepared to affirm, but was asked to raise his hand, which he did after some hesitation, not fully realizing the significance of this act. As this incident has been grossly exaggerated in the newspapers, we would like to mention it here. The whole question was fully discussed in a meeting of all the members of the Society of Brothers, and it was unanimously decided that in any future dealings with courts of law the simple words of affirming the truth will be given, but any further sign like that of raising the hand must be refused, as it seems to all members to be in contradiction to the words of Christ, "Let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

The Brothers and conscription

It is well known to all our friends that under no circumstances will any member of our communities join the fighting forces or do any alternative form of service. This position was fully confirmed at a meeting of the Society of Brothers in connection with the new Conscription Act. So far, none of the members is affected, as all English members are above the age of twenty-one. Yet some of the closer friends of the Bruderhof communities have refused to be conscripted, and have been put on the register of conscientious objectors. We shall follow with eager interest their coming before the tribunals.

The Brothers and refugees

The work which we are able to do in connection with the vast problem of refugees from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia has been

growing steadily, although it has often proved to be far in excess of our limited means and strength. We are glad to report that during the last six months twenty-nine refugees, in addition of course to the actual members of the Bruderhof, have been found work and shelter for more than two months. Further, we have promised work and shelter to ten others, during the time they are carrying through the formalities for re-emigration. In the near future, too, we hope to arrange for twenty young Zionists, all Jewish refugees from Germany, to receive one year's training in farming and general work at the two Bruderhof communities. As our accommodation is so limited, and as not all refugees are suitable for life and work at the Bruderhof, we were also able to help a number who were in desperate circumstances by finding them a shelter, work or financial help through our friends. Another great part of our work for the refugees, which is done mainly by our member Karl Keiderling so far as adults are concerned, and by our member Balz Trümpi for children's cases, consists in writing letters of encouragement to those who are often on the verge of despair owing to the severity of the laws for immigration and emigration. Many have also suffered greatly through the apparent harshness of the various relief organizations, which is of course mainly due to overwork on the one hand and the governmental requirements on the other. In quite a number of such cases we have tried to comfort and strengthen by letters those who often seem to lose all hope of ever finding help. We ask all friends to help us as much as they can with this important branch of our manifold activities. Most of all we need financial help, but also accommodation for more refugees. We also want, on behalf of the refugees, to thank all those who have responded to our previous appeals. We believe that the happiness of those who have found new hope is our best reward.

Publications

Our Plough Publishing House is slowly increasing its output. A book by the founder of our communities, Dr. Eberhard Arnold, called 'The Early Christians after the Death of the Apostles', is now in the press and will be ready for sale shortly. The price will be about 4/6, and orders can now be accepted. An announcement of this book appears on the back cover of this number. The article on the new Bruderhof community at Oaksey will be available as a separate reprint at 3d; and should many of our readers regard the first article, 'The Call of the Hour', as suitable for wider distribution, we will gladly reprint it and send as many copies as are desired.

We also wish to ask all our readers to do as much as they can to help towards the wider distribution of 'The Plough'. Specimen copies at a reduced price are available on request.

Books

HANDBOOK OF THE JEWISH COMMUNAL VILLAGES IN PALESTINE 1938, published by *The Head Office of the Keren Kayemeth Leisrael and Keren Hayesod, Jerusalem.*

Reading this Handbook a member of a Christian community at once asks: "What are the roots of such a life and what are the causes of its success?" Before answering these questions let us first try to get an impression of this community-movement. The Handbook gives a report of one of the three types of Jewish villages in Palestine, the "Kvutza". The movement for communal settlements (Kvutza) must be seen in connection with Jewish colonization in Palestine, which had already begun about 1870. The settlers first came mainly from Russia. A new urge was given when in 1897 the World Zionist Organization was created, which opened in 1908 an office to supervise the settlement of Jews in Palestine. In this same year the first communal settlement—a Kvutza—was established. Some others were also founded before the war, but the great majority were started after it. There are now fifty-seven with twelve thousand members in all (the largest Kvutza containing seven hundred and fifty persons, men, women and children, the smallest under one hundred). The members of a Kvutza have no private property; they work without any wages; all income goes into a common purse, but all services are provided free of charge by the Kvutza for its members. They live in houses built and maintained by the Kvutza; their clothes, food and other necessities are provided by it. There is one common kitchen, one common dining room, one library. The children are brought up on identical lines from birth to sixteen or eighteen years of age. They sleep in one children's house and there is one kindergarten and one school for a Kvutza, or one school or a higher school for a number of surrounding Kvutzot. Much could be said about care for the health of the members of a Kvutza, about the maintenance of parents and other dependants abroad. Everything shows clearly that the members of a Kvutza try to care in the best way for all who belong to them, though this means years of hard struggling; for the work is hard, it lasts from dawn to dusk with few interruptions during the day or in the course of the year. The whole management of a Kvutza is done by a committee of management, elected or re-elected for one year by the general meeting. All who study this clear and exhaustive Handbook will ask themselves, how is it possible that so many people—twelve thousand in number—decided upon this way of life? The book tries to show the reason for this enormous success. There are some practical advantages in living in a Kvutza: life is more rationalized than on a private farm; farming is mechanized, and the cost of production lowered. The Kvutza is better fitted to cope with external problems such as malaria, plant disease and defence against the Arabs. The inhabitants of a Kvutza are not in the least non-resistant. The members, who are mostly young, find in the collective life of the Kvutza something of the warmth of the family life in which they were brought up abroad. Manual and intellectual life are combined in a splendid way. The Kvutza is a mutual insurance against unemployment and ill-health. But the deeper reasons seem to lie in this: the movement of Zionism was combined from the beginning with a deep longing of

many Jews to get back to manual labour, back to the land! A. D. Gordon, who was deeply influenced by Leo Tolstoy, impressed the young people of this movement with an almost mystical fervour drawn from Jewish Hassidic sources. Socialism plays a great part in these settlements; they are grouped into federations and exercise an influence far outweighing their numerical strength. The deeper reason for their development seems to be an idealistic socialism, a kind of religious strength not called by name, but sensed as an urging power in a few names of communal villages, as "Heftziba" taken from Isaiah LXII, 4, meaning "Delighted in Thee," or in "Banir" taken from Jeremiah IV, 3, meaning "In a ploughed field." These are the urging powers which enable people to live such a life. The higher the enthusiasm for this new way of living the smaller was the number of those who left. In the beginning six per cent left annually: now in the last years fourteen per cent have left. Where there is in a community life a still deeper binding power than socialism and high idealism nobody will leave; because where there is the unity of the individual with God there is the same unity with his fellow men, who become his brothers, and who can leave his brothers? GERTRUD HÜSSY.

Editorial Notes

Concerning this Number

We hope that the contributions in this issue of THE PLOUGH will be instrumental in bringing inspiration and encouragement to all those who are striving towards the coming order. A clear-cut decision is more than ever essential, and it is the object of our first article "The Call of the Hour" to present a clear challenge to all those open for it.

The part of Claus Felbinger's Confession published in this issue points to the radical character of Christ's way and the way of the Church as opposed to the compromise with evil as practised by the great organized world churches. This martyr's words should also be carefully studied in connection with Professor Lasserre's letter in our Forum section in order to understand more fully the essential unity of those gathered together in community by Christ, and the meaning of the radical change which individuals have to undergo in order to join such a Church Community. Both truths are explained by Claus Felbinger in his teaching concerning true baptism and the right use of the Lord's Supper.

The account of the sufferings which the Hutterian conscientious objectors had to undergo during the last war will, we hope, encourage those of our readers who are now facing the vital question of conscription under circumstances much easier than at that time. This report is also an indication of the great spiritual strength which made these two young men die courageously for the same truth for which their spiritual forefather, Claus Felbinger, died three hundred and fifty years ago.

Our new section "Concerning the Bruderhof Communities" will be a regular feature of THE PLOUGH in future.

Again we wish to invite our readers to write to the Editor about the articles which appear in THE PLOUGH. Contributions for future issues are welcome.

THE EDITOR.

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